

Measures Report

Housing Service: 5th May 2009 – 30th September 2009

Purpose: to match the right people with the right home.

This report supplements the strategic and Service Plan performance indicators reported through the SPAR process. It aims to monitor the impact of the redesigned parts of the Service following the Systems Thinking review and provide Members sufficient information to understand and challenge what is happening within the Service.

We established that there are essentially three phases in a tenant's experience – moving in; living in; and moving out of council homes. The Housing and Social Inclusion Service redesign considers two aspects of the tenant's experience – ending a tenancy (moving out) and starting a tenancy (moving in). The main **value demands** identified during the Check phase of the Systems Thinking review were:

'I want to end my tenancy ...'

'I want/need a place to live ...'

'I want to transfer to another home ...'

'Set me up right ...' (in other words, enable me to start my tenancy with rent paid, an ongoing payment plan in place and knowing how to get what I need from you)

We established a purpose during Check which is to – **match the right people with the right home**. The Redesign went live with a new (redesigned) system and operating principles on 5th May, the key features being:

- Ensuring existing tenants leave 'clean';
- Accompanied viewing incorporating tenant void standard choice;
- Extended 'sign up' interview and welcome process;
- Ensuring new tenants are 'set up' right;
- Resolving housing problems 'one stop'.

The measures we have created for the Service link to our adopted purpose and to 'what matters' to the customer. Our customers/applicants said that they wanted to *be kept informed of progress with their housing applications* and they wanted access to a good quality, affordable home. The housing service customers are not solely interested in speed of processing; they want good quality housing advice, a fair system of allocations and a well presented home to move into.

During Redesign we worked up a number of **operating principles** such that we do our best to:

- Fully understand our customers housing needs.
- Resolve the customers housing need at the earliest opportunity.
- Receive complete and correct information at first contact with the customer.
- Make it clear to customers what we can and can't do.
- Have up to date and detailed information about our properties.
- Make sure that the tenant (current and new) understands and is fully informed about their rights and responsibilities.
- Reduce the time from keys to keys:
 - Get the current tenant out quickly;
 - Get the new tenant in quickly;
 - Get the void property prepared quickly;
 - Minimise rent loss.

- Do the work required to the property and those works agreed with the new tenant.
- Be accountable and responsible for raising issues and finding solutions to things that affect our work.

There is greater overview now of all the work streams in the housing teams at any one time and the passage of the work through the system is regularly tested to ensure that no unnecessary delays are occurring. The performance for the End 2End times of our keys (leaving tenant) to keys (new tenant) is monitored closely.

The focus of the work is now principally on the value activities and 'what matters' to customers, with tasks that add no value (waste) for the applicant reduced as far as possible. The **value steps** in our redesigned system are essentially:

- gathering information on an applicant's housing needs and understanding the need;
- providing accurate, honest housing advice;
- resolving/preventing homelessness;
- advising existing tenants how to leave 'clean' when they give Notice to Quit;
- joint visit with contractor and new tenant to agree the work required to a void property;
- informed customer bids for property;
- matching customer need with suitable homes;
- setting new tenants up right.

The test of a good measure is:

- Does it relate to purpose and our knowledge of 'what matters' to our customers?
- Does it help us understand our Service as a 'system'?
- Is it used by those in the work and managing the work to improve the work?

We have developed two types of measures – **leading and lagging**.

Leading measures are the 'real time' indicators which tell us what is happening **now** in the system and are the key measures that help us lead change and improvement. Examples are:

- Demand analysis - the type (value or preventable) and frequency of customer demand.
- Our ability to deal with requests/demand first time (one stop).
- How long a process takes from start to finish (End to End times).

Lagging measures are the 'rear view' indicators which tell us what's happening in the system after the event. They tell us about the effectiveness of the service, but will not necessarily help us to lead change. Examples are:

- Budget monitoring.
- Customer satisfaction and staff morale.
- National and local performance indicators.

To deliver good results, the focus of management and staff needs to be on the leading measures as the key drivers of improvement. If these levers for change are understood and used effectively then excellent results and customer satisfaction will follow.

Leading measures

Indicator	Check	2 nd Quarter	Comment
<p>Capability at first point of contact Housing advice and homeless prevention.</p> <p>– measured by the %age of tenants with a clear rent account immediately after ‘sign up’.</p>	<p>5%</p> <p>12%</p>	<p>35%</p> <p>30%</p>	<p>We are spending longer with homeless applicants to deal with cases ‘one stop’.</p> <p>The improved new tenancy ‘sign up’ process has put more emphasis on rent payment and has resulted in a significant improvement.</p>
<p>End to End times (keys to keys)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total End to End time • Keys to Housing Needs • Keys to repairs • Keys to contractor • Void repaired/prepared • Keys to repairs • Keys to Housing Needs • ‘Sign up’ new tenant • Rent paid 	<p>38 days mean Predictably 64 days</p> <p>34 days mean Predictably 66 days</p> <p>5 days mean Predictably 10 days</p> <p>23 days mean Predictably 55 days</p>	<p>See capability charts attached.</p> <p>37 & 46 days mean Predictably 60 & 88 days annex 1</p> <p>48 days mean Predictably 116 days annex 2</p> <p>7 days mean Predictably 22 days (keys to new tenant) annex 3</p> <p>11 days mean Predictably 40 days annex 4</p>	<p>We have used a time line (see below) to break down elements of our system which can be represented by the travel of house keys through the value steps of our system. Our End to End times improved during the first Redesign experiment however when we moved to a Change of Tenancy Team experiment our End to End times deteriorated. A number of steps have been designed out of our system since Check making direct comparisons difficult.</p>

Service redesign live from 5th May 2009

Indicator	Check	2 nd Quarter	Comment
<p>Preventable demand</p> <p><i>Measured by sampling demand to assess what %age of demand is preventable through service design.</i></p> <p>Our top five preventable demands</p>	<p>See table below</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you tell me how my bid is getting on? 2. Have you received my application form? 3. What's happening with my application? 4. Can you tell me how to bid for a property? 5. What's my Housing Register number? 000 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>Service redesign live from 5th May 2009</p> </div> <p>n/a</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How is my application doing? 2. What is my housing application number? 3. Can you help me register online? 4. Why has my banding changed? 5. Can you complete a housing application for my client? 	<p>As part of the review the level of preventable demand was measured by sampling.</p> <p>Another exercise is currently underway to measure preventable demand now.</p>
<p>Customer demand – new applicants during the quarter</p> <p><i>A key driver of service performance</i></p>	<p>53 homeless approaches 33 preventions</p>	<p>25 homeless approaches 73 preventions</p>	<p>We measure the number of homeless applications received and accepted.</p>
<p>Customer demand - caseload</p> <p><i>Number of households registered on our Housing Register.</i></p>	<p>4,500 households</p>	<p>4,200 households</p>	<p>We also measure the number of applicants on the housing register at any time. We can break this down by location and bedroom requirements.</p>

Value & Preventable Demand Survey

The original survey took place during the Check process and the follow up survey in December 2009. We are undertaking these surveys quarterly.

	Check (January 2009) Value Demand	December 2009 Value Demand	Check (January 09) Preventable Demand	December 2009 Preventable Demand
Telephone	50%	Verbal update	50%	Verbal update
Post and email	85%	Verbal update	15%	Verbal update
Face to face	75%	Verbal update	25%	Verbal update

Lagging measures

Indicator	Check	2 nd Quarter	Comment
Customer satisfaction: <i>measured by monthly telephone survey carried out 4-6 weeks after tenancy commenced.</i>			See comments below.
NI 156 Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation. <i>This is a snapshot measure of the number of households in temporary accommodation on 31st March each year.</i>	91	78	A good reduction and part of a consistent downward trend.
NI 160 Local Authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services. <i>This is a measure of overall tenant satisfaction with the services provided by the council measured through the biannual STATUS survey.</i>	87% Top quartile	87% Top quartile	We have this survey undertaken every two years in accordance with government advice.
BVPI 212, the time taken to relet local authority housing <i>This is a measure of the number of the average number of days taken to relet a property from the day it becomes vacant to the date a new tenancy commences.</i>	22 days 2008/09	27 days	This average measure legitimately excludes properties undergoing major repairs from the calculation.

Indicator	Check	2 nd Quarter	Comment
BVPI 66a proportion of rent collected <i>This is a measure of the amount of rent collected as a proportion of rent collectable.</i>	97.11%	98.16%	We are seeing a steady increase towards our 'stretch' target of 99% collection of rent due.
Percentage of new tenants who fall into rent arrears	51%	Verbal update	The new tenancy 'sign up' process emphasises the important of maintaining a clear rent account.
Percentage of new tenants irregular rent payers	27% habitually in arrears	Verbal update	Fewer tenants are poor or irregular payers.
Length of time in days it takes a new tenant falling into rent arrears to clear their rent account.	92 days	Verbal update	
Number of bids received per property advertised through Choice Based Lettings	Typically 20	Typically 20	We are still receiving an average of 20 bids for each property advertised.
Average length of time spent on the Housing Register before being housed (general needs & sheltered housing).	39 months average general needs housing and 27 months average sheltered housing	3 years and 27 weeks (approx. 42 months) for general needs and sheltered housing	This waiting time for housing is longer than we would like and is directly related to vacancies occurring in our housing stock.
Number of homeless applications where the Council accepts a homeless duty towards the applicant.	17	5	This is a radical reduction in homeless acceptances which can be attributed to a range of homeless prevention measures being implemented.

Project investment and benefits

The Systems Thinking review in housing cost approximately £4,625. This was a one-off cost for consultancy support to work on the project and was paid partly from the Housing Revenue Account. The project has delivered substantial benefits, including:

- Improved customer satisfaction with the allocations process and tenant choice.
- Significant reduction in new tenants going into rent arrears.
- A more thorough new tenancy 'sign up' and welcome process with greater clarity of roles and responsibilities.

We have undertaken a telephone survey of new tenants after the commencement of their tenancy. The results of this survey reveal that of the 27 new tenants contacted most rated the service received 8-10 out of a possible score of 10. The accompanied viewing was scored high and staff considered helpful and friendly. We had a few cases where the standard of the property did not meet expectations (poor quality painting and minor repairs not done). In each case we invited the tenant to say how we could improve performance and receive a top score.

Remaining Issues

Although the project has delivered a number of transformational improvements there remain a number of areas for further work.

We are maintaining an **Issues Log** and this is attached so that members can see how we are steadily working on all the issues we have which will improve the way we work from our customers' point of view, and remove waste from the system.

The top 5 issues on the Issues Log that need resolving are:

- Ensuring that the appointment system for accompanied views works consistently well;
- Production of capability charts quickly and accurately;
- Notifying all new tenants of the need to come to the 'sign up' with an ability to pay their rent;
- Rent triggers set up before 'sign up' to ensure that rental payments could be accepted;
- Contractors should not be dictating void ready dates to suit them.

We need to ensure that the measures reports are used by staff and managers to be more aware of what is happening in our system and to allow early corrective action where performance can be improved.

Staff morale, sickness absence and turnover are all lagging measures too as well as budget information to show how investment impacts on performance. These have not been included in this report.

Staff culture

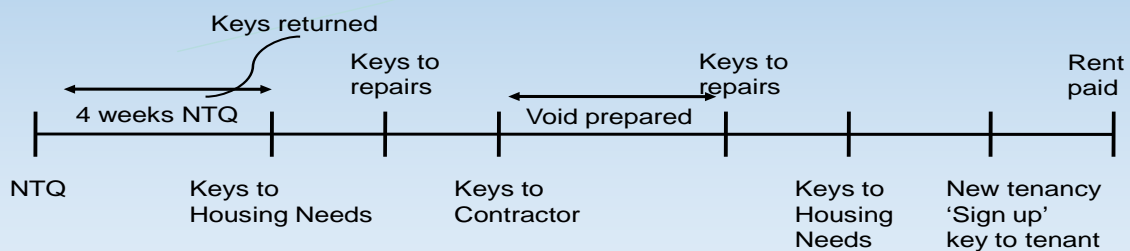
Staff have responded very well to the changes and readily adopted the new working methods. Most of the new methods were generated by staff themselves and the challenge is to maintain a culture where people are encouraged to contribute ideas and suggestions on an ongoing basis rather than as part of a set-piece exercise away from the workplace.

Staff focus groups have praised improved communication within the office and between managers and staff. The increased communication with customers has also improved morale as staff can see that housing is clearly a people-business.

The operational, change, leadership and management principles all need embedding to ensure that we are all working to 'new world' principles and not those that influenced behaviours prior to introducing Systems Thinking.

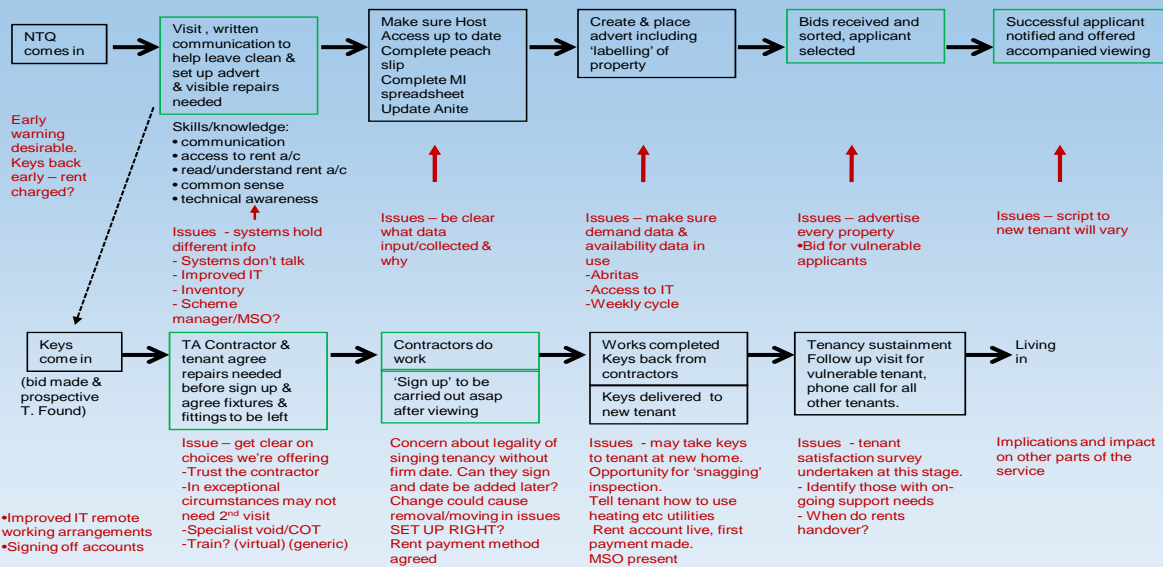
Timeline for capability charts

From NTQ to new tenant signed up and rent paid



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Value steps for redesign



TO MATCH THE RIGHT PEOPLE WITH THE RIGHT HOME

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Note: this report was produced in early December to meet the print deadline. A verbal update will be given at the meeting.