



THE ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS

tpas

**Vico
Homes**

Good Practice Case Study

Customer Contact Scrutiny





Providing the Tools and Setting the Foundation

In 2023 the Vico Homes Scrutiny Team (VST) was created to demonstrate our commitment to honest, transparent and truly tenant-led scrutiny.



VST members have exceptional access at Vico Homes. After signing the code of conduct, they selected hardware (tablets, laptops, and mobile phones) equipped with the same software for Vico Homes colleagues.

Each member has a @vicohomes.co.uk email address and access to Outlook, Teams, and the full Microsoft suite, enabling secure, seamless data sharing and real-time collaboration with the business. They can also book meeting rooms and check availability without needing admin support.

Collaboration also happens with WhatsApp on personal devices, where members coordinate meeting dates and times. Additionally, VST members are issued Vico Homes ID badges and access cards, granting entry to offices, meeting rooms, the Pavilion (an informal café-style space), and printers.



This level of access reflects Vico Homes' trust in the scrutiny process and a promise to a more collaborative and mutually respectful relationship between Vico Homes and VST.

While developing VST, team members enhanced their understanding of their roles by attending scrutiny training courses, the Tpas National Scrutiny Conference, and research training sessions, all while simultaneously creating and refining the documents and processes that would become the foundation of their team.

The Spark: Origins of the Project

One of the first pieces of data presented to VST was the 2024 Tenant Survey results, which the Customer Insight Team delivered in person. Having received the data before the meeting, members were able to understand the story behind the data when presented and were able to ask appropriate, probing questions.

VST raised a question about why satisfaction had declined in how Vico Homes 'listens and acts' dropping from 74% to 72%. With no clear explanation available, the team chose to investigate this issue further.



To start with VST looked to gain an understanding of the most common interactions customers have with colleagues at Vico Homes. VST requested a list of the most commonly service areas contacted by customers. The list highlighted: repairs, customer experience, estates and income management received the most customer contact. VST decided to conduct a scrutiny activity into these departments, to compare their approaches.



Action Stations: Who Led What

VST explored how best to gather data from these four service areas and agreed that a bootcamp-style scrutiny session would be the most efficient and time-effective approach. To support this, they developed tailored question sets for each service area, ensuring relevance while allowing for cross-comparison of responses.

Each service area was invited to attend the bootcamp and allocated a time slot. VST specifically requested that a manager, officer, and support officer from each area participate, ensuring a broad range of frontline experience was represented.



The session was facilitated by VST, with roles agreed in advance by the Chair. A Customer Insight Officer attended to record the session using a dictaphone and took notes throughout.

After the session, VST asked the Customer Insight Officer to transcribe the recording and share it with members for analysis. The Chair emailed all participating colleagues to thank them for their time and openness, and to request feedback on the session and VST's approach, highlighting that this was their first activity and they were keen to learn and improve.

The responses were overwhelmingly positive, with no suggestions for improvement, helping to raise VST's profile within the organisation.

Using the transcription, VST produced a report and set of recommendations. Preferring a more conversational style, they opted to present their findings using a short PowerPoint. To support this, the Customer Insight Team created a briefing note to provide context ahead of the presentation to the Vico Executive Team (VET) and Customer Committee. This ensured attendees could review the findings in advance and prepare questions. VST agreed that a briefing note would accompany all future review reports to improve clarity and engagement.

They first presented to VET for 10 minutes, followed by 25 minutes of questions. VET responded positively, praising the research and outlining actions they would take based on the findings.



A few weeks later, the Chair presented the findings to the Customer Committee. Again, the report was well received and prompted further discussion. The agreed actions were added to an action plan, which will be monitored quarterly by the Customer Committee. VST also plans to evaluate the impact of their recommendations once they've been implemented.



Lessons and Impact

VST found inconsistencies in the customer journey depending on the department, method, and location of contact. Based on this robust research, VST recommended:

- Expanding customer experience training to ensure consistent service standards.
- Reducing unrecorded interactions, supporting self-service for repairs, and minimising system fragmentation and duplication.

This scrutiny exercise consistently upheld the principles of tenant-led scrutiny throughout its implementation:

Independent - VST chose, designed and undertook the activity, with support from Vico Homes.

Inclusive by design - survey data was drawn from all customers, and a balanced approach was taken in selecting colleagues to participate.

Positive - Vico Homes colleagues accommodated VST and made themselves available for interviews when required.

Constructive - VST acted as a critical friend, identifying areas for improvement while also seeking feedback on its own performance from service areas.

Purposeful - VST's recommendations were added to an action plan monitored by the Customer Committee, driving tangible improvements to the customer experience.

In the days following the bootcamp-style scrutiny session, VST and the Customer Insight Team met for a debrief and a “what went well/even better if” session.

The team were in good spirits following a successful bootcamp but did feel as though some small improvements could be made:

1. Decrease the number of questions in the discussion guide to allow for more in-depth answers. VST would have liked to hear the teams talk for longer about their experiences but still felt as though they got what they wanted out of the session.
2. Including a briefing note with the scrutiny reports wasn't something that was factored in at the beginning. This made a good learning experience.



For further information from the organisation, please contact:

scrutiny@vicohomes.co.uk – General

layniewilson@vicohomes.co.uk – Laynie Wilson – VST Chair

tlawton@vicohomes.co.uk – Thomas Lawton – Customer Insight Officer