

East North East Homes Leeds



# MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY



# CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Audience
- 3.0 Aims
- 4.0 Objectives
- 5.0 Methods
- 6.0 Strategies and Tasks
- 7.0 Monitoring and Reviewing our progress

# 1.0 introduction

Providing decent homes, decent places, fair access and valuing people are the values of East North East Homes Leeds. We base our approach to achieving this goal on the importance of our customers continual involvement in improving performance and a belief that the customer should have choice and control. We can only thrive if we have strong and effective relationships, particularly with the staff and partners who provide the services and our customers who use them and if we market and promote ourselves in a way that embraces our core values and pushes us towards achieving these aims.

Ensuring we provide the right information, listening to people and acting on what they tell us is crucial to providing an excellent service to our customers. Unless we have a good understanding of the issues facing the people who have a stake in our organisation, we can't expect to adequately meet their needs. This strategy seeks to ensure that our customers and potential customers know about the services we can offer, and that in developing and shaping these services, we ensure that we are meeting our customers' needs in a modern and effective way. We aim to ensure that all our tenants are reached and our services are accessible, regardless of their language, age or disability and provide documents in a range of alternative formats.

East North East Homes Leeds was created through the merger of Leeds North East homes, part of Leeds South East homes and Leeds East homes in April 2007 and covers a diverse area of different communities and housing issues. This strategy has been developed following consultation with staff, partners and customers. It is a document that will be constantly reviewed and will react to the changing needs of our customers and our vision as a new and developing company.

This is a corporate strategy and all East North East Homes Leeds staff will have a role to play in its successful implementation and should take responsibility for ensuring that all objectives are achieved.

# 2.0 audience

Every person who lives, works or visits East North East Homes Leeds has a stake in our organisation and should be considered our customers. Our approach will take account of the need to target:

- current and potential tenants
- owner occupiers, private rented tenants
- our own staff
- staff from other Directorates
- Board Directors
- Members
- contractors
- other agencies
- voluntary sector groups

We have a strong link with the Customer Research Team, profiling the information and the knowledge base we have of the tenants in our area.

Within these groups, our approach will take account of the need to target specific types of customer, for example older people, young people, people with special needs and those from the BME community to ensure we provide a fair and consistent service to all. We also recognise the need to market ourselves within the social housing sector and to those who will assess our performance, e.g. Leeds City Council and the Audit Commission.

# 3.0 aims

Our approach is targeted on:

- Being open and transparent, explaining what we can and cannot provide and why.
- Removing barriers which prevent people from accessing information and services.
- Improving lines of communication with traditionally hard to reach sections of the community.
- Providing consistent standards in the way we treat our customers, so people know what to expect each time they contact us.
- Providing accurate, useful and regular information in an appropriate format to suit the individuals needs.
- Creating a strong brand image consistently so people know what we provide and come to trust in our quality.
- Ensuring East North East Homes Leeds staff take ownership of customer enquiries.
- Encouraging and listening to customer's views, ensuring they are taken into account when decisions are made and explaining our decisions clearly.
- Taking responsibility for our mistakes and aiming to correct errors as soon as possible.
- Constantly promoting East North East Homes Leeds and celebrating our successes with all stakeholders.

# 4.0 objectives

To achieve this we will:

- provide information on services, new legislation and new initiatives through newsletters, articles, text messaging, website, leaflets, displays and events.
- use product specific marketing to increase take up e.g. sheltered housing.
- create campaign work to tackle specific issues e.g. rent arrears through promoting direct debit.
- consult/involve to gauge satisfaction and involve customers in service development through links with tenant and resident associations, village voices, tenant forums groups and questionnaires which are frequently distributed and monitored by the Customer Research Team.
- increase satisfaction levels with our communication techniques.
- ensure customer access to our services is provided in a variety of ways to meet all customer needs.
- work with internal teams to promote the functions and benefits of the team. Our service standards will control expectations of service delivery.

# 5.0 method

Adopting a customer first approach, we will:

## *Research*

- identify the needs of our customers:

We will use established consultation and carry out bespoke research to further increase our information on customer profiles, expectations and levels of satisfaction and awareness about our services.

## *Product*

- shape our services to these needs:

We will use research findings in shaping and developing services to ensure that we offer customers choice and adopt a customer first approach in service delivery through feedback of findings to teams across the company.

## *Place*

- make services available when needed:

We will have regard to accessibility issues in service planning and delivery.

## *Promotion*

- raise awareness:

We will use a range of internal and external communication channels to raise awareness and encourage positive perceptions of the company.

## *People*

- ensure we can deliver:

We will make sure that our services are adequately resourced to meet service requirements and match customer needs and expectations.

# 6.0 Strategy Plan

| Strategies and Tasks  | Implemented By   | Frequency   |
|---|--|---|
| Support and connect with other strategies within East North East Homes Leeds, namely the Customer Research Strategy.  | Communications Team/Customer Research Team/Company   | Ongoing   |
| Publish and review a Tenants Handbook.  | Resources and Information  | Annual  |
| Publish a variety of Newsletters:<br><br><i>'Communications' and 'Housing Matters' for staff</i><br><br><i>'Open Door' for tenants</i><br><br><i>'Regeneration' for tenants in specific areas benefiting from regeneration.</i> | Communications Team/Staff<br><br>Communications Team/Tenants<br><br>Communications Team/Community Involvement Team | Weekly and monthly<br><br>Quarterly<br><br>Regularly (as and when needed) |
| Produce a Tenants Calendar of future events and dates working with the Partnerships Team.   | Communications Team/Community Involvement Team   | Annual  |
| Produce an Annual Report to our customers.  | Communications Team/Management Team  | Annual  |
| Develop new publications as the need is identified.   | Communications Team  | Ongoing - as and when needed  |
| Review and edit any publications accordingly for changes in legislation, contact details, general information etc.  | Communications Team  | Monthly   |
| Consult with appropriate stakeholders on new publications, using editorial panels and through Tenant Forums.  | Communications Team/Customer Research Team   | Ongoing - as and when needed  |
| Set up and develop editorial panels for the tenant newsletter. To consist of tenants and leaseholders and reflect the readership of the newsletter.   | Communications Team  | Quarterly   |
| Achieve positive articles in external publications:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the local press</li> <li>• the housing press</li> <li>• Open Door</li> <li>• Website</li> </ul>                                 | Communications Team/Tenants/Board Members/Councillors/Staff  | Bi-monthly  |
| Develop and update the information on the East North East Homes Leeds website   | Communications Team  | Daily   |
| Promote the use of the website amongst staff, Board Members and partners to retain knowledge levels which can be passed on to customers.  | Communications Team  | Daily   |
| Promote ourselves on our partners websites  | Communications Team  | Quarterly   |
| Place advertisements in the Press about the services provided, changes to those services and other items of special interest and promote East North East Homes Leeds.   | Communications Team  | Bi-monthly  |
| Cooperate and liaise with other teams in East North East Homes Leeds in identifying the services and products to be marketed and promoted.  | Communications Team/Company  | Monthly   |
| Regularly monitor the delivery of the action plan.  | Communications Team  | Monthly   |
| Review & update the Marketing and Communications Strategy and action plan.  | Resources and Information  | Quarterly   |
| Periodically review and develop the Marketing and Communications Strategy.  | Communications Team  | Annually  |

# 7.0 reviewing and monitoring

Delivering the strategy and actions achieved will be reviewed by the Resources and Information team as part of the monthly review of their Service Improvement Plan.

The effectiveness of the strategy will be measured by:

- benchmarking our progress against existing satisfaction levels.
- analysing the complaints and compliments we receive.
- continuing with quality assurance procedures to assess our levels of customer service through the Tenant Inspectors Project and the Mystery Shoppers Scheme.
- surveying our staff and tenants regularly and benchmarking our progress against current satisfaction levels and other similar employers.
- produce quarterly reports to ALMO Management Team and Board of Directors to display the impact the Marketing and Communications team has on the internal and external customers and general health of the organisation.