



Report to:

Northwards Housing Board
8th May 2007

Item No:

13c

Title:	Customer Satisfaction		
Date:	30 th April 2007		
Author:	Mike Stevens	Tel No:	0161 227 3016
E mail:	m.stevens@northwardshousing.co.uk		
Confidential:	No		
For: (Please tick action required)	NOTING √	DISCUSSION	APPROVAL

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Board on customer satisfaction activity carried out in 2006/07 and also the proposed timetable for satisfaction surveys to be carried out in 2007/08.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board is asked to note the report and the proposed timetable for 2007/08.

IMPLICATIONS

Equality & Diversity:	Future satisfaction surveys will take into account the importance of securing feedback from BME and other customers with diverse needs.
Financial:	An amount has been set aside in the 2007/08 budget for carrying out survey activity.
Staffing:	None arising from this report.
Decency Target:	None arising from this report.
Governance:	None arising from this report.

Equality & Diversity Implications (Please tick where relevant):

BME	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Parents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Domestic Violence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Alcohol / Drug Mis-users	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Consultation/Consideration:

	Yes, No or N/A:	Name:	Date:
Sub-Committee:	Yes	Neighbourhood & Quality Services	27 th April 2007
Area Panel:	No		
Task Groups	No		
Ward Councillors:	N/A		

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Northwards Housing attaches a high priority to securing feedback from customers on how we deliver and can improve our services. To help us do this in a structured way we have a number of satisfaction surveys that are conducted in relation to various service areas throughout the organisation.
- 1.2 Such surveys help us to monitor our performance and provide customers with an opportunity to make their opinions known to us. The more we know about what our customers like or don't like, the better we are able to learn and act positively to further improve our services.
- 1.3 This report summarises the satisfaction surveys conducted by Northwards Housing in 2006/07. The report also sets out a proposed schedule of surveys to be carried out in 2007/08.

2. Surveys carried out in 2006/07

2.1 Customer Satisfaction Survey 2006

- 2.1.1 Northwards Housing undertook a Customer Satisfaction Survey in June 2006. 1861 completed questionnaires were returned giving an overall response rate of 14.3 %. The primary objective of this research was to ascertain levels of satisfaction and respondents' views in the following areas:
 - Telephone answering, local offices and paying rent
 - Repairs
 - Neighbour Nuisance & Anti Social Behaviour
 - Resident Involvement
 - The Local Area
- 2.1.2 The survey also aimed to identify the facilities and services respondents would like Northwards Housing to improve upon.
- 2.1.3 The results of the survey were reported in detail to the Neighbourhood and Quality Services Sub-Committee and Board, and an Action Plan drawn up to address areas of concern.
- 2.1.4 Satisfaction with the On Call Service was very high for both BME and Non BME customers and had increased since 2003/04. Satisfaction with the final outcome had increased from 68% to 83% since 2003/04. This suggests an improvement in back office functions as well as telephone answering.

- 2.1.5 74% of people said the service from their local office was good or excellent and only 8% were dissatisfied. A follow up survey of dissatisfied customers was carried out in January 2007 and some suggestions made have been implemented.
- 2.1.6 The satisfaction level with the repairs service was positive. However the satisfaction levels for BME respondents were slightly lower. A further analysis and a follow up survey was carried out as a result and the findings have been reported to Property and Procurement Sub-Committee.
- 2.1.7 The results on satisfaction in relation to neighbour nuisance and ASB were disappointing and a follow up survey is currently being undertaken. This links to the work being undertaken in relation to the Respect Standard, and the results will be reported through the Neighbourhood and Quality Services Sub-Committee.
- 2.1.8 Resident involvement and consultation were very positive; and with the implementation of the Resident Involvement Action Plan satisfaction levels should increase even further.
- 2.1.9 Satisfaction with one's neighbourhood as a place to live in was high and showed significant improvement on previous surveys.
- 2.1.10 Overall the results of the survey were very encouraging; and feedback is being used positively to further improve services. The survey has also been used to enhance our capacity to involve residents; in particular by allowing us to establish a database of residents interested in becoming involved.

2.2 Tenant Reply Forms

- 2.2.1 Tenant Reply Forms measure customer satisfaction for all tenants who have accessed our repairs service. Satisfaction levels are currently running at 85%. All cases where the customer is dissatisfied are investigated and resolved and the outcome used to inform future service improvement.

2.3 Home Improvement Survey

- 2.3.1 Prior to January 2007 Northwards Housing measured customer satisfaction by the Home Improvement Satisfaction Survey. This survey was given to all customers who had had home improvements and results were used for the City's KPI's. In total we received 485 surveys and the satisfaction rate was 97%. This survey was replaced in January 2007 with the Home Improvement Survey. This measures satisfaction with the product, the contractor's performance and also Northwards staff performance. These measures allow Northwards Housing to compare performance nationally to other Almo's and RSL's. As at March 2007 we have received 387 replies with an overall satisfaction rate of 98%. We also have additional questions to measure satisfaction on timescale, choices given, information provided and respect. The results for these are used for internal performance management and service improvement.

2.4 Complaints Handling Telephone Survey

- 2.4.1 In order to provide a good quality service, Northwards Housing recognises the importance of listening to what our customers have to say. With this in mind, a telephone customer satisfaction survey on the complaints handling process was carried out. A sample of customers who had complained was surveyed and their

comments used to help us to improve complaints handling. The survey results were reported to the Neighbourhood and Quality Services Sub-Committee.

2.5 Gas Servicing Survey

2.5.1 We have a standard to visit all our Northwards homes to check all our gas appliances are safe and service them on an annual basis. After the safety check has been carried out the tenant receives a customer satisfaction form. The current satisfaction level is 99%. Dissatisfied cases are all investigated.

2.6 Mystery Shopping Scheme

2.6.1 Northwards Housing introduced the Mystery Customer Register in June 2006 to help us to monitor the quality of service delivered to customers.

2.6.2 The register comprises of 50 customers who have agreed to going on the mystery customer register. To obtain a realistic overview of the quality of the service we ask for completed feedback forms each time a customer has legitimate cause to make contact with Northwards Housing's services.

2.6.3 Twenty five completed forms were received for the period of June 2006 to December 2006. This is a very small sample, and this should be borne in mind when considering the results.

2.6.4 Findings from the first six-month period suggest that customers' perception of Northwards Housing is very positive.

2.6.5 The Neighbourhood and Quality Services Sub-Committee receives six-monthly updates about the results of Mystery Shopping.

2.7 Tenant Inspectors Scheme

2.7.1 Northwards Housing launched a new scheme in May 2006: the Northwards Housing Tenant Inspector Scheme. We now have a dedicated group of ten committed tenants who have actively taken part in the inspections of a range of our services.

2.7.2 The inspectors provide instant feedback and receive an immediate response to this. Inspectors' recommendations are considered and actioned where appropriate. The Neighbourhood and Quality Services Sub-Committee and Area Panels receive regular updates about the activities of the tenant inspectors.

2.8 Supporting People Survey

2.8.1 This survey was carried out by SITRA (an independent organisation) to measure satisfaction with services funded by Supporting People. Northwards Housing joined SITRA in this benchmarking exercise and the questionnaire was sent to 200 residents, looking at three areas of the service:

- Warden Services
- Accommodation
- Community Alarm service

2.8.2 The overall response rate was high (90%) and the feedback given was very positive with valuable suggestions which have been implemented.

2.9 Customer Network

- 2.9.1 A database has been established of customers who said in the last Customer Satisfaction Survey that they would like to take part in consultation activity. This database is being used for populating task groups, small-scale one-off surveys and other consultation and satisfaction activity.

3 2007/08 Programme

- 3.1 All the surveys listed in section 2 are considered to be effective and appropriate, and it is proposed to continue with these. They are therefore reflected in the schedule set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 A comprehensive customer satisfaction survey is proposed for September 2007. This will allow the results to be used to inform the 2008/09 business planning process.
- 3.3 The customer satisfaction survey will be devised with the revised performance management framework in mind. This includes a number of new indicators based on satisfaction. It is intended that a draft of the survey form will be brought before Neighbourhood and Quality Services Sub-Committee for consideration.
- 3.4 The results of the survey will be reported to the Sub-Committee and Board as part of a comprehensive review of satisfaction encompassing all the various surveys carried out during the year. The report will also refer to other measures of satisfaction where relevant (for example MCC surveys); and will update on new measures being developed.
- 3.5 Satisfaction surveys are part of a wider framework by which we seek feedback about customers' views. This includes Area Panels; task and focus groups and residents' forums; and engagement with tenant and resident groups. Although not covered in detail in this report, this activity is reported to the relevant Sub-Committee (or the Board in the case of the Area Panels). Arrangements in this regard are set out in the Resident Involvement Agreement. It is important to ensure that different sources of feedback are properly "joined up" and a rounded view of resident opinion obtained; so where appropriate customer satisfaction information is shared and discussed with the relevant forum.
- 3.6 In addition, smaller scale surveys will be carried out from time to time, for example in connection with local initiatives or specific issues.

4 Summary

- 4.1 Customer satisfaction is a key priority and is tested in a number of ways. The new performance management framework includes a number of satisfaction measures, reflecting a greater emphasis on outcomes. It is important that information about customer satisfaction is properly collated and analysed. A schedule of survey activity has therefore been drawn up and is attached to this report as Appendix 1. Progress against this will be reported regularly to Neighbourhood and Quality Services Sub-Committee, and also to the Board by means of an annual report linked to the results of the customer satisfaction survey. This will help ensure that

customers' views are fully taken into account in key business processes such as business planning.

Recommendation

That the Board note the contents of the report and the schedule at Appendix 1.

Appendix 1 **Satisfaction Survey Activity 2007/08**

<u>Action</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Time scale</u>
Gas Servicing Survey	Jim Lawson	Ongoing and reported quarterly
Tenant Reply Forms (Repairs)	Sue Sanderson	As above
Home Improvement Survey	Matt Roberts	As above
On Call Telephone Survey	Seema Kohli	As above (to be implemented following successful implementation of new ICT system)
Tenant Handbook Review (Tenant friendly stamp)	Lou Mitchell	April 2007
Northwards Natter Survey	Lou Mitchell	June 2007
Complaints Handling survey	Seema Kohli	June 2007 & Dec 2007
Mystery Shopping scheme	Seema Kohli	June 2007 & Dec 2007
Customer Satisfaction survey 2007	Seema Kohli	September 2007
Tenant inspection surveys as scheduled in the workplan for 2007/08.	Seema Kohli	Workplan 2007/08
New tenant survey and new applicant survey	Anne Duffield	From September 2007
Exit survey	TBC – Local Services	From January 2008
Sheltered Residents Survey	Pat Scappaticci	January 2008
Neighbourhood Wardens Survey	Tony Dalton	TBC