

Review of Thenue Housing
Association's Customer Service
Standards



Contents

Executive Summary

1.0	Introduction	p.4
2.0	Background	p.4
3.0	Scope of the Scrutiny Task	p.5
4.0	The Scrutiny Process	p.6
5.0	Performance Information on Customer Service Standards	p.6
6.0	Service Standards Review	p.9
7.0	Mystery Shopping Project	p.11
8.0	Recommendations	p.21
9.0	Conclusion	p.23

Appendix 1: REST group members

Appendix 2: REST feedback on Thenue's Customer Service Standard leaflet

Executive Summary

Introduction

Welcome to the REST Team's scrutiny report. Over the last ten months we have carried out an independent review of Thenue's Customer Service Standards to evaluate how they are delivered in practice. This has involved carrying out our first Mystery Shopping Project.

The REST Team

The Resident Empowerment Scrutiny Team (REST) was formed in October 2013 to independently review Thenue's housing services. We have produced a Terms of Reference which details the roles, responsibilities and reporting arrangements for our group. Thenue have also produced a scrutiny framework to clarify roles and responsibilities.

Scope of the Project

The REST team selected Thenue's Customer Service Standards for a range of reasons:

- » Thenue was due to reviews its customer service standards, so it was a good time to carry out our independent review;
- » Customer service standards underpins all of the work that Thenue does;
- » The Scottish Social Housing Charter has been revised in April 2017 and it is a useful time to see how Thenue meets the revised Charter requirements.

The Scrutiny Process

The scope of the scrutiny task included:

- » To independently review Thenue's Customer Service Standards;
- » To review how the standards are delivered in practice;
- » To review how well the standards are understood and implemented by staff, tenants, and service users;
- » To make recommendations for further improvements.

The scrutiny activities and Mystery Shopping Project were carried out between June 2016 and April 2017.

In reviewing the Customer Service Standards the REST team used the following methods;

- » Met with Thenue staff to review performance, ARC and tenant satisfaction survey results;
- » A policy and procedure review;
- » A Mystery Shopping Project.

Findings

The review identified that Thenue has a customer focused approach in all aspects of its work.

The Mystery Shopping Project reported a high level of service with staff being:

- » Polite and courteous;
- » Quick and efficient;
- » Respectful;
- » Professional and genuinely wanting to help.

There was also a high level of satisfaction with the information provided by staff.

REST have identified a number of recommendations in Section 8 to work with Thenue to drive forward its excellent customer service standards.

The Next Steps

REST identified that this scrutiny review has helped them to gain a better understanding of the work that Thenue does. REST and the mystery shoppers are all volunteers and their commitment to this project was exceptional.

We would like to thank the REST team and our mystery shopper colleagues for their time and commitment to make this review happen. Also, to thank Ilene Campbell from TIS who has supported us throughout our scrutiny journey.

Thenue staff have been very supportive throughout this project and we would like to thank the staff for their support and partnership working.

We hope that our findings and recommendations will support Thenue to continue to drive forward its excellent customer service standards.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Welcome to the REST Team's scrutiny report. Over the last ten months we have carried out an independent review of Thenue's Customer Service Standards to evaluate how they are delivered in practice. This has involved carrying out our first Mystery Shopping Project.
- 1.2 We would like to thank the REST team and our mystery shopper colleagues for their time and commitment to make this review happen. Also to thank Ilene Campbell from TIS who has supported us throughout our scrutiny journey.
- 1.3 Thenue staff have been very supportive throughout this project and we would like to thank the staff for their support and partnership working.
- 1.4 We hope that our findings and recommendations will support Thenue to continue to drive forward its excellent customer service standards.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Resident Empowerment Scrutiny Team (REST) was formed in October 2013 to independently review Thenue's housing services. We have produced a Terms of Reference which details the roles, responsibilities and reporting arrangements for our group. Thenue have also produced a scrutiny framework to clarify roles and responsibilities.
- 2.2 Our key aims:
 - » To independently review and scrutinise the performance of Thenue Housing Association's housing services to support service improvement;
 - » To commission and review scrutiny activities through an annual programme and development of action and improvement plans;
 - » To make recommendations and report progress on actions to the Association's Senior Management Team and the Management Board;
 - » To report to tenants and other service users on progress being made;
 - » To validate the Annual Performance Report on the Charter.
- 2.3 Our work is based on the following core standards:
 - » Being accountable to tenants and service users;
 - » Being transparent;
 - » Reflecting the needs and aspirations of tenants and service users;
 - » Respecting the decision making role of the Board.

- 2.4 To date, we have completed the following activities:
- » Conducted a review of Thenue’s communications in relation to dealing with anti-social behaviour;
 - » Reviewed Thenue’s Rent and Service Charges Policy;
 - » Participated in a Mystery Shopping training programme;
 - » Completed our first Mystery Shopping Project;
 - » A study visit to East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation to learn about their scrutiny practice;
- Provided workshops and speaker inputs at TIS scrutiny conference events to update on our scrutiny work.
- 2.5 REST are currently working with Thenue to provide feedback on the questions to be used in the forthcoming Tenant Satisfaction Survey.
- 2.6 Our work has been acknowledged by receiving a UK Customer Scrutiny Inspection Award for positive practice in scrutiny in Scotland (October 2014) and “The Most Inspiring Scrutiny Group” at the TIS National Excellence Awards (June 2015).
- 2.7 REST have grown in confidence, knowledge and skills over the last four years. We are delighted to work in partnership with Thenue to make a real difference.

3.0 Scope of the Scrutiny Task

- 3.1 The REST team selected Thenue’s Customer Service Standards for a range of reasons:
- » Thenue was due to reviews its customer service standards, so it was a good time to carry out our independent review;
 - » Customer service standards underpins all of the work that Thenue does;
 - » The Scottish Social Housing Charter has been revised in April 2017 and it is a useful time to see how Thenue meets the revised Charter requirements.
- 3.2 The scope of the scrutiny task included:
- » To independently review Thenue’s Customer Service Standards ;
 - » To review how the standards are delivered in practice;
 - » To review how well the standards are understood and implemented by staff and tenants and service users;
 - » To make recommendations for further improvements.
- 3.3 The scrutiny activities and Mystery Shopping Project were carried out between June 2016 and April 2017.

4.0 The Scrutiny Process

4.1 In reviewing the Customer Service Standards the REST team used the following methods;

- » Met with Thenue staff to review performance, ARC and tenant satisfaction survey results;
- » A policy and procedure review;
- » A Mystery Shopping Project.

4.2 Our customer service review had three definitive steps:

- » Summary
- » Positive Points
- » Findings

4.3 Section 8 of the report provides our key recommendations for consideration by the Thenue Board.

5.0 Performance Information on Customer Service Standards

5.1 Summary

REST carried out the following activities to gather performance information about customer service standards:

- » Met with Brian Gannon and Lynne McKenzie from Thenue to get an overview of the customer service standards; how the standards are monitored and the key areas Thenue aims to develop;
- » A review of the findings of the Service Standard Research Report conducted by Research Resource (April 2015);
- » A review of the SHR landlord performance report (2015/16).

5.2 Positive Points

- » Thenue regularly commissions independent service standard surveys to measure tenant satisfaction with customer service standards;
- » The independent surveys show high levels of tenant satisfaction with Thenue's customer service standards over the period 2010-15;
- » The most recent tenant satisfaction survey (2015-16) highlights:
 - » Tenant and other service user satisfaction at being kept informed by Thenue is 91.67% and higher than the Scottish average figure;
 - » Tenant satisfaction with the opportunities to participate is 84.8% and remains higher than the Scottish average figure.

- » All staff receive training and information on customer service standards when they take up their post.

5.3.1 Findings

Independent customer service surveys

1. Over the period 2010-15 Thenue commissioned five independent service standard research surveys to assess how well the customer service standards are being delivered. The aim of the service standards research was to complete a short survey with a random sample of customers. A summary of the surveys is provided below.

11. Meeting Service Standards

The table below takes each of the service standards this survey was intended to monitor and summarises the extent to which the survey indicates that Thenue is meeting these standards:

Service Standard (Reception)	Wave 5 Monitoring 2014/15	Wave 4 Monitoring 2013	Wave 3 Monitoring 2012	Wave 2 Monitoring 2011	Wave 1 Monitoring 2010
....acknowledge you when you arrive	97%	100%	97%	97%	97%
....attend to you as soon as we are able	97%	100%	100%	96%	100%
....polite	98%	98%	98%	96%	97%
....friendly	99%	98%	100%	96%	97%
....helpful	95%	98%	99%	95%	96%
....willing to listen	97%	98%	99%	95%	96%
Service Standard (Dealing with the enquiry/ issue)	Wave 5 Monitoring 2014/15	Wave 4 Monitoring 2013	Wave 3 Monitoring 2012	Wave 2 Monitoring 2011	Wave 1 Monitoring 2010
....polite	94%	95%	99%	89%	92%
....friendly	94%	96%	99%	90%	91%
....helpful	87%	90%	99%	88%	86%
....willing to listen	89%	90%	99%	88%	88%
Service Standard (Home Visits)	Wave 5 Monitoring 2014/15	Wave 4 Monitoring 2013	Wave 3 Monitoring 2012	Wave 2 Monitoring 2011	Wave 1 Monitoring 2010
....polite	100%	67%	100%	100%	100%
....friendly	67%	67%	100%	100%	100%
....helpful	67%	67%	100%	100%	100%
....willing to listen	100%	67%	0%	100%	100%
....sensitive to your needs	67%	67%	0%	100%	100%
Service Standard	Wave 5 Monitoring 2014/15	Wave 4 Monitoring 2013	Wave 3 Monitoring 2012	Wave 2 Monitoring 2011	Wave 1 Monitoring 2010
....help you fill out any form that we ask you to complete	92%	90%	58%	72%	84%

2. The most recent survey results (March 2015) highlights:
 - » High satisfaction with the standard of service at reception in terms of being acknowledge when you arrive; staff being polite, friendly, helpful and willing to listen;
 - » High satisfaction of service standards when dealing with enquiries;
 - » High service standards during home visits;
 - » 92% of tenants were offered support to fill in a form.
3. The service standards are published on Thenue's website, included in newsletters and a leaflet is available at all offices. However, the research report highlighted that only 44% of participants had an awareness of the customer service standards. It is recommended that Thenue raises awareness of the service standards through its communications.
4. During the review Thenue staff identified that the following areas require to be developed:
 - » Thenue needs to continue to carry our regular customer surveys and it may be helpful to complement this with mystery shopping;
 - » Thenue needs to remind staff of the service standards on a more regular basis;
 - » Thenue needs to review what changes in use of online/digital services requires a change to the service standards;
 - » Thenue to consider translation of the service standards.

SHR Landlord Report

5. Of the tenants who responded to Thenue's most recent tenant satisfaction survey:
 - » 88.6% said they were satisfied with the overall service it provided, compared to the Scottish average of 89%;
 - » 91.67% felt Thenue are good at keeping them informed about its services and outcomes compared to the Scottish average of 90.6%;
 - » 84.8 % of tenants were satisfied with the opportunities to participate in decision making processes, compared to the Scottish average of 81.3%.

Complaints

6. Thenue received 39 complaints over 2015-16:
 - » 32 Stage 1 complaints
 - » 7 Stage 2 complaints
 - » 1 complaint was referred to the Ombudsmen
7. 3 of the stage 1 complaints were in relation to customer service.
8. 2 of the stage 2 complaints were regarding service quality and timescale and 1 about the quality of advice.
9. All complaints are recorded and analysed to look at how Thenue can alter its service, policies or procedures to prevent this happening again.

6.0 Service Standards Review

6.1 Summary

During the course of REST's scrutiny review Thenue have revised its Customer Service Standards leaflet to take into account new legislative requirements, the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the use of online and digital consultation. As part of this review REST have examined the revised customer service standard leaflet and this can be found in Appendix 2.

In reviewing Thenue's customer service standards REST looked at how Thenue meets the Scottish Social Housing Charter (specifically outcomes 1, 2 and 3). To compare and contrast we looked at other examples of customer standards from other social rented sector landlords (this included Glasgow Housing Association; Glen Oaks Housing Association and Cunninghame Housing Association.)

There was not time within this project to review the new customer App.

6.2 Positive Points

- » It is useful that Thenue has a Customer Service Standard leaflet to raise awareness about these standards;
- » The revised Customer Service Standard leaflet is clear to understand and a very useful publication;
- » The customer service standards are "fit for purpose" and provide excellent service standards;

6.3 Findings

Review of Service Standard

1. Customer service standards were first introduced in 2005 and were last reviewed in 2012.
2. Thenue recognise that “The way we provide our services can be as important as the service itself”. One of Thenue’s key service standards states “Our staff will help you fill out any form that we ask you to complete”.
3. Thenue has updated its customer service standard publication to reflect Scottish Social Housing Charter requirements, current good practice, and the introduction of the new Customer App.
4. The new Customer App has been well received by REST.
5. The revised Service Standard leaflet is a very useful publication for tenants and service users.
6. REST are satisfied that the Service Standards are “fit for purpose” and have detailed our recommended changes to the leaflet in Appendix 2.
7. It would be helpful to clarify if Area Associations have a role to play in monitoring Service Standards in their localities.
8. The REST team had very little prior knowledge of the customer service standards and in the last service standard research report only 44% of participants had knowledge of this. It is recommended that Thenue provides a copy of its updated Service Standard leaflet:
 - » To every household
 - » On its website
 - » In local offices
 - » Through its social media and communications.

Staff Training and Support

9. All staff receive training and information on customer service standards when they take up their post. REST recommends that when the customer service standards are reviewed that staff training is carried out to ensure consistency of approach and development of good practice.

10. New staff are given a copy of the service standards at their induction.
11. REST acknowledged that staff have to deal at times with challenging situations.
12. All staff and contractors are required to meet Thenue's customer service standards and this is monitored by the Board.

7.0 Mystery Shopping Project

7.1 Summary

Mystery Shopping is a form of market research which assesses services completely from the customer's point of view. The purpose of a Mystery Shopping Exercise is to provide information from a customer's perspective on the quality of every day services to assist staff training and improvements in service.

Thenue decided to establish a Mystery Shopping Project to support tenant scrutiny activity. Thenue advertised the Mystery Shopping Project in its newsletters and at its Tenant Conference event in June 2016. TIS were commissioned to carry out two introductory Mystery Shopping training sessions that took place in November 2016. 18 people participated in these events and vouchers were provided as an incentive.

Following the introductory sessions 9 of the original group agreed to take part in a Mystery Shopping Project and TIS provided a comprehensive training programme. The mystery shoppers also included 5 REST members. The mystery shoppers decided to look at Thenue's Customer Service Standards as its first activity. It was agreed that the mystery shopping report would form an integral part of the REST Scrutiny Report on Thenue's Customer Service Standards. The mystery shoppers agreed that for the success of this project their identify would remain anonymous.

The Mystery Shopping Project followed an agreed workplan which detailed key tasks, outcomes and timescales for the Project. This included:

- » Mystery Shopping awareness raising material, briefing papers and newsletter articles to promote the Project
- » Code of Conduct for Mystery Shoppers
- » Training of Mystery Shoppers
- » Agreeing Mystery Shopping Scenarios
- » Agreeing Mystery Shopping Recording Forms
- » Devising a Project Delivery Plan to include live telephone shops, email based enquiries and live office visit shops
- » On-going support for Mystery Shoppers
- » Project evaluation

The mystery shoppers worked well as a team and carried out the following fieldwork:

- » 9 live visits to Thenue's offices (Headquarters, Netherholm and Cranhill)
- » 10 live telephone calls to Thenue offices
- » 6 email and website enquiries.

The mystery shopping scenario that was used and adapted is detailed below.

"I would like to request a housing application form on behalf of my brother who is moving back to Scotland from England and would like to apply for a house. Can you give me an application form and is there support available if he needs help to fill this in".

The fieldwork was conducted between January and March 2017. TIS provided the mystery shoppers with training and support throughout this project

7.2 Positive points

- » Thenue has a customer focused approach in all aspects of its work;
- » The mystery shopping project reported a high level of service with staff being :
 - » Polite and courteous;
 - » Quick and efficient;
 - » Treated with respect;
 - » Professional and genuinely wanting to help;
- » There was a high level of satisfaction with the information provided by staff.

7.3 Findings

Table 1: Mystery Shopping Office Visits

Question	Response
1. Were you greeted with a smile by staff?	Yes - 100% Comments: "I was made to feel very comfortable – you could actually feel the happy mood of the office in the air". " Very friendly gave me a cup of tea"

2. Was the staff member wearing a badge?	Yes: 50%, but it was difficult to read with the lanyards. No: 50%.
3. Were you seen within 5 minutes	Yes- 89% No - 11% had to wait a bit longer than 5 minutes as the office was busy but were acknowledged immediately. Comments: "I was seen immediately".
4. Were you offered an alternative appointment with another staff member if this was required?	» 78% responded this was not required. » 22% not given an appointment but given the telephone number of another staff member to contact. Comments "I was told I would get a call back but I didn't hear anything".
5. Were staff: » Welcoming » Polite and courteous » Quick & efficient » Come across as » professional » Genuinely wanted to help » Listened to you and responded sensitively to your needs	Yes - 100% recorded. Comments: However a shopper who recorded yes recorded "that the staff member appeared to lose interest when the enquiry was about a non Thenue tenant". 1 shopper recorded "that the staff at reception did not have a full knowledge of which staff were in the office that day".
6. Respect privacy of the customer offering a private area if required	100% of shoppers did not require a private interview space as the offices were quiet.

	<p>Comments :</p> <p>It was noted that the layout of the London Road reception makes it difficult to have privacy when the seating area is so close to the reception and the office is busy.</p> <p>The Cranhill office is not suitable as it is part of a larger Centre and the upstairs office is too small.</p> <p>It was also noted that it can be difficult to get privacy in the Netherholm office.</p>
<p>7. How happy were you with the service provided?</p>	<p>Very satisfied: 22%</p> <p>Satisfied: 67%</p> <p>Unsatisfied: 11%</p> <p>Very unsatisfied: 0%</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>I shopper recorded "I was unsatisfied as I had expected a staff member to call me after the visit and this did not happen".</p> <p>5 shoppers recorded they were satisfied with the information they received.</p> <p>1 shopper recorded "the staff member provided comprehensive information and follow up plans".</p>
<p>8. How happy were you with the information provided?</p>	<p>Very satisfied: 11%</p> <p>Satisfied: 67%</p> <p>Unsatisfied: 22%</p> <p>Very unsatisfied: 0%</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>"Enquiry dealt with promptly"</p> <p>"Wasn't able to answer my enquiry but I was given a staff members name to call"</p>

	<p>"I didn't get my enquiry answered that day and had to call a staff member who was not available that day either".</p>
<p>9. Did the staff member answer your questions in a positive way?</p>	<p>88% answered yes. 22% answered no.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>"I received all the information I needed and the staff member was very helpful"</p> <p>"If I truly had a homeless friend I think it would be the wrong way to treat a person asking them to go back to her Council as their only option – I didn't see this as a positive action."</p>
<p>10. Was there office information regarding services available?</p>	<p>London Road – Information is available, but it is currently not in an accessible position.</p> <p>Netherholm – Shoppers could not easily access information in the reception area.</p> <p>Cranhill - Information is not readily seen at reception or in the office.</p>
<p>11. Was there office information regarding opening times</p>	<p>London Road – Yes</p> <p>Netherholm – Yes</p> <p>Cranhill – Shoppers did not see opening time information.</p> <p>Comments</p> <p>Shoppers identified that as public holidays often fall on a Monday that this has a negative impact on local offices which are only open on a Monday and Thursday. There is a need to review local office opening days and times.</p>

12. Was the reception area clean and tidy?	100% recorded yes to this question.
13. Are office buildings accessible to all customers	London Road – Yes Netherholm – No ramp available Cranhill – Yes
14. Did the member of staff advise that assistance is available to complete the form?	30% of the shoppers recorded being offered help. 70% did not record being offered help.
15. What did Thenue do well in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Staff were eager to help » Staff were very friendly. » Staff were very professional. » “Made me feel like a friend”. » “Took time to listen”.
16. How can service improvements be made	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is important that staff highlight that they can help tenants fill in any form they are asked to complete. 2. Ensure staff call back when tenants are informed they will. 3. Ensure there is a staff member in the office who can deal with the enquiry. 4. Ensure relevant information is available and accessible in reception areas. 5. In London Road there is a need for more privacy. Thenue could move the seats away from the reception to give privacy. 6. More training is needed to ensure Thenue staff have clear instructions on the line of action on how to handle enquiries and to ensure a consistent throughout the organisation.

Table 2: Telephone Shops

Question	Response
1. Was the phone answered promptly? Number of rings?	Under 6 rings - 30% 6-8: - 50% 9-10: - 20% more than 10: - 0%
2. Did the member of staff give their name and department	Yes gave name – 40% No did not give name – 60% Yes gave department: 60% No didn't give department:40%
3. Could the member of staff respond to your enquiry at the point of contact?	Yes – 40% No – 60% Comments: "Staff member at reception tried to contact three different staff members to resolve my enquiry but none of the staff were available". "I tried reaching the Cranhill office without success then had to contact the head office to speak to an Officer"
4. Was the staff member : » Polite & courteous » Quick & efficient » Professional » Genuinely wanted to help » Respectful	Yes – 100% No – 0%
5. How happy were you with the service provided?	Very satisfied – 30% Satisfied – 50% Unsatisfied – 10% Very unsatisfied. – 10%
6. How happy were you with the information provided	Very satisfied – 30% Satisfied – 60% Unsatisfied – 10% Very unsatisfied. – 0%

<p>7. Did staff answer your questions in a positive way?</p>	<p>Yes – 90% No - 10%</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>“Showed concern without breaking confidence and displayed professionalism”.</p>
<p>8. What did Thenue do well in?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provided professional support. » Helpful tried to contact three different staff members » My enquiry was dealt with quickly and professionally » I was impressed with all of the Thenue staff who dealt with my enquiry » Dealt with an awkward customer very well.
<p>9. How can service improvements be made?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Cranhill Office - One shopper found the process of calling Cranhill very difficult to get through to a Thenue staff member when they called the Cranhill office during opening times. The recorded message provides the office opening times. When the caller requested a meeting in the Cranhill office they were directed to go to the London Road office. » It is important that staff give their name and the part of the organisation they work for when speaking to a tenant. » It is important to ensure that staff from the same department are not on holiday at the same time.

Table 3: Direct E-mail and Website

Question	Response
<p>1. How easy was it to request your enquiry by email?</p>	<p>Email enquiries</p> <p>100% satisfied with the clear instructions and information when emailing their enquiry.</p> <p>Website enquiries</p> <p>50% satisfied using the website to make an enquiry.</p> <p>50% unsatisfied as they considered the website is not easy to use. One shopper recorded” The print size when you access the website by smartphone is very small. The pages took forever to load and the website was slow and difficult to navigate”.</p>
<p>2. Length of time to acknowledge your enquiry</p>	<p>Email enquiries</p> <p>100% received acknowledgement within one day.</p> <p>Website enquiries</p> <p>100% received acknowledgement within one day.</p>
<p>3. Did you receive the information you requested?</p>	<p>Email enquiries</p> <p>67% did and 33% didn't.</p> <p>Website enquiries</p> <p>100% yes.</p>
<p>4. If yes, how long did it take</p>	<p>Email enquiries</p> <p>1 day - 67%</p> <p>5 days- 33%</p> <p>Website enquiry</p> <p>1 day – 67%</p> <p>5 days – 33%</p>

5. Was the e-mail polite and courteous?	100% recorded responses were polite and courteous.
6. How happy were you with the service provided?	<p>Email enquiries</p> <p>Very satisfied – 67%</p> <p>Very unsatisfied – 33%</p> <p>Website enquiries</p> <p>Very satisfied – 100%</p>
7. How happy were you with the information provided?	<p>Email enquiries</p> <p>Very satisfied – 33.3%</p> <p>Satisfied – 33.3%</p> <p>Very unsatisfied – 33.3%</p> <p>Website enquiries</p> <p>Very satisfied – 100%</p>
8. What did Thenue do well in?	<p>Email enquiries</p> <p>Provided full information and support.</p> <p>Website enquiries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provided a webform » Professional and helpful » This for me is a perfect customer service response » One shopper commented “In testing staff response I will score them tops”.
9. How can service improvements be made	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » If a tenant submits an enquiry via email and direct website each enquiry should be separately acknowledged. » Review the website to make it more accessible.

8.0 Recommendations

- 8.1 REST is delighted to present its recommendations for consideration by the Thenue Board.

Customer Service Standards

1. Thenue to consider the recommended changes put forward by REST to amend the revised Customer Service Standard leaflet for tenants and service users.
2. Thenue to raise awareness of its service standards by providing a copy of the leaflet:
 - » To every household
 - » On its website
 - » In local offices
 - » Through its social media and wider communications
3. To consider translation of its service standards leaflet.
4. To provide regular staff training and briefings to raise awareness of the service standards and agree a consistent approach.

Monitoring of Customer Service Standards

5. Thenue to continue to commission customer service surveys and that this is complemented with mystery shopping.
6. The customer services leaflet should be updated to highlight the role of the local Area Associations in monitoring customer service standards in their localities.
7. Thenue to work towards increasing the percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided to meet the Scottish average figures for 2017-18.
8. Thenue to review the usage and impact of the Customer App after its first year.

Staffing

9. Thenue to provide staff with a lapel pin style badge that is worn during working hours.
10. Thenue ensures that all staff give their name (and department) when speaking to tenants and service users.
11. It is important that staff offer support to tenants to complete forms (if required).
12. It is important that staff offer support to tenants to use the new Customer App.

13. Thenue to provide regular staff to ensure a consistency of approach in delivering its customer service standards.
14. Thenue to ensure that staff contact tenants within the agreed timeframes.

Offices

15. Thenue to review its local office open days and times as public holidays often fall on a Monday and this has an impact on the local offices which are open only on a Monday and Thursday each week.
16. Thenue to consider a different layout of its London Road reception area to provide more privacy. It is recommended that the seating be moved further away from the reception desk.
17. Thenue to review the office arrangements in Cranhill to ensure accessibility and privacy.
18. Publication stands should be in accessible places in all Thenue offices.
19. Staff need to be available in the Cranhill and Netherholm offices to deal with telephone and face to face enquiries during the opening times.

Telephone

1. To introduce a standard for the number of telephone rings a tenant can expect. REST recommend within 6 rings.
2. Ensure staff always give their name and department,
3. Ensure that when a tenant calls with an enquiry a member of staff deals with this or a follow up call is made within the agreed timetable.
4. It is important that if a tenant calls and the staff member is not available that it is transferred to another staff member to deal with the enquiry.

Website / Email

1. To review website to ensure it is easy to use.
2. To review the Customer App in 2018 to evaluate its impact and usage.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 REST would like to thank its members and TIS for their support in producing this scrutiny report. We hope our recommendations will help to drive forward Thenue's excellent customer service standards. We look forwards to working with Thenue in the years ahead.

Appendix 1

Resident Empowerment Scrutiny Team List of Current Members:

- » Anne McGuire, Dalmarnock
- » Harriet Poole, Dalmarnock
- » Elaine Black, Bridgeton
- » Anne McIver, Cranhill
- » Cathy Martin, Calton
- » Berni Johnston, Castlemilk
- » Joan Soutar, Castlemilk

Appendix 2 Thenue Housing: Service Standards

This document sets out the standards of service you can expect to receive from us:


Tracked Changes by REST

Who are our service users?	Our service users include: tenants, owner occupiers in a factored property, sharing owners, housing applicants and any other individual or groups of individuals who seek or receive a service from us.
What are Service Standards?	<p>Service Standards are service commitments by an organisation. They confirm how specific services will be delivered and explain to users the quality of service they can expect</p> <p><u>REST: Recommend this section is explained in an easier way. Eg. Service standards detail the standards that Thenue tenants and service users can expect.-</u></p> <p>We recognise the way we provide our services can be as important as the service itself.</p>
How will we monitor our performance against our Service Standards?	We will review these standards on a three-yearly basis with our service users and report our performance on achieving the standards to our Board on an annual basis. Where necessary we will ask an independent agency to assess our performance. Where we have not met our standards of service we will apologise, explain why and aim to ensure that it doesn't happen in future.




	<p>If you feel that we have not met a service standard in any way please use our complaints procedure (see section below on making a complaint). This will help us to continually improve our service delivery to you.</p> <p><u>Can Thenue clarify and include the role of Area Associations in terms of monitoring customer service standards locally.</u></p>
<p>Complaints:</p>	
<p>How to make a complaint:</p>	<p>Our separate leaflet entitled <u>‘Making a Complaint’</u> and form will explain in detail how your complaint will be dealt with. We have 3 stages of complaints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1: Frontline Complaint Complaints that can be resolved quickly and close to where the service is provided. • Stage 2: Investigation Complaint Those complaints that have not been resolved at stage 1 or are complex and require more detailed investigation. • Stage 3: If you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the <u>Scottish Public Services Ombudsman</u> (SPSO) or if you are an owner the <u>First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber)</u> to look at it
<p>When you complain we</p>	<p><u>REST: It is recommended that the section on complaints is reworked to clearly detail what</u></p>



<p>will:</p>	<p><u>the different stages of complaints are. Currently this is not clear.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make an information leaflet on our complaints policy readily available from our office and on our website. • Investigate fully all complaints made by service users about our services and use our findings to improve our services to you. • Deal with complaints promptly, courteously, systematically, fairly and in confidence. • Respond to Stage 1 complaints within 5 working days • <u>Respond to Stage 2 complaints within 20 working days</u> <p><u>REST : 20 days seems too long.</u></p> 
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Our key Service Standards

<p>When you make any enquiry to us, we will:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Give you an estimate of when we are likely to be able to respond to your enquiry and keep you regularly informed of our progress in pursuing the matter.</u> <p><u>REST: Estimate appears a bit vague it would be more helpful to specify the number of days or hours.</u></p> <p>Ensure that all correspondence and personal information is treated in confidence and discussed with our colleagues only when necessary and appropriate to do so.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prompt, polite, friendly, helpful and 
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	<p>willing to listen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat everyone who uses our service fairly and equally. • Respond effectively and sensitively to your needs. • Always make ourselves known to the person/organisation we are dealing with. • Wear name badges in the office and at meetings and carry identity cards outside the office. • Provide our email address and direct dial phone number in correspondence to you. • Help you fill out any form that we ask you to complete. • Visit you at home if required.
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Our Targets for Responding to Different Communication Methods

<p>When you visit a Thenue office</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge you when you arrive and attend to you as soon as we are able. • If you have made an appointment with a member of staff you will be seen on time. • If you have not made an appointment and the member of staff you wish to speak to is available, you will not be kept waiting for more than 10 minutes. • Where it is difficult for you to visit our office
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	<p>we will arrange a home visit to you at a mutually convenient time.</p> <p><u>REST: On request be able to use a private interview room when you visit our offices.</u></p>	
<p>When you send a letter to us, we will:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond within 5 working days. If for any reason a reply is likely to take longer (for example to obtain further information) you will receive an initial acknowledgement reply within five working days. 	
<p>When you email us, we will:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will acknowledge your email within 1 working day and if an immediate response is not possible we will respond within 3 working days. 	
<p>When you contact us through our Customer Self Service App, we will:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normally respond within 1 working day unless specified otherwise when the request is made on the App. <p><u>REST: Recommend adding that Thenue will provide support to help you to use the App.</u></p>	
<p>Our Targets for Responding to Different Communication Methods</p>		
<p>When you telephone us, we will:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Answer all telephone calls promptly.</u> <p><u>REST-; Recommend within 6 rings to stay consistent with other RSLs.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deal with all enquiries immediately, but where this is not possible we will call back 	



	<p>within one working day or at an agreed time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that when offices are closed, an answerphone or message service will be in operation. • Respond to any messages left on our voice mail within one working day (if we have not redirected our calls). <p><u>REST: Recommend adding that if the staff member you wish to speak to is out that you will be forwarded to another staff member who can deal with your enquiry.</u></p>
<p>When you make an enquiry on our website, we will:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge your web enquiry within 1 working day and if an immediate response is not possible we will respond within 3 working days
<p>General Information</p>	
<p>Newsletters</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Self Service App</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will issue at least three newsletters to residents each year. • We will post regular news information on our web site when it happens. • Our Self Service App will give information about the organisation and consultation topics. <p><u>REST: Recommend adding “Provide our publications in ways that you’re your needs (translations, interpretations, large print, audio versions etc.)</u></p>



Service Standards for Specific Service Areas	
Housing Applications & Allocation of Property	
When you apply for a house or request a transfer we will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist you with the completion of your application form. • Process your completed application within 15 working days. • Ensure that all information provided to us by you will remain confidential and record only information required for the proper assessment of your application. • Allocate available property fairly according to our Allocation Policy (a copy of which is available on request). • Allow you three working days to accept an offer of rehousing.
Your Rent	
For rent Payments, we will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a variety of easy methods of rent payment. • Provide advice and assistance in completing Housing Benefit & Universal Credit forms. • Process payments by rent payment card to the rent account within two working days.
When you are having difficulty paying your rent, we will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sensible and realistic arrangements for repayment of your arrears based on your circumstances. • Confirm in writing any arrangement you have made to repay your arrears. • Work with other agencies to try to prevent

	arrears and to ensure that all tenants receive appropriate advice on welfare benefits and debt advice.
Our Payments and Accounts Services	
Rents & Factoring Payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will process all rent & factoring payments within two working days of receipt of payment into our bank account.
For Accounts Payable, we will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhere to suppliers agreed payment terms. Respond to suppliers' reminder letters within five working days of receipt. <p><u>REST: Are not sure that the above deleted paragraph is required in this publication.</u></p>
Factoring Service	
If you are an owner (or sharing owner) and receive our factoring service we will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue you with an account giving details of charges 4 times during the year. Offer you a variety of easy payment options including regular monthly payments. Provide a customer with a 'Written Statement of Service' within 4 weeks of us being made aware of a change of ownership in a property we manage. Post inspect all common repairs.
Alterations & Improvements	
If you are a tenant and want to alter or improve your home, we will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not unreasonably withhold permission for requests to alter or improve a property. Compensate you for certain improvements at the end of the tenancy (as long as we agreed to them being done).
Estate Management	



We will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspect all gardens monthly during the growing season. • Inspect closes and common areas on a monthly basis.
Neighbour Disputes & Anti-Social Behaviour Complaints	
When you make a complaint about anti-social behaviour we will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not ask for complaints to be made in writing before investigating. • Where necessary help you to complete our neighbour/anti-social behaviour complaints form. • Visit you (or contact you by phone) within 24 hours if an incident is very serious or serious (Category 1 and 2 cases) such as drug dealing from the property or excessive persistent noise disturbance. • Visit you (or contact you by phone) within five working days if the incident is of a relatively minor nature (Category 3 cases) such as stair cleaning complaints. • Make regular contact with you during ongoing/on-going complaints. • Make clear to all tenants that any form of harassment of a neighbour will be viewed as a serious breach of the Tenancy Agreement. <p style="text-align: center;">REST: It would be helpful to refer to the leaflet <i>Thenue</i> has produced on dealing with anti-social behaviour.</p>
Our New Build Services	
We will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you live in an area where there are new development proposals, hold at least two



	<p>consultation events on our proposals at appropriate stages in the planning process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carry out satisfaction surveys on all our new build properties within a year of the handover of your property and use this to inform future design.
Our Planned Maintenance Services	
<p>When carrying out the renewal of major items in your home we will:</p> <p>When carrying out servicing and cyclical works we will:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that programmes of work are detailed in our newsletters.• Advise you at least two weeks before work commences, that a contractor has been appointed to carry out works in your home.• Give at least seven working days before works commence, visit you with the contractor to discuss the works and any specific requirements.• Post-inspect all works.• Issue a tenant satisfaction survey within three months of completion of the works. <p><u>REST: Recommend that there should be reference to tenant consultation with regards planned maintenance.</u></p> <p>Ensure you are notified of planned visits at least seven working days before unless the visit is urgent in nature.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where applicable, inspect works on completion



Repairs Service	
<p>When you report a repair we will:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to Emergency repairs and make safe within 2.5 hours. • Non Emergency Repairs: The Contractor will attend within the appointment (date and time) slot agreed with you. Most repair appointments will be within a 2 hours time slot. External Repairs will be completed within 10 working days. • <u>Complete Non-Emergency Repairs within ? working days.</u> <p><u>REST: Timeframe needs to be clarified.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to Appointment repairs within an agreed timeslot. • Post inspect for quality a proportion of all jobs • Offer an opportunity to complete a customer satisfaction form for all jobs completed within your home



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