



## Report to Customers and Communities Committee

26 February 2015

**Title:** Customer Involvement Activity – Update

**Report of:** Involvement and Diversity Manager

### Purpose of Report

1. To provide committee with a summary of involvement activity across the company for the third quarter of 2014/15.

### Background

2. All housing company customers are encouraged to get involved in ways that suit them, based on the time they have available and the level of commitment they wish to make. Customer involvement is central to the way we deliver our services.
3. The Involvement and Empowerment standard of the HCA's Regulatory Framework places a requirement on landlords to ensure that tenants are given a range of opportunities to influence and shape policies and scrutinise our services.
4. The Delivery Plan 2013-15 includes an objective to support and fully embed co-regulation. This is carried out through a range of ways including the TALISMAN, Complaints Scrutiny Panel, Service Improvement Groups and through the development of an annual report for tenants and leaseholders each year, which is designed, developed and written by our customers.

### Summary

5. During the period, 1 October 2014 to 31 December 2014, 79 involvement activities took place. Customers were involved in various activities including; meetings, Service Improvement Groups, community events, drop ins, forums, surveys and customer training.
6. Customers have been involved in our activities on over 3,950 occasions, however some may have been involved in more than one event.
7. Appendix 1 to this report shows a summary of activities undertaken during this period and demonstrates the variety of ways customers have been involved. This information is broken down by the two broad service areas, Corporate Services and Customers and Communities, to highlight the different forms of activities that have taken place across the company.

8. Appendix 2 to this report shows the venues where activities have taken place during this period.

### **Key outcomes of involvement**

9. There have been a number of outcomes from customer involvement during this period which are highlighted below;
  - Event held in support of National Older Person's Day where existing teams held a Rookie Golf tournament to promote the benefits to other sheltered scheme residents and encourage take-up of the sport. The event was also used as an opportunity to launch the CHS accreditation scheme
  - Held a number of Eagles Basketball Hoops for Health workshops across primary schools to promote health and wellbeing and the dangers of stereotyping, supporting our work on community cohesion and hate crime
  - TALISMAN received a presentation from service managers with an update on the action plan following the Voids scrutiny exercise
  - The LGBT network met to address issues particularly faced by LGBT tenants and leaseholders. Agreed name and logo for group, it is now called Gateshead Rainbow Forum
  - Complaints Scrutiny Panel elected a tenant Chair to stand for 12 months and reviewed performance for quarter 3, and highlighted areas they would like further information on based on the number of complaints received
  - Bulb planting carried out in Wrekenton and Beacon Lough area to improve the appearance of the estates
  - Warwick Court lunch club was launched in December, for residents of this and nearby multi storey blocks to encourage community engagement and support cohesion in the local area
  - 'Let's Get Digital' survey carried out to gain an understanding of how many of our customers are online or have access to the internet. This initial research has led to the company commissioning a customer insight project to conduct wider research into where we need to focus more specific digital inclusion work, with the ultimate aim of increasing online skills of our tenants and leaseholders and assist people with Universal Credit
  - Quarterly Grounds Maintenance meeting held with tenants which focused on Neighbourhood Pride schemes, estate grading performance and Local Environmental Services enforcement performance
  - Inspections of multi storey blocks undertaken by members of the Multi Storey Service Improvement Group to check service standards are being achieved.

### **Young People**

10. In December 2014 we supported the Prince's Trust 'Team Programme' by facilitating a session on living independently. This also helped us to support our company priority of increasing sustained tenancies.
11. The session focussed on budgeting advice and anti-social behaviour (ASB), as well as gaining generic information about being a tenant with the housing company.
12. This was an interactive two hour session which aimed to raise awareness of what we regard as ASB and the consequences faced by tenants and leaseholders who

cause this. There was also a session around budgeting, particularly looking at food items and where money can be saved.

13. An income and expenditure task was used to encourage the young people to consider how much money they would be left with a week based on the typical amount they would receive if they were claiming benefits. This helped them to see the reality of them living independently.
14. Feedback about the session from participants and lead officer was very positive, and we have been asked to deliver a further session in March 2015.

### **Illegal Money Lending**

15. As a result of intelligence received about loan shark activity taking place, a door knocking exercise was carried out in the Carr Hill area in partnership with the Illegal Money Lending Team and Gateshead Council. This helped to raise awareness of the dangers of illegal money lending and try to prevent customers falling victim to loan sharks.
16. In conjunction with the Bite Back campaign, several streets were targeted in the area, which saw employees from the Rent and Income Team, Housing Office and Involvement Teams raise awareness among residents of this issue and try to gather further information to help tackle illegal money lenders in the area.
17. All properties received an information leaflet with contact details should they wish to raise awareness in confidence at a later date. As a result of the exercise, over 500 customers were reached.

### **Performance against service standards**

18. There are a number of service standards in place for involvement to help monitor performance and ensure that we continue to involve customers in the way services are delivered. They are as follows;
  - Number of involved customers (previously titled Representation of involved customers)
  - Annual training programme course attendance
  - Satisfaction with feedback following involvement
  - % of tenants satisfied that their views are taken into account
    - Number of events attended.
19. At the end of the period 1 October 2014 – 31 December 2014, performance was as follows;
  - There were 949 involved customers on our database, exceeding the target of 890 for the year.
  - There have been 107 attendees on customer training courses, on course to meet to the target of 180 by the end of the year. This also includes customers attending external training sessions.
  - Satisfaction with feedback from involvement is reported six monthly, the next update will be at year end.
  - We have attended 31 events at the end of the third quarter, achieving our target to increase the number of events attended.

## **Mears Community Initiatives**

20. During this quarter Mears have attended various Service Improvement Groups to liaise with residents and respond directly to any queries that customers had. The Customer Service Manager also attended the LGBT network meeting.

## **Involvement database**

21. There has been an increase of 53 involved customers to the database since June 2014 totalling 949 members.
22. The number of white British involved customers has risen by 40 people and BME customers have increased by 9 people. In comparison with the overall customer profile, there is a significantly higher representation of involved BME customers (7.68%) compared to our overall profile (2.86%).
23. Representation of involved males have increased by 19 and females have increased by 34 since June 2014. The age group of our involved 25-39 year olds has also significantly increased by 15 people.
24. Appendix 3 to this report displays profile information of our involved tenants and leaseholders compared with our overall customer profile.

## **Future activity**

25. The following activities are planned, although there will also be a range of additional activities likely to take place;
  - Warwick Court open day to be held in partnership with UNISON, promoting involvement opportunities with the company and to find out from residents how they would like to use the communal lounge
  - Digital drop ins to continue to be held with customers across Gateshead to teach them basic online skills and increase their understanding of how to use the internet and help prepare them for Universal Credit if required
  - Understanding Differences in People course to be held in February to improve awareness and understanding of different cultures and community groups, and to aid community cohesion
  - Continue to deliver Newcastle Eagles Hoops for Health project across primary schools in Gateshead to promote the importance of health and wellbeing and to increase understanding of the dangers of stereotyping
  - Supporting delivery of a breakfast club in Brandling Primary school and will subsequently be engaging with parents and guardians of the pupils to promote involvement opportunities with the company, particularly at their parent's evening in March
  - Work in partnership with Gem Arts to deliver a project with senior school children linked to hate crime, particularly focusing on race due to increasing reports of this nature
  - Deliver a pilot session of the Made of Money training programme to tenants and leaseholders following Involvement and Rent and Income team staff being trained to deliver.

## **Link to values**

26. This report relates to the following company values;

- Being customer focused, innovative and professional
- Being a listening and learning organisation
- Embracing Equality
- Being open, honest and transparent.

### **Impact on tenants**

27. We continue to work extensively with tenants, leaseholders and the wider community, to get views and opinions to identify priorities and inform services.
28. 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**

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. The activities outlined within this report demonstrate our compliance with this standard.

### **Financial Implications**

31. The Head of Corporate Services confirms that a budget is available to support customer involvement, and resources have been made available to support the activities outlined in this report.
32. Individual service managers have the opportunity to request funding from this budget to support involvement activities where they can demonstrate the potential outcomes for housing company tenants and leaseholders.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

33. TGHC is committed to involving people from diverse communities to ensure everyone's views, needs and aspirations are considered in the decision making process.
34. Support is available to assist people with additional needs to access involvement opportunities and this is regularly promoted.
35. 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**

36. 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.

37. All Service Improvement Groups now have Value for Money as a regular agenda item in addition to the specific Value for Money group.

### **Environmental implications**

38. 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 and holding events near to where the majority of attendees live, wherever possible.

### **Consultation carried out**

39. Regular updates are shared with the Involvement Service Improvement Group to advise of progress of involvement across all services and the outcomes which result.
40. The Involvement Service Improvement Group are satisfied with the involvement activity and resulting outcomes that have taken place during the third quarter.

### **Health Implications**

41. 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**

42. The views of the committee are sought on whether it is satisfied with the involvement activities undertaken during this quarter.

## Appendix 1: Summary of involvement activities across the company

Title of Activity	Number of Events	Number of Customers Involved
Drop in sessions	5	89
Forum	1	10
Focus group	2	5
Service Improvement Group	7	44
Questionnaire/survey	5	1,650
Event	10	1,123
Training course	4	36
Workshop	7	391
Mystery shopping/inspections	23	30
Meeting	13	75
Choices event	1	3
Other	1	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>3,956</b>

## Summary of involvement activity – Corporate services

Title of Activity	Number of Events	Number of Customers Involved
Forum	1	10
Focus group	1	2
Service Improvement Group	5	33
Training course	4	36
Event	6	838
Meeting	10	55
Questionnaire/survey	4	1,335
Workshop	7	391
Drop In	4	76
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>2,776</b>

## Summary of outcomes – Corporate Services

- Workshops held in primary schools across Gateshead in partnership with Newcastle Eagles to promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and to raise awareness of the dangers of stereotyping, to improve community cohesion
- Tenant Chair appointed to the Complaints Scrutiny Panel for 12 months
- Leasehold Service Improvement Group members agreed on initiatives that will help to increase income collection
- Let's Get Digital survey carried out to establish initial understanding of how many customers have access to the internet, and to help inform future work around the development of digital inclusion work across the borough.



## Summary of involvement activity - Customers and Communities

Title of Activity	Number of Events	Number of Customers Involved
Mystery shopping/inspections	23	30
Drop in	1	13
Meeting	3	20
Focus Group	1	3
Event	4	285
Service Improvement Group	2	11
Choices event	1	3
Questionnaire/survey	1	315
Other	1	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>1,180</b>

## Summary of outcomes – Customers and Communities

- Rookie Golf tournament held in support of National Older Persons' Day to promote the sport to other sheltered housing residents and encourage improved health and wellbeing among older people
- Door knocking exercise took place in Carr Hill following intelligence received regarding illegal money lending in the area. This was in conjunction with the Bite Back campaign which aims to raise awareness and understanding of the dangers of illegal money lending
- Bulb planting and litter picking taken place on estates in Wrekenton and Beacon Lough to improve the appearance of the local area
- Launched Warwick Court lunch club the help encourage community engagement among local residents and improve usage of the communal lounge.

## Appendix 2: Location of involvement activities

<b>Venue</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Civic Centre	22
Central	25
Inner West	1
West	3
South	16
East	5
External (Newcastle)	2
Other (survey)	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>

### Appendix 3: Profile information of involved customers

#### Gender:

	Involvement Database December 2014		Involvement Database June 2014		Customer profile December 2014	
Female	596	62.80%	562	62.72%	11,291	59.0%
Male	353	37.20%	334	37.28%	7,855	41.0%
Blank	-	-	-	-	1	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,147</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Ethnicity:

	Involvement Database December 2014		Involvement Database June 2014		Customer profile December 2014	
Asian Or Asian British Bangladeshi	1	0.10%	1	0.11%	14	0.07%
Asian Or Asian British Indian	3	0.32%	2	0.22%	9	0.05%
Asian Or Asian British Other	10	1.05%	10	1.12%	105	0.55%
Asian Or Asian British Pakistan	13	1.37%	13	1.45%	14	0.07%
Black Or Black British African	35	3.69%	30	3.35%	208	1.09%
Black Or Black British Caribbean	-	-	-	-	3	0.02%
Black Or Black British Other	1	0.10%	1	0.11%	26	0.14%
Chinese	1	0.10%	1	0.11%	21	0.11%
Mixed Other	4	0.42%	3	0.33%	26	0.14%
Mixed White & Asian	-	-	-	-	18	0.09%
Mixed White & Black African	2	0.21%	2	0.22%	15	0.08%
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	-	-	-	-	6	0.03%
Other	3	0.32%	1	0.11%	80	0.42%
<b>Total BME</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>7.68%</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>7.14%</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>2.86%</b>
Refused	1	0.10%	1	0.11%	47	0.25%
White British	781	82.31%	741	82.70%	18,104	94.55%
White Irish	1	0.10%	1	0.11%	34	0.18%
White Other	13	1.37%	11	1.23%	335	1.75%
(blank)	80	8.44%	78	8.72%	14	0.07%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,147</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Disability:**

Does the tenant have a disability?	Involvement Database December 2014		Involvement Database June 2014		Customer Profile December 2014	
N	647	68.18%	612	68.31%	13,458	70.28%
<b>Y</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>31.61%</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>31.36%</b>	<b>5,480</b>	<b>28.6%</b>
Yes. But type not disclosed	-	-	-	-	98	0.50%
Refused	-	-	1	0.11%	35	0.2%
(blank)	2	0.21%	2	0.22%	72	0.4%
Not disclosed	-	-	-	-	4	0.02
<b>Total</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,147</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Age:**

	Involvement Database December 2014		Involvement Database June 2014		Customer Profile December 2014	
No date of birth	114	12.01%	113	12.61%	3	0.0%
Under 25	19	2.00%	20	2.23%	630	3.3%
25-39	132	13.91%	117	13.06%	4008	20.9%
40-49	121	12.75%	112	12.50%	3236	16.9%
50-59	136	14.33%	123	13.73%	3415	17.8%
60-74	262	27.61%	256	28.57%	4528	23.6%
75 and over	165	17.39%	155	17.30%	3327	17.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,147</b>	<b>100%</b>