

East North East Homes Leeds



# CUSTOMER RESEARCH STRATEGY



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# 1.0 introduction

East North East Homes Leeds is committed to working with customers to obtain feedback to ensure the housing service is provided in accordance with, where possible, customer expectation.

East North East Homes Leeds has a dedicated customer research team to undertake customer research at the fore-end of a project or service and also after it has been delivered. The team works closely with other internal teams to identify areas for feedback and suggested improvements.

Where appropriate the team works with external agencies operating within the housing area East North East Homes Leeds is responsible for. These agencies include, although not an exhaustive list, West Yorkshire Police Service, Leeds Community Safety, Area Management and Impact Leeds.

This document sets out how East North East Homes Leeds will ensure customers are able to feedback their comments and suggestions which ultimately leads to service development and decision making within the company.

# Customer Satisfaction

Feedback from customers is both qualitative and quantitative and leads to an understanding of overall customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction levels are high profile and are closely monitored by the Audit Commission in a suite of Best Value Performance Indicators.

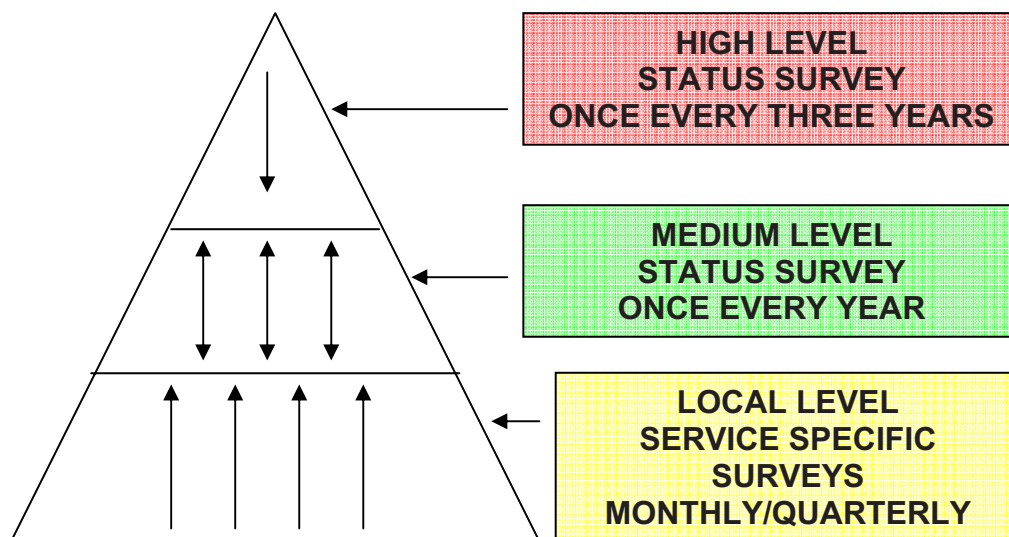
BVPI74 is the indicator that monitors customer satisfaction. This is also broken down on a demographic basis to establish any differences between Black and Minority Ethnic [BME] groups and white groups, disabled groups and non-disabled groups and young people and older people.

- BVPI74a** - Satisfaction with the overall service provided by the landlord  
[Overall]
- BVPI74b** - Satisfaction with the overall service provided by the landlord  
[BME Respondents]
- BVPI74c** - Satisfaction with the overall service provided by the landlord  
[Non-BME Respondents]

Monitoring customer satisfaction is integral to the progression of the company in terms of business development and service planning. All actions undertaken by the company must be formulated around patterns and trends derived from customer satisfaction levels.

It is a statutory obligation of the company to undertake a standardised Status Survey once every three years. The overall satisfaction figure from this survey is acceptable for the contribution to BVPI74. However, it is in the interest of the company to ensure more regular surveys are carried out to obtain 'real time' feedback from customers to ensure resources are allocated to tasks that will be impact effective. The customer research team will continue to complete the Status Survey on an annual basis. This frequency is for good practice and establishes a better understanding of overall customer satisfaction. Service plan actions can be changed immediately to reflect customer opinion to ensure the company delivers services effectively. More regular, quarterly and monthly surveys, will also be undertaken to ensure dynamic feedback is obtained. This will therefore form a three layer approach to deriving customer satisfaction.

# Customer Satisfaction



The three tier approach will be interconnected i.e. each level will not sit in isolation from another. Information from one level will be used as a 'test' to ensure another level is not mis-representative. The 'testing' between levels will also give a good indication of customer expectation and satisfaction over time. This should allow the company to understand how it evolves in terms of responding to these satisfaction levels.

Customer satisfaction is also a requirement of the Audit Commission's Key Lines of Enquiry [KLOE]. It falls into many of the different KLOES that cover an array of service provision. Reference to KLOES is made within the Resources and Information Service Improvement Plan where actions have been designed to meet KLOE objectives.

To monitor customer satisfaction effectively, it is necessary to know the demographic profile of customers who use the service. Profiling of customers will continue to ensure the company knows how different groups of customers experience our services. This will encourage actions to be developed based on tailoring our service to meet customer needs that include, for example, cultural difference.

# 2.0 Aims

- To closely monitor customer satisfaction levels for all service areas on a real time basis and historically.
- To ensure any overall trends are identified between each survey to establish running themes and patterns. This will aid a holistic understanding of the satisfaction of service areas that are monitored on a quarterly and monthly basis.
- To recommend actions for improvements to individual service areas and ensure these actions are implemented to their full capacity.
- To strive to increase customer satisfaction levels to the national upper quartile levels, including BVPI74b and BVPI74c.
- To have detailed, up to date knowledge of the profile of all customers to ensure the appropriate service is delivered.
- To ensure that staff and contractors are given customer profile information to understand how they may need to adapt their service.
- To embed the culture whereby staff proactively seek opportunities to gain feedback from customers to identify improvements to service.

# 2.0 Objectives for 2007/08

- To promote the role of the customer research team to the new company teams through presentations and leaflets to ensure the operations and benefits of the customer research team are known. This includes an awareness of the importance of customer satisfaction to drive service improvement.
- To increase customer satisfaction levels into the medium or upper quartile national level to ensure good practice and Audit Commission recognition.
- To continue the programme of quarterly and monthly satisfaction surveys for individual service areas.
- To provide reports for each survey that is carried out. This will include suggestions for implementing actions.
- To undertake a review of all surveys to make sure all service standards are monitored.
- To target areas that are underperforming with further follow-up research in an effort to understand the difficulties and consequential solutions.
- To ensure that all the data held about customer profile is up to date and managed on the company wide housing management system.
- To follow up all information that is missing regarding customer profile make up and undertake a regular 6 monthly check of this information.
- To undertake the first yearly Status Survey for the company. This will act as a baseline for the company service plans.
- To work with the Partnership Team and support other teams with consultation arrangements for implementing new initiatives.

# 3.0 Current Position and Comparative Information

East North East Homes Leeds holds broad information relating to overall customer satisfaction for the new company. Recently three companies have merged to become East North East Homes Leeds. Leeds East homes, Leeds North East homes and part of Leeds South East homes have come together as one management ALMO. Each individual company had varying ways of managing customer satisfaction monitoring.

Merging overall satisfaction figures from each ALMO would distort the position and give a particularly abnormal baseline to work with. The distortion comes from the variance in figures from all areas. Leeds East homes had a particularly low satisfaction rating in the last STATUS Survey and Leeds North East homes was comparatively higher. The figures for all the South East area were reasonably good. However, with only taking a small section of that area under the new management wing, it would be problematic in assuming that this was the satisfaction opinion from tenants in the inherited housing stock. The separate company positions are given in Fig.1.

	Leeds North East homes	Leeds East homes	Leeds South East homes*
BVPI74a	72.3% [in house survey] 75% [LCC MRUK survey]	66% [LCC MRUK survey]	74% [LCC MRUK survey]
BVPI74b	55.2% [in house survey]	58% [LCC MRUK survey]	58% [LCC MRUK survey]
BVPI74c	74.4% [in house survey]	71% [LCC MRUK survey]	71% [LCC MRUK survey]

\*Statistics refer to the whole area of Leeds South East homes. The new company is made up of a dissection of Leeds South East homes housing stock. This figure may not be representative for the new area.

Figures are taken from an 'overall figure' of all the housing ALMOs in 2006. The figures are therefore rough indicators of satisfaction.

FIG 1. Current overall position of Customer Satisfaction for East North East Homes Leeds [2006 Baseline data]

The annual STATUS Survey, to be completed by July 2007, will give a more representative and accurate measure of customer satisfaction for the new tenant population that East North East Homes Leeds is responsible for.

# 4.0 Key Targets

- To increase customer satisfaction into the national median or top quartile. Based on 2005/2006 BVPI data, these are the upper quartiles for the average across England:

All England	BV 74a	BV 74b	BV 74c
Average	78.09%	70.52%	78.08%
Top Quartile	84.00%	82.00%	84.00%
Median	79.00%	72.00%	80.00%
Bottom Quartile	74.00%	61.00%	74.00%

- A target will be set once the more accurate baseline for all tenants in the new area is established in summer 2007.
- To improve individual service area satisfaction by a margin of 5% on the calculated 'overall satisfaction' figure. The BVPI target can also be used for these quarterly/monthly surveys once a baseline position has been established.
- To know at least 90% of ethnicity information for all our tenants by April 2008.
- To know at least 90% of date of birth information for all our tenants by April 2008.
- To know at least 90% of languages spoken and read by all our tenants by April 2008.
- To have asked and confirmed with all tenants their disability, their marital status, their sexuality, their religion/faith and their contact number details. To be completed by April 2008.
- To average a 40% return rate on satisfaction surveys for all projects.
- To provide and promote the ability for customers to complete satisfaction surveys on-line.
- To publish all satisfaction figures on the website including full reports.

# 5.0 Initiatives for 2007/08

- Annual Status Survey 2007 to establish a new company customer satisfaction baseline.
- Two customer profiling tasks to capture new and amended information.
- Presentations and the production of leaflets to establish the knowledge of the team within other internal teams and encourage further areas of improvement.
- New and amended monthly/quarterly questionnaires for the new company's structure. This is to be completed in consultation with other teams and must closely reflect service area service standards.
- Consultation exercises on projects including:
  - Fuel poverty
  - Regeneration schemes
  - Estate Investment schemes
  - RESPECT Agenda
- Monitoring response rates and the consideration of new research methodology and resource implications.
- Reviewing statistical software packages to allow full delivery of the research service to teams with a view to reaching 3\* status to permit the outsourcing of services, at a cost, to other housing providers in the future.

# 6.0 Strategies and Tasks

Strategies and Tasks	Implemented By	Frequency
To develop the capacity within the Customer Research Team to become more consultative with teams to ensure all aspects of the service are monitored accurately and on a timely basis.		
To link to service area Focus Groups to monitor service provision in a qualitative manner.		
To review all postal questionnaires with service teams ensuring reflection of new service standards.		
To develop a simple monitoring tool for overall satisfaction across each area and its adherence to target levels derived from individual teams or BVPI criteria.		
To develop a monitoring trail of actions that have been recommended and the completion of these. This is to source evidence to support completions, if appropriate.		
To develop a regular reporting mechanism to staff teams, management teams, Committees and Board. This is to ensure all levels of the business are aware of customer satisfaction levels.		
To transfer all existing data of ALMO's to the generic housing management database using administrative resources to allow this to be as productive as possible.		
To ensure that all customers receive feedback from their feedback. This would be either through the website or a form that is completed at the end of each survey/project. This will ensure customers feel their views are taken into account and help keep response rates buoyant.		
To make greater use of joint working and good practice [HouseMark and 3* Inspection Reports] to ensure good ideas are taken up.		
To market the focus of the team in conjunction with the Marketing and Communications Team.		
To develop a set of service standards for the Research Team to manage the expectations of internal staff teams.		
To review research methodologies used to collect information. This includes current projects such as the mystery shopping and tenant inspectors' project.		
To work with service review groups/focus groups and collect trends and themes from these groups to develop a holistic qualitative view of company customer satisfaction.		