

RAISE – Older People’s Service Scrutiny Report

1. Introduction

RAISE want to ensure that the scrutiny programme covers a whole range of customers including those who are vulnerable and / or with support needs. It was felt that services for vulnerable people are less likely to be nominated by customers as a scrutiny topic, as issues around vulnerable people are often hidden. RAISE felt that they wished to scrutinise the Older Persons Service, as this is a vital service that Calico provide for its older tenants. RAISE has focused specifically on the Home Support Service and therefore will not be reporting on the Extra Care or Community Alarm service.

During this scrutiny exercise the requirements of the new supporting people contract were unknown. In light of this, RAISE focused the scrutiny on the quality and consistency of the existing service provided from a customer perspective as delivered under the current contract.

RAISE set the following scope for the scrutiny;

- Explore how customer satisfaction information is collected and used
- Identify if service users understand the service they are receiving and assess if it meets expectations
- Examine if service users are accessing services they do not need
- Identify if efficiencies can be made within the service.

2. Methodology used for the scrutiny of the Older People’s Service

RAISE used a variety of methods to gather a range of information in relation to the Older People’s Service, and engaged with over fifty-three users of the service. The following activities were undertaken by RAISE:

- A desktop review of documents relating to the service including key performance indicators, complaints, policies and procedures
- Briefing by staff on the service
- Meeting with the Senior forum
- A review of information provided to customers
- A review of the customer satisfaction survey and policy
- Shadowing of Home Support Officers
- A focus group with six residents who lived in dispersed properties (94 customers were invited to attend)
- Attendance at coffee mornings at three sheltered schemes, Crosshills, Royal Court and Viking Place
- Postal survey to 56 dispersed properties
- Door knocking of properties in Plane Tree and Clifton Farm
- RAISE’s experiences of using the services
- Interviews with three Home Support Officers and the Independent Living Manager.

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Each member of RAISE assigned themselves to specific scrutiny tasks and produced reports on their findings. These were shared with all RAISE members. These reports have shaped the recommendations from RAISE.

3. Overview of scrutiny findings

RAISE found the standard of the Older People’s Service to be of high quality with customers reporting high levels of satisfaction. Those who have joined the service within the last three years are clearer about the role of the Home Support Officer than those who have been with the service longer. Perception of what the frontline service can deliver varies as a result of setting very general guidelines on this, which results in varying approaches to frontline service delivery.

The report is broken down in to five key areas where strengths and areas for improvement with the service have been indentified. Recommendations for service improvement are detailed on page 6.

3.1 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction with the service is shown to be at 100% in the current performance indicators. Consultations that RAISE has carried out via a survey, doorknocking, attendance at coffee mornings and a focus group demonstrate there is not 100% satisfaction. RAISE have found the following in relation to customer satisfaction.

Strengths

- There is a high level of satisfaction with the service. During our consultations residents have reported that the service is responsive to needs and that staff are friendly, caring and supportive.
- There is a clear formal resident involvement structure in place via the Senior and Disability Forum. Customers are able to influence the Older People’s Service, which results in improvements to services for customers.

Areas for improvement

- The current customer satisfaction survey is of limited scope and produces a meaningless performance indicator. The policy states twelve people a month are selected by staff to take part. As a result few customers have taken part in the survey, therefore the information produced is not representative of the number of customers using the service and not an accurate reflection of satisfaction.
- Residents disassociate the HSO service from other Calico services. Residents reported they were happy with HSO’s but not as satisfied with other Calico services. Residents are not viewing the HSO officers as a Calico service, and this may result in inaccurate satisfaction ratings of the Home Support or Calico services.

3.2 Understanding the service and meeting expectations

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Anecdotal evidence from RAISE members indicated that those who access the service are not clear about supporting people funding and what the Older People’s Service can deliver. RAISE explored the issues with residents and found the following:

Strengths

- There is a high level of understanding of what the service provides in the dispersed properties. RAISE’s research indicates that customers are clear on what services the Home Support Officers deliver which results in high satisfaction levels with the service.
- The customer handbook is a useful reference tool, which clearly explains the service to customers. RAISE felt the information in the handbook was relevant and explained in a user friendly way. The handbook assists customers and carers and relatives to fully understand the service.
- Where in place notice boards are used and display a range of useful current information. Residents use the boards to find out about local information and social activities.
- All HSO’s deliver the service in line with the agreed service standards. The HSO’s are clear about the standards and demonstrate this in their day-to-day work.
- Customers are signposted to a range of social activities. HSO’s advise on what is on offer in relation to the individuals needs. This contributes to reducing loneliness and isolation amongst customers.

Areas for improvement

- In sheltered schemes there is confusion around the role of the HSO. RAISE’s discussions with customers indicated that some long standing users of the service have not adjusted to the new service and discuss the old service with new customers. This results in misinformation being circulated from customers over what HSO’s can and can’t do.
- The format of the customer handbook is not accessible to all customers. A number of customers reported that it is bulky and difficult to handle and therefore do not use it as a reference tool.
- Some customers are not aware of the support plan that is in place for them. It is not policy to automatically issue support plans to service users. As a result some customers and their families and carers are unclear as to the service they are receiving. This also contributes to customers having inaccurate expectations of the service.
- Customers do not understand that the service they receive is linked to funding requirements. Nearly all the customers RAISE spoke to had little if any knowledge about supporting people. This limits customer understanding of what the service is capable of delivering.

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- The delivery of the HSO service does not have consistency. HSO’s have general guidelines to work to, which results in variations of practice in the delivery of the service. Customers who have received services from varying HSO’s can identify the differences in practice and use these to benchmark what a HSO should be doing. For example, some HSO’s leave calling cards others do not. This leads to a perception that some HSO’s are doing what is required while others are not.
- The perception by customers of what constitutes a visit varies. It is policy that visits take place at home. Customers perceive that being ‘seen’ in a communal area or on a street is classed as a visit. Customers are therefore unclear if they have received a visit as set out in their support plan.

3.3 Accessing relevant services

Strengths

- When a change in circumstances is known HSO’s are quick to respond and reassess support plans. The majority of customers surveyed felt the service had changed with their needs. This ensures that customers are receiving a service that is tailored to their individual needs and circumstances.

Areas for improvement

- It can be difficult for HSO’s to identify if there has been a change in circumstance. Not all customers use the handbook or relay their support plan (if they have it) to others. This means carers and families may not know when and who should be contacted if there is a change in circumstance.
- HSO’s are not guided on how to escalate local neighbourhood issues, which have wider strategic implications for Calico at a neighbourhood or borough wide level. For example, customers reported that bus services have been reduced in some areas, which has directly impacted on users of the HSO service, and may impact on the popularity of properties. Calico cannot effectively tackle neighbourhood issues for its customers if it does not have clear mechanisms in place, which enable frontline staff to share wider issues of concern in neighbourhoods.

3.4 Efficiencies

During the scrutiny the supporting people contract was being re-negotiated. It was felt that RAISE could not explore efficiencies until it was known what the new contract would deliver and if savings were expected to be made as part of the contract. RAISE anticipates that this report provides further customer insight in to the service to ensure effective and efficient delivery of services.

3.5 General Observations

During the scrutiny of this area RAISE noted the following observations;

- Although not specifically scrutinising this area, RAISE received comments regarding the use of community Alarm. A number of customers reported that they felt uneasy

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about using it, as it is ‘for emergencies’. They were worried that their issue would not be an emergency. Others felt that they didn’t want to be seen to be ‘bothering people’.

- RAISE have not looked at the out of hours service but noted some dissatisfaction

With the out of hours service at weekends. This was identified in sheltered schemes where residents were concerned about the lack of an onsite presence.

- As part of its doorknocking consultation exercise, RAISE issued yellow cards to all those who would receive a visit, and requested that if they did not want a visit they should place the card in the window. Out of 56 cards issued 15 customers placed them in their window. This illustrates that some customers do not like to be bothered by surveys, but are happy to use a card system to indicate they would like to be left alone. RAISE noted that this maybe a way to obtain tests of opinion by getting residents to display cards if they are happy with the service or a card if they would like to talk about the service.
- RAISE witnessed some exceptional levels of services to customers. Many residents felt that staff cared about them and displayed endless amounts of enthusiasm, which lifted their spirits.

4. Recommendations

RAISE have considered their findings and propose the following recommendations.

1. Cease using the existing customer satisfaction survey and remove the customer satisfaction KPI from the performance report. See point 2 as to what should replace this.
2. Work with the Seniors Forum and Disability Forum to agree an effective process for collecting satisfaction information, monitoring and reporting it. Consider use of telephone surveys, periodic door knocking, ‘real time’ mystery shopping, displaying cards in windows and the card game developed by Elderly Accommodation Counsel (EAC) to consult with customers in sheltered schemes. <http://www.eac.org.uk/eac-news/item-eacs-new-resident-consultation-service-129fd.aspx>
3. Produce a report on customer satisfaction as and when required by the Seniors Forum and Disability Forum, funders and the board.
4. Issue support plans to all customers.
5. Review handbook with Senior Forum and Disability Forum and consider the following;
 - a. Pocket in handbook for the support plan (if handbook retained)
 - b. Accessibility of current format
 - c. Would other formats be more cost effective and user friendly, e.g. DVD.

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6. Continuously communicate and reinforce what the service can deliver via HSO’s and the newsletter. This should be particularly emphasised at sheltered schemes.
7. Be more specific on the service standards so that customers are clear on what will be delivered and to ensure consistency in service delivery. For example, ‘we will visit you at home’. Provide a clear statement on what happens if the customer is not at home when a visit takes place.
8. Consider with Senior Forum and Disability Forum how to publicise whom to contact if there is a change in circumstances, for example a sticker placed under the community alarm.
9. Place on team briefings and one to ones opportunities for HSO’s to raise wider neighbourhood issues that could be addressed at a wider strategic level. Advise HSO’s on tools Calico have to influence and lobby on strategic issues, for example welfare reform and cuts to local services.
10. Explore how the Community Alarm is branded and if this impacts on its usage. Provide clearer messages on when the alarm should be used.

RAISE anticipate that Calico will respond to the above recommendations by using the table attached at Appendix 1.

5. Support provided for the scrutiny

RAISE have been assisted by Jayne Boote from Engage Associates who has acted as the independent mentor for the group. Jayne has provided advice and guidance on scrutiny activities and facilitated activities where appropriate. This has been to ensure that RAISE has retained its independence during the scrutiny process.

RAISE wishes to express its thanks to all those staff members who have supported and assisted with the scrutiny. Staff have been open and transparent with RAISE throughout the process and provided everything that was asked of them, which is greatly appreciated by RAISE members.

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Appendix 1 - Recommendations

Area	Recommendation	Calico response	Proposed actions	Deadline	Responsibility
Customer Satisfaction	<p>1. Cease using the existing customer satisfaction survey and remove the customer satisfaction KPI from the performance report. See point 2 as to what should replace this.</p> <p>2. Work with the Seniors Forum to agree an effective process for collecting satisfaction information, monitoring and reporting it. Consider use of telephone surveys, periodic door knocking, ‘real time’ mystery shopping and the card game developed by Elderly Accommodation Counsel (EAC) to consult with</p>	<p>1 & 2 taken together are agreed in principle – through dialogue it was clarified that concern relates to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the sampling method and size resulting in the KPI measure, and - the lack of qualitative data to inform the KPI and relevant service action required <p>Therefore, we will continue using the existing KPI and customer satisfaction survey for now pending the development of our approach.</p> <p>We will, however, build on the customer satisfaction survey by developing a more packaged approach to measuring customer satisfaction, developing a range of tools.</p>	<p>1 & 2. Work with the Senior Forum and wider customer forums to agree a packaged approach to gauging customer satisfaction.</p> <p>Review the sampling methods and size as we develop the KPI</p> <p>Develop arrangements for capturing qualitative data about satisfaction with the service that informs our actions</p>	<p>April – June 2012 develop the approach</p> <p>July – September implement the approach</p>	<p>Housing Support Manager (Maggie Baker)</p> <p>Housing Support Manager (Maggie Baker)</p>

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	<p>customers in sheltered schemes. http://www.eac.org.uk/eac-news/item-eacs-new-resident-consultation-service-129fd.aspx</p> <p>3. Produce a report on satisfaction as and when required by the seniors forum, funders and the board.</p>	3. Agreed.	3. Will cover reporting systems when working with the Senior Forum, wider customer forums and other stakeholders to agree what is required in terms of reporting and frequency	As above	As above
Understanding and expectations of the service	<p>4. Issue support plans to all customers.</p> <p>5. Review handbook with senior forum and consider the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pocket in handbook for the support plan (if handbook retained) 	<p>4. Agreed.</p> <p>5. This work is a project within the 2012/13 service plan</p>	<p>4. In line with developing ‘A Quality Visit’ document with staff and customers, revise the approach to issuing support plans so that all support plans are in the customer’s home rather than scheme offices.</p> <p>5. Work with the Senior Forum and wider customer forums to review the handbook and implement a revised version.</p>	<p>June 2012</p> <p>April 2012 Scope exercise with Business Improvement</p> <p>April – June 2012 review with senior</p>	<p>Housing Support Manager (Maggie Baker)</p> <p>Assessment Co-ordinator (Mandy Lord)</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility of current format • Would other formats be more cost effective and user friendly, e.g. DVD <p>6. Continuously communicate and reinforce what the service can deliver via HSO’s and newsletter. This should be particularly emphasised at sheltered schemes.</p> <p>7. Be more specific on the service standards so customers are clear on what will be delivered. For example, ‘we will visit you at home’.</p>	<p>6. Agreed.</p> <p>7. Agreed</p>	<p>6. Develop an on-going communication plan for existing and new customers.</p> <p>7. Review the current service standards with customers and incorporate any changes into the revised handbook and related promotional & communication material</p>	<p>forum and wider customer forum</p> <p>July – September 2012 develop new handbook</p> <p>October – December 2012 issue new handbooks</p> <p>June 2012</p> <p>As per handbook timescales</p>	<p>Independent Living Manager (Karen Henderson)</p> <p>Independent Living Manager (Karen Henderson)</p>
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	8. Provide a clear statement on what happens if the customer is not in when a visit takes place.	8. Agreed	8. Incorporate this into the revised handbook and related promotional & communication material .	As per handbook timescales	Assessment Co-ordinator (Mandy Lord)
Accessing relevant services	<p>9. Consider with Senior Forum and Disability Forum how to publicise whom to contact if there is a change in circumstances, for example place a sticker under the community alarm</p> <p>10. Place on team briefings and one to ones opportunities for HSO’s to raise wider neighbourhood issues that could be addressed at a wider strategic level. Advise HSO’s on tools Calico have to influence and lobby on strategic issues, for example welfare reform and cuts to local services.</p>	<p>9. Agreed. A review of Community Alarm service is underway and this can be incorporated into this review.</p> <p>10. Agreed.</p>	<p>9. Incorporate into the community alarm review and the promotional approach developed</p> <p>10. Incorporate this into the revised handbook.</p> <p>Add as standard agenda items for relevant staff meetings and ensure appropriate training for staff on the wider agenda.</p>	<p>August 2012</p> <p>As per handbook timescales</p> <p>April 2012</p>	<p>Contracts Co-ordinator (Joanne Chadwick)</p> <p>Assessment Co-ordinator (Mandy Lord)</p> <p>Independent Living Manager (Karen Henderson)</p>

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General observations	11. Explore how the community alarm is branded and if this impacts on its usage. Provide clearer messages on when the alarm should be used.	11. Agreed. A review of Community Alarm service is underway and this can be incorporated into this review.	11. Incorporate action into the community alarm review	August 2012	Contracts Co-ordinator (Joanne Chadwick)