



## Involvement News | March 2017 | [www.homegroup.org.uk](http://www.homegroup.org.uk)

### Involvement team news

- Kate O'Donnell, Involvement Advisor with the Involvement Team left Home Group in February to set up her theatre company 'Trans Creative'. We wish Kate all the best and look out for one of her amazing shows at a theatre near you!
- This month's Involvement News will include **outcomes in pink** to highlight how customers' views have shaped, changed and influenced Home Group. Please let us know what you think about this idea for future issues.

### Homelife Editorial Panel

Rented and supported customers came together from across the south for the first Editorial Panel of the new look Homelife magazine which will be for all customers and will replace the former Homelife and Mag. Customers spent the day designing, agreeing the content and signing up to write articles for the Spring edition. Customers also piloted the new HAP module in magazine editing.

*Great input into the new magazine and hopefully gain an accreditation .....I am interested in a media based career- this is good experience and good for my CV*

**We will use their ideas and articles to produce the Spring issue of Homelife**

### Equality and Diversity and the Human Library

Ruth Jackson, Human Library member delivered a speech at the TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) Awards ceremony in London about her involvement in the Human Library, raising awareness of the Human Library and Home Group's partnership with TPAS, and increasing Home Group's profile within the housing sector.

### Involvement Works

Two former clients and Involvement Volunteers co-delivered Local Involvement Works training to 12 colleagues in Peterlee, providing colleagues with increased understanding of involvement and tools to involve supported customers and record involvement at their local services.

## Complaints

- Independent Complaints Panel members from the North (including Scotland) and South met in person and by conference call to review and make recommendations to Home Group to resolve two rented and leasehold customer complaints that had exhausted our internal complaints procedure. The Panel uses our digital technology to link up with Panel members from both regions, reducing travel costs and supporting the involvement of a broad group of Panel members.

### Recommendations from the panel will help resolve the two complaints

- Over 50 supported and rented customers from across the organisation gave us their views on introducing a two stage complaints process for supported customers in line with rented customers. They were in favour of the change and believe one system for all complaints across all customer groups will be quicker, fairer and less stressful for all involved.

### Home Group will proceed with the proposed changes to the complaints process with the confidence that it has customer approval.

## Website Review

Almost 200 supported and rented customers gave their views on the Home Group website during February with many testing various functions and tasks (reporting a repair, paying rent, finding information etc.). Less than 40 of the customers asked had previously used the Home Group website and were surprised at what they were able to do. The overall feeling is that it is customer friendly, doesn't use jargon and is easy to navigate and understand but needs to be promoted, especially with supported customers.

### We will use this feedback to improve and promote the Home Group website

## Digital Involvement

anyone@home has moved from its external site to the Home Group website so is now much easier to find and join in! You don't need to register, just go onto the website and join the conversation.

This month 38 customers gave us their views on

- text reminders for paying rent
- Home Group website - testing how easy or difficult it is to complete various tasks with recommendations for improvements
- leasehold customer satisfaction survey

### We will use this feedback to shape the text campaign and satisfaction survey and improve the Home Group website

## Scrutiny

**Supported customer assessors** visit our services across the organisation 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 on our website

- Assessors awarded a mental health service in Ellesmere Port the **silver** standard, with gold for reliable services. Assessors were impressed by the quick and efficient repairs service clients receive.  
*This service has been a lifeline for me*
- Assessors awarded a floating support service for supported customers at risk of homelessness in Chester the **gold** standard. Assessors were impressed by the number of customers who got involved at the assessment on the day (twenty) and the opportunities for customers to volunteer at the service. *We feel like a family here*
- Assessors awarded a mental health service in Blackpool the **gold** standard. Assessors were very impressed with the service and the difference it is making to customers' lives, including Molly, the service dog. They upgraded the hotel@home score from gold to a platinum following improvements made since completing the self-assessment *they have helped me loads, I didn't think I could be this well...really nice, helpful people, I didn't know places like this existed...they've taken such a big weight off my shoulders*
- Assessors awarded an older peoples service in Dunstable the **silver** standard. Customers from the service have been involved in improving accommodation standards through Hotel@Home and assessors were particularly impressed with the people who care standard. *This is my forever home and I love living here*
- Assessors awarded an older peoples service in Dunstable the **silver** standard. Assessors were particularly impressed with the safe place to live and people who care standards due to excellent work managing anti-social behaviour and supporting the most vulnerable customers. *They've really helped me with being assertive and recognising healthy relationships*
- Assessors awarded a homeless service in Oxfordshire the **gold** standard. They were impressed with the woodwork shop and the work around mental health wellbeing. *All the staff are patient and go above and beyond to put time and effort into me...Every day is great when you're involved with Home Group*
- Assessors awarded an older peoples service in Billingshurst the **gold** standard overall. Assessors loved the art work around the service all created by current and former customers which gave the service a very homely feel.  
*They do everything they can to help.....we get involved in community events and our service is a valued part of the village*

**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 colleagues and supported customers to measure the decent home section of the promise in care and support services.

- In February five services involved six customers in assessing their own service. All services awarded themselves **bronze** and have produced an accommodation improvement plan to aim for silver.

**Shape. Change. Influence.**

Assessors will validate self-assessment scores for a decent home as part of their assessments against the promise. Assessors are seeing great improvements in accommodation standards since services completed their hotel@home self-assessment and have upgraded several self-assessments this month.

**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 and 12 month scrutiny reports summarising neighbourhood assessments on our website

- Assessors awarded a neighbourhood in Newbury the silver standard overall with gold for Decent home and Safe place to live *the skills of the staff at the customer service centre are exceptional...my home itself is brilliant*
- Customers assessed a neighbourhood in Sheffield with the overall standard to be confirmed. The neighbourhood achieved silver for a decent home and choice of products and services.  
*It's a nice modern flat. I love it...I get lots of information about the neighbourhood and what's happening at Home Group*
- Assessors consulted 13 customers in Southhouse in Edinburgh and awarded a **silver** standard with gold for people who care.
- Assessors consulted eight customers at Andrew Court in the North East and awarded a **silver** standard with gold for a decent home, reliable services and people who care
- Assessors consulted 12 customers in Dogsthorpe in Peterborough and awarded a **silver** standard with silver in every section of the promise.
- Assessors consulted five customers in Barrowfield in Peterborough and awarded a **silver** standard.

**Assessors' recommendations will shape an improvement plan for each neighbourhood which will be reviewed within three months of the assessment.**

**News from the regions** You can find viewpoint reports for all our regions on our website

### **North East Viewpoint Team**

Eight customers from the North East Viewpoint team met in Newcastle where they

- Gave their views on the Allocations and Tenure policy consultation
- Reviewed the manager's feedback for West View, Hartlepool customer promise assessment and shaped their plan for the neighbourhoods to be assessed in 2017/18
- Influenced their involvement to quality assess grounds maintenance checklists and be involved with the procurement of the new contract
- Gave their views for the website consultation
- Reviewed the changes to the rent increase letter and influenced a review of service charge letters

- They reviewed the outcomes of their Viewpoint team for 2016 in a 'you said, we did' format
- Customers discussed what skills they have in the team and what skills would help them in their role, identifying key areas for development in 2017
- Developed their scrutiny plan for 2017/18

### **North West Viewpoint Team**

Seven customers from the North West Viewpoint team met at Maryport where they

- Gave their views for the website consultation
- Customers discussed what skills they have in the team and what skills would help them in their role, identifying key areas for development in 2017
- Gave their views on the Allocations and Tenure policy consultation
- Reviewed the region's performance through the 'Voice of the Customer' performance report and additionally repeat maintenance calls
- Discussed the new contractor/s arrangements and how they would like to scrutinise the contractor/s and repairs and maintenance services
- Reviewed the changes to the rent increase letter and influenced a review of service charge letters
- They reviewed the outcomes of their Viewpoint team for 2016 in a 'you said, we did' format
- Developed their scrutiny plan and agreed the neighbourhoods they would like to assess in 2017/18

### **Yorkshire and Central Viewpoint Team**

Members of the team visited a scheme in Harrogate and consulted colleagues and eight customers about the information and communication provided by Home Group and our contractors during kitchen upgrades as part of their planned works scrutiny review. Viewpoint Team members will consult the remaining customers on the scheme by phone to complete their review and make recommendations to the business.

### **Satisfaction with Involvement**

71 customers completed involvement evaluations this month.

- 98% of customers and clients are satisfied with involvement activities that they took part in this month with 73% saying they are excellent.
- 93% said it has increased their confidence to get involved.
- 85% said they have gained or developed skills as a result of their involvement.
- 93% are satisfied with involvement opportunities overall at Home with 75% saying they are excellent.

**What do you think of our newsletter?** Please contact [Jill.Twigger@homegroup.org.uk](mailto:Jill.Twigger@homegroup.org.uk)