

Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Thursday 16 January 2020 at 5.00 pm

**To be held at the Town Hall, Pinstone
Street, Sheffield, S1 2HH**

The Press and Public are Welcome to Attend

Membership

Councillors Ben Curran (Chair), Tim Huggan (Deputy Chair), Sue Auckland, Penny Baker, Michelle Cook, Dawn Dale, Karen McGowan, Pat Midgley, Anne Murphy, Peter Price, Peter Rippon, Kaltum Rivers, Andrew Sangar and Richard Shaw

Substitute Members

In accordance with the Constitution, Substitute Members may be provided for the above Committee Members as and when required.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE MEETING

The Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee exercises an overview and scrutiny function in respect of the planning, development and monitoring of performance and delivery of services which aim to make Sheffield a safer, stronger and more sustainable city for all of its residents.

A copy of the agenda and reports is available on the Council's website at www.sheffield.gov.uk. You can also see the reports to be discussed at the meeting if you call at the First Point Reception, Town Hall, Pinstone Street entrance. The Reception is open between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm, Monday to Thursday and between 9.00 am and 4.45 pm. on Friday. You may not be allowed to see some reports because they contain confidential information. These items are usually marked * on the agenda.

Members of the public have the right to ask questions or submit petitions to Scrutiny Committee meetings and recording is allowed under the direction of the Chair. Please see the website or contact Democratic Services for further information regarding public questions and petitions and details of the Council's protocol on audio/visual recording and photography at council meetings.

Scrutiny Committee meetings are normally open to the public but sometimes the Committee may have to discuss an item in private. If this happens, you will be asked to leave. Any private items are normally left until last. If you would like to attend the meeting please report to the First Point Reception desk where you will be directed to the meeting room.

If you require any further information about this Scrutiny Committee, please contact Alice Nicholson, Policy and Improvement Officer, on 0114 2735065 or email alice.nicholson@sheffield.gov.uk

FACILITIES

There are public toilets available, with wheelchair access, on the ground floor of the Town Hall. Induction loop facilities are available in meeting rooms.

Access for people with mobility difficulties can be obtained through the ramp on the side to the main Town Hall entrance.

**SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY AND POLICY
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA
16 JANUARY 2020**

Order of Business

- 1. Welcome and Housekeeping Arrangements**
- 2. Apologies for Absence**
- 3. Exclusion of Public and Press**
To identify items where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public
- 4. Declarations of Interest**
Members to declare any interests they have in the business to be considered at the meeting
- 5. Minutes of Previous Meeting**
To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19th November, 2019.
- 6. Public Questions and Petitions**
To receive any questions or petitions from members of the public
- 7. Challenge for Change**
Presentation and Report of Challenge for Change Tenant Scrutiny Panel – Customer Access.
- 8. Update on the work of the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit**
Report of the Joint Heads of the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit.
- 9. Hate Crime in Sheffield**
Report of the Head of Neighbourhood Intervention and Tenant Support Service.
- 10. Work Programme 2019-20**
Report of the Policy and Improvement Officer.
- 11. Date of Next Meeting**
The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Thursday, 13th February, 2020, at 5.00 p.m., in the Town Hall.

This page is intentionally left blank

ADVICE TO MEMBERS ON DECLARING INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

If you are present at a meeting of the Council, of its executive or any committee of the executive, or of any committee, sub-committee, joint committee, or joint sub-committee of the authority, and you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI)** relating to any business that will be considered at the meeting, you must not:

- participate in any discussion of the business at the meeting, or if you become aware of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the meeting, participate further in any discussion of the business, or
- participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting.

These prohibitions apply to any form of participation, including speaking as a member of the public.

You **must**:

- leave the room (in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct)
- make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of any DPI at any meeting at which you are present at which an item of business which affects or relates to the subject matter of that interest is under consideration, at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.
- declare it to the meeting and notify the Council's Monitoring Officer within 28 days, if the DPI is not already registered.

If you have any of the following pecuniary interests, they are your **disclosable pecuniary interests** under the new national rules. You have a pecuniary interest if you, or your spouse or civil partner, have a pecuniary interest.

- Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain, which you, or your spouse or civil partner undertakes.
- Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from your council or authority) made or provided within the relevant period* in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

*The relevant period is the 12 months ending on the day when you tell the Monitoring Officer about your disclosable pecuniary interests.

- Any contract which is made between you, or your spouse or your civil partner (or a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest) and your council or authority –
 - under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
 - which has not been fully discharged.

- Any beneficial interest in land which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, have and which is within the area of your council or authority.
- Any licence (alone or jointly with others) which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, holds to occupy land in the area of your council or authority for a month or longer.
- Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) –
 - the landlord is your council or authority; and
 - the tenant is a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest.
- Any beneficial interest which you, or your spouse or your civil partner has in securities of a body where -
 - (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of your council or authority; and
 - (b) either -
 - the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
 - if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

If you attend a meeting at which any item of business is to be considered and you are aware that you have a **personal interest** in the matter which does not amount to a DPI, you must make verbal declaration of the existence and nature of that interest at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent. You should leave the room if your continued presence is incompatible with the 7 Principles of Public Life (selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; and leadership).

You have a personal interest where –

- a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing (including interests in land and easements over land) of you or a member of your family or a person or an organisation with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the Authority's administrative area, or
- it relates to or is likely to affect any of the interests that are defined as DPIs but are in respect of a member of your family (other than a partner) or a person with whom you have a close association.

Guidance on declarations of interest, incorporating regulations published by the Government in relation to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, has been circulated to you previously.

You should identify any potential interest you may have relating to business to be considered at the meeting. This will help you and anyone that you ask for advice to fully consider all the circumstances before deciding what action you should take.

In certain circumstances the Council may grant a **dispensation** to permit a Member to take part in the business of the Authority even if the member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest relating to that business.

To obtain a dispensation, you must write to the Monitoring Officer at least 48 hours before the meeting in question, explaining why a dispensation is sought and desirable, and specifying the period of time for which it is sought. The Monitoring Officer may consult with the Independent Person or the Council's Audit and Standards Committee in relation to a request for dispensation.

Further advice can be obtained from Gillian Duckworth, Director of Legal and Governance on 0114 2734018 or email gillian.duckworth@sheffield.gov.uk.

This page is intentionally left blank

Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Meeting held 19 November 2019

PRESENT: Councillors Ben Curran (Chair), Tim Huggan (Deputy Chair), Sue Auckland, Penny Baker, Dawn Dale, Pat Midgley, Anne Murphy, Peter Price, Peter Rippon and Richard Shaw

.....

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Baker, Michelle Cook, Karen McGowan and Kaltum Rivers (with Councillor Angela Argenzio attending as Councillor Kaltum Rivers substitute).

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

4.1 Mick Watts has indicated that he wishes to ask a question and this will be taken under Item 5 on the agenda – Call-in of Cabinet Member decision on Council Housing Stock Increase Programme, as part of the discussion.

5. CALL-IN OF CABINET MEMBER DECISION ON COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK INCREASE PROGRAMME

5.1 The Committee considered the following decision of the Cabinet, made on 14th October, 2019:-

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety:-

- (a) notes the progress of the HRA funded Stock Increase Programme since its approval in 2014 and approves the principle of increasing delivery from 1,600 to around 3,100 new homes over the next 10 years (which if necessary may include the purchase of land for the purpose of the delivery of new council homes) subject to individual business cases and the Council's Capital Approval Processes;
- (b) agrees that proposals be developed for shared ownership homes to improve housing choice in some areas and notes that appropriate policies for the management of this tenure will be the subject of a further executive

decision; and

- (c) approves that the HRA Stock Increase Programme is reviewed annually to ensure that any additional prudential borrowing is at a level that poses no additional risk to the 30 year HRA Business Plan as the programme increases the number of new homes provided.

5.2 Signatories

The lead signatory to the call-in was Councillor Tim Huggan, and the other signatories were Councillors Steve Ayris, Penny Baker, Mike Levery and Richard Shaw.

5.3 Reasons for the Call-In

The signatories have stated that it is unclear what the implications for the Council of the extra borrowing required to finance the new homes.

5.4 Attendees

- Councillor Paul Wood (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety)
- Janet Sharpe (Director of Housing Services).
- Councillor Steve Ayris

5.5 Councillor Tim Huggan addressing the Committee as Lead Signatory, explained that the purpose of the call-in was for a number of reasons. He felt the report was vague and out-dated as approval of the HRA funded programme was given in 2014. He asked the following questions:

- why has it taken five years to get to this point?
- with the five main areas of housing need, how has that housing need been worked out as it only mitigates for a sixth of the number of social rented houses that we are going to lose over the next 10 years in the medium term plan;
- how has the impact of the programme been assessed for affordable homes which might otherwise be provided i.e. through housing associations or other social landlords.

5.6 Councillor Steve Ayris, as a signatory to the call-in, asked

- has land been purchased for the increase in the number of homes proposed to be built and has the need been identified in the local plan?
- what is the percentage of the proposed number of houses to be built on Council-owned land and what percentage of houses is to be built on Council-owned farms and farmland?
- what is the difference in cost between new build, including the purchase of the land and general acquisitions?
- are the general acquisitions from housing associations or other social

landlords?

- do the general acquisitions already exist or is there a target figure to acquire those properties within any specific year?
- will there be a full breakdown of housing types to be built and targets on different sizes, number of bedrooms etc., set out in the local plan?

5.7 Councillor Penny Baker, as a signatory to the call-in, expressed her concern about the right to buy scheme and how that will impact on any houses being built for purchase and has the impact of that scheme been built into the plan; what input has there been from tenants i.e. where or when the properties will be, and a reassurance that if there is any shortfall it won't be added to Council housing rents.

5.8 Councillor Richard Shaw, as a signatory to the call-in, the Council takes on these investments, liabilities and borrowing, could all these new homes be sold under RTB and that ought to be made clear of the implications, like to be reassured that the number that has been put forward is the right number and could it be higher.

5.9 In response, Janet Sharpe stated that the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is required to be undertaken by Councils every five years to assess housing need at a geographical level within the city. The assessment looks at the current numbers, types of homes and where the gaps are. Also the assessment looks at the income levels in neighbourhoods to ascertain what is needed and this also forms the local plan. The SHMA in 2019, in partnership with Rotherham, was done based on information gathered by the University, the Council and the housing market, to take account of housing demand and shortfalls and estimate where the gaps are. Initially, the assessment in 2014 was to provide 725 new homes per year, but draft assessment for 2019, has found that there was a need to increase that number up to 900 new homes per year. Janet Sharpe said the Council worked alongside housing associations and although there were up to 40 different housing associations in the city, only six of these were developing housing associations and work was being carried out to encourage housing associations to build more. On average, housing associations build about 60 new homes per year. She added that there was a shortfall in specialist homes to meet the needs of disabled people, people with learning disabilities and older people. Janet Sharpe said that the provision more affordable homes through the stock increase programme will meet the shortfall created over the last 30 years by tenants purchasing their homes through the right to buy scheme. She further stated that on some estates, 50% of houses had been sold which has left a lack of choice in the type and size of Council homes available to rent. All new properties built by the Council will meet the lifetime home standard principles and she already has a workforce in place to embark on such a project and employ more apprentices.

5.10 Janet Sharpe stated that since the Government removed the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap on local authorities, the Council now has the flexibility to increase its borrowing for the purpose of increasing its housing stock, provided that robust business plans were put in place to manage any additional borrowing. She said that once the agreed levels had been reached, there was a need to maintain the number of properties available to protect those assets for as long as possible. She said that the priority was to make sure people can access the right

type of property to meet their needs. Janet Sharpe identified the areas in the city where land has been redundant for a few years i.e. Scowerdons, Weaklands, etc., and these estates were now being developed to the highest standard.

- 5.11 Councillor Paul Wood stated that currently there are 12,500 people actively looking for Council housing, with 40,000 on the housing register. Although the initial figure to build 1,250 homes per year, over the next 10 years, he hoped that it would be viable to build more as approximately 400 homes each year become unavailable to rent through the right to buy (RTB) scheme. Councillor Wood added that many of homes purchased under RTB were in need of major improvements, as social landlords did not always maintain the properties to the same standards as Council owned properties and this was something that needed investigating. He said that current Council house rents would not increase to fund the programme.

5.12 Questions from Members of the Committee and the public

Members made various comments and asked a number of questions, to which responses were provided as follows:-

- Properties which have been purchased through the RTB scheme are rented out by private landlords who charge sky high rents and don't always maintain the premises.
- Seven out of 10 Council housing requests are emergency accommodation.
- Through consultation, it has been found that tenants have the desire for the Council to provide affordable housing in vast numbers, as they did decades ago.
- The standard of the houses – could build more, cheaper properties, but these require repairs more so it's not cost effective in the long term.
- Specialist housing does cost more but the overall programme is balanced and the borrowing will be paid back within 30 years.
- The Programme has taken into account the impact on schools, local doctors surgeries and highways to ensure that services were delivered.
- With regard to private landlords and housing associations, Councillor Wood stated that building checks were not being carried and this was something he had raised with the Secretary of State but due there was a delay in receiving a response due to the general election being called.
- In terms of funding the programme, the total cost over 10 years is £350m, the Council is not borrowing the full amount, the Government are providing some funding, as is Homes for England, and a contribution from Section 106 monies.
- With regard to expanding the programme, Sheffield wants to maintain a

level of 300 per year, but is prepared to go above that figure but will make sure that borrowing for the programme remains under control.

- Shared ownership, which is a lost cost home ownership tenure where the buyer is granted a lease for a premium based on a percentage of the market value and then pays rent for the remaining percentage, would address some of the city's shortfall in affordable housing and would help reduce demand for social rented homes however, there is a need to develop a clear policy on this. The Government's definition on this is very strict, but the scheme would enable people to be able to afford to downsize if they so wished.
- The Council is looking into modular types of housing, which are quite expensive to build but very easy to maintain and have a very long life.

5.12 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the comments now made and the responses to the questions raised; and
- (b) agrees to take no action in relation to the called-in decision, but that the relevant Scrutiny Committee(s), should include the Housing Stock increase programme on an annual basis as part of its work programme:
 - (i) to ensure housing needs are kept under continual and relevant review,
 - (ii) that the Climate Emergency goals are taken account of; and
- (c) requests that the Council should press to have the powers to determine 'Right to Buy' on the new homes based on local need.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

6.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee will be held on Thursday, 16th January, 2020 at 5.00 p.m., in the Town Hall.

This page is intentionally left blank

Challenge for Change

Customer Access

Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee

16 January 2020



Introduction

- Challenge for Change is a customer scrutiny panel
- We review different parts of the Council Housing Service
- Open to tenants, leaseholders and customers of the service
- For more information visit:-
<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/council-housing/scrutinising-housing-services.html>

Project Objectives

1. Information

- What information is available to customers and how easy is it to locate?
- Is the information provided easy to understand?

2. Access

- How effective and efficient are the different ways customers use to access the service?
- What are the barriers to accessing the service?

Project Objectives

3. Satisfaction

- How close does the customer experience match the 'Customer Services Promises Charter'?
- What reporting is in place to monitor service performance?
- How does the current accessibility match customers' needs?

4. Delivery

- How well does the service cope with demand?
- What work is being done to meet the changing ways in which customers want to contact the Housing Service?

Reality Checks

- Observational Visits to Housing Offices
- Review of Existing Leaflets and Information
- Customer Care Promises Charter
- Online Survey
- Meeting with TARA Representatives
- Call Centre Visit
- Meetings with Staff
- Nottingham City Homes Visit

Recommendations

1. Information

- Ensure that the way that it communicates information to tenants is efficient and effective so that they are kept up-to-date on service changes.
- Rationalise its suite of printed material and on-line information to ensure it is accessible, useful and appropriate to customers' needs.
- Ensure that all key policies are available to customers in an accessible format.

Recommendations

2. Access

- Radically improve the quality and accessibility of information on the website.
- Review the future locations, layouts and standards of its smaller housing offices.
- Explore opportunities to deliver housing services alongside other organisations in shared buildings or spaces.
- Have a clear plan for improving in-person, telephone and on-line access to its services.

Recommendations

3. Delivery

- Take urgent action to improve contact centre waiting times.
- Invest in improved contact methods such as email, web chat and call back facilities to improve customer contact satisfaction.
- Ensure the effectiveness of current arrangements for staff to support customers with high volume enquiries particularly repairs, benefits and rehousing.
- Change the way that training is provided for its staff, particularly the reliance on email and electronic updates rather than team briefings.
- Find a better way for customers to get through to a named member of staff when returning telephone calls.

Recommendations

4. Delivery

- Update the current Customer Services Charter.
- Be clear with customers the standards that they can expect when accessing services and ensure that they are met.
- Regularly share information about satisfaction and performance in delivering customers' expectations.



Recommendations

Additional Recommendations

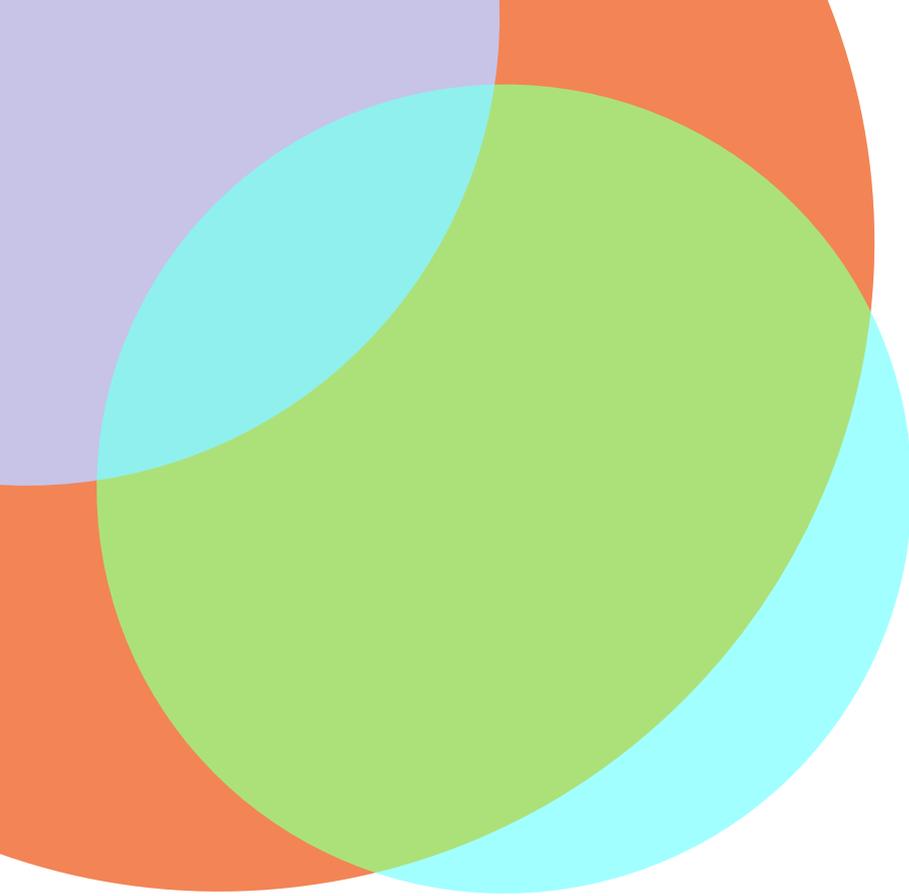
- Consider ways in which its staff has a direct impact on local communities - for example through Housing & Neighbourhoods Service-led volunteer days or supporting local community events.
- Raise at the highest level, the impact that local and national policy decisions and budget cuts are having on services to customers and tell customers what impact this has had.



Any Questions?



This page is intentionally left blank



Challenge for Change

Scrutiny Report
Customer Access

December 2019







Contents

- 1. Introduction and Background**
- 2. Objectives**
- 3. Summary of Reality Checks**
- 4. Recommendations**
- 5. Budget**
- 6. Acknowledgements**

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Observational visits

Appendix 2 - Online questionnaire

Appendix 3 - Questionnaire summary report

Appendix 4 - Meeting with Tara representatives

Appendix 5 - Call centre visit

Appendix 6 - Meeting with staff

Appendix 7 - Nottingham homes visit

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Challenge for Change is a customer scrutiny panel that was set up to review different parts of the Council Housing Service. It is open to tenants, leaseholders and customers of the service. The group has carried out several reviews, produced a series of reports and recommendations for service improvement. Detailed information can be found by visiting <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/council-housing/scrutinising-housing-services.html>
- 1.2 This project was suggested by the group and has involved Jackie Taylor, Grace Collins, Carrie Hedderwick and Joe Clarke.

Acknowledgements are also made to Linda Moxon, Max Richardson and Rich Heaton who assisted at the start of the project.
- 1.3 This report is a summary of how effectively customers are able to access the housing service.
- 1.4 In this report, we have detailed our findings following investigations that have included:
 - Observational visits to neighbourhood housing offices in Sheffield
 - Review of existing leaflets and information available
 - Meeting with Tenants and Residents Association (TARA) representatives
 - Online survey
 - Sheffield City Council call centre visit
 - Meeting with Neighbourhood Support staff
 - Nottingham City Homes visit
- 1.5 We have made several judgements and recommendations based on our findings. These are detailed within the report and in a summary appendix which includes evidence and impacts.
- 1.6 The purpose of the project is to review the customer experience when contacting the Housing Service by telephone or visiting neighbourhood offices and to provide recommendations for improved access. The project predominately focuses on access to the service via telephone and face to face contact, however as a result of the evidence gathered and the transfer and encouragement by the Council to utilise online services, some recommendations relate to online and digital access.
- 1.7 The project excludes accessing the repairs service as this is currently in a process of transformation, however we think the repairs service would benefit from taking on board the findings of this project.
- 1.8 We acknowledge that the Council is under significant financial pressures and this can limit the resources it has to implement major changes. Never the less, as a result of undertaking this project, we believe that improvements can still be made in regard to accessing the service for housing customers.



2. Objectives

From our initial research and discussions, we have identified the following themes and objectives for this project:

2.1 Information

- What information is available to customers and how easy is it to locate?
- Is the information provided easy to understand?

2.2 Access

- How effective and efficient are the different ways customers use to access the service?
- What are the barriers to accessing the service?

2.3 Delivery

- How well does the service cope with demand?
- What work is being done to meet the changing ways in which customers want to contact the Housing Service?

2.4 Satisfaction

- How close does the customer experience match the 'Customer Services Promises Charter'?
- What reporting is in place to monitor service performance?
- How does the current accessibility match customers' needs?



3. Summary of reality checks

3.1 Observational Visits to Housing Offices

The Housing and Neighbourhoods Service currently has 13 public facing offices; we decided to visit 5 of these to make some observations.

Feedback from these visits was that there was generally good signage and leaflets displayed within the neighbourhood offices, however in some offices this information was not always up to date e.g. one office had out of date information on mutual exchanges.

The offices have different layouts, some offices are bigger than others and have adjoining services e.g. libraries, job centre etc. We observed that some of the offices felt spacious whereas others felt cramped and unsuitable.

There are rooms for private conversations to take place in the offices that were visited; however some of these were unsuitable as confidential conversations could be heard in the public areas. The same was observed for telephone conversations. The free phones were not located in a sufficiently private area as confidential conversations could be overheard.

Offices that had a shared space e.g. Chapeltown with the Jobcentre, made it easy for staff within the housing office to re-direct customers for queries relating to benefits etc, whereas offices that didn't have this, did not have this benefit.

We observed that staff are polite when dealing with customers and apologetic if they had to wait to be seen. The reception desks are not permanently staffed and some offices had a bell to ring to be seen, although this was not consistent across all offices that we visited. This didn't create a very welcoming atmosphere and we felt this was an outdated way of doing things.

Some offices were also busier than others, for example the bigger offices attached to or close to other amenities such as shopping areas and libraries have greater footfall. For example from February 2018-February 2019, the neighbourhood office at Crystal Peaks had a total footfall of 9,780 compared with Lowedges neighbourhood office that had a total of 2,951.

To read more about our observational visits, please see appendix 1.

3.2 Review of Existing Leaflets and Information

The Housing and Neighbourhood Service produce a number of leaflets and information about the services provided. We reviewed a number of these leaflets that are currently available to see if this information was purposeful, understandable and accessible.

The key things we found were:-

- There are too many leaflets
- Many of the leaflets contained grammatical errors
- No information on the translation service
- No clear link to the policies that underpin the information contained in leaflets

3.3 Customer Care Promises Charter

We also looked at the Customer Care Promises Charter for the Housing and Neighbourhoods service to see if we thought these were being delivered. The promises set out what tenants should expect from the Housing and Neighbourhood Service when providing services and reflect what is important to customers.

The promises are:-

To ensure services are accessible, we will:

- make sure our customer service points are accessible to all and equipped to deal with a range of enquiries
- provide translation and interpretation services
- ensure that our call centres provide a prompt, courteous and efficient service

To provide good quality information and communications, we will:

- ensure all our leaflets and newsletters are easy to understand
- continue to improve and enhance our online services and regularly update our website
- deal with all enquiries confidentially and sensitively
- respond promptly to complaints and keep you informed as we deal with them
- publish facts and figures about complaints each year and tell you about any service changes we made as a result

We felt that whilst the promises were being delivered to an extent, improvements should be made to ensure these are being delivered more effectively.

3.4 Online Survey

In order to find out what tenants thought about accessing the housing service and to find out more about their experiences, we produced an online survey.

The survey was emailed out to around 22,885 subscribers of council housing news and alerts as well as subscribers of the Council Housing newsletter “Your Home, Your Neighbourhood”. The survey ran for 7 weeks with a total of 276 responses received. This is a reasonably representable sample and we have confidence that the results reflect the wider views of customers.

The survey asked tenants and customers of the Housing and Neighbourhoods Service how they currently accessed the housing service, preferences for accessing the service and their experiences of telephone and face to face contact.

Telephone Access

The survey showed that although the majority of people were satisfied when they accessed the service there was an overwhelming number of negative comments about the telephone. Comments were predominately about the length of time it took to get through to speak to a staff member, but there were also substantial comments made about lack of communication when calling e.g. not knowing where you were in the call queue, there not being a call back facility and lack of confidence about being put through to the right person.

When asked “What was your preferred method of accessing the service”, 163 respondents said telephone, with 62 of these answering yes to “is there anything stopping you from using your preferred method of contacting the Housing Service?”.

Out of these 62 respondents, 56 (90%) referenced the length of time it takes to get through to the service on the telephone as being the main barrier.

“Phone takes far too long to answer - 20 mins or more is usual. There is no clue as to how long a wait or queue might be”

“It takes forever for someone to answer the phone. It not a good experience”

“Depending on what time I ring I could be waiting too long to be put through and end up putting the phone down in frustration”

“Waiting time to speak to someone is ridiculous; usually have to give up after twenty minutes. Should have direct numbers for each housing office”.

Linked to the dissatisfaction of with the telephone service (lengthy wait), many responses suggested:-

- Recruiting more staff
- Better training to be provided for staff so they can resolve queries rather than passing through to other teams.
- Having direct numbers for departments

Face to Face

A small number of respondents (27) stated that they access the service by visiting the neighbourhood offices. Only 12 of these said visiting the office was their preferred way of contacting the service.

The survey found the main reason people visited the neighbourhood offices were:-

- To drop off documentation
- If passing by or in the area
- If they had been unable to get through via the telephone
- Prefer to speak to someone face to face as are able to explain themselves better.

“To drop documentation off and obtain signed receipt.”

“Would like to speak to someone on the phone, but end up going to our local office because after 3 days of trying to get through”.

“Because things get explained better and online is no good to older generation I am 62 and find online hard to get round and sometimes getting through on phone is hard due to busy phone lines”

“I visit an office if I need to ask staff how to fill in a form because I don't see very well I would also visit if I needed information about a local issue for example fly-tipping or vandalism the Chapeltown office are also very useful as they are connected with the DWP”.

Some comments from the survey suggest that customers mistakenly believe by visiting their neighbourhood office will give them easier access to the service.

“I visit for information and help but usually get told to phone department upstairs”

“I have tried numerous times, pressed the relevant numbers to direct my call to the correct person, only to be advised they are busy and to call back later..... very infuriating and not acceptable, especially as when you visit a housing office, all they can do is point you to their phones (which dial the same number)”.

Digital Access

Although the online survey was predominately focused on telephone and face to face access, the responses highlighted issues with contacting the service online. Examples of this include:

- The website being difficult to navigate meaning customers are unable to find out information this way.
- This then impacting on the telephone service, resulting in increased telephone calls to the service
- Better emailing system is needed

“The web site is difficult to navigate and I was unable to do what I wanted to do”.

“There is no email address to use so I have a copy/proof of what I have enquired or complained about”.

“I cannot get thru on the phone and your website is not fit for purpose. It is difficult to navigate and the links don’t work”.

“There often aren’t enough options on the website to get across your query/issue and therefore have to call up and the phone lines are always quite busy”

“The website is horrendously laid out, and the server frequently returns internal errors. Much of the telephone line information is outdated”.

“I like to use email as it gives both sides a written record of what is happening. Phone calls rely on my memory (imperfect) and my understanding of the person at the other end. Written communication is more reasoned and can be referred to later to ensure nothing is missed”.

“Difficulty finding e-mail addresses, poor response times”

The survey questions and responses summary can be found at appendix 2 and 3.

3.5 Meeting with Tenants and Residents Association Representatives

We invited representatives from TARAs to meet with us to discuss their experiences and views on accessing the housing service. The main comments from them included:-

- Long waiting times on the telephone
- At some of the First Points, some staff are ‘ignorant’.
- Response times too slow when using email
- Tenants can be impatient - they think that their problem is the absolute priority and are bad mannered.
- Staff need more patience if English is not a tenant’s first language
- Impressed with staff at the Call Centre - very friendly and dealt really well with awkward customers
- Lack of privacy in the neighbourhood offices especially when using the telephones as others can overhear private and confidential conversations

- Difficulties using the website and accessing the service to report repairs and being able to login generally with a pin number

Suggestions to help improve the service included:-

- To be told on the phone - "You are now number 3 in the queue". This would help as could then gauge whether to hang on or call back later
- Could do with more staff (in offices and in call centres)
- Possible direct numbers to departments
- A notice at the reception desk to ask customers to stand back while the person at the desk is explaining their issue
- Some Housing Associations use apps which can help speed up the process such as repairs reporting as can take photos of the problem etc

To read more about our meeting with TARA representatives, please see appendix 4.

3.6 Call Centre Visit

We visited the Sheffield City Council Call Centre to find out more about accessing the service via the telephone.

The call centre is split into 4 teams –

1. Council Housing Enquiries and Rents;
2. Council Housing Repairs and Gas Servicing;
3. Council Tax, Benefits and Universal Credit; and
4. Other Council Services (roads, parking, education etc).

The performance information that was presented related specifically to calls for housing and rent enquiries as well as for repairs and gas servicing. What we found most interesting was that the call centre was reporting waiting times of around 6.51 minutes (as the longest), with the shortest being 0.48mins. We found this surprising as call waiting times, from our personal experience and from the vast number of comments from the online survey, are a huge source of dissatisfaction it generally taking much longer than 6.51 minutes to get through.

As waiting times are seen as a big issue, the call centre team try to improve the situation in a number of ways such as:-

- A rolling recruitment team; (10 staff, 4 times a year)
- Training repairs staff to take calls on other housing areas e.g. rents and vice versa
- Re-routing calls to other staff in busier periods.

Housing related calls were the busiest Monday and Friday, with repairs calls busiest on a Monday. In terms of transferring calls to other departments, this was reported as happening when a query is more complex and needs more information/ expertise.

We sat in and listened to a number of live calls being taken by call centre operatives. We found this really interesting and were very impressed by the courteousness and the knowledge of the staff. As the staff are continuously on the phone, we had little opportunity to actually talk to the staff about their experiences of working in the call centre.

Typically the service recruits about 10 staff, 4 times a year, which we felt to be quite high as there seems to be a high turnover of staff and this will impact on the knowledge and experience levels of staff working in the call centre. Retention and recruitment seems to be an issue.

We were told about plans for improvements to the service and these included: –

- Call centre staff being able to see a complete view of the tenant's case/history
- Systems to be easier for call centre staff to access information
- Potentially being able to tell customers their place in the queue i.e. “you are now 4th in the queue” and/or the waiting time is 3, 5, 10 mins etc.
- Potential for a ring back option
- Web chat option
- Voice recognition, rather than 1-5 options, the customer states their required service

We welcome these improvements but would like to see some of these options trialled first. For example web chats and voice recognition.

To read more about our visit to the call centre, please see appendix 5.

3.7 Meetings with Staff

We met with Neighbourhood Support staff from each of the neighbourhood offices and a staff member from the Property Shop based at Howden House in order to gain their views on how tenants access housing services.

We first asked staff for their views on the neighbourhood offices, specifically the environment, facilities and accessibility. The second part of the meeting focused on views from staff on delivering an accessible service, such as the service they are able to provide to customers, potential barriers to customers accessing the service and training and support available for staff.

The main issues the staff identified within the offices included:-

- Computer access at the offices was poor as the computers were old and had limited web access
- Lack of privacy for confidential and sensitive conversations
- Poor layout issues in some offices and issues around accessibility for example wheelchair users as fixtures and fittings had been screwed down.
- Lack of security for both staff and customers

Staff stated a lot of queries they received were related to benefits which can be complex. Despite these being the most frequent types of enquiries, staff felt they were ill-equipped to deal with them. Some suggestions from staff included having a benefit specialist located in offices who had the training and knowledge to deal with these types of enquiries.

Staff did feel frustrated at not being able to deal with all enquires and some of this was linked to the information they had access to via the systems. Online forms across the service were also inconsistent and not user friendly – staff had difficulty using them as do customers.

In some areas, customers choose to come in to speak to staff due to language issues as have difficulties over the telephone. Also, customers would come in to speak to staff after not being able to get through on the telephone little realising that staff have to go through the same process.

Staff commented that using footfall as a way of planning services and monitoring trends is ineffective. For example it could be that offices only record 5 visits from customers but these could be complex enquiries that take a long time to deal with. "Footfall" doesn't take account of this.

Overall it appeared that at times staff were just as frustrated as customers.

To read more about our meeting with Neighbourhood Support staff, please see appendix 6.

3.8 Nottingham City Homes Visit

We visited Nottingham City Homes alongside a number of representatives from the Customer Access Focus Group.

Nottingham City Homes is an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) and manages the council housing on behalf of Nottingham City Homes are different to Sheffield for example as their call centre is only taking calls relating to council housing services as opposed to all council services which is the case in Sheffield.

In Nottingham we visited a multi-service centre, public access housing office and heard presentations from the digital and call centre teams.

The key differences that Nottingham City Homes had adopted in their approach to customer accessibility included:-

Housing Offices

- Four Multi-Service Centres that provide support for council wide services including housing. The centres also work in partnership with the NHS with GP surgeries located within the centres, as well as a library and pharmacy.
- One public facing housing office that can be accessed. This is located within one of the larger council estates and remains open as is used frequently by the local tenants.

Call Centre

- Direct telephone numbers for the most popular services e.g. repairs, rents and tenant services
- Surveys at the end of calls to help measure satisfaction and help with staff training and development
- Training days are used for call centre staff so they are taken off the phones for this. This can result in a reduced service however this was felt worthwhile in the longer term.

Digital

- A Digital Strategy and Plan have been developed and will help promote further digital access for customers
- An online portal is in development – Housing Online. This will help customers access what they need in one place e.g. access rent balance, report a repairs etc

Other

- Incorporate staff volunteer days and working within local communities.

To read more about our visit to Nottingham City Homes, please see appendix 7.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Information

The service must:

- R1 Ensure that the way it communicates information to tenants is efficient and effective so that they are kept up-to-date on service changes.
- R2 Rationalise its suite of printed material and on-line information to ensure it is accessible, useful and appropriate to customers' needs.
- R3 Ensure that all key policies are available to customers in an accessible format.



4.2 Access

The service must:

- R4 Radically improve the quality and accessibility of information on the website.
- R5 Review the future locations, layouts and standards of its housing offices.
- R6 Explore opportunities to deliver housing services alongside other organisations in shared buildings or spaces.
- R7 Have a clear plan for improving in-person, telephone and on-line access to its services.

4.3 Delivery

The service must:

- R8 Take urgent action to improve contact centre waiting times.
- R9 Invest in improved contact methods such as email, web chat and call back facilities to improve customer contact satisfaction.
- R10 Ensure the effectiveness of current arrangements for staff to support customers with high volume enquiries particularly repairs, benefits and rehousing.
- R11 Change the way that training is provided for its staff, avoiding reliance on email and electronic updates in favour of team briefings.
- R12 Find a better way for customers to get through to a named member of staff when returning telephone calls.

4.4 Satisfaction

The service must:

- R13 Update the current Customer Services Charter.
- R14 Clarify for customers the standards that they can expect when accessing services and ensure that they are met.
- R15 Regularly share information about satisfaction and performance in delivering customers' expectations.

4.5 Additional Recommendations

The service must:

R16 Consider ways in which its staff has a direct impact on local communities - for example through Housing & Neighbourhoods Service-led volunteer days or supporting local community events.

R17 Raise at the highest level, the impact that local and national policy decisions and budget cuts are having on services to customers and tell customers what impact this has had.

5. Budget

5.1 The following expenses were incurred as part of the project from March 2019 – November 2019:

- Refreshments £30
- C4C members expenses £72

6. Acknowledgements

6.1 The C4C group would like to give sincere thanks for their commitment to this process to Peter Brown and Louise Cassin and their input to the production of this report.

In addition we would like to thank those staff and TARA reps who met with us, who shared their thoughts, experiences and suggestions which are incorporated in this report.

APPENDIX 1 - NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICE OBSERVATIONAL VISITS

Crystal Peaks Neighbourhood Office - Wednesday 8th May 2019, 11:30am

- Easily accessible attached to a large shopping centre
- The building includes a library and well used café, and additional space downstairs (accessed from the housing office) used for adult / children's services groups.
- Signage for each area, although signs to the group rooms to the rear could be more prominent to save people queuing to ask at reception during busy times.
- Clean and tidy
- Relatively quiet when we visited at 11.30am (approx. 7 people in 1 hour using reception), which may have been due to library being closed and half day opening at the housing office
- Visitors were dealt with efficiently and pleasantly and either dealt with immediately or only had a short waiting time (no more than 2 people waiting - less than 4 mins to clear the queue)
- Good selection of leaflets situated near the library entrance to maximise accessibility
- A range of posters on notice boards clearly marked community, library, financial safety and general
- Observed people looking at posters – located where there is good footfall
- Facilities included 2 freephone telephones to access other council services, 3 PC's to access SCC and the Council's property website, a small children's area located in one corner, disabled toilet. Over 20 chairs in waiting area.
- 2 areas to (presumably) conduct interviews with low-levels screens to partition. A clear sign visible to say there is a private interview room available on request.

Possible questions/thoughts.....

- Do we need further observation when it is busier? Do we know when that is?
- Freephone telephone – these are wall-mounted with a 'canopy' over the top – How much privacy do they give as they are on a wall in the middle of the waiting area? What happens when a tenant has a complex query, they are stood up holding the phone and have paperwork or they need to make notes? Telephones are quite high up for disabled customers to use – do they have provision for that?
- More prominent signs for other activities when they happen to signpost to the other area of the office (rather than at the back of the office 10m from the entrance)? Is this an issue?

Burngreave Neighbourhood Office - Wednesday 8th May 2019 11.30am

This is an area office that was formerly located across the road, Spital Hill, in a purpose built building with a front reception area and back offices. It is now located within Sorby House which contains Burngreave Library and various other services in the upstairs offices. There are several meeting rooms that are used by local groups.

You walk in off the street and there is a front desk for the whole building with a receptionist. On the right hand side of this is a receptionist dedicated to the Housing Service. There is a notice, Housing Services, on the desk but it is not immediately obvious, and the receptionist was hardly visible because of 1) the height of the desk and 2) a computer screen.

On this ground floor level and immediately accessible are – the Library to the left and a Housing Services area to the right. Opening hours are displayed on the glass doors.(Have several photos)

Spacious area – approx 10m x 7m. There are comfortable chairs in the centre, some play equipment for kids and 6 computers for use by customers. There are 2 semi private alcoves for private conversations at the far end of the room with seating and a table in each. There are 2 phones on the end wall for customers to ring staff. There are also 3 Interview rooms. One was in use when I was there.

There is plenty of information – both on the walls and copies of leaflets for people to take if they need them, covering all aspects of the housing service, and also related information of interest – e.g. about the Police, local TARAs, events, Councillors surgeries etc. There were some CAB leaflets about available help with Universal Credit and also a laminated sheet with a list of languages used, so that people can indicate if they need an interpreter.

There was one man at the computers – but he was a technician sorting out some IT problem. The computers are set up to only access the Property Shop i.e. for looking up possible properties to rent. There is no access to either other SCC services, or other information. This might be changing.

Another older man came in but he wanted help/ advice from the CAB which is further down the street, so was re-directed there.

Nobody was waiting. I had to go back out into the hall/ main reception area to talk to Housing staff. I was told that it can get busy, but as it was a rainy day, people were not out and about much. Also there are no staff available on Wednesday afternoons – although the area with the info and the computers is still open.

To visit again on a Monday to check if busier.

Burngreave Neighbourhood Office (2nd Visit) - Monday 13th May 2019

1. Spent about 40 mins sitting on one of chairs in the housing office area. The housing staff member is at the desk outside in the main reception area alongside the general receptionist for Sorby House.
2. 1 couple went into one of the 3 interview rooms; there was 1 other woman going thru the Property Shop screens on the PC. After 20 mins she finished and went to talk to the Housing receptionist in the hallway.
3. Older woman spoke to the Housing Reception and came in to use one of the phones to ring thru a repair. She came away after a minute or so, saying that it was the same recorded message that she got when she rang from home. She was not prepared to stand there for 40 mins waiting to actually speak to a person about her repair. She said that you could not put in a written request for a repair – it had to be by phone and this was hugely frustrating. She left and was going to try ringing again from her home.
4. In the main reception area, an older man came in to report a repair. He was somewhat confused and the general receptionist did not talk to him very respectfully. Hustled him round to the Housing officer who then sent him off with a number to ring. Language and understanding difficulties.
5. Young man and his mother came in – talked at housing reception, came and sat down on the PC and spent about 15 mins looking thru the screens. Then went and spoke again to the housing officer on reception and left.
6. A young couple with a baby came out of one of the interview rooms – had been in there for 25 mins approx – looked reasonably satisfied with whatever had been discussed.
7. Young woman came into reception and was directed to the phones. She must have spent about 5-10 mins until she got thru. Repair issue.
8. Young man with child at housing reception - 3 minute conversation then left.
9. Another older woman came in – spent a little time talking to housing officer.
10. A woman and small boy came into the housing area – knew the woman who was on the PC. Spent a little time but her son very active/ bit disruptive so she left
11. Another woman came in to use the phone – was waiting for 5- 10 mins. Still waiting when I left.
12. Older woman was waiting to see the housing officer in the main reception area.

It was a different housing officer from my previous visit who was on reception duty.

Of 15 people using the facilities, there were 12 people where English was not their first language.

Newfield Green Neighbourhood Office

- Arrived 10.33
- Clean tidy office, although struggled to find exact location.
- No staff visible, no means of calling anyone.
- Four tenants waiting unsure how to summon staff, eventually someone spots bell, but still wait for response. Whilst waiting can hear private conversation in individual rooms, discussing universal credit/debt etc
- When one staff arrived. Polite and apologetic.
- Leaflets on display.
- Other staff come out and interrupt, without apologies, when one visible staff is dealing directly with tenant.
- 3rd to see, about 12 minutes wait.
- Polite handling query, although far too much personal information given out in public space. Date of birth, name, address, email.
- Apologies when can't handle query.
- Asked about setting up online account.
- At first confused, then tried going through system and requesting account, but couldn't pull up promised log in details email. So have to call phone line!

My initial thoughts, based on past housing experience/interaction,

1. Would be nice to see name/be introduced hello I am how can I help you? Rather than "who's next?"
2. When you start needing to give personal information, be asked if you would like a private space. Imagine someone with hearing issues, you would be shouting over desk.
3. Waiting area seats are very close to desk, so again lack of privacy, yet it is a biggish room, maybe it could be rearranged.
4. There are so many notices, on walls/desk we didn't clearly see the bell that was there to be rung.
5. The leaflet display was in the area between seats, if more seats were taken/buggys were in it would have been hard to access. It was also a bit overlooked to browse and felt if by looking you could be seen a listening to what was going on.
6. I am guessing as a safety measure seats at counter are attached to floor, not ideal if you are disabled, need more room to move around.

7. Access may be difficult for those who struggle to walk yet don't use wheelchair as parking not directly outside. This may deter some from using?
8. There is no way I would use the phone, far too close to others waiting and at desk. Imagine you call up for a repair, give all your details and then make an appointment, saying when you are not available and why, anyone could be listening and know your property was empty at these times.

**Wordsworth Avenue (Parson Cross) Neighbourhood Office -
Wednesday 29th May 2019**

- Huge, new –ish building incorporating a library plus other amenities, with a large outdoor space to the front.. Across the road is ASDA, Chaucer school, and there are other shops nearby, so a busy well used area. However, the space occupied by the housing office within the building is very cramped.
- On turning right from the lobby of the building there is a short passageway to the housing office with 2 desks. Straight on from there are 4 interview rooms – so well out of the way and suitably private.
- The waiting area though is narrow, just over 2m wide. There is seating on either side but uncomfortable. And on one side the seating is right up against the wall where there are notices and booklets – so obstructive – to both those wanting to read the notices and to those using the seating. The furniture and carpet are a bit worn and dirty. On one wall there were a lot – 32 – mutual exchange notices – I don't think they were up-to-date.
- 3 men were waiting when I came in. They were seen fairly quickly. A mother and daughter came in for what looked like an arranged appointment and went to an interview room within 5 minutes. A young couple then came in and used the bell on the desk to summon staff. No staff are permanently on reception.
- There was a wall phone up by the desks but would have been hopelessly within earshot of anyone else in the office/ waiting area. At the other end of the waiting area – more like a corridor – was a 5th interview room. There was a computer but wasn't connected – and no table or desk for people who might use it.

Chapeltown Neighbourhood Office - Wednesday 29th May 2019

- The office is located just off the main roundabout. The building is shared with a Job Centre Plus. The building is quite old but is light , bright and seems well laid out. There are 4 reception desks – not permanently staffed. There is a clear, accessible wall with all housing and related topics leaflets/ booklets displayed. There are also A4 sheets explaining main policies – allocations etc. Behind the seats in the waiting area there were 2 (?) PCs. All the council departments are available on the computers. It did state that priority is given to those with housing enquiries.
- There was a wall phone – slightly further away from the seating area compared to Wordsworth office but still others would hear your conversation. However, there was a list of all department phone numbers by the phone.
- Not many people in – again when someone comes in, there is a bell to summon staff. There is also a security person who is present and moves about between the Job Centre and the Housing Office. It is easy I would think if there is a problem with Housing Benefit/ Universal Credit, Council Tax– to get it sorted with the DWP and housing office sharing the space.



Housing & Neighbourhoods Service - Customer Access

Overview



Sheffield's Council Housing Service has a customer led group - **Challenge for Change** which looks at different areas of the Housing Service with the aim of letting the Council know what it does well and what it can improve.

The current topic the Challenge for Change group is looking at is **customer access to the housing service** and would like to hear about your views and experiences!

The online survey focuses specifically around in-person and telephone contact with the service **excluding the repairs service**.

Please note, we will be unable to respond with individual queries as part of this online survey.

For further information about the Challenge for Change group, please click **here**
<<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/council-housing/scrutinising-housing-services>> .

Housing & Neighbourhoods Service - Customer Access

1 How do you usually contact the Housing Service?

Please select all that apply

- Telephone Office Visit Website Email Other

If other, please give details in the box below

2 Which is your preferred way to contact the Housing Service?

Please select only one item

- Telephone Office Visit Website Email Other

If other, please give details in the box below

3 If there is anything stopping you from using your preferred method of contacting the Housing Service, please provide details in the box below.

Please select only one item

- Yes No

4 Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices?

	Very Frequently	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Very Rarely	Never
Crystal Peaks	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Hillsborough	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Burngreave	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Wordsworth Avenue	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Darnall	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Chapelton	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Newfield Green	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Stocksbridge	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Lowedges	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Manor Library	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Jordanthorpe	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Firth Park	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Howden House	<input type="checkbox"/>					

5 Why do you visit the housing office?

6 How satisfied are you with the following when visiting the housing office?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Unsatisfactory
Ease of access <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Welcoming and pleasant environment <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The availability of leaflets and information <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your query is dealt with in a polite and professional manner <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The time taken to deal with your query on first contact <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7 How satisfied are you with the following when contacting the Housing Service (excluding the repairs service) by telephone?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Unsatisfactory
The time taken to answer your call <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
That your call is handled in a polite and professional manner <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How your query is dealt with on first contact <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8 Is there anything that would improve your experience of contacting the Housing Service?

Please select only one item

- Yes No

If you answered yes, please provide further information in the box below.

9 What is your postcode?

10 Are you a

Please select only one item

- Council Tenant Leaseholder Private Rented Tenant
 Housing Association Tenant Home Owner Other

If other, please give details in the box below

8 Is there anything that would improve your experience of contacting the Housing Service?

Please select only one item

- Yes No

If you answered yes, please provide further information in the box below.

9 What is your postcode?

10 Are you a

Please select only one item

- Council Tenant Leaseholder Private Rented Tenant
 Housing Association Tenant Home Owner Other

If other, please give details in the box below



Housing & Neighbourhoods Service - Customer Access: Summary report

This report was created on Monday 12 August 2019 at 15:15.

The consultation ran from 17/06/2019 to 09/08/2019.

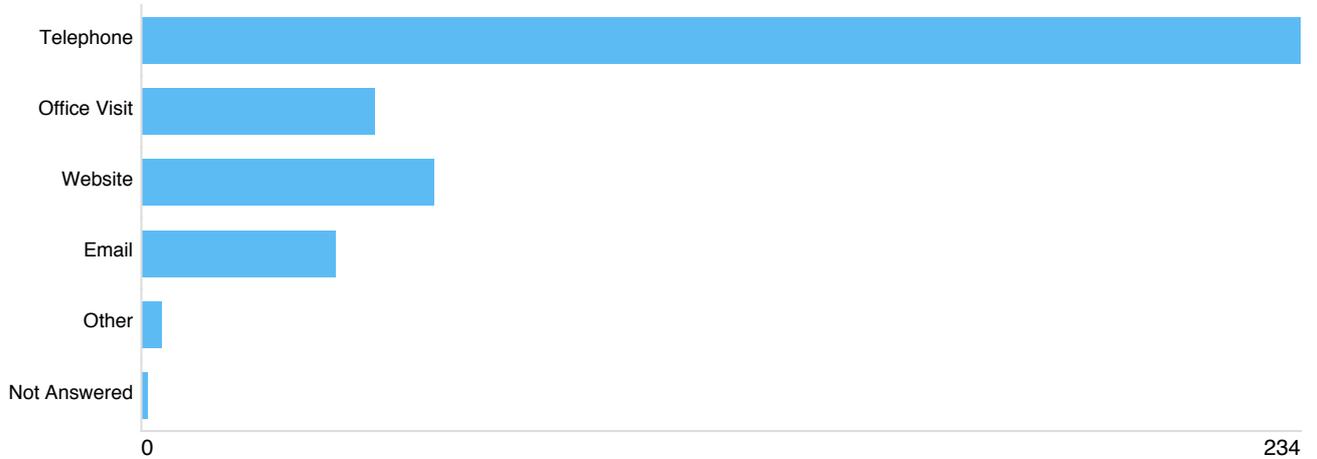
Contents

Question 1: How do you usually contact the Housing Service?	2
How often do you usually contact the housing office?	2
If other, please give details in the box below	2
Question 2: Which is your preferred way to contact the Housing Service?	2
Which is your preferred way to contact the Housing and Neighbourhoods Service?	2
If other, please give details in the box below	2
Question 3: If there is anything stopping you from using your preferred method of contacting the Housing Service, please provide details in the box below.	3
Is there anything stopping you from using your preferred method of contacting the Housing and Neighbourhoods Service?	3
If there is anything stopping you, please provide details in the box below	3
Question 4: Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices?	3
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Crystal Peaks	3
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Hillsborough	4
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Burngreave	4
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Wordsworth Avenue	5
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Darnall	5
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Chapeltown	6
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Newfield Green	6
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Stocksbridge	7
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Lowedges	7
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Manor Library	8
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Jordanthorpe	8
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Firth Park	9
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Howden House	9
Question 5: Why do you visit the housing office?	10
Why do you visit the housing office	10
Question 6: How satisfied are you with the following when visiting the housing office?	10
How satisfied are you with the following - Ease of access	10
How satisfied are you with the following - Welcoming and pleasant environment	10
How satisfied are you with the following - The availability of leaflets and information	11
How satisfied are you with the following - Your query is dealt with in a polite and professional manner	11
How satisfied are you with the following - The time taken to deal with your query on first contact	12
Question 7: How satisfied are you with the following when contacting the Housing Service (excluding the repairs service) by telephone?	12
How satisfied are you when contacting the Housing and Neighbourhoods Service by telephone:- - The time taken to answer your call	12
How satisfied are you when contacting the Housing and Neighbourhoods Service by telephone:- - That your call is handled in a polite and professional manner	13
How satisfied are you when contacting the Housing and Neighbourhoods Service by telephone:- - How your query is dealt with on first contact	13
Question 8: Is there anything that would improve your experience of contacting the Housing Service?	14
Is there anything that would improve your experience of contacting the Housing and Neighbourhood Service?	14
If you answered yes, please provide further information in the box below.	14
Question 9: What is your postcode?	14
Please provide your full postcode in the box below	14
Question 10: Are you a	14
Are you a	14
If other, please give details in the box below	15



Question 1: How do you usually contact the Housing Service?

How often do you usually contact the housing office?



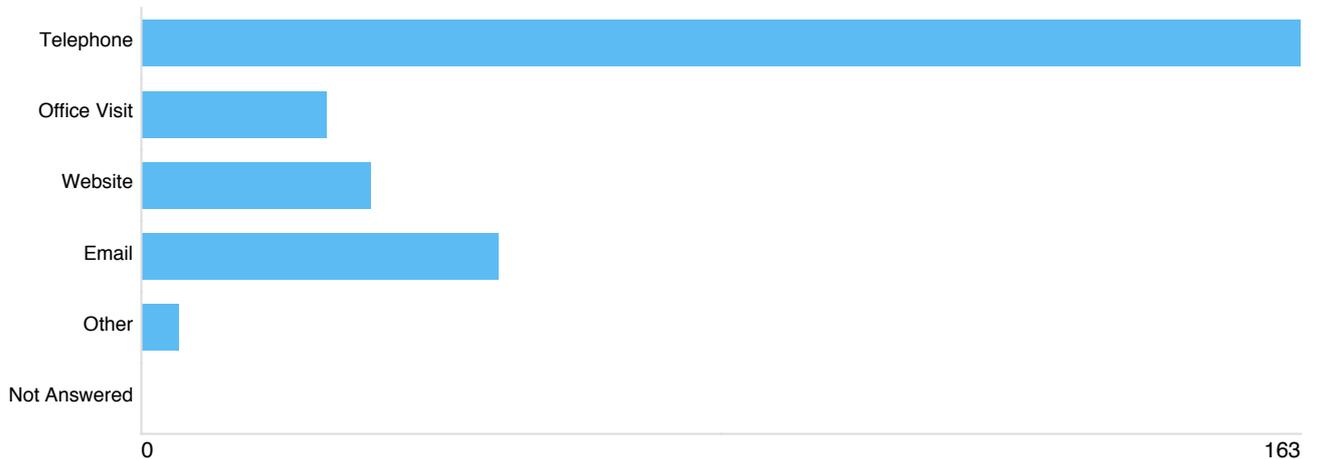
Option	Total	Percent
Telephone	234	84.78%
Office Visit	47	17.03%
Website	59	21.38%
Email	39	14.13%
Other	4	1.45%
Not Answered	1	0.36%

If other, please give details in the box below

There were 11 responses to this part of the question.

Question 2: Which is your preferred way to contact the Housing Service?

Which is your preferred way to contact the Housing and Neighbourhoods Service?



Option	Total	Percent
Telephone	163	59.06%
Office Visit	26	9.42%
Website	32	11.59%
Email	50	18.12%
Other	5	1.81%
Not Answered	0	0%

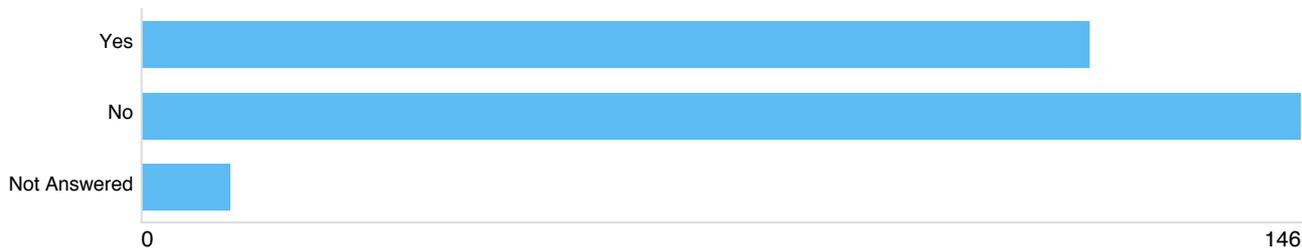
If other, please give details in the box below

There were 11 responses to this part of the question.



Question 3: If there is anything stopping you from using your preferred method of contacting the Housing Service, please provide details in the box below.

Is there anything stopping you from using your preferred method of contacting the Housing and Neighbourhoods Service?



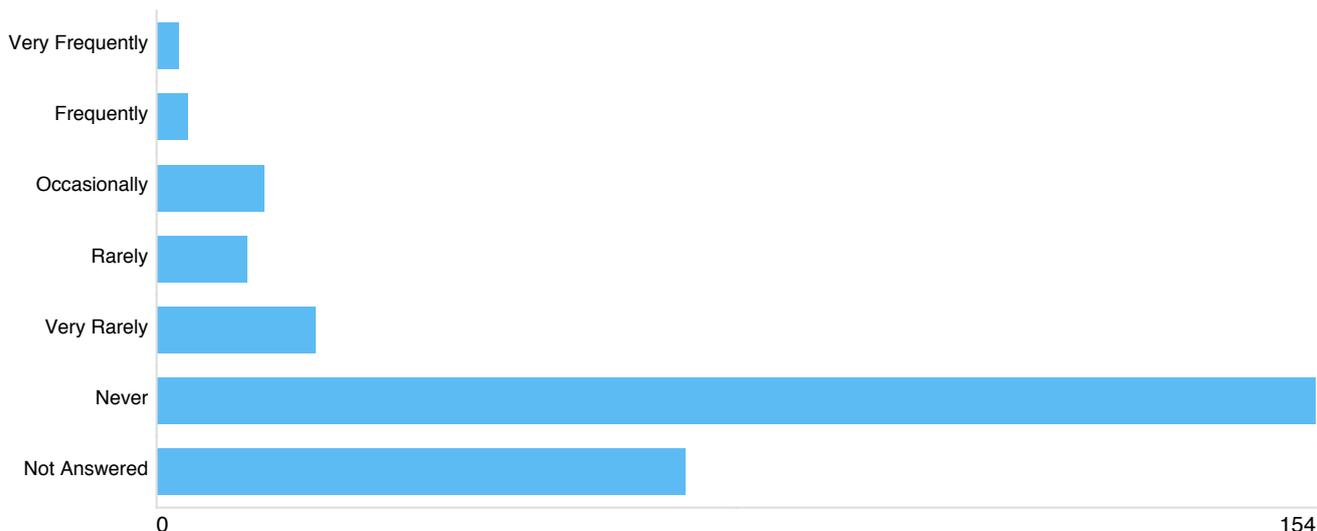
Option	Total	Percent
Yes	119	43.12%
No	146	52.90%
Not Answered	11	3.99%

If there is anything stopping you, please provide details in the box below

There were **128** responses to this part of the question.

Question 4: Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices?

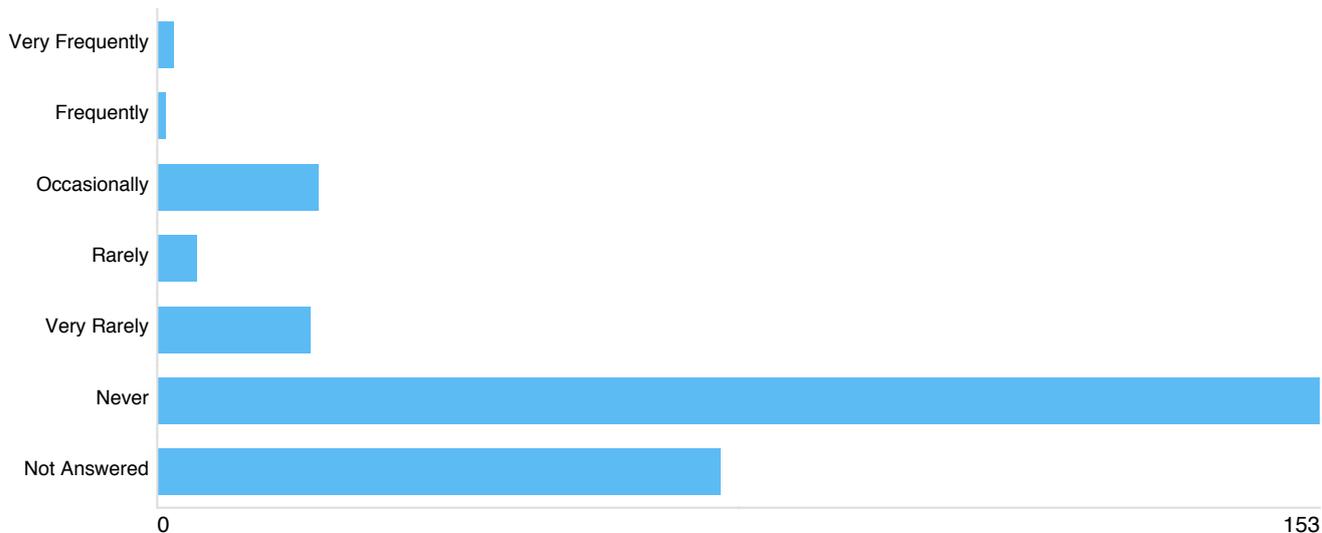
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Crystal Peaks





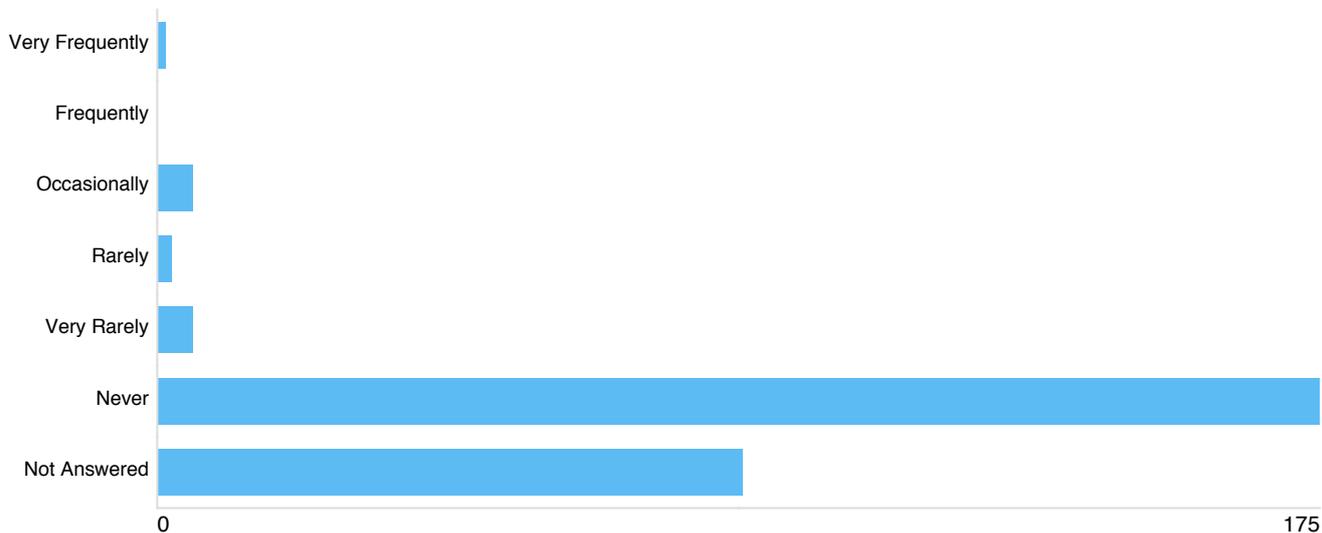
Option	Total	Percent
Very Frequently	3	1.09%
Frequently	4	1.45%
Occasionally	14	5.07%
Rarely	12	4.35%
Very Rarely	21	7.61%
Never	154	55.80%
Not Answered	70	25.36%

Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Hillsborough



Option	Total	Percent
Very Frequently	2	0.72%
Frequently	1	0.36%
Occasionally	21	7.61%
Rarely	5	1.81%
Very Rarely	20	7.25%
Never	153	55.43%
Not Answered	74	26.81%

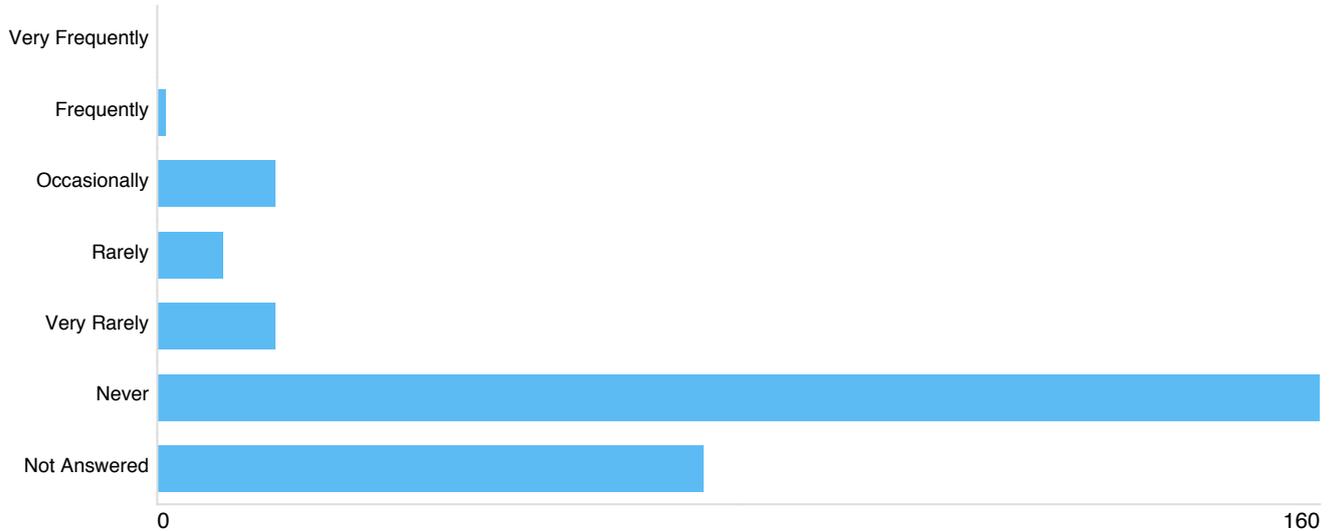
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Burngreave





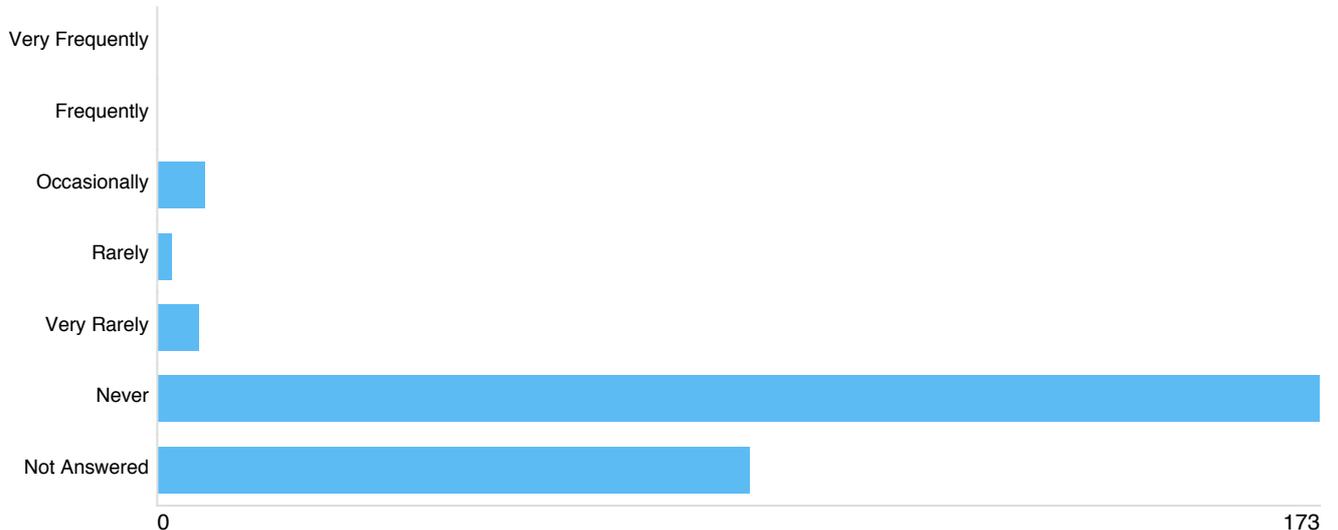
Option	Total	Percent
Very Frequently	1	0.36%
Frequently	0	0%
Occasionally	5	1.81%
Rarely	2	0.72%
Very Rarely	5	1.81%
Never	175	63.41%
Not Answered	88	31.88%

Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Wordsworth Avenue



Option	Total	Percent
Very Frequently	0	0%
Frequently	1	0.36%
Occasionally	16	5.80%
Rarely	9	3.26%
Very Rarely	16	5.80%
Never	160	57.97%
Not Answered	75	27.17%

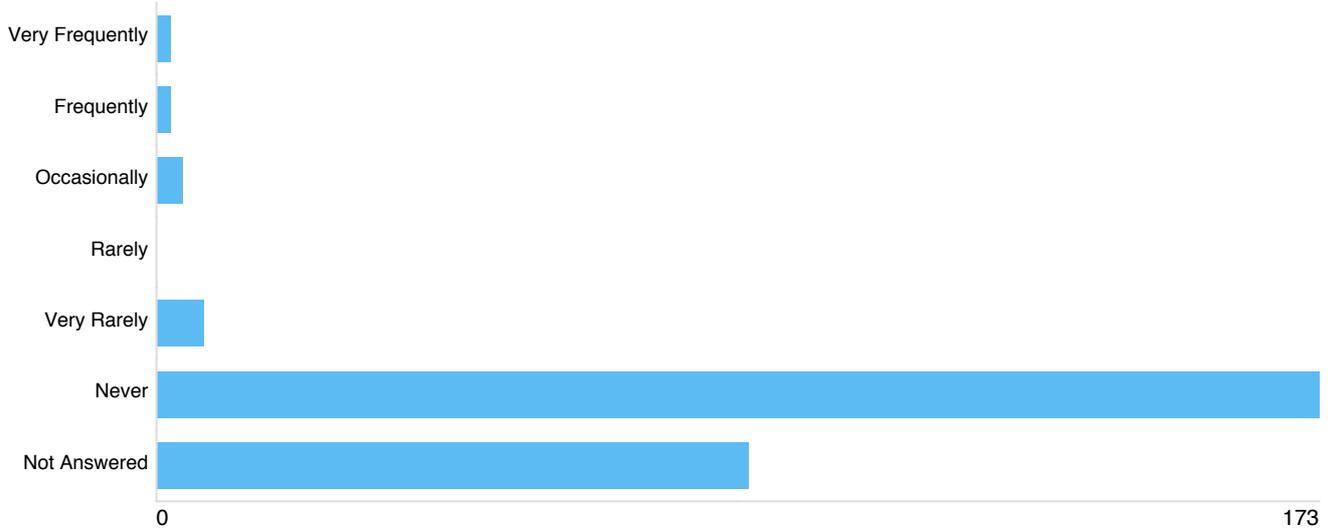
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Darnall





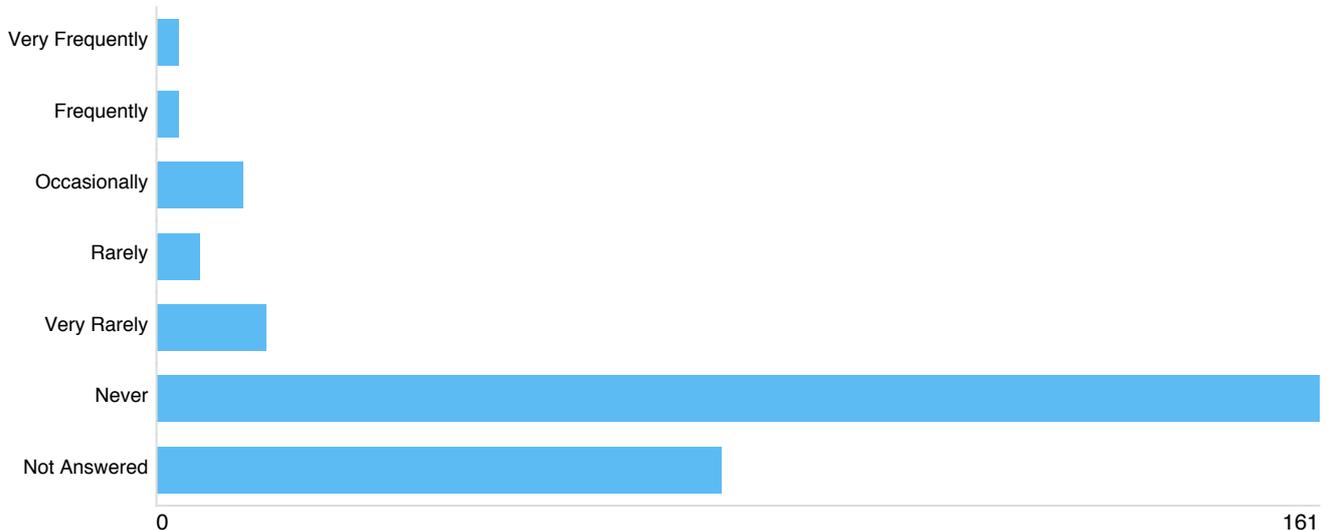
Option	Total	Percent
Very Frequently	0	0%
Frequently	0	0%
Occasionally	7	2.54%
Rarely	2	0.72%
Very Rarely	6	2.17%
Never	173	62.68%
Not Answered	88	31.88%

Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Chapeltown



Option	Total	Percent
Very Frequently	2	0.72%
Frequently	2	0.72%
Occasionally	4	1.45%
Rarely	0	0%
Very Rarely	7	2.54%
Never	173	62.68%
Not Answered	88	31.88%

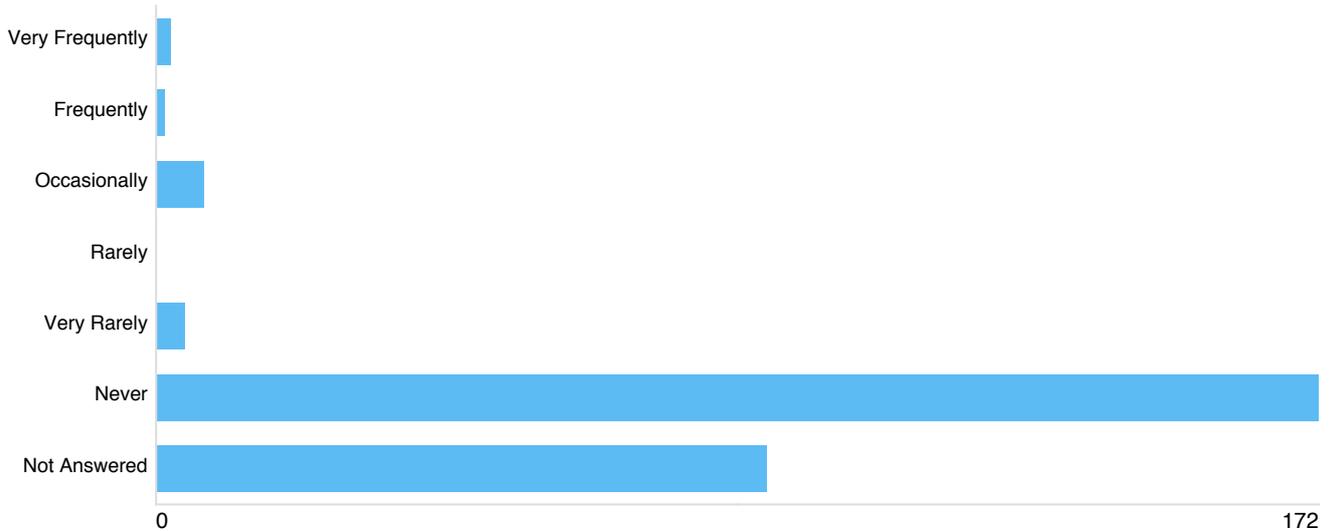
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Newfield Green





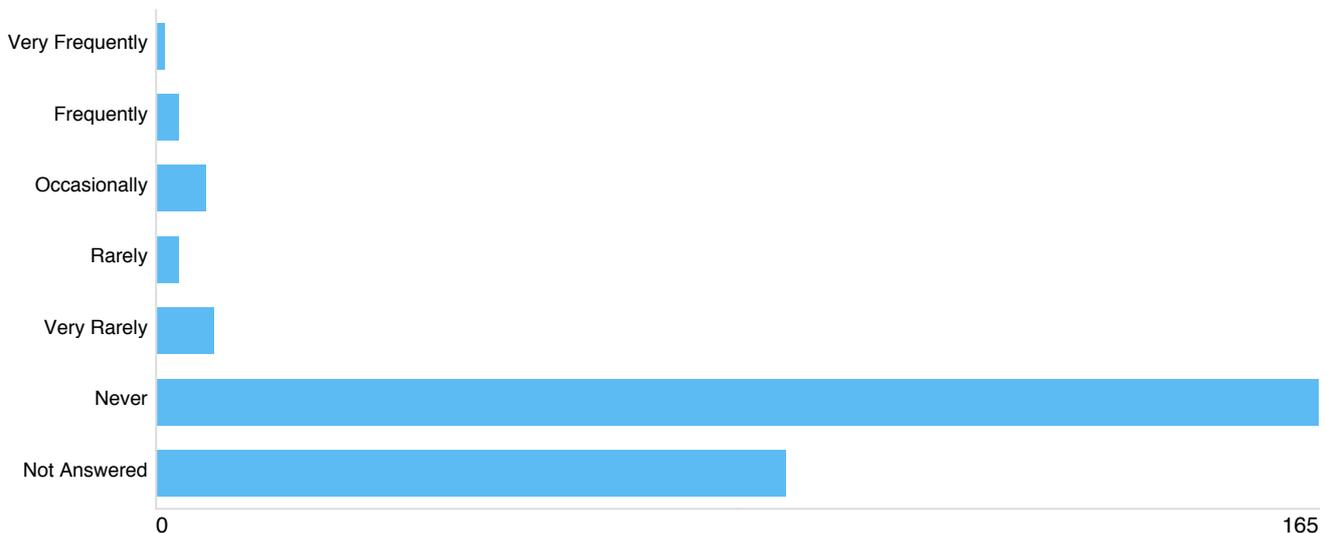
Option	Total	Percent
Very Frequently	3	1.09%
Frequently	3	1.09%
Occasionally	12	4.35%
Rarely	6	2.17%
Very Rarely	15	5.43%
Never	161	58.33%
Not Answered	78	28.26%

Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Stocksbridge



Option	Total	Percent
Very Frequently	2	0.72%
Frequently	1	0.36%
Occasionally	7	2.54%
Rarely	0	0%
Very Rarely	4	1.45%
Never	172	62.32%
Not Answered	90	32.61%

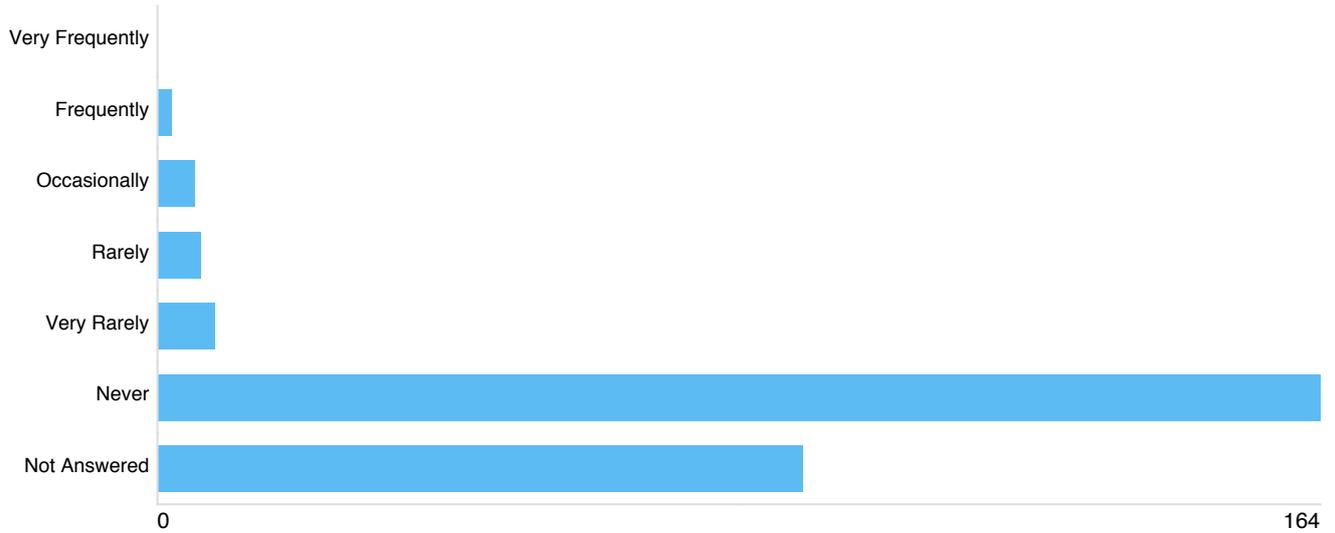
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Lowedges





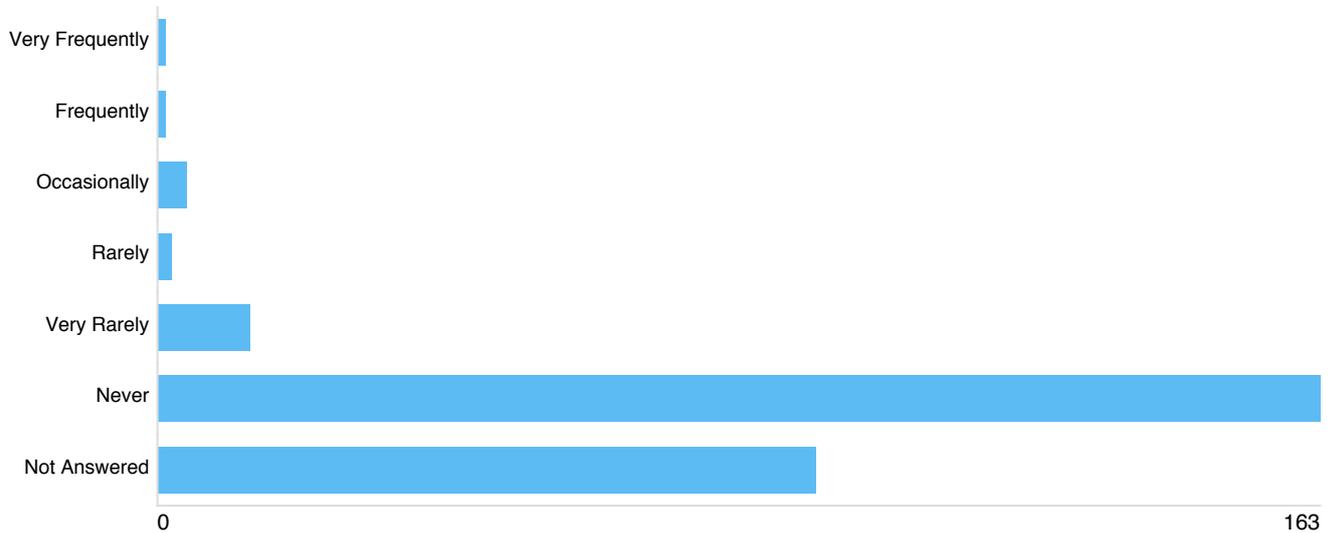
Option	Total	Percent
Very Frequently	1	0.36%
Frequently	3	1.09%
Occasionally	7	2.54%
Rarely	3	1.09%
Very Rarely	8	2.90%
Never	165	59.78%
Not Answered	89	32.25%

Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Manor Library



Option	Total	Percent
Very Frequently	0	0%
Frequently	2	0.72%
Occasionally	5	1.81%
Rarely	6	2.17%
Very Rarely	8	2.90%
Never	164	59.42%
Not Answered	91	32.97%

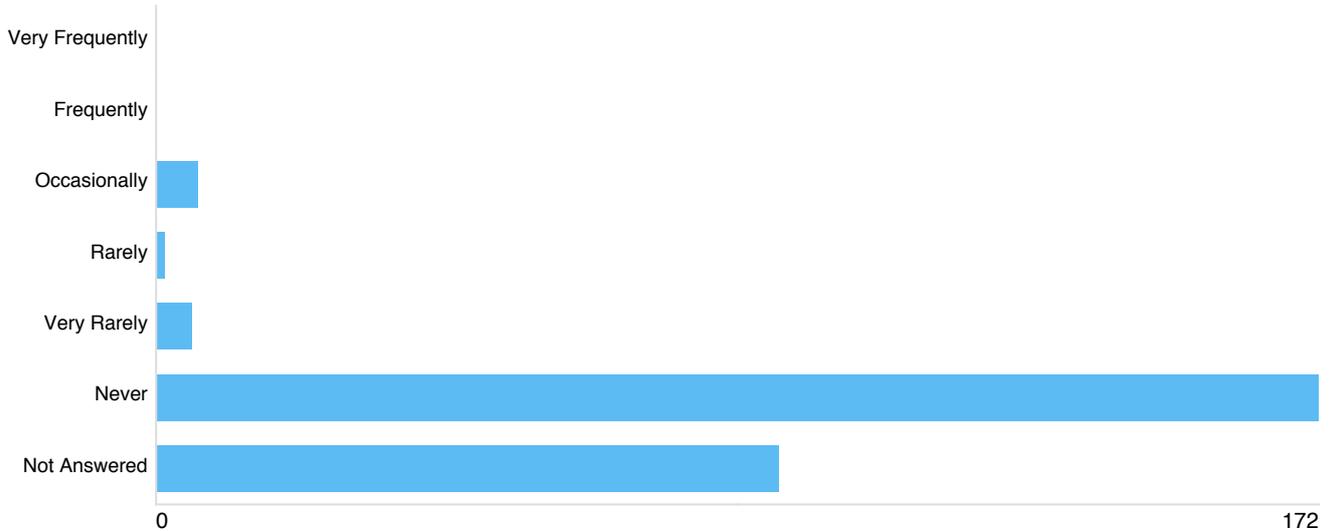
Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Jordanthorpe





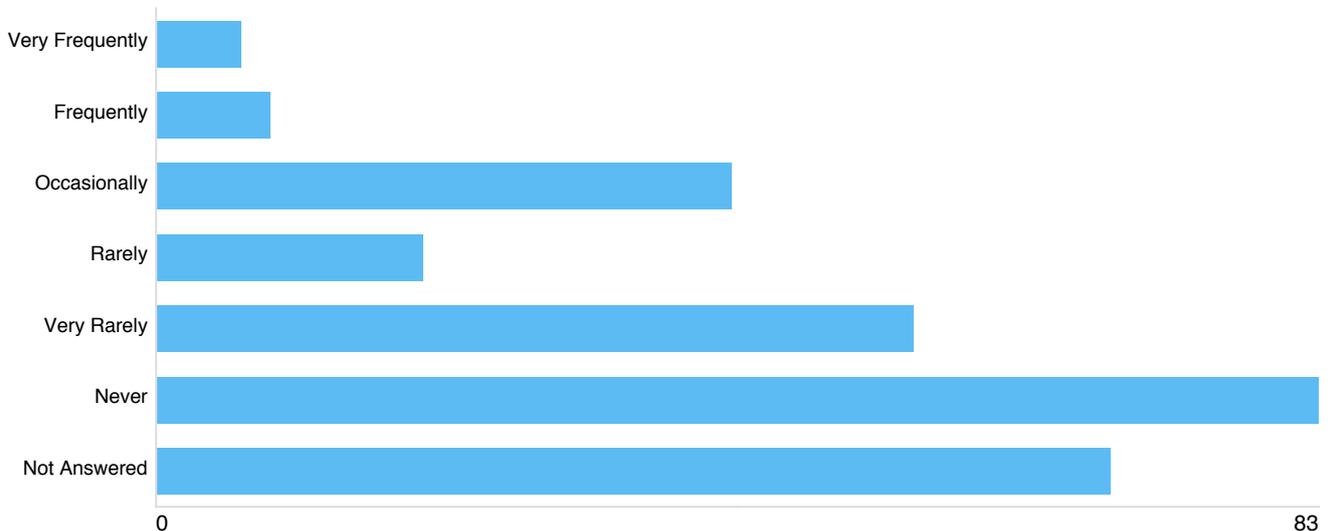
Option	Total	Percent
Very Frequently	1	0.36%
Frequently	1	0.36%
Occasionally	4	1.45%
Rarely	2	0.72%
Very Rarely	13	4.71%
Never	163	59.06%
Not Answered	92	33.33%

Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Firth Park



Option	Total	Percent
Very Frequently	0	0%
Frequently	0	0%
Occasionally	6	2.17%
Rarely	1	0.36%
Very Rarely	5	1.81%
Never	172	62.32%
Not Answered	92	33.33%

Do you ever visit any of the following housing offices? - Howden House





Option	Total	Percent
Very Frequently	6	2.17%
Frequently	8	2.90%
Occasionally	41	14.86%
Rarely	19	6.88%
Very Rarely	54	19.57%
Never	83	30.07%
Not Answered	68	24.64%

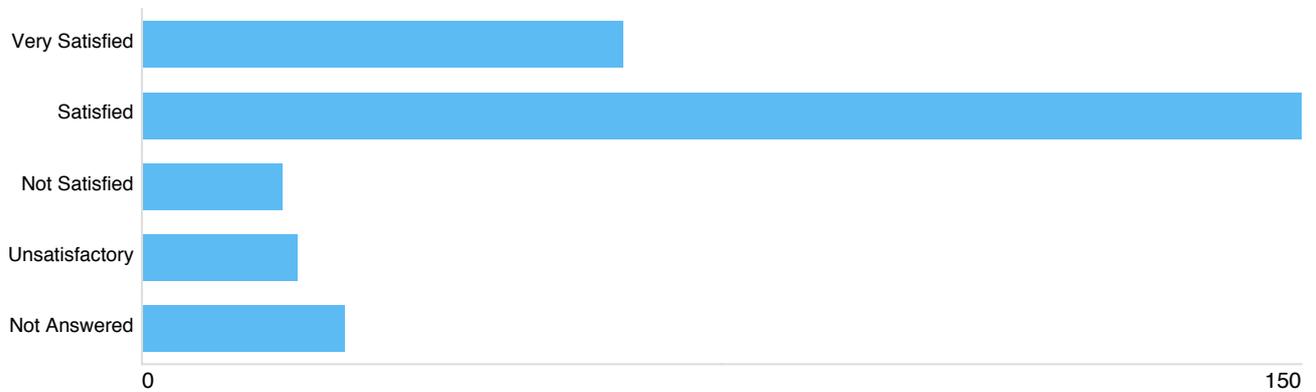
Question 5: Why do you visit the housing office?

Why do you visit the housing office

There were 198 responses to this part of the question.

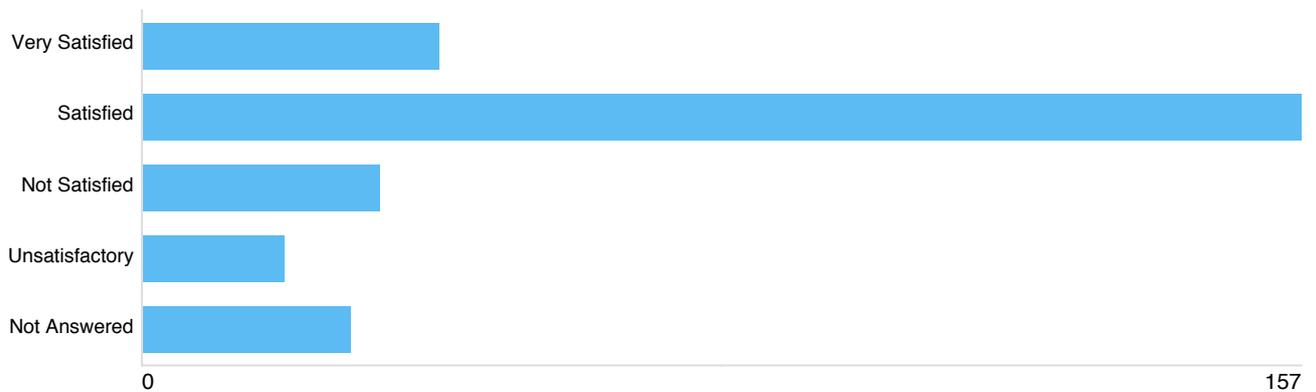
Question 6: How satisfied are you with the following when visiting the housing office?

How satisfied are you with the following - Ease of access



Option	Total	Percent
Very Satisfied	62	22.46%
Satisfied	150	54.35%
Not Satisfied	18	6.52%
Unsatisfactory	20	7.25%
Not Answered	26	9.42%

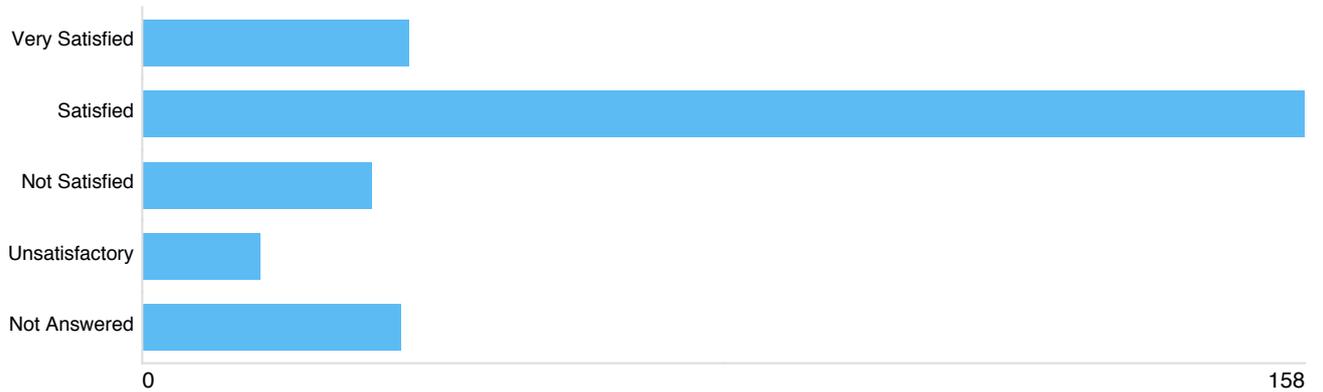
How satisfied are you with the following - Welcoming and pleasant environment





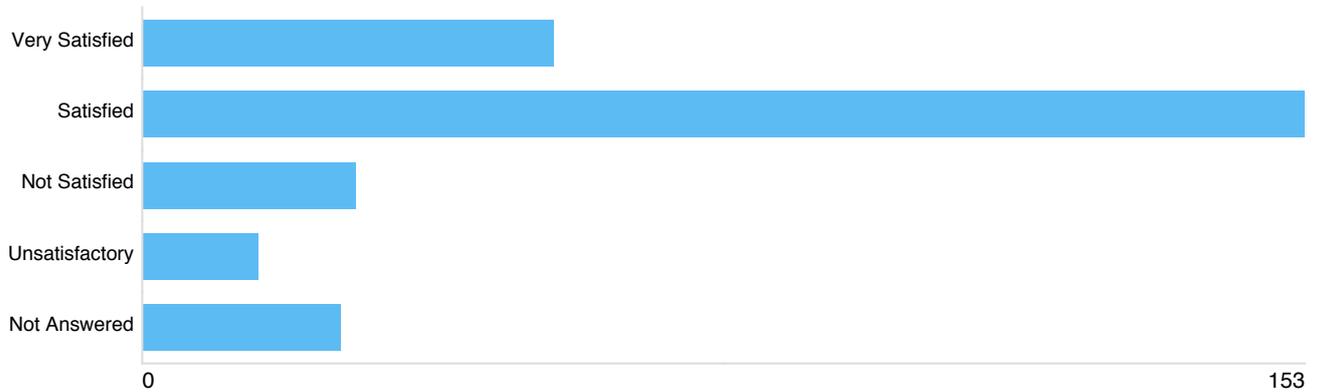
Option	Total	Percent
Very Satisfied	40	14.49%
Satisfied	157	56.88%
Not Satisfied	32	11.59%
Unsatisfactory	19	6.88%
Not Answered	28	10.14%

How satisfied are you with the following - The availability of leaflets and information



Option	Total	Percent
Very Satisfied	36	13.04%
Satisfied	158	57.25%
Not Satisfied	31	11.23%
Unsatisfactory	16	5.80%
Not Answered	35	12.68%

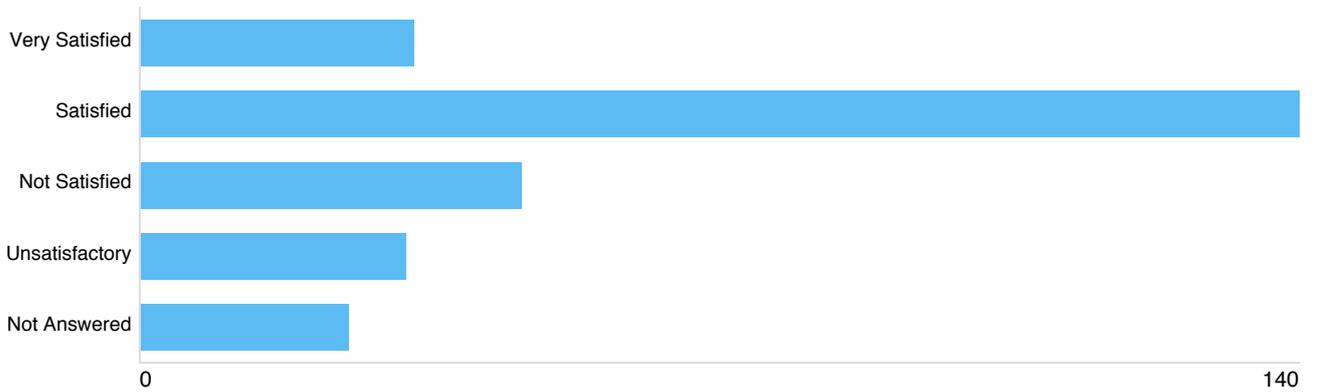
How satisfied are you with the following - Your query is dealt with in a polite and professional manner





Option	Total	Percent
Very Satisfied	54	19.57%
Satisfied	153	55.43%
Not Satisfied	28	10.14%
Unsatisfactory	15	5.43%
Not Answered	26	9.42%

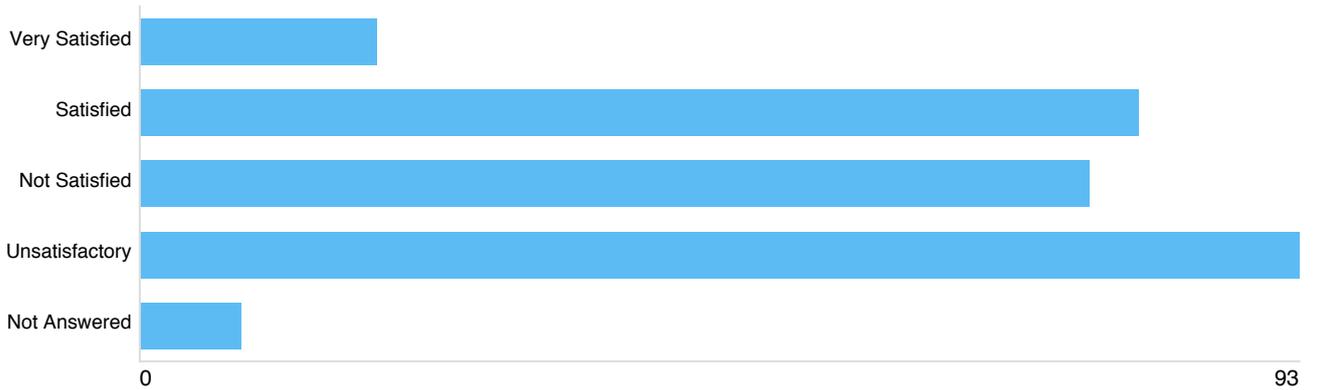
How satisfied are you with the following - The time taken to deal with your query on first contact



Option	Total	Percent
Very Satisfied	33	11.96%
Satisfied	140	50.72%
Not Satisfied	46	16.67%
Unsatisfactory	32	11.59%
Not Answered	25	9.06%

Question 7: How satisfied are you with the following when contacting the Housing Service (excluding the repairs service) by telephone?

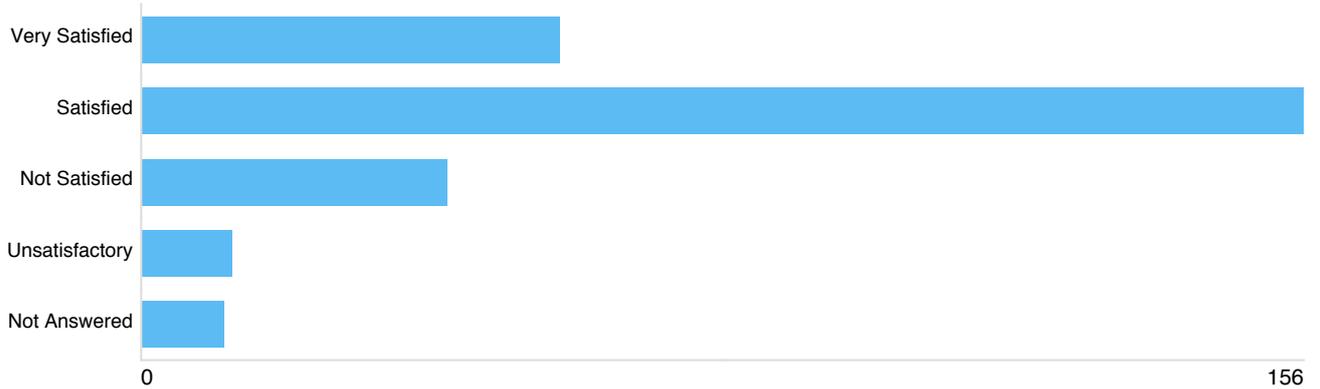
How satisfied are you when contacting the Housing and Neighbourhoods Service by telephone:- - The time taken to answer your call





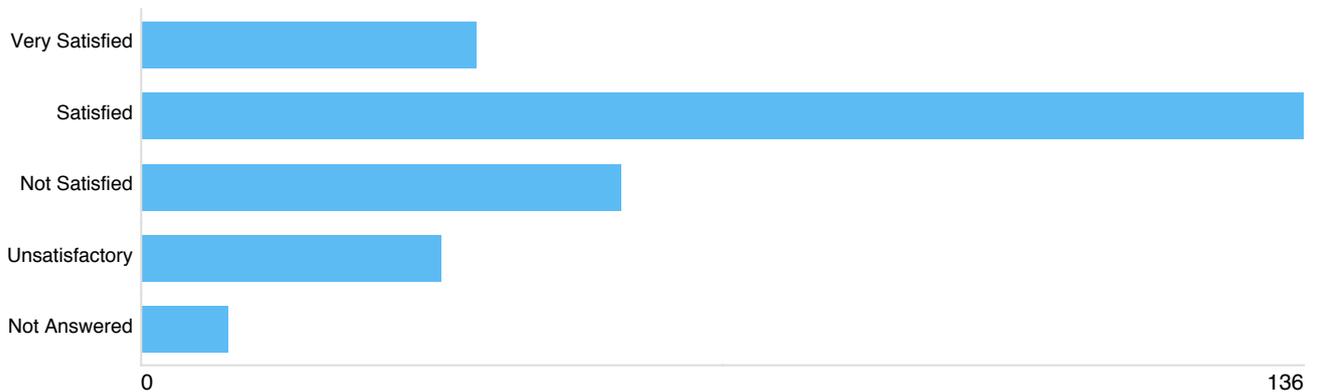
Option	Total	Percent
Very Satisfied	19	6.88%
Satisfied	80	28.99%
Not Satisfied	76	27.54%
Unsatisfactory	93	33.70%
Not Answered	8	2.90%

How satisfied are you when contacting the Housing and Neighbourhoods Service by telephone:- - That your call is handled in a polite and professional manner



Option	Total	Percent
Very Satisfied	56	20.29%
Satisfied	156	56.52%
Not Satisfied	41	14.86%
Unsatisfactory	12	4.35%
Not Answered	11	3.99%

How satisfied are you when contacting the Housing and Neighbourhoods Service by telephone:- - How your query is dealt with on first contact

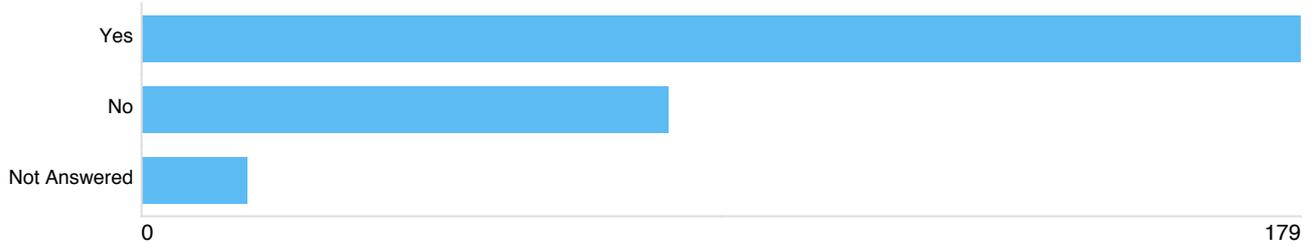




Option	Total	Percent
Very Satisfied	39	14.13%
Satisfied	136	49.28%
Not Satisfied	56	20.29%
Unsatisfactory	35	12.68%
Not Answered	10	3.62%

Question 8: Is there anything that would improve your experience of contacting the Housing Service?

Is there anything that would improve your experience of contacting the Housing and Neighbourhood Service?



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	179	64.86%
No	81	29.35%
Not Answered	16	5.80%

If you answered yes, please provide further information in the box below.

There were 179 responses to this part of the question.

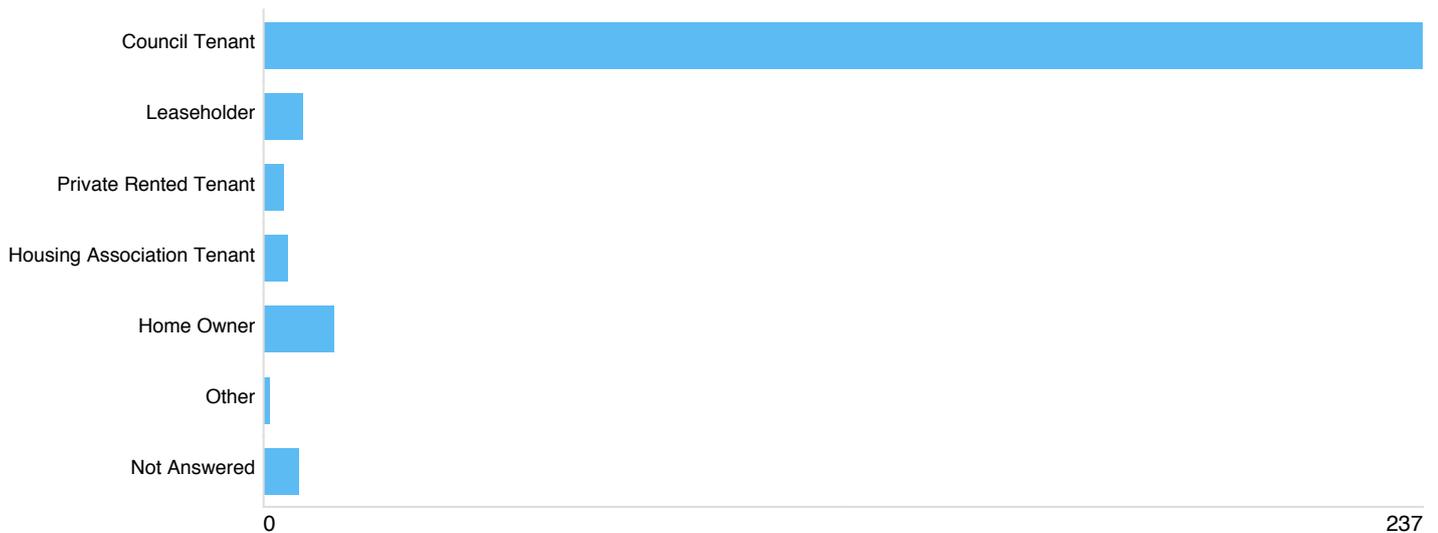
Question 9: What is your postcode?

Please provide your full postcode in the box below

There were 267 responses to this part of the question.

Question 10: Are you a

Are you a





Option	Total	Percent
Council Tenant	237	85.87%
Leaseholder	8	2.90%
Private Rented Tenant	4	1.45%
Housing Association Tenant	5	1.81%
Home Owner	14	5.07%
Other	1	0.36%
Not Answered	7	2.54%

If other, please give details in the box below

There were **4** responses to this part of the question.

APPENDIX 4 - MEETING WITH TARAS

10th July 2019

1. Introductions

Explained the make- up of C4C and how from the previous project that the group had been involved in, on anti social behaviour, they had been pulled up because they had not consulted with the TARAs. Rightly so – so this was the rationale of holding this meeting. The topic of this consultation and report was decided as a result of findings in the previous project. The group realised that tenants had difficulties accessing/ contacting Housing Services. The project is not about accessing the Repairs service.

2. General Comments

TARA rep - I go to lots of meetings and there are serious problems about accessing the Housing Service. Some of these are: -

- long waiting times on the phone
- at some of the First Points, some staff are 'ignorant'.
- if you use email to report a problem – the response time is too slow.
- tenants too can be impatient – they think that their problem is the absolute priority and are bad mannered.
- staff need more patience if English is not a tenant's first language
- the frontline staff are not the people responsible for the carrying out of whatever task/ problem needs sorting out.
- TARA rep had been on the phone recently for 45 minutes.
- She has also had to wait two and a half hours at Howden House
- Other tenants report similar issues.
- Suggestion – to be told on the phone – “You are now number 3 in the queue.” would help as could then gauge whether to hang on or not.
- C4C Member - I email my problems thru - to the relevant housing officer. If not dealt with promptly, she complains to the local councillor.
- TARA Rep - the response and action from the Refuse Dept is good
- TARA Rep - visited the Call Centre and was impressed with how staff were very friendly and dealt really well with awkward customers.
- Could do with more staff (in offices and in call centres?)

- I only use phone to report repairs – and use options **1** and **2**. That is **new** or **existing** reporting of a repairing problem
- Bit of a debate as to whether it would be easier if there were separate numbers for all the different jobs/ functions of council services. This was done at one point, however this was seen by staff as too complicated and not universally easy – hence the one number and then the Call centre routing the call to the relevant department. So there are now numbered options. Debated whether it would be good if some of us tried both – so ringing directly a department that we know, and contrasting that with going thru the Call Centre – to check if there is a time difference.
- C4C Member reported that she found that the phones in housing offices were far too public – others could overhear name, address, times when at home, and not at home etc – all should be confidential.
- Crystal Peaks office could use the current children’s play space to allow for more of a distance between waiting tenants and people who are on the phone and do not want to be overheard.
- You could put – Stand back a bit’ type notices as they do in Post Offices - but definite need for improvement.
- C4C asked if many tenants use the council website to source info.
- TARA Rep - No, very rarely – as can’t get onto Property Shop home page.
- TARA Rep - does use the website. (She is younger)
- Spoke of login/ password/ PIN number to access the rent account. And repairs – but quite often, does not work. Mentioned that Woodhouse office is only open 2 days a week. (Is not on the list of housing offices that the group has).
- C4C Member - In Bristol where she lived previously, the HA used an App – for the Repairs Service. Helped to speed up the process – as the tenant can take photos of the problem – so in some cases, this might cut out the need for an Inspector to come out first.
- TARA Rep - had paid a visit to the Call Centre. Told how teams are dedicated to answering calls on – either repairs, rent, other housing issues. Wanted to know how flexible this was – e.g if there was a slack period with few calls in the repairs section , could they then pick up on some of the call coming thru for the other team?
- queried whether the Crystal Peaks office could adjust its hours – so it corresponded to the library opening times, and could maybe stay open on Saturday mornings, and late evenings on some days.
- C4C & TARA reps were to visit the Call Centre at Howden House on 23 July to see at first hand how the system/ service works.

APPENDIX 5 – CALL CENTRE VISIT

Some notes from our visit to the Call Centre at Howden House.

We attended a session with another tenants' focus group – were welcomed and taken up to a side room of the call centre and given an over view of how the Call Centre works.

Main points were –

1. There are 4 teams working during the day– Council housing enquiries and rents; Council housing repairs and gas servicing; Council Tax, benefits and Universal Credit; and all other council services (roads, parking, pests, education etc)
2. There is an out of hours team that deal with urgent and lift repairs; Adult & Children's social care; Homeless queries
3. Typically the service recruits about 10 staff, 4 times a year. The training includes -
 - Induction; listening in; classroom training on service knowledge, telephone systems
 - Meeting with workers in the various teams that they are referring calls through to
 - Service knowledge is learnt and scripted and listed in a directory.
 - Response – speed, and quality of calls are assessed monthly - have 90% most times
4. We then looked at charts measuring performance in 2019 – this was from Jan to June. The Housing & rent enquiries – 125, 063 calls (highest in the first quarter i.e winter months. The Repairs & Gas servicing enquiries totalled 142, 241. Again higher in the winter months. Waiting times - longest 6.51 mins; shortest 00.48 min. This we all found surprising – as call waiting times are usually a huge source of dissatisfaction.
5. Then went on to outline what impacted on performance – and this is where it became clearer what leads to dissatisfaction –
 - Back office/ client services
 - Opening times not the same as the Call Centre
 - Staffing vacancies
 - Time tenants are put on hold
 - Staff availability (away from their desks due to team meetings, training, holidays etc)
6. As waiting times are seen as a big issue, the team try to improve the situation thru –
 - a rolling recruitment team
 - train Repairs staff to take housing rent calls

- Train the Housing staff likewise to handle new repairs enquiries and those on gas servicing.
 - So everybody knows more about other sectors!
 - Re-route calls to other staff if they are not busy.
7. Pattern of call activity - Housing lines busiest Monday and Friday; Repairs lines busiest Monday after the weekend!
 8. A few examples then given of why calls would be transferred – basically, if the query is more complex and needs more information/ expertise.
 9. On a recent survey, the scoring was on average 87% for repairs calls, 83% for Housing calls, 93% for Out of Hours service.
 10. We were then told about plans for improvements. These included –
 - call centre staff being able to see a complete view of the tenant’s case/ history
 - systems to be easier for call centre staff to access information
 - Potentially being able to tell customers their place in the queue i.e you are now 4th in the queue and/or the waiting time is 3, 5, 10 mins or whatever.
 - Potential for a ring back option.
 - Introduce a staff resource/ rota management module ??
 - web chat option for the website???Handle 3 queries at once(don’t understand and sounds fearsome!)
 - Voice recognition, rather than 1-5 options-the customer states their required service

We were then allocated to different staff in the call centre and for 15 mins or so had an earphone and could listen in to calls. This session was really interesting and I think that most of the tenants in our group were very impressed by the courteousness, the knowledge of the staff.

As the staff are continuously on the phone, we had little opportunity to actually talk ourselves to the staff. The woman I was with had worked for years in a call centre in a commercial setting so was well used to managing ‘telephony’ services.

Concerns –

1. The call centre staff seemed to be extremely able, but the work is pretty relentless and many of us noted that the coded system, that records their time away from their desk and phone, seems severe. So – a separate code for – a toilet break, a lunch break, holidays, team meetings, training etc - had to be used. And toilet and food

breaks were closely monitored. And staff were pulled up if they 'exceeded' the allotted time. Who decides what is a reasonable amount of time for toilet breaks? My staff member said she often did not have time to eat her lunch or take a break away from the office. The woman on the next desk had some kind of leg injury/ condition and had to take a break regularly to stretch/ walk around to ease the ache/ pain. It is very important that staff talk to the unions to ensure that their conditions are reasonable. As there is a high turnover of staff this could be down to 'burnout' and therefore impacts on both the staff and the customers – always somebody new who doesn't know the ropes. And management having to keep retraining staff.

2. I recognise that there have to be targets but when numbers are continually flashing up on screens – showing numbers of calls, numbers of people waiting – it becomes pretty stressful
3. Re training – it appears that a lot of 'new' info about a range of issues is just emailed through so a staff member has to read this and try to act on it. I think – from this brief visit – that there should be more proper training and team building
4. I think that possibly the IT systems are not top quality. As this came out in a session we later had with housing office staff. There needs to be decent and yes, expensive, investment in the best quality IT systems in order to deliver a good service and enable staff to perform at their best.

APPENDIX 6 – MEETING WITH NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORT STAFF

Notes - from the meeting on 7 August

Group 1

1. Staff represented a good cross section of the neighbourhood offices – Southey, the Property Shop; Crystal Peaks (2); Hillsborough (2); Chapeltown; Lowedges (2); Norfolk Park; East Area Call centre)
2. Staff having to deal with people queuing for long periods – can result in aggressive behaviour
3. Crystal Peaks – No air conditioning – very hot for both staff and customers
4. We don't have a minute to spare. – If not doing front line, having a lot of back office work following up cases.
5. Front desk – have to deal with queries across a huge range of subjects – benefits, Universal Credit, when customers come to a First Point office – they expect answers to everything. Office staff cannot resolve all problems – often having to signpost or put thru to someone else. But they get the blame as they are the visible member of staff. Better when there were dedicated Benefits Advisors on hand.
6. Repairs – several staff said that the service was no better despite being brought back in house.
7. Lot of people off sick with stress – inevitably puts strain on remaining staff.
8. Specific Housing officers are responsible for 300/400 properties each.
9. Several officers said that they felt they were not able to give customers the service that they need as they are pushed for time.
10. 2016 – everything changed – used to be separate Housing officers alongside dedicated Customer Service Advisors
11. A lot of lone worker working – although customers' files on the data base can be coded (to indicate problems, dangers) very often the systems are not up dated and officers can be walking into a very risky situation.
12. ALL the cases are COMPLEX
13. Work related stress impacts on others and on workers' family lives.(Stated several times)
14. Feel quite exposed – with low desks, no partitions/ screens, no security staff around (Chapeltown shares their office with the Job Centre. they DO have a security staff member but he has to stick to the Job Centre section of the office.)
15. There is a rota whereby staff every ???have to do phone cover from 8.30 – 9am and also 5 to 5.30.

16. Some staff thought that the previous system of having separate numbers for customers to use for the different services – council tax, environment, traffic issues etc – worked better.
17. Sometimes on certain phone calls – to Benefits I think especially, the phone rings and rings and then just cuts off.
18. There are NO notices saying - Customers will be asked to leave the office if they behave aggressively towards the staff. Should be!
19. There is a lot of miscommunication – from management to staff and therefore passed on to customers – a lot of this is due to changes by the week. Especially in regard to what paperwork/ ID that customers need to bring in for various applications/ registration/ sign ups etc..
20. And because of data protection – data cannot be transferred to a safe site unless all the necessary documentation is presented. So if only half the correct papers are brought in, they cannot be retained and records of having seen them have to be shredded!
21. Dealing with just ONE customer can take up to 25 minutes but this only counts as 1'Footfall'
22. The information on CRM is 'terrible'. 'Un-useable'
23. When new procedures are brought in – instructions on how to use them are just emailed to staff, rather than any proper training being given
24. IT systems currently in use – DO NOT WORK
25. Since Sheffield Homes came back in house – a lot of the work is not functioning properly. 'Just winging it..!'
26. The majority of queries are to do with Council Tax, Benefits. and Registration
27. Can't make up the shortfall in staff. Unison are not perceived as being helpful
28. Shortly Capita services are to come back in-house BUT what is needed, what is really essential is USER -FRIENDLY I. T.SYSTEMS . Tech 2020 ???
29. View expressed – Council want services to fail in order to justify closing offices.!
30. When asked, no member of staff knew who the Councillor is who is responsible for Housing.
31. Problem with vacant properties – often when th keys are handed in to the office – turns out that the property is not fit to live in.
32. View expressed (and agreed by most) that Right to Buy should be cancelled as houses disappearing fast and not being replaced

Group 2

- Telephone Placement – lack of confidentiality
- Sensitive reporting eg. Death – activities in cafe can negatively impact eg singalong
- Accessible (no stairs), library brings people in, staff are flexible
- No air conditioning
- 3rd parties beginning to use office for meetings/info sharing
- 1 person on reception but additional staff will assist to reduce queue
- No facility for copying – customers can use library PC but cost?? Time??
- Customers with queries on Housing Benefit/Council Tax unable to get through to service on phone ..come into office where reception staff have to use same phone number
- Small offices have only one member of staff on duty. Can call for back up if a queue but time delay in staff arriving.
- Different opening hours at small offices causes confusion and queues when customers certain of opening hours
- No standard opening hours across service.
- Most contentious issues are registration for housing/re-housing and Council Tax – conflicting information re supporting info and evidence. GDPR actively works against smooth service delivery. Manner in which info updates circulated within service actively works against smooth service delivery in some/many cases.
- If SCC encouraging online contact more public pcs need to be provided and the website needs overhauling/scrapping/renewing
- Have a pc dedicated to repairs reporting in each office
- Norfolk Park/Manor Top/Darnall offices dark, cold, do not provide confidential areas
- Provide a Benefits Officer on site or give staff basic Benefits training
- Registration for re-housing/Benefits/Council Tax issues are most important but least standard.
- Footfall: Complex Queries – can footfall be weighted to show time spent on complex cases?

Group 3

- Staffing levels an issue
- Systems not fit for purpose
- Staff not trained on benefits – main face to face enquiry we get.
- Property shop – easier to re-direct/sign-post as based in Howden House amongst other Council services
- A benefit officer in each housing office would help
- People struggle with digital options – unable to use
- Not got the staff to help people with the digital options
- Inconsistencies with online forms
- A property shop app would be good
- Some staff not happy not been able to help with all the enquiries received
- More staff in the call centre needed
- Reception areas use a bell, however customers don't always que and expect a staff member to see them straight away
- Issues at Firth Park office is that customers don't realise it is back open and lack of signage doesn't help. People think the reception area is for the library only.
- Public access computers are old and limited to what the customer can access / browsers outdated – internet explorer not compatible with online forms
- Lack of CCTV and security – Chapeltown office has a security guard as part of the job centre office however they can't get involved if incidents relate to housing office. Fixtures and fittings screwed to floor as precautions
- A dedicated computer in each office for reporting repairs would be good
- Discussion around information to bring in for ID verification – knowing what to bring in and how this communicated. Staff do tell them but customers do not always bring in all or correct documents
- System issues in terms of what information staff can provided and discussion around how visits are recorded – not recorded on a timed basis
- GDPR makes things harder as have to shred any ID a customer brings in if they've not brought in all correct ID
- Some issues around communications to staff about changes in processes
- Digital access – needs to be user friendly and simple

APPENDIX 7 - Nottingham Homes Visit

Wednesday 25th September

St Ann's Centre – Multi Service Centre

- Multi-service centre – linked with other services e.g. library, NHS
- Modern building – open planned. Library, pharmacy, main reception, seating area, interview rooms, meeting rooms on ground floor with GP surgery on upper floor.
- Lifts available for accessibility
- Police are over the road
- Housing Patch Officers are based here covering around 6,000 properties
- 3 of these multi-service centres – one in the North of the City, one central (St Ann's) and one in the South of the city
- Tenants can come in for a number of different services
- Duty officer to deal with face to face enquiries if required
- Interview rooms
- Information/leaflets about various of services

Bestwood Housing Office

- Met with Dan Richard (Patch Manager)
- Only customer facing office open
- Housing Patch Officers are based here
- Rent Officers are based here including Universal Credit team
- Tenancy Sustainment team based here
- Helps to have some specialist teams based here – can help with vulnerable tenants
- Patch teams based here manage 4,502 properties
- Footfall levels into the office 30-40 people per day
- 2 officers on the front desk
- Get a wide range of housing enquiries as well as benefit enquiries – try and signpost these

- Have volunteer days where staff volunteer within the local community e.g. the local church providing meals to the local community
- Tenant Academy – which provides free courses for tenants. Managed by the Tenant Involvement Team
- Street & Block Champions for estates/areas – they can escalate estate issues – a bit like our TARA reps.
- Reception area – seated area, kids zone, computer desks (can access internet – not just limited to the main webpage etc).
- Leaflets and information displayed
- Quite spacious
- Public toilets

Loxley House – Nottingham Homes HQ

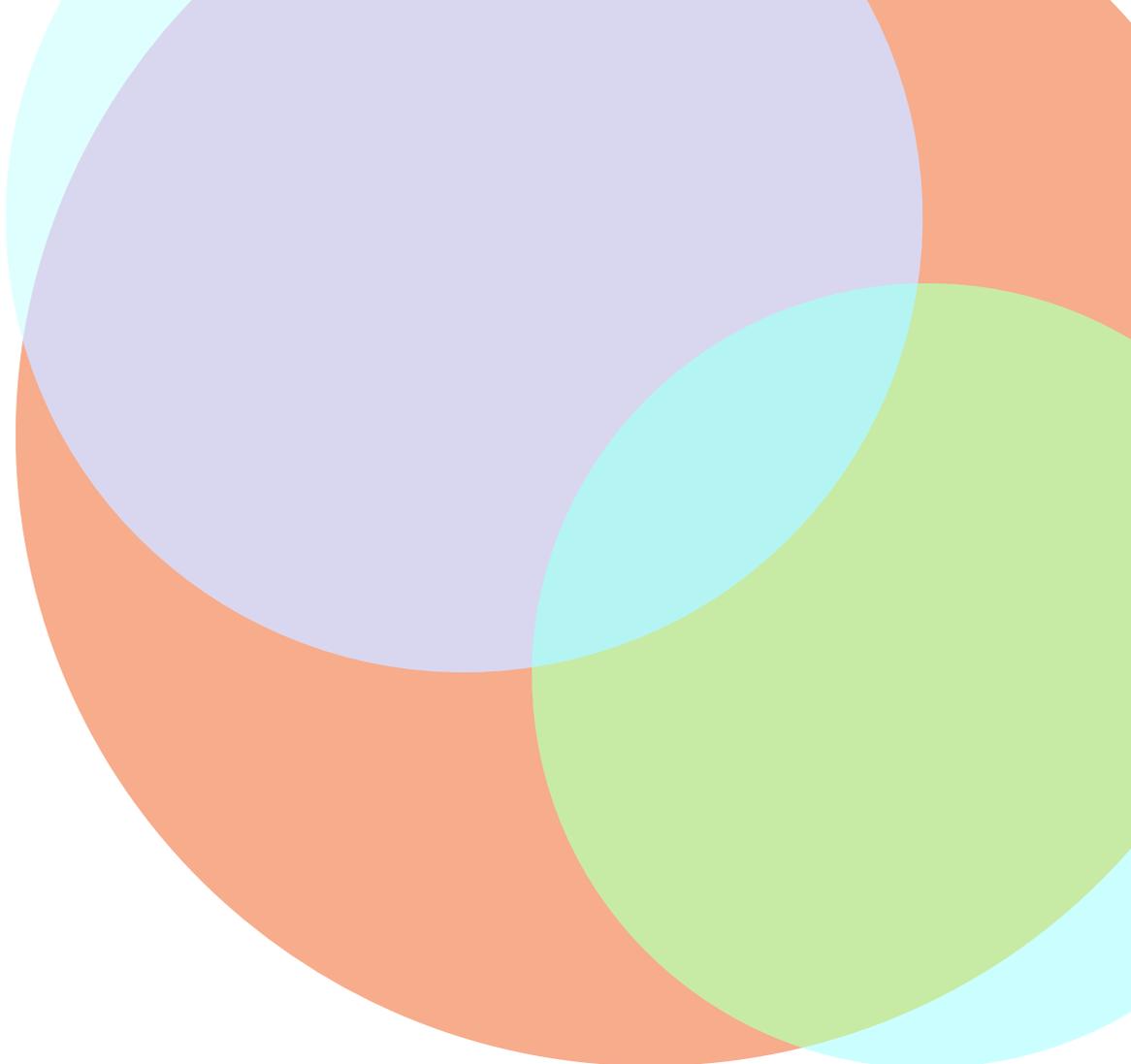
Digital – Online Offer

- Working towards a housing portal – “Housing Online” – so customers can access everything in one place e.g. report a repair, see rent balance etc
- Account Number to login
- Still developing this
- Will have a Digital Strategy – this will help to promote the online offer, however want to get this in place first
- Housing registrations and bidding on properties is the most complicated for the system
- Also re-working the website and trying to incorporate partner websites so that everything is all in one place.

Contact Centre

- 3 strands to the service (1.Repairs 2. Rents 3. Tenancy & Estates)
- They have separate numbers for each of the 3 strands
- 50-55 staff
- Don't use “press 1 for x” options

- These are local rate numbers
- Staff are multi-skilled so can deal with enquires across all strands
- 75% of repairs calls are answered in around 20 seconds
- Use the hold message to play key messages
- Receive around 30,000 calls per month
- 18-19,000 of these are for repairs, with 5-6,000 for rents
- Have 24/7 out of hours service for repairs (Nottingham On Call)
- Only just started to measure customer satisfaction
- Have put a survey at the end of each call for callers to rate the call and advisor – using this to improve and coach/develop staff
- Soon to have a housing staff within the contact centre to help on any specialist queries
- Prefer to resolve the call at the call centre rather than pass on
- Diverse staff means have a number of staff that can speak different languages which can help with language barriers from callers.



This document can be supplied in alternative formats, please contact:
Sheffield City Council • Council Housing Service
Tel: 0114 293 0000 or 205 3333
www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing

This document is printed on paper from a sustainable source

Report to Safer and Stronger Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

16th January 2020

Report of: Rachel Staniforth, Joint-Head of the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit and Lee Berry, Superintendent and Joint Head of the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit

Subject: Update on the work of the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit

Author of Report: Angela Greenwood, Senior Partnership Manager, South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit angela.greenwood@southyorks.pnn.police.uk

Summary:

This report explains the work of the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and its links to the Council and other organisations working to prevent and reduce violence across South Yorkshire. It is being presented at the request of Scrutiny who wanted to know more about the work in this area.

Type of item:

Reviewing of existing policy
Informing the development of new policy
Statutory consultation
Performance / budget monitoring report
Cabinet request for scrutiny
Full Council request for scrutiny
Call-in of Cabinet decision
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee Y
Other

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

The Committee is asked to read the report and provide" views, comments and Recommendations for future areas of work

Background Papers: none

Category of Report: OPEN

SOUTH YORKSHIRE VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT: JANUARY 2020

1. Introduction/Context

On 19th June 2019, the Home Secretary announced that £35m would be made available to establish Violence Reduction Units (VRUs). Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in 18 Force areas, including South Yorkshire, were invited to apply for an amount proposed by the Home Office.

Following a successful application, South Yorkshire secured £1.6m in August 2019 to establish the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit (SYVRU).

The three main elements of work are:

- Enhancing Partnership Arrangements: these arrangements are intended to lay the foundations of a sustainable, multi-agency approach, both at strategic and operational levels
- 'Scale Up': local delivery of tried and tested multi-agency public health approaches to reducing violence
- New Projects - To deliver a range of new interventions and initiatives with partners across the county focussed on violence prevention and violence reduction

The funding must support delivery of the VRU function, which the Home Office defines as being, "to offer leadership and, working with all relevant agencies operating locally, strategic coordination of the local response to serious violence"¹.

¹<file:///C:/Users/747724/Downloads/20190619%20VRU%20application%20guidance%201.0.pdf>

The Home Office specifies two mandatory products to be delivered by the end of March 2020:

- A South Yorkshire **Area Profile** – identifying the drivers of violence in local areas and the initial steps to identify the people most affected.
- A South Yorkshire violence **Response Strategy** – setting out the multiagency response to be delivered by the SYVRU and partners across South Yorkshire.

VRU activity must support a multi-agency, **public health approach** to preventing and reducing violence. The 'South Yorkshire Public Health Approach to Violence Reduction' is outlined below.

2. What does this mean for the people of Sheffield?

A public health approach to violence starts with the needs of the public or population group rather than with individual people. This means the work will be focused on communities, and with communities, groups and partners.

There is already a vast amount of work ongoing in Sheffield and South Yorkshire. Success of the VRU will be built upon coordinating, utilising and learning from

existing initiatives and resources in communities with partners, to ensure a comprehensive approach to tackling violence across the city and county.

3. THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH

A public health approach has five common elements².

- prevention
- data and evidence base
- looking at what causes violence
- taking a population level approach
- working together in partnership

² <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Support/uniformed-policingfaculty/Documents/Public%20Health%20Approaches.pdf>

A public health approach starts with the needs of the public or population group rather than with individual people. Understanding the situation in each local area, from different perspectives, is essential to enabling effective targeting of resources and helping avoid unintended consequences or assumptions. Skilled use and interpretation of data and the evidence base is central to taking a public health approach. Using evidence based, 'what works' approaches, agreed at local level, is central to our approach.

Taking a public health approach means analysing what drives violence. These are often 'social determinants' or 'structural factors' and include things like: access to services, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), childhood trauma, family and social support, education, housing, community cohesion, income, work and physical/mental health, all of which underpin people's lives. These drivers illustrate the need for partnership working, which is central to taking a public health approach.

The volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous nature of violence (and the causes of it) makes collaboration across many professions and services essential. Each partner has access to different skills, levers and mechanisms to affect change.

Public health approaches always consider the wider system, including communities. It is our intention that we always start with the voice of communities across South Yorkshire, combining this with evidence of what works, to ensure a comprehensive approach that reflects the reality of life in local areas.

Public health approaches have prevention at their core. In the SYVRU, we will focus on six key areas:

- Solid foundation** – we are committed to using and developing evidence, developing excellent relationships between partners, good governance, process and multiagency intelligence.
- Primary prevention** – we are committed to stopping violence before it begins.
- Secondary prevention** – we will halt the progression of violence as early as possible through early detection and prompt, effective intervention, including providing positive alternatives.
- Tertiary prevention** – we will provide a way out for people with established violent

behaviour, or those affected as a victim.

- **Enforcement and criminal justice** – we will continue to disrupt criminality that often involves violence, like organised crime groups (OCGs) through Fortify.
- **Attitudinal change** – in some areas of South Yorkshire, violence has become normalised. We will work to change attitudes to all types of violence at a societal, community and personal level.

4. WORK SO FAR

4.1 Area Profile

The Area Profile document is in early draft format and is currently being considered by the Violence Reduction Executive Board (The Board). (This Board has been established to provide strategic direction and oversight of the work being undertaken). We have engaged a graphic designer to work with us. They will work to make the profile more accessible by designing an interactive Portable Document Format (PDF) and then producing a number of infographics to support the data.

In tandem with the development of this Area Profile, we are looking to develop an internal dashboard of data, which we could use to answer further questions arising from the Profile. We anticipate this to be a much longer-term piece of work, and is likely to extend beyond March 2020.

The final interactive PDF will be presented to the Board at its March meeting, for any final alterations before sending to the Home Office by 31 March 2020. It is expected to be published in mid May 2020. We hope the profile becomes a useful tool for partners and community organisations.

4.2 Community involvement: Paid community working groups

In May 2019, an event was held on Youth Violence, Masculinity and Mental Health in Sheffield with community members, elected members and third sector organisations. A recommendation was made that the Violence Reduction Unit should pay community members for their input into our response strategy.

The VRU has commissioned Voluntary Action Sheffield to lead and coordinate this work; subcontracting to Voluntary Action Rotherham and Co:Create for Barnsley and Doncaster. Nine workshops were held across South Yorkshire during December, engaging up to ten members of the community at each (both adults and young people), to get their insight into what it is like to live in their area, as well as seeking their input into the South Yorkshire Response Strategy.

4.3 Response Strategy

We have engaged a strategy consultant, to support us with the development of our Response Strategy for South Yorkshire. They will interview key stakeholders in each area of South Yorkshire to produce a 'plan on a page' for South Yorkshire, and depending on the outcome of the interviews, possibly a localised 'plan on a page' for Rotherham, Barnsley, Doncaster and Sheffield.

Interviews will take place with stakeholders in each area during the month of January. As a result, the consultant will produce a draft plan-on-a-page that will also

include information from the paid community working groups. In addition to this, they will facilitate a session with members of the Board at the January meeting, to further develop the plans. The March board meeting will agree a final draft.

From April 2020, the intention will be to develop a South Yorkshire Violence Reduction delivery plan, with key performance indicators going forward.

4.4 Scale Up existing Activity

The main activity that we are looking to scale up across South Yorkshire relates to preventing and tackling organised crime, which goes under the name, Fortify. This activity is co-ordinated across the whole of South Yorkshire by South Yorkshire Police through the Organised Crime Partnership Board. The Organised Crime Partnership Board is chaired by South Yorkshire Police's, Head of Crime. A public health approach had already begun to develop within Fortify, before the Home Office VRU funding announcement. In Sheffield, local Fortify meetings are chaired by the Chief Superintendent and Chief Executive of Sheffield City Council, and involve a range of partners.

SYVRU funding is enabling an extension of that approach within Fortify. The Fortify Fund was set up for partnership interventions to take place to prevent, reduce and disrupt violence associated with organised crime. The closing date was 6th November, and all successful bidders have been notified. Some examples of interventions that have been funded are: prevention activity focussed on drug and alcohol outreach work; reducing serious violence in South Yorkshire prisons; and, disruption to the sale of illegal and counterfeit goods.

4.5. New Projects

There are a number of new projects that aim to develop or test out new approaches across the county, with distinct target groups. The intention behind these projects is to analyse, assess and build business cases with a view to potentially upscaling the most successful in future years. A number of the projects are detailed below:

Navigators (Accident and Emergency (A&E) and Police Custody)

Using A&E and police custody as a 'reachable' and 'teachable' moments for people in contact with violence, we are seeking to provide support and intervention to break the cycle of offending and violence. Navigators will provide appropriate pathways, addressing needs such as education, training, housing, and substance misuse.

Assertive Outreach

Detached youth workers (that are based in the community), will be working with looked after children who are at risk of exploitation, due to frequent and/or high-risk missing episodes.

Violence Reduction Fund

The Violence Reduction Fund was for local community-based and partner organisations to bid for up to £20,000 of funding to prevent and reduce violence across our six key areas. The closing date was 31st October, and all successful bidders have been notified. Details relating to the Violence Reduction Fund, including the successful projects, appear in the appendix. Some examples of the interventions that have been funded are: youth engagement activities; interventions focussed on addressing violence in schools; violence

prevention focussed upon the Night Time Economy such as search mitts; and interventions focussed on promoting healthy relationships amongst young people.

4.6. Interventions

The Home Office set an expectation that at least 20% of funding would be spent on interventions. Taking account of our 'Scale Up' activity and our 'New Projects', we are proud to report that we are aiming to spend over 50% of our grant funding on interventions.

5. VRU STRUCTURE

Accommodation

The SYVRU is located at Shepcote Lane Police Station in a purpose built office. The location is central for the county, close to the M1 and M18.

Staffing

The SYVRU is led by Joint Heads: Lee Berry (Temporary Superintendent) and Rachel Staniforth (Public Health Professional). This gives South Yorkshire a unique advantage, as the Unit has both a public health and policing perspective. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has a strategic advisor into the VRU Linda Mayhew.

There are local partnership leads working within the VRU. These leads come from each of the four local authorities to ensure: local linkages; identification of current work; ready access to data; and utilisation of existing relationships and work. Angela Greenwood is the Sheffield partnership lead and the senior partnership lead for the VRU. The leads also have connections back to their local communities and third sector. The leads also act as the link to the Community Safety Partnerships and will take an update report to each board and theme groups as required.

The VRU has a full-time analyst Mike Parker and administration assistant Neepa Bandyopadhyay, as well as a seconded communications Manager Samantha Mawson.

Governance

The SYVRU is overseen by the Violence Reduction Executive Board. This Board meets monthly. Membership of the Board is directed by the Home Office and includes: Local Authority Chief Executives, Directors of Public Health and/or Directors of Children's Services, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), education representatives, community, voluntary and faith sector representatives, youth offending team representatives and the South Yorkshire Police Chief Constable and Assistant Chief Constable.

An Elected Member Reference group, with a representative from each of the four local authorities across South Yorkshire, has also been established, which meets on a bi-monthly basis.

Communication

Activities include:

Creation of a SYVRU website:

<http://www.southyorkshireviolencereductionunit.com>

Twitter account established, @sy_vru

Twitter 'chats'

Monthly newsletter will be distributed internally and externally in due course.

6. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to read the report and provide views and comments..

Rachel Staniforth, Joint Head of the SYVRU

Lee Berry, Joint Head of the SYVRU

Angela Greenwood, Senior Partnership Lead, SYVRU

This page is intentionally left blank



Report to Safer & Stronger Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Report of: Maxine Stavrianakos, Head of Neighbourhood Intervention and Tenant Support Service.

Subject: Hate Crime

Author of Report: Maxine Stavrianakos, Head of Neighbourhood Intervention and Tenant Support Service.

Summary:

The report will update Members of the Committee on work carried out by the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in relation to Hate Crime in Sheffield.

The report will provide detail of the work carried out by the Community Safety Partnership to address Hate Crime in the City in particular concentrating on:

- The work of the Partnership Hate Crime Coordinator for Sheffield
- The Establishment of a Hate Crime Priority Group answering to the Community Safety Partnership.

In addition the report will provide Members of the Committee with details and statistics relating to Hate Crime figures recorded in Sheffield and South Yorkshire overall.

Type of item: The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	x
Other	

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

Note the report for information.

Background Papers.

The report refers to information gained from:

- Police Data covering the National Picture and Sheffield
- Stop Hate UK Data covering Quarter 2 in Sheffield
- Crime Survey for England and Wales / Office for National Statistics.

Category of Report: OPEN (please specify)

Report of the Head of Neighbourhood Intervention and Tenant Support Service

Hate Crime

1. Introduction/Context

1.1 The Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee set up a cross-party group to review hate crime and hate incidents occurring in Sheffield. The group agreed to concentrate efforts on: To understand the different ways hate crime is reported in Sheffield and to increase awareness of Hate Crime in Sheffield.

1.2 This report will provide members with an update on what is currently being carried out via partnership working to address hate crime and hate incidents in Sheffield. The report provides members with an overview of the current national picture in relation to Hate Crime and an overview of Hate Crime reported in Sheffield.

2. Main body of report, matters for consideration, etc.

2.1 The main body of the report will cover the following areas:

- Community Safety Partnership Hate Crime Coordinators Update
- Hate Crime Reporting – National Update / Sheffield Update
- Community Safety Partnership - Hate Crime Priority Group Update

2.2 Community Safety Partnership - Hate Crime Coordinator

The Partnership Hate Crime Coordinator is now in post and has access to both South Yorkshire Police and Sheffield City Councils Computer Systems. On a daily basis both of these systems are interrogated by the coordinator in order to identify the following:

- Any trends in hate crime reported in the previous 24hrs in Sheffield
- To identify any emerging community tensions within Sheffield that is Hate Crime Motivated.
- To identify repeat victims, locations or suspects relating to Hate Crime within Sheffield.

- To have an awareness of Hate Crime issues throughout South Yorkshire

In addition to daily monitoring of Hate Crime in Sheffield the Hate Crime Coordinator is tasked with producing weekly and monthly written reports. These reports are vital in determining how best to utilise resources and address current issues in a timely and appropriate manner.

One of the main objectives of the Hate Crime Coordinator has been to raise awareness and to develop a better understanding of Hate Crime and how it affects our communities here in Sheffield.

To date this year the coordinator has organised and carried out over fifty hate crime initiatives in Sheffield with various organisations. These events have been in the way of hate training sessions to professionals, hate awareness raising events and attendance in school assemblies to educate students how hate crime is committed and the effects of hate on victims, families and Communities.

The coordinator has been influential in creating and developing the Hate Crime Priority Group during 2019.

Ongoing Work

Sheffield Hate Crime Community Reporting Centre's

During 2020 the partnership coordinator will ascertain the current position of all centres and ensure that those that are still in place have the correct support and appropriate Hate Crime Training to ensure all reports are correctly recorded and investigated appropriately.

South Yorkshire Police are currently reviewing their internal processes in relation to Hate Crime and Hate Crime Incidents that are directly reported to them. The police hate crime working group are keen to ensure that a quick, timely and adequate response to all Hate Crime is implemented to ensure victims are seen rapidly following an incident.

The coordinator is commencing work with partners in developing Sheffield Safer Places Scheme. This scheme will identify specific locations throughout Sheffield where those who are vulnerable are more likely to attend and openly discuss Hate Incidents. The plan is for this to be in place by October 2020.

2.3 Hate Crime Reporting / Methods of Reporting

- 2.3.1 Sheffield Community Safety Partnership has provided funding to Stop Hate UK to provide the hate crime reporting line in Sheffield during 2019 (0800 158 1625).

In summary the Helpline during quarter two of 2019/20 have received a total of 21 contacts in Sheffield. Six of those contacts have reported Hate Crimes where the motivations were **Disability, Gender identity, Race, Sexual Orientation and Other** aspects of personal identity. The callers reported being subjected to **Verbal Abuse and Threatening Behaviour**. Average length of call being 10 mins.

So far this year 64% of contacts have been made into the helpline outside during normal working hours. The number of reports made to Stop Hate UK since being commissioned in 2017 has steadily increased.

The recommendation going forward would be to continue the funding to Stop Hate UK. The rationale to continue the funding is that not all crimes/incidents of Hate are reported directly to the police by those affected. Therefore, this data will capture numerical information that may not be reported via the police. Therefore, a comparison of reported Hate Crime over a specific period of time can be undertaken.

2.3.2 **National Hate Crime Reporting – The Bigger Picture**

The most recent Home Office release of Hate Crime in England and Wales (2018/19)¹ shows a continued increase in the number of hate crimes recorded by police in comparison to previous years.

In 2018/19, there were over 100,000 hate crimes recorded in England and Wales, showing a +10% increase on the previous year (approximately 94,000 offences). Year on year increases in hate crimes recorded have been observed, and figures have more than doubled since 2012/13 (approximately 42,000 to over 100,000 offences in six years).

Increases over the last five years are likely to have been driven by crime recording improvements by the police. However, growing awareness of what constitutes a hate crime may also have impacted on the number of recorded offences. Short term genuine rises in hate crime recorded have also been noticed following terrorist attacks and events such as the EU Referendum in 2016.

Nationally, around three quarters of offences (76%, approximately 78,000) were race hate crimes. Around 12% of these incidents were flagged with more than one motivating factor, which were most commonly race and religion.

Nationally, the most commonly targeted religion in hate incidents flagged as motivated by religion was against Muslims (47%). Offences against Jewish people accounted for around 18% of religious hate crimes.

2.3.3 Reported Hate Crime South Yorkshire

There were 2602 Hate Crimes and 330 Hate Incidents recorded by South Yorkshire Police during the year period Jan 2018 – Dec 18 making a total of 2932 during this period overall.

88% (2602) of these were crimes and 12% (330) were recorded non-crimes.

During the same period of Jan 19 – Dec19 recorded crime in South Yorkshire was 2727 Hate Crimes and 399 Hate Incidents making an overall total of 3126.

These recorded figs show the following for 2019

- 87% (2727) of the total are Hate Crimes an increase of 125
- 13% (399) of the total are Hate Crime Incidents an increase of 69

A total increase of 194 report of Hate incidents.

Where hate was flagged as motivated by religious hatred, the most commonly perceived religion recorded was Muslim. Hate incidents against perceived Christian, Jewish and Other/Unknown religious beliefs were also recorded.

2.3.4 Crime Survey for England and Wales

The Crime Survey for England and Wales is unaffected by changes in police recording practices and less likely to be affected by victim willingness to report. However, due to a lower proportion of the population having experienced a hate crime, survey years have to be combined to give a large enough dataset for analysis. This means short term trends cannot be analysed.

In contrast to the police recorded data, the Crime Survey appears to show a decrease in hate incidents experienced by adults (aged 16+) between the 2007/08/09 and 2015/16/17/18 surveys. This decrease has fallen from over 307,000 incidents to 184,000 (-40%).

2.3.5 Reporting Hate Crime in Sheffield

Anyone can be a victim of Hate. Hate Crime or incidents can take place anywhere and at any time. Victims or witnesses can report via:

- Call 101 for non-emergency / 999 in an emergency
- If person reporting is deaf or hard of hearing or speech impaired text **18001 101** or SMS **07786 220 220**
- Visit or contact a local Hate Crime Reporting Centre
- Online Reporting via website True Vision or Stop Hate Crime UK

Further guidance can be found on Sheffield City Centre Website and also on southyorks.police.uk/hatehurts.

2.4 **Hate Crime Priority Group**

The Hate Crime Priority Group is in place and functioning.

The group reports directly into Sheffield Community Safety Partnership.

The group have met three times since their inception.

Chair is still developing membership.

The group aims and objectives are:

- To Develop a Citywide Strategy for Hate Crime
- To respond to any gaps in relation to Hate Crime Victim and Community Provision
- Create an Action Plan relating to Hate Crime / Incidents
- Work in Partnership to address all Emerging Trends relating to Hate Crime in Sheffield and to carry out Community Consultation in relation to Hate Crime in Sheffield.

3

- 3.1 The people of Sheffield will see that hate crime and hate crime incidents are being addressed in full partnership across the whole of the City. The work of the Hate Crime Coordinator is far reaching throughout Sheffield and this will only grow in the coming months / years ahead. The ongoing work of the Priority Group will involve more integration of members from numerous communities and community consultation will be a main driver for this group. The methods of reporting hate crime is still developing with the overall aim of gaining the communities confidence in reporting all aspects of Hate Crime.

4. **Recommendation**

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of this report and
- To provide feedback / members viewpoint relating to Hate Crime

Hate Crime Update

Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy
Development Committee

16.01.2020

Maxine Stavrianakos

Head of Neighbourhood Intervention and
Tenant Support

Sheffield City Council

Sheffield
City Council



Definition

- Any incident or criminal offence perceived to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards a person because of their...

Page 94

- Race,
- Religion or belief,
- Sexual orientation,
- Gender identity (inc. Transgender).
- Disability

Sheffield City Council

Sheffield
City Council



Definition – Hate Crime

When a **criminal offence** of a hate nature is reported to South Yorkshire Police, either by the victim or another person, it will be recorded and investigated as a **hate crime**

Page 95



Sheffield City Council

HATE MAKES ME FEEL...

Hate hurts. Report it and put a stop to it.
Call 101 or 999 in an emergency or visit southyorks.police.uk/hatehurts

#HateHurtsSY

South Yorkshire Police (PO) social media icons: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and the South Yorkshire Police crest.

Non-Crime Hate Incident

- A victim or witness may perceive that an action against them was motivated by the hostility and prejudice of the perpetrator - but **no** criminal offence has been committed.
- Page 96 When an incident of this nature is reported to South Yorkshire Police, it will be recorded as a 'non-crime hate incident'.
- South Yorkshire Police personnel (officers or staff) will need to decide whether a hate crime or non-crime hate incident has occurred and respond appropriately.



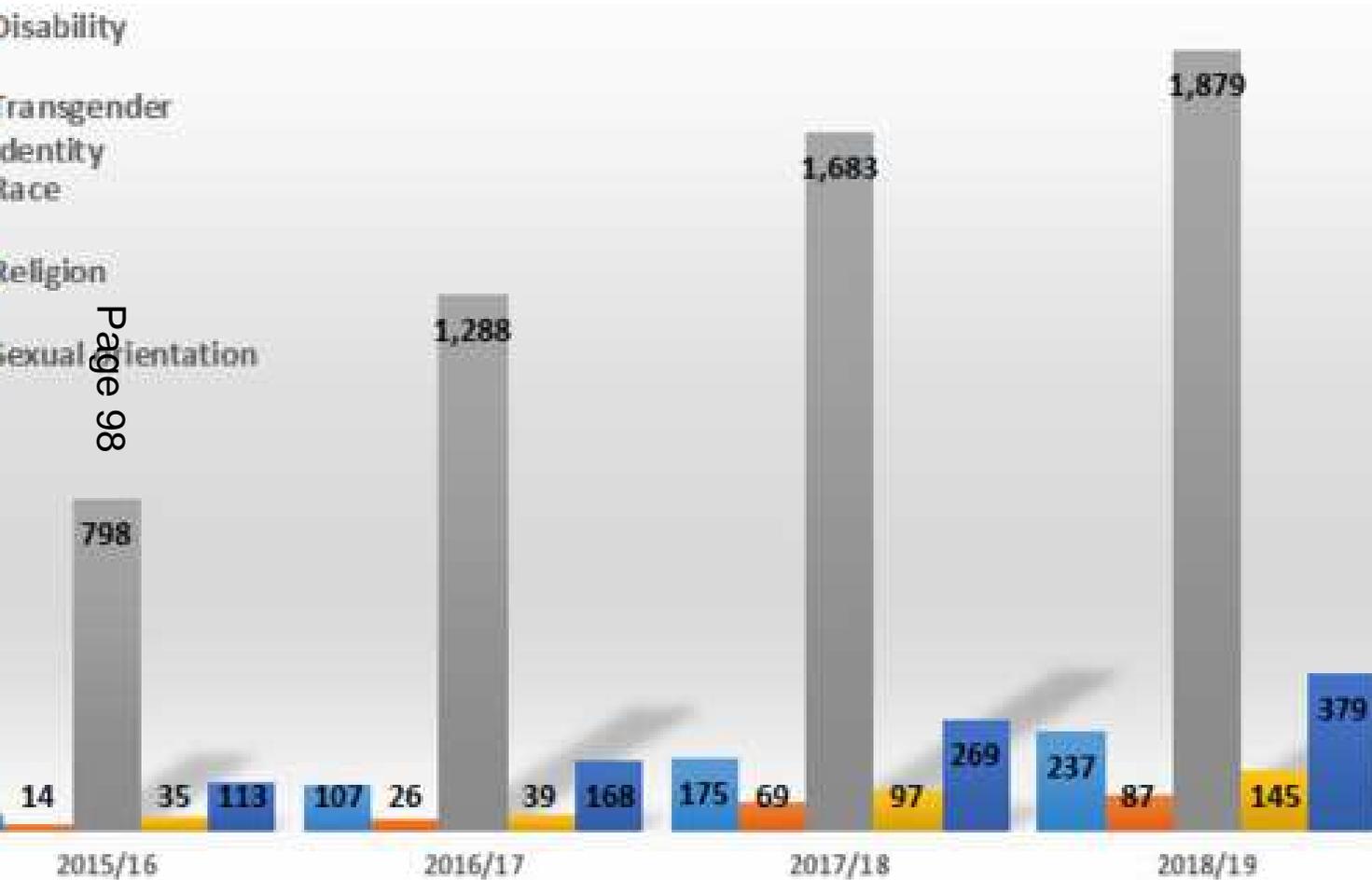
Sheffield City Council



Mate Crime” - Cuckooing

- Mate Crime’ is the exploitation of vulnerable people by others who seize an opportunity to prey on an individual’s weakness.
- In other words, befriending the vulnerable person in order to take from them what ever they can, knowing that the vulnerable person is unlikely to report them because they are their ‘Mate’.
- This can include borrowing money, consuming their food and drink, taking expensive electrical goods, bank cards etc. What ever they can exploit.
- This could even lead to them becoming involved in low level crime

Hate Crime Strands South Yorkshire



- The level of police recorded hate crimes in South Yorkshire has been increasing since 2015/16.
- In the year 2018/19 racially motivated hate crimes accounted for 69% of the total recorded hate crimes
- Data Source: Office for National Statistics

South Yorkshire Police Data - Sheffield

The most common type of hate crime reported to South Yorkshire Police is **Racial**. Figures below provide a quick overview / comparison of Hate Strands reported to SYP and verifies the National trend of Racial Crimes / Incidents being most prevalent.

Page 99

Crime/Non-Crime	Hate Strand	
Crimes	Disability	12
	Gender	7
	Other	3
	Racial	172
	Religion	15
	Sexual Orientation	28
Non-Crimes	Disability	1
	Racial	6
	Religion	3
	Sexual Orientation	1

Reported Hate Crime Yearly Comparison

There were 2602 Hate Crimes and 330 Hate Incidents recorded by South Yorkshire Police during the period Jan 2018 – Dec 18 (total of 2932 during this period overall).

88% (2602) of these were crimes and 12% (330) were recorded non-crimes.

During the same period of Jan 19 – Dec 19 recorded Hate Crimes in South Yorkshire was 2727 and 399 Hate Incidents (overall total of 3143).

These recorded figs show the following:

5% increase in recorded Hate Crimes (142 more recorded)

21% increase in recorded Hate Crime Incidents (69 more reported)

A total increase of 211 incidents in 2019.

This equates to an overall increase of 7%

Where hate was flagged as motivated by religious hatred, the most commonly perceived religion recorded was Muslim. Hate incidents against perceived Christian, Jewish and Other/Unknown religious beliefs were also recorded.

Sheffield City Council

Sheffield
City Council



Stop Hate Data UK 19/20

Stop Hate UK – Latest Figures 2019/20

During Q2 of 2019 Stop Hate UK received reports of:

6 Hate Crimes and **15** Non-Crime Hate Incidents.

Out of the **21** reports, **5** referrals were made. **3** of these were to South Yorkshire Police, **1** Housing Association and the other **1** was Victim Support

90% of contact was made via the telephone line, the others via e-mail and the online chat service

64% of these reports were taken outside of regular, 9-5 office hours. During this period

South Yorkshire Police

Sheffield City Council

Sheffield
City Council

The most common type of hate crime reported to South Yorkshire Police is Racial.

Our Response

- Partnership Work
- Community Safety and Community Cohesion
- Hate Crime Co-ordinator
- Community Co-ordinator
- Prevent



Graffiti



Groups, signs and symbols



Partnership Hate Crime Coordinator Role

- Raising the awareness of hate crime
- Overseeing Hate Crime Investigations
- Making contact with victims – phone calls and letters

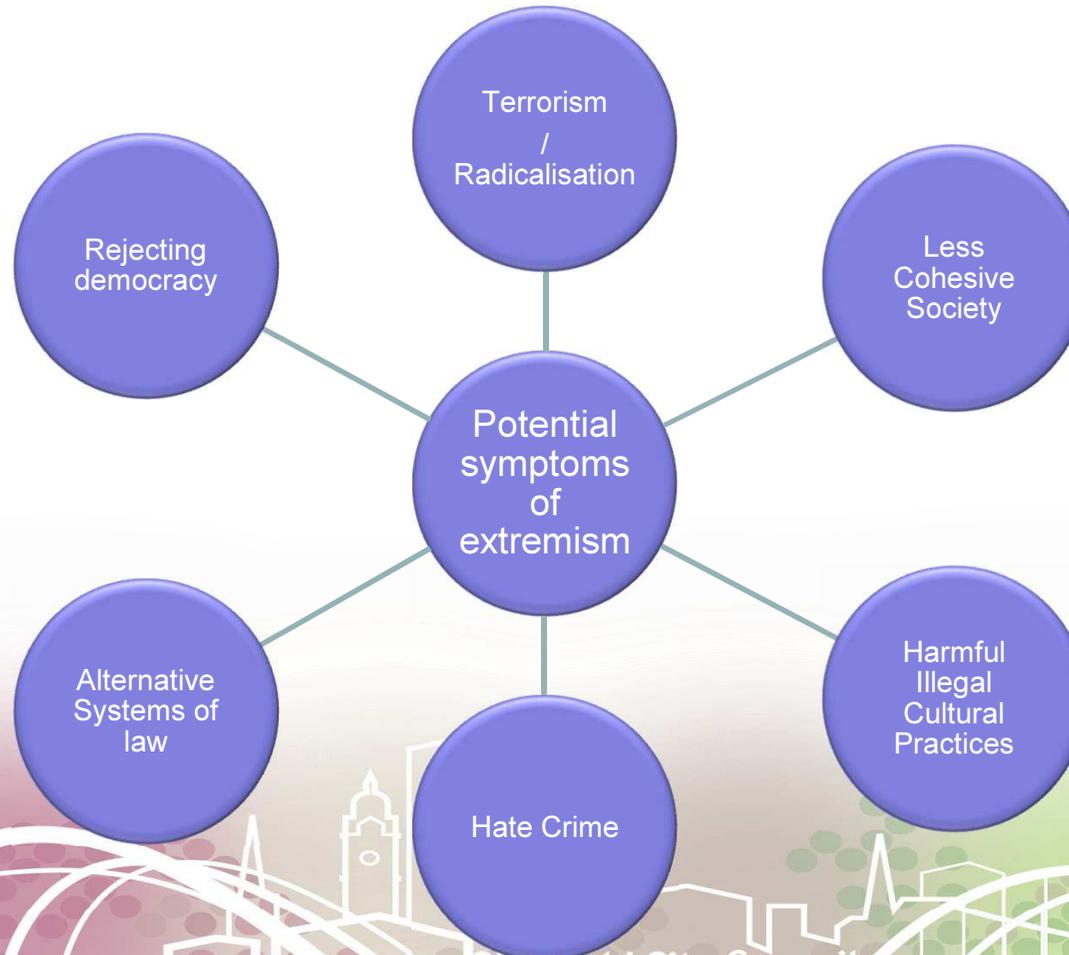
- Page 109
- **SYP** – action plan, daily checks of crime recording systems, overseeing hate crime investigations, contacting and visiting victims, staff training
 - **SCC** – daily checks of call recording systems, disclosure, tenant support information, monitoring of hate crime calls, staff training
 - **Work with Voluntary and Community Faith Sector** – staff training, supporting victims
 - **Engagement and Prevention Work** – engagement events, stalls and displays, social media posts, hate crime priority group

Prevent and Counter Extremism

- Multi-agency approach with statutory and community partners. Work together with partners to avoid duplication
- Identifying issues and concerns and responding with early intervention
- Using intelligence to address issues and prevent escalation



Links with Prevent and Extremism



Main Challenge - Under reporting of hate crime

- The majority of hate crime that is reported to SYP is of a Racial nature – 80%.
- Other identified groups such as Disability, Sexual Orientation and Transgender are more widely unreported.
- We know that hate crime in general is massively under reported.
- Why is this
 - A lack of understanding as to what Hate Crime is.
 - Not knowing how to report it.
 - Not having the confidence to contact an authoritative organisation.
 - Lack of trust in the police.
 - Thinking that nothing will get done about it anyway.
 - Fear of further abuse if the offenders are dealt with.

Key Priorities for the next 12 Months

- **Increased reporting of hate crime**
 - Continue to build confidence
 - Sharing reports with partners
 - Third party reporting centres
 - Review work of Stop Hate UK and telephone line
 - Increased front line staff training
 - Shared IT?
- **Increase Victim Support** – visits to repeat victims of hate crime.
- **Hate Crime Priority Group, Community Safety Partnership**

Any Questions ?





Report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee Thursday 16th January 2020

Report of: Policy and Improvement Officer

Subject: Current Work Programme 2019/20: Safer & Stronger
Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

Author of Report: Alice Nicholson, Policy and Improvement Officer
alice.nicholson@sheffield.gov.uk
0114 273 5065

The current work programme for 2019/20 is attached at Appendix 1 for the Committee's consideration and discussion. The work programme has been updated and items scheduled for some of the meetings. The work programme includes a list of items to be prioritised and scheduled and the Committee is asked to prioritise and agree remaining items to be scheduled in line with the sections of this report that refer to role of scrutiny, determining the work programme. Where an issue is not appropriate for inclusion on a meeting agenda, but there is significant interest from members, the Committee can choose to request a written briefing.

Type of item: The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	
Other	X

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

- Consider and discuss the committee's work programme for 2019/20
- Prioritise and agree remaining items to be scheduled

Background Papers: [Sheffield Council Constitution](#)

Category of Report: OPEN

Current Work Programme 2019/20: Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee - Thursday 16th January 2020

1.0 What is the role of Scrutiny?

1.1 Scrutiny Committees exist to hold decision makers to account, investigate issues of local concern, and make recommendations for improvement. The Centre for Public Scrutiny has identified that effective scrutiny:

- Provides 'Critical Friend' challenge to executive policy makers and decision makers
- Enables the voice and concern of the public and its communities
- Is carried out by independent minded governors who lead and own the scrutiny process
- Drives improvement in public services and finds efficiencies and new ways of delivering services

1.2 Scrutiny Committees can operate in a number of ways – through formal meetings with several agenda items, single item 'select committee' style meetings, task and finish groups, and informal visits and meetings to gather evidence to inform scrutiny work. Committees can hear from Council Officers, Cabinet Members, partner organisations, expert witnesses, members of the public. Scrutiny Committees are not decision making bodies, but can make recommendations to decision makers.

2.0 Legislative Powers relevant to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

2.1 Under the Police and Justice Act 2006, every local authority is required to have a Crime and Disorder Committee with the power to scrutinise the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership or Community Safety Partnership as they are now referred. In Sheffield the Crime and Disorder Committee is the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee and the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) is the Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership.

2.2 The requirements of the 2006 Act were enacted by the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 which came into force for local authorities in England on 30 April 2009. Under the Act the Crime and Disorder Committee (in Sheffield the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee) can:

- Scrutinise decisions made and actions taken in connection by the responsible authorities that make up the CDRP / Community Safety Partnership
- Request information from the responsible authorities
- Require attendance of officer or employees or responsible authorities to answer questions or to provide information.

- 2.3 The Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership is made up of all the public services in the city, with representatives from the private and voluntary sectors. The Partnership considers issues across the breadth of community safety, such as: crime, anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, community cohesion, preventing offending and reoffending, and protecting vulnerable people.
- 2.4 The bodies represented on the Partnership have a statutory duty to work together to prevent crime and disorder in their area. The Partnership is also required by statutory regulation to produce an annual assessment of the levels and patterns of crime, disorder and substance misuse, and agree an annual partnership plan. This is referred to as the Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment. The Committee usually considers an annual reporting item from the partnership, and would expect this January/March 2020. The work programme could incorporate a more present through the year scrutiny of Sheffield's community safety partnership (The Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership).
- 2.5 The Police and Crime Panel was established with the statutory function to scrutinise and hold to account the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire. The Committee have at times received an update on the work of the Police and Crime Panel.

3.0 Determining the work programme

- 3.1 Attached to this report at Appendix 1 is a current work programme 2019/20.
- 3.2 It is important the work programme reflects the principles of effective scrutiny, outlined above at 1.1, and so the Committee has a vital role in ensuring that the work programme is looking at issues that concern local people, and looking at issues where scrutiny can influence decision makers. The work programme remains a live document, and there will be an opportunity for the Committee to discuss it at every Committee meeting, this might include:
- Prioritising issues for inclusion on a meeting agenda
 - Identifying new issues for scrutiny
 - Determining the appropriate approach for an issue – e.g. select committee style single item agenda vs task and finish group
 - Identifying appropriate witnesses and sources of evidence to inform scrutiny discussions
 - Identifying key lines of enquiry and specific issues that should be addressed through scrutiny of any given issue.
- 3.3 Members of the Committee can also raise any issues for the work programme via the Chair or Policy and Improvement Officer at any time.

4.0 Meeting Dates 2019/20

4.1 Meetings have been scheduled for Thursdays 5-7pm on the following dates:

- 16th January 2020
- 13th February 2020
- 12th March 2020

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

- Consider and discuss the committee's work programme for 2019/20
 - Prioritise and agree remaining items to be scheduled
-

Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

Last updated: 7th January 2020

Please note: the work programme is a live document and so is subject to change.

Safer & Stronger Communities		Thursday 5-7pm	
Topic	Reasons for selecting topic	Lead Officer/s	Agenda Item/ Briefing paper
Thursday 11th July 5-7pm			
15 15 15 South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue draft Integrated Risk Management Plan	<i>Consideration of implications of this draft plan currently out to consultation, especially in light of the matters raised by a petition presented to Full Council 12th June 2019</i>	South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue - Chief Fire Officer and Director of Support Services	Agenda Item
Fire Service Cuts - Petition to Council 12th June 2019	<i>Full Council received a petition on the Fire Service Cuts proposed through the Integrated Risk Management Plan and referred matters raised by the petition to scrutiny for consideration</i>	Lead Petitioner - Neil Carbutt, Fire Brigade Union (FBU)	Agenda Item
Work Programme 2019/20 including Gun and Knife Crime Review draft report of work to date and findings 2018/19	<i>Consideration of a draft work programme for Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee 2019/20</i>	Policy and Improvement Officer	Agenda Item

Thursday 19th September 5-7pm			
<i>Abbeydale Road (LAC) Selective Licensing – update post implementation</i>	<i>Monitoring the impact of the impact of the scheme over 6/12 months - Cabinet Decision 20th June 2018 - implementation scheduled 1st November 2018 - progress report 10 months on from implementation</i>	<i>Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety, Neighbourhood Intervention and Tenant Support Team, Place</i>	
<i>Universal Credit in Sheffield an update:</i>	<i>Start with a briefing of 'what it looks like in Sheffield: Impact and Support, organisations involved' - Committee can then determine what more they want to know and who to attend; follow on post introduction of UC in the city</i>		<i>For information</i>
<i>Work programme 2019/20</i>		<i>Policy and Improvement Officer</i>	<i>Standing Item</i>
Thursday 24th October 5-7pm			
<i>Cohesion Sheffield - an update on city wide framework, joint strategy, and area projects</i>	<i>Understanding the local cohesion structure and system; cohesion is impacted by a number of factors and this would be to receive a report of work undertaken by Cohesion Sheffield to implement the framework and strategy, especially an update on area based projects</i>	<i>Angela Greenwood, Mike Fitter</i>	
<i>City of Sanctuary</i>	<i>Update and review</i>	<i>City of Sanctuary</i>	

<i>Controlling Migration Fund</i>	<i>Check back on this fund – How we are using it</i>	<i>Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety, Director of Neighbourhoods; members of public who asked questions at last meeting (19.09.2019)</i>	
<i>Work programme 2019/20</i>		<i>Policy and Improvement Officer</i>	<i>Standing Item</i>
Thursday 12th December 5-7 pm – the meeting was cancelled, with all items moving to 16th January and additional meeting put in 13th February 2020			
Thursday 16th January 5-7pm			
Challenge for Change	Report on latest project of Challenge for Change Tenant Scrutiny Panel - Customer Access	Members of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel; lead officer - Louise Cassin, Housing and Neighbourhoods Service	
South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit	An update on this new unit for South Yorkshire	Violence Reduction Unit - Rachel Staniforth/Angela Greenwood/Lee Berry	
Hate Crime in Sheffield	Hate Crime is a CSP (Community Safety Partnership) priority, an action plan was a recommendation of this Committee 2016/17; This item would be to receive a report of performance on this CSP priority as part of this Committee's Statutory role to scrutinise the CSP; and a progress update on the Hate Crime Action Plan, including how (what routes) are people reporting hate crime		TBC
Work programme 2019/20		Policy and Improvement Officer	Standing Item

Thursday 13th February 2020 5-7pm			
TBC - Housing - Private Rented Sector, housing affordability and affordable housing, housing supply	Committee want to know what affordable housing looks like in Sheffield; how do we maintain affordability; and issues of appropriate housing, for example, catering for new way of living for ageing population, and young people's housing opportunity (especially care leavers); city fairness and equality in housing	Cabinet Members with responsibility for Planning, Housing Strategy, Housing Delivery	
TBC - Refugee Needs Review	Added to work programme following meeting on 24th October about Cohesion, City of Sanctuary, Controlling Migration Fund		for information
TBC - Page Hall Selective Licensing Review	Identified and added to the programme at the meeting on 24th October		for information
Work programme 2019/20		Policy and Improvement Officer	Standing Item
Thursday 12th March 5-7 pm			
Community Safety Partnership Annual Report	"Statutory role for this Committee as the Crime and Disorder Committee to scrutinise the Sheffield Community Safety Partnership (CSP)		
Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/20 Draft Content & Work Programme 2020/21	This report provides the Committee with a summary of its activities over the municipal year for inclusion in the Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/20; and a list of topics which it is recommended be put forward for consideration as part of the 2020/21 Work Programme for this committee.	Policy and Improvement Officer	

Items to be prioritised and scheduled 2019/20			
101 service - The Police non-emergency number - operation and performance update	Performance is still of concern to members, receive an update on the operation and performance of this number in South Yorkshire - impact on non-emergency crime reporting data, is it fit for purpose	South Yorkshire Police - see work programme of SY Police and Crime Panel	TBC if required
Housing + update	Committee received an update March 2018 and would like to know how it is going		March 2020?
Other areas of work - not scheduled as agenda items			
Gun and knife crime scrutiny review	Committee work to date report needs to be updated into a formal review report, gathering more information if required - small task group of the Committee to work on this; and to scope with Children, Young People & Families Support Scrutiny Committee activity, and work on Violent Crime Reduction in the city		Task and Finish Group

This page is intentionally left blank