



Scrutiny Report: Responsive Repairs Service – November 2021

1.0 Introduction

Resident led scrutiny is just one of the ways which DBC demonstrates its practical use of the regulatory framework for social housing in England (April 2012) which states:

Tenant scrutiny is a key aspect of the Homes and Communities Agency Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England which allows for the following benefits:

- The formulation of their landlords housing related policies and strategic priorities
- The making of decisions about how housing related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards
- The scrutiny of their landlord and making of recommendations about how performance might be improved

2.0 What are the benefits of scrutiny?

Resident led scrutiny can bring benefits for all stakeholders as follows:

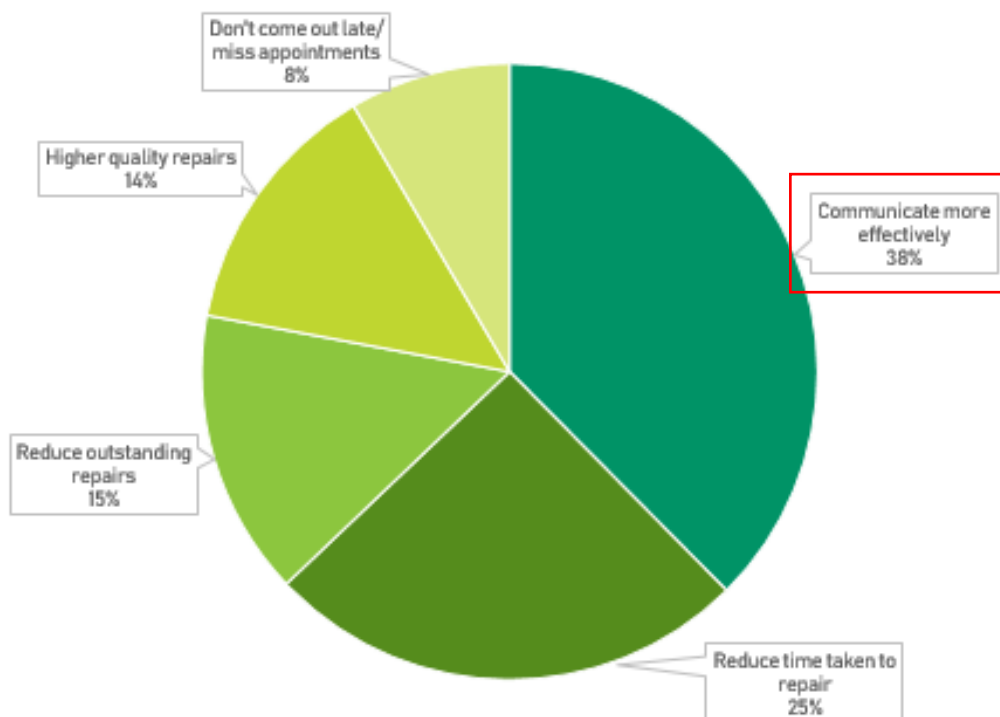
- **Residents** – improves services
- **DBC** – reviews performance and identifies areas for improvement
- **Regulators** – demonstrates regulatory compliance with the consumer standards
- **Partners & Stakeholders** – illustrates the benefits of partnership working, and continuous improvement.

3.0 Selecting service for scrutiny

A key role of the Improvement and engagement team (I&E Team) is to review key service areas by monitoring performance and collecting customer intelligence data, this is then used to identify areas of concern and inform recommendations for areas of focus, and how we can work in partnership with DBC Tenants and Leaseholders to improve our services.

In 2020 the I&E Team rolled out a transactional satisfaction survey for all responsive repairs. This followed Housemark's StarT format which is considered best practice in the sector. Analysis of this data identified that the main area for dissatisfaction amongst Tenants receiving responsive repairs is communication. This was the subject of the November scrutiny boot camp sessions.

Five largest areas for improvement



4.0 Scrutiny process: Boot camp

The scrutiny process followed the 'boot camp' model. We organised 3 identical virtual workshops. The workshops were made up of Tenants and Leaseholders of DBC. The format of the sessions covered the following stages:

Identify service for review, by reviewing StarT Osborne responsive repairs surveys.

Agree scope and identify evidence to demonstrate focus

Desktop review of the evidence (StarT Osborne responsive repairs feedback)

Breakout groups to discuss what currently works well and suggestions for improvement

A presentation from Osborne outlining the recent changes they have made to their service to improve the repairs customer journey.

Agreement of this draft scrutiny report with attendees

Improvement plan which will be progressed at the DBC and Osborne customer journey working group.

The next steps will be for the Improvement and engagement team to monitor progress and facilitate feedback to the boot camp attendees on progress in 6 months' time (Jun/July 2022).

5.0 Findings and Recommendations

The boot camp focussed on responsive repairs to our tenanted properties, however some suggestions for improvement were made for our planned works team which have been passed onto them.

Attached is all the scrutiny boot camps recommendations **(see appendix 1)**

6.0. Conclusion and acknowledgement

The Improvement and Engagement team would like to thank all attendees to the boot camps, both our residents and colleagues at Osborne. Without your input this scrutiny would not have been possible.

Despite this scrutiny focussing on improvements to Osborne communication, we would like to acknowledge that there are unprecedented pressures on the responsive repairs service. These include, but are not limited to supply chain issues due to brexit, ever changing Covid 19 restrictions impacting on the front line service and staff and recruitment pressures due to the current environment.

Although satisfaction with Osborne communication is a concern, at the boot camps we observed some very positive feedback from attendees as well as examples of excellent improvements which Osborne have put in place recently to tackle this **(Details at appendix 2).**

Appendix 1:

Findings (information discovered as a result of investigation)	Recommendations (Suggested action based on findings)
During the Osborne presentation it was confirmed that Osborne are now sending text messages to people to let them know when their operative is on the way.	It would be more personal is in the text message it included the name of the operative who is attending
During the Osborne presentation it was confirmed that Osborne are now sending text messages to people to let them know when their operative is on the way. Residents during break out sessions thought this was a good idea, and could it be extended to send updates throughout the process.	Updates on repairs via text message, along the way similar to royal mail and Amazon updates.
Via Osborne presentation pressures on the responsive repairs service have resulted in a backlog of repairs. In particular those which have been reported via the DBC website which are managed through an e-mail mailbox. This mailbox is now being managed by more staff to clear the backlog, Osborne are keen to update all those with outstanding repairs who may have been impacted.	Text or a letter to those with outstanding repairs to explain backlog and current pressures on the service
Analysis of the StarT Osborne survey feedback, showed a significant number of comments about communication focussed on both reporting a repair and not hearing anything, or an operative attending and then leaving and again not being kept in the loop as to what's happening.	Providing realistic timescales when logging a repair, or when an operative has to re-attend, this would manage expectations especially for non-emergency repairs.
During breakout sessions residents fed back that it is not always possible to fully explain a repair, which results in wrong diagnosis.	A way for tenants to send in pictures/videos of their issue to allow for better descriptions of their issues.
During breakout sessions residents were concerned that sometimes repairs were not carried out to a consistent standard, or Tenants were left with damage or the job not sufficiently completed.	Post completion inspection of repairs to ensure quality control.
Analysis of the Start Osborne survey data consistently records several people monthly requesting the ability to book at more specific time for a repair. This was also raised a concern during breakout sessions during the boot camp sessions.	More precise appointment time for individual repairs? OR alternatively take into account where tenants are unable to be available at particular times? For example school run.
During breakout sessions residents fed back that they have experienced unnecessary delays and frustration because the correct questions were not asked when the repair was logged for example, are there any access issues or busier times for parking etc.	When booking a repair Osbornes take time to explain what will happen next, timescales and discuss potential pitfalls that may cause delays.
During the boot camp breakout sessions residents explained that they are aware of communal repairs which have been outstanding for a long time. Sometimes these can be more than just a nuisance and are as important as repairs in people's homes.	Once backlog of repairs is sorted out, could communal repairs be completed as there are many which have been outstanding for a long time.

Appendix 2:

Improvements

Contact Centre Efficiency

- We have actively increased our staff within the call centre to meet the demands, and we are prepared for the seasonal demand during autumn and winter. We have seen a significant improvement to wait times.
- Extra training is being provided to the call centre on repairs diagnosis and condensation and mould. This will improve diagnosis and first time fix rates.
- SMS are being sent to customers for booked appointments and a reminder 24hours before for customers who have opted in.

Complaints Process

- We have conducted a review of the process to ensure complaints are highlighted in our systems. Appointments relating to complaints can no longer be cancelled.
- We have a dedicated person managing the administration of complaints and appointed a person in each department to lead resolution.

Service Standards

- We are developing service standards to support our customer strategy. These will set the standards of the expected customer centric behaviours of all our people.

Planning Academy

- Our planning academy will offer teams teams who manage calls and planning with a comprehensive way to manage the softer and technical skills involved to deliver great customer experience.

Reactive Repairs Manager

We have appointed a new reactive repairs manager Kel Judd. Kel has made the following improvements:

- Geographical planning for operatives to reduce travel and increase productivity.
- Grouping works to a singular address reducing number of visits and creating better efficiency for maximised customer experience.
- Follow on works are now booked onsite to reduce wait between visits.

Repairs Service

- Our Repairs manager has built strong relationships with our operatives building trust and increase communication to ensure excellent service delivery.
- Roles and responsibilities have been developed for the team to set clear expectations for efficient service delivery.
- We are reviewing our Van stocks to improve on our right first time fix.

Process improvements

- Processes for repairs service have been refined and implemented for improved service delivery and customer service.
- Emails are now being managed trade/department to ensure accountability.
- Operatives now have one point of contact through the planning team.