

Tenant-Led Scrutiny Report Number 4



Executive Summary



An investigation to see if the review of the Complaint's Procedure has improved the service for customers

This scrutiny exercise was produced by the Tenant-led Scrutiny Pool known as SIFT (Scrutiny, Involvement For Tenants) supported by an Independent Tenant Advisor.

The second topic chosen by SIFT to scrutinise was “Has the review of the Complaints Procedure improved the complaints service for customers?”

The purpose of the exercise was to:

- Assess if the procedure is easier to use than the older version
- Evaluate if complaints are resolved to the customer's satisfaction more quickly
- Identify if complainants are signposted to 'Designated Persons' more frequently for local resolution
- Assess if 'Sorry Money' is used effectively
- Recommend procedural changes where necessary.

Methods used to Scrutinise the Service

The methods used on this scrutiny included:

- Briefings by service managers
- Desktop review of relevant policies, procedures, complaints and performance information
- Assessment of relevant complaints
- Mystery Shopping exercises
- Benchmarking exercises

The main findings included:

- YHN do not routinely monitor service failure, but do monitor the level of formal complaints
- YHN offer financial and other remedies to say sorry to customers who have not received a good service
- The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard is largely complied with, however the range of ways to complain is not extensive
- The online complaints form is not fit for purpose in that it is a generic form.
- Mystery Shopping exercises demonstrated that on the whole most staff wanted to help customers and looked for an early resolution
- The new policy in action saw a drop of approximately 91 percent of formal complaints received
- The leaflet which advised service users how to access the complaints procedure was withdrawn at the point the new policy was introduced.

SIFT's main recommendations are:

- The signposting to Designated Persons when appropriate should be encouraged
- The amount of spend on remedies should continue to be monitored and reported to the Customer Service Committee
- An advice leaflet should be issued on how to make a complaint, including the contact address and telephone number
- The flowchart describing the complaints process on the website should be made mobile friendly
- All staff should be reminded about how a service user can access the complaints service
- The online complaints form should be reviewed and updated.

The full report details the findings and recommendations of this scrutiny exercise, which took place during May, June and July 2018. The report can be accessed by contacting Ashleigh.Fullwood@sift-newcastle.org or calling 07707 013 417.