



## **Scrutiny Team Report (12)**

Communications within the complaints process.

### **Management Response**

**Prepared by:** Ria Bristow/Lyn Collins

**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020

#### **1 Introduction:**

This scrutiny team review was focused on communication with our customers during the complaints process.

#### **2 Management response:**

This scrutiny review has provided us information on how our customers feel we communicate with them during the complaints process. Having received substantial assurance for our complaints process by our internal auditors, we were keen to find out about the experience of our customers, only this way would we be able to make improvements to the process.

The post review meeting with the scrutiny team went well, whilst we did not agree with one recommendation, we were very pleased to see that many of the review recommendations tallied with those of the complaints self-assessment and white paper.

The group people director, customer support manager and complaints resolution coordinator, all agreed at this meeting that all actions coming out of this review, the self-assessment and white paper, would be collated into one action plan, progress against this would be shared with the scrutiny team at their regular meetings.

#### **3 Findings and recommendations:**

The findings of the group are very customer focused and the recommendations are welcomed.

#### 4 Conclusion:

We would like to thank the scrutiny team for their work and we commit to keeping them up to date with action plan progress.

#### 5 Recommendations:

	Recommendation	Management response
1	<p>Scrutiny recommends that customer support staff should ensure they offer the details of the customer conversation in writing, rather than rely on customers requesting this.</p> <p>This communication should also include an explanation of the process, an estimate of the timescale where possible, information on access to the Housing Ombudsman and/or direction to the Selwood website for further information.</p>	<p><b>Expected completion date: 31/3/2021</b></p> <p><b>Coordinator:</b> Complaints resolution co-ordinator</p> <p><b>Response: Agree:</b> We will create an acknowledgement template that will include the information listed in the recommendation. All C/S team members will also be trained to offer the details of the conversation.</p> <p>Feb 8th update: <b>All</b> staff now trained on this at induction and Managers briefed on changes of expectation. Letters amended as recommended.</p>
2	<p>Scrutiny recommends that a letter, or email where preferred, be sent to customers informing them that their Expression of Dissatisfaction has been closed following the accepted procedure set out in Findings 1.1.2 above.</p>	<p><b>ECD: 31/03/2021</b></p> <p><b>Coordinator:</b> Complaints resolution co-ordinator</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Agreed: The investigator must try to call the customer at least 3 times before closing the EOD and then follow up with an email or letter.</p>

		<p>Policy, procedure and training to be updated to reflect this.</p> <p>Feb 8<sup>th</sup> update: Training and policy now updated to reflect this change in procedure.</p>
3	<p>The scrutiny team feels that Selwood should make more use of social media to promote the information available on the website around the Complaint Policy and Process and access to the Housing Ombudsman.</p>	<p><b>ECD: 31.03.21 and ongoing</b></p> <p><b>Coordinator:</b> <i>Communications team</i></p> <p><b>Response:</b> Agreed. This is already on the self-assessment action plan, with a focus on sharing learnings from complaints as an effective way to get this message across on social media.</p> <p>Feb 8<sup>th</sup> update: First positive 'real life' case study expected by end of March, then aiming for a regular approach (or when a story is captured).</p>
4	<p>a)The scrutiny team would like to see a more easily accessible route to the complaints area of the website from the home page</p> <p>b)with emphasis on complaints being a positive force for improvement of services.</p>	<p><b>ECD: 31/01/2021</b></p> <p><b>Coordinator:</b> <i>Communications team</i></p> <p><b>Response:</b> Agreed. As part of a self-assessment action plan item, the complaints and compliments web pages have been reviewed and adapted into a central hub, including the messaging that learnings from complaints</p>

	<p>Feb 8<sup>th</sup> update: actions delivered as outlined in the Communications Team response.</p>	<p>help to improve our services. This is accessible in two clicks from the top of the home page, either through the 'contact us' link or using the search bar. A 'compliments and complaints' link has also been added to the home page footer.</p>
5	<p>The team would like Selwood to consider the introduction of a Live Chat facility as noted from benchmarking. This is an increasingly popular method of live communication where perhaps the telephone is less favourable for some customers in the event of hearing or confidence issues.</p> <p>This additional service could have the potential to speed up the complaint handling process and give customers an added option in live communication with Selwood, with the extra benefit of a transcript being available.</p>	<p><b>ECD: TBC</b></p> <p><b>Coordinator:</b> <i>Portal project team</i></p> <p><b>Response:</b> Agreed: This is in the scope of the portal project.</p> <p>Feb 8th update: One Big Project (which includes the portal) Team and involved customers to be updated on this recommendation at the appropriate point for action.</p>
6	<p>The scrutiny team is most concerned about the standard of communication and attitude from the out of hours service provider.</p> <p>The team recommends that Selwood considers introducing their own in-house out of hours service, which would increase</p>	<p><b>ECD:</b></p> <p><b>Coordinator:</b></p> <p><b>Response:</b> Not agreed.</p> <p>Tunstall out of hours is a vital control in our business continuity planning, without it if we lost our phones we would have no way for our</p>

	<p>customer confidence and raise the profile of Selwood with regard to communication.</p> <p>Feb 8<sup>th</sup> update: No further action expected, well explained situation.</p>	<p>customers to contact us in an emergency.</p> <p>Amendments to the out of hours IVR message have been completed to reflect that Tunstall are acting on our behalf and in accordance with our current repair offer.</p> <p>We also hold quarterly meetings with Tunstall to discuss issues and ensure compliance with our procedures and are happy to raise any concerns that come to light</p>
7	<p>The scrutiny team feels that the fact many customers believe they are not being listened to is a major issue, adversely affecting the image of Selwood as a caring provider of homes.</p> <p>The team recommends that staff who deal directly with complaints have further training on telephone approach and attitude.</p> <p>Feb 8<sup>th</sup> update: Qly complaints training pack and manual now redesigned to incorporate review actions alongside White Paper and Ombudsman Code expectations on customer communications.</p>	<p><b>ECD: 30/06/2021</b></p> <p><b>Coordinator:</b> <i>Training team and complaints resolution co-ordinator</i></p> <p><b>Response:</b> Five customers out of the fourteen interviewed felt this. However, this is a key part of the white paper and threads through the new ombudsman code will be added to the self-assessment action plan</p>