



Communications Service Sheffield City Council

Housing & Neighbourhoods Service
Customer Standards Review

Communication and Consultation Plan



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Customer Standards Review – background to the Project

The current Customer Standards were developed in partnership with tenants and leaseholders in 2012. They cover the following key ‘themes’:

- Cleaner, Greener, and Safer
- Customer Service
- Income Management
- Maintenance and Repair
- Access to Housing
- Getting Involved
- Sheltered Housing

A recent TPAS report, undertaken as part of our work in 2019 to develop a new Engagement Strategy, made the recommendation that the council housing service should “Develop, with tenants and leaseholders, a clear set of service standards for all the key landlord services”

A similar recommendation was also made by our scrutiny panel Challenge for Change as part of their most recent review. They stated that “the [council housing] service must update the current Customer Services Charter”

It is essential if we are to deliver an efficient, high standard housing service that we are committed to achieving the things that matter most to our tenants and leaseholders. Also, it is imperative that targets are set to ensure that we are measuring our performance of those elements in a transparent and accessible way.

Alongside all of this, the Government recently published its White Paper “A Charter for Social Housing Tenants”. This outlines the areas which the government feels social landlords should focus on and which – following extensive consultation nationwide – they believe to be of most importance to social tenants.

All of these factors have led to us now undertaking a review of our Customer Standards, along with the performance measures which underpin them. This document outlines the communications and consultation we intend to do as part of that review.

The consultation will be undertaken in two main stages. The initial stage will cover the broad themes of the new standards, initially based on what existing customer feedback tells us and also the key themes of the recent White Paper. We will check with tenants that these cover all the things important to them, identify any gaps and – most importantly – ask how good performance against each of these would look to them as customers of the service.

Following completion of this consultation, officers will then undertake detailed work to analyse the feedback gathered and use this to shape a set of new proposed standards, and performance and scrutiny measures to underpin them.

The Review Stage of the consultation will then involve sharing the draft new standards with a Review Group of tenants and leaseholders (recruited during Phase One consultation) and verifying that they are reflective of what was said in Phase One. The outcome of this Review Stage will be a set of standards agreed with customers which can then be implemented.

Objectives of the Communications and Consultation Plan

1. To ensure that all relevant stakeholders are aware of the project and receive updates on progress, at the appropriate times and frequency.
2. To ensure that all relevant stakeholders are effectively engaged in the project and have the opportunity to share their views with us which can then help shape the project.
3. To promote the positive outcomes for customers, and for the H&NS, which the project is aimed at achieving.

Target audiences

Priority audiences / stakeholders have been identified as:

- All tenants and leaseholders of Sheffield City Council
- Housing and Neighbourhoods Advisory Panel (HANAP)
- Housing Leadership Team (HLT)
- Service Managers of council-housing related services within H&NS
- Service Managers of related services outside of H&NS (eg. Customer Services, the Housing Repairs Service)
- Tenants and Residents Associations (TARAs)
- Cabinet Member for Safer and Stronger Communities

Key messages

Key messages will be used to make sure that consistent and relevant information is communicated in the right way, to the right people at the right time:

- Our customer standards need to be reviewed and updated, for the reasons outlined above.
- We want this review to be customer-led (by tenants and leaseholders).
- We want to engage with as wide a range of customers as possible to help ensure the new customer standards developed are reflective of the needs of all our customers.
- We will listen to what customers tell us, and this will be a genuine opportunity to meaningfully shape the standards and make a difference. Views will be heard and acted upon.
- As well as the customer standards themselves, this is also a review of the performance measures which will underpin them.
- We will ensure that performance in achieving the customer standards is monitored and scrutinised by appropriate stakeholders on a regular basis, and that the results of that is shared publicly in an easily accessible way.

Methods / channels of communication and consultation to be used

We will use a combination of communications methods to ensure maximum possible reach of our stakeholders. These will include:

- Bi-weekly tenant / leaseholder bulletin
- Your Home Your Neighbourhood (YHYN, quarterly e-bulletin for tenants and leaseholders)
- Housing and Neighbourhoods Partnership Group (HNPG)
- Housing and Neighbourhoods Advisory Panel (HANAP)
- Dedicated webpage
- Social media (eg. FaceBook)
- Your TARA News (e-bulletin for TARAs)
- Housing and Neighbourhoods News (staff e-bulletin)
- Customer Services Task and Finish Group
- Service Managers Group
- Customer Services T&F Group (manager group including call-centre staff)
- HLT / HoS meetings
- Cabinet Member Briefings
- Customer surveys (online / ViewPoint, etc)

Detailed Communication and Consultation Implementation Plan

The implementation of this Communications and Consultation Plan will be planned and will evolve through the course of the project. A detailed implementation plan for the next 3 months is given on the next page.

Date	Activity	Audience	Officer(s) responsible	Comments
Feb 2021	HLT meeting / email to HLT	Senior Managers	VK / BC	To share the proposed comms plan and obtain their agreement to go ahead as proposed.
22 nd Feb	Cabinet Member Briefing	Cabinet Member	VK	To make him aware of this project, to share the proposed comms plan and obtain his agreement to go ahead as proposed.
2 nd March	Service Managers meeting	H&NS managers	VK / BC	To make them aware of the project, discuss their involvement and obtain their buy-in. To share the proposed comms plan and project plan.
16 th March	HNPG	Tenants and leaseholders	VK / BC	To make them aware of the project and begin consultation
March - April	Telephone surveys	Tenants and leaseholders	BC / DJ	To make them aware of the project and undertake consultation. To be done via Viewpoint.
“ “	Online surveys	Tenants and leaseholders	BC / LC / LF	To make them aware of the project and undertake consultation. To be done via Citizenspace
“ “	Facebook promotion	Tenants and leaseholders	VK / SK	To make them aware of the project and promote the consultation.
“ “	Bi-weekly e-bulletin / YHYN	Tenants and leaseholders	VK / LC	To make them aware of the project and promote the consultation.
“ “	Your TARA News	Tenants and leaseholders	VK / AB	To make them aware of the project and promote the consultation.
“ “	Sign-up packs for new tenants	New tenants	BC	To make them aware of the project and promote the consultation.
April	Customer Services T&F Group	Service Managers outside of H&NS	VK	To update them on progress of the Review.
		Pause in consultation whilst officers analyse feedback and develop new draft Standards with suggested performance measures which will underpin them		
Early July	HLT	Senior Managers	VK / BC	To share outcomes and resulting proposed new standards and performance measures. To obtain their feedback, and approval to progress.
Early – mid July	Cabinet Member Briefing	Cabinet Member	VK	To share outcomes and resulting proposed new standards and performance measures. To obtain his feedback, and approval to progress.
Early –	Service Managers	Service Managers	VK / BC	To share outcomes and resulting proposed new standards and

mid Juy				performance measures.
Mid Jul	Tenant and Leaseholder Review Group	Tenants and leaseholders	VK / BC	To share outcomes and resulting proposed new standards and performance measures. To obtain their feedback, and confirmation that proposed standards reflect the outcomes of the consultation.
Work will then be done to finalise the new Customer Standards, and ICMD process undertaken. The final Standards will then be confirmed to all stakeholders using all of the channels used above, with a target launch date of mid-October 2021. A more detailed launch-campaign will be planned with Comms over the coming months, but is likely to involve all of our usual channels plus posters, leaflets and possibly a promotional video (charged under the current Comms SLA)				