



# INSIGHT

## Customer Scrutiny Group

### Scrutiny Review Summary Report

## Customers' Move-In Experience to a new Build Home

May 2023

### Purpose of Review

Insight was invited to scrutinise decreasing customer satisfaction with new build homes. We heard satisfaction levels of shared ownership and general need customers fed back via the new home satisfaction survey had progressively decreased, since October 2021. The purpose of our review was to gain insight to help the Affordable Development Team provide a better customer experience.

The report summarises our findings and what we would like to happen next.

We wanted to review service from the point of view of customers so set off to:

- learn about the customer journey for general need customers and timescales
- explore customers' experiences, who had moved into a new build home
- review evidence to identify recommendations to improve customers' experience

We collected information to help us understand the service, as follows:

- met the Affordable Development Team
- reviewed performance and feedback info
- analysed what is important to customers
- visited a new development site to learn about the handover experience
- met the Development Performance Manager

### Service Background

To understand customers' needs and monitor satisfaction a survey is sent to customers within 6-8 weeks of move in. The survey asks customers to score six aspects relating to their home and experience:

- overall satisfaction, internal layout, external appearance, quality, location, and customer service.



Feedback is reviewed with other data collected by the team to identify customer dissatisfaction and trends, which are investigated by the Project Manager. Customers are contacted to discuss and reach a resolution, which may involve collaborating with other teams and site contractors. Numbers of completed customer surveys tend to be low, 18%.

A Customer Care Co-ordinator role was introduced in November 2020 to give support with the customer journey on larger more complex sites, a Customer Care Manager is shortly to be recruited. Service-related performance data including customers' overall satisfaction are reviewed and reported to the business.

### **Our key findings**

- We were impressed with the property standard at the site visit and the attention of detail shown by the Customer Care Co-ordinator and Neighbourhood Service Manager to demonstrate the use of the home. We were informed the quality and specification of fixtures and finish is standardised.
- We felt the new home demonstration is an important feature in customers' journey. For most it will be the first viewing therefore it serves as an opportunity to understand and connect with their new home.
- We felt a general good sense of the scheme design and layout and observed no visible difference of external property standard, so nothing to differentiate between tenure.
- The process is explained to customers, however, we felt that if a visual was accessible this would serve as a useful guide. The process map highlights 6-weeks after handover that the Project Manager calls to check customers know how to report defects, enquiring if they have settled into their home. From feedback we saw a key driver for dissatisfaction were issues that related to defects, communication, customer service and timescales.
- Each customer receives a 'Welcome' email with a home user guide, (HUG) one week prior to handover. We discussed benefits, if detail was available before handover to allow customers time to plan and prepare to feel more assured of their move.
- Feedback we reviewed of 163 responses; Jan 21-23 showed average overall satisfaction as 8.9.
- Review of qualitative data gathered in our survey indicated satisfaction can be influenced by transactions, in addition to satisfaction with their new home. We noted questions in the new home satisfaction survey focus on aspects relating to the property. To measure satisfaction more accurately, we felt the survey may need to differentiate between the stages of the customer journey to identify the provider of services mentioned in comments.



### What customers said:

Our survey asked customers to score satisfaction at each stage of their journey as follows, i) pre-handover, ii) handover and iii) post-handover plus comment if a score of less than 10 was given, to explain 'what would have improved their experience'.

Feedback in our survey showed customers were more dissatisfied post-handover in their journey once they had moved into their new home. Customers mentioned issues relating to defects and customer service as drivers for dissatisfaction.

We have summarised below some reasons given for dissatisfaction in customer feedback comments:

Love my home just tinged with getting jobs done, this impacted my view, let the company down and left me disappointed	Very satisfied, it would make it easier if we got room sizes waiting for keys does not allow time to plan	I've asked and asked for the garden to be sorted; it is flooded
5 – the house is great, the experience was not	having to chase enquiries, no response to emails or calls	resolve issues, promptly
problems with things not working, fitted properly or that need replacing, which were reported soon after we moved in 10 weeks ago still waiting	very satisfied with my home but not with the service, complained about a repair a month ago but no action has been taken yet	jobs listed when we got keys have not been completed, been reported since but still not done
not knowing detail despite the Home User Guide, HUG	help to see entire process, if Great Places are responsible	getting in-touch with Great Places



We met the Performance Manager to ask of action taken following feedback, we've summarised points:

- the team is aware of issues to complete snags and defects; targets to carry out snags is 15 days from handover and defect resolution within 28 days for 12 months following property handover.
- defects are monitored by the Project Manager, which includes the no. of defects and days to close jobs
- an alternative contractor can be appointed from an approved list, if the site contractor is unable to complete within timescales
- Terra-Nova, Great Places in-house contractor have recruited a Customer Care Operative, who could attend to small repair jobs, if required
- Aareon is causing blockages - it's important the contractor portal is set up ready for Project Managers to demonstrate at handover, how to use to respond to reports of defects

### **Overall Summary;**

During our review we saw evidence of affordable housing that meet customers' needs and supports current housing demand. In feedback, customers spoke positively of new homes and services, plus highlighted areas for improvement. A key observation was that service experiences can significantly influence satisfaction, we feel this should be an area on which to focus.

We would like to suggest ways to make improvement to the customer journey, as follows:

- to enhance the offer before handover to better inform customers
- further invest in home demonstrations, offering customers greater understanding
- offer reliably consistent customer services
- remodel new home satisfaction survey – questions, timings, and choice to feedback

Insight would like to thank the Affordable Development team for their support and customers, who provided feedback to inform the review findings.

We're always keen to hear from customers, so keep your eyes peeled for our next review, if you're interested to find out more about customer scrutiny, email us at [CustomerScrutiny@greatplaces.org.uk](mailto:CustomerScrutiny@greatplaces.org.uk) or visit [www.greatplaces.org.uk/customers/get-involved/insight-customer-scrutiny-group/](http://www.greatplaces.org.uk/customers/get-involved/insight-customer-scrutiny-group/)