



Assessment Report  
Customer Service Excellence

## Northwards Housing

Successful  
26 June 2010

## Assessment Summary

### Overview

Overall Self-assessment	Insufficient
Overall outcome	Successful

Northwards Housing is an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) created in December 2005 by Manchester City Council as part of the Housing Investment Options programme. Northwards took over management of 12,900 Council homes in North Manchester, pledging to bring all the properties up to at least the Government's "Decent Homes Standard" by 2011.

Northwards Housing has made rapid and successful progress, providing a very high quality service. The Audit Commission's ALMO Inspection Report, February 2009, gave Northwards the highest possible rating as an "excellent" three-star service that has excellent prospects for improvement.

Northwards Housing achieved the Charter Mark Standard in 2007 and has quickly and successfully transitioned over to the Customer Service Excellence Standard. There is a strong focus on customer care within the organisation and consultation is clearly central to service improvement.

1RP10 The CSE Rolling Programme 1 visit in 2010 confirms that Northwards Housing continues to provide an excellent quality of service for its customers, gaining two additional areas of Compliance Plus for the One 2 One Service and the Complaints pocket guide for staff. The three previous partial compliances have now been reduced to just one in Criterion 5. Since the last visit, Northwards has introduced customer journey mapping and now publicises the action taken following complaints.

### 1: Customer Insight

Criterion 1 self-assessment	Satisfactory
Criterion 1 outcome	Successful

Northwards Housing has an in-depth understanding of its customers that has enabled it to design and provide services that meet the needs of the full range of customer groups. Satisfaction levels are high and improving.

The one area for improvement relates to the need to show that the Service maps customers' journeys and takes steps to improve these.

### 2: The Culture of the Organisation

Criterion 2 self-assessment	Satisfactory
Criterion 2 outcome	Successful

There is strong corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery.

You empower and encourage all staff to actively promote and participate in the customer focused culture of the organisation.

### 3: Information and Access

Criterion 3 self-assessment	Satisfactory
Criterion 3 outcome	Successful

The high quality of verbal, published and web-based information that you produce merits Compliance Plus, particularly the clear and innovative DVD of the Tenants Handbook, the attractive and colourful Annual Report, the impressive Northwards Natter newsletter and the interactive web site.

Your partnership arrangements are another strength of the Service meriting Compliance Plus. You have very strong partnership arrangements with other providers particularly Manchester City Council, and including Manchester Strategic Housing Partnership, North Manchester Regeneration Partnership, Anti-Social Behaviour Action Team, partner contractors such as Manchester Working, the award winning IMPACT Manchester not-for-profit housing consortium and Manchester Police.

Additionally, you support the wider communities in many outstanding ways that merit Compliance Plus. You now run the award winning and highly valued Neighbourhood Wardens Service across the whole of the Northwards area.

**4: Delivery**

Criterion 4 self-assessment	Insufficient
Criterion 4 outcome	Successful

The Service has challenging standards and sound monitoring procedures for its main services that are used to raise standards and effect continuous improvement.

You consult and involve people in a wide range of ways, learning from best practice and benchmarking your performance against similar organisations.

The main area for development lies in Complaints, where there is a need for you to publish information on the improvements you have made, specifically relating the actions you have taken to the complaints you have received.

**5: Timeliness and Quality of Service**

Criterion 5 self-assessment	Satisfactory
Criterion 5 outcome	Successful

Northwards Housing has clear and measurable standards and monitoring procedures in relation to timeliness and quality of service.

You are responsive to customers' needs, taking steps to inform the customer of any delays.

The main area for development relates to the need for further evidence to demonstrate conclusively that your performance in relation to timeliness compares well with similar organisations.

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## 1: Customer Insight

### 1.1: Customer Identification

#### 1.1.1: We have an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of our current and potential customer groups based on recent and reliable information.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### New Evidence

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##### E144: One 2 One Service

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As a result of our customer profiling data we identified a support need for tenants with learning disabilities or mental health problems. Northwards have implemented a new service to ensure extra support is given to these customers when they contact the Customer Services Centre.

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##### E142: Various Satisfaction Surveys and Reports

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Northwards have identified various groups and regularly survey these groups to gain an insight on their experiences and to improve and shape the services that we provide.

#### Active Evidence

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##### E105: Customer Profiling Data - How it has been used

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The report highlights how we have used the data collected to improve the services we deliver and how we plan to use the data for further improvements.

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##### E01: Customer Profiling Results

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Fair and Equal Survey has been carried out to help identify the make up of our tenants and any individual communication needs that will assist us in delivering services. Monitoring of this data is reported to sub-committee and a strategy is in place to collect/update the information.

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##### E107: Sign Up Procedure

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This procedure highlights when information needs to be collected regarding the customers profiling, communication and individual needs. All new tenants are given the Fair and Equal Survey at the let interview to complete.

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**1.1.2: We have developed customer insight about our customer groups to better understand their needs and preferences.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E53: Resident Involvement Database**

This a database that holds information on all residents that are actively involved with Northwards Housing.

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**E107: Sign Up Procedure**

This procedure highlights when information needs to be collected regarding the customers communication and individual needs.

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**E106: Forums**

There are a number of Forums across Northwards which focus on a particular service area and are valuable in gaining customers feedback to assist us to improve services. Improvements made are setting up an LGBT Forum, exploring a specialised adviser at On Call for Tenants with Learning Disabilities.

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**E104: Surveys**

Partnering Contractors pre entry survey, Fair and Equal survey and Post Let Survey are all used to collect information about our customers to adapt the services to meet their individual needs.

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**E07: Equality Impact Assessments**

EIA carried out to improve the services provided by Northwards Housing by ensuring it does not discriminate against, BME, disabled, age, sexuality, gender and race. There are examples of completed EIAs and actions taken to avoid discrimination.

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**1.1.3: We make particular efforts to identify hard to reach and disadvantaged groups and individuals and have developed our services in response to their specific needs.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Insufficient

**Active Evidence**

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**E13: Tenants Handbook DVD**

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Information provided to all new tenants and leaseholders on standards and services that are available and how to access them.

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**E12: Home Improvement DVD**

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This DVD informs Tenants of Home Improvements Works the process and the choices available. Also available in various languages and with subtitles.

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**E108: Access to Services Strategy**

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This strategy was produced following a review in consultation with tenants It shows how we deliver our services and what improvements we plan to make.

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**E106: Forums**

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There are a number of Forums across the organisation which focus on a particular service area and are a valuable tool in gaining customers feedback to assist us to improve services. The LGBT residents forum was established as a result of feedback from the customer satisfaction survey and HIP survey.

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**E105: Customer Profiling Data - How it has been used**

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The report highlights how we have used the data collected to improve the services we deliver and we plan to use the data for further improvements.

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**E07: Equality Impact Assessments**

---

EIA carried out to improve the services provided by Northwards Housing by ensuring it does not discriminate against, BME, disabled, age, sexuality, gender and race. There are examples of completed EIAs and actions taken to avoid discrimination.

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## 1.2: Engagement and Consultation

### 1.2.1: We have a strategy for engaging and involving customers using a range of methods appropriate to the needs of identified customer groups.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### New Evidence

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##### E147: Forums and Committees

Northwards has a vast selection of forums across all services that tenants are able to get involved in and their involvement provides us with valuable feedback.

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##### E146: Various publications

We send out a number of publications to all our tenants to keep them informed and also to give tenants an opportunity to get involved and be consulted.

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##### E145: Business Plan Consultation Event

This event was held for residents within the Northwards area, to highlight key priorities that matter to them. This valuable feedback was used to review the Business Plan for Northwards.

#### Active Evidence

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##### E14: Resident Involvement Agreement

Resident involvement Agreement developed in consultation with customers and residents and monitored by the Resident Involvement Forum. There are a wide range of forums which are used to gain valuable feedback from customers. This strategy also links in with MCCs Community Engagement Strategy.

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##### E115: Single Equality Scheme

Northwards have a three year strategy and action plan to meet our commitments under the Race, Disability and Gender Equality Duties, and in anticipation of a new single Equality Duty. An annual review is carried out in consultation with residents and staff and new actions are added.

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##### E139: Employee Groups

Northwards have a number of employee groups. Their aim is to provide forums where employees can come together to discuss issues and make suggestions for improvements. Some employee groups are run in partnership with Eastlands Homes.

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**1.2.2: We have made the consultation of customers integral to continually improving our service and we advise customers of the results and action taken.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E20: Team Improvement Plans**

Team Improvement Plans set out how individual teams will improve services over the forthcoming period. This links to the organisations aims and objectives.

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**E19: Voids Review**

Consultants commissioned by Northwards to carryout a review on the voids management process. Focus groups held with tenants and staff to obtain feedback. The aim of the review was to reduce relet times. Further consultation with residents looking at void standards is currently being carried out.

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**E18: Welcome to Northwards Report**

Sub Committee Report on findings of the Welcome to Northwards Survey. The report highlights actions taken or planned as a result of the survey.

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**E11: Access Review**

An Access Review was carried out with staff and residents to ensure all services are accessible to all our customers. Following on from the review a Access to Services Strategy was produced.

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**E106: Forums**

There are a number of Forums across the organisation which focus on a particular service area and are a valuable tool in gaining customers feedback to assist us to improve services. Customers have helped design and deliver the Hate Incident Policy.

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**E07: Equality Impact Assessments**

EIA carried out to improve the services provided by Northwards Housing by ensuring it does not discriminate against, BME, disabled, age, sexuality, gender and race. There are examples of completed EIAs and actions taken to avoid discrimination.

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**1.2.3: We regularly review our strategies and opportunities for consulting and engaging with customers to ensure that the methods used are effective and provide reliable and representative results.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E22: Performance Improvement Group (PIG)**

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Group of Northwards staff and partners which looks at Performance of the organisation and makes suggestions for improvement.

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**E19: Voids Review**

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Consultants commissioned by Northwards to carryout a review on the voids management process. Focus groups held with tenants and staff to obtain feedback. The aim of the review was to reduce relet times. Further consultation with residents looking at void standards is currently being carried out.

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**E14: Resident Involvement Agreement**

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Resident involvement Agreement developed in consultation with customers and residents and monitored by the Resident Involvement Task Group. This has been subject to a review and a revised version has been approved. Recently a review has been carried out on the Area Panels constitution.

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**E11: Access Review**

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An Access Review was carried out with staff and residents to ensure all services are accessible to all our customers. Following on from the review a Access to Services Strategy was produced.

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**E105: Customer Profiling Data - How it has been used**

---

The report highlights how we have used the data collected to improve the services we deliver and we plan to use the data for further improvements.

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**E07: Equality Impact Assessments**

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EIA carried out to improve the services provided by Northwards Housing by ensuring it does not discriminate against, BME, disabled, age, sexuality, gender and race. There are examples of completed EIAs and actions taken to avoid discrimination.

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### 1.3: Customer Satisfaction

#### 1.3.1: We use reliable and accurate methods to measure customer satisfaction on a regular basis.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

##### New Evidence

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###### E175: End of Scheme Letter

This letter is sent to all residents after the home improvements have been completed to their property. It also notifies to them the satisfaction score and gives them an opportunity to give feedback.

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###### E164: Employee Annual Survey Amendments

This report highlights changes made to the Employee Satisfaction Survey after intense consultation with the employee groups.

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###### E148: Evaluation Report of Surveys Completed at Various Events

This report provides an overview of the major events which Northwards Housing has attended or organised in 2009. The levels of involvement in each event varied and this is reflected in section 3 of the report where each event is described, including the costs and feedback obtained from attendees.

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###### E142: Various Satisfaction Surveys and Reports

As part of its ongoing commitment to seek the views of its tenants, Northwards Housing carries out a number of satisfaction surveys across the organisation, to assess how we deliver and can improve our services.

##### Active Evidence

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###### E27: Customer Satisfaction Timetable

This report sets out the timetable for proposed customer satisfaction activity for Northwards Housing for 2009/2010

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**1.3.2: We analyse and publicise satisfaction levels for the full range of customers for all main areas of our service and we have improved services as a result.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E29: Satisfaction Reports to Sub Committee**

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Reports taken to various Sub Committees on residents satisfaction levels for all Northwards services.

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**E28: Northwards Natter**

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The March 09 edition of the Northwards Natter published the results of the Customer Satisfaction Survey 2008.

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**E25: 1/4ly Performance Report**

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Quarterly Performance Management Report Jan-March 09.

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**E20: Team Improvement Plans**

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Team Improvement Plans set out how individual teams will improve services over the forthcoming period. This links to the organisations aims and objectives.

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**E110: Area Panel Customer Satisfaction**

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Report highlighting the results of the annual customer satisfaction survey and minutes from the area panel meeting highlighting their comments.

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**E02: Customer Satisfaction Survey and Report**

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Customer Satisfaction Survey (2008) sent to all tenants and leaseholders to assess levels of satisfaction. Research report on findings from the survey 2008.

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**1.3.3: We include in our measurement of satisfaction specific questions relating to key areas including those on delivery, timeliness, information, access, and the quality of customer service, as well as specific questions which are informed by customer insight.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**N200: Various evaluation of events**

Evaluation of various events held by Northwards asking customers for their views.

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**E11: Access Review**

An Access Review was carried out with staff and residents to ensure all services are accessible to all our customers. Following on from the review a Access to Services Strategy was produced. The group also looked at extended opening hours and carried out a pilot scheme.

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**E109: Business Planning 2009**

An annual event held with tenants to feedback on how Northwards has acted on there ideas given and also consultation for future planning.

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**E106: Forums**

There are a number of Forums across the organisation which focus on a particular service area and are a valuable tool in gaining customers feedback to assist us to improve services.

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**E104: Surveys**

Customer Satisfaction Survey, Decent Homes Improvement Survey, Post Let Survey, Complaints Handling Survey and Repairs Satisfaction Survey.

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**E02: Customer Satisfaction Survey and Report**

Customer Satisfaction Survey (2008) sent to all tenants and leaseholders to assess levels of satisfaction. Research report on findings from the survey 2008.

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**1.3.4: We set challenging and stretching targets for customer satisfaction and our levels are improving.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**E149: Guidance for Managers on Reviewing and Setting Targets**

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A guidance has been produced for managers on how to review existing targets and when to set new targets.

**Active Evidence**

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**E29: Satisfaction Reports to Sub Committee**

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All satisfaction surveys are reported to the sub committee's and this data is used to set annual and equality targets for the forth coming year.

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**E34: Housemark**

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Report of Performance Indicators comparing ALMOs who have joined up to the Housemark Benchmarking Club.

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**E25: 1/4ly Performance Report**

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Quarterly Corporate Performance Report for Northwards and Manchester City.

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**E112: Setting Targets**

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A number of reports have been submitted to our Sub committee's where targets have been reviewed and set for the following year.

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**1.3.5: We have made positive changes to services as a result of analysing customer experience, including improved customer journeys.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**E163: Savings and Efficiencies**

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This report to sub committee summarises what has been achieved to date to secure value for money and efficiencies in the delivery of the home improvements programme.

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**E152: Cost Savings for Customer Service Centre**

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This report highlights cost savings to be made by Northwards by transferring the operation of the Customer Service Centre from MCC to Manchester Working.

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**E151: Performance Report for Customer Service Centre**

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Benchmarking reports have been produced. These reports compare our Customer Service Centre to similar organisation in the North West and are part of the Housemark Club and also with other organisations in Manchester whose stock was previously MCC.

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**E144: One 2 One Service**

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As a result of our customer profiling data and consultation with tenants by way of a coffee afternoon, Northwards have implemented a new service to ensure extra support is given to customers with support needs when they contact the Customer Services Centre.

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**E150: Customer Journey Mapping**

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We have carried out customer journey mapping with tenants regarding heating repairs. From this we have identified areas for improvement. We have developed customer journey maps for tenants to use alongside video cameras to map their experiences across other services.

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## **2: The Culture of the Organisation**

### **2.1: Leadership, Policy and Culture**

#### **2.1.1: There is corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and leaders in our organisation actively support this and advocate for customers.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### **New Evidence**

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##### **E154: Social Networking Websites**

As a result of our embedded resident involvement a suggestion that emerged from feedback gained from events was to incorporate social networking websites. This allows our customers to communicate with us in a method suitable to them.

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##### **E153: Various Strategies**

There are a number of corporate strategies that highlight the commitment the organisation gives to the community and strives to provide a high class customer service and directs the organisation to meet and exceed it's aims and objectives.

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##### **E148: Evaluation Report of Surveys Completed at Various Events**

This report summaries all the events that have taken place in 2009 and evaluates the impact of resident involvement in the organisation along with recommendations for the forthcoming year.

#### **Active Evidence**

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##### **E41: Business/Delivery Plan**

This Business and Delivery Plan is a statement of objectives and targets which address the Mission and Values of Northwards Housing, within the constraints of available resources, both staff and finance.

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##### **E38: Northwards Mission Statement / Objectives**

Mission Statement set out the values and objectives for Northwards Housing,

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##### **E20: Team Improvement Plans**

Team Improvement Plans set out how individual teams will improve services over the forthcoming period. This links to the organisations aims and objectives.

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**2.1.2: We use customer insight to inform policy and strategy and to prioritise service improvement activity.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E90: Complaints Review**

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A Review of the Complaints Policy took place with Tenants and staff. This led to the policy being revised with the main point being that customers are contacted personally to discuss their complaint.

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**E19: Voids Review**

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Consultants commissioned by Northwards to carry out a review on the voids management process. Focus groups held with tenants and staff to obtain feedback. The aim of the review was to reduce relet times. Further consultation with residents looking at void standards is currently being carried out.

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**E11: Access Review**

---

An Access Review was carried out with staff and residents to ensure all services are accessible to all our customers. Following on from the review a Access to Services Strategy was produced.

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**E105: Customer Profiling Data - How it has been used**

---

The report highlights how we have used the data collected to improve the services we deliver and we plan to use the data for further improvements.

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**E07: Equality Impact Assessments**

---

EIA carried out to improve the services provided by Northwards Housing by ensuring it does not discriminate against, BME, disabled, age, sexuality, gender and race. There are examples of completed EIAs and actions taken to avoid discrimination.

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**2.1.3: We have policies and procedures which support the right of all customers to expect excellent levels of service.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E44: Customer Care Standards Leaflet**

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The customer care standards adhered to by all Northwards staff. Set minimum standards for responding to our customers.

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**E42: Equality and Diversity Policies**

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Policies which set out overall commitment to Equality it incorporates both the equal opportunity policy in service provision and equal opportunities in employment. Other policies relating to Equality and Diversity are the Single Equality Scheme, Translations Policy and the Hate Incident Policy.

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**E38: Northwards Mission Statement / Objectives**

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Mission Statement, values and objectives for Northwards Housing.

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**E20: Team Improvement Plans**

---

Team Improvement Plans set out how individual teams will improve services over the forthcoming period. This links to the organisations aims and objectives.

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**E13: Tenants Handbook DVD**

---

Information provided to all new tenants and leaseholders on standards and services that are available and how to access them.

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**2.1.4: We ensure that all customers and customer groups are treated fairly and this is confirmed by feedback and the measurement of customer experience.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**E155: Employee Satisfaction Survey**

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This survey was sent to all employees to measure satisfactions levels with their employer and also their personal development.

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**E144: One 2 One Service**

---

As a result of our customer profiling data and consultation with tenants by way of a coffee afternoon, Northwards have implemented a new service to ensure extra support is given to customers with support needs when they contact the Customer Services Centre.

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**E142: Various Satisfaction Surveys and Reports**

---

Northwards have identified various groups and regularly survey these groups to gain an insight on their experiences and to improve and shape the services that we provide.

---

**E150: Customer Journey Mapping**

---

We have carried out customer journey mapping with tenants regarding heating repairs. From this we have identified areas for improvement. We have developed customer journey maps for tenants to use alongside video cameras to map their experiences across other services.

**Active Evidence**

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**E24: Mystery Shoppers**

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An initiative using a register of customers to assist with monitoring the quality of the service.

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**E07: Equality Impact Assessments**

---

EIAs carried out to improve the services provided by Northwards Housing by ensuring it does not discriminate against, BME, disability, age, sexuality, gender and race. There are examples of completed EIAs and actions taken to avoid discrimination.

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**2.1.5: We protect customers' privacy both in face-to-face discussions and in the transfer and storage of customer information.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**N048: Various Posters**

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Posters informing customers that if they require to speak in private rooms are available. These posters are displayed in all of our local offices reception areas.

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**E49: Information we hold leaflet**

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Leaflet telling customers what they need to do to request information.

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**E46: Data Protection/Freedom of Information**

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Information on procedures for staff on how to deal with Freedom on Information or Data Protection requests. This information was cascaded to all staff at a cascade briefing. We were challenged by the Information Commissioners Office regarding the security of data we held.

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**E117: IT Security Policy**

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Internal policy for all staff on the use/security of all IT equipment and data.

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**E116: On Call Validation Script**

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Script used by all staff at the Contact Centre checking the validation of the caller.

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**E02: Customer Satisfaction Survey and Report**

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Customer Satisfaction Survey (2008) sent to all tenants and leaseholders to assess levels of satisfaction. Research report on findings from the survey 2008.

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**2.1.6: We empower and encourage all employees to actively promote and participate in the customer focused culture of our organisation.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E54: Appraisals**

Competency based appraisal scheme for all Northwards employees.

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**E52: Leadership Training**

Northwards ran a bespoke Leadership Development Programme for 48 Directors, Heads of Service, Managers and Deputies on building a high performance team, creative problem solving, managing change and leading and developing people.

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**E20: Team Improvement Plans**

Team Improvement Plans set out how individual teams will improve services over the forthcoming period. This links to the organisations aims and objectives.

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**E14: Resident Involvement Agreement**

Resident involvement Agreement developed in consultation with customers and residents and monitored by the Resident Involvement Task Group. This has been subject to a review and a revised version has been approved.

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**E139: Employee Groups**

These groups enable staff to actively promote and participate in the running of the organisation.

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**E103: Policies and Procedures - website**

Link to staff Intranet where all Policies and Procedures are held and staff can access.

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## **2.2: Staff Professionalism and Attitude**

### **2.2.1: We can demonstrate our commitment to developing and delivering customer focused services through our recruitment, training and development policies for staff.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### **New Evidence**

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##### **E165: Job Specifications**

Examples of various Job Specs which all promote excellent of customer services and part of the induction training incorporates Customer Service and Equality and Diversity Training.

#### **Active Evidence**

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##### **E54: Appraisals**

Competency based appraisal scheme for Northwards employees. Through this process a Personal Development Plan is completed which highlights training needs.

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##### **E50: Training available - Intranet**

Link to the staff Intranet on e-learning which all staff can access and earphones have been provided to every employee.

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##### **E140: Training**

There is a variety of training that has been programmed in for 2010/11.

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**2.2.2: Our staff are polite and friendly to customers and have an understanding of customer needs.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E62: Contact Manager**

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On line IT system, all Northwards Staff have access to this and are able to update and view information relating to an individual property on tenant. Guidance notes have been produced for all staff. This document available on the Intranet.

**E59: On Call Quality Checks**

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Copies of forms completed at monthly monitoring visits to On Call.

**E44: Customer Care Standards Leaflet**

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The customer care standards adhered to by all Northwards staff. Set minimum standards for responding to customers.

**E24: Mystery Shoppers**

---

An initiative using a register of customers to assist with monitoring the quality of the service.

**E104: Surveys**

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Home Improvement Satisfaction Survey which all residents, who have had decent homes work completed on their property, receive.

**E02: Customer Satisfaction Survey and Report**

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Customer Satisfaction Survey (2008) sent to all tenants and leaseholders to assess levels of satisfaction. Research report on findings from the survey 2008.

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**2.2.3: We prioritise customer focus at all levels of our organisation and evaluate individual and team commitment through the performance management system.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E63: Reward and Recognition**

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To recognise and reward staff that go "that extra mile" in their daily duties and provide an above excellent service for the community of North Manchester. A full Reward and Recognition Policy for staff is now available.

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**E54: Appraisals**

---

Competency based appraisal scheme for Northwards employees.

---

**E52: Leadership Training**

---

Northwards ran a bespoke Leadership Development Programme for 48 Directors, Heads of Service, Managers and Deputies on building a high performance team, creative problem solving, managing change and leading and developing people. 360' feedback has been carried out with managers and Board members.

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**E47: Cascade Briefings**

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Staff Briefings are held every 3 months; with approx 150 staff attending each briefing. It is a useful way of informing everyone of any major news, developments taking place within the company.

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**E25: 1/4ly Performance Report**

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Quarterly Performance Management Report Jan-March 09.

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**E111: Covalent**

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This new performance management software enables us to monitor performance and identify trends. The system also holds all teams improvement plans and the status of them at any given time.

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**2.2.4: We can demonstrate how customer-facing staffs' insight and experience is incorporated into internal processes, policy development and service planning.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**E166: Customers who pose a risk policy**

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This document lays out Northwards' policy towards alerting staff and our partner organisations of customers who pose a risk.

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**E156: Rehousing Process via Customer Service Centre**

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We have made positive changes to services as a result of analysing customer experience, including improved customer journeys. Improving the customer journey for housing options and empty property information.

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**E151: Performance Report for Customer Service Centre**

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Benchmarking reports which compares the Customer Service Centre performance with the performance of the On Call Centre which was managed by MCC

**Active Evidence**

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**E07: Equality Impact Assessments**

---

EIAs carried out to improve the services provided by Northwards Housing by ensuring it does not discriminate against, BME, disability, age, sexuality, gender and race. There are examples of completed EIAs and actions taken to avoid discrimination.

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**E15: Staff Suggestion Scheme**

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We run two Reward schemes (staff suggestions and Value for Money Suggestions) to motivate staff and improve productivity, efficiency and service delivery.

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**2.2.5: We value the contribution our staff make to delivering customer focused services, and leaders, managers and staff demonstrate these behaviours.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E66: Extra Days Holiday**

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This was a reward given to all staff at Northwards Housing for their contribution to the Audit Commission score. It enables all staff to have their birthday off. In light of the recent Inspection score of three stars all staff were given a further extra day for one year only.

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**E64: Team Away Days**

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As a recognition of the hard work by staff Northwards have awarded all Teams in the organisation to have an away day each financial year.

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**E63: Reward and Recognition**

---

To recognise and reward staff that go "that extra mile" in their daily duties and provide an above excellent service for the community of North Manchester. A full Reward and Recognition Policy for staff is now available.

---

**E52: Leadership Training**

---

Northwards ran a bespoke Leadership Development Programme for 48 Directors, Heads of Service, Managers and Deputies on building a high performance team, creative problem solving, managing change and leading and developing people. 360' feedback has been carried out with managers and Board members.

---

**E51: Green Hats Training**

---

External Customer Care Training delivered to front line staff. Also to be rolled out to our partners.

---

**E119: Operation COL**

---

Operation COL was an 3 month initiative introduced into the Rents Team to increase rent collection targets.

---

### 3: Information and Access

#### 3.1: Range of Information

**3.1.1: We make information about the full range of services we provide available to our customers and potential customers, including how and when people can contact us, how our services are run and who is in charge.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### **New Evidence**

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##### **E157: A-Z of Corporate Responsibilities**

---

This Northwards Housing A-Z of Corporate and Social Responsibility gives a snapshot of some of the projects Northwards is involved in.

---

##### **E146: Various publications**

---

We send out a number of publications to all our tenants to keep them informed and also to give tenants an opportunity to get involved and be consulted.

#### **Active Evidence**

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##### **E35: Annual Report**

---

The Annual Report highlights customer satisfaction and what we are going to do to improve.

---

##### **E16: Northwards Website**

---

Provides information and interactive access to all services.

---

##### **E13: Tenants Handbook DVD**

---

Information provided to all new tenants and leaseholders on standards and services that are available and how to access them.

---

##### **E132: Digital Signage**

---

Digital Signage is displayed in all our public offices. The system is updated regularly with information.

---

**3.1.2: Where there is a charge for services, we tell our customers how much they will have to pay.**

Applicant Self Assessment:        Insufficient

**Active Evidence**

---

**N186: Rechargeable Repair Letter**

---

Example of a standard letter sent to a tenant informing them of the cost of a rechargeable repair carried out on their property.

---

**N185: Tenancy Agreement**

---

Front cover of a standard tenancy agreement which informs the tenant of the weekly rent payable.

---

**N184: Leaseholder Service Charge**

---

Break down of estimated service charge and for a Leaseholder.

---

**N034: Benchmarking/Housemark Reports**

---

A breakdown of the costs and resources involved in managing the housing management and maintenance functions.

---

**E121: Payment Leaflets**

---

Various leaflets are available for customers regarding money and payments.

---

**E120: Website - Link to Payment Details**

---

Link to external website which informs customers on the variety of methods that rent can be paid.

---

## 3.2: Quality of Information

### 3.2.1: We provide our customers with the information they need in ways which meet their needs and preferences, using a variety of appropriate channels.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### New Evidence

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##### E167: Access to Services Forum

---

Access to Services Forum is made up of tenants and staff and they look at making all Northwards service accessible to staff.

---

##### E158: Communications Strategy

---

This Communications Strategy outlines Northwards Housing's aims and objectives for communicating with our diverse audience. The Strategy continues to evolve develop to reflect personal preference, developments in communication technology and greater awareness of audiences

#### Active Evidence

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##### N112: Translation/Interpretation Policy

---

This Policy and Procedure outlines how Northwards Housing will meet the diverse communication needs of our customers and how we will ensure that our interpreting and translation services comply with legislative requirements.

---

##### E69: Communication Handbook

---

This communication handbook is given to frontline staff to assist them in their day to day work and communicate effectively with our customers.

---

##### E122: Communication Tools for Staff

---

Various tools are available for staff - Communications Handbook, Communications Toolkit, BSL Interpreters, Foldilocks and the Big Word.

---

##### E02: Customer Satisfaction Survey and Report

---

Within the Annual Customer Satisfaction there is a question specifically relating to Communication.

---

**3.2.2: We take reasonable steps to make sure our customers have received and understood the information we provide.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**N046: Tenants Newsletters**

The tenant's newsletter (Northwards Natter) is sent to all our customers four times a year. It's packed full of information, advice, competitions and features from Northwards Housing and local community groups and partnerships. This information is also provided in CD format.

---

**E62: Contact Manager**

On line IT system, all Northwards Staff have access to this and are able to update and view information relating to an individual property on tenant. Guidance notes have been produced for all staff. This document available on the Intranet.

---

**E105: Customer Profiling Data - How it has been used**

The report highlights how we have used the data collected to improve the services we deliver and we plan to use the data for further improvements.

---

**E02: Customer Satisfaction Survey and Report**

Customer Satisfaction Survey (2008) sent to all tenants and leaseholders to assess levels of satisfaction. Research report on findings from the survey 2008.

---

**3.2.3: We have improved the range, content and quality of verbal, published and web based information we provide to ensure it is relevant and meets the needs of customers.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E28: Northwards Natter**

---

The tenant's newsletter (Northwards Natter) is sent to all our customers four times a year. It's packed full of information, advice, competitions and features from Northwards Housing and local community groups and partnerships. This information is also provided in CD format and large print.

**E13: Tenants Handbook DVD**

---

Information provided to all new tenants and leaseholders on standards and services that are available and how to access them.

**E124: Review of Policies and Procedures Timetable**

---

All policy and procedures have been timetabled in for a review.

**E123: Equality Impact Assessments Timetable**

---

Equality Impact Assessments for 2009/10 timetabled all new policies and procedures are added into the policies and procedures timetable.

**E108: Access to Services Strategy**

---

This strategy was produced following a review in consultation with tenants It shows how we deliver our services and what improvements we plan to make.

**E105: Customer Profiling Data - How it has been used**

---

The report highlights how we have used the data collected to improve the services we deliver and we plan to use the data for further improvements.

---

**3.2.4: We can demonstrate that information we provide to our customers is accurate and complete, and that when this is not the case we advise customers when they will receive the information they requested.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E44: Customer Care Standards Leaflet**

The customer care standards adhered to by all Northwards staff. Set minimum standards for responding to customers.

---

**E24: Mystery Shoppers**

An initiative using a register of customers to assist with monitoring the quality of the service.

---

**E126: Examples of how wrong information was rectified**

Examples of how wrong information was rectified.

---

**E125: Tenant Reply Form and Procedures**

Tenant Reply Form are received from customers who have had a repair carried out to their property. The guidelines are how responses from dis-satisfied customers are dealt with.

---

**E03: Post Let Survey**

This survey is given at sign up procedure to all new tenants asking them how satisfied they were with their property and the process.

---

**E02: Customer Satisfaction Survey and Report**

Customer Satisfaction Survey (2008) sent to all tenants and leaseholders to assess levels of satisfaction. Research report on findings from the survey 2008.

### 3.3: Access

#### 3.3.1: We make our services easily accessible to all customers through provision of a range of alternative channels.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

##### New Evidence

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##### E168: Large Print Review

A review was carried out of all tenants who received the Northwards Natter in large print. This resulted in Northwards providing tenants with a magnifying glass so that publications can be sent in standard text. This has a cost saving for Northwards but also assists tenants with other mail they get.

---

##### E159: Review of Neighbourhood Wardens

Northwards Wardens are dedicated to keeping the North Manchester neighbourhood a clean, safe and happy place to live. Previously this service only covered the Monsall area, a review was carried out and as a result of this, their service was rolled out to cover all of the Northwards area.

##### Active Evidence

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##### E115: Single Equality Scheme

Northwards have a three year strategy and action plan to meet our commitments under the Race, Disability and Gender Equality Duties, and in anticipation of a new single Equality Duty. An annual review is carried out in consultation with residents and staff and new actions are added.

---

##### N104: Website Homepage

Provides information and interactive access to services. - with Contact details and on line forms for all services

---

##### E108: Access to Services Strategy

This strategy was produced following a review in consultation with tenants It shows how we deliver our services and what improvements we plan to make.

---

##### E07: Equality Impact Assessments

EIAs carried out to improve the services provided by Northwards Housing by ensuring it does not discriminate against, BME, disabled, age, sexuality, gender and race. There are examples of completed EIAs and actions taken to avoid discrimination.

---

**3.3.2: We evaluate how customers interact with the organisation through access channels and we use this information to identify possible service improvements, and offer better choices**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**N045: At Your service Leaflet**

Information for customers detailing how we respond to customers by telephone, in writing, face to face and dealing with complaints.

---

**E73: On Call Review**

Review of On Call has been carried out by consultants in partnership with other organisations that use the facility.

---

**E37: Internet Kiosks**

This new performance management software enables us to monitor performance and identify trends. The system also holds all teams improvement plans and the status of them at any given time.

---

**E108: Access to Services Strategy**

This strategy was produced following a review in consultation with tenants It shows how we deliver our services and what improvements we plan to make.

---

**E105: Customer Profiling Data - How it has been used**

The report highlights how we have used the data collected to improve the services we deliver and we plan to use the data for further improvements.

---

**E02: Customer Satisfaction Survey and Report**

Customer Satisfaction Survey (2008) sent to all tenants and leaseholders to assess levels of satisfaction. Research report on findings from the survey 2008.

---

**3.3.3: We ensure that where customers can visit our premises in person facilities are as clean and comfortable as possible.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E74: DDA Compliant Certificates**

---

DDA Certificates to certify Northwards public and non public offices are DDA compliant.

---

**E24: Mystery Shoppers**

---

An initiative using a register of customers to assist with monitoring the quality of the service.

---

**E21: Tenant Inspectors Scheme**

---

Tenant Inspectors Scheme is a method of engaging with tenants, acting on direct feedback from them and involving tenants in the improvement of front line services.

---

**E02: Customer Satisfaction Survey and Report**

---

Customer Satisfaction Survey (2008) sent to all tenants and leaseholders to assess levels of satisfaction. Research report on findings from the survey 2008.

---

### 3.4: Co-operative working with other providers, partners and communities

#### 3.4.1: We have made arrangements with other providers and partners to offer and supply co-ordinated services, and these arrangements have demonstrable benefits for our customers

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

##### New Evidence

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##### E171: Overcrowding and Under Occupancy

---

This project is funded by CLG to deliver over crowding reduction and under occupancy initiatives across the city in partnership with the Council and other RSLs.

##### E170: New Build

---

New Build' project to develop 32 new build 2-bed bungalows in the Higher Blackley and Charlestown wards and the refurbishment of Whitebeck Court (Victoria Avenue East, Charlestown) into an Extra Care Housing Scheme for the elderly.

##### E169: Safeguarding Children Policy

---

The policy and procedures provide a framework within which we can work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people across north Manchester.

##### E144: One 2 One Service

---

As a result of our customer profiling data and consultation with tenants by way of a coffee afternoon, Northwards have implemented a new service to ensure extra support is given to customers with support needs when they contact the Customer Services Centre.

##### Active Evidence

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##### N032: Audit Commission Report

---

Audit Commission Report from November 2008 inspection Identifies and summarises areas of good practice in Northwards Housing. The Audit Commission awarded Northwards Housing 3 Stars and excellent prospects for improvement.

##### E127: Good Practice Guides

---

Northwards produce guidelines to ensure consistency and efficiency in the way our employees and contracting partners deliver services to tenants. These are regularly reviewed and GPGS are put through the EIA process to highlight an potential equality implications..

---

**3.4.2: We have developed co-ordinated working arrangements with our partners that ensure customers have clear lines of accountability for quality of service.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E79: Home Improvement Pack**

---

This pack is given to all tenants prior to any home improvement works commencing.

---

**E78: Website- Home Improvement Schemes in Progress**

---

This link to the website enables On Call staff to view contacts of schemes. It also has a screen for the contractors to view and update progress.

---

**E77: Home Improvements Intro Leaflet**

---

This leaflets sets out our commitment to the tenant and the improvement works that are to be carried out on their homes. All guidelines have been agreed in conjunction with contractors.

---

**E76: Impact Manchester Agreement**

---

Report of the success of Impact Manchester and of how Impact Manchester will progress and be funded in the future.

---

**E40: Community Regeneration Strategy and Improvement Plan**

---

Northwards Housing is committed to helping create successful sustainable communities, including addressing inequalities that exist between areas of North and East Manchester and the rest of the City.

---

**E33: KPI Targets**

---

Key set of Performance Indicators to ensure consistent monitoring of the capital programme across the framework of contractors.

---

**3.4.3: We interact within wider communities and we can demonstrate the ways in which we support those communities.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

---

**N200: Various evaluation of events**

---

Information and evaluation reports of events that Northwards Housing have held

---

**N033: Neighbourhood Wardens**

---

The Neighbour Warden Services is now run by Northwards Housing and the wardens cover the whole of the Northwards area. Our wardens are out and about, six days a week, from eight in the morning, 'til nine at night. In their distinctive uniform, they patrol the streets - on foot, on scooters, by bike

---

**E40: Community Regeneration Strategy and Improvement Plan**

---

Northwards Housing is committed to helping create successful sustainable communities, including addressing inequalities that exist between areas of North and East Manchester and the rest of the City.

---

**E14: Resident Involvement Agreement**

---

Resident involvement Agreement developed in consultation with customers and residents and monitored by the Resident Involvement Task Group. The Revolve newsletter is produced by the Resident Involvement Team and is sent out monthly to all involved tenants.

---

**E130: NorthAwards**

---

Local people who make a real difference to the quality of life in their community were recognised at our special 'NorthAwards' event in October 08 and this will be a yearly event.

---

**E128: Positive Practice Examples**

---

Examples of Positive Practice carried out by Northwards Housing.

---

## 4: Delivery

### 4.1: Delivery standards

#### 4.1.1: We have challenging standards for our main services, which take account of our responsibility for delivering national and statutory standards and targets.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### New Evidence

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##### E172: Excellence Committee

---

In line with new regulation requirements from the TSA, and following consultation with our three Area Panels, Northwards Housing has created a tenants' Excellence Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to help Northwards to continually improve the services we deliver to our tenants.

#### Active Evidence

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##### E14: Resident Involvement Agreement

---

Resident involvement Agreement developed in consultation with customers and residents and monitored by the Resident Involvement Forum. There are a wide range of forums which are used to gain valuable feedback from customers. This strategy also links in with MCCs Community Engagement Strategy.

---

##### E25: 1/4ly Performance Report

---

Quarterly Corporate Performance Report for Northwards and Manchester City.

---

##### E20: Team Improvement Plans

---

Team Improvement Plans set out how individual teams will improve services over the forthcoming period. This links to the organisations aims and objectives.

---

##### E112: Setting Targets

---

Reports to sub committee that set out targets.

---

##### E13: Tenants Handbook DVD

---

Information provided to all new tenants and leaseholders on standards and services that are available and how to access them.

---

**4.1.2: We monitor and meet our standards, key departmental and performance targets, and we tell our customers about our performance.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

**Active Evidence**

---

**N28: Northwards Natter**

---

Regular publications informing people of how we are performing against our standards.

---

**N035: Sub Committee Report - Benchmarking**

---

A breakdown of the costs and resources involved in managing the housing management and maintenance functions

---

**N032: Audit Commission Report**

---

Audit Commission Report from November 2008 inspection Identifies and summarises areas of good practice in Northwards Housing. The Audit Commission awarded Northwards Housing 3 Stars and excellent prospects for improvement.

---

**N022: Website - Performance Information**

---

Website service offering results of monthly and quarterly performance indicators and surveys.

---

**E132: Digital Signage**

---

Digital Signage is displayed in all our public offices. The system is updated regularly with information.

---

**E111: Covalent**

---

This new performance management software enables us to monitor performance and identify trends. The system also holds all teams improvement plans and the status of them at any given time.

---

---

**4.1.3: We consult and involve customers, citizens, partners and staff on the setting, reviewing and raising of our local standards.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

**Active Evidence**

---

**E90: Complaints Review**

---

A Review of the Complaints Policy took place with Tenants and staff. This led to the policy being revised with the main point being that customers are contacted personally to discuss their complaint.

---

**E19: Voids Review**

---

Consultants commissioned by Northwards to carry out a review on the voids management process. Focus groups held with tenants and staff to obtain feedback. The aim of the review was to reduce relet times. Further consultation with residents looking at void standards is currently being carried out.

---

**E141: Corporate Scorecard**

---

Board report highlighting current performance this is presented by way of corporate scorecard.

---

**E111: Covalent**

---

This new performance management software enables us to monitor performance and identify trends. The system also holds all teams improvement plans and the status of them at any given time.

---

**E108: Access to Services Strategy**

---

This strategy was produced following a review in consultation with tenants It shows how we deliver our services and what improvements we plan to make.

---

**E104: Surveys**

---

Customer Satisfaction Survey, Post Let Survey and Fair and Equal Survey.

---

---

## 4.2: Achieved Delivery and Outcomes

### 4.2.1: We agree with our customers at the outset what they can expect from the service we provide.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### Active Evidence

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##### E14: Resident Involvement Agreement

Resident involvement Agreement developed in consultation with customers and residents and monitored by the Resident Involvement Forum. There are a wide range of forums which are used to gain valuable feedback from customers. This strategy also links in with MCCs Community Engagement Strategy.

---

##### E70: Complaints Policy and Procedure

A three stage complaints procedure for resolving complaints.

---

##### E81: Website - Your Northwards

This page on the website highlights Northwards promises, aims and commitments to each tenant.

---

##### E133: Welcome to Northwards Pack

This pack is given to all new tenants who sign up to a Northwards property

---

##### E13: Tenants Handbook DVD

Information provided to all new tenants and leaseholders on standards and services that are available and how to access them.

---

##### E12: Home Improvement DVD

This DVD informs Tenants of Home Improvements Works the process and the choiced available. Also available in various languages and with subtitles.

---

**4.2.2: We can demonstrate that we deliver the service we promised to individual customers and that outcomes are positive for the majority of our customers.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

---

**E82: Praise Boards**

These boards are in the contractors offices showing all letters and cards of thanks recieved from tenants.

---

**E33: KPI Targets**

Key set of Performance Indicators to ensure consistent monitoring of the capital programme across the framework of contractors.

---

**E29: Satisfaction Reports to Sub Committee**

Various reports to Sub Committees highlighting levels of satisfaction across the organisation.

---

**E25: 1/4ly Performance Report**

Quarterly Performance Management Report Jan-March 09.

---

**E02: Customer Satisfaction Survey and Report**

Customer Satisfaction Survey (2008) sent to all tenants and leaseholders to assess levels of satisfaction. Research report on findings from the survey 2008.

---

**4.2.3: We can demonstrate that we benchmark our performance against that of similar or complementary organisations and have used that information to improve our service.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**N178: AC Inspections comparison to Other ALMOs**

---

Table showing comparison of other ALMOs Audit Commission Inspection scores

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**E84: E & D Practitioners Group**

---

Group of Equality and Diversity officers meet regularly to share best practice and information on improving services.

---

**E83: Housemark**

---

Reports comparing performance against similar organisations.

---

**E33: KPI Targets**

---

Key set of Performance Indicators to ensure consistent monitoring of the capital programme across the framework of contractors.

---

**E25: 1/4ly Performance Report**

---

Quarterly Performance Management Report Jan-March 09.

---

**E134: Customer Profiling Comparison Report**

---

Report comparing Northwards housing to similar organisations about the collection of Customer Profiling Data.

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---

**4.2.4: We have developed and learned from best practice identified within and outside our organisation, and we publish our examples externally where appropriate.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

---

**E89: Covalent**

---

This new performance management software enables us to monitor performance and identify trends. The system also holds all teams improvement plans and the status of them at any given time.

**E88: Charter Mark Assessment Report**

---

Charter Mark achieved in May 2007 and retained in 2008, assessment and evaluation report, highlighting areas of best practice.

**E87: Audit Commission Report**

---

Audit Commission Report from November 2008 inspection Identifies and summarises areas of good practice in Northwards Housing. The Audit Commission awarded Northwards Housing 3 Stars and excellent prospects for improvement.

**E37: Internet Kiosks**

---

This new performance management software enables us to monitor performance and identify trends. The system also holds all teams improvement plans and the status of them at any given time.

**E23: Older Persons Park**

---

Northwards funded and over 60's park in Damhead. This is the first in the UK and has been advertised globally.

**E128: Positive Practice Examples**

---

Examples of Positive Practice carried out by Northwards Housing. Recently Northwards Housing held an Discovering Excellence Event sharing with other organisations how we achieved 3 stars with excellent prospects for improvement.

---

### 4.3: Deal effectively with problems

#### 4.3.1: We identify any dips in performance against our standards and explain these to customers, together with action we are taking to put things right and prevent further recurrence.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### New Evidence

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##### E160: Contingency/Emergency Plan

---

The aim of the Emergency Plan is to protect Northwards Housing tenants and leaseholders, its employees and property during an emergency situation and to minimise disruption to the City.

#### Active Evidence

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##### N022: Website - Performance Information

---

Quarterly returns detailing performance against standards in all key service areas and identifying areas of improvement

##### E35: Annual Report

---

The Annual Report highlights customer satisfaction and what we are going to do to improve.

##### E132: Digital Signage

---

Digital Signage is displayed in all our public offices. The system is updated regularly with information. This facility is also available in the back office for the rents team which highlights individual performance and targets.

##### E111: Covalent

---

This new performance management software enables us to monitor performance and identify trends. The system also holds all teams improvement plans and the status of them at any given time.

##### E07: Equality Impact Assessments

---

EIAs carried out to improve the services provided by Northwards Housing by ensuring it does not discriminate against, BME, disabled, age, sexuality, gender and race. There are examples of completed EIAs and actions taken to avoid discrimination.

---

**4.3.2: We have an easy to use complaints procedure, which includes a commitment to deal with problems fully and solve them wherever possible within a reasonable time limit.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

---

**N144: On-line Complaints**

---

Easily accessible way for customers to make a complaint or give praise using the internet

---

**N045: At Your service Leaflet**

---

Information for customers produced in nine languages, detailing how we respond to customers by telephone, in writing, face to face and dealing with complaints.

---

**N020: Complaints Monitoring**

---

Reports on complaints activity in quarter 2 highlighting areas of concern

---

**E71: Complaints Panel**

---

Complaints Panel set up to assess activity from complaints, performance and carry out quality control checks on responses.

---

**E70: Complaints Policy and Procedure**

---

A three stage complaints procedure for resolving complaints.

---

**4.3.3: We give staff training and guidance to handle complaints and to investigate them objectively, and we can demonstrate that we empower staff to put things right.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

---

**E94: 1/4ly Complaints Report**

---

Reports on complaints activity highlighting areas of concern and also the number of letters of praise recieved.

---

**E91: Complaints Checklist**

---

A complaints checklist is followed by the Complaints Panel, when checking samples of responses by managers in the organisation. Following this feedback is given to the relevant manager.

---

**E71: Complaints Panel**

---

Complaints Panel set up to assess activity from complaints, performance and carry out quality control checks on responses.

---

**E70: Complaints Policy and Procedure**

---

A three stage complaints procedure for resolving complaints

---

**E136: Complaints Training**

---

Training carried out following the implementation of the new Policy and Procedure.

---

**E135: Complaints Panel E-Bulletin**

---

Following every Complaints Panel meeting an E-Bulletin is sent to all staff who respond to complaints.

---

**4.3.4: We learn from any mistakes we make by identifying patterns in formal and informal complaints and comments from customers and use this information to improve services and publicise action taken.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

---

**E173: Case Studies (Home Improvements)**

---

Northwards produce to ensure consistency and efficiency in the way our employees and contracting partners deliver services to tenants. These are regularly reviewed and GPGS are put through the EIA process to highlight an potential equality implications.

---

**E161: Complaints Quality of Responses Audit Report**

---

A complaints audit was carried out across the organisation around complaints received and the quality of written responses sent. Feedback is given back to the manager for future reference.

---

**E150: Customer Journey Mapping**

---

We have carried out customer journey mapping with tenants regarding heating repairs. From this we have identified areas for improvement. We have developed customer journey maps for tenants to use alongside video cameras to map their experiences across other services.

---

**E146: Various publications**

---

We send out a number of publications to all our tenants to keep them informed and also to give tenants an opportunity to get involved and be consulted.

**Active Evidence**

---

**E35: Annual Report**

---

The Annual Report highlights customer satisfaction and what we are going to do to improve.

---

**E94: 1/4ly Complaints Report**

---

Reports on complaints activity highlighting areas of concern and also the number of letters of praise received.

---

**4.3.5: We regularly review and improve our complaints procedure, taking account of the views of customers, complainants and staff.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Weak

**Active Evidence**

---

**N111: Customer Care Action Plan**

---

Overall Plan to ensure services are effectively delivered.

---

**N054: Complaints Procedure**

---

A three stage complaints procedure for resolving complaints.

---

**E90: Complaints Review**

---

A Review of the Complaints Policy took place with Tenants and Staff. This led to the policy being revised with the main point being that customers are contacted personally to discuss their complaint.

---

**E71: Complaints Panel**

---

Complaints Panel set up to assess activity from complaints, performance and carry out quality control checks on responses.

---

**4.3.6: We ensure that the outcome of the complaint process for customers (whose complaint is upheld) is satisfactory for them.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

---

**E95: Compensation policy**

Compensation Policy for Personal Distress and Financial Loss. There is a seperate policy for disrepair and personal injury.

---

**E91: Complaints Checklist**

A complaints checklist is followed by the Complaints Panel, when checking samples of responses by managers in the organisation. Following this feedback is given to the relevant manager.

---

**E70: Complaints Policy and Procedure**

A three stage complaints procedure for resolving complaints.

---

**E30: Complaints Handling Survey**

This survey is sent to all tenants who have sent a complaint to Northwards Housing. The survey is completed monthly and monitor satisfaction of the process.

---

**E125: Tenant Reply Form and Procedures**

Tenant Reply Form are received from customers who have had a repair carried out to their property. The guidelines are how responses from dis-satisfied customers are dealt with.

---

**5: Timeliness and Quality of Service****5.1: Standards for Timeliness and Quality**

**5.1.1: We set appropriate and measurable standards for the timeliness of response for all forms of customer contact including phone calls, letters, e-communications and personal callers.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**N045: At Your service Leaflet**

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Information for customers produced in nine languages, detailing how we respond to customers by telephone, in writing, face to face and dealing with complaints.

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**E13: Tenants Handbook DVD**

---

Information provided to all new tenants and leaseholders on standards and services that are available and how to access them.

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**E108: Access to Services Strategy**

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This strategy was produced following a review in consultation with tenants It shows how we deliver our services and what improvements we plan to make.

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**5.1.2: We set comprehensive standards for all aspects of the quality of customer service to be expected in all dealings with our organisation.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**E151: Performance Report for Customer Service Centre**

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Benchmarking reports have been produced. These reports compare our Customer Service Centre to similar organisation in the North West and are part of the Housemark Club and also with other organisations in Manchester whose stock was previously MCC.

**Active Evidence**

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**E25: 1/4ly Performance Report**

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Quarterly Corporate Performance Report for Northwards and Manchester City.

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**N018: Mystery Shoppers**

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An initiative using a register of customers to assist with monitoring the quality of the service.

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## 5.2: Timely Outcomes

### 5.2.1: We advise our customers and potential customers about our promises on timeliness and quality of customer service.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

#### Active Evidence

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##### **N048: Various Posters**

Posters displayed in all three public offices and informing them of the organisations service standards

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##### **N047: At Your Service - Website**

Website service offering information to customers on all aspects of the housing service, how to access, and what standards to expect

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##### **N045: At Your service Leaflet**

Information for customers produced in nine languages, detailing how we respond to customers by telephone, in writing, face to face and dealing with complaints

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##### **E28: Northwards Natter**

The tenant's newsletter (Northwards Natter) is sent to all our customers four times a year. It's packed full of information, advice, competitions and features from Northwards Housing and local community groups and partnerships. This information is also provided in CD format.

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##### **E131: Sub Committee Target Reports**

Sub Committee reports setting targets for the organisation.

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##### **E13: Tenants Handbook DVD**

Information provided to all new tenants and leaseholders on standards and services that are available and how to access them.

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**5.2.2: We identify individual customer needs at the first point of contact with us and ensure that an appropriate person who can address the reason for contact deals with the customer.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E62: Contact Manager**

On line IT system, all Northwards Staff have access to this and are able to update and view information relating to an individual property on tenant.

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**E137: On Call Scripts**

Script that On Call use when a customer makes contact with Northwards.

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**E133: Welcome to Northwards Pack**

This pack is given to all new tenants who sign up to a Northwards property.

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**E06: Partnering Contractors Pre Entry Survey**

These surveys are carried out by contractors before any improvement works start. The information is used by the contractors to ensure there is little disruption and aware of any individual needs whilst they are on site.

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**E02: Customer Satisfaction Survey and Report**

Customer Satisfaction Survey (2008) sent to all tenants and leaseholders to assess levels of satisfaction. Research report on findings from the survey 2008.

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**E01: Customer Profiling Results**

Fair and Equal Survey is in the process of being carried out to help identify the make up of our tenants and any individual communication needs that will assist Northwards in delivering services.

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**5.2.3: We promptly share customer information with colleagues and partners within our organisation whenever appropriate and can demonstrate how this has reduced unnecessary contact for customers.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E98: Hate Crime Reporting**

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On Line - Hate Reporting database shared with MCC and the Police. This database is online and only accessible to certain officers.

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**E97: Local Tasking Meetings**

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Partnership working with agencies to work together and make the neighbourhood safer to live in.

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**E68: Home Improvement website search**

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Links to search engines on Intranet and Internet which enables tenants/staff to see when works are programmed for any Northwards address. This was designed following customer queries and consultation.

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**E62: Contact Manager**

---

On line IT system, all Northwards Staff have access to this and are able to update and view information relating to an individual property on tenant.

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**E138: Repeat Call Statistics**

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Statistics showing the breakdown of repeat calls to On Call.

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**E118: PDA Handheld Technology**

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The PDA system is currently being implemented in partnership with MWL. This will help to improve communication with residents and make sure that any special requirements are known and addressed before the repair visit.

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**5.2.4: Where service is not completed at the first point of contact we discuss with the customer the next steps and indicate the likely overall time to achieve outcomes.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E99: Interim Letters**

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Template letter within the Correspondence log, for staff to utilise when there is a delay in responding to a customers complaint and also examples of letters sent to tenants informing them of new timescales from the Rehousing and Home Improvement Teams.

**E90: Complaints Review**

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A Review of the Complaints Policy took place with Tenants and Staff. This led to the policy being revised with the main point being that customers are contacted personally to discuss their complaint.

**E32: Decent Homes Improvement Survey**

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Satisfaction Survey sent to all tenants following Decent Homes Work. In the survey they are asked if they are satisfied with how their individual needs were met.

**E11: Access Review**

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An Access Review carried out with staff and tenants to ensure all services are accessible to all our customers.

**E100: Extra Services Leaflet**

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Informs customers of the various formats that information is available in, and how to obtain it.

**E02: Customer Satisfaction Survey and Report**

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Customer Satisfaction Survey (2008) sent to all tenants and leaseholders to assess levels of satisfaction. Research report on findings from the survey 2008.

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**5.2.5: We respond to initial enquiries promptly, if there is a delay we advise the customer and take action to rectify the problem.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**E99: Interim Letters**

---

Template letter within the Correspondence log, for staff to utilise when there is a delay in responding to a customers complaint and also examples of letters sent to tenants informing them of new timescales from the Rehousing and Home Improvement Teams.

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**E70: Complaints Policy and Procedure**

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A three stage complaints procedure for resolving complaints.

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**E44: Customer Care Standards Leaflet**

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The customer care standards adhered to by all Northwards staff. Set minimum standards for responding to customers.

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### 5.3: Achieved Timely Delivery

#### 5.3.1: We monitor our performance against standards for timeliness and quality of customer service and we take action if problems are identified.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

##### New Evidence

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##### E174: Home Improvement Progress Report

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The report sets out the status of all projects within the Home Improvements Programme which are currently on site.

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##### E142: Various Satisfaction Surveys and Reports

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Northwards have identified various groups and regularly survey these groups to gain an insight on their experiences and to improve and shape the services that we provide.

##### Active Evidence

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##### E111: Covalent

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This new performance management software enables us to monitor performance and identify trends. The system also holds all teams improvement plans and the status of them at any given time.

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##### N022: Website - Performance Information

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Quarterly returns detailing performance against standards in all key service areas and identifying areas of improvement

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**5.3.2: We are meeting our current standards for timeliness and quality of customer service and we publicise our performance against these standards.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**N032: Audit Commission Report**

Audit Commission Report from November 2008 inspection Identifies and summarises areas of good practice in Northwards Housing. The Audit Commission awarded Northwards Housing 3 Stars and excellent prospects for improvement.

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**N022: Website - Performance Information**

Website service offering results of monthly and quarterly performance indicators and surveys.

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**E24: Mystery Shoppers**

An initiative using a register of customers to assist with monitoring the quality of the service.

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**E132: Digital Signage**

Digital Signage is displayed in all our public offices. The system is updated regularly with information.

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**E111: Covalent**

This new performance management software enables us to monitor performance and identify trends. The system also holds all teams improvement plans and the status of them at any given time.

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**E02: Customer Satisfaction Survey and Report**

Customer Satisfaction Survey (2008) sent to all tenants and leaseholders to assess levels of satisfaction. Research report on findings from the survey 2008.

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**5.3.3: Our performance in relation to timeliness and quality of service compares well with that of similar organisations.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**E162: TSA Standards Pilot**

The aim is to enlist tenants from our communities to join our Decent Homes project teams. The outcome of the pilot will have a positive impact on our service and on individual tenants, giving them ownership and total involvement in the process, by giving them pride in their homes and communities.

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**E142: Various Satisfaction Surveys and Reports**

Northwards have identified various groups and regularly survey these groups to gain an insight on their experiences and to improve and shape the services that we provide.

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**E146: Various publications**

We send out a number of publications to all our tenants to keep them informed and also to give tenants an opportunity to get involved and be consulted. Also included is the How we Compare with other organisations leaflet which has been circulated to all Tenants.

**Active Evidence**

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**E132: Digital Signage**

Digital Signage is displayed in all our public offices. The system is updated regularly with information.

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**E35: Annual Report**

The Annual Report highlights customer satisfaction and what we are going to do to improve.

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**N032: Audit Commission Report**

Audit Commission Report from November 2008 inspection Identifies and summarises areas of good practice in Northwards Housing. The Audit Commission awarded Northwards Housing 3 Stars and excellent prospects for improvement.