



Tenant Inspectors' – Quarter One

Osborne - Out of Hours Call Centre

Introduction

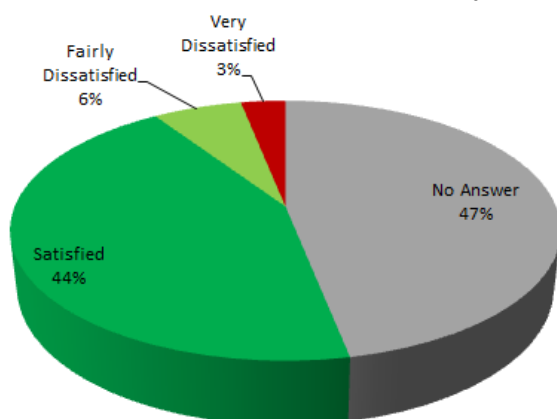
For their first inspection of 17-18, the tenant inspectors chose to review the out of hours (OOH) emergency repairs call centre run by Osborne. The inspection was made up of three parts:

- Carrying out satisfaction surveys with tenants who have recently used the OOH call centre;
- Mystery shopping the service provided by the OOH call centre; and
- Reviewing recordings of recent calls made by tenants to the OOH call centre.

Below, all aspects of the inspection are summarised with thoughts and recommendations put forward by the three Tenant Inspectors involved (Barry Merridan, Andrea Maloney and Michelle Mitchell).

Satisfaction Surveys for Out of Hours Job Completion

Using information supplied by Osborne, the Inspectors had the opportunity to survey tenants who have recently logged an out of hours call and had their repair completed. The purpose of this was to look at tenant satisfaction across the entire process. Initially the Tenant Inspectors came into The Forum in the afternoon but weren't able to speak to many tenants so they could not make an assessment about the service. They agreed to re-groups on an evening in the hope this would be more successful as tenants would be home from work. Tenant Inspectors attempted to contact 33 tenants in total.



As can be seen by the pie chart, the majority of tenants spoken to as part of this exercise were satisfied with the process. However, Andrea spoke to one tenant who was very unhappy and felt that she needed further support with the problems in her property. She said she had some mental health issues and was quite emotional during the call.

There was also a case of a long-running unresolved repair to soil/sewer pipe which the tenant stated had been ongoing for 20 years. Tenant Inspectors were curious about this case in particular as the length of time it has been ongoing is extremely unusual. It also became evident that in some cases tenants were having family members or other representatives handle the repairs call. A tenant (a victim of domestic violence) had been panicked by a landing light not working and presumably had called police who phoned the OOH call centre to report the fault. Two of the tenants called had given their daughters' numbers as they didn't feel confident enough to deal with repair call themselves.

Recommendations

- Osborne should consider communicating the findings from investigation works and report back to the tenant what the outcome may be (whether resolved or not) as this could prevent unnecessary follow-up calls / repairs being re-reported.
- If an operative fills in a 'concern card' this should be passed on to the DBC Housing Officer who could add a note to Orchard to flag up any issues on for six months.

Mystery Shopping

Each of the three Tenant Inspectors was given a mystery shopping scenario to use to log an Out of Hours repair from their own home. These calls were planned to take place on different days so that they were spaced out and did not place undue demands on the call centre.

Overall, the Tenant Inspectors felt that the call centre handled the calls very well and answered the phone very quickly. The call handlers came across very well-informed, showing extensive knowledge of electrical issues and blocked toilets. One thing that the Tenant Inspectors picked up on was that sometimes call handlers can speak too quickly, which may be problematic for the tenant calling, specifically if they are vulnerable.

Recommendations

- Call centre operatives should aim to speak as clearly as possibly, particularly if they are aware that the tenant they are speaking to is elderly or otherwise hard of hearing.

Reviewing Calls

Barry attended Osborne's offices to listen to call recordings. Barry was given two calls to listen to, plus his own made as part of the mystery shopping exercise at an earlier date. Although, generally it was felt that the calls were handled appropriately, a number of recommendations were identified.

Recommendations:

- There should be more consistency in repeating back details to tenants to check they are correct, such as giving their name clearly and ref no. especially when the tenant is elderly.
- Call centre operatives should have training on how to handle a call with someone that may seem confused due to suffering with an illness (e.g. dementia) which may mean the call needs to be dealt with more sensitively.
- Possibly send a letter / text / email to the tenant confirming the repairs/maintenance date. Osborne could ask that tenants call them if they have any problems or to offer feedback on the service received.
- Satisfaction surveys should be considered for after a job is completed. Some tenants may engage but some may not however, this gives all tenant and leaseholders the opportunity to have their views heard and demonstrate the desire of Osborne and DBC to ensure tenants satisfaction by gaining feedback.

Additional Thoughts on the Inspection

- Tenant Inspectors felt that they were not given enough tenant contact numbers to initially carry out an appropriate number of satisfaction surveys. As can be seen from the above pie chart, there were a number of no answers. Some details were also duplicated, reducing the sample size.
- Tenant Inspectors felt that there could have been more opportunity for them to pick calls to listen to or repairs to follow up re. Satisfaction themselves, in order to better evidence impartiality on the part of Osborne.