



Report to Customers and Communities Committee

8 May 2014

Title: Multi–Storey Management – Year End Update 2013/14

Report of: Director of Customers and Communities

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to provide committee with a summary of activity carried out by the Multi- Storey management team during 2013/14.

Background

2. The committee received a report on 27 February 2014 on the evaluation of the new Concierge and Cleaning service, which also outlined changes to the way Multi-storey blocks are now being managed.
3. The Multi- storey team manages the Caretaker service which is delivered to 25 multi storey blocks across Gateshead and the Concierge service which is delivered to four blocks. The team also works with other TGHC and Council services and external partners to co-ordinate and improve services delivered to customers including any investment works in multi storey blocks. This report highlights some of that activity.
4. The team comprises of a Housing Manager (Multi – storey), three Supervisors and one Housing Management Assistant (Multi- storey). The team is aligned with the Central Neighbourhood team and based in the Civic Centre.

Concierge and Cleaning Review

5. Since the last committee report the Concierge service has successfully relocated and now operates from one location at Eslington Court.

Performance against Service Standards

6. The Caretakers service carries out the cleaning to communal areas of multi storey blocks and a range of additional tasks. They work to clear service standards, developed with customer input and monitored by the Multi Storey team and customers.
7. During 2013/14 all service standard targets were met and in some cases exceeded. Customer surveys were sent out in December 2013 and satisfaction with the Caretaker increased from 93% in 2012.13 to 94%. Satisfaction with the

Concierge service was benchmarked at 86% and the focus in 2014/15 will be to work with customers and employees to improve satisfaction with the service.

8. The results are summarised below. The figure in brackets was the target for 2013/14:

- Satisfaction with the Caretaker service – 94% (94%)
- Satisfaction with the Concierge service – 86% (-)
- % inspections that meet cleaning service standard – 99% (98%)
- % accompanied viewing attended by Caretaker – 98% (90%)
- % new tenants receiving Caretaker new tenant visit within 21 days – 90% (83%)

9. Service standard targets for 2014/15 were reviewed and agreed with customers at the Multi Storey Service Group.

Repairs in Communal areas

10. Caretakers carry out a range of small repair tasks in communal areas of multi storey blocks. During 2013/14 they carried out a total of 1707 repair tasks and the value of this work based on existing Schedule of Rate codes is £12,513

11. The most common repair tasks carried out are unblocking bin chutes, adjusting door closures and replacing light bulbs.

Small Tasks

12. In addition to repairs in the communal areas, Caretakers also carry out a range of small tasks inside customers' homes. During 2013/14 a total of 299 tasks were carried out, examples include hanging curtain rails, connecting washing machines, fitting plugs to lamps and putting flat pack furniture together. They also took 2761 meter readings on behalf of customers.

13. The Caretakers also provide valuable support to customers in other ways such as phoning in repairs, testing intercoms, moving furniture and putting rubbish out for those with mobility problems.

New Tenant Visits

14. Caretakers aim to visit all new customers within 21 days of the tenancy start date to discuss a range of topics including; the role of the Caretaker service, fire safety, car parking, rubbish disposal, recycling, operating instructions for heating and connecting washing machines to existing taps. During 2013/14 a total of 217 new tenant visits were carried out.

Complaints and Compliments

15. The team received a total of 41 compliments and five complaints from customers during 2013/14. The compliments ranged from the high quality of their work to the general attitude and helpfulness of employees. This highlights the excellent service they provide in maintaining a clean and safe environment within the blocks but also how well the service is valued by customers.

16. Of the five complaints received, four related to service standards not being maintained and one around access via the Concierge to Regent Court. All complaints were investigated and resolved satisfactorily. As a result of these complaints we reviewed the cleaning rota and delivered refresher training at team meetings.

Training and Development

17. Training is the key to ensuring that the team has the knowledge and skills to deliver services to a high standard. It is delivered through a combination of in house training, as well as formal qualifications.
18. During 2013/14, five Caretakers completed a Qualifications and Credit Framework level 2 in Cleaning and Support Services. All 25 Caretakers have now completed this qualification. The course covers a range of practical tasks such as cleaning and maintenance. It also covers interaction with customers. Assessment is through on site observation by course tutors and written submissions.
19. The two Caretaker Supervisors commenced a Level 3 NVQ in Facilities Management. The course covers management skills such as setting team objectives, managing change and recruitment of staff. It also covers Health and Safety in the workplace and procuring equipment and supplies.
20. The Concierge Supervisor completed an Essential Skills for Supervisors course provided by ACAS.
21. The team undertake a range of mandatory training courses that covers for example Health and Safety awareness. Additional training has been delivered during the year that included Drugs Awareness, Safeguarding Adults, Domestic Violence, Child Protection and Customer service.

Multi Storey Service Improvement Group

22. A Multi Storey Service Improvement Group has been long established in recognition that multi storey accommodation is different from traditional housing estates and presents its own challenges due to the physical layout and design. The group is well attended and includes representation from both tenants and leaseholders. The Housing Manager (Multi Storey) chairs the group and different officers attend depending on the agenda items.
23. During 2013/14 the group undertook a range of activities which included:
 - Reviewed and agreed Caretaker service standards.
 - Reviewed and agreed content of customer satisfaction surveys
 - Contributed to the Tenancy Agreement review
 - Discussed and agreed content of Fire Safety leaflet
 - Discussed progress with fire safety investment work
 - Received presentations on a range of subjects which included anti-social behaviour, value for money and budgets.
 - Reviewed and agreed service standard performance indicators for 2014/15
 - Developed customer inspections of cleaning standards

Customer Inspections

24. A customer inspection pilot was developed to ensure that customers have an opportunity to “test” our cleaning service standards. The pilot proved very successful and all blocks now receive a customer inspection. If customers are unavailable to carry out inspections the Caretaker Supervisor will cover to ensure all are carried out. The results of these inspections along with Estate Grading’s inform service standard performance.

Improvement projects

25. In addition to the activities outlined above the Multi Storey team has worked closely with colleagues within TGHC, The Council and partners on a range of projects to improve the environment and safety within and around the blocks. Examples include:
- Developed schemes funded by the designing out crime budget to improve security and reduce anti-social behaviour within multi storey blocks. At Crowhall Towers and Warwick Court additional fob readers were installed to control access and at Redheugh and Eslington Courts netting to open balconies was fitted to prevent objects being thrown from them.
 - The team has supported the successful delivery of investment programmes including rewires and electrical upgrades lift refurbishments and the sprinkler system in Regent Court. The team are able to bring their detailed knowledge of the layout of buildings and services as well as their established relationship with residents to help with the delivery of these programmes.
 - In the East Neighbourhood, the Housing Manager (Multi -storey) attended the Tasking and Coordination partnership meetings, to tackle an increase in the occurrence of drug paraphernalia in Crowhall Towers.
 - Worked alongside Officers and partners including the Council; Police, Basis and Probation Services to tackle incidents of rough sleeping in some multi storey blocks.

Priorities 2014/15

26. The key priorities are:
- Undertake a review of CCTV provided in multi storey accommodation, sheltered schemes and Housing Offices.
 - Action planning to improve the management and sustainability of blocks.
 - Develop Concierge service standards with customer involvement.
 - Work with HomeRepairs to promote Caretaker small tasks.

Link to Values

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

Impact on tenants

28. The team has built up a knowledge and expertise that can help inform and influence decisions relating to multi storey accommodation, ultimately producing better outcomes for customers. By sharing experience and practice of what works well in some blocks this can be applied to others. The team can also respond to issues quickly such as repairs to communal areas, thereby minimising the impact on customers.

Risk Management Implications

29. There are no direct risk management implications resulting from this report.

Financial Implications

30. The Head of Corporate Services has confirmed that there are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations of this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

31. The Caretaker service is very accessible to customers on a day to day basis and out of hours via the duty Caretaker. Tasks such as small scale repairs in customers' homes directly benefit the more vulnerable residents who may not have access to friends or family for such assistance.

Value for Money Implications

32. The service will continue to explore opportunities to maximise value for money. One area identified is to provide new floor cleaning equipment in the larger blocks that will produce time efficiency savings. The time saved will allow Caretakers to undertake additional tasks. Value for Money is also a standard agenda item at the Multi storey SIG.
33. Establishing the Concierge Service in one location provides opportunities to achieve value for money via improved options for rota cover and reducing travelling time.
34. In addition, the review of concierge and cleaning services has ensured that the costs of the service are in line with the service charge income received. The review has provided additional opportunities to achieve value for money, for example caretakers now undertake repairs in communal areas and deliver small repair tasks for customers in their home.

Health Implications

35. There are no direct health implications arising from the report although the activities outlined will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of customers in multi storey blocks.

Environmental Implications

36. The Caretaker's duties will help to maintain the environment both inside and around the external areas of multi-story blocks.

Consultation carried out

37. The team works closely with customers in a variety of ways to assess and review the services we provide. This includes through the Multi Storey SIG meetings, customer satisfaction surveys, customer inspections and complaints and compliments received.

Recommendations

38. The committee are asked to:
- note the information contained in the report; and
 - discuss if it is satisfied with the activities outlined in the report.