

# Customer Inspectors

## Complaints Mystery Shop



**Report by**  
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# Acknowledgements

This research project was conducted by Hannah Fitzhenry, Customer Insight Officer.

Graham Jones, Business Support Advisor produced and conducted a Complaints briefing along with a question and answer session for the Customer Inspectors.

A special thanks is given to all the Customer Inspectors who took the time to complete the different elements of the Complaints mystery shop.

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# Executive Summary

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to summarise and evaluate the Customer Inspectors mystery shop of Helena Partnerships complaints service

The complaints mystery shop is the fourth Inspection to be carried out by the Customer Inspectors.

## **Aim**

The aims of the Complaints mystery shop are:

- To develop an understanding of a customer's view of the current complaints service
- To assess areas of improvements with the complaints service
- To identify recommendations to make the complaint service more customer focused

## **Context**

Overall the Customer Inspectors conducted forty one mystery shops of the complaints service. They were conducted through a variety of methods including visits to Neighbourhood Offices and Local Access Points and Renew Offices, Calls to the One Call service and also via Helena websites.

The mystery shop was conducted over a number of dates between Thursday 26 August 2010 and Monday 27 September 2010.

## **Initial Complaint Form**

The Inspectors gave the Initial Feedback Form a variety of ratings; the majority were satisfied (50%), 30% were dissatisfied. Results also highlighted the following:

- All but one Inspector found the form easy to complete
- 70% of Inspectors found the form to be presented in a clear format
- 50% suggested the form does not provide details of what to do with the completed form.

## **Helena Websites**

The results for the Helena Website demonstrate that there is a requirement to make improvements. In summary the following points show the results gathered from the checklists:

- The complaints information on the Helena Homes website was considered 'fairly easy' to find.
- It was considered difficult to find complaints information on the Helena Partnerships website.
- There was no information about complaints on Helena Extra, Helena Living or Helena PropertyCare websites.
- The Customer Inspectors considered the information on Helena Partnerships and Helena Homes websites easy to understand and presented in a clear format.

## **One Call**

The results of the mystery shop, reporting a complaint via One Call, demonstrate a high level of satisfaction. All three calls made were rated as 'satisfied'.

One Call were rated highly in terms of how easy it was to make the complaint, the advisors level of knowledge and support. All calls made were ended with the Inspector having a good understanding of what happens after reporting their complaint.

### ***Complaint via Neighbourhood Office and Local Access Point***

Overall the Inspectors were generally happy with this element of the complaints mystery shop, almost three quarters of shops were rated as 'satisfied', 14% were 'dissatisfied'.

The following points summarise the results

- 72% (5) found it easy to report a complaint via this method
- All members of staff were 'polite and helpful'
- All but one of the members of staff was 'supportive' about the complaint
- The Inspectors 'agreed' that the member of staff was knowledgeable on five occasions
- Three Inspectors were aware of what would happen after the mystery shop, two disagreed.

### ***Complaints information in Neighbourhood Office's and Local Access Point's***

Overall, the Inspectors rated eight of the twenty two mystery shops of the complaints information in offices positively; seven were rated as 'very satisfied' and one as 'fairly satisfied'. The Inspectors were dissatisfied on almost half of the visits to the offices, three were 'fairly dissatisfied' and seven 'very dissatisfied'.

The following points summarise the results:

- None of the offices that were visited had a complaints leaflet on display
- No Helena complaints posters were found
- Complaints information was easy to obtain from 36% of offices
- 36% found the complaints information provided easy to understand
- 55% highlighted that they understood how to report a complaint after the visit
- On 50% of the visits the Inspectors felt they understood the complaints process.
- 64% of the mystery shops found there to be 'too little' information available

### ***What next?***

*Recommendations from the Customer Inspectors can be found on page ???*

Findings from this report along with the recommendations from the Customer Inspectors will be presented to the Customer Excellence Panel by the Customer Inspectors.

# Introduction

## Purpose

The purpose of this report is to summarise and evaluate the Customer Inspectors mystery shop of Helena Partnerships complaints service. The report analyses the information from the complaints mystery shop checklists and any additional comments made by the Customer Inspectors.

## Background

Helena Partnerships want to ensure that our customers are at the heart of everything we do. We want to demonstrate that we continually improve and deliver customer led services.

The Tenant Authority (TSA) expects housing associations to have a clear strategy for involving tenants and residents in influencing and monitoring service delivery.

Tenants should be clear on how they can be involved in managing their homes, and Helena must demonstrate how services have been modified in response to tenant views.

Over recent years there has been increased emphasis on tenant led regulation; ensuring housing associations are accountable to its customers.

“Making services and decisions accountable to, and contestable by, residents, and responding to the resident voice, are vital to achieving... excellence in housing.”  
*Chartered Institute of Housing, 2008*

“We expect all housing associations to clearly show how their services have been commented on and influenced by the people living in their homes... We also expect housing associations to be able to show that responding to residents’ views is something that runs through all their activities as part of their culture and the way they deliver services.”  
*Housing Corporation, 2007*

Helena has already made successful inroads to achieving this through its Customer Excellence and Resident Involvement Strategies, by providing greater opportunities for tenants to influence the decision-making process and shape the services that they receive. The Customer Inspector group is just one of a range of initiatives aimed at achieving this.

The Customer Excellence Strategy aims to ensure we deliver high quality services based on what matters most to tenants. We want to ensure that we continually improve and deliver customer led services.

The creation of the Customer Excellence Strategy has led to the development of Customer Inspectors.

The diagram on the following page identifies the different tenant groups within the Customer Excellence Strategy

## About the Customer Inspectors

A Customer Inspector is a volunteer whose role is to test and feedback the level of service being provided from a customer perspective. They carry out mystery shopping or reality checks which provide feedback on actual service delivery.

Customer Inspectors have a key role within the new Customer Excellence Strategy and will help to improve customer satisfaction with Helena services.

Helena Homes has a total of ten trained Customer Inspectors who are able to conduct a variety of overt and covert exercises.

The Customer Inspectors will continue to conduct reality checks on Helena Homes services throughout the upcoming year. Although a timetable has been developed this will remain a 'mystery' to ensure that the research remain a reality check.

The services identified to mystery shop have been identified by the priorities of the Customer Excellence Panel. The recommendations from the mystery shops will aid the Customer Excellence Panel in the full review of a specific service area.

Mystery shops will also be identified by specific service managers when there is a requirement to carry out a reality check of the service.

The checklists have been developed specifically for use by the trained Customer Inspectors and allow them to express their satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the complaints service whilst giving them room to detail any additional comments and suggestions for improvements.

The results of these studies will provide feedback to service managers, which in turn will help to identify strengths and weaknesses with the services and will enable them to highlight areas for improvement.

The results of Mystery Shops and Inspectors are used to identify direct service improvements for the individual service manager. In addition to this the results will be a valuable piece of performance information to aid the Customer Excellence Panel in their review of a service area, which then fed back to Board.

The diagram below displays the groups involved within the Customer Excellence strategy.



## Mystery Shop of Complaints

The complaints mystery shop is the fourth Inspection to be carried out by the Customer Inspectors.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction at our failure to provide a service that we are required to provide to our customers. There is a requirement to ensure that all our customers are able to access the complaints service through a suitable method. Reporting a complaint can be done in writing, in person or over the phone. Helena's websites also offer an opportunity for a customer to view complaints information and also report a complaint.

Complaints are a current priority across Helena Partnerships it is therefore beneficial to conduct a reality check to aid with improvements to the service.

A recent review of the complaints service has identified that there is some confusion over how a customer makes a complaint. In addition it was also identified that staff awareness across the organisation should be improved.

To help improve the complaints process a new documotive system was launched across Helena in April 2010.

It is important that Helena ensures that all members of staff are following the same complaints policy and procedures and that a consistent approach to complaints is being carried out. It is also necessary to ensure that all customers are aware of how to make a complaint and have the opportunity to do so.

The mystery shop of complaints will help to identify areas for improvement and in addition will seek recommendations from the Customer Inspectors to how the service can be improved from a customer's perspective.

The mystery shop of complaints considered all the different methods of reporting a complaint and also where a customer is able to obtain information regarding the complaints process. The diagram below displays the different elements considered for the mystery shop of complaints.





# Aims and Objectives

## Aims

The aims of the Complaints mystery shop are:

- To develop an understanding of a customer's view of the current complaints service
- To assess areas of improvements with the complaints service
- To identify recommendations to make the complaint service more customer focused

## Objectives

To achieve the aims the mystery shop will focus around:

- The Initial Feedback Form
- Complaints information on Helena websites
- Complaint information from Neighbourhood Offices, Local Access Points and Renew Offices
- Reporting a complaint via Email
- Reporting a complaint via Neighbourhood Office, Local Access Point and Renew Offices
- Reporting a complaint via One Call
- Additional comments made by the Customer Inspectors

# Method

## Context

Overall the Customer Inspectors conducted forty one mystery shops of the complaints service. They were conducted through a variety of methods including visits to Neighbourhood Offices and Local Access Points and Renew Offices, Calls to the One Call service and also via Helena websites.

The mystery shop was conducted over a number of dates between Thursday 26 August 2010 and Monday 27 September 2010.

The table below gives details of the number of mystery shops that were carried out for each element of the service.

Mystery Shop	Count
Visits to Neighbourhood Offices	10
Visits to Local Access Points	4
Renew Offices	9
Enquiries to One Call	3
Website	5
Initial Complaints From	10

Ten visits were made to Neighbourhood Offices during the fieldwork period, the table below display the dates that the visits were made.

Local Office	Date of Visit
Derbyshire Hill/Newton-le-Willows	07/09/10
Derbyshire Hill/Newton-le-Willows	23/9/10
Duke Street	07/09/10
Duke Street	07/09/10
Duke Street	08/09/10
Duke Street	09/09/10
Duke Street	23/09/10
Thatto Heath	07/09/10
Thatto Heath	07/09/10
Thatto Heath	09/09/10

Four visits were made to Local Access Points during the fieldwork period, the table below displays the locations and dates the visits were made.

Local Access Points	Date of Visit
FINTRA	02/09/10
FETRA	02/09/10
Moss Bank	02/09/10
Salvation Army - Parr	07/09/10

The Customer Inspectors conducted complaints mystery shops in the four Renew offices. Nine visits were made to the Renew offices, the dates of the visits are displayed in the table below.

Renew Office	Date of Visit
Fingerpost and Town Centre	23/09/10
Four Acre	08/09/10
Four Acre	08/09/10
Parr	07/09/10
Parr	08/09/10
Parr	09/09/10
Parr	23/09/10
Perth Centre	07/09/10
Perth Centre	09/09/10

Three complaints mystery shops were made to One Call, the dates and times are displayed below.

One Call	
Date	Time
31/08/10	11.37
07/09/10	Morning
16/09/10	12.17

## Method

### Checklist

The complaints checklists were developed considering the complaints service standards and elements of the current complaints satisfaction survey were linked into the checklists to allow of some further comparisons to be made.

The Inspectors checklists have been developed as a questionnaire using a variety of different scales. Instructions have also been developed on each checklist. (Appendix 1)

Similar to previous checklists space was provided throughout the checklists to encourage as many additional comments and suggestions to be made.

To incorporate all the elements to the complaints service a number of different checklists were developed (Appendix 2). Five checklists were developed:

- The Initial Complaint Form
- Complaints information on Helena websites/Reporting a complaint via Email
- Complaint information from Neighbourhood Offices and Local Access Points
- Reporting a complaint via Neighbourhood Office or Local Access Point
- Reporting a complaint via One Call

To help with the completion of the mystery shops a number of scenarios were developed to help the Inspectors think of a suitable complaint. (Appendix 3)

The checklist was signed off by Graham Jones, Business Support Advisor.

### The Complaints Mystery Shop

The Customer Inspectors were briefed by the service manager responsible for complaints, Graham Jones, Business Support Advisor at Alexandra Park on Thursday 26 August 2010. (Appendix 4)

The service manager gave the Inspectors an overview of the complaints procedure and what service can be expected. The Inspectors were given an opportunity to go through all the checklists and raise any queries about its completion before any mystery shops were carried out.

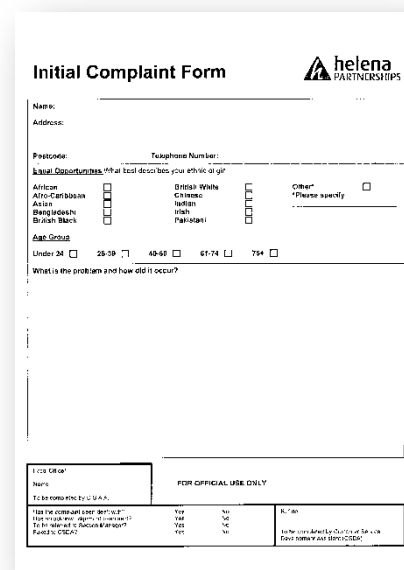
To ensure the complaints mystery shop was carried out efficiently and to reduce any confusion with the five checklists it was carried out in stages managed by the Customer Insight Officer, Hannah Fitzhenry.

### Initial Complaint Form

After the briefing exercise the Inspectors conducted a mystery shop of the Initial Complaint Form (displayed on the right). A specific checklist was devised to capture the feedback on the Initial Complaints Form.

Those Inspectors not present at the meeting were sent the Initial Complaint Form checklist and scenarios to complete in their own time.

A full size version of the Initial Complaint form can be viewed in Appendix 5.



The image shows a form titled "Initial Complaint Form" with the Helena Partnerships logo. The form includes fields for Name, Address, Postcode, and Telephone Number. It features a section for "Initial Complaints" with checkboxes for various ethnic groups: African, African-Caribbean, Asian, Black/Black British, British White, Chinese, Indian, Irish, Pakistani, and Other (with a "Please specify" field). There is also an "Age Group" section with checkboxes for Under 24, 25-39, 40-59, 60-74, and 75+. A large text area asks "What is the problem and how did it occur?". At the bottom, there is a section for "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY" with checkboxes for "To be completed by U.S.A.A.", "Has the problem been resolved?", "Has the problem been reported to the manager?", "Is the manager the District Manager?", "Is the complaint being handled by the District Manager?", and "Have you been satisfied?".

## **Reporting a complaint via One Call**

The Inspectors conducted the complaints enquiry to One Call in their own time, this made it important to provide some guidance on making the call.

The Customer Inspectors practised reporting complaints over the phone in pairs during the briefing session to ensure they were full aware of what was required to do to conduct the mystery shop. The Inspectors were also made aware that pilot mystery shop could be conducted to the Customer Insight Office to ensure they feel confident to make the call.

The Inspectors were all encouraged to make calls at any time of the day as there is a One Call Extension service to provide the One Call service after six o'clock during the week and at the weekend.

The Inspectors all took away the checklists to conduct the enquiries to One Call at a convenient time.

## **Reporting a complaint via Helena website**

Those Customer Inspectors with email addresses were issued with the checklist which covered the elements of reporting a complaint via email. The checklist also required the Inspector to feedback on the information that is provided on the following websites:

- Helena Partnerships
- Helena Homes
- Helena Living
- Helena Extra
- Helena Propertycare

## **Reporting a complaint and Information in Neighbourhood Offices**

A co-ordinated approach was taken to the completion of the checklists relating to Neighbourhood Offices/LAP's and Renew Offices. The Inspectors were given allocated times with the Customer Insight Officer. The Inspectors were briefed fully on the specific checklist before carrying out the mystery shop.

## **Equipment**

To help the Customer Inspectors complete their mystery shops they were issued with following equipment:

- Pens/pencils
- Mobile phone
- Clipboard
- Relevant checklist and guidance notes
- Complaint scenarios

# **Sample**

A random sample of mystery shops were conducted by the Inspectors. This sample method was chosen as it allowed the Inspectors to conduct mystery shops at a time that was convenient to them.

The mystery shops of the Local Access Points were conducted considering their opening times.

Overall the Inspectors conducted forty one mystery shops between Thursday 26 August 2010 and Monday 27 September 2010. A checklist was completed for almost all of the complaints mystery shops. The response rate was 98%.

56% of mystery shops were carried out through face to face contact. (Neighbourhood Offices, Renew Offices or Local Access Points), 7% were over the phone to One Call, 24% were about the Initial Feedback Form and 12% were about the websites.

No complaints were reported via email.

## Summary of Main Findings

This section of the report summarises the results from the mystery shop of complaints. A more detailed analysis of the results can be found in the following section.

### The Initial Complaint Form

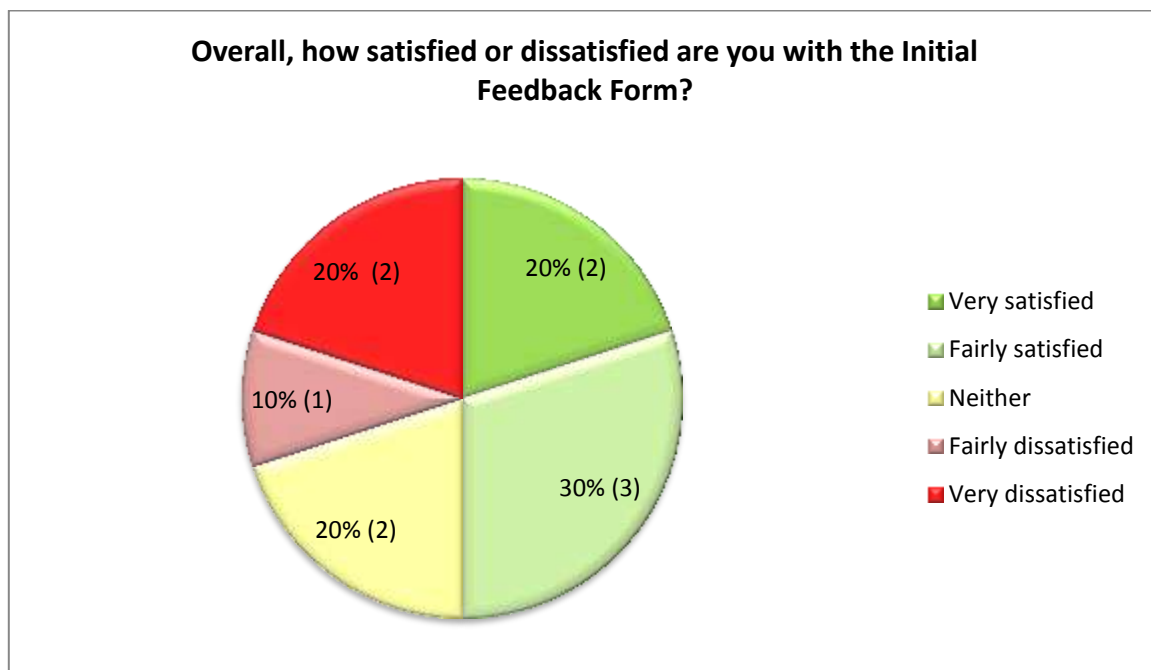
The results relating to the Initial Complaint Form demonstrate that there is a requirement to make improvements. In summary the following points show the results gathered from the checklists:

- The Initial Feedback form was considered easy to complete by all but one Inspector
- The majority (70%) of Inspectors found the form to be presented in a clear format
- It was highlighted by 50% of the Inspectors that the form does not provide any details of what to do with the form once it has been completed.

### Overall

The Inspectors gave the Initial Feedback Form a variety of ratings; the majority were 'fairly satisfied' (3).

The pie chart below displays the overall feedback for the Initial Feedback form.



## Helena Websites

The results for the Helena Website demonstrate that there is a requirement to make improvements. In summary the following points show the results gathered from the checklists:

- The complaints information on the Helena Homes website was considered 'fairly easy' to find.
- It was considered difficult to find complaints information on the Helena Partnerships website.
- There was no information about complaints on Helena Extra, Helena Living or Helena Property care websites.
- The Customer Inspectors considered the information on Helena Partnerships and Helena Homes websites easy to understand and presented in a clear format.

### Overall

The Helena Partnerships website received a positive response of 'very satisfied', the Helena Homes website also received a positive response of 'fairly satisfied'.

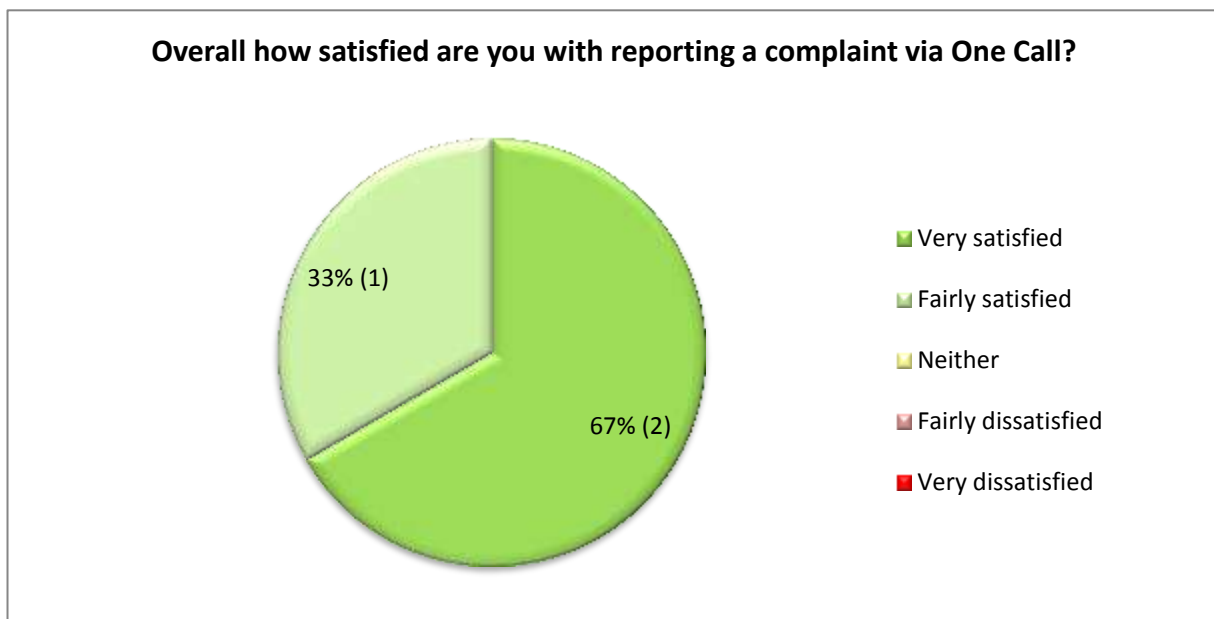
## Complaint via One Call

The results of the mystery shop, reporting a complaint via One Call, demonstrate a high level of satisfaction. The following points summarise the findings from this element of the mystery shop:

- Reporting a complaint via One Call was considered easy for 100% of the mystery shops (3)
- The Inspectors who made the calls agreed that the One Call advisors were 'polite and helpful', supportive and had a good level of knowledge.
- 100% of calls ended with the Inspector having an understanding of what would happen after reporting a complaint

### Overall

The Inspectors were all happy with the service they received whilst reporting a complaint to One Call. The pie chart below displays the results of this element of the checklist.



## Complaint via Neighbourhood Office and Local Access Point

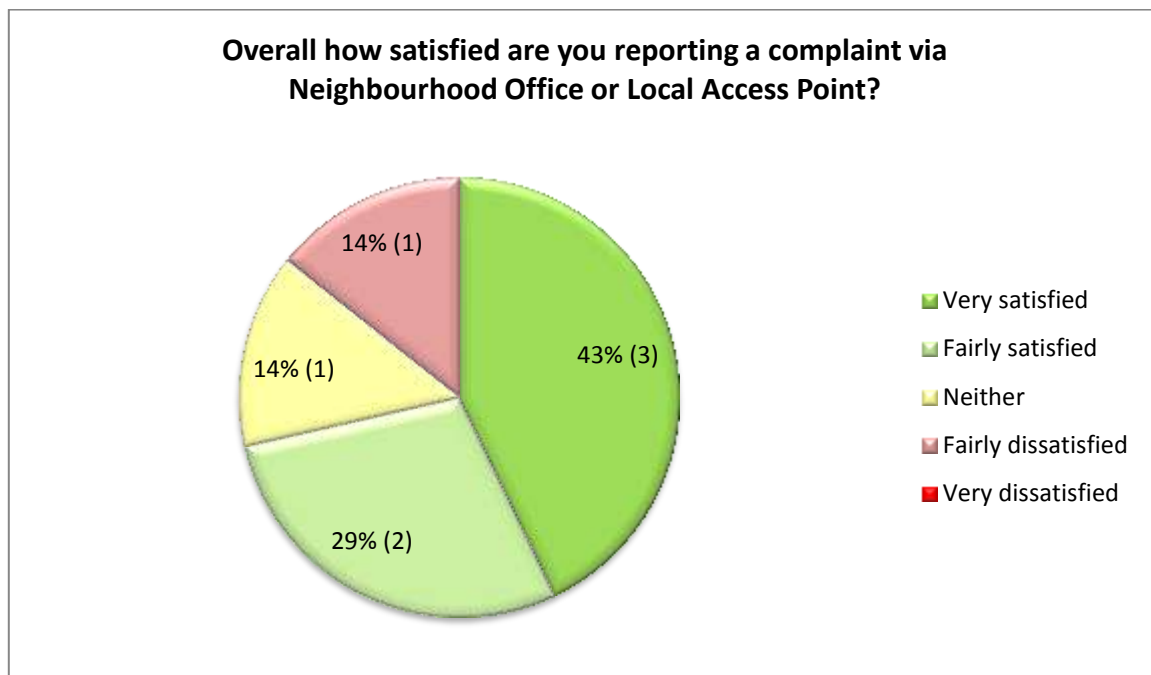
The results of the mystery shop of reporting a complaint via Neighbourhood Office or Local Access Point demonstrates some elements high performance and has identified some areas for improvement.

The following points summarise the results of the checklists.

- 72% (5) of the mystery shops found it easy to report a complaint to the Neighbourhood Office or Local Access Point.
- The Inspectors found all members off staff to be 'polite and helpful'.
- All but one of the members of staff were considered to be 'supportive' about the complaint
- On the majority of occasions (5) the Inspectors 'agreed' that the member of staff was knowledgeable.
- After reporting the complaint to the office, three Inspectors were aware of what would happen as a result, two disagreed.

### Overall

The Inspectors were generally happy with the service they received the when they reported a complaint to the Neighbourhood Office or LAP. The pie chart below displays the results of this element of the checklist.



## Complaints information in Neighbourhood Office's and Local Access Point's

The results of the mystery shop of the information provided in Neighbourhood Office's and Local Access Point's demonstrates some elements for improvement.

The following points summarise the results of the checklists:

- None of the offices that were visited had a complaints leaflet on display.

- Out of twenty two mystery shops one Inspector obtained a Helena complaints leaflet from the member of staff on duty
- No Helena complaints posters were found in any of the offices that were visited
- Complaints information was easy to obtain from 36% of the offices that were visited
- 36% of visits found the complaints information they were provided with easy to understand
- 55% of the Inspectors highlighted that they understood how to report a complaints after their visit.
- On 50% of the visits the Inspectors felt they understood the complaints process.
- The majority (64%) of the Inspectors felt that there was 'too little' complaints information available in the Neighbourhood Office, Local Access Points and Renew offices.

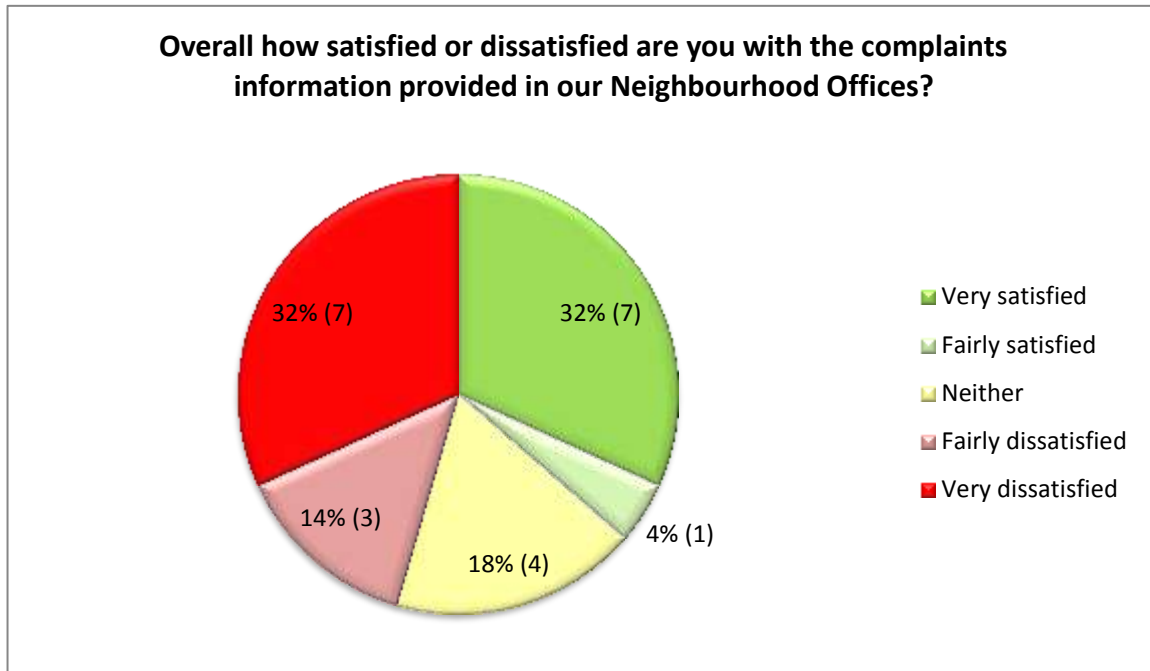
**Overall**

Overall, the Inspectors rated eight of the twenty two mystery shops of the complaints information in offices positively, seven were rated as 'very satisfied' and one as 'fairly satisfied'.

'Neither' was selected for four of the mystery shops.

The Inspectors were dissatisfied on almost half of the visits to the offices, three were 'fairly dissatisfied' and seven 'very dissatisfied'.

The pie chart below also displays the overall result.



A number of comments and suggestions were made by the Inspectors about the Information within the Neighbourhood Offices, Local Access Points and Renew Offices. Examples are displayed below.

“There could be better displayed information about complaints”

“...need to monitor what’s available”

“...the member of staff wasn’t too sure if they had any information ...”



## Debrief/Overall satisfaction

When questioned the Inspectors rated the overall complaints service fairly highly, the majority (4) considered the complaints service to be 'very' or 'fairly good'. Only one Inspector expressed dissatisfaction and rated the complaints service as 'fairly poor'.

The Customer Inspectors considered all the methods of reporting a complaint and gathering information, One Call was considered to be the easiest method (three out of five inspectors agreed). Reporting a complaint via Neighbourhood Office/Local Access Point was considered the easiest by two of the Inspectors.

Reporting a complaint via email was considered the most difficult, however this was mainly due to access to the Internet and lack of familiarity with using a computer and email.

One Inspector detailed that they found it most difficult to report a complaint via One Call, this was due to personal preference as the Inspector stated that it was easier to report a complaint in person through face to face contact.

Below are some comments made by the Inspectors to make reporting a complaint via the different methods.



## Detailed Analysis

### Initial Complaint Form

*The Initial Complaint Form is completed by a customer or a member of staff on behalf of a customer when a complaint is reported.*

#### **Easy or difficult**

Almost all the Inspectors who completed the Initial Complaints Form checklist found it easy to complete. (Eight Inspectors found it 'very easy') One Inspector rated it as 'neither'.

No Inspectors found the Initial Complaint Form difficult to complete.

#### **Clear format**

The majority (7) of the Inspectors found the Initial Complaint Form to be presented in a 'clear format'. A further three disagreed and found that the form was not clear. No responses were received for 'neither'.

Half (5) of the Inspectors considered the form to be clear at informing them what they needed to do with the completed form. (Three strongly agreed) The other half (5) of the Inspectors disagreed and suggested that there were no instructions on the form to direct the customer to what they need to do once it had been completed. (Four strongly disagreed)

The Initial Complaints Form does not contain any information about where to send the form once it has been completed by the customer.

### **Additional Comments**

The comments from the Inspectors highlight the requirement for some improvement to the Initial Complaint Form. Examples are detailed below,

“Add a date and indicate clearly who to contact for further information”

“Need to know what to do and where to send the form”

“The form was poor quality, it doesn't give a good impression. Also doesn't give the impression Helena take complaints seriously”

### **Helena Websites**

*Although the results of the website checklists are worth considering it must be highlighted that results are based on one checklist completed for each Helena website.*

### **Easy or difficult**

Helena Homes website was the only website considered 'fairly easy' to find the complaints information. It was considered difficult to find complaints information on the other four websites.

The Inspectors detailed what made it difficult to find the complaints information.

“No information on the Helena Extra website”

“Difficult to find the complaints information”  
*(Helena Living)*

“Had to search around and actually couldn't find the information”  
*(Propertycare)*

Information on the websites was considered 'fairly easy' to other understand, this refers to the Helena Partnerships and Helena Homes sites. The other three websites were rated as either 'neither'(2) or 'fairly difficult' (1) as the information was not available.

### **Complaints information**

The Inspectors 'slightly agreed' that after reading the information on the Helena Partnerships and Helena Homes websites they understood how to report a complaint, understood the process and felt that the information was presented in a clear format.

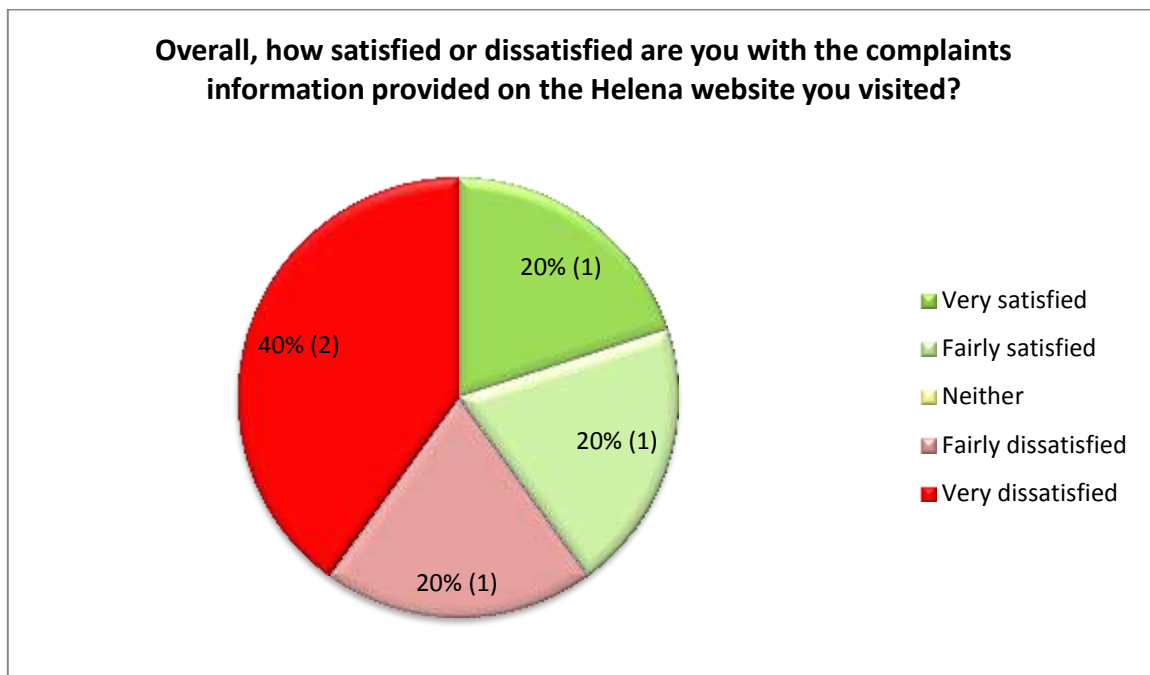
The other websites do not contain complaints information therefore received either 'slightly or strongly disagree' or 'neither'.

## Overall

The Helena Partnerships website received a positive response of 'very satisfied'. The Helena Homes website also received a positive response of 'fairly satisfied'.

Responses from the mystery shop of Helena websites in relation to complaints are fairly poor. The majority were 'very dissatisfied' (2) due to the fact information is not available on the Helena Living, Helena Extra or Helena Property care websites.

The pie chart below displays the overall satisfaction with Helena's websites.



### Complaint via One Call

*Although the results of the Complaints via One Call mystery shop is worth considering it is worth highlighting that the results are based on three calls. Results of this element of the complaints mystery shop should be applied carefully although comments and suggestions for improvements are beneficial.*

### Easy or difficult

Complaining via One Call was considered to be easy; all of the complaints that were conducted via One Call were rated as 'Very' (2) or 'Fairly' (1) easy.

It was not considered to be difficult to log a complaint via One Call as none of the Inspectors rated it as 'very difficult', 'fairly difficult' or 'neither'.

### One Call Advisor

The Inspectors who made the calls agreed that the One Call advisors were 'polite and helpful'. (Two strongly agreed)

The One Call advisors who dealt with these calls were considered to be supportive with the Inspector making the complaint. (Two strongly agreed)

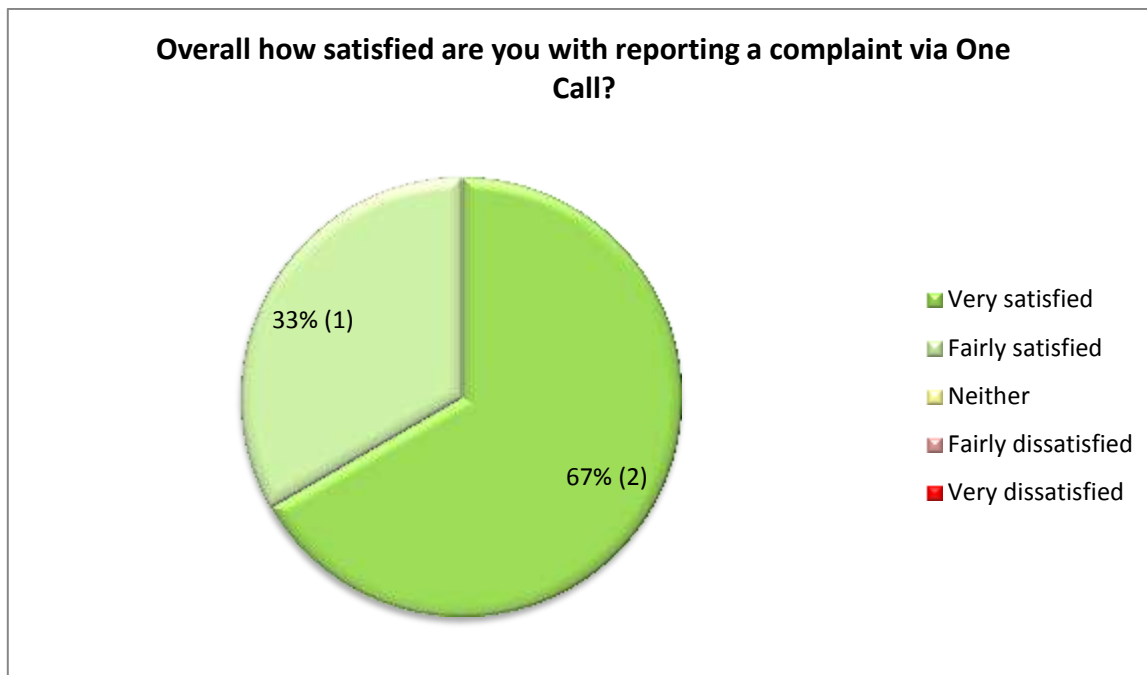
The Inspectors all agreed that the One Call advisors demonstrated a good level of knowledge about the complaints process. (Two strongly agreed)

### ***After reporting the complaint***

The Inspectors were asked if they felt they understood what would happen next in the process after reporting their complaint to One Call. All Inspectors either strongly (2) or slightly agreed (1).

### ***Overall***

The Inspectors were all happy with the service they received the when they reported a complaint to One Call. The pie chart below displays the results of this element of the checklist.



## **Complaint via Neighbourhood Office and Local Access Point**

### ***Easy or difficult***

Four out of the seven mystery shops reporting a complaint to an office were considered as easy. On two occasions it was found to be 'very difficult' and one 'neither'. Those who found it difficult reported their complaint to Renew Parr and Renew Four Acre.

Comments of what made it difficult are detailed below.

"Told to write a letter"

"The member of staff wasn't sure of the procedure – had to go in the back and ask"

"Told to ring One Call"

### ***Member of staff***

All seven of the mystery shops to the offices considered the member of staff 'polite and helpful'. (Five strongly agreed)

The members of staff were also rated positively in terms of being 'supportive' for almost all (6) of the mystery shops to the offices. (Five strongly agreed)

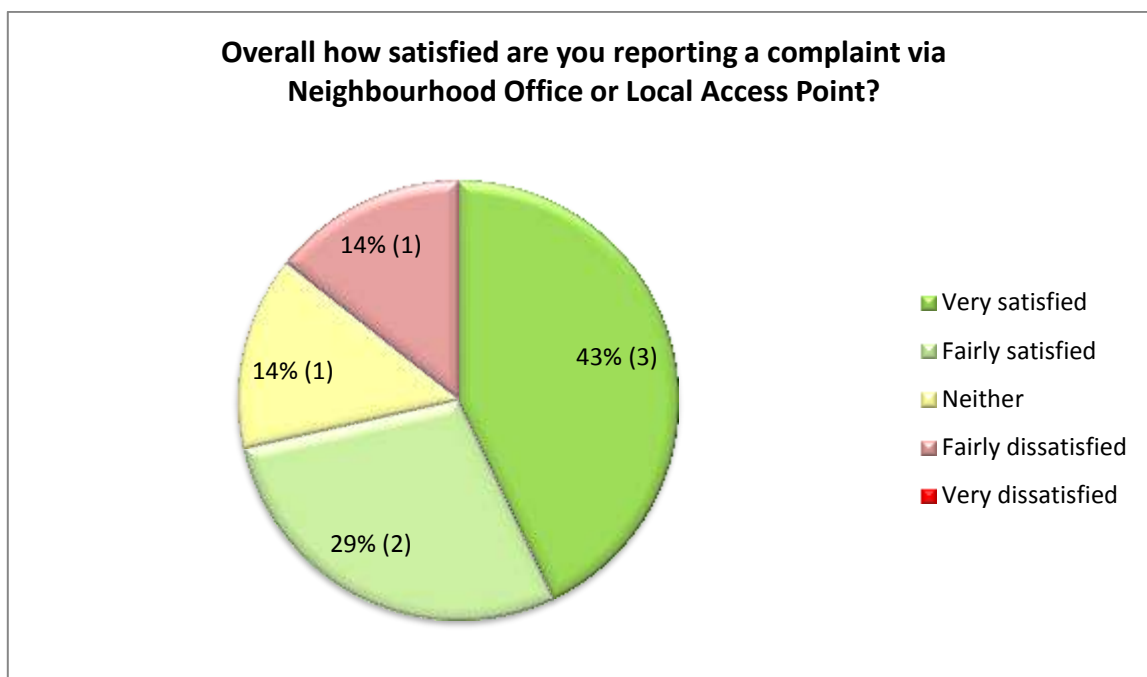
On the majority (5) of occasions the Inspectors 'agreed' that the member of staff was knowledgeable (three strongly agreed). One mystery shop 'strongly disagreed' that the member of staff was knowledgeable, this was at Renew Parr.

### **After reporting the complaint**

The Inspectors were asked if they felt they understood what would happen next in the complaints process after reporting their complaint. Two of the Inspectors 'strongly agreed' that they were aware of what would happen after reporting a complaint, one slightly agreed and two 'neither'. Two 'strongly disagreed' that they understood the complaints process after reporting a complaint to Renew Parr and Duke Street offices.

### **Overall**

The Inspectors were generally happy with the service they received when they reported a complaint to the Neighbourhood Office or LAP. The pie chart below displays the results of this element of the checklist.



### **Additional Comments**

The comments from the Inspectors highlight that there is some requirement for some improvement to the complaints service provided by the Neighbourhood Offices and the LAP's. Comments are detailed below.

"A poor quality form does not give a good impression"

"Inform you of the procedure even if it can't be logged"

"I was told I would receive a response to my complaint within 24 hours"  
*(Service standard is to receive an acknowledgement within 48 hours)*

## Complaints Information in Neighbourhood Office's and Local

The Inspectors conducted twenty two mystery shops specifically looking for complaints information in the Neighbourhood Office's, Local Access Points and Renew Offices. The Inspectors also requested information from the officer available on reception.

The table below displays the information that was found during the mystery shops.

	Number	Percentage (%)
Complaints poster	0	0
Complaints leaflet	1	4
Ombudsman poster	3	12
Ombudsman leaflet	3	12
None	17	68
Other	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

Ombudsman posters and leaflets were found in the Duke Street Neighbourhood office and the Four Acre Renew Office.

A complaints leaflet was given to one of the Inspectors; however this was done after a request for complaints information. This was at the Duke Street local office.

An Initial Complaint Form was given to an Inspector after a request for information in the Derbyshire Hill local office. The Inspector highlighted that the form was of a poor quality which gives the impression that complaints are not taken seriously.

The majority of offices that were visited during the mystery shop did not have any posters or leaflets on display and none were distributed when requested by the Inspector.

### **Information about complaints**

The Inspectors were asked to give feedback on how easy or difficult they found obtaining information about the complaints process via an information leaflet or from the members of staff on duty.

Just over a third (8) of the mystery shops found it 'very' or 'fairly easy' to find information in the local office. Almost half (10) found it 'fairly' or 'very difficult' to find and a further four mystery shops suggested it was 'neither' easy or difficult. Information was considered difficult to access in the following offices:

- Derbyshire Hill/Newton-le-Willows
- Duke Street (x2)
- Thatto Heath
- Renew Four Acre
- Renew Thatto Heath
- Renew Parr (x3)
- Salvation Army Parr (LAP)

The Inspectors detailed what made it difficult to find complaints information in the office that was visited.

"Although the lady was nice and polite the information was not satisfactory"

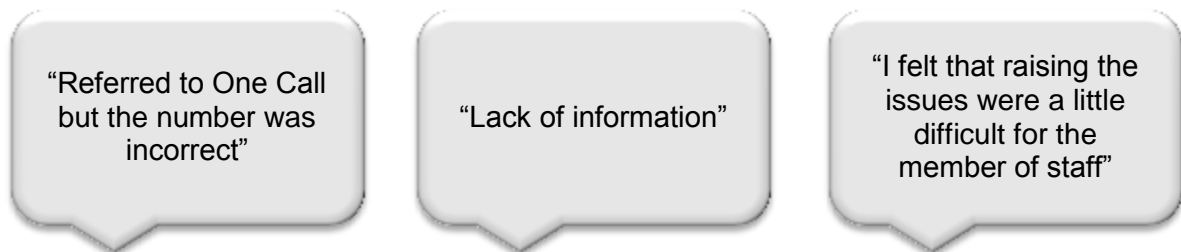
"I found the attitude of the member of staff a little frosty"

"There was no information about complaints"

Five Inspectors found the complaints information they were provided with 'very easy' to understand, a further three found it 'fairly easy'. Six found it 'very difficult' and three 'fairly difficult'. A total of five Inspectors selected 'neither' this suggests they were not provided with any information at all. Difficulties with the information provided were in the following offices:

- Derbyshire Hill/Newton-le-Willows
- Duke Street
- Thatto Heath
- Renew Four Acre
- Renew Thatto Heath
- Renew Parr (x2)
- Salvation Army Parr (LAP)

Further comments from the Inspectors can be seen below.



For the majority (11) of mystery shops the Inspectors agreed that they understood how to report a complaint. (Six Inspectors strongly agreed). Seven responses were received disagreeing that they understood how to report a complaint. (Six strongly disagreed) Two Inspectors 'neither' agreed or disagreed that they understood how to report a complaint after visiting the office. Those who disagreed visited the following offices:

- Duke Street (x2)
- Renew Thatto Heath
- Renew Parr (x3)
- Salvation Army Parr (LAP)

A similar response was received in relation to the Inspectors understanding of the complaints process, ten Inspectors agreed after their visit they understood how to report a complaint. Seven disagreed and three selected 'neither'.

A mixed response was received in relation to 'Is the information presented in a clear format?'. This question would have been somewhat difficult to answer when information was received verbally from the member of staff on duty.

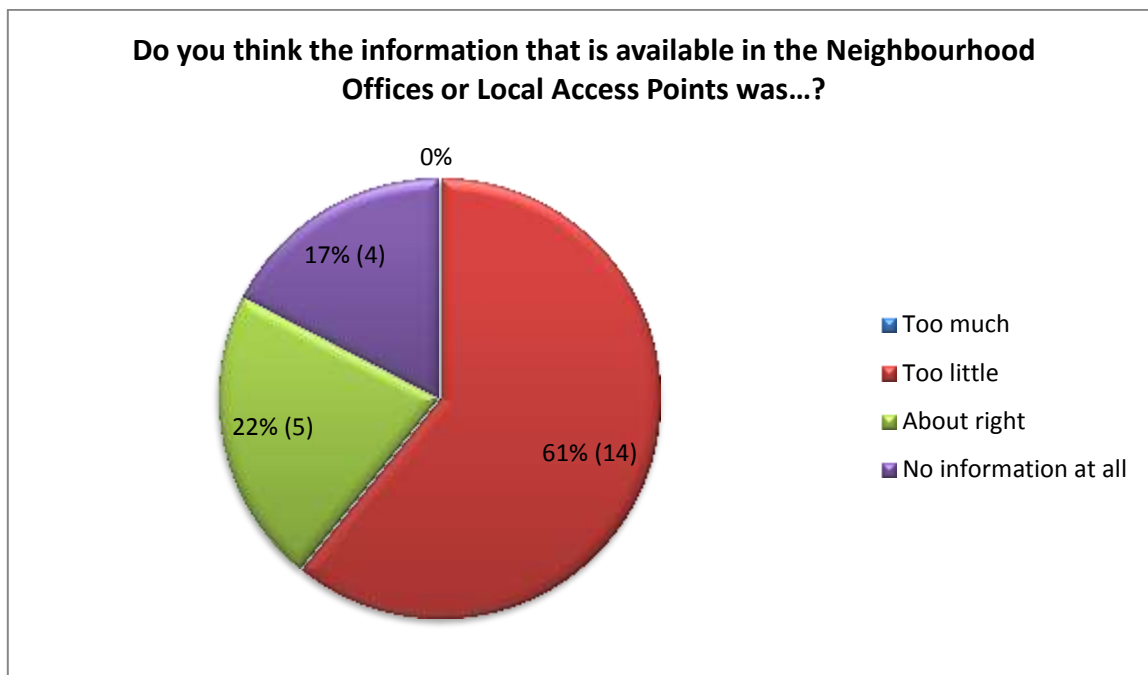
Out of twenty two mystery shops, nine agreed that the information was in a clear format (six strongly agreed). The same response was received for those who disagreed, nine. (Eight strongly disagreed). Two Inspectors neither agreed or disagreed that the information was presented in a clear format.

The majority (14) of the Inspectors felt that there was 'too little' complaints information available in the Neighbourhood Office, Local Access Points and Renew offices. Only five suggested that there was 'about the right' amount of information. Four mystery shops highlighted that there was no complaints information at all.

The table below displays the outcome of the amount of information in the specific offices.

'Too little'	'Too much'	About right	None at all
Derbyshire Hill (x2)		Renew Parr	Renew Four Acre
Duke Street		Duke Street (x2)	Renew Parr
Thatto Heath (x3)		Renew Four Acre	Duke Street (x2)
Renew Parr (x3)			
Renew Fingerpost and Town Centre			
Renew Thatto Heath			
FINTRA (LAP)			
Salvation Army Parr			

No Inspectors found the offices to have too much information about complaints. The pie chart below displays the results of this question.



### Overall

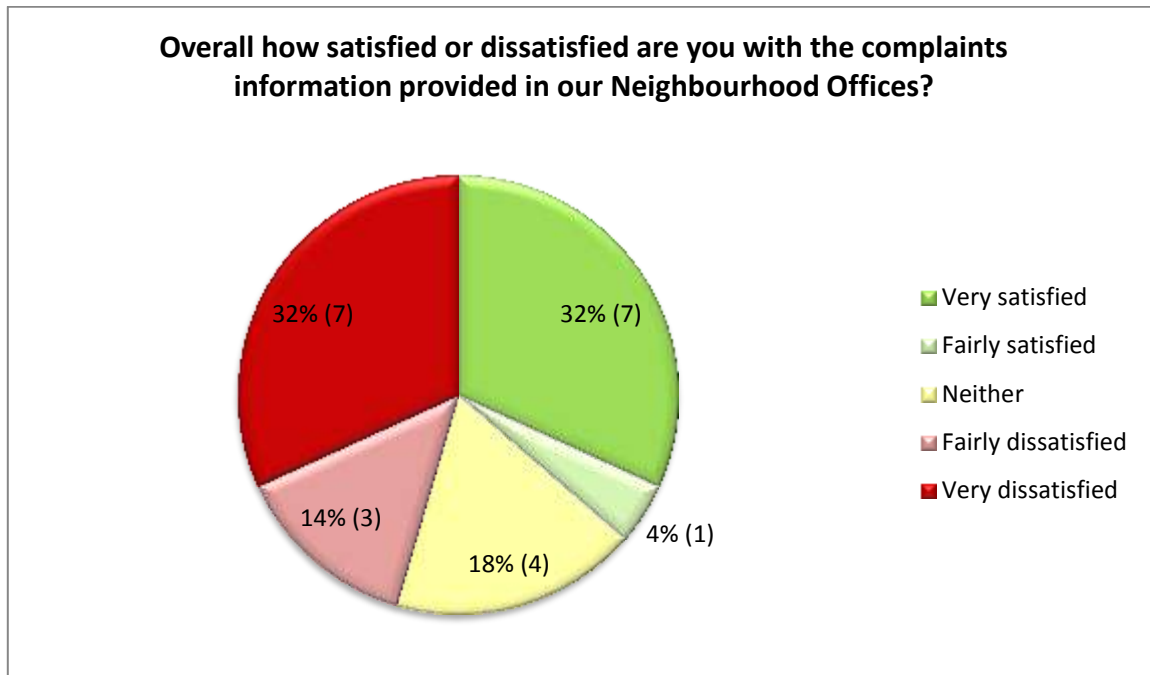
Overall, the Inspectors rated eight of the twenty two mystery shops of the complaints information in offices positively; seven were rated as 'very satisfied' and one as 'fairly satisfied'.

'Neither' was selected for four of the mystery shops.

The Inspectors were dissatisfied on almost half of the visits to the offices, three were 'fairly dissatisfied' and seven 'very dissatisfied'.



The pie chart below also displays the overall result.



The table below displays the overall result for each mystery shop.

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Duke Street (x3)	Renew Parr	Thatto Heath (x2)	Renew Parr	Renew Four Acre
FETRA (LAP)		Duke Street	Renew Thatto Heath	Renew Parr (x2)
Renew Parr		Renew Fingerpost and Town Centre	Derbyshire Hill/Newton-le-Willows	Salvation Army (LAP)
Renew Four Acre				Thatto Heath
FINTRA (LAP)				Derbyshire Hill/Newton-le-Willows
				Duke Street

A number of comments and suggestions were made by the Inspectors about the Information within the Neighbourhood Offices, Local Access Points and Renew Offices.

A number of example comments are displayed below.

“More leaflets required”

“Member of staff was very helpful although their knowledge was a little poor”

“The door was locked...not very inviting to have a closed door”

# Customer Inspector Recommendations

The Customer Inspectors have given their own suggestions as to how the complaints service can be improved. The information was gathered during a breakout session during a Customer Inspector meeting. The Customer Inspector were asked collectively to recommend ideas to improve the complaints service. (Appendix 6)

The list below provides a summary of each element of the complaints service and the recommendations made by the Inspectors.

## **Websites**

- The websites are impressive however Helena Extra, Helena Living and Helena Propertycare are missing some complaints information
- Locating the complaints information on Helena Partnerships and Helena Homes websites could be simplified
- All members of staff should be aware that complaints can be sent via email
- A response should be received within four working hours when a complaint email is received

## **One Call**

- Make is clear which selection is required on the greeting menu
- Be more specific about what will happen as a result of making the complaint
- Continue to be courteous and polite
- Be specific with dates
- Do not say the term “hopefully”
- Ask the customer after making their complaint if they would like a copy of the complaints process or refer them to the website for further details

## **Neighbourhood Office/Local Access Point**

- All members of staff should be trained to the same standard and should give the customer the same information
- Although members of staff were considered polite and helpful however the level of knowledge varied
- Guidance notes should be provided for members of staff who deal with customer complaints
- The correct One Call telephone number should be given to customers
- Be specific about the information that is provided
- More information in Neighbourhood offices or with the member of staff at the local access point. Suggestion information includes:
  - Up to date complaints information leaflets
  - Poster's displaying feedback via complaints i.e. “you said...we did”.
  - Complaints information posters referring to the complaint form
- Include a mechanism for compliments as well as complaints

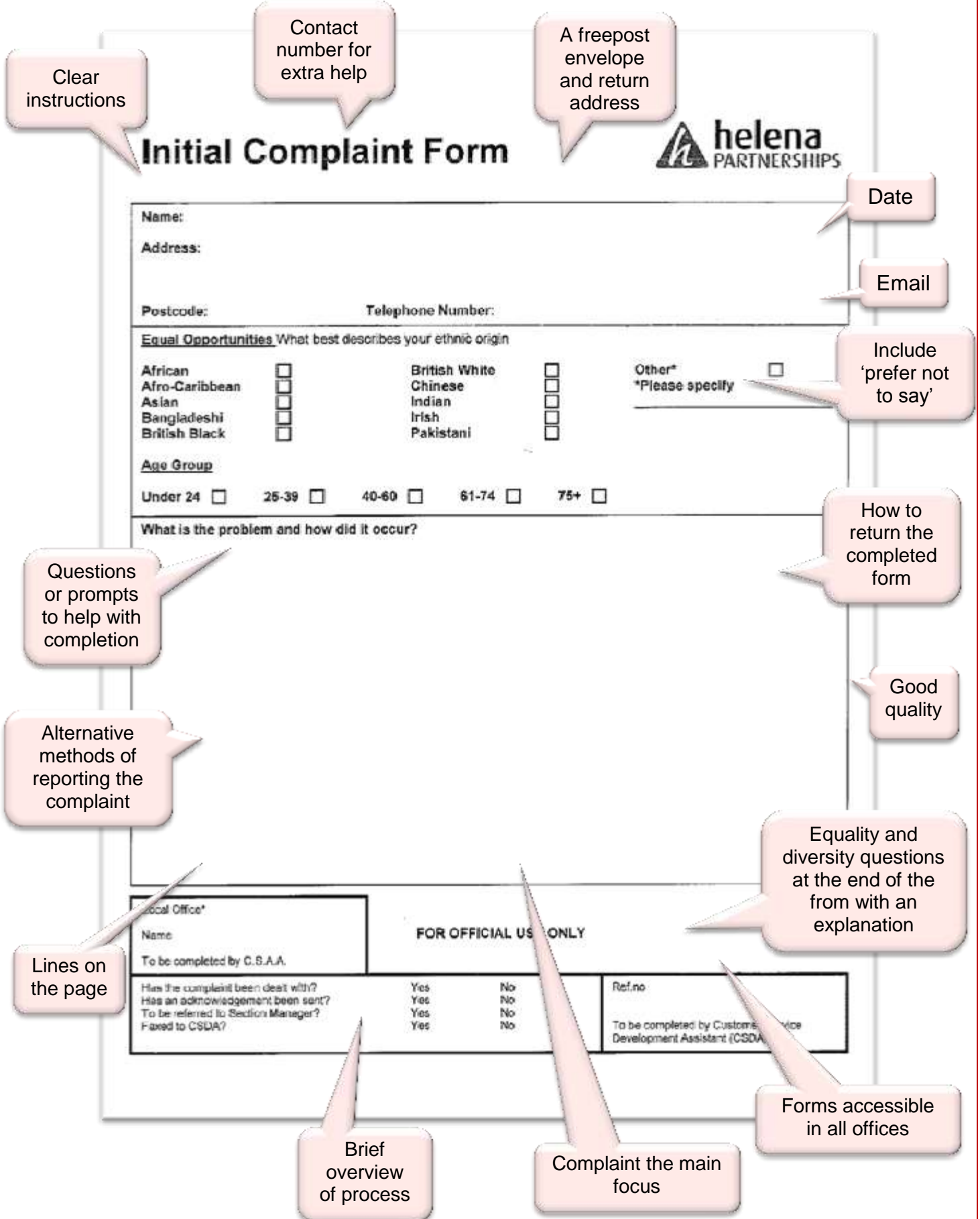
## **Overall recommendations**

- An article in a future copy of headlines informing tenants of how complaints and compliments can be made including all the different methods of accessing the service (*The Customer Inspectors were keen that the article did not encourage customers to make a complaint and therefore suggested it should be alongside how to make a compliment*)
- Members of staff who deal with complaints should continue to be respectful and polite
- Plain English should be used in all complaints publications

The Customer Inspectors suggested a future mystery shop to identify if improvements have been made to the service

## Initial Complaint Form

The following diagram displays the suggested improvements to the Initial Feedback Form



## Improvements to Future Inspections

The Customer Inspectors were happy with the current method of mystery shopping the complaints service. The only suggestion to be made is detailed below.

- Use different coloured checklists for each mystery shops to ensure the checklists are not being confused

## Next steps

Findings from this report along with the recommendations from the Customer Inspectors will be presented to the Customer Excellence Panel by the Customer Inspectors. The managers from the service area will attend the Customer Excellence Panel meeting to hear their feedback.

## Appendix 1: Sample Instructions



### Complaints Mystery Shop July 2010

#### Reporting a complaint via Local Office and Local Access Points

##### Instructions

The aim of this mystery shop is to gather your feedback on the complaints process specifically when a complaint is reported through face to face contact via our Local Offices or Local Access Points.

To complete this mystery shop you will need the following equipment:

- Checklist
- Complaint Scenarios
- A pen

There are two elements to this mystery shop the first is reporting your complaint to the member of staff in the local office or local access point, the second is to investigate the information that is provided in each of the offices.

1. Using one of the scenarios from the 'Complaints Scenarios' report your complaint to the member of staff on duty in the office you have been allocated.

Please also ask:

**"What will happen after I have reported my complaint?"**

2. Whilst in the office take the opportunity to have a look round and identify and pick up any information relating to complaints, this may include leaflets and posters.

Complete the checklist once you have left the Local Office or Local Access Point to ensure you don't forget any of the information. Do not take your checklist with you - remember you are conducting a mystery shop!



Once you have reported your complaint it is extremely important that we then delete the complaint from the system to ensure there is not impact on the complaints performance. Immediately after making your complaint please contact any of the following members of the Performance and Intelligence team:



- Hannah Fitzhenry 01744 671557
- Graham Jones 01744 675762
- Jenny Hilton 01744 675539

If you need further instruction about carrying out this mystery shop please contact Hannah Fitzhenry on 01744 671557.

Prompts have also been included throughout the checklist to help you.

Please return all completed mystery shops to Hannah Fitzhenry.



### Complaints Mystery Shop August 2010

#### Debrief

1. Which method of reporting a complaint did you find the easiest?

- Via One Call
- Via Local Office / Local Access Point
- Via Email

2. Which method of reporting a complaint did you find the most difficult?

- Via One Call
- Via Local Office / Local Access Point
- Via Email

3. Thinking about your response to question 2, what can we do to make reporting in this method easier?

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4. Overall, how would you rate the complaint service?

- |                                      |                                      |                                    |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very good   | <input type="checkbox"/> Neither     | <input type="checkbox"/> Very poor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fairly good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fairly poor |                                    |

5. Do you have any further comments or suggestions to make about the complaints mystery shop?

---

---

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6. Do you have any suggestions to how we can improve this mystery shop?

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## Complaints Mystery Shop July 2010

### Scenarios

*These scenarios can be used to complete any of the complaints mystery shop. This includes:*

- *Reporting a complaint via email*
- *Reporting a complaint via One Call*
- *Reporting a complaint via a Local Office (face to face)*

#### **Rules**

*When you are reporting a complaint please be consider the following rules:*


- *The complaint should not relate to the behaviour of a named officer*
- *The complaint should not be serious enough to provoke an emergency response (Police etc.)*
- *Named officers should be notified of all reported complaints so that responsive action can be averted.*

1. XXXXX has written to complain about the care of her garden at the front being too much for her. XXXXX states that when she took on the tenancy she was informed that the front grass would be cut for her. XXXXX would like the front garden cut
2. Complaint regarding outstanding works to garden, has been promised that the work be completed but still waiting. Also has been promised that someone would contact customer but no-one has. Find out what has gone wrong and to have the work carried out
3. XXXXX is disappointed with the lack of contact made when he has been chasing outstanding repairs despite being advised by One Call that supervisors or managers will be in contact within a 24 hour timescale (via contact managements etc). Believes this has happened on numerous occasions and feels the communication process lets the company down but he does feel both the One Call and repairs service is very good. Would like to be kept up to date of any appointments, especially outside of Optitime, and would like to be contacted when he has specifically requested this.
4. Customer complaining about the removal of the 'No ball games' sign. Want's signs replacing.
5. XXXXX is complaining that youth behaviour on the estate at night has got worse since summer holidays have started. This has been reported to the office but there has been no noticeable improvement. XXXXX feels that they she is being ignored and would now like to arrange for a formal complaint to be made.
6. I don't want to give my name or address but I think you should be aware that the condition of my estate leaves a lot to be desired. I never see staff from the local office and I don't think Helena really care.

## Appendix 4: Briefing


**Customer Inspector Brief**

Graham Jones  
12 August 2010




**What is a complaint?**

- An expression of dissatisfaction at our failure to provide a service that we are required to provide to our customers.
- It may be an act, omission or failure to meet deadlines outlined in our service standards.
- An expression of dissatisfaction with a landlord's action or omission *whether justified or not* (Housing Ombudsman)




**Reporting a complaint**

- By phone
- E mail
- In writing
- In person




**Aims of presentation**

- What is a complaint?
- Reporting a complaint
- Complaints review 09/ 10 – Why?
- Changes made
- How a Mystery Shop will help us to further challenge and improve




**What's not included?**

- Complaints of ASB etc
- Compliments and comments
- Enquiries



**Complaints review 09/ 10 – Why?**


- Improve performance
- Learn from tenant & user feedback – 'you said we did'
- Ensure policy & procedure meet good practice
- Meet AC and TSA requirements/ standards
- Policy requirement to review every 2 years
- Short Notice Inspections (SNI's)




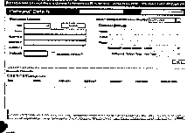
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**Changes Made**



- Policy review & more challenging service standards
- Personal contact at the initial stage
- Opportunity to resolve 'over the phone'
- Documentive (Deputy/ Escalation & Prompts)
- Satisfaction & benchmarking



**Logging a Complaint**




**Logging a Complaint (con't)**





**Complaints Mystery Shop**


- CSEA criticisms of complaints process
  - Some confusion as to how to make a complaint
  - Raise staff awareness across organisation
  - Analysis of spatial, customer groupings, type and resolution



**Logging a Complaint (con't)**



Any Questions?



2



# Initial Complaint Form



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Equal Opportunities** What best describes your ethnic origin

African <input type="checkbox"/>	British White <input type="checkbox"/>	Other* <input type="checkbox"/>
Afro-Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese <input type="checkbox"/>	*Please specify _____
Asian <input type="checkbox"/>	Indian <input type="checkbox"/>	
Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/>	Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	
British Black <input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/>	

**Age Group**

Under 24     25-39     40-60     61-74     75+

What is the problem and how did it occur?

Local Office* Name To be completed by C.S.A.A.	<b>FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY</b>	
Has the complaint been dealt with?	Yes      No	Ref.no
Has an acknowledgement been sent?	Yes      No	To be completed by Customer Service Development Assistant (CSDA)
To be referred to Section Manager?	Yes      No	
Faxed to CSDA?	Yes      No	

## Appendix 6: Raw Data

### The Initial Complaints Form

1. Did you find the Initial Complaint Form easy or difficult to complete?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	10	
Very easy	8	80
Fairly easy	1	10
Neither	1	10
Fairly difficult	0	0
Very difficult	0	0

If you found it difficult please indicate what made it difficult in the space below.

*No Inspectors found the Initial feedback form difficult to complete therefore answers were received for this question.*

2. Do you agree or disagree that the Initial Complaint Form is presented in a clear format?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	10	
Strongly agree	5	50
Slightly agree	2	20
Neither	0	0
Slightly disagree	1	10
Strongly disagree	2	20

3. Is it clear what you need to do with your completed Initial Complaint Form

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	10	
Very clear	3	30
Fairly clear	2	20
Neither	0	0
Not clear	1	10
Not at all clear	4	40

4. What can we do to improve the Initial Complaint Form?

*2: Put details on how to fill in and where to send your complaint to need more information*

*3: Make it clear where to send the form*

*5: Just make the writing a bit bigger*

*8: Need to know what to do and where to send the form*

*9: The form was poor quality; it doesn't give a good impression. Also doesn't give the impression that Helena take complaints seriously*

*10: Add a space for the date Indicate clearly who to contact if further information is required add instructions of where to send the form*

5. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the Initial Complaint Form?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	10	
Very satisfied	2	20
Fairly satisfied	3	30
Neither	2	20
Fairly dissatisfied	1	10
Very dissatisfied	2	20

### Complaints information on Helena websites

Which website did you choose?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	5	
Helena Partnerships	1	20
Helena Homes	1	20
Helena Extra	1	20
Helena Living	1	20
Helena Propertycare	1	20

1. Did you find the information about reporting a complaint easy or difficult to find on the website that you used?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	5	
Very easy	0	0
Fairly easy	1	20
Neither	0	0
Fairly difficult	4	80
Very difficult	0	0

If you found it difficult please indicate what made it difficult in the space below

- 1: *Had to search for the around actually not information about complaints on this website.*
- 2: *Complaint process is available from main page; response to complaint seems reasonable and informative.*
- 5: *Difficult to find the way of reporting a complaint*

2. Did you find the information about the complaints process on the website easy to difficult to understand?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	5	
Very easy	0	0
Fairly easy	2	40
Neither	2	40
Fairly difficult	1	20
Very difficult	0	0

If you found it difficult please indicate what made it difficult in the space below.

1: No information about complaints on this website

3: Helena Living site doesn't appear to have any method of reporting a complaint

4: Propertycare no method of reporting a complaint via email also no information

3. After reading the information about our complaints process provided on the website, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	I understand how to report a complaint		I understand the complaints process		The information is presented in a clear format	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	5					
Strongly agree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slightly agree	2	40	2	40	2	40
Neither	0	0	0	0	2	40
Slightly disagree	1	20	1	20	1	20
Strongly disagree	2	40	2	40	0	0

4. Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the complaints information provided on the Helena website you visited?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>		
Very satisfied	1	20
Fairly satisfied	1	20
Neither	0	0
Fairly dissatisfied	1	20
Very dissatisfied	2	40

5. Do you have any suggestions to how we can improve the information provided about our complaints process?

1: Clearer format to find complaints

### Complaint information from Neighbourhood Offices and Local Access Points

Date and Which local office did you visit?

1:	09/09/10	Renew Thatto Heath	12:	23/09/10	Renew Parr
2:	09/09/10	Renew Parr	13:	07/09/10	Thatto Heath
3:	08/09/10	Duke Street	14:	07/09/10	Bold Miners
4:	08/09/10	Renew Parr	15:	07/09/10	Duke Street
5:	08/09/10	Millersdale	16:	09/09/10	Thatto Heath
6:	07/09/10	Salvation Army - Parr	17:	08/09/10	Clock Face
7:	07/09/10	Renew Parr	18:	07/09/10	Renew Parr
8:	02/09/10	FINTRA - LAP	19:	09/09/10	Duke Street
9:	23/09/10	Renew Fingerpost and Town Centre	20:	09/09/10	FETRA
10:	23/09/10	Duke Street	21:	07/09/10	Thatto Heath
11:	23/09/10	Derbyshire Hill	22:	07/09/10	Duke Street

1. Which of the following documents were available in the Local Neighbourhood or Local Access Point you visited? *(not mutually exclusive)*

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	25	
Complaints poster	0	0
Complaints leaflet	1	4.0
Ombudsman poster	3	12.0
Ombudsman leaflet	3	12.0
None	17	68.0
Other	1	4.0

14: Initial Complaints Form Given on request

2. Did you find the information about reporting a complaint easy or difficult to find in the local office that you visited?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	22	
Very easy	5	22.7
Fairly easy	3	13.6
Neither	4	18.2
Fairly difficult	3	13.6
Very difficult	7	31.8

3. If you found it difficult please indicate what made it difficult in the space below.

- 1: *Although the lady was nice and polite the information was not satisfactory*  
 4: *There was no information on complaints*  
 6: *No information*  
 7: *No written information told to ring One Call*  
 9: *lack of information leaflets*  
 11: *I found the attitude of the member of staff a little frosty*  
 15: *No leaflets*  
 16: *lack of information*  
 17: *None*  
 18: *None*  
 21: *Felt they didn't want to complain would rather set up another repair*

4. Did you find the information about the complaints process provided in our Neighbourhood Office easy to difficult to understand?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	22	
Very easy	5	22.7
Fairly easy	3	13.6
Neither	5	22.7
Fairly difficult	3	13.6
Very difficult	6	27.3

5. If you found it difficult please indicate what made it difficult in the space below.

- 1: *Referred to One Call (But the number was incorrect)*
- 4: *No information*
- 6: *Told to either go to local office or told to wait til the Helena member of staff was available, tea and toast offered.*
- 9: *lack of information leaflets*
- 11: *i felt that raising the issues were a little difficult for the member of staff*
- 13: *There was none*
- 16: *lack of information*
- 17: *There was none on display the information gathered was from the members of staff*

6. After reading the information provided in our local office, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	I understand how to report a complaint		I understand the complaints process		The information is presented in a clear format	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	20					
Strongly agree	6	30.0	5	25.0	6	30.0
Slightly agree	5	25.0	5	25.0	3	15.0
Neither	2	10.0	3	15.0	2	10.0
Slightly disagree	1	5.0	1	5.0	1	5.0
Strongly disagree	6	30.0	6	30.0	8	40.0

7. Do you think the information that is available in the Neighbourhood Offices or Local Access Points was...?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	22	
Too much	0	0
Too little	14	63.6
About right	5	22.7
No information at all	4	18.2

8. Overall how satisfied are you with the complaints information provided in our Neighbourhood Offices?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	22	
Very satisfied	7	31.8
Fairly satisfied	1	4.5
Neither	4	18.2
Fairly dissatisfied	3	13.6
Very dissatisfied	7	31.8

9. Do you have any suggestions to how we can improve the information provided about our complaints process?

- 1: *More access to actual documents*
- 4: *There could be better displayed information about complaints*
- 6: *provide more information and leaflets in local access points, need to monitor what's available*

- 7: *More written information is required, the member of staff wasn't too sure if they had any information although she did look. There was no Helena branded information in this LAP*
- 9: *The door was locked; a sign or doorbell would help - not very inviting having the door closed*
- 11: *More leaflets are required; an already unhappy customer may have been further dissatisfied by the service*
- 12: *Member of staff was very helpful although knowledge was a little poor*
- 14: *More in required on display however when asked we were given the initial complaints form and would receive a reply within five working days*
- 15: *More information needed on display - lots of other information for Helena but not on complaints*
- 16: *More leaflets relating to complaints would be useful*
- 19: *Issue was outside Helena remit however office staff were very friendly and informative*
- 21: *More leaflets on display*
- 22: *Would have been better if told what would happen first after the letter*

**Reporting a complaint via Neighbourhood Office or Local Access Point**

*Date, Time and Location*

- 1: 09/09/10 14.02 *Thatto Heath*
- 2: 08/09/10 *Clock Face*
- 3: 07/09/10 11.20 *Renew Parr*
- 4: 09/09/10 12.20 *Duke Street*
- 5: 09/09/10 12.30 *FETRA - Newton-le-Willows*
- 6: 07/09/10 *Thatto Heath*
- 7: 07/09/10 12.45 *Duke Street*

1. Did you find reporting a complaint via Neighbourhood Office or Local Access Point easy or difficult?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	7	
Very easy	2	28.6
Fairly easy	2	28.6
Neither	1	14.3
Fairly difficult	0	0
Very difficult	2	28.6

2. If you found it difficult please detail in the space below how we might make it easier for you to report your complaint?

- 2: *No complaints forms on display*
- 3: *Wasn't sure of procedure had to go and ask someone in the back, gave One Call number and told to ring that*
- 7: *response on first instance was to write a letter*

3. How much do you agree or disagree that the member of Helena staff that dealt with your complaint was...?

	Polite and helpful		Supportive		Knowledgeable	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	7					
Strongly agree	5	71.4	5	71.4	3	42.9
Slightly agree	2	28.6	1	14.3	2	28.6
Neither	0	0	1	14.3	1	14.3
Slightly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	1	14.3

4. Do you agree or disagree that you understand what will happen next now you have reported your complaint?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	7	
Strongly agree	0	0
Slightly agree	2	28.6
Neither	2	28.6
Slightly disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	3	42.9

5. Overall how satisfied are you with reporting a complaint via the Neighbourhood Office or Local Access Point?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	7	
Very satisfied	3	42.9
Fairly satisfied	2	28.6
Neither	1	14.3
Fairly dissatisfied	1	14.3
Very dissatisfied	0	0

6. Do you have any further comments to make about the reporting a complaint via Neighbourhood Office or Local Access Point?

- 1: *Poor quality form given - does not give a good impression*
- 3: *Inform you of the procedure know exactly what needs to be done if it can't be logged*
- 5: *The Helena member of staff was very helpful and supportive*
- 6: *The lady was very helpful and knowledgeable wanted to set up another repair appointment i declined and said i felt that i would like to make a complaint she gave me an initial complaint form asked how long before a reply and i was told 24 hours*

### Reporting a complaint via One Call

Time and Date of calls

- 1: 31/08/10 11.37
- 2: 07/09/10 Morning
- 3: 16/09/10 12.17



1. Did you find reporting a complaint via One Call easy or difficult?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	3	
Very easy	2	66.6
Fairly easy	1	33.3
Neither	0	0
Fairly difficult	0	0
Very difficult	0	0

2. If you found it difficult please detail in the space below how we might make it easier for you to report a complaint via One Call?

No comments were received from the Inspectors

3. How much do you agree or disagree that the member of Helena staff that dealt with your complaint was...?

	Polite and helpful		Supportive		Knowledgeable	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	3					
Strongly agree	2	66.6	2	66.6	2	66.6
Slightly agree	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3
Neither	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slightly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0

4. Do you agree or disagree that you understand what will happen next now you have reported your complaint via One Call?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	3	
Strongly agree	2	66.6
Slightly agree	1	33.3
Neither	0	0
Slightly disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0

5. Overall how satisfied are you with reporting a complaint One Call?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	3	
Very satisfied	2	66.6
Fairly satisfied	1	33.3
Neither	0	0
Fairly dissatisfied	0	0
Very dissatisfied	0	0

6. Do you have any further comments to make about the reporting a complaint via One Call?

1: *Referred to another department and told to ring back later One Call advisor was very helpful*

3: *Scenario indicated a mistake or problem a promise to look at it would have been helpful otherwise generally polite and helpful*

### Debrief

1. Which method of reporting a complaint did you find the easiest?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	5	
One Call	3	60.0
Neighbourhood Office/Local Access Point	2	40.0
Email	0	0

2. Which method of reporting a complaint did you find the most difficult? *(not mutually exclusive)*

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	6	
One Call	1	16.7
Neighbourhood Office/Local Access Point	0	0
Email	5	83.3

3. Thinking about your response to question 2, what can we do to make reporting in this method easier?

- 1: *Local office is too far away and didn't know that there was a website for complaining*
- 3: *The site did not work so it should be made accessible and easy to use. Physically can't get to our Local Office*
- 4: *Face to face contact was better rather than ringing One Call although this method is fairly easy. Email difficult as i have no email*
- 5: *More clarity with all method and more information*

4. Overall, how would you rate the complaint service?

	No.	%
<b>Base</b>	5	
Very good	2	40.0
Fairly good	2	40.0
Neither	0	0
Fairly poor	1	20.0
Very poor	0	0

5. Do you have any further comments or suggestions to make about the complaints mystery shop?

5: *Generally the staff and service was ok*

6. Do you have any suggestions to how we can improve this mystery shop?

*No comments were received for this question*

## **Appendix 7: Recommendations**

### **Website**

- On the whole the website is impressive however missing some complaints information
- In regards to the complaints the website seems complex and should therefore be simplified
- Staff should be aware that complaints can be sent via email
- No reply was received via email

### **Initial Complaint Form**

- Instructions on how to complete the form
- Presentation should be improved
- Phone number for additional help completing the form
- An envelope provided with mailing address
- Forms should be more accessible rather than asking for the form from the member of staff
- Questions or prompts could be included on the form to ensure enough information is provided to help the manager deal with the complaint
- The additional equality and diversity questions should be at the end of the form and should not be the main focus, a reason for why the questions are asked should also be provided.
- Lines should be on the page to help when hand writing the complaint
- A date should be included on the form
- Details of an address of where to send the form back
- Ethnic groups should include the option of 'prefer not to say'
- Brief overview of the policy highlighting what will happen once this form has been completed
- The form should be available for the customer to take away and complete in their own time if they want to, all options to report a complaint should be communicated to the customer

### **One Call**

- More specific about what will happen as a result of making the complaint
- Continue to be courteous and polite
- Be specific with the dates
- Do not say the term "hopefully"
- Ask the customer after making their complaint if they would like a copy of the complaints process or refer to them the website for further details
- It is not clear which button to select when listening to the call menu options

### **Local Neighbourhood/Local Access Point**

- All members of staff should be trained to the same standard and should give the customer the same information
- Although members of staff were considered polite and helpful the level of knowledge was sometimes poor and where unsure about what to do.
- Guidance notes for members of staff who may deal with customer complaints
- Some members of staff were defensive about customers who wanted to make a complaint – training or additional information was therefore suggested.
- The correct One Call telephone number should be given to customers
- Sometimes the information given by some of the members of staff was considered overwhelming information should be specific and to the point.
- Distributed leaflets should not be out of date
- Posters would be useful displayed in the local offices highlighting what has been done as a result of tenant feedback via complaints. “you said...we did”. Posters should refer the customer to the complaint form.
- More information in local offices or with the member of staff at the local access point, suggestions include:
  - Leaflets
  - Posters (*information and ‘you said, we did’*)
  - Complaints form
- Include a mechanism for compliments as well as complaints
- Include an article in a future copy of headlines informing tenants of how complaints and compliments can be made including all the different methods of access. Although the Inspectors were keen that the article did not encourage customers to make a complaint.
- Compliments were suggested a good method of highlighting positive service

### **General**

- Remain respectful and polite
- Use plain English when speaking to customers and in all complaints publications, no abbreviations
- A future mystery shop to identify if improvements have been made to the service