



## The Gateshead Housing Company Customers and Communities Committee

Thursday 1 November 2012 at 2pm  
Board Room 2, The Gateshead Housing Company, Keelman  
House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Fifth Avenue, Team Valley  
Trading Estate, Gateshead NE11 0XA

### *Agenda*

Item	Business
1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
	<b><u>ITEM FOR DECISION</u></b>
3.	<b>Minutes (Pages 3-9)</b> To approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting of the committee held on 26 July 2012
4.	<b>Matters Arising</b>
	<b><u>ITEMS FOR INFORMATION</u></b>
5.	<b>TALISMAN Review – Anti-Social Behaviour – Response to Recommendations (Pages 10-17)</b> Report of Director of Customers and Communities
6.	<b>Anti-Social Behaviour Partnership Update – April to September 2012 (Pages 18-47)</b> Report of Director of Customers and Communities

Contact: Stuart Gibson Tel: (0191) 433 5308 Date: 25 October 2012

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Item	Business
7.	<b>Customer Involvement Activity – Update (Pages 48-59)</b> Report of Acting Chief Executive
8.	<b>Survey Monitoring Group – Update (Pages 60-66)</b> Report of Acting Chief Executive
9.	<b>Moving Forward Customer Training Programme 2012-13 – Update (Pages 67-74)</b> Report of Acting Chief Executive
10.	<b>Forward Plan (Pages 75-77)</b> Report of Acting Chief Executive
11.	<b>Items for Future Agendas</b>
12.	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b> To be agreed



## CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

26 July 2012

### PRESENT:

#### Directors

Joachim Moussounda Mouanda (Deputy Chair in the Chair)  
 Robert Buckley  
 Pauline Dillon  
 Paul Foy  
 John Hamilton  
 Gordon Spring

#### Advisers

Jon Mallen-Beadle	Acting Chief Executive
Neil Bouch	Director of Customers and Communities
Kevin Johnson	Head of Customer Services
Louise Taylor	Equality and Diversity Manager
Teresa Smare	Neighbourhood Services Manager (East and South)
Mandy Huston	Neighbourhood Relations Manager
Gavin Milne	Local Environmental Services
Stuart Gibson	Governance and Risk Officer

#### Also Present

Sheila Bouitieh	TALISMAN
Elizabeth Bird	TALISMAN
Hazel Hitchen	TALISMAN
Clare Butterfield	TALISMAN Mentor

#### Apologies

Kathryn Ferdinand

### 15 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of the committee held on 2 May 2012 were approved as a correct record.

### 16 MATTERS ARISING – FELLING OFFICE

Felling Office is on schedule to close on 6 August 2012 and the committee will receive a further report on the outcome of the review six months after the opening of the new office.

## **17 CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITY – UPDATE**

During the three month period 1 April 20 to 30 June 2012, over 100 involvement activities took place. Customers have been involved in involvement activities on over 5,000 occasions although some may have been involved in more than one activity.

There have been a number of outcomes from customer involvement during the period, details of which were reported.

During the period, the annual survey was issued to all tenants and leaseholders. Satisfaction results are currently being compiled and positively over 3,342 tenants responded compared to 1,715 respondents in 2011. In comparison 72 leaseholders responded this year compared to 103 in 2011.

A comparison of the profile of the involvement database as of 30 June 2012, compared to the same time last year was reported. There has been an overall increase in the total number of customers on the database from 748 in June 2011, to 816 in June 2012.

62.61% of involved customers are women, 30.15% have a disability and 6.25% are BME. The proportion of under-25s engaged is still lower than the overall customer base and the company will continue to look at different methods to engage with this age range.

Activities in the next quarter include Opportunity Knocks and the Annual Report to Tenants and Leaseholders.

- RESOLVED – (i) That the information be noted.
- (ii) That the committee receive more information on what the company is doing to promote activities where attendance is poor and measures being taken to try to improve attendance at these events.

## **18 RESPECT – ASB CHARTER FOR HOUSING- A REVIEW OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR CASE MANAGEMENT**

The committee was informed of the review by TALISMAN (Tenant and Leaseholder Independent Scrutiny Management Panel) into how the company manages anti-social behaviour and any recommendations it considered would improve service delivery. This is the first area it has scrutinised since being established in 2011.

Overall findings showed that there is a high level of commitment by managers and employees to tackle and support customers experiencing ASB. There were ten areas of positive practise highlighted.

The panel also made ten recommendations which if implemented will result in tangible improvements to customer service delivery and assist in managing the service more effectively. These were reached using a range of scrutiny tools.

- RESOLVED – (i) That recommendations and positive practice be noted.

- (ii) That a formal response to TALISMAN's recommendations from the Neighbourhood Relations Team be presented to the next meeting of the committee and subsequently report this response and action plan to TALISMAN.

## **19 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR PARTNERSHIP UPDATE – JANUARY TO JUNE 2012**

The committee received a report detailing the partnership work undertaken between January and June 2012 to tackle anti-social behaviour and address underlying causes.

During the period, 25 referrals were made to the Brief Intervention Alcohol Worker and 70 referrals to the PCT Mental Health Link Worker.

There were 25 new cases opened relating to Hate Crime incidents compared to 26 the previous year.

There were 88 new ASB cases opened relating to domestic abuse. To ensure both victims and alleged perpetrators of domestic abuse receive all the relevant support, 75 referrals have been made to a number of different agencies.

During the period, NRT managers attended 23 Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings and completed 104 research forms to assist the process. 87 of these cases related to victims living in Council properties. 21 customers have benefited from security improvements to their property due to concerns of further domestic violence. 13 of these were identified through MARAC meetings.

The company made 56 direct referrals to Victim Support and a further 101 referrals relating to Council tenants were made by other agencies.

The first annual review of Safer Neighbourhood Groups (SNG) took place during May 2012. A further update on progress with the South SNG action plan to address the problems within the Allerdene area was reported.

The Council is leading on the development of a Community Alcohol Partnership which will focus on three key areas. Due to the large number of off licences and high level of alcohol related hospital admissions, it has been agreed to pilot the partnership within Barley Mow.

As a result of increased reports of the supply and availability of new potentially dangerous substances and 'legal highs' within Gateshead, a protocol has been developed to govern reports. These will be shared with the company to make staff aware of the availability of any dangerous substances.

A protocol has been agreed for the company to share information with the Illegal Money Lending Team.

In December 2011, the government announced its Troubled Families programme, committed to turning around the lives of 120,000 families. The government estimates this equates to 595 families in Gateshead. The

Council, in partnership with other agencies, is leading on the development of the approach locally, known as Families Gateshead.

Two neighbourhood relations officers have attended a five day training course in relation to the process of Restorative Justice which involves bringing together those affected by ASB, crime or conflict with those responsible.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

(Note: Robert Buckley declared a non-pecuniary interest in this matter as he is a Governor of South of Tyne NHS Foundation Trust and they pay for the Mental Health Intervention Worker)

## **20 ANNUAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY REPORT 2011/12**

The committee received an update on estate management activity for April 2011 to March 2012 and service priorities for 2012/13.

A performance summary for estate tours during the period was reported. There have been 792 estate tours, 73.5% of which involved residents which is consistent with last year's performance of 73.5%. 94.7% of estates achieved a gold grading compared to 87.84% of estates in 2010/11.

The Neighbourhood Pride budget for 2011/12 was £70,000 and split equally between each of the five neighbourhoods (£50,000 TGHC contribution and £20,000 from Local Environmental Services (LES). 38 projects were completed in 2011/12 totalling £67,088 and details of these were reported. The 2012/13 budget has been reduced to £50,000 (£30,000 TGHC contribution and £20,000 from LES) and the terms of reference have been reviewed to reflect a focus on identifying other streams of funding to support the delivery of Neighbourhood Pride schemes.

Each of the five neighbourhoods was allocated a budget of £5,000 capital to deliver area based initiatives that would reduce the effects of anti-social behaviour. Total spend for 2011/12 was £24,160 which delivered 28 projects. Due to other budget priorities, there will be no allocated budget for 2012/13.

The neighbourhood action planning model has continued and an updated Wrekenton NAP has been developed with customers and partners to address local priorities.

During the period, 2,806 new garden cases were identified compared to 3,481 cases for the same period in 2010/11. The average time taken to resolve a case has significantly reduced from 4.8 to 3.9 weeks.

The following service priorities have been agreed for 2012/13: -

- Review of Estate Tours and Grading – Including an external peer review in partnership with Housing Hartlepool and Gentoo that will involve customers in September 2012
- A sub regional estate activity group has been set up with Housing Hartlepool, Gentoo and YHN to look at estate activity
- Carry out a review of our Garden Case Management to deal with rubbish in gardens

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

## **21 STREET ACTION AND ENFORCEMENT TEAM**

The committee received a presentation from Gavin Milne, Local Environmental Services on the Street Action and Enforcement Team.

The Team tackles place based, environmental anti-social behaviour. These issues are constantly highlighted by the public. Its core remit focuses on issues where the victim is the place as opposed to an individual.

The Team mainly deals with place based anti-social behaviour around litter, dog fouling, fly tipping, waste carrier operations, graffiti, nuisance parking, duty of care inspections and other environmental issues.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

## **22 RENT ARREARS MONITORING AND PREVENTION – 2011/12**

The committee received an update on rent arrears monitoring in 2011/12 and the company's approach to rent arrears prevention.

In 2011/12, there was a small increase in current rent arrears from £1,674,738 to £1,690,940 (an increase of 0.97%). However, this was in the context of a much larger (5.43%) increase in the amount to be collected.

In April 2007, under-25's arrears were £191 more than the average, but the gap has now reduced to just £45. Similarly, BME tenants' arrears were £133 more than the average in 2007, but the gap is now £40.

There were 70 evictions for rent arrears in 2011/12 compared with 83 in 2010/11.

Former tenant arrears reduced in 2011/12 from £1,884,643 to £1,683,530. In 2007/08 almost £791,953 of debt was passed to Former Tenants for recovering following the termination of tenancies. By 2011/12 this figure had dropped to £412,198. This means that the average arrears of someone ending their tenancy has dropped from £359 to £221.

In 2010/11 there were 146 cases written off as no trace (value of £189,587) but this reduced to 57 in 2011/12 (value of £42,048). Of the 146 cases, 76 potential new addresses have been found where the company has started recovery action again.

In 2011/12 there were 212 instances where tenants moved to the private sector (around 10% of all tenancy terminations).

A key focus for the service in the future will be dealing with the impact of welfare reform, for example the proposed "bedroom tax" where housing benefit will be reduced for under-occupation from April 2013 and affect thousands of Gateshead tenants. The phased introduction of Universal Credit from October 2013 and associated end of direct housing benefit payments will also affect a wide range of tenants.

A new development with the potential for considerable impact is contained within the draft regulations for Universal Credit which are due to be presented to Parliament in the autumn. The proposal is to restrict the types of service charge that will be eligible to be included in the housing element of Universal Credit to just three types: -

- services that are necessary to maintain the 'fabric of the accommodation'
- the cleaning of communal areas
- the cleaning of windows that tenants are unable to clean

Raising awareness of coming changes has been an objective during 2011/12 and more specific information and advice will be targeted at affected households in the coming months.

RESOLVED – (i) That the information be noted.

- (ii) That the Acting Chief Executive writes to all local MPs expressing the company's concerns about Universal Credit and the further proposals.

## **23 LETTINGS REPORT 2011/12**

The committee was advised of lettings activity in 2011/12 and of preparation for the new Tyne and Wear Homes lettings scheme.

The number of households on the existing Gateshead housing register decreased slightly during the year from 12,160 to 11,894. Applicants awarded some level of housing priority increased from 1,144 to 1,406. Most applicants are classed as having General Needs.

Applicants on the Gateshead housing register have been invited to re-register their details for the new Tyne and Wear register since February 2012. By the start of July, just over 6,500 Gateshead applicants were on the new register.

1,776 properties were let to applicants on the Gateshead register in 2011/12 compared to 1,547 in 2010/11. The increase was partly due to the letting of new properties.

82 properties were let to customers outside of the borough with 50 of these from within Tyne and Wear. Of the 82 lettings, 20 were assessed to have a local connection and a rehousing priority. The remaining 62 were based on waiting time. An amendment to the Lettings Policy is being implemented for Tyne and Wear Homes that will give preference on waiting time adverts to those applications with a Gateshead local connection.

14 applicants were assessed to be severely overcrowded at the end of March 2012 and a further 313 had lesser award.

By the end of March 2012, 71 applicants on the register had a "best use of Stock" award for downsizing, which gives Urgent Need priority. This was an increase from 34 at start of the year. 35 tenants moved to smaller properties during the year through the downsizing scheme.



RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

**24 FORWARD PLAN**

A forward plan of reports that will be presented to meetings of this committee during the next year was submitted.

RESOLVED – That the forward plan be noted.

**25 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

To be agreed.



## Report to Customers and Communities Committee

1 November 2012

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**Title:** TALISMAN Review – Anti-social Behaviour – Response to Recommendations

**Report of:** Director of Customers and Communities

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide committee with a response to the Tenant and Leaseholder Independent Scrutiny Management Panel's (TALISMAN) recommendations previously reported to committee in July 2012.

### **Background**

2. TALISMAN reported outcomes to committee following their scrutiny of anti-social behaviour (ASB) services which included highlighting a range of positive practise and also a number of recommendations for the service to consider.

### **Summary**

3. Feedback from this and the recommendations made have been shared with relevant staff through briefing sessions and a general briefing note to all employees.
4. An action plan has been developed by the neighbourhood relations team to address the recommendations. This is attached in the appendix to this report. The response to these recommendations has been shared and endorsed at a meeting with TALISMAN in October.
5. A number of the recommendations made are linked to delivering staff training to ensure a consistent service is delivered. These recommendations will be incorporated within future ASB training plans and wider corporate training plans.

### **Link to values**

6. This report links to the following company values:
  - Being a listening and learning organisation
  - Being honest, accountable and transparent
  - Being customer focussed, innovative and professional

### **Impact on tenants**

7. Scrutiny of the ASB service ensures continuous improvement is made in addressing this key customer priority. Improving customer satisfaction and quality of ASB case work will impact positively on customers accessing ASB services.

### **Risk Management Implications**

8. Tackling ASB effectively is a priority area for customers; failure to prioritise and tackle these issues is a risk for the company in terms of levels of customer satisfaction and reputation.

### **Financial Implications**

9. There are no additional financial implications arising as a result of implementing the agreed recommendations within the action plan.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

10. There are no additional Equality and Diversity implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

### **Value for Money Implications**

11. Improving accessible information for customers on the ASB services we provide and improvements made to case work will impact positively on effective and efficient service delivery.

### **Health Implications**

12. There are no additional health implications associated with this report.

### **Environmental Implications**

13. There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

### **Consultation carried out**

14. The recommendations made by TALISMAN have been shared with the service.

### **Recommendation**

15. The views of the committee are sought on the action plan to address TALISMAN'S recommendations.



## Appendix

### Service Feedback to committee on TALISMAN recommendations



Service Area		NRT		
Date of response to committee		1 November 2012		
Recommendation	How is this to be implemented? (or if it cant be explain the reasons for this including any further discussions with TALISMAN)	Lead service	Target date for completion	Where will progress be reported? (e.g. committee, relevant SIG etc)
Review and update leaflet promptly and on a regular basis throughout the year	Leaflets are currently being updated – leaflet is updated now on website and printed leaflets will be distributed to offices during October. Communications team coordinate an annual review of leaflets to ensure they are regularly reviewed.	M Huston, NRT/I Clarkin, Communications Team	October 2012	Feedback on all actions will be provided to both the ASB SIG and Customers and Communities Committee
NRT to circulate a briefing (sharing findings of the mystery shopping exercise) and deliver at housing office training sessions to ensure consistency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Processes/procedures to help customers suffering from anti-social behaviour</li> </ul>	NRT briefing session took place in September 2012; housing office teams will follow on from this during October.  Mystery shopping outcomes shared with Neighbourhood Service Managers, NRT and HR Officers - September 2012.	J Meldrum/M Huston, NRT	October 2012	

<p>and that information can be provided to anonymous callers (in line with statement in Guide to Services)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support services available to help customers through the process to report anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Tools available to gather evidence</li> </ul>				
<p>Share feedback from customer experience of the Customer Assessment Tool (CAT) process with employees</p> <p>Review the method of completing and signing CAT face to face with customers as this can cause a delay in collecting evidence and providing the customer with a quick response to ASB incidents</p>	<p>CAT evaluation completed September 2012; NRT briefing sessions took place in September 2012. Evaluation has been shared via Vulnerable Victims partnership group in September 2012. Complete</p> <p>An evaluation of the CAT process has been undertaken.</p> <p>The CAT evaluation demonstrates that case investigations continue to be begun on time and CAT assessments are completed on average within four days.</p>	<p>D Ewart</p>	<p>October 2012</p>	<p>Complete</p>

Investigate the possibility of completing CAT's by telephone which is followed up by customer signing document.	See above comment			
Review and update website on a regular basis throughout year	NRT Managers to review website content in relation to ASB on a quarterly basis	John Meldrum, NRT	November 2012 and quarterly thereafter	
Develop 2012/13 Service Improvement Group work plan with group	To be discussed with SIG during November meeting.	John Meldrum, NRT	November 2012	
TPAS Tenant Involvement Training to be re-run for all SIG leads to concentrate on outcomes of service improvement for customers  Review with SIG and managers their original purpose, remind them of their role and how to use data from other organisation to improve TGHC ASB service	Specific training to be sought to focus on the role of SIG lead officers and how they get the most out of the groups.  Initial quotes for training have been sought from three different providers however SIG leads will be involved in shaping the overall objectives for the training once an organisation has been identified.	Involvement Team	January 2013	
Investigate the possibility of establishing partnership links with Council's adult and	Partnership contacts are in place and procedures established for referring to	D Ewart	February 2013	

<p>children services to allow TGHC employees a direct link/named officer which would allow for quick access to these services when customers need it most.</p>	<p>these services.</p> <p>Refresher briefings will be provided to relevant staff as a reminder as part of wider training.</p>			
<p>Telephone surveys need to be complimented with the development of web based surveys, as well as conducting additional postal surveys. Reminder letters should be issued. This will allow for a more meaningful statistical return resulting in more robust data collection. The random nature of customer survey selection needs to be more rigorous adopting the use of Microsoft office products or similar electronic software products. Share survey results with eth SIG to allow customers and officers to work together and identify areas for improvement.</p>	<p>This action is to be picked up through the survey Monitoring group as it will potentially impact on the overall approach taken. This was initially discussed at September's survey meeting.</p>	<p>NRT/Survey group</p>	<p>March 2013</p>	
<p>Repeat annual mystery shopping exercise of the ASB service delivered via the housing office network</p>	<p>Mystery shoppers will repeat the exercise again during this financial year to monitor the impact of briefings and training</p>	<p>Involvement Team</p>	<p>March 2013</p>	

	<p>to employees.</p> <p>The mystery shopping will consider the responses in line with the service standards but will also consider the customer service element of the calls, including attitude, phone handling.</p>			
<p>Collect and report data to Service Improvement Group (SIG) for monitoring purposes</p> <p>SIG and employees to use data and work together to identify areas for improvement for the average time to resolve ASB case.</p>	<p>Reporting on the time taken to resolve cases requires ICT development within our ASB case management system. This has been identified as a requirement in the service work plan.</p>	<p>M Huston, NRT</p>	<p>March 2013</p>	
<p>Regularly review and update promptly where appropriate the <i>ASB Guidance Procedures (revised in January 2011)</i> which is accessed by the Managing Tenancies Intranet resource. This will provide a resource to all employees and ensure that the service is delivered consistently across the</p>	<p>This action is identified within the service plan for 2012/13 – work is currently in progress on updating this.</p>	<p>J Meldrum/M Huston, NRT</p>	<p>March 2013</p>	



borough.				
Share the annual Housemark ASB report with SIG, employees and Customers and Communities Committee	Input to Housemark ASB service is currently under review. Findings to be collated by end of November 2012	M Huston, NRT	November 2012	
Use the Housemark report and include in the annual SIG work plan	Discuss Housemark tool with SIG group	J Meldrum, NRT	November 2012	
Use Housemark report and work with SIG to benchmark TGHC NRT services against other housing providers, learn from best practise, improve performance and Value for Money.	Any follow up actions around this to be agreed with group following above actions being completed	J Meldrum, NRT	March 2013	



## Report to Customer and Communities Committee

1 November 2012

**Title:** Anti-Social Behaviour Performance Update – April to September 2012

**Report of:** Director of Customers and Communities

### Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a performance update for the period April to September 2012 as well as an update on anti-social behaviour (ASB) procedure developments.

### Background

2. The report details a summary of ASB performance results and achievements during the first two quarters of this year. This performance is broken down further by neighbourhood area in appendices one to eight. Progress in relation to ASB service developments is also included.

### Performance Update

3. During this period 1,000 new cases were opened. This is virtually the same as this period last year where we opened 1,005 cases.
4. As at 30 September 2012 there were 612 cases currently being investigated across the borough; this is a slight increase of 5% compared to the same period last year where we were investigating 582 cases. This figure can fluctuate depending on the number of cases being closed during the period as well as a usual seasonal increase during the summer months.
5. The top three types of ASB issues recorded during this period are: -

Noise Nuisance	290 - (29%)
Youth Disorder	96 - (10%)
Domestic Abuse	95 - (10%)

Compared to the same period last year, Noise Nuisance remains the top reported issue by customers.

6. During this period we made 884 referrals to other agencies in relation to supporting customers during the investigation of ASB cases. These are broken down by Office in appendix one to eight.
7. Between April 2012 and September 2012 882 cases were closed. Of these closed cases 854 (97%) were resolved without the need for ASB related legal action. This is a decrease compared to the same period last year where we closed 955 cases however we resolved the same percentage of cases without the need for legal action. The reasons for case closure are included in appendix one to eight.
8. Between April 2012 and September 2012 we took 288 Formal and Legal Actions. This equates to 2.3 actions being taken each working day. During the same period last year we took 316, which equated to 2.6 actions being taken each working day.
9. The Formal and Legal Actions are broken down below,

Formal Warnings Issued	257
Notice of Seeking Possession Served	9
Suspended Possession Granted	1
Notice of termination Served	1
Extension of Introductory Tenancy granted	1
Evictions carried out	5
Injunction applied for	13
❖ Injunctions obtained	12
❖ Interim orders obtained	4
❖ Of the interim orders – led to undertakings	3
❖ Undertakings obtained	1
❖ Discontinued	1

Measure	Result – Quarter 2 2012/2013 (Comparable with last year)	Target	Performance against Target, Cumulative
<b>Performance Indicators</b>			
The number of hate crime incidents reported	<b>32 (32)</b>	Increase	On Target
% of hate crime incidents that resulted in further action	<b>100% (100%)</b>	100%	On target
The number of Domestic Violence incidents reported	<b>95 (91)</b>	Baseline	-
% of Domestic Violence incidents that resulted in further action	<b>100% (100%)</b>	Baseline	-

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Result – Quarter 2 2012/2013 (Comparable with last year)</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Performance against Target, Cumulative</b>
% of ASB cases that are resolved without the need for ASB legal action	<b>97% (97%)</b> (882 cases were closed, 854 were resolved without the need for legal action)	95%	Above Target
Satisfaction with the way ASB complaints are dealt with	<b>94% (92%)</b> (120 closed ASB cases were surveyed. 113 were satisfied with the way the case was handled)	91%	Above Target
Satisfaction with the outcome of ASB complaints	<b>91% (92%)</b> (120 closed ASB cases were surveyed. 109 were satisfied with the outcome)	91%	Not on target
<b>Service Standards</b>			
% of ASB cases responded to and investigations begun within the timescale	<b>98% (98%)</b> (1000 cases opened during this period, 976 of cases were acknowledged and investigations begun within the specified timescales)	<b>98%</b>	On Target

## **Customer Satisfaction**

### **Closed case surveys**

10. During this period we carried out 120 surveys with customers following the closure of their ASB case. This equates to 14% of cases closed during this period. Of these 113 (94%) of customers stated that they were satisfied with how their case was dealt with and 109 (91%) of customers were satisfied with the outcome of their case.
11. There were 11 overall customers who responded as dissatisfied during this period. 6 customers stated that they were still experiencing problems, 3 were unhappy with the outcome of the case, 1 felt the case took too long to resolve and 1 was unhappy with the frequency of feedback given by the investigating officer. Of these;

- ❖ 3 customers have been contacted and their case discussed again and clarity given over the outcome of their case
- ❖ 1 case has since been re-opened
- ❖ 8 customers were contacted and given further advice relating to their previous ASB case and are no longer experiencing problems

### Open case surveys

12. During this period attempts were made to contact 112 customers with open ASB cases. Surveys were carried out with 88 customers, of these 77 (88%) stated that they were satisfied with how their case was being investigated. 11 customers said they were dissatisfied, 2 said they were not being given regular updates by the investigating officer; 3 felt it was taking too long to resolve their complaint and 6 felt that not enough was being done to resolve their case.
13. This dissatisfaction has been fed back to officers and managers through monthly performance updates and supervision meetings and the 11 customers have since been contacted. Of these
- ❖ 2 customers have now agreed regular feedback timescales with the investigating officer
  - ❖ 3 customers have met with the investigating officer and been updated regarding the progress of their case and are clear about the timescales involved in the investigation process
  - ❖ 6 customers have been contacted by the investigating officer and given advice in relation to their case and have contributed to clear Action Plans in relation to the investigation of their case

### Hate Incidents

14. During this period we received 32 Hate Incident reports; this is equal to the same period last year. The new Hate Incidents reported related to,:-

Race	18
Disability	8
Religion	3
Sexuality	2
Age	1

See the table below for further details.

Year	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Total
2008/09	1	8	17	6	32
2009/2010	8	11	13	13	45
2010/2011	8	10	18	10	46
2011/2012	16	16	2	15	49
2012/2013	10	22			32

15. We closed 29 ASB cases relating to Hate Incidents during this period. The closure reasons are detailed as follows: -

Resolved without the need for legal action	17
Written warning	4
No Hate Crime evidenced	2
Non-engagement from Customer	2
Customer re-housed by TGHC	1
Referred to support agencies	1
Perpetrator terminated tenancy	1
Customer terminated tenancy	1

16. We are currently investigating 23 cases relating to Hate Incidents.

### **Domestic Violence**

17. During this period we received 95 new reports of Domestic Abuse, this is an increase of 9% compared to the same period last year when we received 86 incident reports. The new Domestic Abuse reports related to: -

Physical	46
Emotional	7
Psychological	2
Financial	5
MARAC – For info only	35

18. We closed 92 ASB cases relating to Domestic Abuse during this period. The closure reasons are detailed as follows: -

Resolved without the Need for Legal Action	37
MARAC – Information Only	28
Victim Re-housed	6
Perpetrator Re-housed	2
Victim Terminated Tenancy	4
Referred to Agencies for Support	2
Not evidenced	4
Perpetrator Terminated Tenancy	3
Warning Issued	3
Non-engagement from Customer	5
Perpetrator Evicted	1

19. We are currently investigating 49 cases relating to Domestic Abuse.

### **Safeguarding referrals**

20. During this period 22 referrals were made to the Safeguarding Children Team. These are broken down further below: -

Central	6
Inner West	2
West	6
South	5
East	3

21. Of the 22 referrals, 9 received an assessment by the Safeguarding Team and resulted in no further action, 6 Families are currently working with Social

services, 1 Child is currently in the Care of the Local authority and 6 are awaiting an assessment.

22. In partnership with the Council and other agencies we are currently reviewing and updating the procedures for Safeguarding Adults. Guidance for company employees and Mears contractors is being developed to ensure clear alerting and referral processes are in place. Further updates on this progress will be provided to committee in a future report.

### **Vetting and Exclusions**

23. Between April 2012 and September 2012 we carried out 210 police vetting checks. Of these 162 related to male applicants and 48 related to female applicants.
24. Of the 210 vetting checks received, 182 were from TGHC Home Choice, 21 from Gateshead Council's Housing Options Service and 7 were from Gateshead Council's Supported Tenancy Team.
25. Of the 210 vetting checks carried out 46 met the criteria for Exclusion, 154 applicants were given access to the Housing Register, 8 were in relation to requests for information and 2 applications were demoted.
26. Of the Exclusion cases 1 case went to appeal and the decision to Exclude was upheld by the appeal panel. A customer profile breakdown of Excluded applicants is detailed in appendix nine.

### **ASB Developments**

#### **Sheltered Scheme Officer ASB Training**

27. During this period 3 training sessions have been delivered by the Neighbourhood Relations Team to Gateshead Council's Sheltered Scheme Officers to raise the awareness of their role in reporting anti-social behaviour problems within sheltered schemes and developments.

#### **Customer Assessment Tool ("C.A.T")**

28. Following a pilot within Inner West and training for frontline officers the use of the C.A.T was rolled out across all neighbourhoods for victims of ASB with effect from April 2012.
29. Consultation took place with staff and partner agencies during July and August to establish their views on the use of the C.A.T. Comments from this process were used along with data to undertake an evaluation of all C.A.T forms completed during quarter one. A report on the evaluation and future actions that will result from this are attached to the report in appendix ten.

#### **Northumbria University Academic Research**

30. Further to the interviews which took place with officers during August & September 2011 an NRT Manager was asked to speak at a free conference during September which was held at Newcastle University Law School. Other

speakers were from the Home Office, Teesside University and University of Gronigen from the Netherlands.

31. The conference was titled 'Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour Bringing Research and Practice Together' and a presentation was given on the importance of the relationship between academic research and the role of specialist ASB officers. Approximately 90 delegates attended from different vocational backgrounds including law firms, police and social landlords.
32. A presentation was also provided by the researcher, Dr Kevin J Brown on his research findings. A draft paper has been produced which it is anticipated will be published during late 2013 with a title; The Anti-Social Behaviour Practitioner: Mission Expansion from Labour to Coalition. The researcher has agreed to share a copy of the published version with TGHC and has also expressed his gratitude for the support and time which officers have given to assist with the research.

### **Impact on Tenants**

33. Our partnership approach ensures we continue to focus on the customer priority of tackling anti-social behaviour effectively, supporting vulnerable victims and having a positive impact on tenants, their families and communities.

### **Link to Values**

34. The report relates to the following values of the company:-
  - Being customer focussed, innovative and professional
  - Being motivated, trained and committed across the company
  - Embracing equality
  - Being a listening and learning organisation

### **Risk management Implications**

35. Tackling anti-social behaviour effectively has continued to be a key priority for tenants in Gateshead. Failure to address anti-social behaviour would impact negatively on levels of customer satisfaction and company reputation.

### **Financial Implications**

36. The Director of Corporate Services confirms there are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations of this report.

### **Value for Money Implications**

37. There is no additional value for money implications.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

38. Ensuring we have access to specialist services and resources to support the most vulnerable residents, regardless of what diverse needs they may have is crucial in tackling ASB. The development of the vulnerable victims customer



assessment tool is enabling us to develop our approach to managing risk and will enhance the services provided.

### **Health Implications**

39. By accessing partnership arrangements with health services we are providing additional support services to help address the underlying causes of ASB and also to support victims and witnesses. This will impact positively on the health and well being of individuals.

### **Environmental Implications**

40. There are no environmental implications as a result of this report.

### **Consultation Carried Out**

41. There has been no additional customer consultation carried out in relation to this report. Updates on involvement and consultation with the customer service improvement group will be provided in the ASB partnership update report.

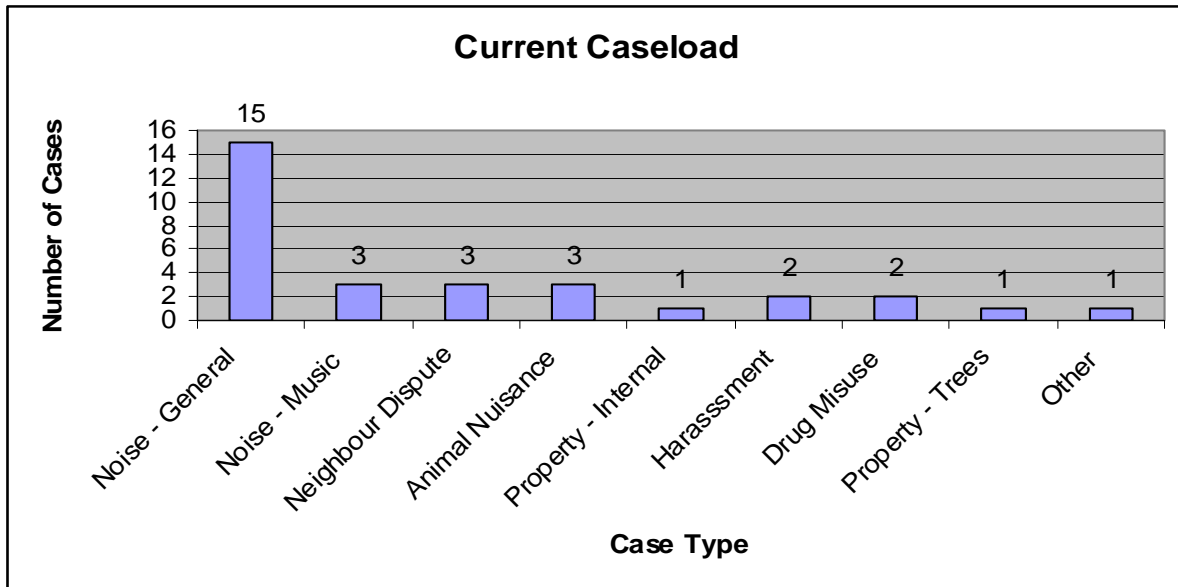
### **Recommendation**

42. The views of the committee are sought on the anti-social behaviour partnership update.

**Central**

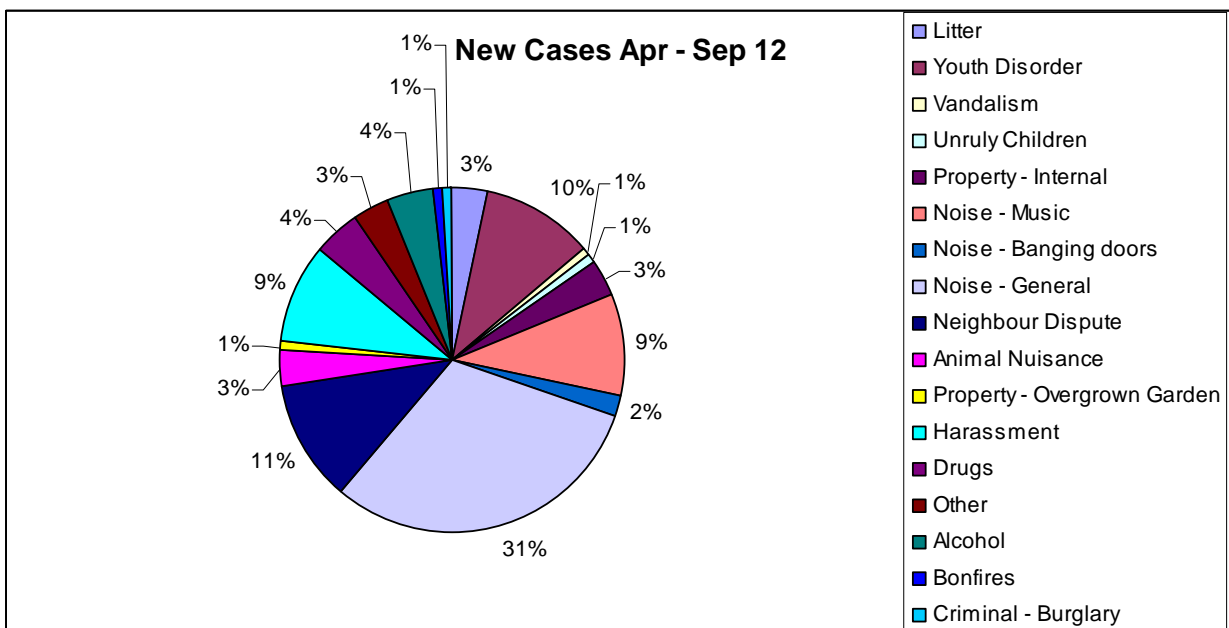
**Current Caseload**

The current caseload for Central Housing Office at the end of September 2012 is 31 open cases. This can be broken down further by case type.



**New Cases**

Between April 12 and September 12, 116 new ASB cases have been opened in Central area.



## **Closed Cases**

Between April 12 and September 12, 131 cases have been closed within the Central area. The closure reasons are as follows:-

Resolved without the need for Legal Action	66
Written Warning Issued	35
Duplicate case	9
Non-engagement from Customer	6
Referred to Other Agency	4
Complaint Investigated - No Nuisance evidenced	4
Perpetrator Terminated Tenancy	3
Perpetrator re-housed	1
Complainant Terminated Tenancy	1
Legal Eviction	1
Perpetrator Flit	1

## **Formal Actions**

Between April 12 and September 12, 40 written warnings were issued.

## **Service Standards**

Between April 12 and September 12, 116 new cases were opened and 113 97% of these were acknowledged and investigations begun within timescales.

Between April 12 and September 12, 131 cases were closed, of these 130 99% of Customers were sent a closure letter prior to the case being closed.

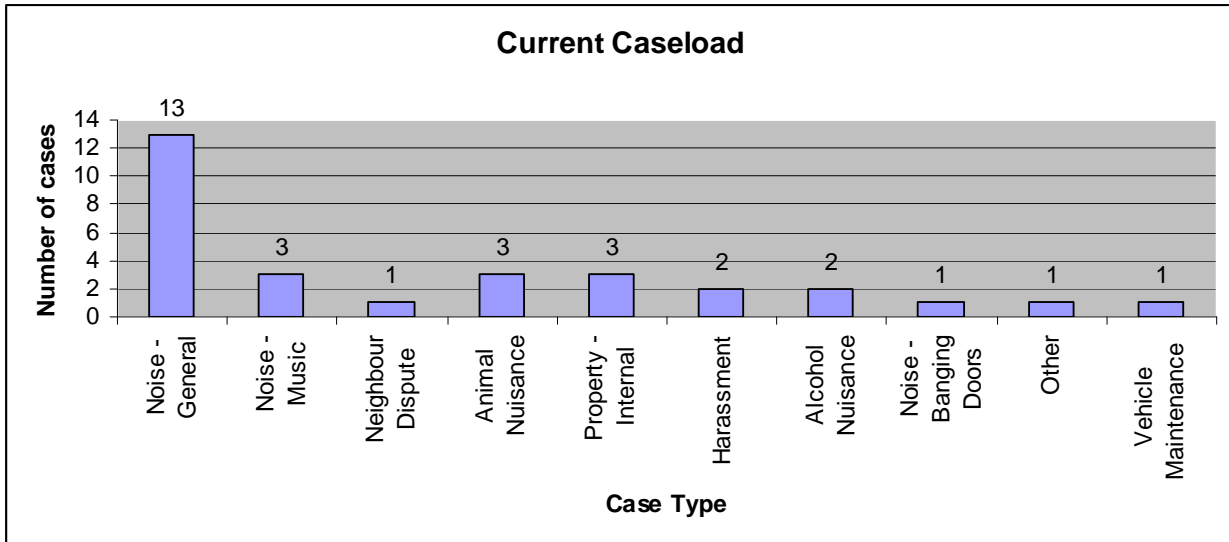
## **Referrals to Agencies**

Between April 12 and September 12, 51 referrals have been made to other agencies.

**Dunston**

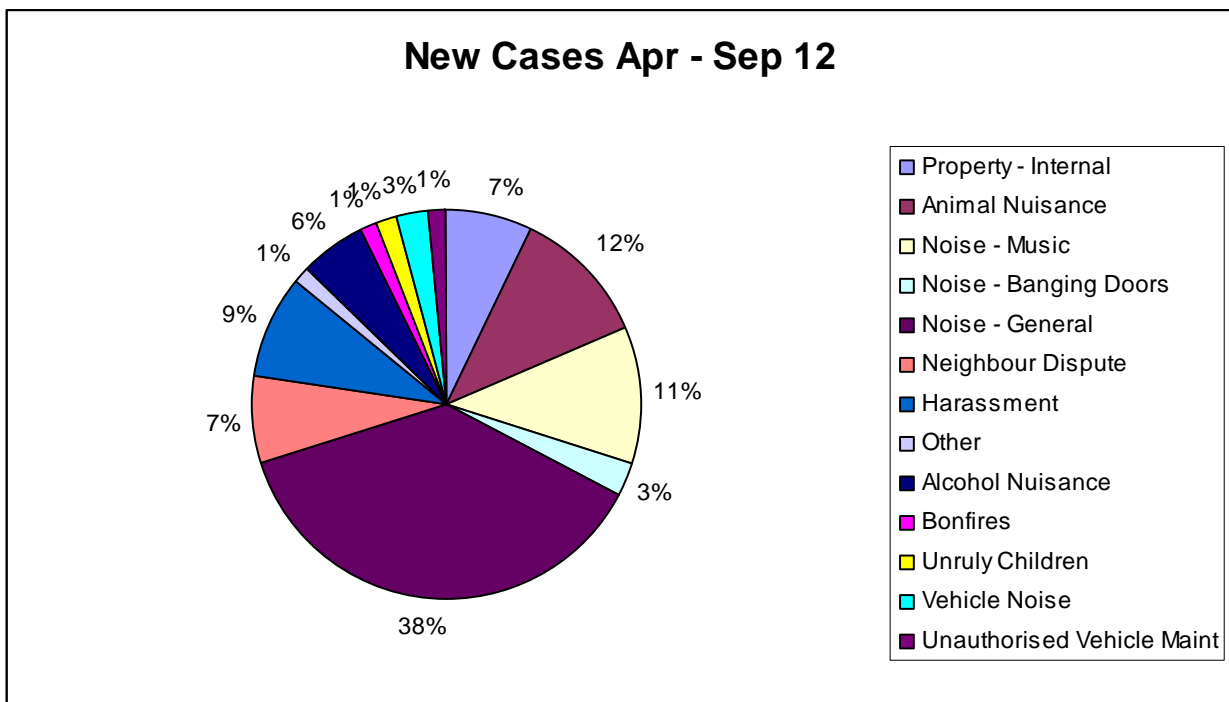
**Current Caseload**

The current caseload for Dunston Housing Office at the end of September 2012 is 30 open cases. This can be broken down further by case type.



**New Cases**

Between April 12 and September 12, 70 new ASB cases have been opened in Dunston area.



### **Closed Cases**

Between April 12 – September 12, 66 cases were closed within the Dunston area. The closure reasons are as follows:-

Written Warning Issued	25
Resolved without the need for legal action	19
Complaint Investigated – No Nuisance Evidenced	11
Non-engagement from Customer	3
Referred to Other Agency	3
Complainant Terminated Tenancy	2
Legal Eviction	2
Duplicate Case	1

### **Formal Actions**

Between April 12 – September 12, 26 written warnings were issued.

### **Service Standards**

Between April 12 – September 12, 70 new cases were opened, of these 68 (97%) were acknowledged and investigations begun within timescales.

Between April 12 – September 12, 66 cases were closed, 66 100% of Customers were sent a closure letter prior to the case being closed.

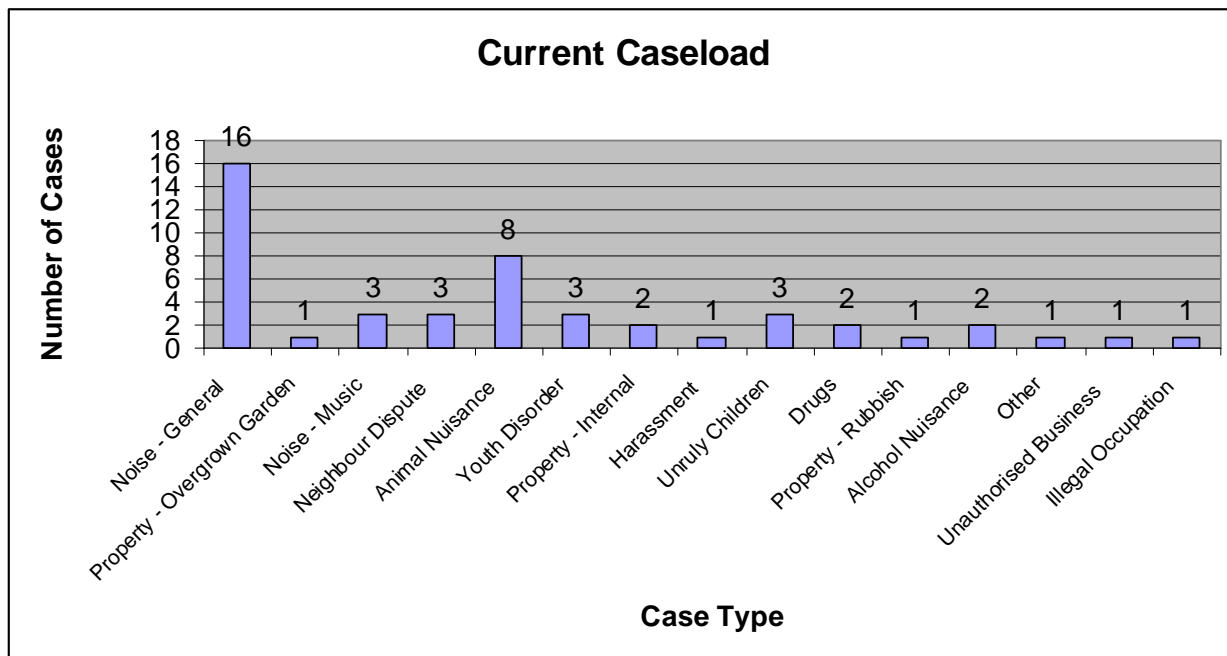
### **Referrals to Agencies**

Between April 12 – September 12, 78 referrals were made to other Agencies.

**Blaydon**

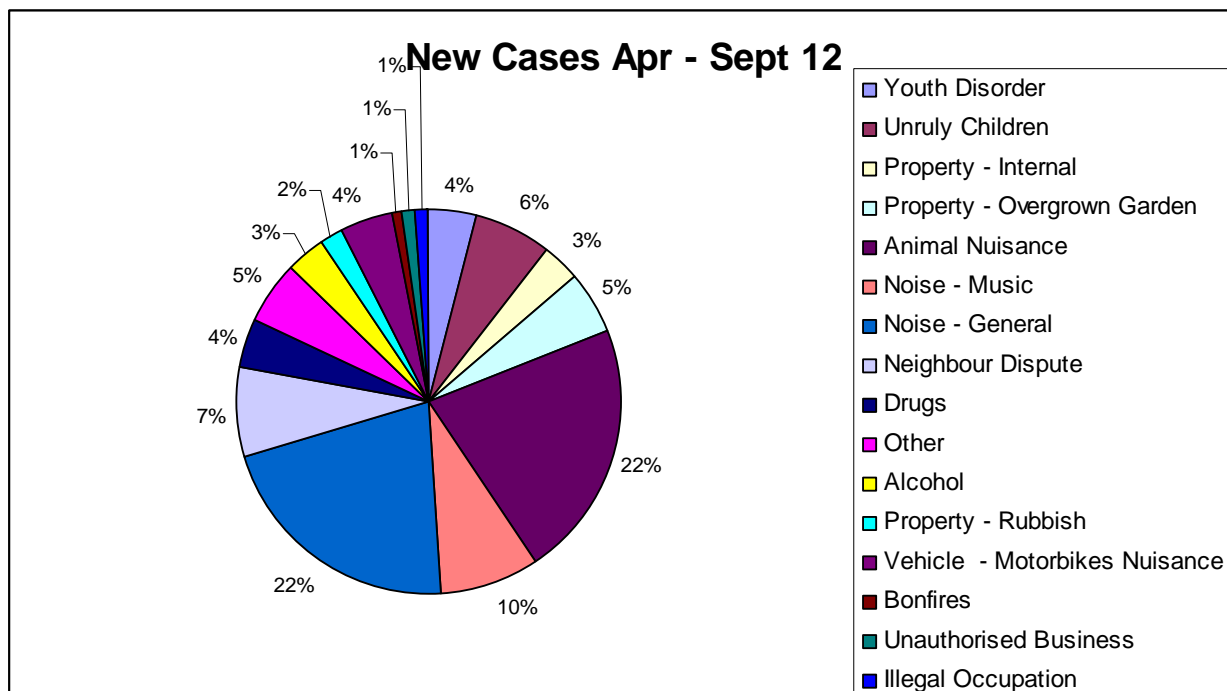
**Current Caseload**

The current caseload for Blaydon Housing Office at the end of September 2012 is 48 open cases. This can be broken down further by case type.



**New Cases**

Between April 12 and September 12, 94 new ASB cases have been opened in Blaydon area.



## **Closed Cases**

Between April 12 – September 12, 79 cases were closed within the Blaydon area. The closure reasons are as follows:-

Resolved without the need for Legal Action	45
Complaint Investigated – No Nuisance Evidenced	14
Referred to other Agency	5
Duplicate Case	5
Perpetrator Terminated Tenancy	2
Written Warning Issued	2
Customer Terminated Tenancy	2
Complainant Re-housed	2
Perpetrator Re-housed	1
Non-engagement from Customer	1

## **Formal Actions**

Between April 12 – September 12, 6 written warnings were issued.

## **Service Standards**

Between April 12 – September 12, 94 cases were opened of these 90 (96%) were acknowledged and investigations begun within timescales.

Between April 12 – September 12, 79 cases were closed, of these 78 99% of Customers were sent a closure letter prior to the case being closed.

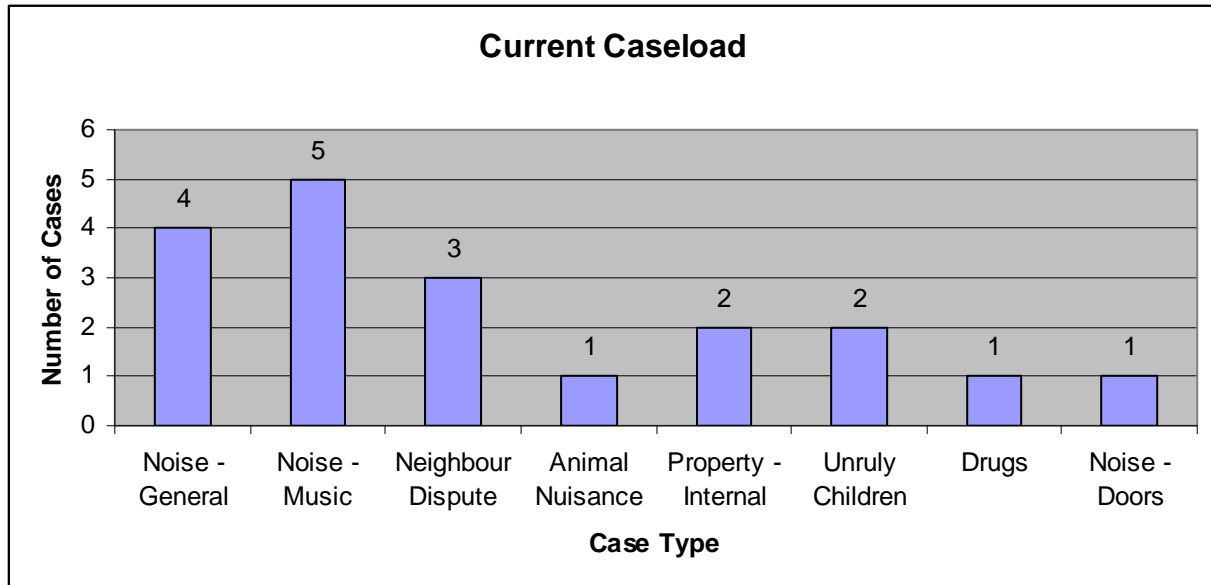
## **Referrals to Agencies**

Between April 12 – September 12, 32 referrals were made to other agencies.

**Felling**

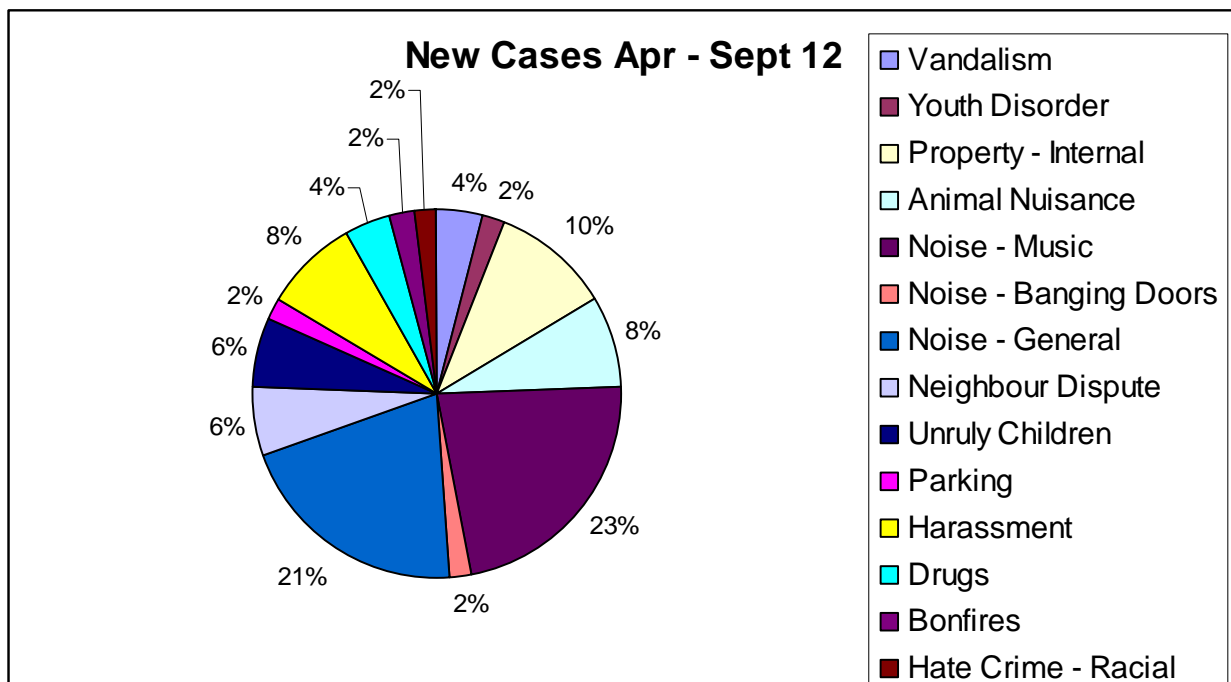
**Current Caseload**

The current caseload for Felling Housing Office at the end of September 2012 is 19 open cases. This can be broken down further by case type.



**New Cases**

Between April 12 and September 12, 49 new ASB cases have been opened in Felling area.





### **Closed Cases**

Between April 12 – September 12, 39 cases were closed within the Felling area. The closure reasons are as follows:-

Resolved without the need for Legal Action	23
Referred to other Agency	5
Complaint investigated – No nuisance evidenced	5
Written Warning Issued	3
Complainant Terminated Tenancy	1
Perpetrator Terminated Tenancy	1
Legal Action – Eviction	1

### **Formal Actions**

Between April 12 – September 12, 13 written warnings were issued.

### **Service Standards**

Between April 12 – September 12, 49 cases were opened, 48 (98%) of these were acknowledged and investigations begun within timescales.

Between April 12 – September 12, 39 cases were closed, of these 39 100% of Customers were sent a closure letter prior to the case being closed.

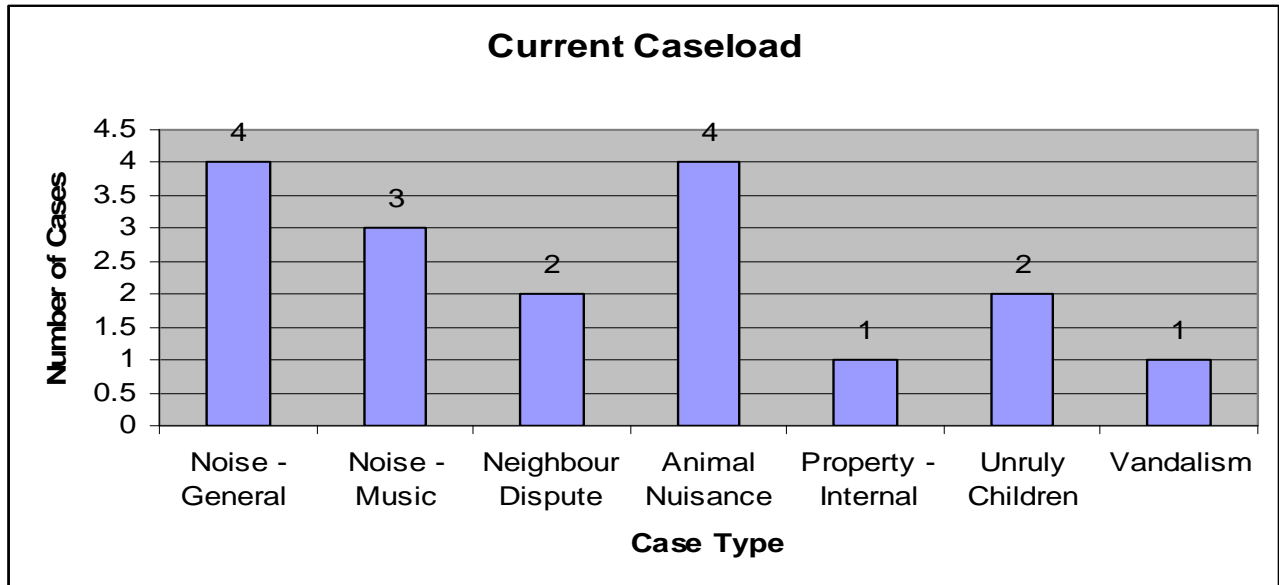
### **Referrals to Agencies**

Between April 12 – September 12, 37 referrals were made to other agencies.

**Leam Lane**

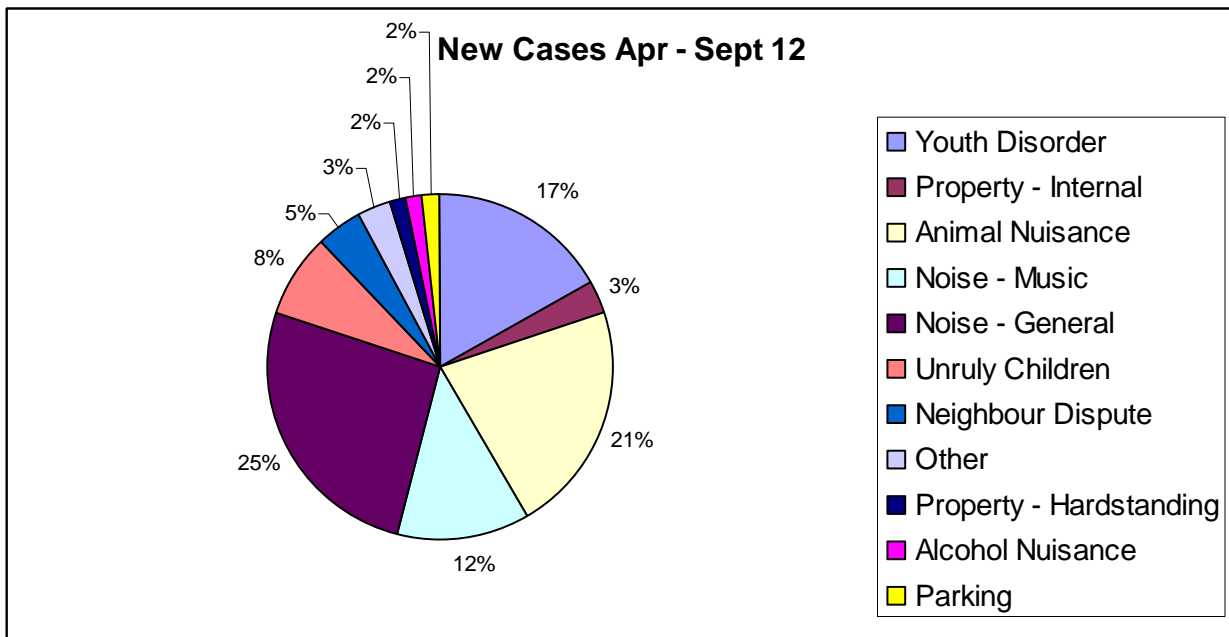
**Current Caseload**

The current caseload for Leam Lane Housing Office at the end of September 12 is 17 open cases. This can be broken down further by case type.



**New Cases**

Between April 12 and September 12, 65 new ASB cases have been opened in Leam Lane area.



### **Closed Cases**

Between April 12 – September 12, 59 cases were closed within the Leam Lane area. The closure reasons are as follows:-

Resolved without the need for Legal Action	36
Written Warning Issued	8
Referred to other Agency	6
Duplicate Cases	5
Complaint investigated – No Nuisance Evidenced	3
Complainant Re-housed	1

### **Formal Actions**

Between April 12 – September 12, 12 written warnings were issued.

### **Service Standards**

Between April 12 – September 12, 65 cases were opened, of these 61 (94%) of cases were acknowledged and investigations begun within timescales.

Between April 12 – September 12, 59 cases were closed, of these 59 100% of Customers were sent a closure letter prior to the case being closed.

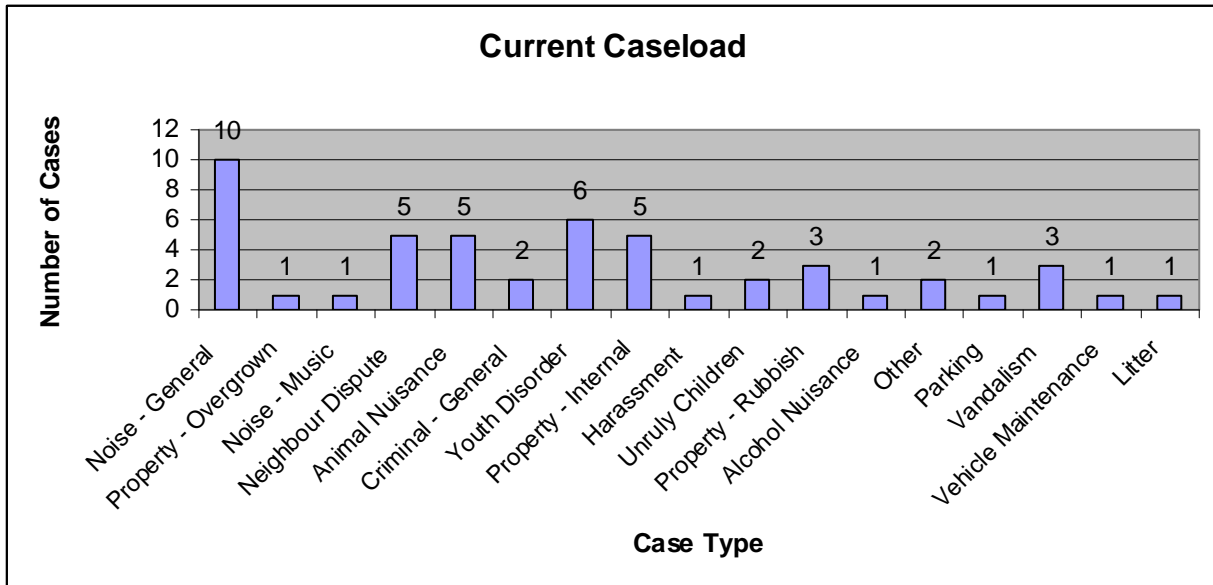
### **Referrals to Agencies**

Between April 12 – September 12, 32 referrals were made to other Agencies.

**Birtley**

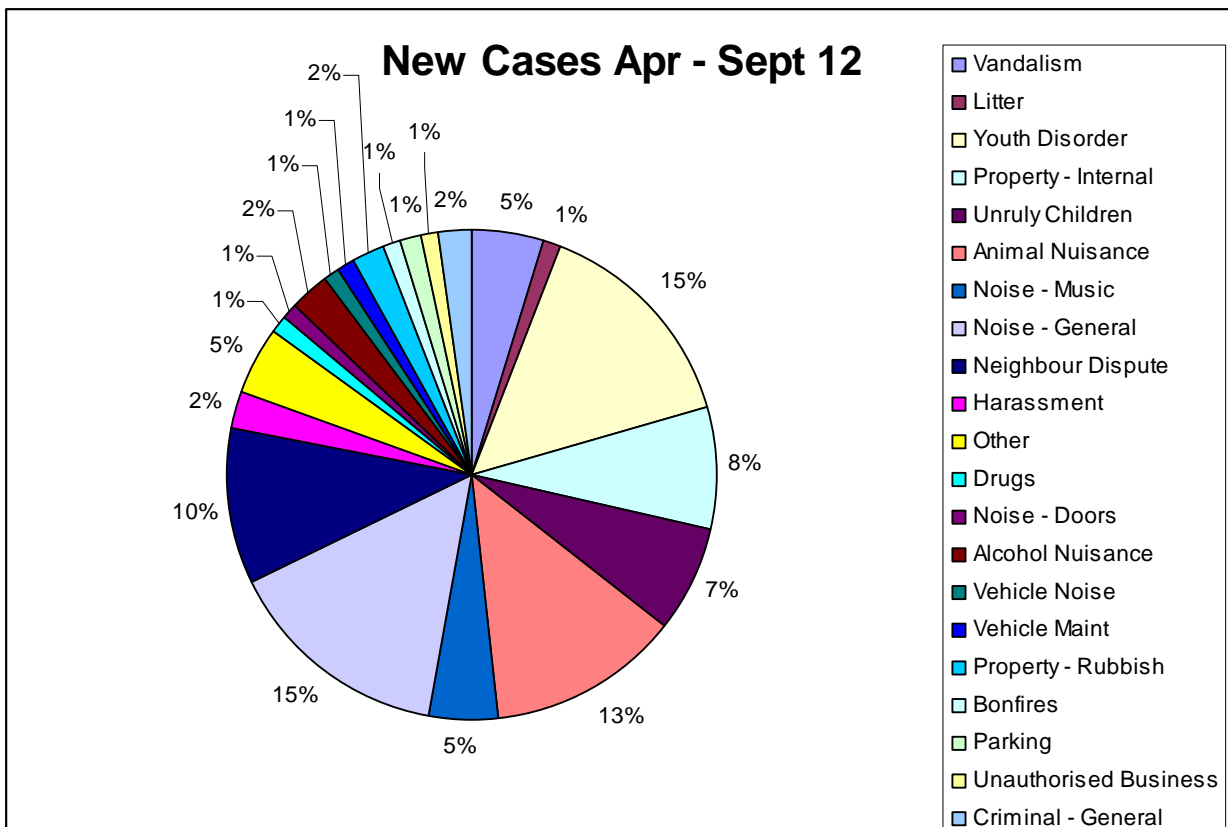
**Current Caseload**

The current caseload for Birtley Housing Office at the end of September 2012 is 50 open cases. This can be broken down further by case type.



**New Cases**

Between April 12 and September 12, 87 new ASB cases have been opened in Birtley area.



### **Closed Cases**

Between April 12 – September 12, 63 cases were closed in the Birtley area. The closure reasons are as follows:-

Resolved without the need for Legal Action	48
Written Warning Issued	5
Referred to other Agency	4
Complaint Investigated – No Nuisance Evidenced	2
Duplicate Case	2
Non- engagement from Customer	2

### **Formal Actions**

Between April 12 – September 12, 5 written warnings were issued.

### **Service Standards**

Between April 12 – September 12, 87 cases were opened, of these 86 (99%) cases were acknowledged and investigations begun within timescales.

Between April 12 – September 12, 63 cases were closed with 63 100% of Customers being sent a closure letter prior to the case being closed.

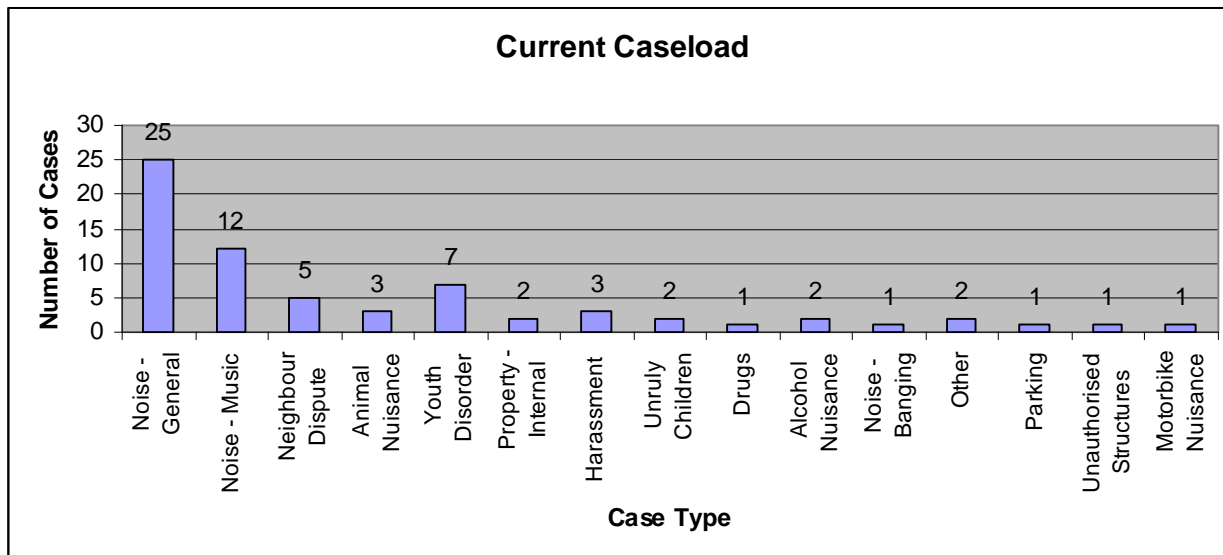
### **Referrals to Agencies**

Between April 12 – September 12, 82 referrals were made to other agencies.

**Wrekenton**

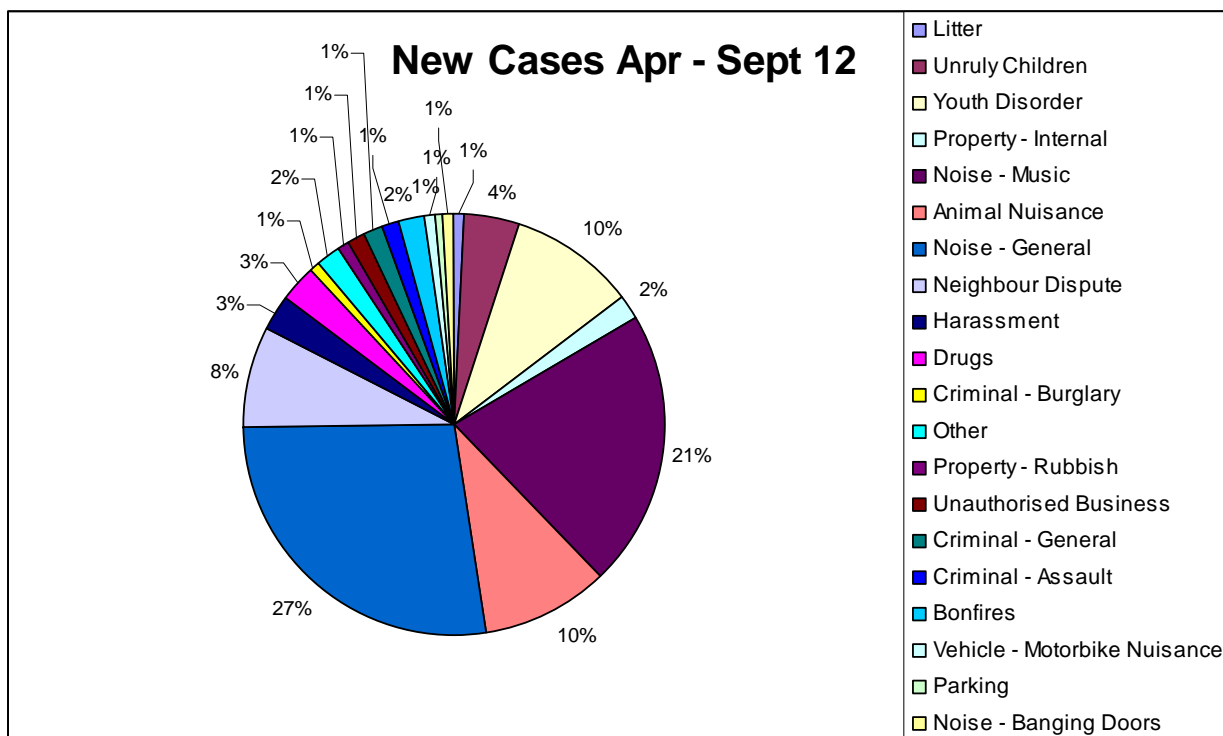
**Current Caseload**

The current caseload for Wrekenton Housing Office at the end of September 2012 is 68 open cases. This can be broken down further by case type.



**New Cases**

Between April 12 and September 12, 143 new ASB cases have been opened in Wrekenton area.



### **Closed Cases**

Between April 12 – September 12, 112 cases were closed in the Wrekenton area. The closure reasons are as follows:-

Resolved without the need for Legal Action	78
Written warning Issued	17
Referred to other Agency	7
Complaint Investigated – No Nuisance Evidenced	5
Duplicate Case	3
Perpetrator Terminated Tenancy	1
Legal Other	1

### **Formal Actions**

Between April 12 – September 12, 25 written warnings were issued.

### **Service Standards**

Between April 12 – September 12, 143 cases were opened, 137 (96%) of cases were acknowledged and investigations begun within timescales.

Between April 12 – September 12, 112 cases were closed, of these 111 100% of Customers were sent a closure letter prior to case closure.

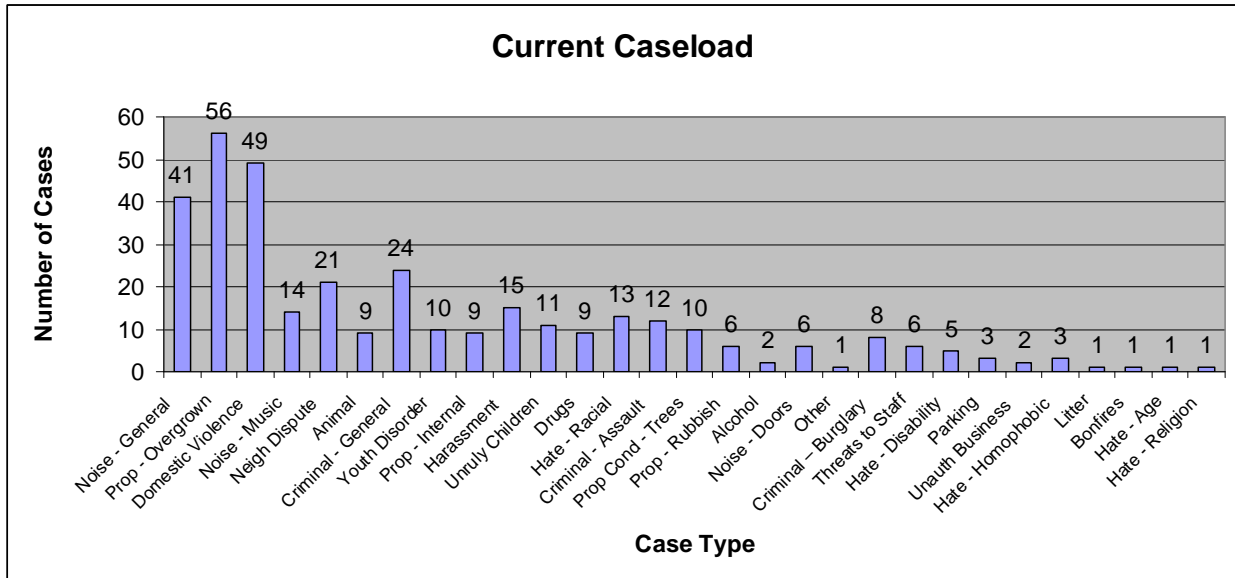
### **Referrals to Agencies**

Between April 12 – September 12, 29 referrals were made to other agencies.

**Neighbourhood Relations Team**

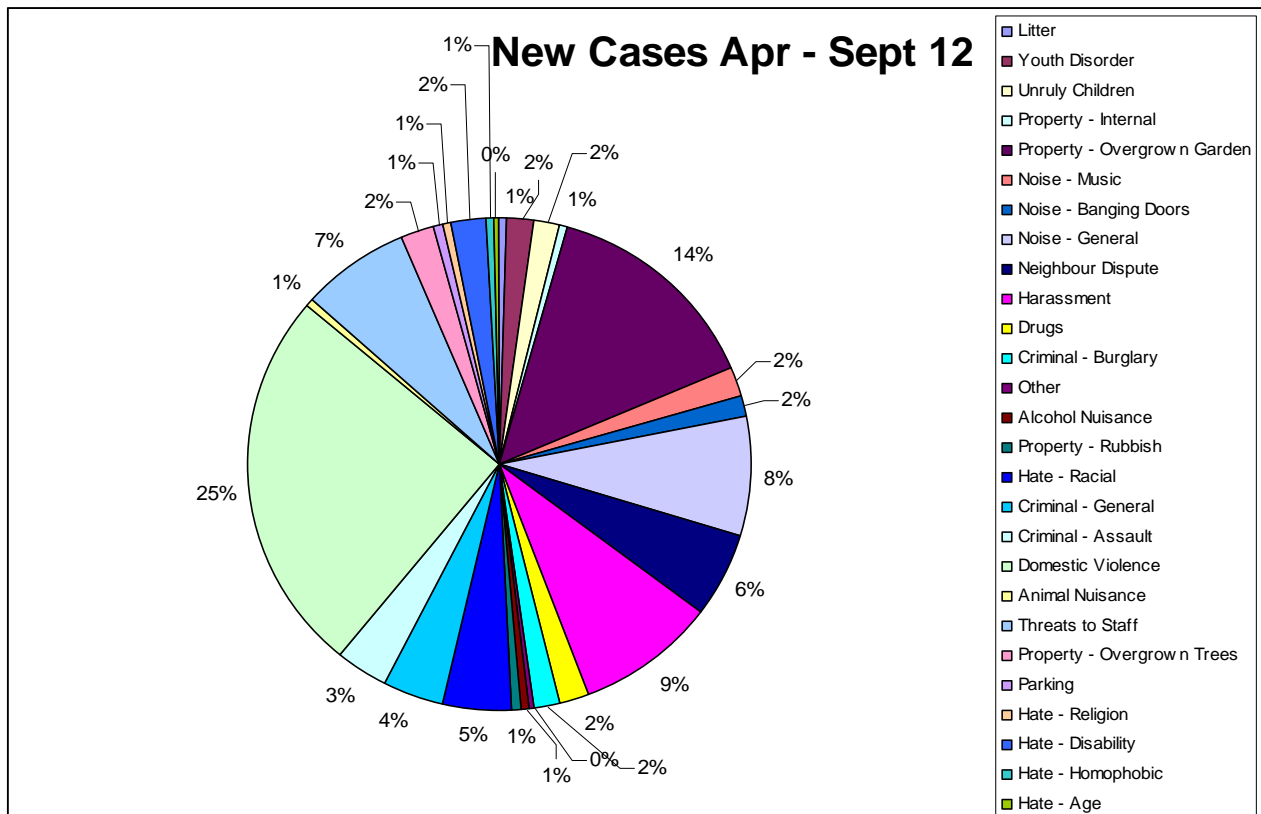
**Current Caseload**

The current caseload for The Neighbourhood Relations Team at the end of September 12 is 349 open cases. This can be broken down further by case type.



**New Cases**

Between April 12 and September 12, 376 new ASB cases have been opened by the Neighbourhood Relations Team.





## **Closed Cases**

Between April 12 – September 12, 333 cases were closed within the Neighbourhood Relations Team. The closure reasons are as follows:-

Resolved without the need for Legal Action	134
Written Warning Issued	55
MARAC – Information Only	27
Complaint Investigated – No Nuisance Evidenced	22
Complainant Re-housed	15
Perpetrator Terminated Tenancy	14
Non-engagement from Customer	11
Legal Action - NOSP served not pursued	10
Referred to Other Agency	10
Legal Action – Eviction	7
Legal – Other	7
Complainant Terminated Tenancy	6
Perpetrator Re-housed	6
Legal – Possession	4
Duplicate	3
Perpetrator Deceased	1
Legal Action – Injunction	1

## **Formal Actions**

Between April 12 and September 12, 152 legal and formal actions were taken; 22 Legal actions and 130 written warnings were issued.

## **Service Standards**

Between April 12 – September 12, 376 cases were opened, of these 373 (99%) of cases were acknowledged and investigations begun within timescales.

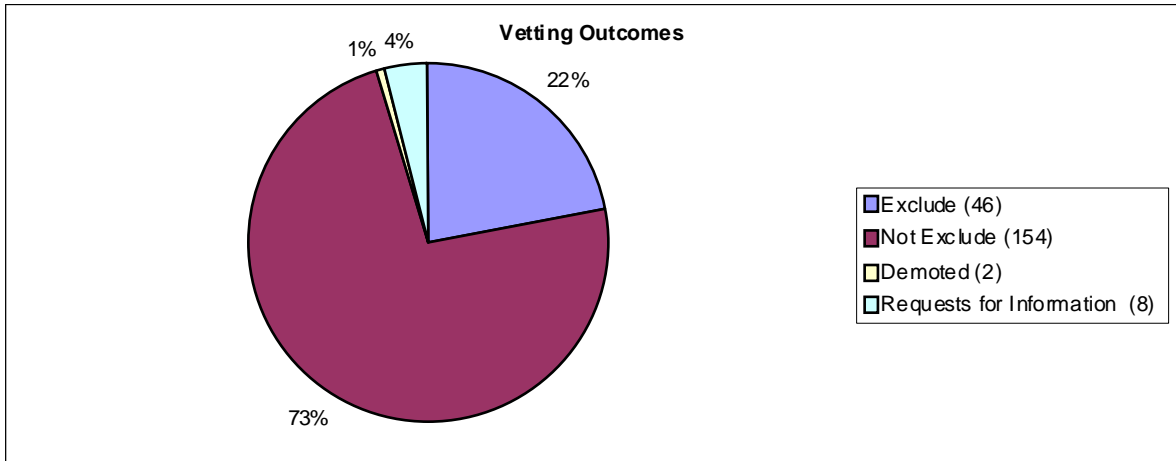
Between April 12 – September 12, 333 cases were closed with 333 100% of Customers being sent a closure letter prior to the case being closed.

## **Referrals to Agencies**

Between April 12 – September 12, 543 referrals were made to other agencies.

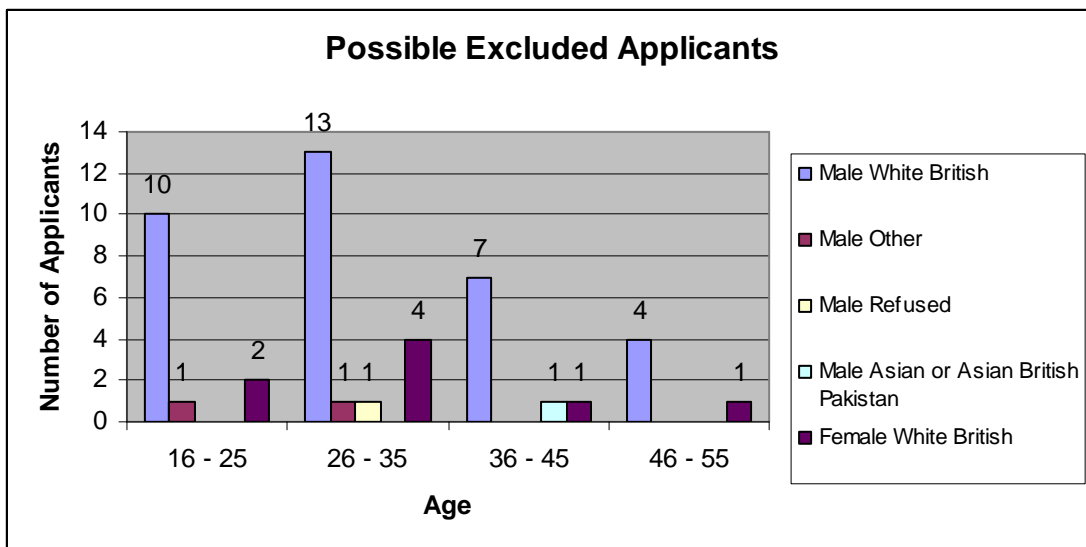
### Vettings and Exclusions

Between April 12 and September 12, 210 vettings were received, 48 were in relation to male applicants and 162 were female applicants.



Of the 46 applicants put forward for possible exclusion 38 were male and 8 were female.

The possible exclude cases can be further broken down by age, gender and ethnicity:



## TGHC Customer Assessment Tool – Evaluation summary

### Background

Following the pilot approach within Inner West Neighbourhood, TGHC rolled out the use of the Customer Assessment Tool (CAT) for victims of ASB across all neighbourhoods with effect from April 2012.

In order to help review whether the use of the CAT was being effective in identifying and supporting vulnerable victims, we undertook an analysis of the data for the period April to June 2012; we also consulted with employees and Safer Neighbourhood Group partners during July and August 2012.

Comments provided were used to help identify where we can improve upon the approach and revise our internal procedures.

### Analysis of data

423 ASB cases were opened during this period

- 183 CAT forms completed relating to 147 ASB Cases
- 26 ASB cases contained more than one customer

The following cases would not have customers or be appropriate to undertake a CAT:

46 Domestic Violence Cases  
 12 Internal property Conditions  
 15 External property conditions (gardens)  
 Total = 73

This equates to 42% of ASB Cases being managed using the CAT tool. This evaluation has highlighted that approximately two-thirds of ASB cases reported to us do not have a 'customer' involved. Some cases are reported via an agency; anonymously or by our own employees. There is currently no systematic reporting mechanism to measure this.

413 ASB cases were closed Quarter One and 51 CAT2 forms were completed with customers relating to 49 cases.

### Number of CAT's received by Week

Week Commencing	Number of Forms Completed	Number of HIGH category forms
2 April 2012	17	6
9 April 2012	12	6

16 April 2012	28	8
23 April 2012	17	1
30 April 2012	7	7
9 May 2012	10	4
14 May 2012	6	2
21 May 2012	14	4
28 May 2012	8	0
6 June 2012	3	1
11 June 2012	15	3
18 June 2012	15	8
25 June 2012	31	8

### Gender & Ethnicity

- 124 Females (68%)
- 59 Males (32%)

Male	Ethnic Origin						
	White British	Black Other	Black African	Asian Pakistani	Black Caribbean	Unknown	Other
18 – 24	2					1	
25 – 40	10	1	1				1
41 - 49	6			1			
50 – 64	10				1		
65+	9						
Unknown	9					5	2
Total	46	1	1	1	1	6	3

Female	Ethnic Origin						
	White British	Black Other	Black African	Asian Pakistani	Black Caribbean	Unknown	Other
18 – 24	6					1	
25 – 40	28						
41 - 49	20					3	
50 – 64	18						
65+	18						
Unknown	23					6	
Total	113	1				10	

**Average Age** - 35 years

**Oldest Customer** - 85 years

**Youngest Customer** - 18 years

**Average Number of Days to Complete CAT tool:** 4.36 working days

**Number of CAT tools completed within one working day:**

55 (30%)

## Scoring

- 61 Customers were HIGH priority (33%)
- 91 Customers were MEDIUM (50%)
- 31 Customers were STANDARD (17%)

The average customer score during this period is 30 which is within the medium category.

55 of 61 'High' CAT's were referred to NRT at an earlier stage than would have been previously e.g. based on category of ASB.

All 'High' CAT's were shared with the relevant Tasking and coordination group.

## Neighbourhood breakdown

Neighbourhood	High (% of neighbourhood cases)	Medium (% of neighbourhood cases)	Standard (% of neighbourhood cases)	Total
Central	9 (36%)	14 (56%)	2 (8%)	25
East	16 (38%)	20 (48%)	6 (15%)	42
Inner West	10 (32%)	16 (52%)	5 (16%)	31
South	13 (26%)	30 (61%)	6 (13%)	49
West	13 (36%)	11 (31%)	12 (23%)	36
Total	61	91	31	183

## ASB Categories for 'HIGH' CAT's across all neighbourhood areas:

Harassment – 17 (28%)  
Noise - 14 (23%)  
Neighbour Dispute – 9 (15%)  
Criminal Assault – 7 (11%)  
Youth Disorder – 5 (8%)  
Hate Crime\* - 2 (3%)  
Property Condition – 2 (3%)  
Other – 2 (3%)  
Litter – 1 (2%)  
Drugs – 1 (2%)

(\*Disability & Racial hate incidents)

## Summary of Responses to CAT Questions

- ❖ 80% of customers were stating that this is not the first time they had experienced problems (this is relatively equal across all neighbourhoods)
- ❖ 61% of customers felt their problem was getting worse
- ❖ 87% of customers know the person that is causing the problems, with 86% saying the person lives close to them
- ❖ 40% of customers stated they were very fearful of retaliation
- ❖ 51% of customers hadn't reported the issues to other agencies
- ❖ 9% of customers felt the incident was because of disability, ethnicity, faith, gender or sexuality
- ❖ 44% of customers felt the issue was not personally targeted towards them, however 29% felt that it was personal
- ❖ 69% of customers stated they felt very affected by what had happened
- ❖ 57% of customers stated they felt their health (or their families) had been affected by the incident
- ❖ 69% of customers said they didn't want any additional support from other agencies
- ❖ 80% of customers said they had friends and family who would support them
- ❖ 67% of customers said they felt safe in their home; 32% said they didn't feel safe
- ❖ 73% of customers said they felt safe in their community; 26% said they didn't

## Case Closure

51 CAT2 forms were completed during this period relating to 49 cases

- The score for 44 (86%) customers reduced
- 5 customers stayed the same
- 2 customers the score increased

The five customers whose score remained the same were within the 'Standard' category and have not reported any further issues.

In relation to the scores that increased these also fell within the 'Standard' category; the increase in both scores was by two points and related to customers answering 'Not Very' rather than 'Not at All' to Question 6 which relates to feelings of fear of retaliation.

## Case Outcomes

- 30 cases were resolved without the need for any legal actions

- 6 tenancy warnings were issued to perpetrators
- 3 cases were referred to another agency (2 – private sector team, 1 – PCT mental health)
- 1 case was closed as no nuisance was evidenced

2 cases have since been re-opened – only one case relates to the same customer being involved, following a further incident occurring after the case had been agreed to be closed.

### **Next steps**

- Share evaluation findings with staff, partners and involved customer groups
- Make relevant amendments to form following feedback from staff and partners
- Amend procedural guidance and re-issue to all staff supplemented with further re-fresher training
- Ensure all relevant cases are also recorded on ARCH ( to be addressed as part of training)



## Report to Customers and Communities Committee

1 November 2012

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**Title:** Customer Involvement Activity - update

**Report of:** Acting Chief Executive

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. To provide an update on customer involvement activity for the second quarter of 2012/13.

### **Background**

2. The committee has previously requested a quarterly update of involvement activity across the company.
3. The format of this report previously contained an appendix including full details of each activity, including numbers attending, venues, description and outcome. Due to the volume of activity taking place, this often resulted in the report becoming over 25 pages long. For this instance, we have changed the format of the report to provide an overview of involvement activity and outcomes by service area.

### **Summary**

3. During the period, 1 July to 30 September 2012, over 80 involvement activities took place. A range of activities are offered to provide tenants and leaseholders with the opportunity to get involved and influence decision making in a way which suits them.
4. During this quarter, customers were involved in various activities including panel meetings, Service Improvement Groups, choices events, drop in sessions, focus groups, forums and local community festivals.
5. Customers have been involved in our involvement activities on over 2,764 occasions although some may have been involved in more than one activity.
6. The Appendix to this report shows a summary of activities undertaken during this period and demonstrates the variety of ways customers have been involved. The activities are broken down by service area to highlight the different work that has taken place across the company.



7. In the last committee, a question was raised about how certain events are promoted, in particular events in sheltered schemes where there was typically low attendance. Drop in sessions in sheltered schemes are promoted in a range of ways including on the internet, in the Here and Now magazine and posters are displayed directly in the communal lounges promoting the dates of the 4 drop ins held during the year. Sheltered schemes officers also remind customers through a monthly newsletter of any upcoming drop ins and when in direct contact with customers.

### **Key outcomes of involvement**

8. There have been a number of outcomes from customer involvement during this period which are highlighted as follows: -
- Tenants and leaseholders were given information and advice on how to maximise their income and opportunities to get involved through a series of drop ins at local housing offices.
  - The Money Advice Service and Citizen's Advice visited some local offices to provide advice and guidance about managing money and promote the benefits of having a basic bank account
  - The Involvement Service Improvement Group was chaired by a tenant at its last meeting empowering members to drive the agenda for the meeting. This has resulted in a number of other volunteers coming forward and the group operating on a rolling chair.
  - A public meeting was held to discuss concerns around the proposals for the new sprinkler system in Regent Court as part of the company's fire safety work, due to some concerns among residents about the scheme
  - Residents meetings held at Wrekenton library where customers were able to discuss issues and receive updates about the programme of work scheduled for their estate
  - Customers have developed skills through a range of training including scheduled and demand led courses around health, DIY, help with employment, confidence building, dealing with stress and mystery shopping.
9. A summary of service activity and further outcomes can be found in Appendix 2.

### **Performance against service standards**

10. One of the service standards for involvement is to, 'listen to tenants' views and take these into account when making decisions about how services are delivered. This is measured both through the annual survey which all tenants and leaseholders receive, and through involvement evaluations. For the period 1 April to 30 September, 92% of customers were satisfied that their views were taken into account.
11. Overall satisfaction with opportunities to get involved is high at 98%, based on evaluation forms distributed at each SIG six monthly. A breakdown of responses can be seen in Appendix 3.

### **Opportunity Knocks**

12. The company has committed for the past three years to attend a range of community events promoting the Opportunity Knocks theme: -

- The company has supported over 20 community events across the summer to engage with our customers on a local level. Events held included; Lobley Hill festival, Birtley fire station open day, Northern Pride, National Play Day, Carnival on the hill and Kibblesworth fayre
- Some of these events were local community festivals and others were housing office drop ins, in order to cover all neighbourhood areas and increase the number of customers we spoke to
- The focus for Opportunity Knocks this year was to advise tenants and leaseholders on how to maximise their income as well as promoting opportunities to get involved
- At these events we distributed information such as the Money Matters guide which included advice around maximising income and useful contact details of financial support agencies. We were also able to distribute our Moving Forward programme and promote our new Guide to Getting Involved.
- Due to bad weather this summer, some events were cancelled, including Dunston Gala and Felling festival, which reduced our ability to engage with more customers, but being in all our local offices twice during the course of this period, helped us increase the potential number of customers we engaged with.

### 13. **Annual Report to Tenants and Leaseholders**

- Within this period a working group of tenants and leaseholders have continued to meet regularly, working on the production of the third annual report for customers
- This has included tenants carrying out interviews with some service managers
- The report has been completed and approved and will be sent to all tenants and leaseholders in October.

### 14. **Activity in the next quarter**

- We will commence our work with Newcastle Eagles basketball for 2012/13 to help engage with young people across Gateshead and find out about how they feel in their community.
- Promotion for recruitment to the TALISMAN will be undertaken to attract new members to the panel. Current TALISMAN members will be attending drop in sessions to help promote the panel and encourage new members to apply, in addition to leaflets being sent to customers and verbal promotion in Service Improvement Groups and forums
- Mystery shopping activity is scheduled to take place. In order to get the most out of these exercises, all mystery shoppers have undergone training so they all have the same understanding and awareness of the reasons why the company carries out mystery shopping and how it helps us to monitor and improve our services.

### **Link to values**

### 15. This report relates to the following company values: -

- Being customer focused, innovative and professional
- Being a listening and learning organisation.

### **Impact on tenants**

16. We have worked extensively with tenants, leaseholders and the wider community during this period, to get views and opinions to identify priorities and inform services.
17. The information gained from these involvement activities helps inform service improvement and delivery to make sure that the services we are providing to our customers meet their needs.

### **Risk Management Implications**

18. Failure to engage with customers was identified as a key strategic risk for the company.
19. The Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA's) Involvement and Empowerment standard requires us to demonstrate that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to be involved in the management of their housing and are provided with the support they need to take part in this. The activities outlined within this report demonstrate our compliance with this standard.

### **Financial Implications**

20. The Head of Finance confirms that a budget is available to support customer involvement and resources have been made available to support the activities outlined in this report.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

21. The company is committed to involving people from diverse communities to ensure everyone's views, needs and aspirations are considered in the decision making process.
22. Support is available to assist people with additional needs to access involvement opportunities and this is regularly promoted.
23. Every effort is made to ensure we do not directly or indirectly discriminate against any individual or group and to provide equal access to this service and the representation of involved tenants is regularly monitored and acted upon.

### **Value for Money implications**

24. The involvement of tenants and the wider community can result in value for money savings as service managers can gain an insight into what tenants want and need. This can result in resolving the issues first time and delivering something that works for all parties.

### **Environmental implications**

25. The environmental impact of involvement is considered when conducting activities across the company and addressed wherever possible, for example, customers sharing taxis where possible when attending events.

### **Consultation carried out**

26. The Involvement Service Improvement Group is regularly updated with the progress of involvement across all services and the outcomes which result.

### **Health Implications**

27. There are no direct health implications arising from this report although the successful implementation of the recommendations would have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of Gateshead residents.

### **Recommendation**

28. The views of the committee are sought on
- whether it is satisfied with the impact on customers to date;
  - whether the revised format is more accessible to give an accurate picture of involvement activity across the company.

## Summary of involvement activities across the company

Title of Activity	Number of Events	Number of Customers Involved
Meetings	18	142
Drop In Sessions	24	533
Service Improvement Groups	7	66
Events	8	1,804 <sup>1</sup>
Forums	4	53
Focus Groups	3	26
Training Courses	9	49
Surgeries	8	91
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>2,764</b>

<sup>1</sup> Attendance at events such as Northern Pride involves much greater numbers than reported here, however this specifically includes the number of people who engaged and completed a form for us.

### Summary of involvement activity – Corporate services

Title of Activity	Number of Events	Number of Customers Involved
Meetings	13	59
Drop In Sessions	10	478
Service Improvement Groups	5	45
Events	6	1,254 <sup>2</sup>
Forums	4	53
Focus Groups	1	12
Training Courses	9	49
Surgeries	3	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>1,991</b>

### Summary of outcomes – Corporate services

- Attended the annual Northern Pride event to engage with LGBT customers and used the opportunity to ask them about their experiences of good or bad customer service, to help us with future planning of our services on where we could improve our services and be more accessible
- Supported National Play Day working with Newcastle Eagles to engage with young people. We asked young people what they understand to be a community and what they like or dislike in their own, to help us learn for future work in and around estates, and then encouraged them to learn some basketball skills with the Eagles players
- Regular TALISMAN meetings have taken place to plan for future scrutiny exercises and prepare for recruitment of new members to the panel, looking at how they will promote this and what membership requirements will be

<sup>2</sup> Attendance at events such as Northern Pride involves much greater numbers than reported here, however this specifically includes the number of people who engaged and completed a form for us.

- Involvement Service Improvement Group has reviewed the proposals for mystery shopping plans and made recommendations for improvements, which have been implemented
- BME surgeries held to help accessibility to the company for BME customers where we were able to promote opportunities to get involved, including training courses and the BME housing forum. As a result, a customer attended the Confidence building course and other customers requested to be invited to future forums
- BME and Disabled persons' housing forums held to meet with customers with specific needs and identify service improvements.
- As part of the company's commitment to fire safety in high rise blocks, a consultation event was held with customers to help alleviate concerns about the proposed sprinkler system in Regent Court. A demonstration was also provided which helped understanding of how the system would work.

**Summary of involvement activity – Customers and Communities,  
Customer service**

<b>Title of Activity</b>	<b>Number of Events</b>	<b>Number of Customers Involved</b>
Events	1	300
Meeting	4	54
Service Improvement Group	2	21
Choices event	1	335
Drop in sessions	14	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>765</b>

**Summary of outcomes - Customers and Communities, Customer service**

- Choices event held for customers to choose their replacement boiler and fireplace as part of the 'Maintaining decency' programme.
- Sheltered scheme drop in sessions held so residents can meet with their Sheltered housing estate officer and discuss and queries or concerns they may have in their home or estate
- Multi storey SIG approved the new Caretaker signage and began reviewing the sign up procedure
- Older persons' Service Improvement Group received an update around annual performance results and were advised that areas of dissatisfaction have been addressed with individuals. Planning was also made around agenda items for future meetings, and included Welfare Reform and Grounds Maintenance
- Event held at Larkspur school themed around the opening of the new play park installation.



## Summary of involvement activity – Neighbourhood services

Title of Activity	Number of Events	Number of Customers Involved
Events	1	250
Meeting	1	29
Focus group	2	14
Surgery	4	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>303</b>

## Summary of outcomes – Neighbourhood services

- Focus group held to discuss proposals for the concierge and cleaning service and highlight areas for improvement which included key issues such as hours of operation, access protocol and car park barriers
- Local surgeries held in Felling office for customers to drop in and discuss any queries or concerns about their local area
- Attended a community event held at Kibblesworth Millennium centre organised by the local community where we promoted opportunities to get involved and take part in our Moving Forward courses. We also used the opportunity to display the public area artwork, engaged with customers about maximising their income and promoting our Money Matters guide and responded to queries about the progress of the Kibblesworth redevelopment
- Harlow Green focus group met with their Estate Officer and Council employees to discuss a number of issues residents have about their estate, to be investigated and feedback on at the next meeting
- East Street flats residents meeting held to discuss a number of issues including; town centre redevelopment, car park bollard scheme, Housing Capital Investment Programme (Window replacement), Anti social behaviour, pest control, fire safety work, Newcastle University 3ps project update and how to set up a Tenant and Resident Association.

## Summary of involvement activity - Property services

Title of Activity	Number of Events	Number of Customers Involved
Surgery	1	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>40</b>

## Summary of outcomes – Property services

- Attended a Councillor surgery to provide advice to customers around the proposed sprinkler system for the multi blocks. Agreed to hold a further advice and information session at an independent location to provide the opportunity for customers to speak in more detail with officers and see a demonstration of the proposed system.

## Evaluation form feedback – Involvement Service Standards

<b>How satisfied are you that your views were taken into account today?</b>		
<b>Very satisfied</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Fairly satisfied</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Fairly dissatisfied</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Very dissatisfied</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Neither satisfied or dissatisfied</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>Overall, how satisfied were you with this opportunity to get involved?</b>		
<b>Very satisfied</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Fairly satisfied</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Fairly dissatisfied<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Very dissatisfied</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Neither satisfied or dissatisfied</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

<sup>3</sup> This figure relates to a comment around the Older Person's SIG where the attendee felt there was more focus on sheltered housing than older people's housing needs in general. This has been raised with the SIG lead to be addressed for future meetings.



## Report to Customers and Communities Committee

1 November 2012

**Title:** Survey Monitoring Group – Update

**Report of:** Acting Chief Executive

### Purpose of Report

1. To provide committee with information on the work of the Survey Monitoring Group.

### Background

2. Previous involvement activity reports have referred to the work of the Survey Monitoring Group and their role in the collection and monitoring of customer satisfaction. In February's committee, a separate report was requested on the role of the group and what it has achieved.
3. In 2010, the Guide to Services was published setting out the service standards a customer could expect throughout their time as a tenant and leaseholder of the housing company.
4. It was identified that once these standards were in place, there needed to be a focus on measuring and monitoring how we were performing against the service standards.
5. The Survey Monitoring Group was formed in February 2010 to undertake this role. The group is an internal working group of managers representing each service area. The role of the group is to create a consistent and effective approach to collecting satisfaction information through surveys and ensure that this information is monitored, responded to and fed back to customers.

### Summary

6. Prior to establishing the survey monitoring group, it was recognised that in addition to the lengthy annual survey, questionnaires and surveys were being used on an ad hoc basis across the company. Each service was taking their own approach to collecting customer satisfaction and there was no overview or consistency in relation to how questions were being asked or how this information was used.
7. The group initially completed an exercise to understand what surveys were being undertaken, the reason for the survey being carried out, the number of people

being surveyed and what the information was being used for. This identified that some customers could be potentially receiving over 10-15 surveys from the company during the year causing consultation overload.

8. In April 2010, a new approach to surveys was agreed: -
  - **Annual survey** - Reduced to a 5 question survey to all tenants and leaseholders to gain overall satisfaction information for benchmarking and establish customer priorities
  - **Themed surveys** - Issued one with each edition of TGHC news targeting a sample of a maximum of 5000 randomly selected customers per survey. These surveys were 'In your Neighbourhood', 'Rent and Payments advice', 'Customer Services', 'Caretaker/Concierge services', 'Leasehold Service Charge'
  - **Service specific surveys** - Targeting customers who have recently accessed a service for example to report a repair, view a property or attend a customer meeting.
9. The objective of the new structure was to ensure there was a clear picture of when and how people were being asked about their experiences of the housing company. This would then allow closer monitoring and control to ensure that a consistent approach was taken which would involve responding to satisfaction and feeding back results.
10. The Appendix to this report sets out the surveys carried out by the company across all services.
11. It has previously been noted that the response rate to the Annual Survey in 2012 was considerably higher than in 2011 with 3342 respondents compared to 1715. Whilst this is a large increase and maybe attributed to the reduction in surveys customers are receiving thus increasing their willingness to participate, we are not able to confirm this. We will continue to monitor response rates to other surveys during the year to see if this trend continues.

### **Gathering satisfaction information through surveys**

12. Any survey being proposed is reviewed by the Survey Monitoring Group prior to being finalised. The group ensure that the format is consistent with the corporate approach and discuss the questions for clarity.
13. Surveys are also discussed and approved by the relevant Service Improvement Group to get a customer perspective. This has proved particularly valuable in changing the wording of questions where responses have not been as predicted. In these cases further discussion with customers identified that the question was not being interpreted as intended and needed to be amended.
14. ICT and Communications form an integral part of the group to ensure that when any survey is being proposed, it is built into the communications plan if this is to be distributed with TGHC news, and to make sure that the questions are built into Northgate ready for input on return. This allows the results to be analysed by profile information.

15. Service leads are required to follow up any dissatisfaction reported within the surveys. This helps both to address individual issues and to be able to identify trends in dissatisfaction or significant issues for customers.
16. The annual survey and themed surveys provide the opportunity for a customer to request contact from the service regarding their responses. In the Annual Survey 2012, 325 customers requested contact. Contact was prioritised based on how dissatisfied people were based on their answers across the questions. Initial contact was carried out by the Involvement Team to establish the theme of their comments or issue and then was allocated to the relevant service for further contact if it could not be resolved at this point.
17. This approach enabled us to reach and resolve issues more promptly, such as outstanding ASB issues or unresolved repairs however all customers who had requested feedback as a minimum received a letter thanking them for their response and providing them with relevant contact details.
18. For themed surveys a similar approach will be taken but this is co-ordinated by the service manager.
19. Results from the annual and themed surveys are reported in the following issue of TGHC news.

### **Gathering Repairs Satisfaction**

20. From 1 April 2012, as the new repairs and maintenance contractor, Mears began collecting satisfaction information directly from customers when a job is complete. This is carried out via a handheld system in the home, or the customer has the option to request a call back instead. Where there are any negative responses to questions this automatically flags up the need for further investigation.
21. Telephone surveys are carried out by paid tenants through ASERT. This approach has the benefit that issues can be identified and rectified promptly rather than waiting until a point in the month when a sample of surveys would be carried out.

### **Learning from surveys**

22. There are a range of actions and learning that have resulted from surveys. This includes both actions affecting an individual customer as well as wider service improvements. This includes: -
  - Feedback from the Caretaker survey feeding into the review of the Caretaker service, including the introduction of carrying out small tasks
  - Publishing contact details in Leasehold news where customers had identified they were not aware of the appropriate person to contact
  - Advice provided on how to access services, for example further support and guidance provided on the bidding system when applying for properties
  - Applications made for Neighbourhood Pride funding for estate issues.
  - Changes to communication and notification when lifts are out of order in multi-storey blocks
  - Referrals to other organisations such as Warmzone

- Applications to the sheltered housing 'Tenant led budgets' to access equipment such as 'Wiis' or equipment for chair based exercises
- Introduction of additional, longer DIY courses offered as part of the Moving Forward programme
- Introduction of the Customer Assessment tool after feedback that we needed to put more resources into the support for vulnerable victims

### **Developments to gathering satisfaction**

23. The remit of the survey monitoring group includes continually looking for ways to improve the methods used to gather satisfaction and how to respond to the information we collect.
24. This year customers have been able to complete surveys online including the Annual Survey, Rent and In your Neighbourhood Surveys. Although the response via the website is still relatively small, we will continue to offer this as a method to respond and try to increase awareness through the website, newspaper and social media to encourage people to respond in this way.
25. We have also been trialling the use of automated surveys whereby the responses are scanned into a system by an external company and then uploaded into Northgate. Previously the time and resource required for input meant a significant delay between when the survey was returned and the service responding. This new approach represents both value for money in terms of the reduction in input time as well as providing a more responsive service to customers.
26. The group has also been undertaking research on methods used by other organisations for satisfaction, covering method of collection, sample sizes and response rates. The group is currently reviewing this research to identify anything which we could replicate, for example use of customers to carry out telephone surveys and alternative benchmarking opportunities.

### **Link to values**

27. This report relates to the following values:
  - Being a listening and learning organisation
  - Embracing Equality
  - Being customer focused, innovative and professional

### **Impact on tenants**

28. Through gathering satisfaction information we are able to understand the experience of tenants. This helps us to identify where we can make improvements to services or where there are individual queries which are unresolved.

### **Risk Management Implications**

29. Failure to engage with customers was identified as a key strategic risk for the company.

30. The Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA's) Involvement and Empowerment standard requires us to demonstrate that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to be involved in the management of their housing and are provided with the support they need to take part in this. Surveys are one of the opportunities we provide customers with to be able to shape our services.

### **Financial Implications**

31. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

32. The company is committed to involving people from diverse communities to ensure everyone's views, needs and aspirations are considered in the decision making process.
33. Responses to the annual and themed surveys are broken down by profile information to help us understand whether there are any disparities in satisfaction based on protected characteristics. This also helps identify if we are getting a representative range of people responding to the surveys or whether there are specific groups who are not responding to help us target future activity.

### **Value for Money Implications**

34. In order to minimise expenditure on postage, themed surveys and the annual survey are sent with TGHC news or rent statements. Any changes to our approach such as the use of automated surveys are considered from a value for money perspective weighing up any additional costs compared to the impact on resources or the improved service to customers.

### **Health Implications**

35. There are no direct health implications arising from this report.

### **Environmental Implications**

36. There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

### **Consultation carried out**

37. Our approach to satisfaction monitoring has been discussed at a number of service improvement groups to get a customer perspective on the number and type of surveys we carry out.
38. In the first scrutiny exercise carried out by the TALISMAN, one their recommendations related directly to the methods used to collect satisfaction and the number of surveys being carried out. This has been discussed at the last meeting of the group and is due to be revisited at the next meeting to progress.



## **Recommendation**

12. The views of the committee are sought on whether it is satisfied with the work to date of the Survey Monitoring Group.

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Contact: Louise Taylor, Involvement and Diversity Manager      Tel No: (0191) 433 5380

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**Themed Surveys**

<b>Name of Survey</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Distributed</b>
Annual tenant & Leasehold survey	Louise Taylor	April
Customer service	Andrea Foreman	January
Rent	Jonathan Graham	July
In your neighbourhood	Craig Gandy	July
Leasehold service charge	Janice Adams	September
Caretaker/concierge	Martin Poulter	January

**Service Specific Surveys**

<b>Name of Survey</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Frequency of distribution</b>
Rent advice survey	Telephone	Annual - January
Home Welcome Visit	In person	As required - all new tenants
Annual sheltered scheme surveys	In person	Annual meetings
Small tasks survey	Postal, follow up by telephone if no reply	Quarterly
ASB survey	Telephone	Quarterly
Training Evaluation form – Moving Forward	In person	Every course
Moving Forward annual survey	Postal	Annual
Involvement evaluation form	In person	6 monthly – Sept/Mar
Garden service	Postal	Annually
Satisfaction with advice & info on applying for a new home	Telephone	Six monthly
Satisfaction with bidding for properties	Telephone	Six monthly
Satisfaction with furniture packages	Telephone	
Repairs (Mears)	Via handheld/through ASERT	After each repair
Investing in your home	In person. Telephone if not possible	On completion of work



## Report to Customers and Communities Committee

1 November 2012

**Title:** Moving Forward Customer Training Programme 2012/13 – update

**Report of:** Acting Chief Executive

### Purpose of Report

1. To provide a 6-month update on the Moving Forward Customer Training Programme for 2012/13.

### Background

2. The regulatory framework set out by the Homes and Communities Agency places a requirement on providers to support tenants by increasing their capacity and becoming more effectively involved. Previous successes have seen attendees on the programme going on to join Service Improvement Groups, take part in mystery shopping and become members of the Board.
3. The Moving Forward training programme has been running since 2004, offering customers a chance to develop their skills and capacity, with the aim of getting more involved with other activities across the company. This programme has expanded and adapted each year based on the needs of tenants and the issues currently affecting people living in our homes.
4. The programme has previously been identified as positive practice and we have shared our experiences of delivering the programme with a number of organisations.

### Summary

5. Courses are delivered by B&Q, Gateshead Council, TPAS, Citizen's Advice Bureau and The Gateshead Housing Company.
6. Demand led courses were introduced in the 2009/10 programme which has enabled more customers to attend capacity building training. This continues to be an effective way to engage our customers in training and build practical skills to help them become actively involved in shaping services or to use these skills in other parts of their lives.
7. The programme is open to all tenants and leaseholders with the new programme being sent via the company newspaper reaching over 22,000 homes. In addition

to this, targeted promotion is carried out through community organisations, at events, in housing offices and through officer networks. The courses are also featured in Gateshead Council's Learning and Skills directory, which is sent to all residents of Gateshead. This wider promotion has resulted in an increased interest in courses, resulting in less need for targeted work to generate attendance.

### **Current Position**

8. Providing training and support to customers as appropriate to their needs is a service standard for the company. The target for 2012/13 is to achieve 160 attendees at training during the year. This includes attendance at courses provided through the Moving Forward programme as well as any external conferences or seminars we may support customers to attend.
9. A total of 11 courses have been delivered during the period 1 April to 30 September 2012. There have been a total of 87 customers attending the training, which is an average attendance of 8 people per course.
10. Appendix 1 highlights attendee information from 1 April to 30 September 2012 and comparison data for the 2011/12 programme.
11. The first course in the programme, Alcohol and you, was postponed due to low take up as there was a delay in the newspaper being sent out. The decorating course was also postponed due to the flooding and will be re-scheduled for later in the year.
12. To date, six capacity building courses have taken place this year:
  - Understanding health improvement
  - Dealing with stress
  - Social media made simple (x2)
  - Confidence building
  - Checking our services (mystery shopping).
13. Two social media courses, 'Social Media Made Simple' were delivered in this period. One was specifically targeted at SIG and TARA members and the other was open to all customers. This was the first social media course that has been delivered by the company and received positive feedback including some customers being set up on social media sites by the end of the course. As a result, during the year we will be looking to run some additional sessions to equip tenants and leaseholders with an understanding of social media, how they can use this effectively to engage with other tenants whilst also understanding the potential pitfalls and risks.

### **Feedback from attendees**

14. An evaluation form is distributed at the end of each course to help us gather feedback about our courses. The evaluation form was revised for April 2012 to include some additional questions and to provide an opportunity to gather profile information. This helps us to improve our understanding of who is accessing the training.

15. Appendix 2 shows the results for satisfaction responses of each course and some of the specific comments made by attendees.
16. Satisfaction figures are based on 76 responses, with 96.05% of attendees satisfied overall with the course they attended. Where any dissatisfaction is reported, this is followed up directly with the customer to identify why they were dissatisfied and if we are able to improve this for subsequent courses. Within this period there was only one customer reporting they were dissatisfied with the length of the course 'Checking our Services'. On further discussions with the customer, this was a personal preference that they would prefer the course not to take place on a Friday.

### **Future plans**

17. The company has recently secured funding to deliver Energy Best Deal training to vulnerable tenants and leaseholders to help ensure they are on the best energy deal for them, aiming to avoid tenants and leaseholders going into fuel poverty.
18. This training will be delivered between October 2012 and May 2013. The three officers who will be delivering this training are from the Involvement team, Rent and Income team and the Environmental management group. Front line officers will also be invited to attend this training so that they are able to signpost any customers they come into contact with.
19. Plans will be made as to how we effectively promote this opportunity to our more vulnerable customers who are more likely to benefit from this training.
20. A further update will be provided in the next Moving Forward committee report once we have started delivering the training.

### **Link to values**

21. This report relates to the company values of:
  - Being customer focused, innovative and professional
  - Being a listening and learning organisation
  - Embracing Equality

### **Impact on tenants**

22. Offering a range of free courses where customers can build their skills and capacity is an example of how the company encourages customers to develop and support further involvement with the company.
23. The practical courses offered by B&Q provide tenants and leaseholders with the skills to make small improvements themselves and take a pride in their homes, and potentially reducing the impact on the HomeRepairs team.
24. Tenants have the opportunity throughout the year to offer suggestions of new courses which are then considered in the planning of the next programme.

## **Risk Management Implications**

25. Failure to engage with tenants was identified as a strategic risk for the company. In addition, the Involvement and Empowerment standard, set out within the TSA's regulatory framework places a requirement on landlords to provide support to tenants to build their capacity to be effectively involved.
26. Through delivery of the training programme we ensure that we are offering a range of opportunities for our tenants and leaseholders to do this, to then enable them to take an active role in scrutinising and challenging our performance.

## **Financial Implications**

27. The Head of Finance confirms that a budget is available to support customer involvement and resources have been made available from this budget to support the Moving Forward Customer Training Programme.
28. External Funding has been secured from Skills for Life where we receive £3.80 per person per hour of learning for capacity building courses. For the period 1 April to 30 September 2012 we will receive £1071.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

29. The company has a commitment to valuing diversity and ensures all customers have the opportunity to access the courses within the programme.
30. Every effort is made to ensure we do not directly or indirectly discriminate against any individual or group and we provide equal access to this service.
31. The equality impact assessment was reviewed and updated for the 2012/13 programme to ensure that it continues to be accessible to all. Through collection of profile information as part of the evaluation form we will be able to build a better picture of who is attending the training and if there are any groups that are particularly underrepresented to identify future actions.

## **Environmental implications**

32. The programme offers a course relating to environmental awareness, delivered by Warmzone, around fuel poverty entitled; Saving energy and money in your home.

## **Health implications**

33. Feedback from customers has told us that attendees feel a direct health improvement from attending our courses in building their confidence through socialising with other people, learning and developing new skills.
34. Specifically we have delivered two health awareness sessions during this period. These courses aim to reduce the levels of stress among our tenants, leaseholders and residents in Gateshead and ultimately improve their health and wellbeing.
35. In addition the 'How to manage your money' course is aimed to help people and reduce stress and anxiety. This will be delivered in November as it is recognised

that during the lead in to Christmas, many people can become at risk of going into debt due to financial pressures which in turn can impact on people's mental health. This course aims to help people manage their finances and gives people some basic advice on what to do if they are worried they are getting into debt.

### **Value for Money Implications**

36. When developing the programme each year, we work with tenants and leaseholders to identify the best way to deliver and promote the programme in a cost effective way.
37. By offering demand led courses it ensures that they are run when there is a high level of attendance, rather than committing resources to a session where there is little or no take up by customers.
38. The programme was sent to all tenants and leaseholders as part of May's company newspaper, meaning only design costs of £395 were incurred. The cost of promoting the programme in this way is significantly less than last year's programme which cost approximately £4000 to reach the same number of people through a separate publication.

### **Consultation carried out**

39. Customers were involved in consultations to develop the 2012/13 programme around the content, design and the selection of the trainer for capacity building courses. A new design was launched this year to reflect the branding of Opportunity Knocks.
40. Satisfaction with the programme is reported to the Involvement Service Improvement group where any areas of dissatisfaction can be discussed and addressed. The Involvement SIG approved the 2012/13 programme and was impressed with the new design.

### **Recommendations**

41. The views of the committee are sought on whether the committee is satisfied with the impact on customers to date from the Moving Forward Programme.

## Comparison figures for the first half of the programme for 2011/12 and 2012/13

	2012/13		2011/12	
	Scheduled Courses	Demand led courses	Scheduled courses	Demand led courses
<b>Number of courses held</b>	5	6	8	1
<b>Total of Attendees</b>	44	43	71	11
<b>External funding received</b>	n/a	£478.70*	n/a	£167.20*

\*Changes to the funding criteria have meant that we now only receive funding for the capacity building courses.

## Courses held and attendees for Moving Forward programme 2011/12 and 2012/13

2012/13		2011/12	
Course Title	Attendees	Course Title	Attendees
Understanding health improvement Friday 4 May 2012	9	Decorating Friday 20 May 2011	2
Gardening Thursday 21 June 2012	10	Gardening Thursday 9 June 2011	9
Plumbing Thursday 12 July 2012	11	Alcohol and you Wednesday 22 June 2011	6
Improve your health Thursday 26 July 2012	11	Inspecting our services (mystery shopping) Friday 1 July 2011	11
Help with employment Thursday 9 August 2012	7	HomeRepairs Wednesday 10 August 2011	9
Dealing with stress Friday 17 August 2012	8	Summer gardening Friday 19 August 2011	14
Basic DIY Tuesday 21 August 2012	5	Help with employment Thursday 1 September 2011	9
Social media made simple Tuesday 21 & Thursday 23 August	5, 8	Improve your health Friday 9 September 2011	8
Confidence building Thursday 13 September 2012	7	Basic DIY Tuesday 13 September 2011	14



Checking our services (mystery shopping) Friday 28 September 2012	6		
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>

**Responses to questions for those who answered 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied for the period 1 April – 30 September 2012**

Question		Satisfaction Response – 'Very' or 'fairly' satisfied	
1	How satisfied are you with the course organisation?	100%	
2	How satisfied are you with the facilities?	100%	
3	How satisfied are you with the length of the course?	97.36%	
4	How satisfied are you with the trainer?	100%	
5	How satisfied are you with the course content?	97.36%*	
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
6	Did you find anything in the course racist, sexist or offensive in any way?	1.32%	97.36%
7	From the skills and knowledge you've gained in this course could you apply them in your day to day life?	86.84%	6.57%
8	Did the course meet your expectations?	88.15%	7.89%
9	How satisfied are you with the opportunities to get involved today?	97.34%*	
10	Overall, how satisfied are you with the course today?	96.05%*	

\*Where these results are not 100% satisfied, the remaining respondents marked 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'

**Customer comments from courses:**

- *'Timing was right, and the course lively and kept me engaged and refreshed',* Help with employment,
- *'Now wise to tackle myself',* Plumbing
- *'Fun and informative',* Improve your health
- *'Would like to do another course like this',* Dealing with stress
- *'Staff were informative and helpful',* Social media made simple
- *'Excellent course',* Confidence building
- *'It gave good insight into the life of a mystery shopper',* Mystery shopping
- *'Drama, speaking, discussion - what more could you ask for?',* Checking our services (Mystery shopping).



## Report to Customers and Communities Committee

1 November 2012

**Title:** Forward Plan

**Report of:** Acting Chief Executive

### **Purpose of report**

1. To approve a forward plan of reports which will be presented to Customers and Communities Committee during the next year.

### **Background**

2. The committee agreed, at its meeting held on 2 February 2011 that a forward plan of reports it will receive at future meetings become a standing item on every committee agenda.
3. Attached as an Appendix to this report is a forward plan of reports that will be presented to meetings of this committee during the next year. This will not be an exhaustive list of reports and there will clearly be a number of other items of business that the committee will be required to consider during the course of the next year. It will however give the committee an idea of forthcoming business. It will also assist officers when planning in business and meetings to avoid when there is a lot of business.

### **Outstanding Issues**

4. The committee a report at its last meeting on the work of the survey monitoring group and it will receive this at a future meeting.

### **Link to Values**

5. This report relates to the following company value of being honest, accountable and transparent.

### **Risk Management Implications**

6. The forward plan will mitigate the risk of reports not being planned into the committee cycle.

### **Value for Money Implications**

7. There are no value for money implications directly arising from this report.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

8. Equality and diversity implications will be addressed separately in future reports.

### **Financial Implications**

9. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

### **Health Implications**

10. There are no health implications directly arising from this report.

### **Environmental Implications**

11. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

### **Consultation carried out**

12. Lead officers within the company have identified reports for future meetings of this committee.

### **Impact on Customers**

13. There is no impact on customers as a result of compiling this report.

### **Recommendation**

14. It is recommended that the forward plan be noted.

### Customers and Communities Committee Forward Plan

<b>Customers and Communities Committee</b>	<b>Issues to be discussed</b>
February 2013 (date still to be agreed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housemark – Resident Involvement Results</li> <li>• Peer Review of Estate Grading</li> <li>• East Neighbourhood Housing Services</li> </ul>
May 2013 (date still to be agreed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mystery Shopping 2012/13</li> <li>• Complaints and Compliments Performance – End of Year Report 2012-13</li> <li>• Grounds Maintenance Service Agreement 2013-14</li> </ul>
July 2013 (date still to be agreed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estate Activity Report</li> <li>• Rent and Income Annual Report 2012/13</li> <li>• Lettings Report 2012/13</li> </ul>
November 2013 (date still to be agreed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving Forward Training Programme – Six-Month Update</li> </ul>
<p>The following reports are taken to every meeting: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-Social Behaviour Progress Report</li> <li>• Customer Involvement Activity</li> </ul>	