

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Housing Options Service

Customer Satisfaction Survey Summary

September 2012

Introduction

This document is the summary of the results from our annual Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS), conducted in June 2012.

The CSS is our main method of mass service user consultation, being sent to nearly 1700 temporary accommodation tenants this year. With an incentive of entry into a £250 prize draw, we received nearly 101 responses, equalling a response rate of just over 16% - our best yet - and another welcome improvement in service user engagement levels.

Communication

We generally communicate with service users by letter, telephone call and by using information contained on our website – the related survey questions help to validate the effectiveness of each of these communication channels. We also produce up to four newsletters a year – InTouch – which is sent to all of our customers living in temporary accommodation.

This survey showed that 80% of respondents preferred to be contacted via letter, which is a marked increase from our last CSS which indicated that only 51% preferred this method of contact.

We value our Tower Hamlets customer promise and aim to answer calls within 5 rings. When conducting this survey 71% of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with the time taken to answer their call.

Overall 74.2% of our customers were satisfied or very satisfied with the way their call was dealt with.

We asked whether customers felt we could improve on the way we answer calls. There was a mixed response, with 53% indicating that improvements could be made. A significant number of the freehand responses indicated that people did not like leaving voicemail messages. This was primarily directed at the Housing Management Team who are expected to be away from their desks for most of the time. We have therefore decided in response to this feedback that Housing Officers will be expected to have calls forwarded to their mobile phones if they are away from their desks to increase direct contact with customers.

Complaints

The majority of our feedback comes in the form of complaints, comments and compliments. To help capture these, we have put customer feedback cards in our reception area, in addition to the LBTH complaints forms occasionally received and correspondence received from service users.

When asked, 40% of respondents said that they were aware of the feedback cards, this was an improvement on the previous Survey we conducted when only 34% were aware. The survey form provided information about the feedback cards. We will seek to improve customer awareness of this facility by including information in future editions of In Touch.

We welcome complaints as an effective way of obtaining feedback about the service and identifying areas for improvement.,

56% of our customers stated they were aware of the complaints procedure and 14% of respondents had made complaints about the service. Of these 63% were satisfied with the outcome.

We used the opportunity of the survey to raise awareness of the complaints procedure.

InTouch Temporary Accommodation newsletter

76% of our customers found our InTouch customer newsletter useful.

When asked how we can improve InTouch we had a very positive response and will be analysing the free hand comments to identify any improvements that can be made.

Housing Management

Since our last survey we have gone through an organisation review and as part of this process the generic Housing Management Team was formed by merging the functions previously carried out by the separate Customer Liaison, Income and Accommodation teams. This merger has improved the customer journey by reducing the number of officers they need to deal with in relation to their temporary accommodation from three to one.

84% of our customers stated they knew their housing officer.

44% of customers in temporary accommodation had been visited at least once by their housing officer in the previous 12 months. The target this year is for 90% of all customers to be visited twice.

71% of our customers in temporary accommodation knew who their Managing agent was and a further 42% of these customers had been visited by their managing agent at least once within the last year.

72% of customers said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the location of the temporary accommodation. This is a slight reduction on the results for 2009 & 2008, reflecting the need to place more customers out of the borough due to a reduced supply of in-borough accommodation.

61% of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with the condition of their property, against 55% in 2009 and 41.5% in 2008. This reflects the success of work undertaken to set minimum property standards in all temporary accommodation, improved training for staff and recruiting staff with more expertise in maintenance and housing management.

Satisfaction with the Managing Agent, at 60% was on a par with the 2008 & 2009 results.

Overall satisfaction

69% of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall service they received. Targets on customer satisfaction vary between teams. The SMT has identified the need to review target setting and monitoring, which is one of the areas to be addressed by the review of Admin and Business Support services currently underway

What next?

The findings from the CSS will be fed back to our Management Team, along with copies to all teams for consideration at team meetings. Please look at these results and feedback to the Business Support Team your comments. We want to know:

- What actions your team will be taking
- Any ideas you have that you can work on with the Quality Team
- Any other comments on the Customer Satisfaction Survey

The full data can be found here;

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