**Scrutiny.net**

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**Notes of meeting on 12th November at Southway Housing Trust**

**(Thanks to Maureen for hosting)**

**Reward Schemes**

**Presentation from Catherine Elliott at Southway**

(Maureen to share the business case, consultation postcard and presentation – when I get it – it will be on the website with these notes).

Yvonne’s notes

Early days – just been in for a few months

Southway have set up the systems through their IT. They can double and triple check the winners with officers and systems to ensure they do not pay incorrectly as it is easy to manage with 3 winners.

Those who qualify must have stuck to 13 weeks repayment, have a credit or zero balance and this is picked up by their IT (they wrote their own spreadsheet to do this as their provider was unable to support the changes). They exclude those with a warning for tenancy breach for 13 weeks. They must have a valid gas safety certificate

There is an opt out clause, everyone is enrolled unless they ask not to be

They also give a discount card – which costs £150 per tenancy and is labelled as Southway which is included in the launch pack – called Countdown – Countdown have negotiated with 150 local shops where this can be used – this include car mechanics, cafes etc.

Staff selling of the reward scheme and consultative panel sell was harder than with other tenants.

Property services were keen on the scheme for access for gas servicing – they are considering a firmer stance of access by the 2nd visit.

Front Line neighbourhood staff are keen on using the tenancy breach threat and are now seeing this as an advantage. Warning letters mention the scheme

The solar panel team (SW are promoting this at some homes now) have found the contact details more use than the IT systems in the business.

Staff also get the discount card.

Southway have used this to get peoples e mail addresses, bank details and contact details.

The prize draw is 1 x £1000 and 2 x £500 a month, supplemented by a corporate strategy link each quarter – they might consider incentivising involvement, but they have completed their first quarterly corporate strategy link by giving away 100 computer tablets.

Costs – £150k a year – It is a 3 year pilot for all tenants – the costs include a salary to set this up and a budget – the majority of work was investigating the potential with IT provider to deliver through their software (Capita) but this was not possible, writing the business case, and them many design meetings with It to set up the project. They now run this with a temporary admin post for 6 months who helps promote the scheme and administer it for 25 hours a week – after which it will be reviewed and possible go to another team to administer.

Each staff team has a Rewards Champion who helps promote and share information about the scheme.

Of the 6000 tenants, 3900 are eligible.

The Board gets a quarterly update report on measures of usage and usefulness of the scheme.

There is plenty of information about the scheme on the website.

Time to set up – 9 months – most of this was abortive work with Capita. When it went in-house – it took from May to September to set up and organise. – One manager spent 1.5 days a week with an IT user group weekly – this as recognised in staff targets.

They looked at the £60 a year for all tenants and thought it was not enough for people to change habits and pay their rent under UC.

They gained 600 more e mail addresses when people entered into the scheme.

They found marketing the probability of winning was a useful tool to gain interest – it gained the attention of the press.

**East Durham Homes**

EDH has a STAR scheme, everyone who gets involved gets a STAR and when they have 7 stars, they give £50 (unless there are issues of rent arrears, tenancy management or ASB). They also have a prize draw at the end of each year for everyone who qualified for £50. It was popular at first to get people involved, but needed 10 stars to qualify, so it was dropped to 7 stars.

**Cheshire Peaks and Plains**

Looked at the Irwell valley and Community Rewards Systems point schemes – but Board refused it.

**Thirteen**

Are just investigating a reward scheme as a result of tenant scrutiny. A project team has been set up and is approved for early investigation – a business case will go to board to discuss the scheme in February after which it will be decided whether a 2nd stage of delivery is necessary.

**NHF presentation, from Katie Teasdale, External Affairs Manager at the NHF**

**– A Home, a Job, A future.**

Katie’s presentation is next to these notes on the website.

Fact – there are more people employed by HAs in Merseyside than there are in Starbucks in the UK.

Yvonne’s notes

* Landlords are at the forefront of proper apprenticeship programmes and supporting young people into work
* Calico have been successful in targeting challenging young boys in school
* Bolton at Homes have run a successful Stitch and Bitch, which has developed by growing the group in confidence, who have gone on to gain interest in employment opportunities – with 70% of them getting into low paid employment – they are now starting a Men in Sheds group to encourage health and wellbeing
* Many landlords are in a pre-universal credit support Phase – what can the customer involvement offer is to encourage local people to engage and to ensure awareness is raised?
* Generally the HACT model calculated involvement but it was not possible to break down the calculation
* Greater Manchester have linked their apprenticeships to the chamber of commerce spend of £1billion
* Many landlords have been involved in the future jobs fund
* Incommunities have developed their involved customers into community interpreters, hey give help with translation, with housing and NHS etc – this has been successful and led to self –employment
* In Bradford, Open field has led to local growers being able to trade, following training. Other initiatives include photography and advertising. Their Centre for Partnerships enables a junior graduate scheme into housing; they also offer local work experience districtwide.
* A youth programme in Bradford enables working with local colleges for YP who are good at maths and also support YP through boot camps – where they consider bullying, get talks form police and fire and make bird boxes – to name a few things
* Thirteen – training local people as taxi drivers – route of training into self-employment as taxi drivers, including training apprentices at local colleges for 15 hours
* Thirteen – latch key system supports those tenants who can, to do simple repairs, like fixing gate latches – the inclusion team also run employability projects
* Liverpool Mutual Homes – have enabled their young people and tenants to do Duke of Edinburgh as not all the schools offer this now.
* Liverpool Mutual Homes have a digital awareness campaign – where volunteers get trained to support others in the community – they also use this opportunity to collect information while they are out in the community (Thirteen have also used local people to volunteer for digital awareness training of other customers).
* Warrington HA – have got older generation volunteering (55+) though keep fit and crafting and making a film has improved their confidence
* Southway have encouraged their apprentices to join the scrutiny panel and are looking to make short film about their journey to employment

**NHF 17th March**

Event in London which Katie was promoting – March and Fun events and information on housing – everyone encouraged to join the march or get involved in London to raise awareness about housing

**On the couch**

**Involving tenants on line and through social media**

**East Durham Homes**

EDH have engaged with a Facebook group from Seaham which had almost 2000 members and are keen to explore others who might link and have a large following. This was particularly effective with a week of action to promote what EDH was doing and to gain feedback.

Steven is about to do a CMI curse and his project will be exploring social media and getting on line with customers – along with exploring the development of an app. Steven will update us on how that goes.

**Bury**

Mini plan with the communications teams to showcase what they have been doing 5 times a week.

Link the twitter and Facebook page, they do one text a month – they got 60% of mobile phone and 50% of the e mail addresses through promoting this.

They have commissioned some short films – get all the business areas involved.

One message on CI goes out on Fridays

They also pass on community publicity/advertise local events.

**Thirteen**

CI had a Facebook page in one part of the new group – but not in the other – though this is planned in the current strategy and social media review.

They intend to promote policy consultation on social media and are just starting to think what the CI offer on SM might be.

**LMH**

Have been taking photos at tenants meetings which has proved of interest to other tenants

**Cheshire Peaks and Plains**

Tried this through the rent setting policy. CPPHT e mailed everyone on their database about key changes on the policy, it was also placed in the website on the front page. CPPHT did not offer incentives for feedback.

**Payment v Vouchers**

**Southway** had had advice that payment and vouchers might be deemed to be income and have been warned to pay everything as a prize draw.

**Warrington HA** – pay £10 per meeting which their customers attend

Many of the landords give vouchers but had heard of the fears which Southway had mentioned.

Yvonne saw a letter from DWP in Brent to allow payment to their tenants – but each is individual – Irwell Valley has the same for their incentive scheme.

Family HA have a deal with the CVS in Birmingham where they “loan the payment to the tenant”, they never intend to get this back – they pay £10 per contact or feedback survey requested. Yvonne will dig out the detail she has on this and place it on the website.

**Reviewing Scrutiny Arrangements**

**6 Town Housing – Bury Customer Review Group**

Have been reviewing scrutiny. They have penned a process map for scrutiny in the last 12 months and have had them work alongside external auditors. (Carran to share the process map – when I get it – it will be on the website with these notes).

The group have been networking with other landlords to build up their expertise and to prevent them from becoming stale – they are looking at a rolling programme of scrutiny of services.

**Incommunities**

Have begun a review of their CI Strategy – under 4 headings: Scrutiny; Support; Systems and Sustainability. They have been looking at demand capture and they have trained the panels in issues which meet with organisational pressures. They have embarked on a project to measure real time activity and outcomes – they are calculating involvement using the minimum wage against volunteer time and reporting this to board and area panels. The in -house performance team has developed a tool for them to use – Helen to send Yvonne a screen shot. The programme can record all customer activity on a notes page through free text, including 121 notes. (Helen to share the screen shot – when I get it – it will be on the website with these notes)

**Habinteg**

Are taking a fresh look at Scrutiny, with recruitment planned in December. Existing members were comfortable with this – looking to set a 3 year maximum time limit for the group membership.

**Cheshire Peaks and Plains**

9 members – the HA feels they do too much – they are looking at sharing out their work and also looking at what the groups can do at home. Customer Inspectors might take on part of the role.

**Liverpool Mutual Homes**

Scrutiny, The Designated Complaints Panel and Mystery Shopping is now in Governance, along with some smaller specific involvement groups. The Involvement team has all but disappeared into a regeneration team. The current chair is external and this has worked well for them – they have a place on the Customer Service Committee of the Board, along with Tenant Board Members but have now served 6 years. They are currently succession planning.

**Thirteen**

Use their task and finish Customer Service Investigators to do tenant to tenant focus groups, door knocking and surveys to support scrutiny. They can also undertake interviews if req.

**Interviewing scrutiny panel members and processes used**

**Bury**

Have based their recruitment on recognised skills and then developing the talent once they join he panel. It is hard to get buy in due to the length of commitment (this was echoed by others)

**Thirteen**

Have just done a speed dating of interviews following a formal expression of interest and role description/accountability expectation (on their 4 landlord website permanently, along with a guide to involvement - try Tristar Homes website for info) and questions on skills, qualities, volunteering experience, attitude/need for training and team work. If they were to do it again, they would have used a test as the skills were those who could verbalise but might not be able to undertake the work. They might also not have shortlisted 3 people for some comments on their application – these will not be out on a probationary period.

KYM – their Young person project across 9 landlords might be used to provide focus group to support scrutiny members.

Facilitating involved tenants and scrutiny groups – yet maintaining their independence

**Bury**

Start with the facts from the officer which the tenants then challenge

**Thirteen**

Use 1 person from the 4 landlords to engage in a 4 meeting per policy review process. Tenants must be existing service users

* Meeting one – understanding the issues faced by the landlord
* Two – what are their views of the service?
* Three – reviewing what others think of the service and understanding best practice
* Four – review and sign off of the new policy by a manager.

It has ensured customers involvement as all policies are being re written.

**Gathering evidence, rather than anecdotal views**

Everyone used the code of conduct to enforce and challenge those involved. Many are thinking of refreshing these, which provides a good reminder of their need to adhere to it.

**Dale and Valley**

Have changed the layout of the room into smaller tables to ensure discussion and enabling the quieter members to get engaged.

**Incommunities**

Look at demand for services through the contact centre and other officers, face to face and try to capture real time demand for services.

The business manager will give evidence, they have found survey monkey useful on their website

**Warrington HA**

Use benchmark information

**Pierhead HA**

Used survey monkey for staff surveys to support and supplement scrutiny

Have captured complaint information.

**Tenant Panel conference, 18th November 2014**

Yvonne has organised this conference for the NHC, hope to see you there, bookings are through the NHC. 13 workshops in involvement and staff and scrutiny and complaint panels

**Future meetings in 2015**

* Yvonne to send around dates for January; April (which may be an all Customer involvement staff UnConference); July and October.
* Volunteers to hold a meeting included – Bury; Guinness Northern Counties; East Durham Homes; Habinteg, Magenta

**Future meeting topics**

* Discussion on promoting and getting young people involved – January 2014
* Succession planning for tenant panels
* More topics welcome.

**UnConferences for early 2014**

**Unconference for tenants and staff working on Scrutiny**

Maximising customer insight, supporting regulatory compliance, involving tenants in adding value, social value, advanced scrutiny techniques and even more

Week Com 16th February 2015, North East – keep an eye on the website for more details

**Unconference for tenants and staff for new and experienced Complaints Panels (with Rafael Runco)**

Maximising your impact on difficult/complex complaints, sifting evidence, interviewing staff and tenants about the compliant, making clear balanced judgements, writing up your findings, negotiating the solution with the landlord, taking complaint panels to the next stage and offering an advocacy service in your downtime – there is something for everyone

Week Com 16th March 2015, North West - keep an eye on the website for more details

**Unconference: Staff Conference - customer involvement**

Reviewing your Customer Involvement strategy, supporting co-regulation, neighbourhood working, consultation, supporting tenants into volunteering, inclusion and work, social value, customer feedback and consultation and even more!

Week Com 20th April 2015, Yorkshire and Humberside – keep an eye on the website for more details

