

thirteen

Managing and building homes

Customer Engagement report

Introduction

Consumer Standards – Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

Regulatory standards contain specific expectations and the outcomes that providers are expected to achieve. These apply to all registered providers. The Regulator of Social Housing's role is to set the consumer standards and to intervene where failure to meet the standards has caused, or could have caused, serious harm to tenants.

Within Thirteen Customer Engagement Framework we have a panel of involved customers dedicated to testing our compliance of the Consumer Standards, which includes the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.

Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Group

The group consisted of 13 members, involved customers, who met on a regular basis depending on the needs of the members and the activities to be carried out. All the checks carried out are to ensure that Thirteen is compliant with the Consumer Standards – Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.

Process

The Consumer Standard group met to discuss the process and made the decision to carry out the following checks:

Mystery Shopping

Members of the group carried out a series of mystery shopping activities including website checks, telephone calls and reception visits.

Interview with Neighbourhood Co-ordinators

A number of the group met with Neighbourhood Co-ordinators working in Middlesbrough, Stockton and Hartlepool to discuss how they ensure their customers are made aware of the services Thirteen provide, how to contact Thirteen and how they meet the diverse needs of their customer group. Members of the group challenged the Co-ordinators on a number of subjects, including translation of documents to other languages, how they communicate with customer whose first language is not English and how they ensure that all customers, not just new customers, are kept informed of the services Thirteen offer to support them to retain their tenancy.

Job Shadowing

A member of the group spent two hours job shadowing a Customer Relations Co-ordinator, listening to calls, observing systems in use and was shown evidence of correspondence between staff member and customer. She was able to question the Customer Relations Co-ordinator about the route of the complaint, processes and investigations, timescales and the resolution of the complaint and she fed this back to the wider group.

Website Checks

Several members of the group were able to carry out website checks, looking for:

- Policies and procedures
- Contact information
- Support services
- The Customer Engagement Framework
- How to become and involved customer
- Thirteen Strategic Priorities
- Performance information
- Thirteen Service Standards
- Annual Report
- Results of customer satisfaction surveys
- Ways to contact Thirteen
- How to make a complaint
- What is available for customers whose first language is not English

They were able to assure the wider group that this information is available, easy to access, easy to find and clear for customers to understand.

Reception visits

Other members of the group were able to carry out mystery shopping in the form of reception visits. They visited Thirteen offices and spoke to the reception staff asking questions about:

- Services for customers whose first language is not English
- Information being available in braille if needed
- Various ways to contact Thirteen

They were able to feed back to the wider group that they were made welcome by the reception staff, their queries were answered with enough detail to offer assurance

Requested Evidence

The group requested hard copy evidence from a number of teams within Thirteen including:

- Complaints
- Repairs and maintenance
- Customer Engagement
- Neighbourhoods

Conclusion

The group are happy with the information and services that Thirteen offer to customers and that information can be tailored to each customers needs, ie Braille, translation service, support services. They feel that there may be some issues for customers whose first language is not English. The customer does not receive a translated, hard copy, of the Tenancy Agreement, Neighbourhood Co-ordinator's arrange for an interpreter to read it to customer and customer then signs. They feel that if any issues arise the customer does not have a hard copy of the Tenancy Agreement to refer to and that this may cause difficulties.

They are happy with the opportunities for engagement that Thirteen offer to customers, that the Customer Engagement Framework clearly indicates a variety of ways customers can become involved to influence and improve services and that Thirteen supports local tenants and residents groups.

They note the opportunities for engagement within neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood Co-ordinators hold regular local surgeries, information sharing sessions and area walk abouts. This information is shared via a newsletter delivered to each customer, on the Thirteen website and by social media.

They are also happy to note that complaints information is clear, that the service has improved since the appointment of a dedicated team and that Thirteen is using complaints information to drive change and improved services for customers.


Recommendations

From the investigations and observations that group have made they would like to put forward the following recommendations:

- Hard copies of the most common translated Tenancy Agreements are kept on file for photocopying each time a customer, whose first language is not English, signs up with Thirteen.
- All customers are advised that The Deal video, which is shown to new customers on sign up, is available for them to view on YouTube.

Pauline Brace

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Signed: 

Date: 

