

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

July 2013

Tenant Scrutiny Panel

Complaints Review

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To make recommendations for improvements to process and outcomes of complaints on behalf of tenants.

2.0 Background and Context

- 2.1 Regulatory feedback identified a need for greater tenant involvement in the shaping and delivery of services.
- 2.2 Cadwyn was awarded a Tenant Empowerment Grant (TEG) from the Welsh Government to develop a Tenant Scrutiny Panel.
- 2.3 Tenants have followed a comprehensive training programme facilitated by the TEG Agent, including a study visit to another organisation, before undertaking this review.
- 2.4 The panel selected complaints because it displayed poor satisfaction rates.
- 2.5 The review process has included;
 - 2.5.1 examining Cadwyn policy and procedure regarding complaints
 - 2.5.2 interviewing key staff
 - 2.5.3 analysis of individual complaints for the last year
 - 2.5.4 speaking to tenants
 - 2.5.5 taking into consideration the HARA
 - 2.5.6 comparative data from the 2011 Tenant Satisfaction survey
 - 2.5.7 assessment of current best practice.

3.0 Delivery Outcomes

- 3.1 We place the people who use our services at the heart of our work, putting the citizen first.
- 3.2 We know our current and potential service users and tailor our services and activities accordingly.
- 3.3 Our customers will benefit from cost effective and quality services.
- 3.4 Increased tenant satisfaction in the way complaints are dealt with and resolved.

4.0 Risk

- 4.1 There are no operational or financial risks anticipated with these recommendations as they should be covered by existing budgets.

5.0 Summary

- 5.1 Overall the Complaints Policy is sound although there appears to be confusion amongst tenants on what a complaint is and how to initiate a complaint. All staff involved in the review were helpful, courteous and professional in the manner they assisted the Panel. Staff are obviously committed to providing the best service to tenants.
- 5.2 Not all actions taken to resolve a complaint are currently being recorded, which gives the organisation an incomplete picture. It appears that not all staff have received dedicated complaints handling training. Not all aspects of the procedure are being followed, particularly during staff absences. The Panel were impressed with the 'Five Whys' procedure but noted that these meetings did not always take place. The standard letters used tend to be impersonal and over-long and the current target response time does not meet best practice.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 To introduce a dedicated shared database for complaints handling within 6 months.
- 6.2 To ensure all actions and resolutions (including phone calls, emails and other correspondence) are logged on this database.
- 6.3 All staff to receive complaints handling training and to be regularly reminded of their importance, with an emphasis on staff making personal contact.
- 6.4 To ensure there is better communication of complaint status during staff absences, including holidays and illness, to provide continuity for the complainant.
- 6.5 The 'Five Whys' meetings should routinely take place within a month of the complaint being received and service improvement outcomes published in Cadwyn's newsletter and online.
- 6.6 To revise the standard complaint acknowledgment letter to make it more accessible and personal.
- 6.7 To respond to complaints within 5 working days.
- 6.8 To distribute the Complaints, Compliments and Comments leaflet more widely, including in New Tenancy packs, in reception and via social media.