



Customer Excellence Panel

Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour Review

November 2009



Report by
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Acknowledgements

A special thanks to the Customer Excellence Panel members who took the time to carry out this review.

Tom Bates (Neighbourhood Operations Manager) and Joy Wilson (Anti-Nuisance Manager) provided feedback to the panel and responded to any queries.

The review was facilitated by Nina Peters (Performance and Intelligence Manager) and Graham Jones (Business Support Advisor) supported by Hannah Fitzhenry (Customer Insight Officer).

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to summarise the findings of the Customer Excellence Panel (CEP) review of Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour.

The review was carried out between August and November 2009.

Background

The Tenant Services 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 Excellence Panel is just one of a range of initiatives aimed at achieving this.

Introduction

Helena Homes wants to ensure that our customers are at the heart of everything that we do.

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 Customer Excellence Panel have a key role within the Customer Excellence Strategy in helping to improve customer satisfaction and raise the percentage of very satisfied tenants by 25% over the next 5 years. It will help ensure that tenants play an active role in shaping service delivery and identifying areas for improvement.

About the Customer Excellence Panel (CEP)

The Customer Excellence Panel (CEP) was established to provide an enhanced scrutiny role across the services Helena provides. Scrutiny is an important function, which helps to ensure that our customers receive high quality services that are relevant to their needs and demonstrate value for money. It adds a new dimension to Helena’s decision-making process by examining and questioning performance and decisions made by the organisation from a tenant’s perspective.

Aims of the Panel

The aim of the panel is to help Helena deliver better services by ensuring tenants are able to influence service design and hold Helena to account for performance.

The panel's role is not as a consultation group to advise on policy and procedure, but as a scrutiny panel to challenge the way in which services are provided.

The panel aims to regularly review Helena's performance, actively challenging the way in which we deliver services to assist us in continuous improvement.

The panel will draw on wider sources of information to ensure that they represent the views of the majority of tenants (and residents where applicable). Such information includes customer satisfaction surveys and complaint feedback.

The panel enables tenants to have a greater role in:

- Defining what is important and expressing preference in shaping service delivery, including reviewing and setting service standards
- Monitoring performance and holding Helena to account

In doing this it is hoped that the role of the CEP will help us to increase customer satisfaction with the services Helena provides

Overall the approach will help to further embed a customer focus in the way that Helena behaves, which will lead to better services for customers.

Review Process

The panel has received independent training and support (from the Northern Housing Consortium) in order to build confidence and capacity in their role.

The review entails an overview of service delivery and performance, and questions whether the CEP can further develop a service to improve customer satisfaction and value for money.

To do this the panel is provided with a range of performance information and scrutiny activities to ensure they accurately reflect the customer's experience. The information provided includes:

- Performance data
 - against targets
 - over the past three years (trend analysis)
 - against similar organisations (benchmark information)
- Customer feedback to determine what matters most to tenants
- Complaints information
- Positive feedback and compliments
- Best practice information from other organisations
- Activity Based Costing (ABC) information
- Service Standards
- Findings from Customer Inspector reviews
- One Voice survey findings
- GIS maps to identify geographical trends (where applicable)
- Customer Insight information
- Other information as required

The panel use the stated information to gauge a view of how well a service is performing and ensure that we are working towards meeting tenant priorities and providing value for money. This then enables the panel to recommend service improvements.

If further information is required the panel can request questions to be put to the One Voice tenant panel, or they can request an inspection or a mystery shop by the Customer Inspectors.

As part of the review the panel are also given the opportunity to meet and discuss the service areas performance with the relevant service managers.

This approach helps to ensure that Helena keeps tenants are at the heart of service delivery and that tenant views and opinions are a key consideration in the decision-making process.

Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour – Customer Excellence Panel Review

This is the second service area review undertaken by the panel.

The schedule of reviews was agreed between the Performance and Intelligence Team and the CEP based on the current corporate priorities and aspects that tenants have identified as key drivers of satisfaction. A copy of the review schedule for 2009/10 can be found on Highway within the Customer Excellence Project section.

Aims of the Review

Specifically relating to Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour, the review aimed to :

- Review and scrutinise performance & customer feedback (including complaints)
- Agree Customer Excellence Performance Indicators
- Review current Service Standards
- Recommend areas of improvement and identify actions
- Consider whether the service is providing value for money and delivering excellent services to tenants and residents.

Approach to the Review

The Performance and Intelligence team presented an overview of performance to date drawing on the range of information outlined within the 'Review Process' section.

A number of breakout sessions were held throughout the presentation in order for the panel to discuss their views and opinions, ask questions and challenge performance.

The breakout sessions were structured around:

- What matters most to Helena Tenants?
- Do our Service Standards reflect this?
- How are we performing? (considering cost and value for money)
- Are we monitoring the right things?
- What improvements do tenants want?

Managers were invited to attend the meeting to respond to any questions the panel raised and explain any reasoning behind decisions made.

A wrap up session was later held to develop an action plan which identifies recommendations for improvements to the ASB service.

Findings

Overall panel members are fairly happy with the ASB service and its current performance, all targets are considered to be at a good level. Only a small number of minor improvements were suggested by the panel in relation to the nuisance and ASB Service Standards.

The panel identified that satisfaction levels were good with nearly three quarters of services users being satisfied with the service they received, however they noted that when compared to other similar organisations satisfactions levels are at an 'average' level.

As with the previous Repairs and Maintenance review the panel have agreed to continue to monitor a selection of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) specifically relating to aspects of Nuisance and ASB that are important to tenants. Details of the specific KPI's can be found in the 'Are we monitoring the right things' on page 8 of this report.

The following sections outline the findings and actions that have been discussed and agreed as part of the review of Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour.

How are we performing?

The CEP considered the overall satisfaction with the ASB service to be at a fairly good level, however acknowledged that there is room for improvement as in comparison to other similar organisations performance is rated as 'Average'.

It was recognised by the panel that there were inaccuracies in some of the historical (quantitative) performance information which could have been misleading, for example the reporting system used to inform performance counted multiple incidents of nuisance when in fact they were reports of the same nuisance by different complainants. However these issues have been identified and addressed.

Current targets in relation to Nuisance and ASB were considered to be at a good level and no changes were suggested.

Panel members felt that it is important to provide complainants with regular updates on the progress of their complaint.

The panel suggested that information regarding the services that are offered are more widely communicated to help tackle any misconceptions of the service, this was prompted by the results of the One Voice survey in July 2009 and Customer Excellence Research 2009.

The panel have requested that structured ASB sessions take place at Local Access Points. The service managers informed the panel that this technique has been used previously without any success and therefore suggested alternative methods of engagement. For example:

- To raise awareness with customer's themed estate walkabouts will be arranged with the help of Community Engagement Officers.
- New tenants will be informed of the methods of engagement at sign up and interested parties kept in touch
- Letters of introduction will be issued by Neighbourhood Officers on annual basis

The following points are important to consider however it is worth noting that comments have been based on personal opinions and where not prompted through evidence such as surveys and Key Performance Indicators. .

- There were also comments received from the panel that suggested Helena should consider alternatives to enforcement action including provision of play areas for young children and

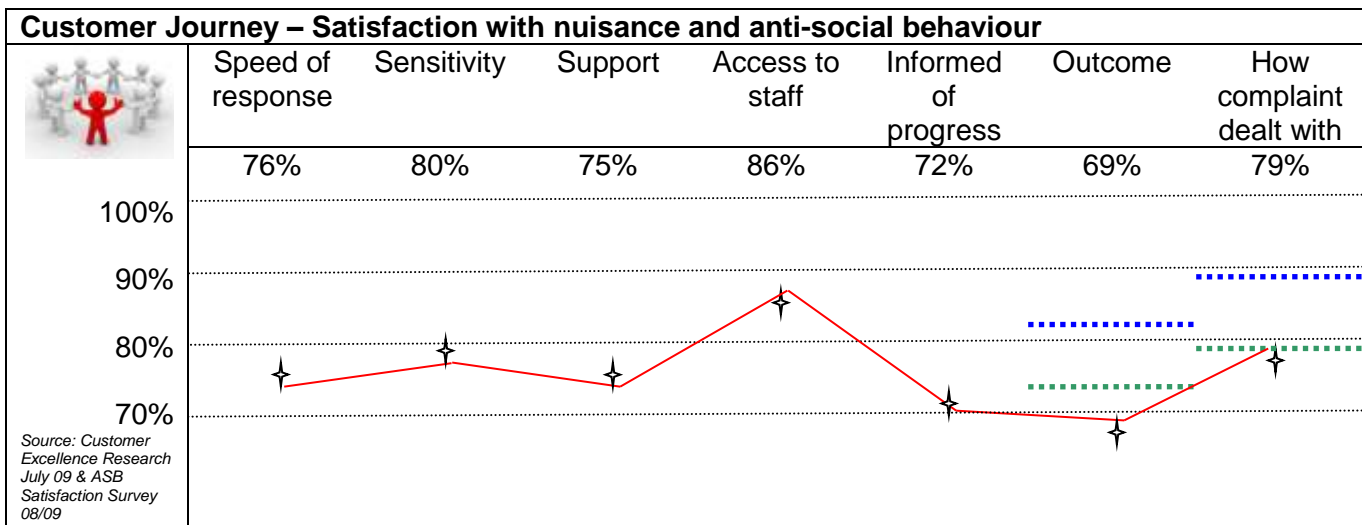
support for tenants whose family members perpetrate the nuisance and whom they may find difficult to control.

- Comments were received from some panel members suggesting that unemployment is a driving force for ASB. The panel have requested Roy Williams (Project Officer – Neighbourhood Employment) to attend a future meeting to provide them with information of how Helena help those who are unemployed.

Future One Voice surveys around ASB will help to identify the points in relation to improvements to the service area.

What matters most to tenants?

The diagram below displays the customer’s journey in terms of their satisfaction at each stage of the process. This is from the initial reporting of the nuisance to the overall closure of the case.



Key:

- = Northern LSVT 5000 – 2500 Units Upper Quartile Performance 2008/09 (81.7%/89%)
- = Northern Median Performance 2008/09 (74.0%/79%)
- = Customer Satisfaction at different stages of the ASB process

Please note that the Customer Excellence Research July 2009 gathered information from some customers who have had no direct experience of the ASB service, respondents gave feedback about what is important to customers. Satisfaction with the outcome and how the complaint was dealt is from a separate service user only survey.

The panel were fairly impressed with the customer’s level of reported satisfaction throughout the journey. However benchmark data shows there is room for improvement.

Almost four out of five respondents are happy with how their complaint was dealt with, the panel noted that this performance is exactly at ‘average’ when compared to other Northern LSVT’s this indicates that there is room for improvements. The panel recommended a target of 85% rather than the 90% which has been set out in the Corporate Plan. The recommended target will be discussed as part of the Performance Management Framework in January 2010.

Seven out of ten respondents are happy with the outcome of their complaint, the panel noted that this performance is slightly below average in comparison to other Northern LSVT’s and therefore indicates that there is room for improvement. A target of 75% has therefore been established and agreed.

To achieve improved satisfaction with performance service managers have proposed the following:

- Customer Excellence training which will build upon an already customer focused service
- This will be developed through a second nuisance Project Implementation Document (PID) with emphasis given to customer excellence.
- Fortnightly or greater contact to update complainants and manage expectations (*weekly from January 2010*)

All panel members were happy with the current ASB satisfaction survey and considered it to be a good method of ascertaining customer feedback in relation to this service. The panel highlighted that the question assessing the customers levels of feedback in regards to 'accessibility', 'support' and 'sensitivity' is important and individual questions would be beneficial in assessing what matters most to the wider tenant base.

The issue of 'accessibility' 'support' and 'sensitivity' was discussed during a focus group with One Voice members, these elements were not highlighted as key areas for improvements. However respondents recommend that Helena ensures a consistent high level of customer service from all officers. Feedback will be reflected in the service standards as part of the promises campaign.

The outcomes of the Customer Excellence Research July 2009 illustrates that some tenants are of the opinion that Helena's authority is limited, however findings shows that this belief is held by tenants who have no first hand experience of the process. Tenants who have made use of the service show to be mainly happy with the service they experienced. This led to the panel members recommending raising awareness of the services offered by Helena by communicating success stories of how Helena has helped to tackle issues of nuisance and ASB. The panel also recommended the production and distribution of a guidance leaflet to explain the service available to customer's experiencing ASB. In response the service managers have commissioned leaflets on the three key areas of:

- Nuisance and ASB
- Hate Crime
- Domestic Violence

The survey also highlights that there are misconceptions around Helena's responsibilities for tackling ASB. This therefore also suggests communication to the wider tenant base is required. The panel considered these misconceptions important and therefore requested further survey information from the representative One Voice survey panel to gain a better understanding of tenants views.

The breakdown of types of nuisance shows untidy gardens to be a clear issue for Helena with 21.54% of reported nuisance being of this type. This is significantly higher when compared to other Northern LSVT's which shows a median percentage of 4.37.

This led to panel members being concerned that Helena are not strong enough at combating untidy gardens or quick enough to give support to those who are unable to maintain their own gardens including those with relatives within the borough but who offered them no support. There are clearly issues around perceptions of enforcement and whether we are utilising our powers and resources to the fullest extent.

(Please note that the panel recognised that there were some inaccuracies in some of the historical (quantitative) performance information which could have been misleading, for example the reporting system used to inform performance counted multiple incidents of nuisance when in fact they were reports of the same nuisance by different complainants. However these issues have been identified and addressed).

Do our service standards reflect what matters most to tenants?

The panel considered the current ASB Service Standards to be acceptable, however they noted that they all focus on the 'time' elements of an ASB complaint. Whilst the panel members acknowledge the requirement to monitor such elements it does not provide a full picture as to whether we are providing an excellent services.

It was previously noted by the panel that satisfaction levels for this service could be improved. To address this, the panel recommend that the current ASB Service Standards are communicated to the complainant at the initial stage of their complaint.

The panel recognised misconceptions held by the wider tenant base. To help address this the panel recommend that the services provided by Helena are more widely communicated this includes any related Service Standards. Along with promoting success it will help to raise awareness for those customers who want to access the service.

The panel noted that tenant feedback from the Customer Excellence Research July 09 illustrated that it is important to keep tenants informed with the progress of their ASB complaint and therefore suggested that there is an alteration to one of the Service Standards to two weeks from monthly. Service managers proposed a further enhancement of service standard. The amended Service Standard is displayed below.

"Complainants will be contacted and updated a minimum of every week"

Whilst panel members felt that current standards were acceptable, service managers proposed an enhanced level of service. This resulted in amendments to one service standard which is noted below.

"Residents reporting or enquiring about the service will be contacted within 48 hours (no change) and visited within 5 working days (currently 7 working days)"

The panel highlighted that the Service Standards are important to tenants and that it is important to ensure Helena are enforcing such standards.

Details of the amended service standards can be found in the Appendix at the end of this report.

Are we monitoring the right things?

The panel recognised the importance of measuring quantitative information to evidence compliance with Service Standards and Performance Indicators.

The panel are continuing to develop their own suite of Customer Excellence Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). Whilst the panel recognise the need to monitor regulatory requirements and assess financial viability, they would also like to monitor issues that are important to tenants which will help us to ensure we are working towards improving services for tenants and in turn increase our percentage of very satisfied.

The panel were asked to consider what performance information they would like to monitor in relation to Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour.

The following Performance Indicators will be reported to the panel as part of the Customer Excellence suite of KPI's:

- Satisfaction with the service
- Satisfaction with the outcome
- Number of new cases
- Number of closed cases
- Closed unresolved cases*

**When ASB is still ongoing but the circumstances of the case do not make further action possible.*

Panel Recommendations

In order to increase the percentage of tenants stating that they are satisfied with this service the panel recommends that Helena:

- Ensure Customers are kept up to date with the progress of their complaint
- Celebrate successes and raise awareness of the services Helena provides
- Gather more details in relation to how customers feel about
 - Accessibility
 - Support
 - Sensitivity
- Consider alternative methods of customer engagement
- Introduce the new Customer Excellence KPI's in relation to ASB
- Monitor performance geographically

Next steps

An action plan in response to the panel findings has been agreed.

The outcomes will be presented to the Customer Excellence Strategy Group and Board.

The Service Standards and Customer Excellence KPI's identified as part of this review will be publicised to tenants via headlines and leaflets and other literature amended accordingly.

Action Plan – Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour CEP Review

Recommendation	Action	Reason	Service Area Response	Who	When	Progress update
<p>'Customers want to be kept up to date'</p>	<p>Alteration of service standard. 'Complainants will be contacted a minimum of once every two weeks'</p>	<p>To ensure the customer is kept informed of the progress of the complaints and are able to ask for additional information</p>	<p>The panel noted that tenant feedback from the Customer Excellence Research July 09 illustrated that it is important to keep tenants informed with the progress of their ASB complaint and therefore suggested that there is an alteration to one of the Service Standards to two weeks from monthly. Service managers proposed a further enhancement of service standard.</p> <p><i>Whilst panel members felt that current standards were acceptable, service managers proposed an enhanced level of service. This resulted in amendments to the following service standard.</i></p> <p><i>"Residents reporting or enquiring about the service will be contacted within 48 hours (no change) and visited within 5 working days (currently 7 working days)"</i></p>	<p>N'hoods</p>	<p>From January 2010</p> <p>From April 2010</p>	<p>25 January 2010</p>

Recommendation	Action	Reason	Service Area Response	Who	When	Progress update
<p>'Celebrate success and raise awareness of services'</p>	<p>Guidance leaflets will be produced on ASB and Domestic Violence. These will explain what Helena can and cannot do and also what support is available along with any relevant Service Standards</p>	<p>Raise awareness of those who want to access the service and to tackle misconceptions held by the wider tenant base who have never made use of the ASB service. Promote the support available for those affected by Domestic Violence.</p>	<p>Produce three separate leaflets detailing Nuisance and Anti-social Behaviour, Domestic Violence and Hate Crime and distribute to the wider tenant base. The leaflets will explain to tenants key responsibilities and service standards. These leaflets will be communicated to tenants as part of the launch of the Promises campaign in April 2010.</p>	<p>N'hoods</p>	<p>April 2010</p>	<p>25 January 2010</p>
	<p>Services and approaches to Domestic Violence , Hate Crime and ASB will be publicised in Helena Headlines along with any success stories.</p>		<p>CEP's comments have been taken on board and Communications and Neighbourhoods will develop a strategy to promote current services and any success.</p>	<p>Comms. and N'hoods</p>	<p>Introduce in April 2010 and review for impact in December 2010</p>	<p>25 January 2010</p>

Recommendation	Action	Reason	Service Area Response	Who	When	Progress update
'Room for improvement in reported satisfaction levels'	Aim to improve satisfaction with the service from 79% to 90% inline with the promises made in our Corporate Plan by 2011 and outcome from 69% - 75% by October 2010.	In comparison to other Northern LSVT organisations is rated as average (79%) in regards to how an ASB complaint is dealt with (page 7)	<p>The CEP highlighted that the target is significantly higher than current performance it is therefore suggested that the current target is reduced. The panel recommended a target of 85% which they felt is more realistic in the shorter term this could then be increased to 90% once achieved. Rather than the 90% which has been set out in the Corporate Plan. The recommended target will be discussed as part of the Performance Management Framework in January 2010. Improved satisfaction will be achieved through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Excellence training for staff • This will be developed through a second nuisance Project Implementation Document (PID) with emphasis given to customer excellence. • Weekly contact to update complainants and manage expectations 	N'hoods	2010/11	25 January 2010
'Accessibility support and sensitivity are rated highly'	To ascertain further customer feedback on 'accessibility' 'support' and 'sensitivity' via the use of the One Voice panel	The Service Standards should reflect what matters most to tenants (Customer Excellence Research July 2009)	Further consultation with One Voice requested. Further qualitative research with One Voice members identified that access, support and sensitivity are not key areas for improvement. However respondents recommend that Helena ensures a consistent high level of customer service from all officers. Feedback will be reflected in the service standards as part of the promises campaign.	PIT	December 09 –	Complete

Appendix 1: Service Standards

Original Service Standards	New Service Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond within 24 hours to all reports of nuisance and racial harassment where there is a risk to you or damage to your home. • Respond to all other reports of anti-social behaviour within 7 working days. • Publicise details of our successes including ASBO's, injunctions, possessions and evictions for anti-social behaviour. • Arrange for mediation, if appropriate, if it can help neighbours resolve disputes. • Work with other organisations such as the Police and the local authority to deal with anti-social behaviour. • Keep notes on all cases and communicate on a monthly basis with the people who have complained about anti-social behaviour. • Issue everyone who uses the service with a customer satisfaction survey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond within 24 hours to all reports of racial harassment, hate crime, domestic violence or any serious nuisance where there is a risk to you or damage to your home. • Residents reporting or enquiring about the service will be contacted within 48 hours and visited within 5 working days • Publicise where appropriate details of our successes including ASBO's, injunctions, possessions and evictions for anti-social behaviour. • Arrange for mediation, if appropriate, if it can help neighbours resolve disputes. • Work with other organisations such as the Police and the local authority to deal with anti-social behaviour. • Complainants will be contacted and updated a minimum of every week. • Issue everyone who uses the service with a customer satisfaction survey.