

# Tenant Scrutiny Group

## Report to Service Quality Committee



### Executive Summary

This is our third step of looking at the process from the initial tenant contact to CCT, the schedulers booking the job in and Craft Workers carrying out the repair. Two of our members met with Craft Workers and following the meeting wrote their reports which were then discussed with the Group, and we identified from these our recommendations.

### Findings

The below findings are taken from the meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November, with three Craft workers from different trades.

- There does not appear to be a 'universally recognised' start and finish times of a 'Craft-workers' working day. Some arrive at the yard at 07.30 am to pick up their schedule for the day, and some go straight to jobs from home.
- The Craft Worker phones are very antiquated and various information is not always accessible on their mobile device, meaning all the jobs and the information do not match up. The perception is that the mobile device is out of date / not compatible with 'schedulers' technology because the information that is on the 'Craft-workers' phone is different to the information that is on the 'schedulers' log?'
- The Craftworkers reported that they are unable to see the timeline on their phones or access any photographs that have been sent to WIP.
- There appeared to be a lack of correct scheduling due to each Craft-worker not having their own specific area there is a tendency to send them all over the different areas with an exceptional amount of time being wasted driving back and forth (Being organised better with set areas would streamline the service).
- From the Craft workers in the meeting there appeared to be a consensus that they would prefer the old ticket system and to have their own areas. They felt that the old 'ticket' system was more productive with better customer/tenant satisfaction results.
- It was reported they had too many jobs scheduled for the working day with not enough time allowed to cover travelling and completion of tasks.

- Any emergency call outs will further impact their already less than fluent day and sometimes these calls will turn out to be far from an emergency, in some instances, the schedulers need to have a 'better' understanding of what constitutes an emergency call.
- The details of jobs to be carried out are not always complete – the 'headline' of the work to be carried out does not give a full picture of what to expect. E.g. – headline = 'Dripping Tap' but on arrival find that there are multiple other jobs to be carried out.
- Craft-workers' team believe that they should each have their own area's and be responsible for organising their daily/weekly/ monthly workload.
- They felt there should be a scheduler in the office at the start of their day to iron out any issues or fix their phone system.
- The Craft workers who met with us reported a feeling of craft workers, as a whole, feeling incredibly undervalued and not feeling part of the Saffron Team. If they happen to be in the office, they feel alienated by other staff if they are just catching up with other craftworkers: (i.e., checking on their wellbeing or jobs) They feel that there is resentment against them when they are in the office, first thing in the morning, which is when they are 'going through' their daily workloads.
- There seems to be equally a resentment of office staff and a perception that being able to work from home means they are getting 'perks' such as up to date laptops, not needing to take holiday when children are not in school, financial help with electricity, saving on travel cost to the office and being able to carry out various non business-related activities (housework etc.) the conclusion being they appear to them to be more valued by Saffron.
- Staff have team building days or nights, but the Craft-workers do not feel welcomed to these by the office staff, there is clearly a divide when we feel it should be one big team working toward the common goal.
- For the Craft-workers tenant communications are generally good and polite. Though it can get frustrating when they cannot get a timescale for jobs. Craft-workers are not aware of when the job was created or when an order will arrive. Tenants would benefit from knowing how long a job will take from start to finish. They need to chase it. If a tenant wants to rant the Craft-worker will just listen as they need to vent. For the most part the tenants are happy to see them and get the issue solved.

## Recommendations

- Please can there be some clarity about the start and finish times for all craftworkers – this is an outstanding action from our last report.
- To look at updating their technology and network signal. Could the possibility of offering a small tablet or similar device be considered as another option?
- We feel that having geographical areas for set days of the week would be better for consistency and preplanning outstanding jobs. Following our meeting with Craft Workers we asked if the Craft Workers have set areas and our Chair commented it used to be that certain areas were covered on different days of the week, and it worked well.

***We have since been informed that they do have their own areas where possible, jobs are within these areas, however if they have a specific skill or there is an emergency then they will be called to do jobs outside of their usual areas.***

- Craft Workers expressed how the old-style ticket printing system worked well. We understand that due to GDPR this is not possible anymore however is there a way of compromising whereby photos and additional information could be printed and linked anonymously.
- We felt that it is unfair for Craft Workers to come into work at 7:30am if they have been called out numerous times or a long period of time during the emergency call out night shift. Please can we have an answer as to whether there is a policy or procedure for overnight call outs for Craft Workers in place. If there is not, we recommend that one is created. If there is one, is it being followed? Please could we see this.
- It was highlighted that not enough information was being collected from call handlers (in house and out of hours) can we have some reassurance that that both teams are working with the same script and asking as many questions as needed, rather than just expecting the Craft Worker to get the information when they call.
- That CCT be reminded to amend the subject of the job title to the correct job being requested e.g., changing it from re-washer a tap to dripping tap, and put more information in the body of the request.
- Regarding having a scheduler present in the office first thing from 7:30am, we have since been informed that they trialled not having a scheduler in the office from 7:30am for two weeks and it did not work, so has proven that it is needed.

- Overall, we have noticed that the Craft Workers morale and inclusivity of Saffron Housing Trust is quite low, and they feel alienated. Due to this we are going to create a survey for the Craft Workers to see how we can make recommendations to better this e.g. can 10/15 minutes be set aside before starting their day just to catch up and check in with others, as their job is quite solitary, so by building in some time into their working week to see their colleagues and mix with staff, would be good for their wellbeing and to feel included at staff social events.
- It was identified that follow on jobs and parts are sometimes not ordered/raised following a repair. This was identified in the CCT report in Q1. As part of the repairs review it was supposed to be that parts are ordered and follow on jobs given to schedulers at the end of the day, and the tenant is contacted 48 hours after their original repair. We want to understand why this is not happening and have since found out that there is a large backlog of requests for follow on work/parts (350 equating to being four weeks behind), so the service standard of 48 hours is not being achieved. It is believed this is due to growing demand in works, additional new builds, and staff levels not being adequate for the level of demand.

We recommend that as the 48-hour timescale is not being met, that it needs to be questioned whether it is ever going to be met? Or does Saffron need to investigate adapting the processes in place to achieve a more realistic goal. We suggest that managing expectations of tenants in relation to job completion timescales be looked into.

- We are aware that the Tenant Handbook is no longer in existence. We have been informed that Tenant Help sheets have been created, however tenants do not necessarily know about them and would only be able to find them on the website if they know to type the words 'help sheet' -there is minimal communications promoting them. We question whether Craft Workers and CCT know about them. Our recommendation would be to get some communications out promoting the varying help sheets and how to find them. Also sharing them with all front-line staff.

## **Overall Thoughts**

Overall, our Group felt the 'Craft-workers' main issues are Communication, information, technology and technological breakdowns (e.g., Internet connection) fluent productivity and inconsistency. It was an eye-opening but enjoyable session meeting with the Craft Workers, they were honest and open to working with us for the better.

We hope in our Q4 investigation we can reflect and look at any outstanding answers which will enable us to see this journey in full and feedback to all staff, in particular those who have supported us, and tenants about the changes, concerns, queries that we may have uncovered during our year of scrutinising the customer journey in relation to day-to-day repairs.