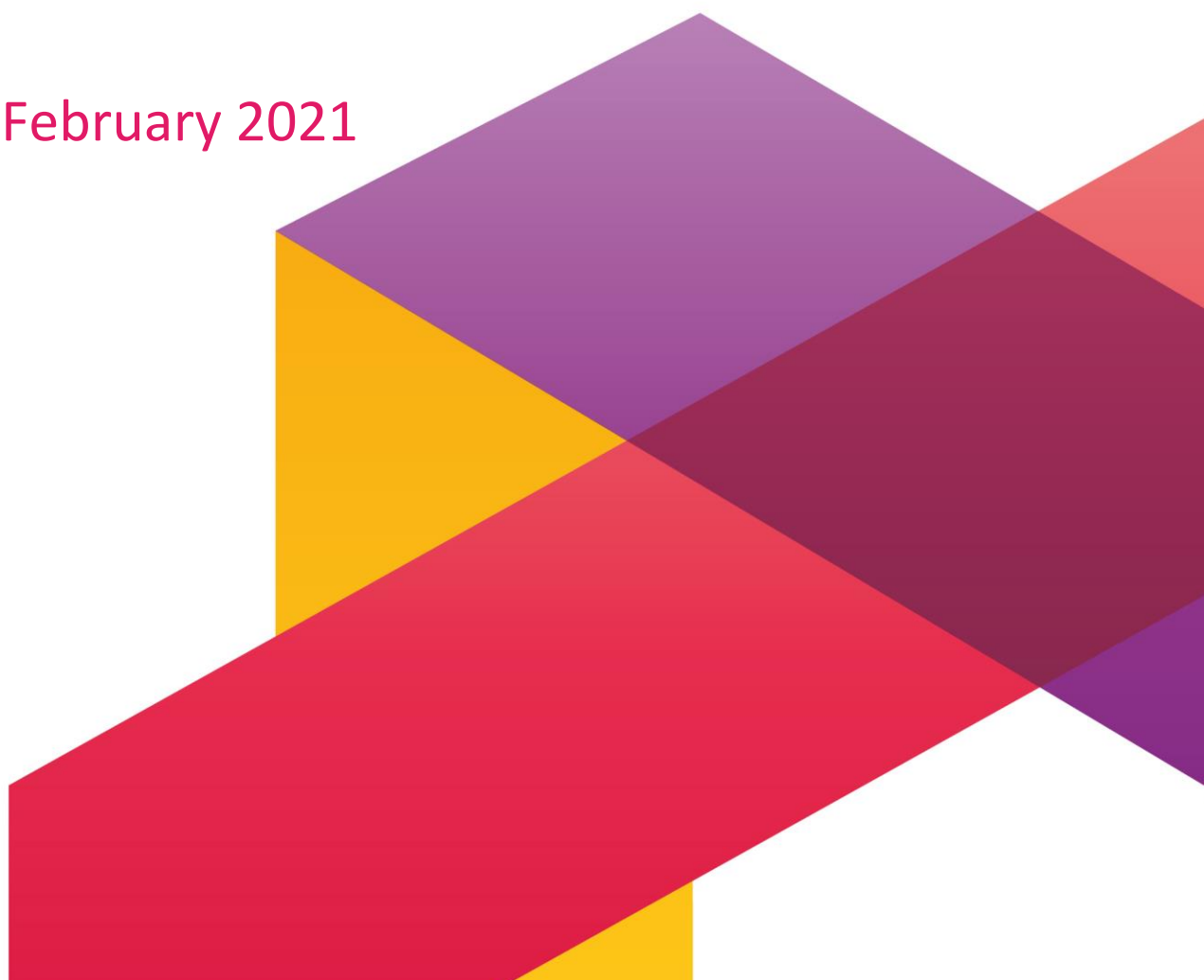


Homes in Sedgemoor



Scrutiny Bootcamp – review of Anti-Social Behaviour Service

Report February 2021





Background

Six Homes in Sedgemoor Customers met over three Zoom sessions to review the Anti-Social behaviour (ASB) Service. Customers were supported by Jane Eyles, Senior Tpas Associate who built training around scrutiny into the day, and by the Community Enabler, Sharon Collard.

Lindsey Hoggard, Neighbourhood Manager and Gary Andrews, Neighbourhood Officer, each gave separate presentations on the service.

The Covid lockdown did restrict the review – it would have improved the review to be able to interview partners and customers but the exercise has been very worthwhile.

The Scrutiny Panel would like to thank everybody for their involvement

Methodology

- A Scrutiny Review was carried out over six weeks through three separate Zoom meetings
- A desk top review was carried out of all relevant documents. These included:
 - The ASB policy and procedure both dated 2017
 - A leaflet for customers giving information about the service
 - A report of the dashboard showing performance against Key performance Indicators in this area
 - The Homes in Sedgemoor Website and customer Portal
- A discussion of those participating about what Customers would expect from the service
- Presentations from and interviews with Lyndsey Hoggard, Neighbourhood Manager and Gary Andrews, Neighbourhood Officer,
- The service was tested against themes which were:
 - Does the service meet the needs of customers?
 - How satisfied are customers and what is the direction of travel?
 - How are customers involved in the service?
 - Was there anything to be learned from Good Practice elsewhere?
 - Are staff trained regularly?



Findings

Customers were extremely positive about:

- The presentations from the staff
- Partnership working with the police and other agencies
- The website and customer portal gave good information and an effective form to report ASB
- The leaflet gave clear information
- The attitude by the Neighbourhood Officer around building relationships on his neighbourhood patch in order to prevent ASB
- The fact that when numbers of ASB cases soared during the pandemic lockdown, HiS were flexible enough to hire an additional temporary member of staff to keep the service as good as possible
- The approach seemed fair to both parties (the complainant and those being complained about)
- The budget to help prevent or solve problems (for additional locks or noise reducing measures)
- The Noise APP which enabled evidence to be gathered simply
- The fact that everybody involved gave up their time, shared ideas and worked collaboratively in this review
- The definition of ASB on the website was very good
- The Policy mentioned areas of Good Practice such as customer involvement and preventative work and was overall clear and had good timescales
- The range and depth of training undertaken by the staff where did the good practice come from?

Not every organisation is perfect and customers found the following:

- Performance had clearly suffered under the lockdown with the increase in cases
- The main documents that drive the service, the policy and procedure were out of date and need an urgent review. The procedure referred to the Tenant Services Authority which had been abolished in 2012!



- The policy and procedure referred to the “perpetrator” and the “victim” even before the complaint was reported, this failed to address the fact that cases are often less clearly defined with both parties often sharing responsibility.
- Evidence relied on diary sheets and apart from the Noise APP there did not seem to be more use of technology
- The documents and the website did not promote the Community Trigger as much as it could
- The leaflet went straight from “prevention” to “legal action” implying there was no action between these
- Customer updates could be more frequent which would increase satisfaction
- The web link repeatedly failed and more use could be made of the site to help set expectations
- Mediation was not being utilised enough and there had been a decision not to use external independent mediation as it was considered too expensive and train a member of staff as well.
- The procedure promises ***local restorative outcomes to resolve concerns and enable/facilitate community involvement*** which we were not able to evidence



Recommendations

	Recommendation Comments		HiS Response
1. Improve organisation of the service:			
a.	Consider patch sizes and more co-operation as town centre patches will have much higher rates of ASB	Could handover through vlog? Etc HiS Comment Officer Patch sizes are reviewed based on case numbers and complexity.	Recommendation is noted
b.	Consider the effectiveness of a specialist ASB Officer	HiS Comment Neighbourhood Team Leader is currently on maternity leave and is the specialist ASB Officer for the team	Already in Place By 30 July 2021
c.	Consider ASB hotspot out of hours working at peak times	HiS Comment Resourcing within the team is closely monitored within agreed budgets. Serious incidents of ASB should be referred to the police out of hours	Unable to progress due to limited resources and low case volumes
d.	Consider training call centre and all staff/contractors on doing a risk assessment	HiS Comment Training and attendance at team meetings will be undertaken to ensure a seamless service is available to customers	Agreed By 30 August 2021
e.	Review old cases (particularly long-term ones) with a view to learning lessons	HiS Comment We will build this into our learning for future case management and evidence where this has made a difference	Agreed By 30 September 2021
2. Review ASB documents with a customer focus group			



	Recommendation Comments		HiS Response
f.	Review all documents and website, particularly the procedure	Consider the best Council multi agency website for ideas Resources – Safe4Me HiS Comment Key documents are currently undergoing review. The website is being reviewed and overhauled to ensure information is up to date and relevant	Agreed By 30 September 2021 By April 2022
g.	Remove “victim” and “perpetrator” and replace with “complainant” and “person being complained about”/”alleged perpetrator”		Agreed By 30 September 2021
h.	Include support for the alleged perpetrator in the policy/procedure		Agreed By 30 September 2021
i.	Take out the large Customer First thumb from the leaflet		Agreed By 31 August 2021
j.	Review targets set and ensure how they are set and by who is publicised	HiS Comment We will include this as part of the annual KPI review with customers	Agreed By 31 August 2021
3. Communication and prevention			
k.	Update complainants more frequently using digital channels such as text – record and monitor updates	HiS Comment We are reviewing our mobile technology to look at opportunities to communicate better with our customers. The Noise app sorts this currently.	Agreed By 30 August 2021
l.	Produce a web article that includes some case studies	HiS Comment We will provide an article in our next newsletter	Agreed Website By 30 August 2021



	Recommendation Comments		HiS Response
			Newsletter 30 August 2021
m.	Promote the Community Trigger more	HiS Comment We will ensure the relevant information and documentation is available for customers to access online or by request	Agreed By 30 August 2021
n.	Advertise evidence collection by texts and messages as well as diary sheets		Agreed COMPLETE
o.	Publicise ASB HELP Anti-Social Behaviour - Free Help and Advice. Don't suffer in silence (asbhelp.co.uk)		Agreed By 30 August 2021
p.	Advertise the different categories of ASB with more clarity	HiS Comment We will ensure supporting information is available as part of our customer information	Agreed By 30 August 2021
q.	Hold a resident focus group on the approach to No Ball Games and signs	HiS Comment We will aim to complete this within the next 6 months	Agreed By 30 September 2021
r.	Develop community strategies to prevent ASB and make expectations more realistic before the ASB.	The group favoured an ASB event "Together Day" with other agencies HiS Comment Delivery of an event may be difficult in the current circumstances. However we will develop strategies to manage realistic expectations when making an ASB complaint	Agreed By 30 September 2021
4. Improve mediation and restorative justice			



	Recommendation Comments		HiS Response
s.	Promote mediation more through a campaign and really push it within cases	HiS Comment HiS have tried to promote mediation and restorative justice to resolve neighbour disputes & ASB. Take-up was very low. We will continue to explore these routes where customers are in agreement including a peer mentoring programme	Agreed 30 August 2021
t.	Research community mediators and use them for the independent ??	As above	Agreed By 30 December 2021
u.	Encourage customer mediation project with full training for volunteer mediators and buddies	They could also do surveys – post ASB case As above however we are mindful sensitivities around ASB cases will make this difficult to progress. Focus on peer support / mentoring will be progressed in the first instance for those who have had similar experiences	Agreed By 30 December 2021



Appendix A

1. What do participants here expect from the service?

- Listen to complainant
- Listen to both sides without judgment
- Be fair to both sides
- Offer mediation pro-actively to both sides if no other solutions
- Expect people to try themselves first
- A good definition of ASB
- Tailor the service to peoples' needs – i.e., Consider evening/weekend response



Appendix B – Interview Questions

Neighbourhood Officer

- What is your role in ASB? Covid?
- How do customers reporting ASB know what to expect from the service?
- What different methods have you used to deal with ASB?
- How do you prevent ASB?
- How do you ensure fairness in dealing with complainant & alleged perpetrator?
- Which agencies do you work with?
- How often do you use mediation?
- How do you find the timescales?
- How do you deal with no ball games?
- What works well about the way HiS deals with ASB?
- What works less well and how would you improve the service?

Neighbourhood Manager

- What is your role in ASB?
- How did you involve customers in the service, policy & procedure?
- How do customers reporting ASB know what to expect from the service?
- How do you prevent ASB?
- How do you ensure fairness in dealing with complainant & alleged perpetrator?
- Which agencies do you work with?
- How often do you use mediation?
- What training do the staff get?
- How did you set the timescales in the policy?
- What works well about the way HiS deals with ASB?
- What works less well and how would you improve the service?