Customer Experience Strategy

2019-23

OUR VISION IS:

TO CREATE THRIVING COMMUNITIES AND PLACES PEOPLE ARE PROUD TO CALL HOME

OUR VALUES ARE:

ENGAGE • EMPOWER • INNOVATE • DELIVER
STRATEGY OVERVIEW AND AIMS

This document sets out our Customer Experience Strategy for 2019 to 2023.

Consultation has shown our residents prefer we use the term ‘residents’ instead of ‘customers’ when making reference to them. However in terms of this strategy, they felt ‘Customer Experience’ was a term more widely understood and therefore more suitable.

Our success as an organisation depends on the delivery of our mission and the five ambitions linked to this as set out in our Corporate Plan 2019/22. In order to deliver the Customer Experience Strategy, we will focus on the Landlord ambition to ‘consistently deliver an excellent and reliable resident experience’.

This strategy links to our People Strategy, Information Technology Strategy, Communications Strategy and Resident Engagement Strategy.

There has been a fundamental shift over the last five years in customer expectations of how services are delivered across all sectors. Customers now expect to be in control, choosing how and when to access services. There is an increasing need for organisations to be easy to deal with and customers to feel their interactions are effortless.

The impact of Brexit and the tragedy at Grenfell Tower have contributed to organisations needing to significantly adapt their approach to delivering services that are open, transparent and demonstrate respect both ways.

The accelerated use of technology has made it easy to do almost anything from the mobile phone and provided the opportunity to enable smart homes, neighbourhoods and cities. This means the next few years are going to lead to a new wave of innovation in services and the home. Customer experience is a holistic approach to service delivery, referring to every interaction a customer has with a business. This strategy defines how we deliver a positive meaningful experience to our residents.

This strategy will focus on 4 key strands which link to the organisations values of Engage - Innovate - Empower – Deliver.

**Resident Insight (Engage)**

We want to know who our individual customers are, understand their needs and use information to tailor services.

**Digital Engagement (Innovate)**

We want to use technology to deliver services which are easy to use and offer our customers choice.

**People Investment (Empower)**

We want every single member of staff, to provide excellent services to every customer they interact with, every single time.

**Service Standards (Deliver)**

We will establish a clear service offer which we will constantly review and monitor to achieve high levels of satisfaction.
This strategy will impact our residents, staff and the organisation in the following ways:

**For our residents:**
- Easier access to services at a time and place that suits them
- Staff will be helpful, inclusive and respectful, treating residents with empathy
- Residents will know what service they can expect and be confident we keep our commitments

**For our staff:**
- Our investment in technology will provide opportunities to work more efficiently with increased access to relevant information
- Our staff will be part of a customer focused organisation and will be clear of what is required of them
- Residents will be clear of our requirement to treat staff with respect

**For the organisation:**
- Improve resident satisfaction
- Achieve savings from more efficient ways of working

**WHERE WE ARE NOW?**

**Resident Insight**
Gathering and using resident insight information has the potential to improve the resident experience, moving away from a one size fits all approach to more tailored service delivery.

Like much of the housing sector, we lack relevant data about our residents and do not routinely collect information in a structured and proactive way. We recognise making improvements in this area, by holding and using the data both intelligently and compliantly (with GDPR) has the potential to transform how we deliver services.

We have recently restructured our business bringing Customer Relations and Performance into one team. One area of focus for this department is to use customer insight, solicited information, such as survey data and unsolicited feedback such as complaints and compliments, to develop learning outcomes, and drive performance improvement across the business.

Resident Services has begun using resident data to identify residents who are less likely to sustain a tenancy and do more early intervention and preventative work.

We have made it easier for residents to provide their feedback with the introduction of on-line polls via our residents’ portal and instant quality scoring of phone calls via our phone system.

**Digital Engagement**
The way customers access services is changing, with increasing numbers of people using the internet each day to access a range of services from booking cinema tickets to paying for school dinners. Combined with the move to ‘digital first’ by Lewisham Housing Benefit and Universal Credit, residents are becoming more familiar with digital services.

In the last five years we have moved more services on-line for our tenants via our portal including reporting repairs, booking gas servicing appointments and updating tenancy details. We have made significant improvements to the portal for leaseholders and have a good platform to develop further.

These developments have allowed us to increase the number of residents using our on-line services. Portal registrations more than doubled from 2,257 in December 2016 to 5,959 in July 2019 which represents 33% of residents. We’ve also seen an increase in the number of residents using text messaging from 1,065 in December 2016 to 3,206 messages in July 2019. Details of our current customer access routes are provided in Appendix 1.

More recently, in 2019 we commenced agile working with our Housing Officers, making use of mobile technology to increase their presence on our estates and to work more efficiently.

**People Investment**
Many residents receive excellent customer service but this is not consistent. We need to improve how we ensure staff are meeting the expected standards.

Consultation with staff has shown teams do not always work well together or consider the impact of their business decision on other parts of the business.

We recognise our staff are the most important resource in improving the customer experience and increasing resident satisfaction. In 2019 we launched our new values which define the way we expect staff to work with residents and each other. We also launched ‘My Performance Conversations’ which will bring a more focussed approach to performance management with assessment throughout the year. This new approach includes a new competency framework which sets out our expected standards of behaviours and attitudes, aligned to the new values.
Service Standards
We want our residents to experience great service at all times and aim to increase tenant satisfaction to 83% and leaseholder satisfaction to 62% by 2022. We are making progress in this area, achieving 79% overall satisfaction with services from tenants in 2018 and 59% from leaseholders.

Our current service standards provide a foundation but there is a need to modernise them and in turn create a better service offer. We have already started our review of the current corporate service standards provided in Appendix 2.

As part of our Corporate Plan 2019 -22 we have set business KPIs linked to our 5 key ambitions. We review performance against these KPIs monthly and develop action plans for any under-performing measures. Appendix 3 sets out the corporate KPIs relevant to this strategy.

We have increased the scope, frequency and quality of customer feedback from service specific surveys for Environmental Services, ASB and Complaints. We have also increased our review of overall satisfaction moving our bi-annual STAR satisfaction survey to a quarterly approach to allow us to respond to any trends in a timelier manner.

Since 2017 we have resolved complaints more quickly through an informal ‘two day outcome’ target. We are seeking to drive up the number of complaints resolved in this way, to focus on putting things right for our residents promptly.

We have started to review the whole repairs service with resident experience and satisfaction forming a large part of the review.

We have recently become a member of the Institute of Customer Service. Our membership to this interdependent professional body for Customer Service, will provide us with support to deliver improved service performance.

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

Resident Insight
We want to know who our individual customers are, understand their needs and use information to tailor services.

We recognise some residents will only want to access services they pay for whilst vulnerable residents may want additional support. We understand resident needs change as they experience different life events and changes in their circumstances. We want to be able to adapt to these changing demands and understand the needs associated with them.

We want to use resident insight information to provide opportunities to segment residents and tailor the service they receive. It will help staff deliver more appropriate services and help sustain tenancies. Tailoring services will allow us to use resources more efficiently, moving away from our current largely reactive approach and increasing our proactive work.

Digital Engagement
We want to use technology to deliver services which are easy to use and offer our customers choice.

Many residents shop, bank and deal with a range of day to day needs online because they offer the ability to transact flexibly at speed and with ease. ‘Customer Effort’ is a key driver for achieving digital engagement and customer satisfaction.

Residents want to complete simple tasks such as making a payment, with as little effort as possible. They want services to be reliable and ‘right first time’. This preferred way to transact is growing and over time our residents will expect our services to match their experiences in other parts of their lives.

To reduce customer effort and increase our ability to work efficiently, we will explore creating a single point of contact through a centralised call centre. We will use Customer Relationship Management technology (CRM) to support this approach, allowing more of the business to implement agile working.

We will take an incremental approach to this centralised delivery of services, ensuring the technology is in place to support the transition. We will also focus on making information on our properties and services easily available to staff and reduce manual intervention so their time is used more effectively.

A key element to becoming more efficient will be improving our ability to achieve ‘right first time’ in our delivery. We want to reduce the time staff spend responding to errors, using technology to reduce failure demand. This will also improve the customer experience, reducing the number of contacts from residents responding to something which has gone wrong.

We will also explore the use of technology to deliver SMART homes.
**People Investment**

We want every single member of staff, to provide excellent services to every customer they interact with, every single time.

This strategy will support our work to ensure staff recognise excellent customer service as a fundamental part of their role.

We want residents to experience empathetic, knowledgeable staff who are helpful and treat them with respect. Our values support this ambition and we will reinforce this to drive the culture.

This aligns with our People Strategy which sets out our commitment to instilling a ‘right first time’ culture and remaining focussed on getting the basics right.

**Service Standards**

We will establish a clear service offer which we will constantly review and monitor to achieve high levels of satisfaction.

Service standards define what residents can expect from us and allow us to establish our expectations of resident’s treatment of staff.

We will establish a clear and consistent service offer across the organisation to avoid inconsistencies which can lead to unfairness, higher costs and dissatisfaction. We will continue to review our service standards ensuring they reflect our drive to be a high performing and inclusive organisation.

**HOW WE WILL GET THERE**

**Resident insight**

Keeping residents data safe and secure will be a priority and our systems will need to ensure we respect resident confidentiality. We will work to the principle that we only collect what we will measure, analyse and act on.

We will need to record residents contact preferences and wherever possible meet these. Where residents do not specify digital channels as their preference, we will support them to shift to digital channels whenever appropriate, using a range of incentives and techniques to encourage behavioural change.

The implementation of a Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) will be key to improving the handling of resident data. It will allow us to ensure we capture data once, store it in one place and share it where required across teams, avoiding duplication.

CRM will provide a single view of the customer which will allow us to provide better and more targeted services. It will also allow us to respond to resident’s desire for better informed staff, with all interactions recorded across departments.

Having up to date data, in particular contact details, will maximise our ability to communicate with residents using prompt and cost effective channels such as email and text messaging.

We will engage residents in our drive to increase resident insight information. We will also need to embed a culture of customer insight with our staff so they commit to collecting, maintaining and using data.

By using customer intelligence from surveys, complaints and service usage data, we will identify the areas of high and low satisfaction and use this information to support continuous improvement.

We already provide a range of opportunities for feedback, however, we will increase opportunities for customers to shape services. It is important we also involve those groups who do not currently engage, so our feedback sources are representative of our resident demographics.

**Digital Engagement**

Improving our digital offer and increasing take up of our digital services is essential to ensure we meet customer expectations. We want to maximise the potential to reduce ‘customer effort’ providing residents with easy to access information and comprehensive records.

We will meet expectations by investing in our IT. Our digital plans are ambitious. We will ensure our Information Technology Strategy supports our ambitions and provides the best opportunity for us to deliver our aims.

As our digital offer improves, we will encourage digitally able residents to use these services. This will help staff to work more efficiently, reducing the time they spend processing day to day transactions and maximising their time to support vulnerable residents.

We recognise some residents are ‘digitally excluded’ and need assistance with accessing and/or using the internet. Our consultation with residents has told us they want Lewisham Homes to support them overcome their digital challenges which we will do as part of our Digital Inclusion work.

We have committed to improving the IT infrastructure in our sheltered housing and will work with Lewisham Council to explore providing low cost Wi-Fi to residents as per their IT strategy, in particular to our residents in Hostels.

We want to significantly increase leasehold satisfaction by implementing timely and transparent service charge and major works bills.
We will look to create reporting Apps for residents to allow them to report communal repairs and to track progress.

**People Investment**

We need to maximise collaborative working, recognising everyone is accountable for service delivery and focusing on the customer experience in our decisions.

We will instil a more collaborative approach to our day to day working, which will avoid duplication and reduce the number of contacts residents need to make to get the service they require.

We will focus on ensuring non-customer facing teams recognise their work leads to a resident. This will link to a new approach to policies and procedures, ensuring we always consider the impact these may have on residents.

**Service Standards**

Through our new values and competency framework we will build a performance focussed culture. We will make changes to ensure we can monitor and measure more services and launch a new set of service standards.

Measurement of quality is important and we will ensure this is a priority across the organisation, with front-line services in particular using a range of methods to monitor how their team is performing. This will include satisfaction surveys, lessons learned from complaints, spot checks, mystery shopping, call listening and observations.

We will create a service improvement group who will review the results and comments from customer surveys, develop action plans, and report their recommendations for improvements to our Performance Committee.

Benchmarking information can provide valuable insight into how we are performing.

To ensure our points of delivery meet customers’ needs we will do the following:

- Ensure residents have equal access to our services
- Continue to provide a walk-in face to face service for our customers who choose this method
- Ensure our office meets accessibility standards
- Provide translation and interpretation services and information in different formats
- Improve information recorded about vulnerability and other special requirements, ensuring this is accessible to staff and periodically reviewed - but also meets data protection and confidentiality requirements.
- Ensure our contractors and others who provide our services also share our vision and values and deliver to this strategy.

**MONITORING AND REVIEW**

We will formally review this strategy in 2023 and will amend and review in the interim, as necessary, to ensure that we keep abreast of developments with new regulatory standards and policies.

We will measure the delivery of the strategy in line with our implementation plan, alongside other activities including:

- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Monitoring data on customer contact face to face, phone, text message and internet
- Staff satisfaction surveys
- Customer complaints and compliments

**DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY**

In developing this strategy we have considered the relevant regulatory requirements. The equality analysis assessment for this strategy has found no changes in approach that would have an adverse impact on a particular group of residents or employees.

We have consulted with staff, board members and other partners and gathered information about our residents’ experiences from surveys, focus groups and complaints. We have benchmarked similar strategies from social landlords and researched good practice within and outside of the housing sector.
APPENDICES
1. Customer Access Routes
2. Corporate Service Standards
3. Performance Measures

APPENDIX 1 - CUSTOMER ACCESS ROUTES

We have continually reviewed our points of delivery to ensure we meet customer need whilst achieving value for money. We currently offer:

- **Access in person**
  - At our reception and interview rooms at the Old Town Hall in Catford.
  - Consultation and resident engagement events
- **Access over the telephone**
  - A freephone number for all enquiries
  - An emergency Repairs service out of hours
  - A witness support service for ASB incidents on Friday and Saturday evenings
  - Via text for our involvement opportunities, rent balances, welfare benefit and rent messages, surveys and polls.
- **Access over the internet**
  - Via email contact - addresses advertised on the website, in leaflets and magazines
  - Via the website with on-line reporting forms, our online shop and our residents portal
- **Access in writing**
  - Via a freepost address
- **Provision of information through a range of printed copy and on-line leaflets, and a six monthly residents magazine**

APPENDIX 2 - CORPORATE SERVICE STANDARDS

1. Complaints – We will respond to complaints promptly with at least 90% of Stage 1 complaints answered in 10 working days and 90% of Stage 2 answered in 5 days.
2. Phones – We aim to answer 90% of all calls in under 2 minutes and answer 96% of all calls.
3. Reception – We will see you quickly when you visit us at Reception. The average wait will be under 10 minutes.
4. Repairs – Our repairs service will meet expectations. We aim for tenants to be satisfied with at least 9 out of 10 repairs.
5. Cleaning – We will keep internal areas clean. We aim for at least 9 out of 10 residents to be satisfied with internal cleaning.
6. Grounds Maintenance – We will keep grass and planted areas attractive. We aim for at least 9 out of 10 residents to be satisfied with gardening and grounds maintenance.
7. Rent Collection – We will make sure that tenants are paying their fair share of the costs of services by collecting at least 99% of all rent due.
8. Resident Safety – We will service all gas appliances that we are responsible for every year.
9. Overall resident satisfaction – Our overall service will meet the expectations of our residents. At least 8 out of 10 tenants and 6 out of 10 leaseholders will be satisfied with the overall service they receive.
# APPENDIX 3 - PERFORMANCE MEASURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>KPI Measure - LBL Owned Permanent Stock</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2019/20</td>
<td>2020/21</td>
<td>2021/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LANDLORD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tenant satisfaction with the overall service</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Leasehold satisfaction with the overall service</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Satisfaction with the last repair</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Satisfaction with internal caretaking and cleaning</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Satisfaction with grounds maintenance</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Complaints responded to on time</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENTERPRISE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Proportion of resident’s actively using the portal</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Customer Experience Strategy

2019-23

CONTACTS:

0800 028 2028
lewishamhomes.org.uk

Old Town Hall
Catford Road
London
SE6 4RU

facebook.com/lewishamhomes
@lewishamhomes
lhomes.org.uk/lhlin
instagram.com/lewishamhomes