

<b>Meeting</b>	Customer Committee	
<b>Date of meeting</b>	13/07/2023	
<b>Agenda number and title of report</b>	Consumer Standard report – Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard	
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<b>What do you want the board/committee to do?</b>	- Note (for information)	

## 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) has set consumer standards which all registered providers (housing associations and housing organisations) must comply with. This is our assessment of how Thirteen meets these standards.
- 1.2 We are required to present this assessment to Thirteen Board and publish it on their website so all customers can view it.
- 1.3 There are four consumer standards:
  1. **Tenant Involvement and Empowerment**
  2. **Home**
  3. **Tenancy**
  4. **Neighbourhood and Community**
- 1.4 Within Thirteen's Customer Involvement Framework, a group of customers are dedicated to testing Thirteen's compliance with the Consumer Standards
- 1.5 This report gives details of our customer reality checks against the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.

## 2 SUMMARY OF THE DECISION

- 2.1 This report and supporting evidence show that through our assessment, we have rated this standard as being met in all areas.

### **3 ASSESSMENTS OF THE TENANT INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT STANDARD**

- 3.1 The customer group consisted of myself as stream lead and 7 customers who met on a regular basis depending on the needs of the group members and the activities to be carried out.
- 3.2 All the checks carried out were to ensure that Thirteen is compliant with the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.

#### **Process**

- 3.3 We held our first meeting to review the standard, agree the scope and plan the project. In this meeting we agreed the methods to be used to establish compliance.

#### **Project Plan**

- 3.5 The project plan was made up of 33 checks/tasks to be carried out.

### **4 CONSULTATION & COMMUNICATION**

#### **Group Meetings**

- 4.1 Meetings were held either using Microsoft Teams or in a hybrid format with a choice of joining online or in person.
- 4.2 Following the initial meeting there were 4 further meetings held for the full group to attend. We met with the Head of Community Resilience, the Offender Services team leader and Tenancy Support team leader as well as 3 group meetings for evidence gathering. Where appropriate, we sent questions to the relevant members of staff prior to the meeting to be answered in group meetings and we were happy that all questions were answered sufficiently.
- 4.3 We met with the Head of Community Resilience to discuss local offers available, how they involve customers and the support given to set up activities within communities. We discussed the community forums set up in the locality areas and the work they have carried out. We were provided copies of the locality plans, forum minutes, spend and volunteer trackers.
- 4.4 We met with the Offenders Service team leader and Tenancy Support team leader to discuss what services they deliver to customers who require extra support. A presentation was delivered going into detail how they support offenders to gain a tenancy when leaving the justice system, help them to maintain this tenancy and help with finances. They discussed how they help these customers to be a part of the community and direct them to support groups. They provided us with their performance targets and current performance figures.

- 4.5 We held a meeting to discuss the Customer Involvement Framework and the opportunities customers have to be involved. The Customer Involvement Framework is reviewed every 3 years, this is currently being reviewed with customers. We are happy that there are opportunities for customers to be involved at different levels to best suit them.

We discussed the various streams within the Framework, which give us the opportunity to meet with members of staff regularly:

- **Complaints Monitoring Group** – we meet with the Customer Experience Manager quarterly to discuss the complaints received and dealt with by the Customer Recovery Team. We receive information on how the team are performing including the number of stage 1 and stage 2 complaints that are received, the results of complaints which have been escalated to the Housing Ombudsman and the current response time to complaints. We are given the opportunity to monitor any trends and follow up on any areas of concern and we are provided information on the lessons learned from complaints. The group also check compliance with the Complaints Handling Code on an annual basis.
- **Recommendations Tracker** – we monitor all recommendations made following projects carried out by involved customers. We ensure that these are implemented within timescales and that they have had the required outcomes.
- **Performance Monitoring Group** – We meet with the Performance Analyst and the Repairs and Voids Customer Coordinator quarterly. During these meetings we are given information on how Thirteen are performing against their Key Performance Indicators and the feedback received from repairs satisfaction surveys. We are given the opportunity to scrutinise these figures, ask for more information if there is anything we are unsure of and monitor any areas of concern. If there are any concerns which do not improve then we can request for a project to be set up for involved customers to investigate further.
- **Policy Consultation** – Thirteen's policies are shared with customers along with a short survey to gather customer feedback on the policy. Customers are given the opportunity to make recommendations for changes to the policies. All customer comments are recorded and passed onto the person responsible for the policy. A report is then published on the website showing the customers' comments and responses and any changes made as a result.
- **Training** - We are given opportunities to attend external conferences for training which is on a rotational basis to ensure that customers get equal opportunities. Customers attended an interactive safeguarding training session held at a Thirteen high rise block. We would like to be given the opportunity to attend further training sessions to build our capacity to be

involved and feel that this would be of particular benefit to newly involved customers. We are aware that a training plan is currently being created.

4.6 As part of the Customer Involvement Framework, meetings and consultations have taken place with managers and involved customers over the last 12 months and meetings have been recorded. We are happy to use these as evidence as no other questions were deemed necessary. These include:

- Customer Involvement Open Day
- Customer Annual Report consultation
- ASB appointment system and action group
- Damp and Mould
- Investment Plan
- Rent Cap
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- Winter Warmer Campaign
- Cost of Living
- Compensation Review
- Your Services, Your Views
- Decent Homes Standards

During these meetings we were given opportunities to ask any questions.

## **Job Shadowing**

4.7 Job shadowing was carried out for a recent project with Touchpoint and Customer Ambassadors, we are happy to use this job shadowing as evidence for this project.

- Group members shadowed touchpoint at the Hull and Stockton store and within Hudson Quay, observing interactions carried out by the staff members and customers. The customers who attended Hudson Quay focused on emails, social media messages and MyThirteen looking at how Thirteen communicate with customers. The customers found that the touchpoint advisors were extremely helpful. They treat each customer with respect and ensured that their query was answered within their response. Customers were given updates on repairs planned for their homes and were signposted to other services if a customer was calling about an issue that was not the responsibility of Thirteen.
- The involved customers were pleased to note that the advisors were using the information provided on Orchard around the protected characteristics of the customer and the extra support they would therefore need.
- We did find that some queries couldn't be answered from social media as customers were not responding to confirm their details with the advisor.
- Group members shadowed the Customer Ambassador team to observe how feedback on repairs is collected and how this information is used to

improve the service. We found that the team follow up any negative feedback received to gather more information about the customers dissatisfaction.

## Mystery Shopping

4.8 Mystery shopping was carried out through website checks and checks directly with customer services:

- Touchpoint - We called the contact team to listen to the options available for customers when telephoning Thirteen. We noted that there is now a call back option, so customers don't need to be on hold, we also noted that there is a message to promote becoming an involved customer with Thirteen and how to sign up to MyThirteen.
- We checked the website to ensure that the different ways in which customers can contact Thirteen is shown.
- Complaints – we checked that it was easy to find out how to make a complaint to Thirteen and the different ways that are available for the customer to do this. We also checked the stages of a complaint are made clear so the customer knows what to expect.
- Customer Involvement - we checked the website for information on Customer Involvement including the opportunities to be involved and evidence of previous projects carried out. We checked that customer reports, newsletters, information on the open days and how to apply to the community fund are available.
- Policies and Procedures – we checked the website to ensure that policies and procedures were available for customers to read.
- Customer Information – we checked the website for information on the services Thirteen offer, the social media Thirteen use and the news stories that are published.
- Performance Information – we checked the website for information on how Thirteen are performing including access to the Customer Annual Report.
- Repairs – we checked the website for the timescales of a repair. We also checked that it is clear what the customer is responsible within their property.

The main findings from mystery shopping were as follows.

- Thirteen provide numerous methods for customers to contact them.
- Thirteen give customers opportunities to provide feedback.
- The information provided on the website is relevant and informative.
- Policies are available on the website for customers to view.
- There is information on how customers can access the services provided by Thirteen
- Tenant responsibilities are clear.

- The complaints process is explained with a range of ways to submit a complaint.
- The customer involvement page shows how customers can be involved, the framework and evidence of previous projects. The page also shows upcoming events/projects that customers can be involved in.

## Document Checks

4.9 The group members agreed that they needed to check a range of documents to support their work. We looked at:

- Customer Involvement Framework
- Customer Annual Report
- Life + Plan
- Responsibilities leaflet
- Complaints, compliment and feedback policy
- Complaints, compliment and feedback procedure
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Customer Feedback Log form

## Other Information

4.10 To support assurance other information was used as evidence, such as:

- Communication In-depth Review on Repairs – the report and recommendations were used as evidence to show that customers can influence repairs and maintenance services and how contact from the service with the customer is going to be improved.
- Customer Involvement Framework Review – involved customers have been given the opportunity to make changes to the current framework to ensure it is still fit for purpose. A survey was sent out to the involvement database.
- Language services – we were provided with the number and type of requests received to change a document into a different language or format ensuring customers are receiving communication in a way that suits their needs.
- Welcome Meetings – the meetings held by the Customer Involvement Team for customers who wish to become involved were used to provide evidence that Thirteen support and empower their customers to become involved.
- Staff interviews – we have been involved in staff interviews for customer facing roles.
- Customer Success – we were shown presentations that Success Coordinators produce on feedback from customers on ASB, terminations, new lets and repairs.
- We looked at a blank copy of a Life + Plan to see how Thirteen ensures they are supporting tenants to live independently.

## **5 CONCLUSION(S)**

- 5.1 The group members were happy that the information and supporting evidence received demonstrated compliance with the standard. We are therefore happy to give assurance that all elements of the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard are being met.

## **5 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 5.1 No recommendations were made following this review.

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