

# Challenge for Change Presentation March 20<sup>th</sup> 2012

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Agenda Item 8



# Introduction

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## Who are the Challenge for Change Team?

- Project was completed with 6 scrutineers

## Purpose of the scrutiny project

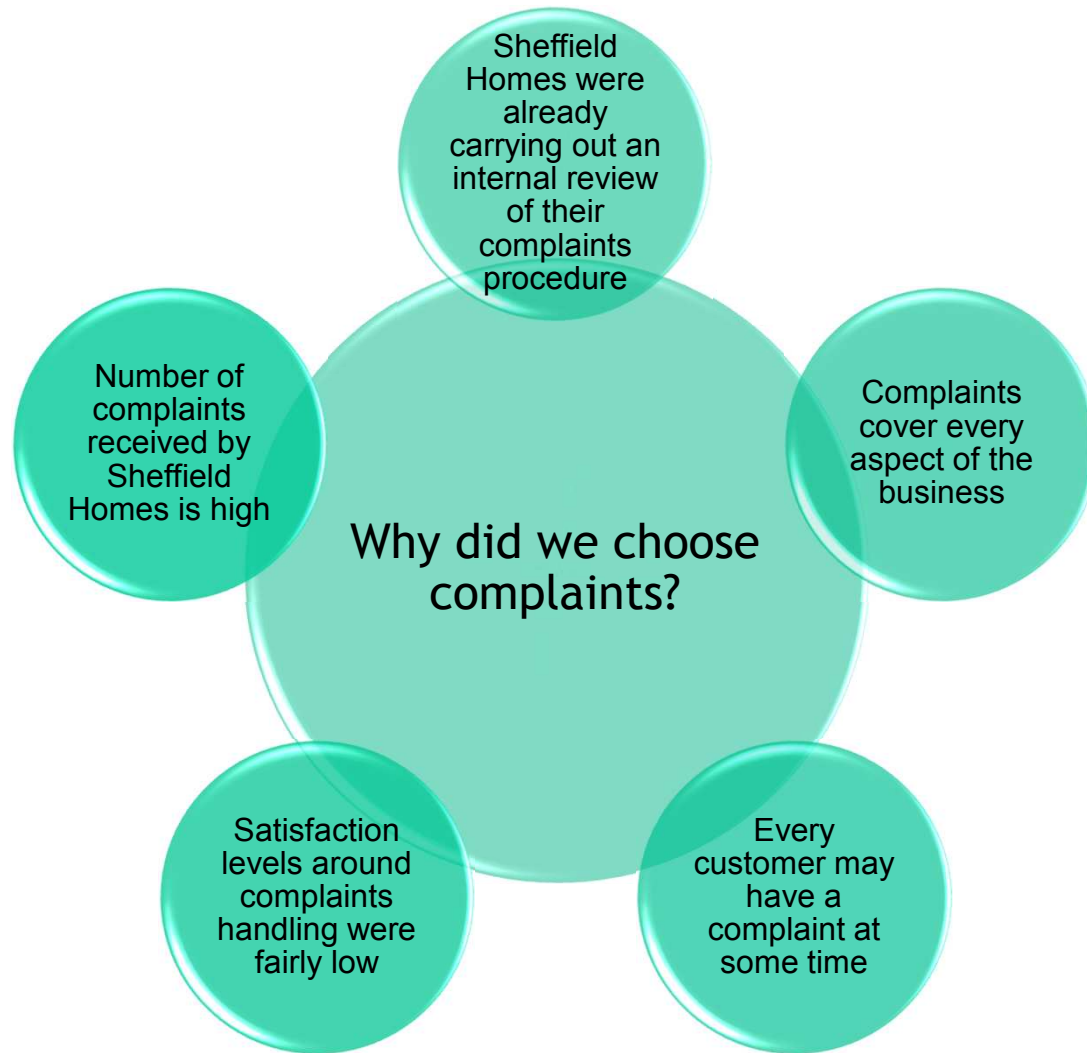
- To examine the customer service satisfaction levels of complaints handling

## Methods for gathering evidence

- Desktop document analysis
- Reality checks with staff and customers



# Project Start-Up



## Key areas for investigation

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What is a complaint?

Customer Expectations

Management of complaints

Communication

Learning from complaints



# Project Objectives



To make recommendations to ensure complaints are handled in a more efficient way

To understand the difference between 'a complaint and a grumble'

To reduce the number of cases considered by the Ombudsman

To recommend improvements on communicating with customers on making a complaint

To publish our activities in newsletters and the website





## Findings - Internal

### Review of customer correspondence letters

- Challengers examined a sample of individual response letters
- Letter quality varied from good to unacceptable
- Responses showed inconsistencies of information and a lack of attention to detail

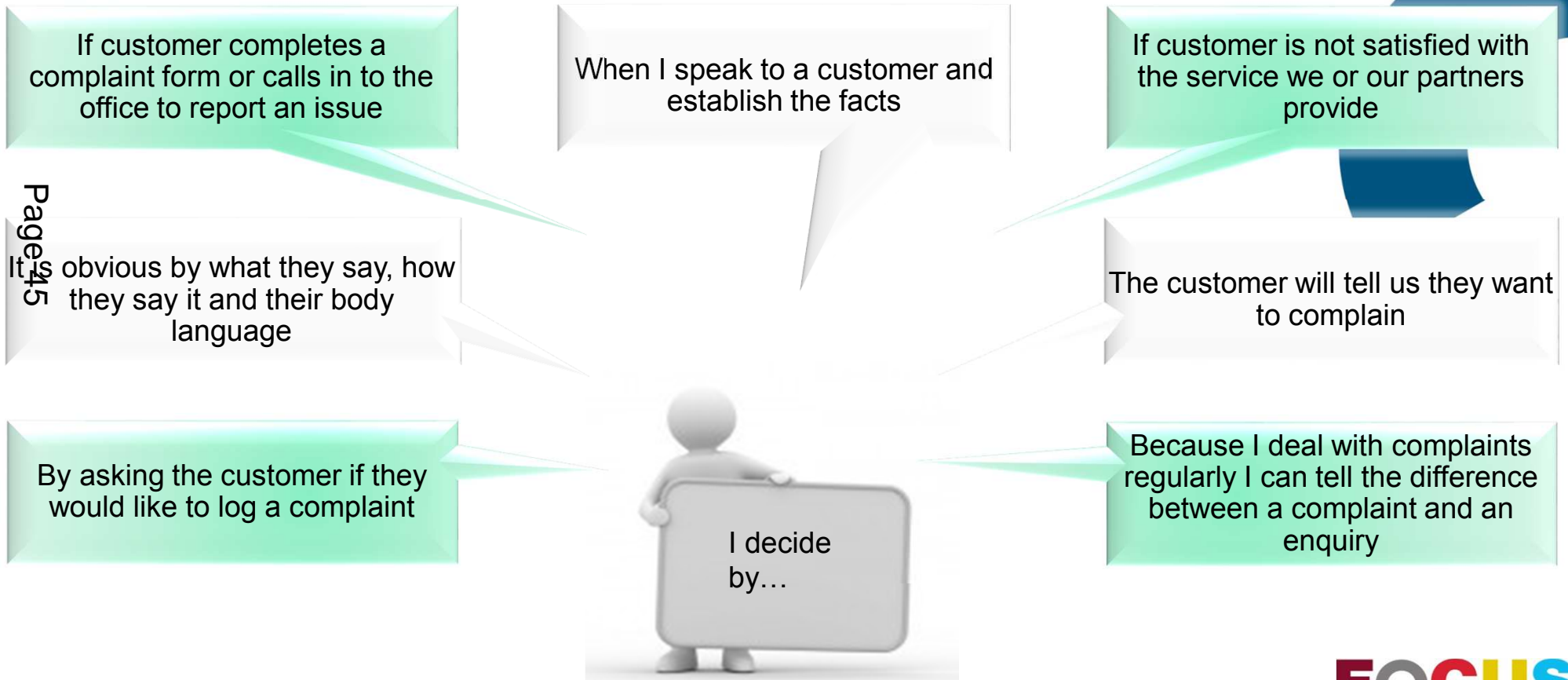
### Staff Forum

- Couple of challengers held a forum with contact centre and housing office staff
- It offered the opportunity for staff to discuss their experience of complaint handling and for the challengers to discuss information gathered from the reality checks and desktop analysis

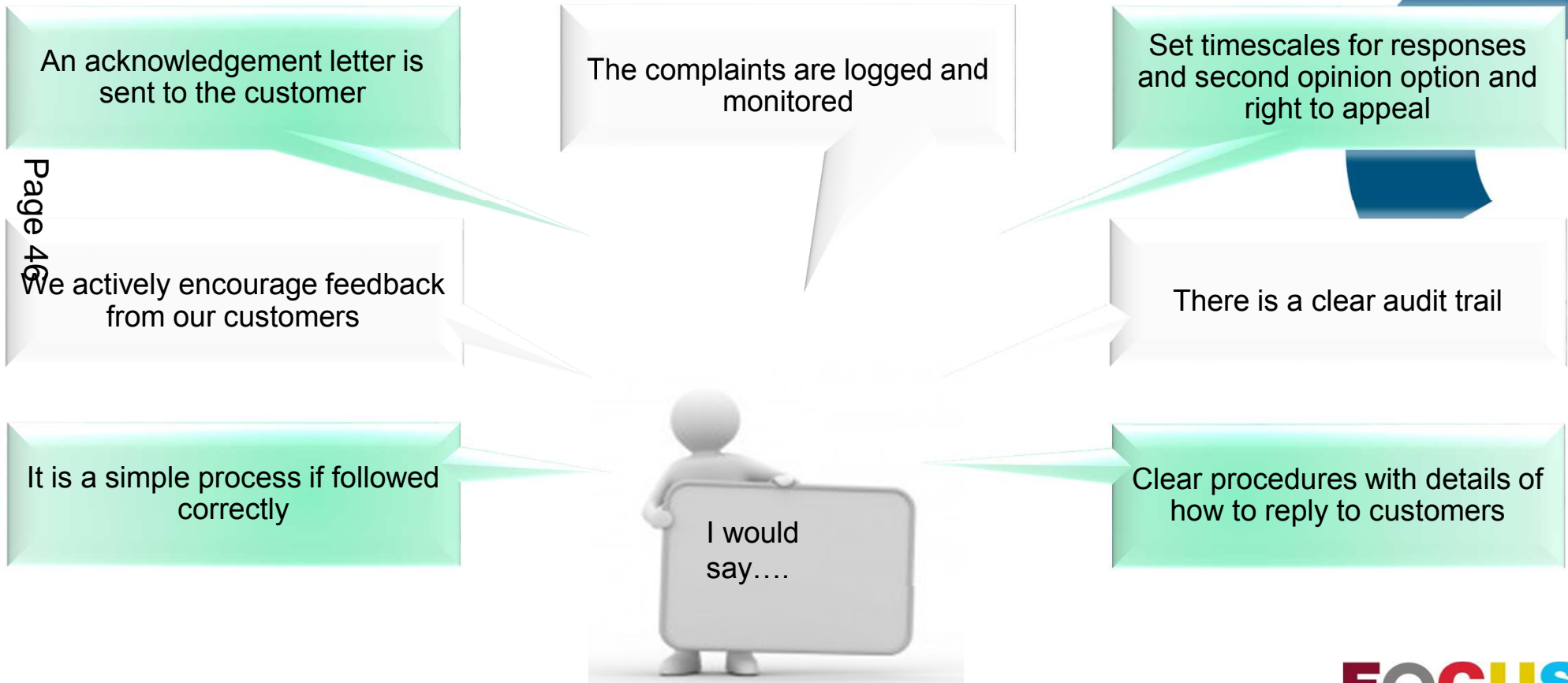
### Staff Survey

- Survey distributed electronically to all Sheffield Homes staff
- 128 responses were returned across all grades of staff
- Results indicated a high level of confidence in the complaints system but many also felt under pressure when dealing with complaints.

## How do you decide if a customer is making a complaint?



## What are the strengths of the complaints process?





## What are the weaknesses of the complaints process?

Finding the right department to forward the complaint onto

Pressure to respond within the timescales and do the 'day job'

Encouraged to apologise for things that a customer doesn't like but have little power to change things

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We have two IT systems running alongside each other.

Staff logging on the IT system as complaint without fully understanding the actual issues

I have seen staff receive a complaint but not log it on to OHMS because this would create extra work for them

There are a few...

We take complaints for our partner organisations over which we have no control

## What improvements would you like to see to improving the complaints process?



# Findings - Customers

## Visit to Viewpoint

- Challengers visited Viewpoint to listen to a sample of recordings of complaints surveys made to customers who made complaints which are now closed.
- Offered an opportunity to gauge the customer experience from lodging a complaint and charting their journey through the complaints process
- Findings from the visit indicated that the customer satisfaction is of a low level

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## Tenants Forum

- Challengers attended a complaints workshop for tenants hosted by Sheffield Homes
- Feedback from the forum suggested that Sheffield Homes needs to improve the way it communicates with customers regarding complaints handling

## Tenants Survey

- Five hundred surveys were sent to customers who had made a complaint in the last 12 months. 91 completed questionnaires were returned
- Results established that just under half of the customers who make a complaint do so by phone, followed by visiting a housing office and putting it in writing
- Just over 10% correspond by email or use the template on the website

## Comments from tenants survey

I expected my question to be given a direct answer. Instead I was fobbed off

You can never speak to anybody to get a proper answer

I got what I expected – excuses as to why the work wasn't being done

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I understand that there is not only myself but being passed from one person to another is not a good service

To have a dedicated complaints team with a named contact

I did not feel an investigation was made even though I received a letter of explanation

My view is...

A tenants appeals panel to consider complaints appeals cases



## Budget

### Budget allocation

- Challenge for Change was allocated a budget of £5,000 for this scrutiny project

### How was it spent?

- Workshop venues
- Challenger members travel expenses
- Support from TPAS mentor
- Refreshments

### Budget Review

- The group ensured all spend decisions throughout the project were based on value for money
- The group financial spend came in under budget

# Recommendations

From all the evidence gathered from the reality checks, desktop document analysis and our own experiences as customers, the group were able to come up with the recommendations listed in Appendix 9 in your board papers.

Please see below a few of the key recommendations which should be considered for implementation

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- R2. To focus on resolving informal grumbles & low level complaints quickly

3

- R3. To implement a 3 stage complaints process

4

- R7. To improve communications between customers, Sheffield Homes and Kier

5

- R9. To produce a lessons learned report from complaints and share with customers and staff

- R13. To have dedicated staff to deal with stage 2 complaints or have a dedicated complaints team



# Acknowledgements

1

- Tom Strong and Louise Thompson of the Community Engagement Team

2

- Peter Brown and Gary Westwood of the Planning and Performance Team

3

- Alison Wood and her staff from the customer care team

4

- Kate Newbolt of TPAS

5

- Tenants, residents and customers who made up the initial steering group and carried out the recruitment



# Any Questions?

