

Breaking the mould

Wednesday 13 February 2019

Representatives from:

Acis	Guinness Partnership	Sheffield City Council
Arches Housing	Midland Heart	South Yorkshire Housing Association
Clarion Futures	National Housing Federation	Together Housing Group
Great Places		

Background

Acis, like most organisations in the sector, responded to the government’s social housing green paper. After identifying common themes, it hosted a roundtable with likeminded organisations to discuss potential ways to work collaboratively to enhance delivery for customers.

Theme one: Customer involvement

Most attendees agreed that while official scrutiny panels worked well, the people involved were not entirely representative of the wider customer base – and, in fact, that the majority (around 80%) of customers didn’t want to engage with their provider.

The point was made that engagement was becoming more digital, but when face-to-face engagement happened, it was done so at larger events or was bite-sized and theme based which is done with a particular purpose in mind.

Engagement is happening in the procurement of services and even the fittings which customers receive – and this needs to be welcomed. However, it’s important these customers are involved in the ongoing management thereafter.

Next step:

Action	How	Timeframe
Providers to share best practice of their own customer engagement techniques together with developing a series of bite-sized, theme based engagements which can be delivered through operational teams	Acis to co-ordinate Partners to share their best practice, evidence and lessons learnt Event attendees to work collaboratively to develop bite-sized engagement structures and implement within own organisation if appropriate	Event delivered July 2019 Impact shared March 2020 to allow time for implementation

Theme two: Complaints

Attendees detailed their own complaints processes, which all seemed to differ – right from what constitutes a complaint. Customer expectations are clearly an issue when it comes to complaints so the need for a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities is key.

It was suggested that better training for front line and call handling workers might be useful to help triage and resolve situations at an earlier stage.

Next step:

Action	How	Timeframe
Providers to work together to develop a complaints handling training course with the potential to be delivered sector-wide. Course to be co-produced and co-delivered with both customers and partners.	Acis to co-ordinate working group Working group to host shared customer engagement events to gather insight and course content Working group to commit to co-designing and co-delivering the course, promote within and deliver to the sector	Engagement events held July 2019 Course content finalised October 2019 to ensure opportunity for all working group partners to feed into this Course delivered December 2019 latest

Theme three: Social value reporting

Attendees agreed there were too many ways of measuring social value for it to really tell a meaningful story, particularly for customers. It was suggested that simplified measures – moving away from monetary figures – would help to tell a better, more humanised story.

A definite consistent approach was needed, and potentially one which includes organisations working in the communities in which we all work – making it much wider than just social housing organisations.

Next steps:

Activity	How	Timeframe
All partners to map what we deliver and where we deliver it, together with how we measure outcomes	Acis to lead Partners to commit to sharing information	Information received from all partners April 2019 Report July 2019
Partners to work collaboratively to map social value provision, focusing on a smaller geography (initially Sheffield). Demonstrating the full impact and cross-sector working rather than stand alone.	Acis to lead Partners to commit to sharing local support service mapping and own service information	All information received from partners April 2019 All mapping complete and contact made with local support provision May 2019 Report finalised and shared August 2019
Partners to work collaboratively to develop a campaign to tell the story of the difference we make.	Working group developed consisting marketing and communication leads within each organisation	May 2019