

YORKSHIRE HOUSING

HOUSING SERVICES MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETING – 3rd DECEMBER 2009

Report of Tim Bright – Policy Co-ordinator

HOUSING SERVICES - QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE REPORT

(FOR SCRUTINY AND DISCUSSION)

Purpose of the Report

This report is the second quarterly activity and performance report dedicated to Housing Services (HS) and shows activity for the period 1st April to 30th September 09.

Attached to this report at Annex 1 (pages 8 to 10) are a series of tables detailing breakdowns in respect of activity, performance, service improvements, why customers are complaining or complimenting us, and feedback on how well customers say we handled their complaint.

Key points to note are:

1. A total of 97 new complaints cases were logged in the period.
2. Brunel (22 cases) has received more complaints than any other team since April
3. In respect of complaints resolved within the period, the report shows that overall within HS 90% were resolved at Stage 1.
4. The average time taken to resolve cases in the period, at each of the three stages for HS as a whole was:

☞ Stage 1	63 days
☞ Stage 2	76 days
☞ Stage 3	131 days
5. The results show that Craven achieved 71% of customers who scored the service 7 or above, however in Brunel we managed only 25%.
6. For HS as a whole the most common cause for complaints is 'Staff Attitude' which accounted for 45% of complaints received in the period. There may therefore be further work to do in this area.
7. The most common areas where customers said we should improve are:

☞ Act quicker when complaints are made
☞ Be more helpful and supportive through the process
☞ Take complaints more seriously

1.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 HSMT colleagues are invited to:

- ☞ Discuss and comment on the contents of this report.**
- ☞ Action recommendations for improvement.**

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 As a listening and learning organisation YH encourages feedback from all our customers and stakeholders whether positive or negative, so that we may learn and improve. Indeed the policy, procedures and processes for learning from this area of feedback is a vital aspect of our overall feedback strategy and as such should be seen as integral to this.

2.2 Whilst we aim to provide excellent services to our customers, as with any organisation we recognise that on occasions things will go wrong and customers expectations may not be met.

2.3 This report is only the second quarterly activity and performance report dedicated to HS. Previously reports relating to complaints and compliments have been compiled and reported on a six monthly basis.

2.4 The report shows activity for the period 1st April to 30th September 09. It is intended that as the report develops to show activity throughout the year this will provide useful information for managers to learn from and improve services provided.

2.5 Attached to this report at Annex 1 (pages 7 to 10) are a series of tables detailing breakdowns in respect of activity, performance, service improvements, why customers are complaining or complimenting us, and feedback on how well customers say we handled their complaint.

3.0 COMPLAINTS ANALYSIS

Volume

3.1 A total of 97 new complaints cases were logged in the period for the whole of HS. The figure for the first quarter was 63 complaints received, this therefore represents a slowing down of complaints received quarter on quarter. The reason for this is likely to be that since April there has been a requirement for repairs and maintenance complaints to be logged against Property Services Teams as opposed to HS.

- 3.2 Brunel (22 cases) has received more complaints than any other team since April followed by YM South (14 cases) and RH Central (13 cases).

Resolving complaints

- 3.3 It is important that we resolve complaints as early and as quickly as possible. This results in a satisfied customer and YH staff spending less time trying to putting things right and more time on delivering services.
- 3.4 In respect of complaints resolved within the period, the report shows that overall within HS 90% were resolved at Stage 1. This is a slight fall from 93% resolved at this stage for the period up to 30th June 09.
- 3.5 As usual there are some variations within teams with some resolving all cases at Stage 1 and others not performing as well (for example YM South with 84% and Brunel with 85% appearing to be the worst performers).
- 3.6 On a positive note all teams have improved their performance or remained stable with the exception of YM North where performance has fallen from 100% to 92% resolution at Stage 1.
- 3.7 The average time taken to resolve cases in the period, at each of the three stages for HS as a whole was:

☰ Stage 1	63 days
☰ Stage 2	76 days
☰ Stage 3	131 days

- 3.8 Similar to resolution at each stage, there is widely differing performance between teams. At the positive end of the spectrum Craven resolved their Stage 1 complaints in an average of 24 days and Stage 2 complaints in 28 days. However at the negative end YM North took an average of 108 days to resolve Stage 1 complaints and Brunel took an average of 114 days to resolve their Stage 2 complaints. This data does not of course take into account the fact that some complaints are more complicated than others and therefore require more time to affect a satisfactory solution.

Satisfaction

- 3.9 This column has only been completed where there is enough cases to provide a meaningful result (at least 6 cases). Where we have not been able to obtain feedback on this many cases the field has been left blank.
- 3.10 The results show that Craven achieved 71% of customers who scored the service 7 or above, however in Brunel we managed only 25%.

4.0 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Cause of complaints

- 4.1 It is important that we know how and why we have dissatisfied customers so that we can learn and improve. The reasons customers make complaints are varied, with the most common reasons for each team highlighted in column 1 on page 8.
- 4.2 For HS as a whole the most common cause for complaints is 'Staff Attitude' which accounted for 45% of complaints received in the period. The figure for HS complaints in 2008/09 was 26% so there is a very worrying trend beginning to emerge here.
- 4.3 Other common causes of complaints were around services related to Housing Applications, points system, allocations and lettings (23% - an increase from 8% in 2008/09) and ASB services (11% - a reduction from 19% in 2008/09)
- 4.4 Dissatisfaction with the rent/ service charge service was cited in 18% of cases in 08/09 but has now dropped to just 7% of cases.

Complaints Handling

- 4.5 As part of our customer survey strategy we ask customers that have made complaints what their experience was of our complaints handling service and where they feel we should improve.
- 4.6 The most common areas where customers said we should improve are:
- ☞ Act quicker when complaints are made
 - ☞ Be more helpful and supportive through the process
 - ☞ Take complaints more seriously
- 4.7 A breakdown of feedback for each team is provided on page 8, column 2.

Compliments

- 4.8 The Feedback Database is also used to record positive comments (Compliments). Column 3 on page 8 shows the breakdown for each team, the more common themes for HS as a whole being:
- ☞ Housing Officers being helpful/ providing a good service.
 - ☞ Family Awayday
 - ☞ Allocation and lettings service

Changes made as a result of complaints

- 4.9 Lastly on page 8, the report details where measures have been put in place to improve as a result of complaints. This information is obtained both from managers and the feedback database and only includes examples that are substantial in nature and specific (eg. a change to service delivery process as opposed to “must follow procedure next time”), and where not included in the last quarterly report. Colleagues will note that this column is still light in detail due to the relevant ‘learning from complaints’ section of the Database often not being completed. In order to try and overcome this problem this field has been compulsory to complete on closure of complaints cases.

5.0 DIVERSITY ANALYSIS

Access

- 5.1 Analysis is broken down here by team relating to customers ethnicity, age, gender and disability for all cases closed in the period Apr to Sep 09.
- 5.2 In respect of individual teams it is worth noting the following:
- a. The Home Ownership Team had the highest level of BME complainants with 50%, with Safe Haven having the highest level of ‘Not Knowns’ with 100%. Do Safe Haven know so little about their customers ?
 - b. The highest age level of complainants appears to come from the 26 to 35 age bracket for HS as a whole. Again Safe Haven recorded 100% as ‘Not Known’, with Support Works recording 85% as such, which is also questionable given the close relationship with many SW’s customers ?
 - c. In terms of gender there appears to slightly more women than men recording complaints, but with variations within teams.
 - d. For disability the figures show that within HS only 10% of complaints were from customers with a disability, though this figure could be much higher given that 72% of cases are logged as ‘Not Known’).
- 5.3 Regarding use of the diversity monitoring fields this shows that for HS as a whole we did not know the ethnicity of complainants in 26% of cases (an improvement from 33% in the previous report), the age of complainants in 32% of cases (34% in the previous report) and whether the customer was disabled or not in 72% of cases (a deterioration from 56% in the previous report). It is accepted that there will be cases where this information is genuinely not known but it is questionable whether the figures should actually be so high. There is still therefore some work to do in getting the message across to staff regarding the accurate recording of diversity information.

6.0 LEARNING AND IMPROVING

- 6.1 We may need to focus further on improving in the area of 'staff attitude/ conduct' in order to reduce the number of dissatisfied customers and therefore complaints. Colleagues will be aware that refresher customer service/ complaints training was delivered to all HS teams in October so this report will not reflect any benefits that this training may have brought.
- 6.2 In respect of the Feedback Database staff need to understand the requirement to accurately complete the diversity fields, why we are recording this information and why it is important.

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 For the avoidance of doubt, this is the risk assessment **after** taking account of any controls in place, including any controls proposed within the paper. This section to include key risks and actions take to mitigate risk.

Category	<i>Risk category</i>
Impact	6
Likelihood	4

This gives a risk figure of 24 (Low Risk).

7.2 Justification of risk assessment

- 7.2.1 It is vital that YHG has robust processes for measuring performance and activity in relation to complaints in order to ensure that we are providing a customer focussed service. The risk of not dealing with customers complaints well may result, not only in the reputation and business effectiveness of YH suffering but also tenants and customers may go elsewhere for rehousing and this may impact on our ability to deliver key operational plan objectives.

The impact has therefore been assessed as 6.

- 7.2.2 This is unlikely to happen as we have robust procedures and processes in place and carry out checks such as audits to ensure that the complaints procedure is being adhered to and complaints handled effectively.

The current likelihood is assessed as 4 (unlikely to happen within 10 years).

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Comments, Compliments, Suggestions and Complaints Procedure and Feedback Database ensures that feedback from our customers is logged in respect of age, gender, disability, ethnicity and sexuality and our performance and activity in this area is monitored and reported.
- 8.2 Whilst we have a group wide policy and procedure, the approach we take is to treat every case on its own merits and to strive to reach a solution based on the individual circumstances. This allows issues such as vulnerability and special needs to be fully taken account of when looking to reach a solution.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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Volume: A high number of complaints shows that we take our customer's problems seriously; are keen to put things right when they go wrong; and that we welcome and value feedback.

Response: We want empowered staff dealing with complaints effectively at the first point of contact. The more complaints resolved at stage1 the better

Speed: We want complaints to be resolved as quickly as possible for our customers. We do not want to sacrifice quality of response for speed though and recognise that some complex complaints take longer because we want to get it right for the customer.

Appreciation: We want customers to be happy with the way we have treated them even when we have to give 'bad news '

Service Improvement: We want to learn from complaints and change our services for the better as a result of what our customers are telling us.

We want to understand why things go wrong (or right) and what matters to our customers in making changes for the better.

COMPLAINTS ANALYSIS											
Team	Volume	Resolution (cases resolved in the period)			Speed (cases resolved in the period)					Satisfaction	Service Improvement (cases resolved in the period)
	Number of new complaints in the period	% resolved at stage 1	% resolved at stage 2	% resolved at stage 3	Average time take to resolve complaints at stage 1	Average time take to resolve complaints at stage 2	Average time taken to resolve complaints at stage 3	Average time taken to resolve complaints for all stages	No. of cases open for 3 mths or longer	% of customers scoring satisfaction with complaints handling as 7 or above	Number of changes made as a result of complaints
Brunel	22	85	8	7	37	114	113	49	6	25%	11
Central	13	93	7	0	47	98	0	50	3	60%	9
Craven	10	92	8	0	24	28	0	24	1	71%	11
East	5	100	0	0	69	0	0	69	0		1
North	9	92	0	8	108	0	169	112	6		11
South	14	84	16	0	94	85	0	92	9	60%	15
West	6	100	0	0	101	0	0	101	6	66%	10
Support Works	10	100	0	0	50	0	0	50	1		2
Safe Haven	3	0	100	0	0	1	0	1	0		0
Home Ownership	5	100	0	0	49	0	0	49	0		6
Tenant Involvement	0	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases		0
Policy and Delivery	0	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases		0
Team Housing Services	97	90	7	3	63	76	131	66	32		76

We want to make sure that our complaints service is accessible to all and delivered fairly.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS				
Team	Most common issues complained about in the period	Most common things customers tell us will improve our complaints handling	Most common things that we were complimented on	Brief detail of changes made as a result of complaints received
Brunel	1. Rent and Service charge issues. 2. Attitude of staff	Be more helpful. Take complaint seriously.	1. Helpful staff 2. Lettings service	
Central	1. Staff attitude 2. ASB service	Improve communication.	Service from Housing Officers	Process of receipt and pointing of housing applications reviewed and improved
Craven	Allocations/ lettings service	Be more supportive to customer	1. Lettings service 2. Warden service	1. Improve information given to customers when they make an application for housing. 2. Carry out refresher training on customer care issues
East	1. Rent/ service charge issues 2. Empty Homes service	Act quicker. Don't use excuses.	1. Helpful reception staff. 2. Helpful Housing Officers	
North	1. Staff attitude 2. Unhelpful Housing Officer	Act quicker. Agree with customer if resolved.	1. Family AwayDay 2. Caretaker service	1. Information given to new tenants at sign up stage reviewed and improved. 2. New system put in place for the keeping of communal keys
South	1. Staff attitude 2. Allocation and lettings service	Keep promises	Service from Housing Officers	1. Information given to trainee HO's improved 2. Better system put in place when Astraline notify emergency services
West	ASB service	Improve communication. Take complaint seriously.	Helpful staff	
Support Works	1. Not being able to move home when requested 2. Attitude of staff		1. Day services gardening team 2. Helpful staff in moving home process	
Safe Haven	Staff attitude			
Home Owners hip	1. Failing to comply with policy & procedure. 2. Staff attitude		Helpful staff	1. Review wording in standard letters
Tenant Involvement			1. Facilitating resolution to problems	
Policy and Delivery				

DIVERSITY ANALYSIS - ACCESS																
Team	BME			AGE								GENDER		Disability		
	% Non-BME	% BME	% Not Known	% 16-25	% 26-35	% 36-45	% 46-55	% 56-65	% 66-75	% 75+	% Not known	% Male	% Female	% Yes	% No	% Not Known
Brunel	53	13	34	4	22	26	11	7	8	0	22	59	41	0	8	92
Central	75	4	21	4	18	25	0	3	18	0	32	41	59	0	36	64
Craven	85	0	15	0	25	0		17	8	0	33	54	46	9	33	58
East	100	0	0	0	0	50	0	0	0	0	50	50	50	0	0	100
North	93	0	7	0	21	7	21	21	14	7	8	36	64	10	10	80
South	72	4	24	8	15	4	8	16	11	4	34	50	50	36	7	57
West	80	20	0	0	17	0	17	25	17	8	16	25	75	20	20	60
Support Works	23	0	77	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	85	23	77	17	8	75
Safe Haven	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100	0	0	100	0
Home Ownership	50	50	0	0	50	50	0	0	0	0	0	23	77	0	100	0
Tenant Involvement	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases
Policy and Delivery	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases
Team Housing Services	68	6	26	3	19	13	9	11	11	2	32	44	56	10	18	72

DIVERSITY ANALYSIS – SATISFACTION (Scores of 7 or above)																
Team	BME			AGE								GENDER		Disability		
	% Non-BME	% BME	% Not Known	% 16-25	% 26-35	% 36-45	% 46-55	% 56-65	% 66-75	% 75+	% Not known	% Male	% Female	% Yes	% No	% Not Known
Housing Services	62	45	33	-	50	-	60	62	85	-	29	35	66	-	-	-