



Involvement News | June 2017 | www.homegroup.org.uk

Welcome to June's Involvement News, it's a bumper issue this month covering April and May and contains links to a further five reports, please take time to click on the links and read more details of the fantastic ways our customers have been shaping, changing and influencing Home Group. Outcomes are highlighted in **pink**

Digital Involvement

Over the last twelve months the Involvement team have been exploring and embracing the digital world and its impact to the business and customer. Starting with The Working Together virtual conference in October, the team has been using the new technology and learning from customers to maximise digital channels for scrutiny, equality and diversity, training, shadowing and delivering involvement events. Adopting a multi-channel approach to involvement helped save an impressive 36% (£184,771) from the involvement budget in 2016/17 whilst involving significantly more customers in key events such as Working Together and Customer and Client awards. Read the full report [here](#)

Customer Forum

We held our first Customer Forum with rented and supported customers in Leeds on 9th May with members of our Viewpoint teams, Human Library and rented and supported assessors along with seniors leaders; Rosie Du Rose, Sally Parsons, Audrey Mitchell, James Kaye and Graham Darby.

[This meeting provided a perfect bridge between dispersed groups and management](#)

- Reviewed Customer Forum achievements from 2016/17. Click [here](#)
- Discussed Home Group's new strategy and key aims
- Reviewed the latest scrutiny report based on 29 customer promise assessments and 50 client promise assessments. Click [here](#) for reports
- Gave their views on their understanding of safeguarding and the consultation for the review of the safeguarding policy
- Customers gave their views on how we can involve customers in the Home Group's key goals to form the basis of the new involvement plan 2017-20

- Customers gave their feedback on the new Homelife magazine for rented and supported customers which was overwhelmingly positive

Brand Testing

25 leasehold, supported and rented customers from Durham, Newcastle, London and the South East gave their views on some of the new ideas for the future of Home Group with external consultants Brand Vista focussing on digital solutions and self-serve for customers.

Customer's views will be added to the wider consultation and help shape digital solutions and our aim to be 90% digital

Equality and Diversity and Human Library

- Human Library member customer, John Baxter, facilitated a mental health themed life swap event with 10 colleagues, customers and volunteers at Consett Wellbeing and Recovery Service during mental health awareness week. *One member said after we had finished, "I don't feel alone now"*
- Human Library and Customer Board Member Ruth Jackson delivered a speech at the TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) Awards ceremony in Manchester about her involvement in the Human Library, raising awareness of the Human Library and Home's Group's partnership with TPAS, and increasing Home Group's profile within the housing sector.
- Three Human Library members delivered a presentation and life swap session at the Pride in Diversity event in Harrogate to 20 members of the public and local diversity groups as part of a week of diversity themed events, raising awareness of Home Group's Human Library and understanding of people's diverse needs and experiences.
- Supported customer and Human Library member Ronnie Treston shared his story and helped to train four new Human Library members from Supported Lodgings services (two hosts and two customers) in Nottingham. New Human Library members then delivered a life swap at a Supported Lodgings event for customers, colleagues and external agencies and practitioners.

We are quite a bouncy, chatty bunch but when he (Ronnie) was telling his story, you could have heard a pin drop. His advice for the life swappers and how he explained the confidentiality side of it was brilliant

Value for money workshop

Seven rented and supported customers reviewed the impact of complaints and scrutiny 2016/17. Customers made value for money judgements and recommendations for improving value for money of involvement activities. You can read the full report [here](#)

Results will be published in our Impact assessment 2017 and recommendations will improve value for money in involvement in 2017/18

Independent Complaints Panel

Customer Panel members reviewed and made recommendations to Home Group to resolve 4 customer complaints that have exhausted our internal complaints process. *It makes me feel happy to do the best I can to help sort out problems*

Recommendations from the panel helped resolve the four complaints

Scrutiny

Supported customer assessors visit our services and talk to the customers who receive support from the service. They measure how well we're doing at delivering the promise, awarding a bronze, silver or gold and making recommendations for improvements. You can find details about the promise [here](#) and 12 month scrutiny reports summarising service assessments [here](#)

- Assessors awarded Webb House, a Mental Health Service in Middlesbrough a **gold** overall. The assessors were very impressed with the service and really enjoyed speaking to customers, for two assessors it was their first assessment and the team did a fantastic job of making them feel welcome and relaxed
- We trained six new fantastic Supported Customers Assessors from learning disability and mental health services in May. Experienced assessors co-facilitated the session and shared their experiences of the process. Our new assessors carried out a promise assessment on a mental health service in Middlesbrough via Skype as part of their training.

I found today very informative and the staff welcoming and helpful...I have enjoyed everything about the day, meeting new people and getting trained.

Assessors' feedback and recommendations will shape an improvement plan for each service which will be reviewed within three months of the visit.

Hotel@home is a self-assessment tool developed by supported customers and colleagues to measure the decent home section of the promise in our services.

- In April and May 33 services involved 13 clients in assessing their own service. All services have produced an accommodation improvement plan based on the findings of the assessments.
 - Two services awarded themselves platinum; one gold, 12 silver and 15 bronze
- Client assessors validate self-assessment scores for a decent home as part of their assessments against the client promise. Hotel@home is really pushing up the decent home standard in our services. At Webb House, Middlesbrough assessors upgraded the hotel@home self-assessment form bronze to silver.

Rented customer assessors visit our neighbourhoods, talk to the customers who live there and measure how well we're doing at delivering the promise, awarding a bronze, silver or gold and making recommendations for improvements. You can find details about the promise [here](#) and 12 month scrutiny reports summarising neighbourhood assessments [here](#)

- Customers assessed the Stansted neighbourhood, Mountfitchet, Essex in the South East by telephone. Assessors awarded **gold** overall, with gold across six standards and silver in people who care.
Home Group helped to refer me to Social Services who installed a wet room free of charge! This was thanks to Home Group's advice and support
- Customers assessed Spoonwood Close in Basingstoke by telephone. They awarded **silver** overall, with gold for Safe place to live, Choice of products and services and People who care *I've got no complaints.*
Everything is fine...Issues get dealt with and I'm really happy with that

- Assessors spoke to 19 households in the Kells neighbourhood, Whitehaven in the North West and awarded a silver standard over all with gold in people who care, reliable services and safe place to live.
- Customers re- assessed The Woodlands neighbourhood in the North East which was one of our first neighbourhoods assessed in 2015. Customers awarding a **silver** again with silver across all 7 standards noting significant improvements in people who care, choice of products and services; clear information and opportunities to influence which scored bronze in 2015.
I'm very happy. The staff are excellent and helpful...I couldn't get a cheaper house this size...Good value, great houses

Assessors' recommendations will shape an improvement plan for each neighbourhood

News from the regions

You can find viewpoint reports for all our regions [here](#) including a you said we did for 2016-17 for each team

North East Viewpoint Team

Seven customers met at the Customer Service Centre in April

- Reviewed the Andrew Court and Forest Hall customer promise assessment feedback and actions
- Gave their views on the introduction of a Graduated Ownership scheme
- Shaped the plans for involvement with the procurement of the grounds maintenance and cleaning contract
- Gave their views our future branding proposals
- Monitored the region's performance through the 'Voice of the Customer' performance report
- Gave their views on Universal Credit support and initiatives to help customers

North West Viewpoint Team

Seven customers met at Maryport Business Centre where they

- Reviewed the new repairs and maintenance contractors implementation, contract terms and targets
- Reviewed the region's performance through the 'Voice of the Customer' performance report
- Monitored the delivery of the 2016/17 planned maintenance programme and reviewed the plan for 2017/18
- Shaped the plans for involvement with the procurement of the grounds maintenance and cleaning contract and provided an update on the grounds maintenance scrutiny group activities
- Reviewed the Parton and Frizington customer promise assessment feedback and action
- Gave their views on the introduction of a Graduated Ownership scheme
- Reviewed and made recommendations about our future branding proposals

North West Grounds Maintenance Scrutiny Group

Five customers from North West met at Burnside Older Peoples Service in Wigton

- Gave the new Landscape Co-ordinator an overview of their scrutiny activities

- Shaped and agreed their scrutiny activities for 2017/18
- Provided updates on local service delivery for 12 schemes and neighbourhoods which will be highlighted with the contractor
- Shaped the plans for involvement with the procurement of the grounds maintenance and cleaning contract
- Made recommendations to influence the grounds maintenance contract specification

South East Viewpoint Team

Six customers met in Kings Cross on Saturday 29th April

- Reviewed performance for the region
- Planned viewpoint meetings and agenda items and customer promise assessments for the year ahead
- Gave their views on the proposed scheme for graduated ownership and the brand basics for rented customers
- Reviewed 2 promise assessments from the South East and one from the South West, amending scores and recommendations

South Leasehold Viewpoint

Seven leasehold customers met at Hygeia in Harrow on 10th May where they

- Identified the skills and experiences customers bring to the team
- Gave feedback on our leasehold brand basics
- Scrutinised a selection of complaints resolution letters, applied our customer standards for communication and made recommendations for improvement
- Reviewed the impact of our Independent Complaints Panel and made recommendations to improve impact

Planned maintenance scrutiny (central)

Five customers met at our Leeds office where they

- Analysed the findings from our customer consultation on communication during planned works in Dalby, Harrogate, identifying key trends and themes
- Made recommendations to improve communication during the planned works process including revising the customer contact diary for planned works

Reading and Havant Viewpoint Team

Customers met in Havant on 25th May

- Set dates for Viewpoint Meetings and Promise Assessments 2017-18
- Reviewed the assessment of the Spoonwood neighbourhood in Basingstoke.
- Gave their views on the proposed scheme for Graduated Ownership and brand basics for rented customers.
- Shaped the national Involvement Plan 2014-17 based on Home Group's new strategy and key themes
- Customers identified what specific skills they bring to the group and identified areas for development which will influence training for the year ahead

What do you think of our newsletter? Please contact Jill.Twigger@homegroup.org.uk