

**SELWOOD HOUSING  
BOARD MEETING  
5<sup>TH</sup> November 2013**

**CUSTOMER CARE AND CUSTOMER SERVICE REVIEW  
FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**SELWOOD SCRUTINY TEAM  
SUMMER 2013**

<b>DECISION</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>CIRCULATION:</b> Board
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Kate Gurner Resident involvement manager Telephone No. 01225 715708  Debbie Hay Independent Consultant Good Governance Network	
<b>RESEARCH &amp; ANALYSIS:</b>	Selwood scrutiny panel: May Law, Robert Greenwood, Bob Gilbert, Julianne Colburn, Barbara Hakes, Ann Haughey	

**Executive Summary**

The Scrutiny Team chose to review customer care in Selwood Housing as their first review topic following the completion of their training. They were supported by the Customer Service Inspector team (CSI's) who collected a range of customer care and customer service data making their own recommendations to the Scrutiny Team.

The Scrutiny Team considered the CSI findings and undertook their own research before reaching a range of conclusions about the approach to customer care and customer services in Selwood Housing and have made a number of recommendations to the Board for consideration.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 In May 2013 following the completion of their training, the Scrutiny Team, who were made up of six tenant representatives, opted to consider their first "pilot" review which would be in relation to customer services and customer care in Selwood housing. A project

initiation document was written by the Resident Involvement Manager and agreed by the Head of Neighbourhoods, the Head of Customer Services and the Chief Executive.

The independent consultant responsible for the recruitment and training of the Scrutiny Team worked closely with them to ensure that they were confident in the way in which they considered a range of information and to ensure that the first pilot review would give a solid basis for further reviews providing a useful template and methodology. She assisted the group in summarising their findings and kept a log of information and research undertaken by the Scrutiny Team.

## 2. Methodology

2.1 The project plan identified seven key areas that would form the basis of the review. A summary of the project plan can be found in Appendix A of this report. **In scope areas were:**

- Consideration of the customer services local offer
- Letter correspondence
- Email correspondence
- Scripting for repairs
- Reception services
- Recruitment process of customer services staff
- Selwood external website

There were several areas that were out of scope as this review was intended to be "light touch". This was the first formal piece of work that the Scrutiny Team had carried out for the organisation. Those areas **out of scope** were:

- Complaints information and correspondence
- ASB information and correspondence
- QL system

2.2 Complaints and ASB were considered to be areas of interest that might be subject to review in the future.

### 2.3 Activities undertaken by the CSI team

A variety of observations and findings were made and the final CSI report can be found in Appendix B of this report.

#### i) Letter checking:

The CSI team undertook a check of 100 letters from a range of services which were selected at random and which were both standard and non-standard letters that had been written during the past 3 months.

**ii) Email checking:**

A random selection of 43 emails were checked from a range of services across the business and classed an email conversation of several emails back and forth as one email. Whilst the team aimed to check 100 emails, it was found that very little formal correspondence was conducted in this way with most teams preferring to send letters or make phone calls to contact tenants.

**iii) Reception services**

Over a two week period a number of the CSI team visited the Selwood Housing offices to carry out ad hoc checks of office and front of house reception services. Eight visits were made over this time with each one being unplanned and unannounced. Checklists were completed by each Customer Service Inspector.

**iv) Call monitoring**

Over a two week period, members of the CSI team spent time listening to incoming and outgoing calls in various customer facing departments including: Customer Services, Income and Money Advice, Neighbourhood services, and Repairs. A total of 9 hours of phone observation were completed. Staff members were aware that they were being monitored.

**2.4 Activities undertaken by the Scrutiny Team**

The Scrutiny Team undertook a range of desktop research relating to comparisons of performance information, survey data and how the Selwood website worked. They also met with Heads of Service on an individual basis to discuss a range of issues relating to customer services and customer care within the business. The Scrutiny Team regularly logged their findings at regular full team meetings and were able to make their conclusions by considering all information that they had received.

In addition, two members of the Scrutiny Team attended the assessment centre process for the recruitment of Customer Service Advisors as observers. This was so that they could observe the process rather than to assist in the actual recruitment of individuals. Appendix E lists the reports and information used and/or collated by the Scrutiny Team for the purpose of this review.

**3. Findings**

The Scrutiny Team considered the information that they had and divided this into subsections.

#### **a) How customer care is managed**

- Key strengths
- Areas of concern

#### **b) The quality and performance of customer care**

- Key strengths
- Areas of concerns

#### **c) Overall recommendations – incorporating findings of all areas.**

### **4. How customer care is managed**

#### **Key strengths:**

- 4.1** Selwood have a call centre which operates as first point of contact for most tenants. The call centre aim to resolve 80% of enquiries at the first point of contact and receives in the region of 5000 calls per month.
- 4.2** In addition tenants can access services through the website, email, face to face and on the telephone. Staff utilise a range of ways to communicate with tenants using email, telephone, text, or face to face appointments.
- 4.3** Selwood have a set of Local Offers and key service standards that were developed two years ago and form the basis of customer care standards.
- 4.4** There is a robust process for recruiting Customer Service Advisors which scrutiny members have observed.
- 4.5** There is a robust method for inducting new staff and training and supporting them to take on the core values for customer care. There is also evidence of specific training for working with people with complex needs or specific disabilities or from different cultural backgrounds for all staff.
- 4.6** There is a wide range of comprehensive surveys and feedback forms on all services. Key services such as repairs showed strong performance on key customer care indicators over a three month period. The other surveys had such a low response rates as to

render them of no value for exploring customer care. Managers focus on overall satisfaction indicators and individual comments and complaints in the feedback rather than customer care per se.

- 4.7 A QHS reality checking and polling system has been put in place with the aim of assessing the quality of customer care and benchmarking this.
- 4.8 The Board see overall satisfaction information quarterly for each service and overall satisfaction for the landlord.
- 4.9 Performance in respect of published Local Offers is outlined in the Annual Report to tenants.

## 5. How customer care is managed

### Areas of concern:

- 5.1 The Local Offers and service standards have not been reviewed for some time and the team feel that many are not fit for purpose, difficult to measure and not reported on.
- 5.2 There is no strategy or procedure for managing customer care across the organisation however, this has been identified and plans are in place to address this.
- 5.3 Although strong performance statistics published by QHS each month were based on 6 assessments, they are considered to not be robust. One wrong answer or negative comment can change the statistics by as much as 25%. Most managers agreed that QHS were not viewed as robust by staff who preferred to look at these annually rather than quarterly.
- 5.4 Looking at the scores over time it is clear that customer feedback scores were considerably lower than the assessment/mystery shop scores however, again the team challenged the robustness of the statistics
- 5.5 Three different months of performance reports to Board were scrutinised to assess what level of reporting on customer care issues was evident. The team felt that 'right first time' constituted as good customer service. Other than right first time for repairs the only other statistic relating to customer service/ care performance or satisfaction data in respect of customer care was very limited.

- 5.6 There are virtually no indicators for customer care elements of services in the Housemark benchmarking report though overall satisfaction with the various services is in top quartile.
- 5.7 Most of the surveys that are used require written replies which exclude many tenants. There is in total 23 different survey forms most of which though formatted in the style contain an average of 10 key questions. The response rates on all surveys except response repairs is so low that statistically the information is of no value and not useful for benchmarking.
- 5.8 There were a number of key findings following interviews with Heads of Service and the way in which survey data feeds into the service planning cycle. Key headlines from these reports can be found in Appendix C. In summary, it is clear from the interviews that the survey information is not fully utilised in any department and may not be best placed sitting with the Resident Involvement Team who currently manage the process of data collection.
- 6. The quality and performance of customer care**
- Key strengths:**
- 6.1 QHS scores for both reception checks and telephone poll of tenants using the reception services were very good.
- 6.2 When QHS results were benchmarked with other local housing associations, Selwood scored high on opening the receptions, accessibility, information and documentation, rent payment, complaints handling and responding to diverse needs of the customer. Selwood was close to top on supporting people seeking housing, involvement and empowerment (although low for maintenance).
- 6.3 Housemark benchmarking database shows Selwood in second quartile for call answering at 7 seconds.
- 6.4 The majority of letters to customers reality checked by CSI were well written. There were some excellent examples especially from Income Advice and Neighbourhood Services. Letters are still the primary form of communication to tenants and there are a number of standard letters used for various aspects of the service to maintain continuity.

- 6.5 There were examples of large print and pictorial letters with good use of graphics.
- 6.6 Emails to customers that were examined were friendly, direct and personal.
- 6.7 Receptions services when reality checked scored very highly. Offices were accessible with welcoming courteous staff who were well informed and able to help. The facilities were of a high standard and there was a wide range of information available including translation services. A rolling TV screen shows a wide range of useful customer information. There is a space for filling in forms.
- 6.8 Call centre reality checking revealed excellent telephone manner, courteous, well informed and helpful. They were reassuring, realistic in their promises and were able to use the translations service. Staff used the scripting well and demonstrated initiative when the systems failed even though the customers were unaware of the crisis. The performance of call handling over the last 6 months prior to the introduction of a new telephony system has been strong however until the new system is bedded in it is not possible to judge its effectiveness. On a more positive note the enhanced capability of the new system should allow for more accurate data and more active call monitoring.

## 7. The quality and performance of customer care

### Areas of concern:

- 7.1 15% of written correspondence contained errors and long winded sentences with a further 14% that were poorly constructed and garbled. There were examples of letters that were not written in plain English containing jargon. Others were missing important content. This means about a third of correspondence is below an acceptable standard.
- 7.2 Many emails were found to be unstructured, contain different salutations; use of fonts and 20% were not to a basic, acceptable standard due to: poor grammar, spelling errors, missing words and a lack of signature in some cases.
- 7.3 There appeared to be no consistent way of adding a signature to the bottom of an email.

#### 7.4 The reality check of the reception revealed that:

- Private interview spaces are not soundproofed and not promoted at the front desk.
- There are no high backed chairs for those with disabilities or who are elderly.
- The space available to fill in forms is not adequate
- There is not room to park a pram or wheelchair and the taps in the disabled toilet are stiff and difficult to use.
- It is difficult to search the racks of leaflets as they are not in headed categories. In addition the receptionist struggled to locate a particular leaflet.
- From time to time the reception gets very busy with both staff and tenants however it's not clear to those entering the area who is next in line or who is waiting already.
- The TV screen is not fully utilised or changed on a regular basis – according to the Communications Team it is updated on a monthly basis and on an as required basis but this did not appear to be the case.
- It was suggested that only 15 people per hour view the reception TV but there was no evidence to suggest this or otherwise.
- The public computers in the reception area are not well used and there is no signage to suggest to that they are available for use.

7.5 The website has not been developed to its full potential and contains many out of date items, broken links and a limited search capability. The staff do not routinely signpost tenants to the website. A more detailed report relating to the website can be found in Appendix D.

7.6 The use of email by tenants is low and Selwood are at an early stage of promoting digital usage as part of their digital inclusions strategy.

7.7 The profiling information does not show who has access to the internet through a range of sources and surveys do not include a question about accessing services using the website

## 8. Recommendations

The Scrutiny Team would like to make the following recommendations to the Board to suggest ways in which the

quality of customer care can be improved within the organisation:

**Improve the way customer care is managed:**

- 8.1 Develop appropriate ongoing training for staff to enable them to write effective and accessible letters and emails to tenants.
- 8.2 Review the use and scope of standard letters.
- 8.3 Set a house style for emails.
- 8.4 Ensure there are regular, random checks for the quality of letters and email correspondence. These actions will improve the quality of written communication and the presentation of Selwood while maintaining consistency.
- 8.5 Ensure that CSI's undertake a range of mystery shops and polls (face to face locally and on the telephone) ideally similar to the ones QHS do but to a more reliable level. The data can either be added to the QHS material initially with a view to CSI taking over the role in time. This will result in a value for money benefit and more useful, robust data.
- 8.6 Develop and/or review local offers/key service standards so that they are robust and measurable together with a regular reporting system that includes a performance target for each standard. Consider at what level this should be reported and how often. For instance there is a role for individual focus groups and Scrutiny in this. This new framework will improve the feedback on how well Selwood is doing in respect of customer care.

**Improve the most cost effective ways to access services for all tenants by:**

- 8.7 Working out how to identify which tenants have access to electronic means of contact including smart phones. From this develop a strategy to promote a higher level electronic contact from tenants (as part of the digital inclusion strategy).
- 8.8 Undertaking a spot assessment of footfall over a period of one month to establish how many people use reception and for what purpose. Use this information to develop more cost effective ways for tenants to access services especially rent payment methods.
- 8.9 Improving the current website to ensure it is more interactive, is accessible, has better search capability, is kept up to date and is

completely diversity compliant. Consider improving 'my account' settings to include repairs.

- 8.10 Considering a more robust review of the website in general and how it could be improved. Potentially use a focus group to undertake some of this work.
- 8.11 Using and updating the profile information more effectively to ensure tenants have information and can access services in the way that suits their needs.

**Improve the reception experience for customers by:**

- 8.12 Promoting the use of the private interview rooms
- 8.13 Making a clear accessible space for filling in forms
- 8.14 Ensuring all leaflets are up to date, in the racks, are visually accessible and staff understand them
- 8.15 Updating the TV rolling screen regularly

**Radically change the way customer feedback is gathered and used by developing more proactive focussed approaches that add value by:**

- 8.16 Reducing the use of written (service) surveys and increasing the use of smaller telephone surveys (1-3 questions)
- 8.17 Where surveys are going to be implemented, consider reducing the questions to only those that are going to be used by the service manager. Ensure that the response rate is high for the service in question and top up responses using the telephone/text and face to face questions.
- 8.18 Continuing to develop the STAR annual survey ensuring that there is a higher level of responses by using the telephone/text/face to face/Facebook to ensure that the widest range of tenants get a chance to feedback.
- 8.19 Developing more innovative ways of gathering feedback on services by collecting this when out and about with tenants or at specific events to gain feedback on a particular subject or service especially using short 'one off' consultation and discussion exercises.

8.20 Considering outsourcing a set of key questions for all services to a company that specialises in real-time feedback using telephone polling. Undertake a cost benefit analysis of utilising this kind of service against the cost of using in house staff to process and write reports. Staff in departments can access the feedback in real-time, there is no conflict of interest and a more diverse selection of tenants can be contacted.

## 9. Conclusions and summary

The Scrutiny Team found the standard of customer care and approach to customer services to be both positive and professional at Selwood Housing.

There are clear areas that could be improved and the team are aware from the Resident Involvement Manager that some aspects are already being addressed. These are:

- A review is currently being undertaken by Business Systems and Involvement relating to survey work;
- There has been a debate about local offers at Leadership Group and a piece of work with Heads of Service will be starting in the autumn to gain more insight into this area;
- Planning has started on the Customer Service Strategy for the organisation headed by the Head of Customer Support & HR, and the Head of Customer Services.
- The theme of the staff conference for 2013 is customer service and therefore some of the recommendations from this report may be covered during that session.

The Scrutiny Team would find it helpful to have an action plan of any recommendations that the Board chooses to take forward as a result of this report so that progress against these actions can be monitored on a regular basis during their quarterly business and performance meetings.

The Scrutiny Team found that the level of cooperation from staff in undertaking the review was excellent with a very open, honest approach from managers and staff.





## SCRUTINY REVIEW

### Customer Service & Customer Care Scrutiny Pilot (Supported by Customer Service Inspectors)

#### 1. Objectives

After a period of recruitment and training, the Scrutiny Team and the Customer Service Inspectors have been asked to undertake a pilot review. In consultation with managers it was decided that a review of customer service functions and overall customer care would be a good first topic for a scrutiny review.

This will be a short and concise piece of work which will also give Scrutiny Team members and the Customer Service Inspectors a chance to test out new skills and put in practice what they have learnt during their training period. As well as being able to comment on important services in relation to customers, this pilot also means that if any further training needs are identified, the Resident Involvement Manager will be able to address them before the more formal team meetings and review programme is put into place.

Debbie Hay will be assisting the two tenant teams in their work by using a toolkit that she has established and to help Scrutiny and CSI in this first review.

Each tenant group will be given specific tasks and then asked to undertake their work with the support of the Involvement Team and Debbie. However, they will be responsible for their own work and will be committed to getting things completed within any set timescales.

At the end of the review the following will happen:

- a) The Scrutiny Team and CSI will report their findings and assist the Involvement Team to reach conclusions about a variety of customer service processes within the organisation
- b) The Resident Involvement Manager will draft the final report of the first pilot review and feed this back to both groups
- c) The pilot will be shared with the Board
- d) Learning outcomes from the review will be fed back to the relevant areas of the organisation
- e) Further training and lessons learnt will be identified with the tenant groups

The first session of both groups being held today, Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May, will focus on the following:

- Discussing what Scrutiny and CSI will be looking at
- Deciding how to approach certain tasks
- Discussing what research might need to take place
- Considering a range of information about customer services
- Talking to the Head of Customer Services
- Considering and agreeing dates of when work will be completed
- Understanding how this review will impact on the business as usual within Selwood Housing
- Identifying any further tools or support that might be necessary to assist people in their tasks.

A project document has been sent to the Chief Executive with details of the review.

## **2. What sort of things will the groups look at?**

There are a number of areas of work that will be “in scope” – e.g. they are the ones that we will look at closely. These are:

**In scope:**

- i) Consideration of the Customer services Local Offer
- ii) Letter correspondence
- iii) Email correspondence
- iv) Scripting for repairs
- v) Reception services
- vi) Recruitment process of customer services staff
- vii) Website

There will be other areas that will be “out of scope” – e.g. things that we can’t consider for a variety of reasons for example, they would take up a lot of time, information may be harder to understand and further training might be needed, or these subjects might be areas that the Scrutiny Team wish to consider as a separate review as part of their work programme.

**Out of scope:**

- Complaints information and correspondence
- ASB information and correspondence
- QL system

## **3. What are we going to do and how are we are doing it?**

A range of actions will be undertaken with both the Scrutiny Team and the CSI team. The number of people designated for each task will be determined at this planning session.

## Actions:

	What:	How :	Who:
1	Review of good practice & research	Introductory session	Scrutiny/CSI
2	Review of customer service local offer	Desktop exercise	CSI
3	Review of sample selection of letters across all departments	Desktop exercise & report the feedback to scrutiny	CSI
4	Review of email correspondence across departments	Desktop exercise as above	CSI
5	Scripting for repairs	Focus group with assistance from Customer Service team	Scrutiny
6	Reception services	Observational exercise, mystery shopping	CSI

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7	Current practice of Customer Services Team	Observational exercise	CSI/Scrutiny
8	Recruitment process of Customer Service staff	Observation of assessment centre process for 2 new posts	Scrutiny
9	Website	Personal research & checklist	Scrutiny/CSI
10	Review of all information	Feedback session	Scrutiny/CSI
11	Drafting of report		Resident Involvement Manager
12	Report completion and sign off	Electronic	All
13	Feedback to Leadership & Board		Resident Involvement Manager

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As you can see, there is a lot of work to do. This session will outline some of the practical arrangements of this work. But there will be some things that might make the project more difficult and we need to consider what these might be. These are “constraints”.

## 5. Constraints

- Time
- Cost
- Knowledge and skills
- Lack of specific training
- Customer Service Team needing to undertake business as usual
- The go live of enquiry scripting and the impact that will have on CS resources – 29<sup>th</sup> May onwards
- The go live of the new telephony – 10<sup>th</sup> June
- Telephony supervisor training and impact on resources – 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> June

We will talk about how these might be overcome. There will also be various phases of the project and milestones with key dates. These might need to change and this can be discussed.

## 6. Project Plan and milestones

Project stage or phase	Milestones	Anticipated Completion/Delivery Date
Phase 1	Introduction Use of tools (score sheets)	28 <sup>th</sup> May
Phase 2	Desktop exercises  Assessment Centre for Customer Services post	Week commencing 10 <sup>th</sup> June Across 2-3 weeks) (on availability basis) 7 <sup>th</sup> June & 2 <sup>nd</sup> date tbc.
Phase 3	Scripting Assessment Centre	Week commencing 17 <sup>th</sup> June (across 2-3 weeks)

Phase 4	Drafting of report	Week commencing 8 <sup>th</sup> July
Phase 5	Completion of report Sign off by Scrutiny Sign off by Head of Neighbourhoods	Week commencing 15 <sup>th</sup> July
Final stage	Sign off by CEO Presentation to Board	To be confirmed

## 7. Your support

As this is the first review and first time some people will have done any work like this, we are very keen to help you as much as possible so would urge you to contact members of the Involvement Team to assist you as much as possible. We would also be grateful if those people who have worked on projects like this before could assist those who are less experienced.

## 8. Your role

We will organise times and sessions for you to come in and look at information. All information you look at is confidential. You won't be able to turn up to the offices unannounced to undertake this review as we need to work with staff as much as possible so that they can still carry on with their own duties. Also, both Scrutiny and CSI are groups to assist and work as "critical friends" to Selwood Housing so we need to be mindful of our approach to this work and how we feedback any findings.





## Customer Service Inspectors

Customer care and customer service review - July 2013

### Reality check findings

INFORMATION	OPEN	CIRCULATION: Scrutiny Team
RESEARCH COMPLETED BY/ REPORT PREPARED BY:	Asma Bakali-Laughton, Catherine Scott, Christine Shord, Julie Rice-Harvey, Linda Monger, Michelle Day, Susan Flower, Vic Oakman.	
SUPPORTED BY:	Amée Desimone, Resident Involvement Coordinator, 01225 715720	

#### Summary

As part of the Scrutiny Teams' first pilot review, the Customer Service Inspector Team (CSI's) were asked by the Scrutiny Team to collect a range of customer care and customer service data as a way of 'reality checking' current services.

Several methods of data collection were used including a random selection of letters and emails sent to tenants, call monitoring with various teams and ad hoc 'mystery' shops of reception services.

We have noted our findings and suggestions for the team to consider.

### 1. Letter check

#### 1.1 Background

100 letters were checked from a range of services. The letters were selected at random by requesting staff members to supply both standard and non-standard letters they had written in the past 3 months. They were told that these letters would form part of a check of our services but no further information. We coded the letters for common errors and observations and then tallied up their findings. Observations and specific examples of our findings can be found below.

## 1.2 Discussion points/observations/findings

### Strengths:

- There were some excellent examples of large print and pictorial letters being sent which were clear and concise and made good use of graphics.
- The majority of letters were well written with some excellent examples of very well written, formal non-standard and specific letters from both the neighbourhood services and income advice team which had to cover a lot of legal content at times but still managed to be concise and had excellent customer care and tone.

### Issues:

- Spelling errors occurred in 13% of letters
- 9% of spelling errors occurred as there is a mistake on the 'Landlords consent to make an alteration' letter. The letter states 'as been granted' rather than 'has been granted'.
- 10% of letters had unnecessary use of repetition. An example of this is the Major Maintenance Survey letter. The word 'survey/s' is used 6 times in the letter. The following exact sentence also appears twice on the same 1 page letter:  
'These surveys help us plan what work needs to be done to your home and without this information, your home will not be included in future improvement programmes.'  
Another example is the word 'response' or 'respond' being used 4 times in 4 sentences in a letter regarding the Bedroom Tax.
- The County Court Possession and Final warning letters AR4 and ST03 are not written in the correct tone. The first sentence on both these letters states; 'I *would like* to visit your home' when the remainder of the letter is a lot more bold and stern in its tone.
- 15% of letters were long-winded and not to the point and a further 14% were poorly constructed, garbled and some paragraphs need completely re-writing. An example of a landlords consent to make an alteration letter included 9 paragraphs of information spanning 2 full pages for erecting a shed. Another slightly different example of this letter included the below longwinded and garbed paragraph:

'Should you terminate your tenancy; you may be required to remove the alteration and return the property to its original state entirely at your own expense. Should Selwood Housing request the removal of an alteration and you refuse to do so, then we will arrange for it to be removed and recover all costs from you. Should Selwood Housing consent to the adaptation/improvement or alteration remaining, then it will become the property of Selwood Housing and should not be removed unless expressly agreed.'

The author then even admitted that 'not all the above conditions relate to your specific request ... I would ask that you sign and return the formal agreement below, prior to works commencing'

The letter has not been amended to relate specifically to the request and unnecessary and confusing information has been included which could have been omitted to make a much more simple letter.

A complaint letter stated the following sentence 'Our staff has a very clear code of conduct and receives training on the Data Protection Act 1998.' It should state either 'Our staff have a very clear code of conduct and receive training on the Data Protection Act 1998.' Or 'The staff member follows our very clear code of conduct and has received training on the Data Protection Act 1998.'

Another example was when bullet points had been made at the beginning of letters to lay out what would be covered, the letters did not always then follow the clear order stated.

- On the other hand, 14% of letters we feel had missing content or additional information was required. Examples of this are below:

The 'Alteration Request' decline letter due to rent arrears or being on a starter tenancy includes no explanation as to why it is rejected for this reason or any signposting to their Account Manager to make payment or a future request.

The decoration vouchers letter which tenants are required to sign and send back states the value of the vouchers given but does not state how many rooms this covers or how the figure was decided as appropriate.

The annual gas safety check letter states that £5 gas credit and £2 electric credit is required, however it should state that it is unlikely to cost this much in most instances.

- Some examples of Jargon used or need for Plain English word-swaps that we identified are below:

Conditional consent – consent will be given providing you

Faces of cupboards – fronts of cupboard doors

Audit – check or inspection

Your tenancy is at risk - your home is at risk or you are at risk of losing your home

Consent is hereby given – we give consent or we agree to allow you

Arrear – Debt or Money you owe us

Advise – Tell you

Obtain – get

Proceed – go ahead

- On over 10% of letters simple changes regarding letter formation, punctuation and grammar changes were required. This included letters not using a consistent tense throughout, lack of capital letters, non standard font size, titles not being in bold and date and contact information missing. A further 10% of letters included additional words that were not required the example 'The Ewart Adams'; 'we need to survey of your home'; or missing words such as 'The new heating system help to make your bills cheaper' needs the work will inserted.
- Four letters we checked had been written in a completely inappropriate tone. Two were blunt and had just 18 and 34 words. One was confusing and slightly alarming which was not appropriate to the content. One letter, written to the next of kin of a deceased tenant was very poorly written and we feel impolite. The author starts the letter with the following statement; 'I need to tell you that I was mistaken when I talked to you last week'. The letter continues for 1 ½ pages without actually apologising. It shows little compassion and is written in a cold manner despite the nature of the letter.
- Unnecessary use of the statement 'in regard to'; 'further to' and 'I refer to'. Although we understand in some circumstances these sentences are necessary, many letters had this phrase more than once.

### **Summary:**

The majority of letters showed a good level of customer care and used a tone relevant to the content of the letter. There were some very well written formal letters that we found to be very informative although there were occasions where unnecessary jargon and long-winded sentences were used to explain a situation. With this in mind, a 'frequent word' word-swap could be issued to staff to use. To explain policy decisions a leaflet or policy extract could be included to explain things rather than overly long letter writing. We had a degree of difficulty checking standard and non standard letters together as some issues with the standard letters were recurring. We would suggest a future review of all standard letters across the organisation with specific importance spent looking at spelling and grammar, the use of long windy sentences, repetition and inconsistent narrative. We found examples of all or these errors during our investigations. All letters regardless of whether they are standard or non-standard need to be checked for accuracy before sending as too many small mistakes are being missed.

## **2. Email check**

### **2.1 Background**

A random selection of 43 emails were checked from a range of services across the business. We classed an email conversation of several emails back and forth as one email. We aimed to check 100 emails, however we found that very little correspondence is done in this way, with most teams preferring to send letters or make phone calls to contact tenants. Many

staff deleted emails of a certain age as a form of housekeeping files and others simply did not use this form of communication with tenants.

## 2.2 Discussion points/observations/findings

### Strengths

- A friendly tone and style is adopted by most staff
- Some of the emails are obviously between staff and tenants who know each other. They are very friendly and written in a relaxed and nice manner.
- The majority of the emails are informative and easy to understand with a lot less waffle than we found in letters.
- Only 4 emails sent in response to a query were not answered within 2 working days or an agreed time frame.
- Some good examples of signposting to other support agencies and information were found. For example the extract below was particularly well written:

'If you are struggling financially we have an in house Money advice team who may be able to help you with any debt and I can make a referral for you. If you are able to access the internet we recommend the information available from Turn2us website, this is an online benefit calculator to check you are in receipt of all the benefits you are entitled to.

Please feel free to ring me on my mobile \*\*\* at any time, including now if you wish to discuss this matter further'

### Issues:

- Eight did not have email signatures or alternative contact information, these were from a range of departments. Three of these emails were written on behalf of the main Selwood Housing email account.
- Nineteen out of the forty three emails did not use the standard font Verdana point 12.
- Four examples of poorly constructed emails with a lack of structure or paragraphs
- Five emails included spelling errors
- Eight emails had missing or unnecessary linking words
- There doesn't seem to be a standard opening for emails, some open 'Hi, Hello, Dear, Good morning' etc these are not always mirroring the tenant and seems to depend on staff style
- The majority of emails written were of the correct style and tone relevant to the subject however a particularly bad example of how this is not the case is below:

'Hi

How much rent are you going to pay? A months rent is £395.98 can you pay £450 so some can go towards arrears? If you can pay £450 each

month I would be happy with that, however if your circumstances change and you are unable to continue with that amount I will have to proceed to court due to the amount outstanding. If this is ok with you I can post an agreement form out to you and would not have to see you.

Luke (not real staff name)'

It is an example of a very poorly constructed email. Its opening is incorrect. It is written using the incorrect size font, there is no email signature; it is too colloquial for the subject matter and needs to be far more formal, based on what the correspondence is referring to. If the tenant is in arrears then staff should not be asking how much the tenant is going to pay or if they are happy and or ok with it, the tone needs to be more firm.

- Emails written on behalf of the Selwood Housing account lacked standard font and did not include a signature or alternative contact details and tenants were not appropriately addressed. Use of 'Hi' and first name when the tenant had written in a much more formal way and had signed with their initials and surname. There was a misuse of non capital for 'housing' in signature too which is not standard.
- There doesn't seem to be a standard signature for emails
- The majority of openings to emails are in the correct tone, mirroring that of the tenants however three of the emails checked had no opening at all and jumped straight into the body of the email.

**Summary:**

Generally speaking we found a very good standard of email communication between tenants and staff at Selwood Housing. The use of language at times is more colloquial than in letters; however we feel that the majority of the time this is appropriate use, mirroring the tone set by the tenant and to the content of the email. Emails are written in an appropriate, friendly manner, are informative and show some good examples of signposting to alternative sources of information. However, there were minor errors including spelling, grammar, additional or missing linking words in almost 20% of the emails we checked. Some standardisation is required for font, signatures and openings of emails for all correspondence. Emails sent on behalf of Selwood Housing need immediate attention.

### 3. Reception

#### 3.1 Background

Over a 2 week period a number of CSIs visited Selwood Housing offices to carry out ad hoc checks of office and front of house reception services. We made 8 visits in total over this time. The visits were unplanned and unannounced. We deliberately made visits at all times of the day and across the whole week to check standards. Checklist forms were

completed on the day. We have collated the main findings and points to take note of below.

### 3.2 Discussion points/observations/findings

#### Strengths:

- The main office is accessible, including a wide entrance with an even ramp and electric doors.
- We found the signage outside the office very good with a high level of contact information for out of hours.
- The reception is welcoming, clean and tidy and well laid out.
- The reception is decorated to a high standard and has both plants and pictures to brighten the area.
- Generally the queuing time was less than 1-2 minutes and on our visits there was enough seating available.
- Customers are acknowledged and dealt with politely and courteously by the receptionist.
- Reception staff are knowledgeable and informed and signposted to the appropriate department or person when necessary
- On 7/8 visits they asked appropriate questions, actively listened and confirmed the agreed actions were dealt with and understood.
- The reception has good facilities including play equipment, accessible disabled facilities, private interview rooms and free computers to use.
- All counters are at an accessible height for wheelchair users.
- There is a small area to complete forms if needed.
- There is a vast amount of information available from reception in a variety of formats including other languages, large print and audio. Some services are available at request only such as translation, Braille and sign. Moroccan and Italian translations are available from Selwood staff themselves.
- The TV screen has lots of information and is a great visual, displaying relevant and important messages.
- There are notice boards and display cabinets within easy reach for visitors
- The money advice display was well stocked and signed.
- Fire exits and extinguishers are clearly marked.

#### Issues:

- Signage off the main roundabout to the office is poor and tenants using a sat nav are sent to the back of the building.
- Visitor parking is limited and it is often difficult to find parking spaces at busy periods.
- Although private interview spaces are available, these are not completely soundproofed and should be looked at. These private rooms are not advertised at the reception desk.
- There is no public phone available or advertised for use.

- There is no queuing system in terms of a ticketing system when the reception is busy however we are told that a second receptionist is called in busy periods.
- Chairs are not available at different heights and could be difficult for less mobile people to use as the arms are not straight across.
- On 80% of our visits, receptionists do not give their name when introducing themselves. They do, however wear a name badge with Christian name.
- The space available for form completion is small and behind the toilet door.
- Although the toilet facilities are equipped for disabled use, the lever taps were stiff and hard to use.
- There is not a lot of space in the seating area for a wheelchair user, especially if another tenant was in there with a pram for example.
- At times we struggled to find the information we were looking for as the display cabinets do not have headings to explain what is included. In particular when looking for performance information, the receptionist did not know where she could find the information when we couldn't find it ourselves. She did make a phone call to check and was very helpful in finding us the information however each receptionist needs to be more aware of where each leaflet is and what is included in the publication.
- Some leaflet displays were empty but we are aware that a change to corporate publications was occurring at this time. Updates and refills of the displays needs to be checked daily.
- Some leaflets in the display boards are hard to read due to font size, especially for the visually impaired.
- Signage offering alternative formats of information need to be placed in a more prominent place.
- 1 of the 8 visits we made was at 10am on the first day of the new telephone and computer system. No sign was placed explaining new systems were in place and for patience. It was very busy and we feel the receptionist failed to react quickly enough to the situation and left people waiting longer than they should. We also felt that during this visit tenants were interrupted when explaining problems and staff were not actively listening to tenants. Follow up actions were not confirmed although this didn't seem to be the standard process.

### **Summary:**

Overall we experienced a very good service in reception during our visits. Tenants are welcomed by friendly and knowledgeable staff and customers are seen quickly. The reception area itself is very welcoming, well decorated and equipped for purpose. We are aware that both the corporate leaflets and the new telephone and computer systems were being updated during some of our visits and that this is not normal procedure. However, there are a few areas that could be improved quite simply. A few improvements are needed but overall most can be overcome easily.

- Expected queuing times could be advertised so people are aware of delays.
- A larger sign stating that information in large print or alternative formats should be displayed closer to the door and again at reception.
- Some additional or larger notice boards could be purchased which would allow posters with larger print to be displayed.
- The waiting time policy could be displayed or a sign saying what the average time is to wait in busy periods.
- Although we realise that corporate leaflets were being changed at this time, we do think that some housekeeping needs to be done in this area and all receptionists need to be aware of the contents in leaflets, including new information on performance, policies and procedures and where they are displayed.
- In times of major disruption such as the change over of new phones and computer systems, a sign should have been in displayed in reception so that people were aware of delays. The TV monitor could have been used for this.
- From our experience, 1 of the visits we made was during an unusually busy period of change and we think this could have been handled in a more positive way as the customer experience left a lot to be desired. Otherwise during the review and our experiences in general have found the experience to be very good and professional.

#### **4. Call monitoring**

##### **4.1 Background**

Over a 2 week period, we spent time listening in to incoming and outgoing calls in various customer facing departments including: Customer services, Income and money advise, Neighbourhood services and Repairs. We completed 9 hours of phone observations in total. Staff members were aware that we were monitoring them as we were sat with them and completing forms but they did not know what we were monitoring them for. Customers calling in/out were not aware we were listening in as to make the situation as natural as possible.

##### **4.2 Discussion points/observations/findings**

###### **Strengths:**

- Excellent telephone manner witnessed by all staff we monitored, offering a personal touch and going over and above to make sure customers were happy with the outcome.
- Staff members tone was appropriate to the type of calls being made
- When scripting in customer services was used it worked well and calls did not need to be transferred.
- Staff members were re-assuring and showed empathy and genuine interest in the call.

- Staff are knowledgeable in a wide range of subjects or redirected calls correctly
- If an answer could not be found then the staff member offered a good level of care and found the answer out at a later time.
- The majority of the time customer service staff probed for further information meaning that they could answer calls themselves rather than transfer unnecessarily.
- Staff seemed realistic in their promises to tenants
- Customers seemed content with the outcome of calls
- On 1 occasion a tenant complimented the staff member on her telephone manner before the call ended.
- On another occasion we were able to witness a translation service taking place as the customer service rep was called to reception to translate to a new Moroccan tenant. Showing the diverse range of skills that members of staff have.
- When outgoing calls were made that could not be picked up, clear concise and easy to understand messages were left for the customer.
- Staff were happy to reiterate points and repeat information for tenants if required.
- At a time when systems were down and major technical errors were occurring, staff used their initiative and dealt with issues with a 'business as usual' approach even though the situation was at times stressful, customers were not made aware of it.

#### **Issues:**

- Staff members are not always able to update QL in real time especially when call volume is high. Some take comprehensive notes and update the system later. This didn't seem to cause a problem when we were monitoring but could leave a back log at the end of the day or missing notes.
- The new telephone system was obviously causing some disruption to the business at the time we were monitoring. Calls to other teams were low due to a technical problem and we experienced some irate tenants who had to wait for long periods of time in the new queuing system.

#### **Summary:**

We witnessed some excellent levels of customer service and care and the staff members were welcoming and informative when we spoke with them. They had a genuine interest in why we were monitoring them and went out of their way to make our visits as informative as possible. We were genuinely surprised at the volume of calls in some departments, especially customer services. We were impressed that the ambiance and atmosphere in all areas of the office was a positive one and staff members worked as a team and seemed genuinely happy to be there. Paper notes being compiled and added to the system at a later date may mean that staff members are left at the end of the day with a long list of tasks to action. The second week of call monitoring was when a new system was in place and we have been told that the level of calls to

departments was unusually low due to some technical problems. We think it would have been beneficial to spend longer with teams to grasp a true understanding of the vast array of issues that are dealt with, however we do feel we got a good insight into the level of care given across departments for this 'light touch' review.



## **CUSTOMER CARE AND CUSTOMER SERVICE REVIEW**

### **SELWOOD SCRUTINY TEAM**

**SUMMER 2013**

#### **Findings from interviews with Heads of Service about survey data feedback and the service planning cycle:**

Interviews with managers about how service feedback survey data feeds into service planning revealed the following:

- Comments were of major importance and were used to detect trends and to manage issues and concerns especially in the repairs department
- 50% and under of the data collected is used. In some instances none of the data is used by managers
- With only one or two responses per service per month, data is not robust and does not represent the tenant view of the service in many areas such as ASB, complaints management, income management and major repairs.
- Service surveys are not coded therefore it is uncertain which groups are happy or not happy with the service
- The emphasis on written only surveys puts many tenants off and does not take account of preferred method of communication stated in the profile information or generally those from diverse groups for whom English is not their first language or who have sensory or literacy issues.
- Staff do not routinely call tenants to ask about their service experience even when response rates are near to zero or the service is of high importance such as ASB or complaints.
- The revised formal complaints system has been in place since April however no statistics on satisfaction with complaints handling has been collected.
- Managers agree that there are currently too many questions on the survey as they are primarily concerned with overall satisfaction and any negative comments. The time spent processing surveys is

undertaken in the Resident Involvement Department a time equivalent of one full-time administrator role. Considering the lack of use of the information gathered this does not represent value for money.

- Concerns over the emphasis on written survey responses only and the use of too many questions makes it too demanding for tenants. It's no wonder the response rates are low and it is difficult to establish feedback from discrete (diversity) groups.

## TENANT SCRUTINY TEAM

### Evaluating the website of Selwood Housing

These figures and comments were produced by four members of the Tenant Scrutiny Team and two members from the CSI team. We looked at the website to see how user friendly the site was, the ease of use and whether the site was sufficiently tenant focussed. The two sections below outline our scoring followed by a section on observations and our recommendations.

#### Scrutiny Team and CSI's comments

We found the website easy to use, but as you can see the website needs some tweaking. 5 out of 6 people agreed that the website was accessible. 4 out of the 6 thought it was easy to use. 5 out of 6 people found the range of information was good. We all felt that the usefulness of information was mostly good. 5 out of the 6 thought the website was resident friendly. However the overall rating was not so good with only 3 out of the 6 saying the website was good and 2 people said it was fair. Compared to other sites we looked at we found that Selwood was one of the better ones.

We have made a list of recommendations and observations that we feel will improve the website. These are in two sections titled: how the website works and how it is used and observations on content. You can see below that much more work is needed in keeping the pages updated and interesting.

#### Recommendations

##### How the website works

- Merge repairs into 'My Account'. This will make it easier for tenants to report repairs as they do not have to fill in the personal details on the form all the time and they can also see how their repair is progressing
- Look at cookie control to stop the reminder coming up all the time.
- Look at navigation bar to stop the bar going away when you take mouse away from it
- Make the 'text size' area of website more prominent
- Look at having 'Browsealoud' or some other tool for those who are visually impaired.
- The search facility is very poor and needs looking at. It could not even find the office 'opening hours' when typed in

##### How the website is used and observations on content

- Look at pages and add more information and content
- Change or move the graphics near to 'what's new and news unexplained' (near megaphone icon) as they obscure that part of website
- Have more pictures of a diverse ( e.g. ethnic) nature on the website

## Tenant Scrutiny Team - Evaluating a website 2013

- Give the website more of a 'wow' factor
- Make it easier for tenants to access 'tenant related themes' on the website
- Update all pages of the website as a lot of them are very out of date
- Look at 'have your say' as it is not working
- Move the FAQ section to the main navigation bar or have its own section on the site and look at making it simpler for people to use (currently under 'contact us' page). It currently covers only the basics and should be more in-depth
- You can only make a complaint via email. We suggest that you also include a form that can be filled in. Make finding 'making a complaint' easier on the website
- Most of the leaflets are out of date on the site and need to be updated
- Include a 'make a suggestion' on main page
- 'Standards for empty homes' link needs looking at as it is not currently working
- Explain about Pdf and how to load it and use it on each download page
- There is not a great deal of information on sheltered housing and supported living on the website
- Supporting People, support charge benefit and fairer charging. There is some info on some of these. We spent some time trying to access this. We couldn't find much detail at all about support charges and fairer changing policies.
- Statement about the number and type of shared ownership properties needs looking at
- Resident involvement section does not show how people who have sensory impairments can get involved.
- Resident involvement section has contact details but we found some pages clearly need updating in this area, due to the recent changes of members and groups etc. Focus groups on the website have not been updated since recruitment
- The consultation exercises section indicates that tenants have to sign up for them. Perhaps people could be asked their opinion on the website without having to sign up for it. There should be a way for people to give feedback on the website online
- Perhaps a staffing structure could be put on the website
- Finding information about the organisation and governance is difficult and all the reports and accounts posted are outdated. Last accounts were dated 2010, Financial Statement 2011 and the Corporate Plan is the most up to date, 2012.
- Information is out of date. In the section 'about us' how does our performance compare? This has not being updated since 19/01/2012
- With all that is changing in policies, the ones on web are out of date
- We found it difficult to find anything on signposting people to other services and agencies
- There needs to be a complete overhaul of web pages, especially those that Selwood want tenants to read on and encourage them to take part and learn more. They must have more of the 'wow' factor to keep interest.

## Tenant Scrutiny Team - Evaluating a website 2013

- To be more user friendly for the residents and their ability to access all areas than it is now

Here are some links to websites that we found were better than the Selwood web site. We also included some worse web sites as well so you can see the differences.

### Better looking Websites

<http://www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk/>

<http://westfieldha.org.uk/index.php/repairs>

<http://www.orwell-housing.co.uk/>

<http://www.rhp.org.uk/custom/1/homepage/default.aspx>

### Worse looking websites

<http://www.orbit.org.uk/main.cfm>

## Tenant Scrutiny Team - Evaluating a website 2013

Below you will find the scores and comments of the six people who carried out the survey of the website.

### 1. How easy is it to read the website?

Very easy 5 Fairly easy 1 Not easy

Positives:

- The website is easy to understand
- Headings & Search engine make them plainer on home page
- Bright homepage
- Easy instructions

Negatives

- The navigation bar is difficult to use
- Some pages need more information and are inconsistent in content

### 2. Does it look inviting? Yes 6 No

Positives:

- The website is interesting
- Changing pictures are excellent, Colours easy to read and used to highlight with good effect
- Clear pictures
- Good print
- Images are great, good graphics. However I dislike the green & red surround

Negatives

### 3. Is there a simple mechanism for changing the text size, clearly exhibited?

Yes 5 No 1

Positives:

- The text size can be changed very easy
- Reads normal, large, larger and changes colour when cursor hovers over
- Tried it and it was much clearer for people with bad eyesight

Negatives

- Not that I could see
- However I feel it could be more prominently displayed as it took me several minutes to find it

4. Are there other facilities for people with visual impairments e.g. Browsealoud

Yes No 6

Positives:

- 

Negatives

- The site does not have this facility
- Could not find this facility
- Not that I could find

5. Is the text obscured by graphics, or too small or difficult to read for any other reason?

Yes 2 No 3

Positives:

- It appears to be fine except the address at the bottom of the page. Grey and white do not go together
- Text is very clear & easy to read

Negatives

- Text needs to be larger
- Graphics on 'what's new' & 'news unexplained' (near megaphone icon)
- Yes, home page appears very cluttered & everything is compact

6. How easy is it to understand the language used? Are things explained simply or does it use jargon, long words and long sentences? (Check this out on the governance section in particular as well as the day-to-day service stuff!)

Very easy 3 Fairly easy 2 Not easy

Positives:

- It appears the language used is easy to understand
- Sentences kept to a reasonable length. Language plain & simple
- I understood what I could find
- This depends on anyone's level of understanding & comprehension. I have trained in these areas prior to Selwood, not everyone has!

Negatives

•

**7. Is it available in other languages or does it guide you to an online translation service?**

Yes 6

No

**(And consider whether this is easy to use (compare with other sites))**

Positives:

- It has a drop down list of languages to choose from and when the language is selected the page changes to that language
- You can select a language from a drop down box on any page
- There is a select language on home page
- This was very easy to use tried it in German

Negatives

•

**8. If it shows pictures or images of residents or prospective residents does it show a diversity of ages, ethnic backgrounds, gender and disability?**

Yes 4

No 2

Positives:

- There are a number of different photos of tenants from all backgrounds
- Good use of graphics throughout, eye catching and diverse

Negatives

- Could have more images on diversity
- Ages, gender & disability – Not many ethnic backgrounds
- Disliked some of the colour themes used, very drab. Lacks the 'wow' factor

**9. How easy is it to find your way around the website? Do you have to go through a lot of screens to get to the information you want?**

Positives:

- Most times you go to the area you wanted
- It was easy – main screen gave good choice to select and the appropriate page came up quickly
- It's as easy as can be given diversity & volume of info available
- I did quite well and I'm not very good on computers

Negatives

- When you click on the item searched it is not easy to click on the item you want
- Yes, most definitely complex. Not for beginners & not user friendly

**10. To what extent is the website oriented towards residents, as opposed to prospective partner organisations and staff?**

Positives:

- The site appears to be for tenants and not for staff and not partner organisations
- Info is orientated towards tenants and giving advice to tenants
- 90-98% of site is oriented to tenants
- Reasonably well oriented towards residents

Negatives

- It isn't. Yes, it's all there, but it isn't easy to find & locate exactly what you may want. Sometimes there are too many options

**11. How useful is the information from a resident user's perspective?**

Very useful 4 Fairly useful 2 Not very useful Not useful at all

Positives:

- There is an abundance of information for tenants
- Covers a lot of FAQ's without the need for personal contact
- I'm a novice at this!

Negatives

- But some of the information is out of date. Different chair of a TARA etc.
- Depends on what you are looking for and your ability to use PC, printer etc. A need for improvement

**12. Do the links actually work?! What doesn't?**

Positives:

- The links I tried worked fine for me
- The links I tried worked fine for me when tried
- All that I tried worked for me

Negatives

- The site does not have this facility
- Sometimes links are difficult to click on
- 'Have your say' does not work despite several attempts

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- Entering search word in search engine also came up with limited information or didn't access anything related to enquiry

**13. Is the information up to date?**

Yes 3 No 3 Don't know

Positives:

- Mostly, but getting better
- Mostly, but some isn't most of the pages were 2010 – 2011
- Pages are frequently updated

Negatives

- There are a number of pages which are not up to date
- The chair of a TARA was out of date as well as other pages
- I found many pages from January 2012, ok some may not need updating, but surely someone needs to be monitoring this

**14. Does it tell you when a page was last updated? Yes 6 No**

Positives:

- At bottom of each page

Negatives

- 

**15. Is there a FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) section?**

Yes 5 No

**16. How useful is it?**

Positives:

- Lifeline & Bedroom tax came under FAQ's
- Not under every heading – only those most topical i.e. Bedroom tax
- Very useful for new tenants

Negatives

- There is a FAQ section, but it is not that good and could be in the navigation bar
- It's under the heading 'contact us' perhaps it could be made more prominent
- Yes, apparently only when necessary

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- Okay, but from my prospective, it doesn't cover all of the questions, but it does cover basics
- FAQ's are unavailable on many pages and sections. It is vague when it is present

17. Is there a 'search' facility? Yes 6 No

18. Does it work in a useful way? (try 'office opening times', 'antisocial behaviour', 'governance' and 'complaints')

Yes 3 No Not sure 1

Positives:

- Found ASB easily

Negatives

- When you typed in the 'office opening times' it did not come with them and a few more things I tried did not work
- Works only on certain subjects. Opening hours was not found when typed in
- Governance page led to leaflets dated from 2010 to 2012. None currently for 2013
- Good on homepage, but not so good in search engine
- Not easy to access others either especially if you have the expense of downloading PDF's etc. I am not impressed

19. What services can you request online?	Yes	No
a. Report a repair	6	
b. Report antisocial behaviour	6	
c. Make a complaint	6	
d. Express an interest in resident involvement	6	
e. Request a rent statement	6	
f. Request copies of publications	6	

Positives:

- You can use 'my account' to access statements, payments etc.
- Publications can be obtained by phone, email or from the website in pdf format.
- Repairs excellent – pinpointing exact problem
- I had to use the search facility, but managed it

Negatives

- You can only make a complaint via email and not using an online form
- Finding the web page 'how to make a complaint' isn't easy. Not suitable for beginners

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20. Can you make payments online? Yes 6 No

21. Are there contact names and telephone numbers on the site?

Yes 3 No 3

Positives:

- Not so many names as contact numbers, which I think is fine

Negatives

- It uses the main 715715 on most things, but uses a direct number for 'make a difference'
- Only via main number

22. Can you email staff? Yes 1 No 4

Positives:

- No access in contact us, but can be done through the headings such as repairs & ASB etc.
- This is a generalised email address which must get re-directed onto other members of staff via customer services

Negatives

- You are unable to email staff direct unless you have had some contact with that member of staff
- Not individual staff – go through customer services
- You can only email customer services

23. Can you make suggestions online? Yes 1 No 3

- Have my say not working, being updated
- Unable to access this page

24. What literature/information is available online?	Yes	No
a. Policies	6	
b. Information leaflets	6	
c. Reports of meetings	3	3
d. Tenant newsletter	4	2
e. Annual report	6	
f. Business plan	6	
g. Tenant handbook	6	
h. Standards for empty homes on re-let (void standards)	4	2
i. Information about transfers and mutual exchanges	6	
j. How to apply for housing	6	

Positives:

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- Most leaflets can be found by using the search engine
- Clear & concise
- Yes, 9 out of 10 are available online

### Negatives

- You can only make suggestions online through the 'make a difference' email address
- Newsletters is not up to date as is the business plan
- Tenant handbook needs looking at
- Standards for empty homes link is not working
- Not easy to navigate and find first time
- PDF's again. Not everyone has adobe reader or would know how to download and install it let alone use
- Assumption is being made that everyone is computer savvy! That is not so!!

### 25. Is there information about sheltered and supported housing?

Yes 5 No 1

### Positives:

- There is information on both Sheltered and Supported Housing

### Negatives

- There was a FAQ heading for Sheltered and Supported Housing. It was in the property box under 'supporting you'. Could not find its FAQ and the pages for these areas need updating
- There was information on food safety & snow & ice. These were not what I was looking for
- Yes, but the contact details are at the very bottom of the web page

### 26. Is there information about Supporting People, support charge benefit and fairer charging policies?

Yes 3 No 2

### Positives:

- Under the 'Rent' dropdown box, then supporting you
- There is information on supporting people, but not much on the other 2 items
- There was an extensive list and also a rewards & recognition list

### Negatives

- Could not find any information on the above
- There is some info on some of the above. I spent some time trying to access this. I couldn't find much detail at all about support charges & fairer changing policies. Poor

### 27. Can documents be downloaded? Yes 6 No

**28. How easy is it to print off information in a usable form?**

Positives:

- The downloads use pdf format and can be download by most people
- Quite good
- Easy to print information
- If you have a printer, adobe reader and understand how to access all of this, it's fine

Negatives

- Not easy for me as I am not very good with computers
- In fact many tenants I know would experience quite a number of problems & find the process daunting

**29. Resident involvement**

**a. Can you find out about resident involvement through the website?**

Yes 6 No

**b. Does it explain the different ways that residents can get involved?**

Yes 5 No

**c. Does it give a variety of ways of getting in touch and are these clearly given?**

Yes 6 No

Positives:

- There are a number of ways that tenants can get involved
- Through make a difference
- Loads of information

Negatives

- It is let down because there is not a way for partially sighted and hard of hearing to get involved
- There are contact details but I found some pages clearly need updating in this area, due to the recent changes of members & groups etc.

**30. Are there consultation exercises that you can participate in interactively on the web?**

Yes 2 No 2

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Positives:

- There are online surveys you can sign up for

Negatives

- You have to sign up for them
- Couldn't find any
- There are some, but they are outdated
- To a degree, most pages I accessed have not been updated since last year. Some since January 2012

### 31. Organisation and governance

#### a. Can you find out about the structure of the staffing of the organisation?

Yes 1 No 5

#### b. Can you find out about the structure of the governance of the organisation and how it works?

Yes 3 No 2

#### c. Did you find the sections on organisation and governance helpful and easy to understand?

Positives:

- There are a number of ways that tenants can get involved
- Fairly easy to find this information

Negatives

- It is difficult to find this information easily
- All outdated reports and accounts. Last accounts were dated 2010. Financial Statement 2011. Cooperate Plan is the most up to date, 2012
- Information out of date
- In 'about us' How does our performance compare – being updated since 19/01/2012
- This no.1 on dashboard
- Couldn't find any of it

#### d. Any other comments on governance

Positives:

- 

Negatives

- Focus groups on the website have not been updated since recruitment
- All needs updating
- With all that is changing in policies, the ones on web are out of date

**32. Is the website used to signpost people to information on other websites?**

Yes 3 No

**Comments**

- Don't know not easy to find it in search engine
- Unsure on this question
- Shared ownership with swap shop

**33. Can you give feedback on the website online?**

Yes 1 No 5 Couldn't find out how

**34. Is there anything you would like to see on the website that isn't there at the moment? If so, what?**

- Repairs connected to the account section. When you report a repair the system puts your details in for you.
- It is quite dysfunctional
- Housemark Motion studies – It would make some of the stats more interesting
- Statement re: number & type of shared ownership properties
- Yes, a complete overhaul with web pages that want you to read on and encourage you to take part & learn more
- To be more about the residents right and ability to access all areas and be more user friendly

**35. How would you rate the following?**

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
<b>Accessibility</b>	1	4		1
<b>Ease of use</b>	1	3	1	1
<b>Range of information</b>		5	1	
<b>Usefulness of information</b>		6		
<b>Resident friendliness</b>	1	4		1
<b>Overall rating</b>		3	2	

**36. Any other comments**

- Keep pages updated

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- Cookie control keeps popping up all the time
- Direct Debit form – Link to form not working
- I found my way around most of the time, but not always
- I quickly became frustrated and bored trying to navigate the site. A need for improvement on most pages, if not all. Found it very dull





## CUSTOMER CARE AND CUSTOMER SERVICE REVIEW

### SELWOOD SCRUTINY TEAM

### SUMMER 2013

Reports written by the Scrutiny Team and Customer Service Inspectors and considered as part of the final recommendations:

	Name of report:	Author(s) & contributors:
1	Customer Service Inspectors – Reality check findings	Asma Bakali-Laughton, Catherine Scott, Christine Shord, Julie Rice-Harvey, Linda Monger, Michelle Day, Vic Oakman, Amée Desimone
2	Meeting with Head of Income & Money Advice	Barbara Hakes, Robert Greenwood
3	Meeting with Head of Neighbourhoods	May Law, Ann Haughey
4	Checking Board performance papers for customer service information	May Law
5	Customer Services recruitment – observations of process	Julianne Colbran, Robert Greenwood
6	Evaluation of the Selwood Housing website	Robert Greenwood  (with contributions from May Law, Barbara Hakes, Julianne Colbran,

		Bob Gilbert)
7	Selwood Housing Local Offers - A Scrutiny Team research paper	Julianne Colbran, Bob Gilbert
8	Review of original scope of Customer Service & Customer Care Review	Barbara Hakes
9	Other meetings were held with the following members of staff:	Tim Parkin and Chris Newbury Helen Luty