

Tenant Communication & Support Group

Report to Service Quality Committee



We had our first meeting on 13th August 2023. We looked at what the role of the group was and a few of the group members felt that it was important to look at how the “support” element of the group name is something that we do. We felt that it was an important part of what we do as we can look at communication all the time, but we need to make sure we are also supporting other tenants. This is something we will develop over time as the group gets to know each other and finds its feet.

We wanted to start with income letters as we have had a lot of feedback from tenants about receiving aggressive income letters. Diane Marshall, Income Manager, explained the process from the first letter to court applications and presented 9 letters to us. We looked through each letter and made a number of changes including:

- We softened the wording on the initial letters as they were unnecessarily frightening at an early stage where a tenant may have forgotten to change their payments or missed one payment.
- We made the letters clearer by taking out the unnecessary language and clarifying what was being said.
- We added wording to make sure tenants understood they could contact their Income Officer for help and support.

We found meeting with Diane really helpful, it was much easier to review the letters with the department manager present so things could be discussed and explained. We also appreciated Diane giving up her time on a Sunday to come to our meeting.

Comms team

We met with the Communications Team virtually regarding their upcoming projects and how the group can be involved. These included Service Standards, newsletters and the Accessibility Review.

We suggested that the newsletters need to be more relevant to tenants. We also asked about the possibility of having an area where the two tenant groups can update in their own words about what they have been doing. This could be a blog or quarterly updates. The Service Standards survey results have been shared with SCMs and the tenant groups and we have been invited to attend a workshop on 12th October.

Service Charges letters

We were made aware that tenants will be receiving a service charges letter from the Rents and Service Charges Team. Frustratingly, the letters had already been sent to the printer before the Tenants and Communities Team were made aware of the letters.

This means our group did not have the opportunity to review and provide feedback. This also makes it very difficult for us to offer support on the Saffron Tenant Facebook Group as we do not know the content of the letter or what it relates to.

Staff should be seeing tenant engagement as positive and a real opportunity to ensure that the letters being sent are understandable and meaningful to tenants. This needs to be embedded in all staff and be at the forefront of their minds and not an afterthought.