



Report to Customers and Communities Committee

5 May 2015

Title: Multi-Storey Team – Year End Update 2014/15

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 Team during 2014/15.

Background

2. The Multi-Storey Team, manages the Caretaker service which is delivered to all 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 improve services delivered to customers and investment programs in multi storey blocks. This report highlights some of that activity.
3. The team comprises of a Housing Manager (Multi-Storey), three (FTE) Supervisors and one Housing Management Assistant (Multi-Storey). The team is aligned with the Central Neighbourhood team and based in the Civic Centre.

Performance against Service Standards

4. 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.
5. Targets for 2014/15 were reviewed with customer input and based on performance in 2013/14. Customer satisfaction surveys were sent out in December 2014 to residents in all multi-storey blocks.
6. Overall satisfaction with the Caretaker service increased from 94% in 2013/14 to 96% and with the Concierge service from 86% in 2013/14 to 87%. This is based on a total of 314 returned surveys, a response rate of 17 %
7. The results are summarised below. The figure in brackets was the performance in 2013/14.

- Satisfaction with the Caretaker service – 96% (94%)
 - Satisfaction with the Concierge service – 87% (86%)
 - % inspections that meet cleaning service standard – 97% (99%)
 - % accompanied viewing attended by Caretaker – 97% (98%)
 - % new tenants receiving Caretaker new tenant visit within 21 days – 87% (83%)
8. Service standard targets for 2015/16 were reviewed and agreed with customers at the Multi-Storey Service Improvement Group and remain challenging.

Repairs in Communal areas

9. Caretakers carry out a range of small repair tasks in communal areas of multi storey blocks. During 2014/15 they carried out a total of 1734 repair tasks and the value of this work based on existing Schedule of Rate codes is £13,005. This compares with 1707 repairs with a value of £12,513 in 2013/14.
10. The most common repair tasks carried out are unblocking bin chutes, adjusting door closures and replacing light bulbs.

Small Tasks

11. In addition to repairs in the communal areas, Caretakers also carry out a range of small tasks inside customers' homes. During 2014/15 a total of 865 tasks were carried out, compared to 299 in 2013/14. Examples included resetting alarms, unblocking sinks and toilets, hanging curtain rails, connecting washing machines, fitting plugs to lamps and putting flat pack furniture together. They also took 2558 meter readings on behalf of customers.
12. Caretakers also support customers in other ways such as phoning in repairs, testing intercoms, moving furniture and putting rubbish out for those with mobility problems. Caretakers have recorded 296 examples of these types of tasks, which demonstrates the invaluable customer service they provide to support tenants in their home.

Complaints and Compliments

13. The team received a total of 45 compliments and 11 complaints from customers during 2014/15. The compliments ranged from the high quality of their work to the general attitude and helpfulness of employees.
14. Of the 11 complaints received, 2 related to service standards not being maintained and one around access via the Concierge to Regent Court. All complaints were investigated by the relevant Supervisor and resolved satisfactorily.
15. Learning from complaints is a key aim. For example we reviewed the out of hours service procedure in response to a complaint from a new tenant who was experiencing difficulties getting his electricity supply connected. We have also reviewed the guidance provided to caretakers responding to reports of water leaks from individual properties. Both changes arose as a direct consequence of investigating complaints received from customers.

Training and Development

16. 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.
17. During 2014/15, Caretakers and Concierge completed a range of mandatory courses including Equality and Diversity, Data Protection, various Health and Safety courses and a range of practical courses relating to tasks such as cleaning and maintenance.
18. The Caretaker Supervisors continued to study a Level 3 NVQ in Facilities Management and expect to complete the course during early 2015/16. 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.

Multi-Storey Service Improvement Group

19. A Multi Storey Service Improvement Group was previously 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.
20. During 2014/15 the group undertook a range of activities which included:
 - Worked with the customer inspectors to identify communal areas that required deep cleaning.
 - Reviewed Estate Tours and the role of Customer Inspectors
 - Initiated a review of CCTV in multi-storey blocks and helped to develop proposals
 - Reviewed the signage in multi-storey blocks and made recommendations
 - Discussed and suggested different methods of marketing of void properties with the Communications team
 - Worked with the Investment team to develop the piloting of a new floor covering
 - Reviewed and agreed the concierge service standards
 - Carried out a joint visit to multi-storey blocks with the Customer Service Excellence assessor.

Customer Inspections and Estate Tours

21. Following a successful pilot a full programme of customer inspections in multi storey blocks was implemented during 2014/15. Committee received an update report at the last meeting in February 2015 and approved the new approach.

Additional Activity

22. In addition to the activities outlined above the Multi-Storey Team has worked closely with colleagues within TGHC, The Council and partners. Examples include:

- Worked with CareCall and external contractors to mobilise the Smoke Alarm Monitoring Service Level Agreement.
 - Working alongside the Company's Cyclical Maintenance Manager and Health and Safety Advisor the team have introduced weekly fire alarm tests in multi blocks carried out by Caretakers.
 - Assisted the Cyclical Maintenance Manager to identify and map waste pipes within each block.
 - Assisted with the delivery of the communal rewire to St Cuthberts, Equality Act works to Barford, Stretford, Tennyson, Newbolt, Crowhall and Bensham, and the lift replacement at Eslington Court.
 - The team has worked with Housing Managers to develop schemes funded by the Designing Out Crime and Neighbourhood Pride budgets to improve security and reduce anti-social behaviour within multi-storey blocks. This has included alterations to bin room access at Redheugh and Eslington Court and access to the communal lounge and laundry at Warwick Court.
 - Worked with the Asset Management team to develop options for Beacon Lough blocks prior to consultation with customers.
 - Concierge and Caretakers have assisted with a number of open day viewings of void properties at Redheugh and Eslington Court.
23. During 2014/15, iPads were introduced for the Caretaker Supervisors. This has been of significant benefit assisting the management of a dispersed team by allowing them to complete many processes and tasks whilst out visiting the blocks, eliminating the need to return to the office. The use of iPads will continue to be developed during 2015/16 and an update will be included in next year's annual activity report.

Priorities 2015/16

- Progress the review of CCTV provided in multi-storey accommodation, sheltered schemes and Housing Offices.
- Continue to support work around fire safety in multi-storey blocks including the implementation and monitoring of the Smoke Alarm Monitoring SLA
- Work with colleagues and partners to improve the sustainability of multi-storey blocks.
- Evaluate impact of iPads on mobile working
- Review signage in multi storey blocks to achieve consistency across all blocks.

Link to values

24. The report relates to the following values of the company:

- Fair
- Customer focused
- Accountable
- Inclusive, valuing diversity
- Innovative
- Passionate about what we do

Impact on tenants

25. 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

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

Financial Implications

27. 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

28. 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

29. The service continues to explore opportunities to maximise value for money. For example the Caretaker Supervisors now change door codes for the multi storey blocks as required. This was previously done by an external contractor at a cost. Value for Money is also a standard agenda item at the Multi storey SIG.

Health Implications

30. 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

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

Consultation carried out

32. 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.

Recommendation

33. The views of the committee are sought on whether it is satisfied with the activities outlined in the report and the priorities identified for 2015/16.

Contact: Martin Poulter, Neighbourhood Services Manager Tel No: (0191) 4335374
