

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 4 October 2010	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel
<b>Report title:</b>		Housing Management CSC Working Party	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>			

## INTRODUCTION

1. The CSC working party meets bi-monthly to consider concerns raised by residents and evaluate the performance of the CSC and housing management services in responding to tenants and homeowners' queries and repairs.
2. The working party have agreed an action plan for quarter 3 and 4 (2010/11) and will be focussing on:
  - Reviewing the messages/IVR and telephony systems, testing the automated messages heard by residents.
  - Evaluating outcomes of the surgeries being held at local TRA forums to test real experiences and consider views expressed by residents.
  - Continuing to monitor calls and suggest improvements and training.
  - Examining complaints to suggest improvements and training.
  - Reviewing and evaluating the performance statistics submitted.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

3. That the working party is supported in its objective to improve the customer experience when contacting the CSC, particularly for reporting or progressing repairs.
5. That the scrutiny panel's proposed action plan is integrated into the objectives of the working party.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6. In June 2008, SGTO expressed concerns about the delivery of the repairs and housing management services through the CSC and questioned a number of key performance statistics. A presentation by the Borough Repairs Manager responding to the SGTO agreed to set up a working group of Council staff, tenant representatives and CSC staff as a way of reviewing performance and concerns and making further recommendations for change.
7. The first meeting of the working group was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010 with the CSC, housing management and residents agreeing to meet every two months, to drive through improvements to the service and improve understanding of residents' needs.

8. The initial meeting focussed on the following recommendations made by the SGTO:
  - Improve communication
  - Improve staff training
  - Improve CSC management (more staff, weekend opening)
  - Quality control of completed repairs
  - Extend priority line to T & RA
  - Speed up time from reporting to undertaking repairs
  - Improve CSR performance
  - Publish easy-to-read repair manual
  - Go back to face-to-face reporting.
9. The group has met 3 times to date with council staff meeting additionally to ensure actions are progressed and liaise with other staff as necessary for further comment or support.

### **SUCCESSSES TO DATE**

10. The freephone number for many of our residents using mobile telephones, is very expensive. In May we established that an 0207 525 2600 number could also be used. This is being regularly advertised through SHN and has been added to the 'reporting housing repairs' website.
11. Vangent (CSC) have agreed to hold regular workshops at TRA meetings to capture key concerns and explain how to get the best out of the service. This is ongoing and needs to be measured.
12. The working group regularly listens to phone calls (inbound and outbound). This has really helped us to understand residents' frustrations and set some clear recommendations for CSC. E.g. improvements in training and scripts.
13. The working group is reviewing scripts used to test satisfaction to ensure CSC officers ask the right questions.
14. The time taken for contractors to update the RCC with difficulties in completing repairs has been reduced to 48 hours following concerns that information was often not available for 5 working days even when the repair was classed as an emergency repair. This often meant residents were not able to progress outstanding repairs for up to a week and resulted in repeat and unresolved phone-calls to the CSC.
15. One layer of automated messages has been removed from the voice systems residents hear when they contact through the CSC
16. The CSC are to be invited to training about homeownership and how the service is delivered. This is due to clear indications that call handlers respond negatively to council homeowners and leaseholders calling regarding communal repairs.
17. Improvements have been made in online reporting and a detailed repairs manual is near completion.
18. The group has been able to establish clear links with other staff to assist in improvements that go beyond the CSC management of repairs. E.g. concerns

raised about communal repair has resulted in area teams now developing processes to assist in informing residents about communal repairs on their estates.

## KEY CHALLENGES

19. Despite some successes since March, it has still proved difficult to resolve a number of problems experienced by residents. The following are particular areas of concern noted by residents.
20. Ensuring appropriate responses to vulnerable residents.  
This is a key concern expressed by the group, particular during those times when the CSC is busy or there are IT failures. As a group we have not yet established how to resolve this matter.
21. Progressing calls that cannot be resolved.  
Having listened to a number of calls, it is evident that there are calls that CSC cannot progress or occasions where the wrong information is offered. CSC use a CRM ticket to liaise with the right department but cannot advise the caller who will respond and when to expect a response. In the event that no-one responds, the caller has to contact again and invariably repeats the process.
22. Some disagreement still exists regarding the validity of the statistics being produced, particularly statistics recording satisfaction.
23. The group has discussed in detail the need to provide an updating service to residents so callers are kept informed about the progress of their repairs (or other matters), but have yet to establish an appropriate process.
24. Managing communal repairs has been a key challenge for the group.  
Homeowners and leaseholders face difficulties in reporting repairs and the only person notified of the repair is the initial caller and not other affected parties.

## CONSULTATION

25. The group will have met for 6 months by October and intends to draft a joint report for Home Ownership Council and Tenants Council. This will highlight the key issues, challenges and successes of the group and ensure the opportunity to raise issues is made widely available.

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	
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