



Report to Customers and Communities Committee

8 May 2014

Title: Moving Forward Customer Training Programme - Annual Review

Report of: Managing Director

Purpose of Report

1. To report progress of the Moving Forward Customer Training Programme 2013/14 and inform committee of the programme for 2014/15.

Background

2. The Moving Forward Training Programme is an annual programme of free customer training sessions providing a range of courses delivered by: -
 - Tenant Participatory Advisory Service (TPAS) – capacity building training
 - HealthWORKS and Gateshead Council – health, wellbeing and scam awareness
 - B&Q, Mears and Gateshead College – practical skills based training
 - Citizens Advice Bureau – advice around financial management
 - National Health Service (NHS) – advice around drug and alcohol awareness
 - Explain (formally wood holmes) – Social media
 - The Gateshead Housing Company – raising awareness of our services.
3. The programme has been running since 2004, offering customers an opportunity to develop their skills and capacity, ultimately aiming to get tenants and leaseholders more involved in shaping services delivered by the company.
4. The Involvement and Empowerment Standard of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)'s Regulatory Framework places a requirement on landlords to provide support to tenants to build their capacity to be more effectively involved. In previous years, customers who have attended training through the Moving Forward programme have gone on to join Service Improvement Groups and become members of TALISMAN and the Board.
5. Providing an annual training programme for customers is one of the involvement service standards set out in The Guide to Services.

Summary

6. The 2013/14 programme offered 7 scheduled and 13 demand led courses. During this period the number of scheduled courses reduced, although an additional 'Spot the scam' course was delivered in May as part of Adult Learning Week and Scam Awareness month.
7. At 31 March 2014, 16 courses had taken place, including 9 demand led and all 7 scheduled sessions, with a total of 162 people attending. On average, there have been 10 attendees per course, which is an increase on 2012/13 year's performance of 8 per course.
8. Moving Forward courses are promoted via a range of methods including our company newspaper, the website, social media, at events and through press releases. We also have an agreement with Gateshead Council to promote the programme in their Adult learning and skills brochure which goes to all Gateshead households throughout the year.
9. A summary of course attendance is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.
10. In addition we have also supported tenants and leaseholders to attend a number of national seminars and conferences to build their wider knowledge and provide networking opportunities. This includes conferences run by Tenant Central at TPAS.
11. We have also delivered a number of Energy Best Deal sessions between December 2013 and March 2014.

Moving Forward review 2013/14

12. Overall attendance figures of courses delivered up to 31 March 2013 show the most popular courses are delivered by B&Q (50), followed jointly by TPAS and Gateshead Council (36). An 'other' category combines courses delivered by various organisations for the following courses; Social media made simple, How to manage your money, Drug and alcohol awareness and Managing your stress (See appendix 2).
13. Evaluation forms are distributed at the end of each course to enable us to monitor satisfaction. Responses show that satisfaction with the training is high with 99.34% stating overall they were either very or fairly satisfied with the course(s) they attended.
14. Figures show that 73.86% attendees are female, and the 60-74 age group continues to have the highest number of attendees (44.30%), followed by 50-59 year olds (20.13%), and 53.02% of attendees have told us they have a disability.
15. There have been a number of positive outcomes for attendees on the training ranging from increased confidence, attending further training with the company, improved health and some customers becoming members of TALISMAN.
16. We continue to monitor how people find out about our training to help us see which methods are more effective. The most popular methods are through the Moving Forward programme and TGHC news (70). This is followed by Adult

Learning and Skills programme (31) and through Service Improvement Groups (11). See Appendix 3 for a full breakdown.

17. Appendix 4 details information about the profile of course attendees and responses to evaluation forms. Examples of feedback from attendees is provided below;
- Meeting skills and being Chair - 'thoroughly enjoyed the course it was well structured and I learnt a lot. Thank you.' (Ms D Parish)
 - Spot the scam - 'Very interesting and valued information' (Mrs R Ranasinghe)
 - Plumbing – 'Thank you, I may be able to manage some small DIY jobs in my flat from now on' (Mr A Yasinoglu)
 - Managing stress – 'enjoyable, beneficial course well worthwhile' (Mr S Carr).

Training and development of residents

18. TALISMAN members have attended various training sessions during the year to support them in their role.
19. Two new members were recruited in March 2014 and attended an induction training session in April. This helped members gain an understanding of how the company operates, its structure, what scrutiny means and how to undertake effective exercises. One existing member also attended this induction as they couldn't attend the second day on a previous induction.
20. Further external training attended by members includes;
- **'Practical Skills in Scrutiny'** – four members attended a three day conference at Trafford Hall in May 2013 to learn more tips around carrying out effective scrutiny exercises
 - **'Outcomes from Customer Scrutiny'** - six members and the panel mentor attended a CIH lunch at Ramside Hall in May 2013 to hear about outcomes achieved from scrutiny exercises
 - **'NHC Annual Tenant Panel Conference'** – four members, their mentor and two officers attended the annual conference at York Racecourse in October 2013
 - **'Making Meetings Matter'** – five members attended this training at Trafford Hall in March 2014 to learn skills around how to hold effective meetings and controlling challenging behaviour from attendees.
21. Two members of the Complaints Scrutiny Panel attended a 'Best Practice in Complaints Handling' course held by Tenant Central in Durham. This helped gather best practice information on how to effectively handle complaints, supporting the current review.
22. A focus on the continued training and development of members helps to ensure that the panels are effective and achieve positive outcomes for tenants, leaseholders and the company.

Mears practical training

23. In June 2013, the company worked in partnership with Mears to deliver an eight week practical training programme, incorporating sessions around decorating,

plumbing, carpentry and joinery and electrics. These were delivered at Gateshead College Construction Campus due to the existing links Mears have with them.

24. As this was a pilot programme, invites were initially restricted to customers who had already attended, or were due to attend, an existing practical course with B&Q as part of our Moving Forward programme, as they were deemed to have an interest in this area of learning. Attendees were required to attend all sessions in this programme.
25. A pre-course survey was sent to all attendees to help establish their level of ability prior to the sessions and reasons for attending. This also helped us monitor whether there had been any personal development of individuals by the end of the programme.
26. Due to unforeseen circumstances not all members were able to attend every session which reduced the amount of feedback we received. Also, some new members joined the programme midway through due to there being spaces available.
27. Regrettably the carpentry and joinery sessions didn't take place due to the lecturer being unable to deliver them, and unfortunately these were not able to be rearranged due to the college timetable being unable to support them.
28. Positive feedback was received about the sessions as they were more in-depth and allowed more time for practical tasks to be undertaken compared to those offered in the Moving Forward programme from B&Q.
29. We are trying to work with Gateshead College to see if we can deliver a similar project during this year's programme based on learning from the pilot.

Energy Best Deal (EBD)

30. In recognition of the increasing pressures on people's finances including rising fuel bills, and as a result of the success from last year's EBD drop ins, the company successfully applied for funding from FINCAN (Financial Capability North East) to deliver more Energy Best Deal (EBD) sessions in 2013/14. We received £3600 funding to deliver 12 sessions before 31 March 2014.
31. An Involvement and Diversity Officer, Rent and Income Officer and Environmental Champion of the company delivered these sessions in a range of locations across Gateshead, particularly in areas where our more vulnerable customers can access. Sessions were held in each neighbourhood area and these took place in either our housing offices or community venues.
32. FINCAN developed and provided a presentation to be delivered to customers along with supporting information to provide further advice and guidance. In addition to the standard presentation provided, as part of these sessions the officer also provided an opportunity to visit price comparison websites for if customers brought along a copy of their fuel bill, to see if they may be able to save money by switching provider or changing tariff. The presentation also included energy saving tips and information around kilowatt hours (kWh), to help people understand what they spend on different appliances in their household.

33. For those who provided a copy of their bill and undertook a price comparison, the total potential average saving per person was £116 on their annual fuel bills.
34. Due to the relatively small resources required to deliver these sessions, and the potential benefits for our tenants and leaseholders, we will continue to offer this support as part of the 2014/15 Moving Forward programme.
35. One customer who attended a drop in subsequently changed their energy provider as a result of viewing a price comparison website and saved £169/year. This switch was the first made via Energy Angels and as a result the company will receive some funding to help towards future financial inclusion work we deliver.
36. See Appendix 5 for a breakdown of the sessions held and customer feedback from attendees who completed a survey at the EBD sessions.

Moving Forward Programme 2014/15

37. The Moving Forward training programme for 2014/15 was launched in March 2014.
38. Based on feedback from customers, we continue to offer a range of scheduled and demand led courses to provide greater flexibility and accessibility to them.
39. The programme is available on our website and has been sent to all tenants and leaseholders. This was developed following discussions with existing providers, service managers and customers to ensure that it meets the current needs of our tenants and leaseholders.
40. The Involvement SIG, BME housing forum and a focus group of tenants and leaseholders have been involved in developing the new programme including the overall design. The design is based on the Opportunity Knocks theme again this year, continuing to provide a clear link between the training and other opportunities to be involved in shaping services.
41. The programme offers 8 scheduled and 13 demand led courses ranging from Gardening to Managing your stress.
42. Based on little or no demand in previous programmes, 'An introduction to being a new tenant' has been removed. Despite popularity, 'Spot the scam' could no longer be delivered by the provider, so any customers requesting information around this will be referred directly to their service for one-to-one advice.
43. We are now able to deliver the 'How to manage your money' course due to employees in the Rent and Income Team being trained in this area of advice.
44. The Social media made simple course is also being developed further to include learning around creating your own free blog and website. We will also be delivering this course in-house.
45. Delivering courses in-house allows us to demonstrate value for money by being more efficient in service delivery by utilising skills of employees and saving

money where we would have paid an external provider. It also allows us to tailor the courses specifically to our needs and those of attendees.

46. New to the 2014/15 programme will be the opportunity for customers to register details with us if customers are looking to develop their skills to find employment. As we hear about relevant events happening in Gateshead, we can signpost them accordingly or invite them to suitable training, depending on what they want to do.
47. As part of our repairs and maintenance contract, Mears committed to provide trade based skills training for tenants and leaseholders. Following a pilot session last year, we aim to deliver additional sessions during the current programme.
48. The programme will be reprinted in October, which also provides the opportunity to incorporate any additional courses which a need may be identified for following its launch.

Link to values

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

Impact on tenants

50. By offering courses in a variety of ways, it allows customers greater accessibility and increased potential in building their capacity. Courses will continue to be offered on both a demand led and scheduled basis in 2014/15.

Risk Management Implications

51. The HCA's Involvement and Empowerment standard places a requirement on landlords to offer their customers the opportunity to develop their skills to actively influence the management of their housing. Specifically the demand led training provides these opportunities to our customers to help them gain skills to scrutinise our services more effectively, ensuring we are meeting this standard.

Financial Implications

52. The Head of Corporate Services confirms there is a budget for the 2014/15 Moving Forward programme. Discount is accessed for the training provided by TPAS as the company currently holds membership for the organisation.
53. External funding is accessed via our Service Level Agreement with Adult Learning and Skills, where we were set a target to achieve £624 during the 2013/14 programme. We reached this target based on the number of customers attending demand led training.
54. The delivery of Energy Best Deal sessions brought in £3600 of external funding to the company. We will continue to look for similar opportunities for funding during 2014/15 which can support further training opportunities for tenants and leaseholders.

Equality and Diversity Implications

55. An equality impact assessment has been carried out on the training programme to ensure that it does not indirectly impact on any vulnerable tenants or leaseholders.
56. Customers are made aware of the support available to assist them to access Moving Forward courses. Support is also heavily promoted to other organisations that work within communities, to encourage customers to attend our courses. People attending training during this financial year have benefitted from this support including the provision of taxis and information provided in a different format. Some customers attending training have also had their personal support worker attending courses to aid their access to learning.

Value for Money implications

57. The agreement with Gateshead Council means our courses are promoted in the Adult Learning and Skills programme at no cost, which is sent to all households in Gateshead for each academic term. Customers finding out about our courses via this method is the second most popular, after receiving our company newspaper.
58. The 2014/15 programme has seen some cost savings to the company as some courses, including Social media made simple and How to manage your money, being delivered internally, rather than paying an external company.

Consultation carried out

59. Feedback on the programme has been gathered through a wide range of sources to ensure that the programme delivered in 2013/14 meets the needs of our tenants and leaseholders. This includes evaluations at the end of each course and discussions with the Involvement SIG and BME housing forum.

Health Implications

60. By offering free customer training to our tenants it has a direct impact on their health and wellbeing, particularly by attending the Dealing with stress and How to manage your money courses.
61. The courses delivered by Gateshead Council and HealthWORKS focus on the importance of general health awareness and stress management, which can ultimately have an impact on an individual's mental health in terms of reducing potential stress.
62. Customers who attend B&Q courses learn skills on improving and maintaining their homes. This helps to empower customers and gives them the confidence to undertake minor improvements and take pride in their home.

Recommendation

63. The views are sought on whether the committee is satisfied with the impact on customers to date and of the proposed 2014/15 programme.

Appendix 1: Summary of course attendance

Course	Provider	Attendance figures
Meeting skills and being Chair	TPAS	14
Spot the scam	Gateshead Council	17
Gardening	B&Q	12
How to manage your money	Other; CAB	8
Plumbing	B&Q	9
Drug and alcohol awareness	Other; NHS	5
Basic DIY	B&Q	12
Managing stress (full day)	Other; HealthWORKS	7
Social Media made simple	Other; Explain (formally wood holmes)	5
Decorating	B&Q	8
How to spot a scam	Gateshead Council	8
Managing your stress (two hour session)	Other; HealthWORKS	6
Health awareness	Gateshead Council	11
Energy Best Deal	The Gateshead Housing Company	9
Checking our services (mystery shopping)	TPAS	14
Confidence building	TPAS	8
Summer gardening	B&Q	9
Total		162

Appendix 2: Course providers and attendance figures

Date	Course provider	Number of courses held	Attendance figures
2013/14 (to 31 March 2014)	B&Q	5	50
	TPAS	3	36
	Gateshead Council	3	36
	The Gateshead Housing Company	1	9
	Other	4	31
Total		16	162

Appendix 3: How attendees found out about course

Promotion method	Number
TGHC news/Moving Forward programme	70
Adult learning & skills	31
Service Improvement Group	11
Recommendation	9
Press release	4
Guide to Getting Involved	2
Unknown	35
Total	162

Appendix 4: Profile of attendees and evaluation form responses and comments

There is a difference in course attendance and evaluation form responses as some customers had to leave courses early and didn't complete an evaluation form before they left.

Gender		
Male	40	26.14%
Female	113	73.86%
Total	153	100%
Disability		
Disabled	79	53.02%
Non-disabled	70	46.98%
Total (not including blanks)	149	100%
blank	4	-
Ethnic origin		
Asian Pakistan	3	2%
Asian Other	3	2%
Chinese	9	6%
Black African	1	0.67%
Mixed Other	10	6.67%
White British	121	80.66%
White Other	3	2%
Total (not including blanks)	150	100%
Unknown/blank	3	-
Age		
Under 25	5	3.36%
25-39	23	15.44%
40-49	15	10.07%
50-59	30	20.13%
60-74	66	44.30%
75 and over	10	6.70%
Total (not including blanks)	149	100%
Unknown/blank	4	-

Question 1: How satisfied are you with the course organisation?		
Very satisfied	136	88.88%
Fairly satisfied	16	10.46%
Fairly dissatisfied	-	-
Very dissatisfied	-	-
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	1	0.65%
Total	153	100%

Question 2: How satisfied are you with the facilities?		
Very satisfied	124	-
Fairly satisfied	28	-
Fairly dissatisfied	-	-
Very dissatisfied	-	-
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	-	-
Total (not including blanks)	152	100%
Blank	1	-

Question 3: How satisfied are you with the length of the course?		
Very satisfied	121	79.08%
Fairly satisfied	29	18.95%
Fairly dissatisfied	2	1.31%
Very dissatisfied	-	-
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	1	0.65%
Total	153	100%

Question 4: How satisfied are you with the trainer?		
Very satisfied	139	90.85%
Fairly satisfied	13	8.50%
Fairly dissatisfied	1	0.65%
Very dissatisfied	-	-
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	-	-
Total	153	100%

Question 5: How satisfied are you with the course content?		
Very satisfied	130	86.09%
Fairly satisfied	20	13.25%
Fairly dissatisfied	1	0.66%
Very dissatisfied	-	-
Total (not including blanks)	151	100%
Blank	2	-

Question 6: Did you find the course racist, sexist or offensive in any way?		
Yes	-	-
No	150	100%
Total (not including blanks)	150	100%
Blank	1	-

Question 7: From the skills and knowledge you've gained in this course could you apply them in your day to day life?		
Yes	152	100%
No	-	-
Total (not including blanks)	152	100%
Blank	1	-

Question 8: Did the course meet your expectations?		
Yes	149	98.68%
No	2	1.32%
Total (not including blanks)	151	100%
Blank	2	-

Question 9: How satisfied are you with the opportunities to get involved today?		
Very satisfied	128	84.21%
Fairly satisfied	24	15.79%
Fairly dissatisfied	-	-
Very dissatisfied	-	-
Total (not including blanks)	152	100%
Blank	1	-

Question 10: Overall, how satisfied are you with the course today?		
Very satisfied	136	89.47%
Fairly satisfied	15	9.87%
Fairly dissatisfied	-	-
Very dissatisfied	1	0.66%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	-	-
Total (not including blanks)	152	100%
Blank	1	-

Comments from evaluation forms;

- **Meeting skills and being Chair** - *'thoroughly enjoyed the course it was well structured and I learnt a lot. Thank you.'* (Ms D Parish)
- **Spot the scam** - *'Very interesting and valued information'* (Mrs R Ranasinghe)
- **Gardening** – *'brilliant course I could not improve - only more of them!'* (Miss P Brown)
- **Plumbing** – *'Thank you, I may be able to manage some small DIY jobs in my flat from now on'* (Mr A Yasinoglu)
- **Drug and alcohol awareness** – *'thank you very important to me'*. (Mrs M Nunez)
- **Basic DIY** – *'Dave was extremely helpful and knowledgeable couldn't be better'* (Mrs S Downs)
- **Managing stress (full day)** – *'enjoyable, beneficial course well worthwhile'* (Mr S Carr)
- **Social media made simple** – *'Had a good day, learnt a lot'* (Mrs M Lowley)
- **Managing stress (2 hour session)** - *'It has opened my eyes for what can be done'* (Mr K Henderson)
- **Health awareness** – *'Would have liked more time to go into course fully as 2 hours was insufficient'* (Mrs N Harrison)
- **Confidence building** - *'I found this course informative and enjoyed being in company with other people'* (Mrs B Hand)
- **Summer gardening** – *'Plenty of help for new gardeners like me'* (Miss P Brown)
- **Checking our services (Mystery shopping)** – *'Hopefully make me a better communicator'* (Miss H Hall).

Appendix 5: Breakdown of Energy Best Deal evaluation responses

Question 1; Apart from when moving house, have you ever changed your gas or electricity supplier?		
Yes, once	15	36.58%
Yes, more than once	5	12.20%
No	21	51.22%
Total	41	100%

Question 2; Have you ever switched to a different tariff with the same supplier?		
Yes	14	34.15%
No	24	58.54%
Don't know	3	7.31%
Total	41	100%

Question 3; If yes, did you switch because you;?		
Decided to look for a better deal	16	72.73%
Were approached by a fuel company salesperson at home or elsewhere	6	27.27%
Total	22	100%
Blank	19	-

Question 4; In winter can you heat your home to a comfortable level?		
Yes	23	60.53%
No, because I switch the heating off or turn it down to save money	10	26.32%
No, because the heating system or insulation is not good enough	5	13.15%
Total	38	100%
Blank	3	-

Question 5; In winter, would you say your fuel bills are;?		
Impossible to manage – I'm already in debt with my fuel bills	3	8.11%
A financial strain – sometimes I have to switch the heating off or not pay my energy bill so I can afford other household bills	7	18.92%
A worry, but I'm able to manage without skimping on other important household bills	9	24.32%
Something I am concerned about but not a major worry	10	27.03%
Not a problem	8	21.62%
Total	37	100%
Blank	4	-

Question 6; Do you have regular access to the internet?		
Yes	15	40.54%
No	22	59.46%
Total	37	100%
Blank	4	-

Question 7; Before today did you know it was possible to change your gas and electricity?		
Yes	34	89.47%
No	4	10.53%
Total	38	100%
Blank	3	-

Question 8a; Did you find today's session useful?		
Yes	35	100%
No	-	-
Total	35	100%
Blank	6	-

Question 8b; If yes, what was useful? Information about;		
How to find the best deal	28	25.69%
How to switch supplier	18	16.51%
Different ways of paying for energy	8	7.34%
Dealing with energy suppliers	11	10.09%
Information about the Warm Home Discount	12	11.01%
Information about energy suppliers' free (priority) services such as moving the meter and password protection	4	3.67%
Information about grants for insulation and heating improvements	6	5.51%
Information about benefits and tax credits	3	2.75%
Information about debt and money management	3	2.75%
Information about energy efficiency	16	14.68%
Total*	109	100%

*higher total as customers could select more than one answer

Question 9; Will you do anything as a result of the session today?		
Yes, definitely	15	40.54%
Probably will	12	32.43%
Probably won't	9	24.32%
No, definitely won't	1	2.71%
Total	37	100%
Blank	4	-

Appendix 6: Breakdown of Energy Best Deal delivery venues

Name of group	Venue	Group type
Luncheon club	Dunston community centre	5
Over 50s Group	Springwell community centre	12
BME housing forum	Keelman House	6
Women's Group	Gateshead Muslim Society	6
Guidepost, Learning Disabilities group	Windmill Hills Group	9
Energy Best Deal session, Moving Forward course	Keelman House	9
Drop in	Leam Lane Housing Office	1
Drop in	Blaydon Housing Office	6
Coffee morning	Kibblesworth Millennium Centre	10
Drop in	GVOC	1
Drop in	Birtley HUB	6
Mental health concern	The Gateshead Clubhouse	8
Women's group	Dunston Community Centre	16
Total		95