

Salix Homes Customer Voice

Scrutiny Report

Salix Homes approach to Business Continuity Management during the Covid-19 Pandemic

September 2020

This scrutiny report is the first commissioned by our Customer Committee, who launched in January 2020. The committee and I believed it was crucial to ensure that Salix Homes learnt from the prolonged period of Business Continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic and that we use this learning to inform our future and how Salix Homes Builds Back Better.

When we launched the committee earlier this year, I would have never anticipated that our first piece of customer scrutiny would be in relation to an international pandemic and how we adapt to the huge societal changes falling out from such a huge crisis.

I believe that this piece of scrutiny has given Salix Homes some of the key actions that they need to build back better and how the organisation should focus its effort and resource in the future. I am particularly passionate about ensuring that we build on the learning identified in this report about focussing on core service delivery, communicating with customers effectively and about how we work with our partners in the future.

The committee have the benefit from a diverse customer scrutiny pool of over 50 customers who we can approach for one off, paid pieces of scrutiny work on a task and finish basis. The panel formed for this scrutiny report were fundamental in the delivery of this work and I'd like to thank them for working so hard to shape our services and the organisation into the future.

I would also like to thank the officers involved in this piece who held honest conversations with the scrutiny panel, to over 200 of our customers who have shared their views with the panel and to the wider team at Salix Homes, who continued to keep customers at the heart of what they did during the immense challenge of operating during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Margaret Bryant

Interim Chair, Salix Homes Customer Committee



This report found that the overall approach to Business Continuity Management, including customer communications and supporting vulnerable customers by Salix Homes during the COVID-19 pandemic was sufficient.

This report outlines where the scrutiny panel believe that Salix Homes can learn from their approach during the pandemic to build back better.

The key strengths outlined in this report cover:

- Salix Homes' Business Continuity Committee made plans for a full lockdown at their meeting on 9th March, three weeks ahead of the national lockdown, announced on Monday, 23 March 2020, ensuring the organisation was in a good position to maintain service delivery and provide appropriate support to customers
- The Business Continuity approach to service provision during the pandemic was proportionate, well considered and utilised cross team and partnership working effectively
- That customer communications were appropriate, and a variety of methods was carefully utilised to ensure that customers understood the impact on service provision and the support available through Spirit of Salford
- The regular calls to vulnerable customers supported effective communications
- The combination of regular calls to vulnerable customers and an effective partnership with Spirit of Salford provided a seamless approach to supporting vulnerable customers which ensured that Salix Homes could focus on the delivery of core services during the pandemic
- Support from the regular calls was well received by customers who appreciated a personal approach and that staff felt autonomous in building relationships with the customers they contacted

Key areas for improvement outlined in this report cover:

- The organisation does not have a specific business continuity pandemic plan as this is covered in the overall disaster recovery plans. Whilst recognising the organisations positive approach to managing the pandemic the scrutiny panel recommend the development of a standalone pandemic plan
- Service specific communications could have been more focused in areas such as repairs and the classification of urgent and non-urgent repairs. Customers reported, they were unclear about the processes for reporting non-urgent repairs during the pandemic
- Customers living in accommodation with communal areas would have preferred to know the cleaning schedules considering the pandemic
- Customers experiencing anti-social behaviour or neighbour issues reported the ease of contacting Salix Homes as more difficult than the overall ease of contacting Salix Homes about other issues
- Salix Homes knowledge of its customer base is limited by the data in the CRM system
- Salix Homes didn't recontact vulnerable customers who initially stated they did not want a regular call and their circumstances may have changed as the lock down period continued for longer than customers originally anticipated

1. Scope



The Key recommendations outlined in this report cover:

- To create a specific pandemic plan with consideration of the impact of local lockdowns in Salford and across Greater Manchester on the delivery of services
- To build on the increased sense of community identified in the report, but to do so in partnership with other organisations in line with Salix Homes ambitions to be come a gateway organisation. Community cohesion work and activities should be delivered through the CVS and supported by Salix Homes including the provision of spaces, where possible
- To recognise that customers prefer different types of communication in different circumstances and to take steps to better understand and act on customer communication preference in context of the message being communicated
- To consider the approach to communications about the classification of repairs and the organisations approach to handling anti-social behaviour
- Customers should be encouraged to update their personal data with Salix Homes, utilising all customer contact to do so and ensuring that communications about the use of data at Salix Homes outlines the benefits of updating data to the customer

Subject	Learning from: Salix Homes' approach to COVID-19
Commissioned by	Salix Homes Customer Committee
Panel	To be sourced from Salix Homes Scrutiny Pool (between 4 and 6 members)
Aims / objectives/ outcomes	<p>The purpose of this review is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Salix Homes' approach to Business Continuity Management during the Covid-19 pandemic to include; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Review Salix Homes approach to communicating with customers 2) Review the support given to vulnerable customers during Covid-19
Key service area involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Services – Marketing and Communications Team • Communities – Housing Projects Team
Links to corporate plan	<p>Scrutiny supports the corporate plan: Our Business: Viable, efficient and well-governed. Ensure a strong and influential customer voice through our new customer engagement arrangements.</p> <p>This scope supports: Our Services: Supporting people and places to achieve their potential: Develop a plan to prioritise and tailor support to our most vulnerable customers.</p>

2. Methodology

2.1 Review of reports of service journeys and copies of relevant documentation in relation to:

- Approach to Business Continuity Management during the Covid-19 pandemic (specific requests: Appendix 3)
- Customer Communications during the COVID-19 pandemic (specific requests: appendix 1)
- Approach to supporting vulnerable people during the COVID-19 pandemic (specific requests: Appendix 2)

2.2 Interviews with the following officers:

- Sue Sutton – Deputy Chief Executive
- James Allan – Marketing and Communications Manager
- Liam Turner – Neighbourhood Manager – Housing Projects
- Daen Smith – Health and Safety Manager

2.3 Focus Group with front line employees involved in the following services: (appendix 4)

- Income collection
- Repairs
- Contact Centre
- Compliance (Gas Servicing)
- Neighbourhood Management

2.4 Telephone interviews with a selection of vulnerable customers who had received regular contact during the covid-19 pandemic (appendix 5)

2.5 Telephone interviews with a selection of customers who had received support from the Spirit of Salford network during the covid-19 pandemic (appendix 6)

2.6 Customer-wide survey to be promoted through existing engagement routes and social media (appendix 7)

2.7 Focus group with the High-Rise Living Forum (appendix 8)

2.8 Review of customer feedback during the COVID-19 pandemic

3. Scrutiny Findings



3.1 What was Salix Homes' approach to Business Continuity Management during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Salix Homes has a Business Continuity Management Committee (BCMC) that meets six times per year and base their Business Continuity Management system on the international standard for business continuity ISO 22301. It was identified that there is no specific Pandemic Plan, although there is mention of a flu pandemic within each Operational Plan.

The BCMC considered the impact of a full lockdown at their meeting on Monday, 9 March, three weeks ahead of the United Kingdom lockdown, announced on Monday, 23 March 2020, the BCMC considered the impacts of the pandemic in Italy and Spain. The BCMC worked closely with networks such as Salford Resilience Forum and Greater Manchester Housing Providers to ensure that the guidance was being followed in a comparable way to similar organisations.

The following key dates relevant to this scope have been identified:

- 9th March – the BCMC considered the impact of a full lockdown
- 16th March – Warning Marker system set up for customers self-isolating and those reporting symptoms
- 16th March – Non-essential home visits to cease
- 18th March – reception to close for visitors
- 20th March – Moved to emergency repairs only for the over 70's.
- 20th March – not accepting further routine repairs
- 20th March – Spirit of Salford set up
- 23rd March – Emergency Repairs only
- 23rd March – Housing Allocations remotely completed
- 23rd March – First Response team move to mobile patrols only to reduce face to face contact
- 24th March – Spirit of Salford goes live
- 24th March – caretakers reduce services
- 24th March – contractors close development and improvement sites down
- 25th March – vulnerable customer list finalised
- 26th March – calls to P1 customers commence
- 27th March – 1,600 customer calls made within 24 hours – to P1 and P2 customers
- 30th March – calls to P3 customers commence
- 26th May – increase in Environmental Services and repairs and maintenance begin
- 13th July – Neighbourhood Officers and Income Officer's allowed to visit properties and estates for external viewing
- 13th July – Diamond House opens interview rooms for specific face to face meetings
- 13th July – Call centre book new (non-urgent) repairs

Additional operating costs had been identified in relation to the increased requirement for personal protective equipment (PPE) and ICT equipment to enable staff to work from home. Income from rent has fluctuated since the start of March.



Strengths

- There were no unnecessary gaps in service provision to customers during the lockdown
- All gaps in service provision aligned with the government advice at the time
- Partnership working was utilised to ensure that delivery of services was comparable to peer organisations
- Business Continuity Management included consideration and understanding the international, national and local approach to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Business Continuity Management embedded cross-team working in the organisation

Areas for Improvement

- It has been highlighted that there were delays to the return of the green spaces team, which resulted in green spaces becoming overgrown
- It was identified that there was no specific pandemic plan

Recommendations

1. Create a specific Pandemic Plan; focussing on the strengths and opportunities identified in this scrutiny review, including partnership and cross-team working
2. Consider the impact of local lockdowns in Salford and across Greater Manchester on the delivery of services
3. Develop methods to retain and continue cross-team working throughout the organisation
4. Consider the timeline of furlough arrangements if a similar lockdown situation arises in the future
5. Consider whether with the introduction of social distancing measures, that the green spaces team would be considered essential workers in the event of future lockdowns

3.2 What was Salix Homes' approach to communicating with customers during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Salix Homes used a variety of methods to get in touch with customers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included direct mail, email, text messaging, social media, recorded telephone messages and messages on the website. It was identified that direct mail is costly, around £8,000 per mailing, and that direct mailing has a lead time of around 10 days until it's received.

It was identified that there is a centralised Marketing and Communications Team who took responsibility for corporate communications, that a significant amount of communications were delivered by individual service areas. The panel considered the following services during this report:

- Compliance: Customers affected by gas servicing
- Income Collection: Customers affected by the loss of income and at risk of eviction
- Responsive Repairs: Customers with outstanding repairs

Consideration was made to communications with vulnerable customers and this is reviewed in more depth in section 3.3.

The customer survey indicated that communications during the COVID-19 pandemic to be satisfactory, with an average of 7 out of 10. The relevance, frequency and quality of communications were also found to be satisfactory, with an average of 7 out of 10.

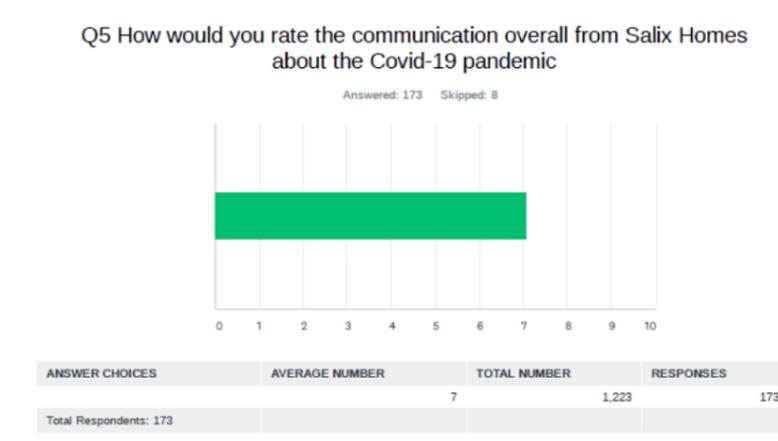


Fig 1 – Rating of overall communications from Salix Homes

Customers were asked who they would expect to receive communications from about health, changes to services, support in their local area and national approaches to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was found that customers would expect communications about health to be delivered by the National Health Service (42.94%) followed by the Government (28.25%). Very few (14) customers reported that they would expect Salix Homes to deliver communications about health.



Q6 Who would you expect to receive communications from about health?

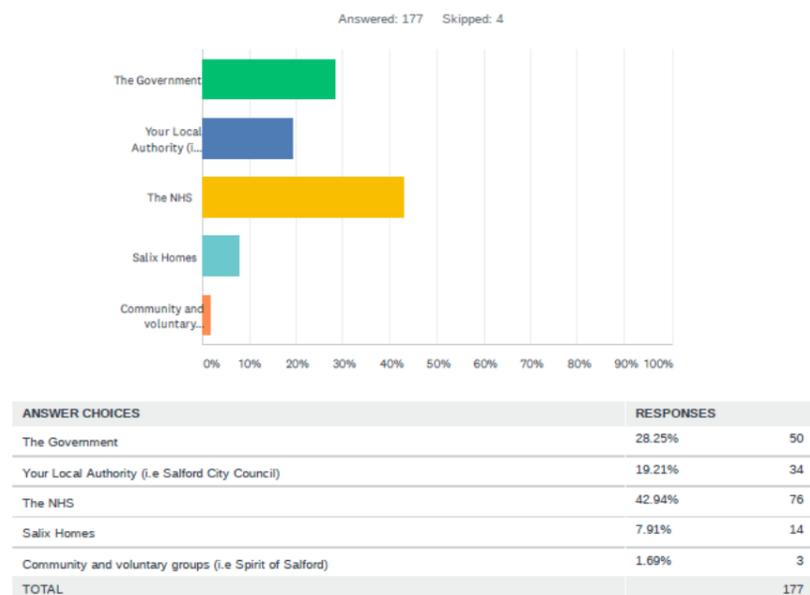


Fig 2 – Communications about health

It was found that 48.88% of customers would expect to receive communications from Salix Homes about changes to services, secondary to this was the Local Authority 29.78%.

Q7 Who would you expect to receive communications from about changes to services?

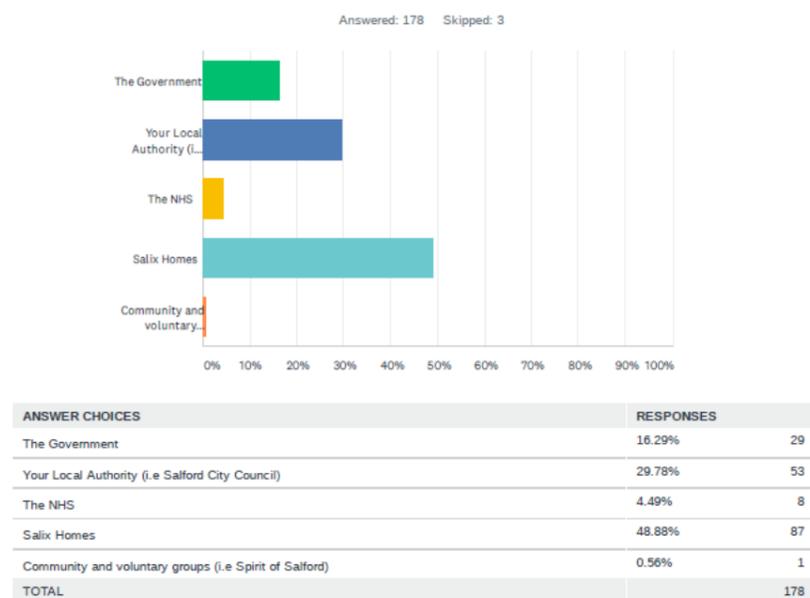


Fig 3 – Communications about changes to services

In the majority, customers surveyed advised that they would expect to receive communications about support in their local area from the Local Authority (56.82%), followed by Salix Homes (30.11%).

Q8 Who would you expect to receive communications from about support in your local area?

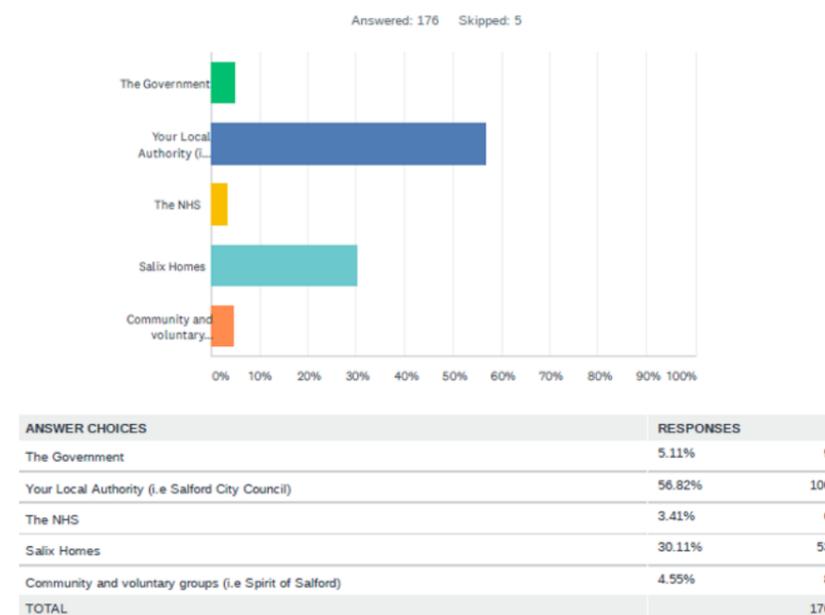


Fig 4 – Communications about support in the local area.

Customers Surveyed expected to receive communications from the government in relation to the national approach to the COVID-19 pandemic (72.73%), very few (12) customers expected communications from Salix Homes in relation to national approaches.

Q9 Who would you expect to receive communications from about national approaches to the COVID-19 pandemic?

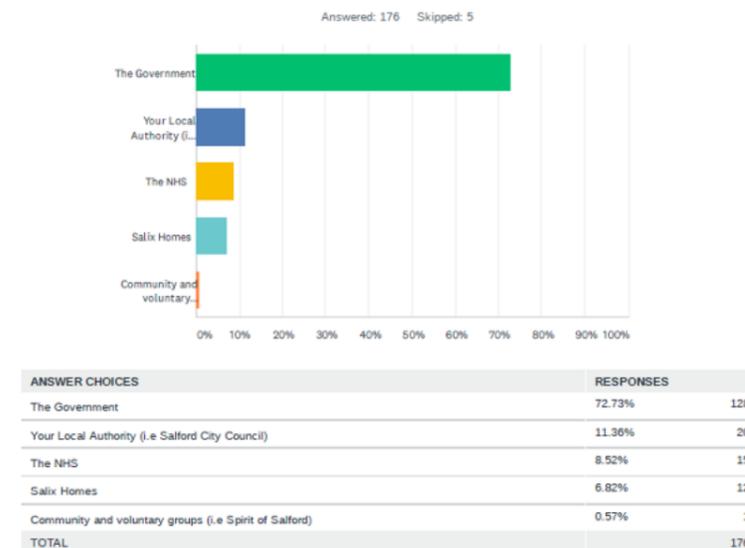


Fig 5 – Communication about national approaches to the COVID-19 pandemic



The customer survey was distributed by email with a link to the survey and although customers were completing the survey digitally, it was identified that customers completing the survey value written communication most.

Q14 Please rank which kind of communication you value the most from Salix Homes? (1 being the most valued)

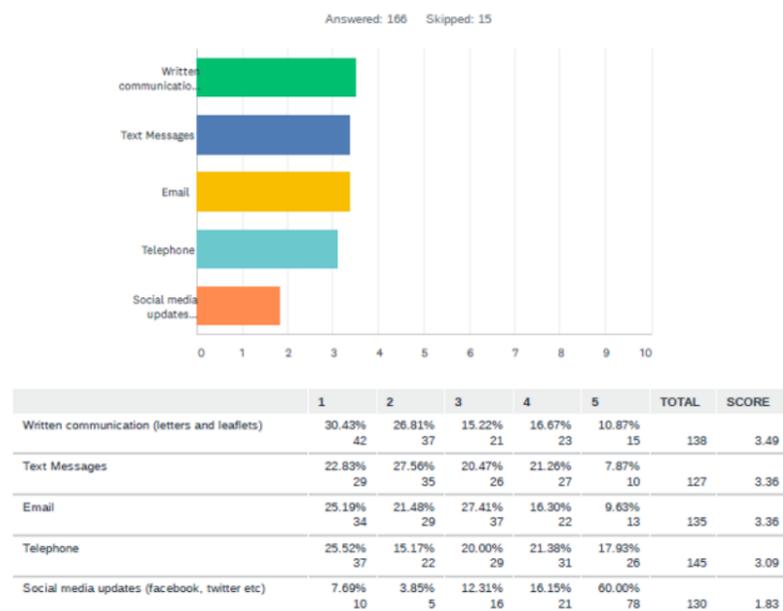


Fig 6: Customer wide survey results – most valued form of communication.

Of the customers who were surveyed, 38 had reported antisocial behaviour or neighbour issues since Sunday, 15 March.

Q10 Have you reported anti-social behavior or neighbour issues during the period of 15th March to today?

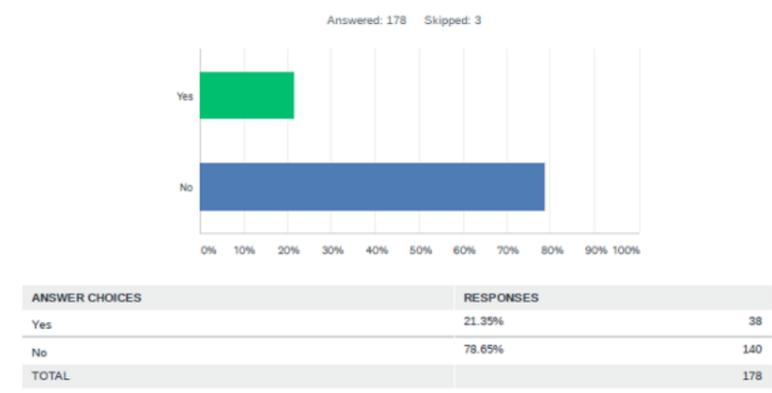


Fig 7 – the number of respondents that had reported anti-social behaviour

The ease of contacting Salix Homes in relation to antisocial behaviour or neighbour issues was ranked at an average of 6 out of 10.

Q11 How did you rate the ease of contacting Salix Homes about anti-social or neighbour issues?

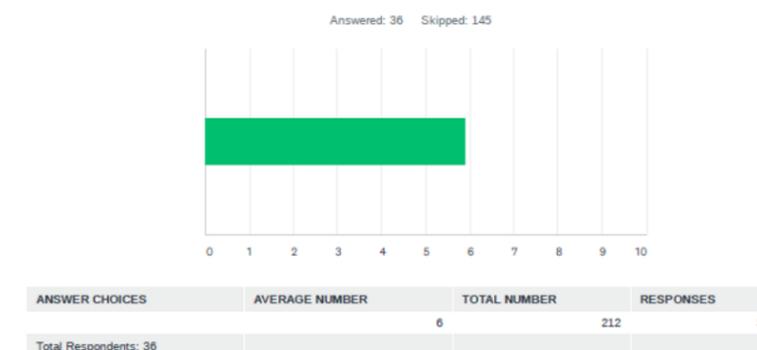


Fig 8 – the ease of contacting Salix Homes about anti-social behaviour

Of the customers surveyed, 106 had been in touch with Salix Homes since Sunday, 15 March.

Q12 Did you contact Salix Homes about anything else during the period of 15th March to today?

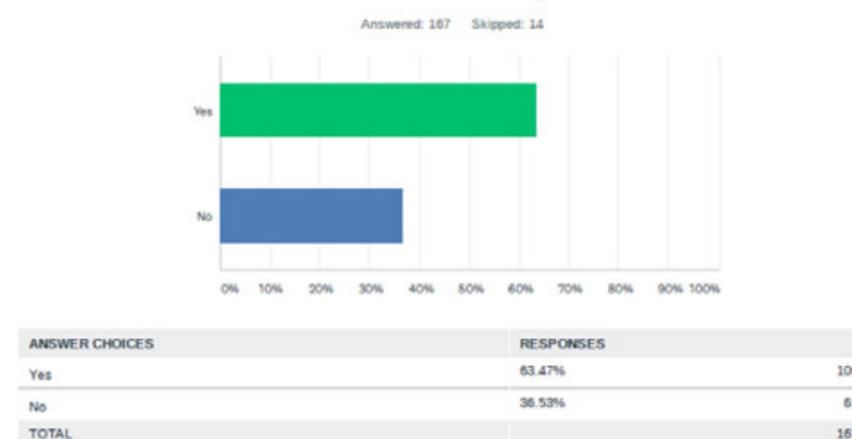


Fig 9 – respondents who contacted Salix Homes during the period of 15th March to completion of the survey



The ease of contacting Salix Homes in relation to antisocial behaviour or neighbour issues was ranked at an average of 6 out of 10.

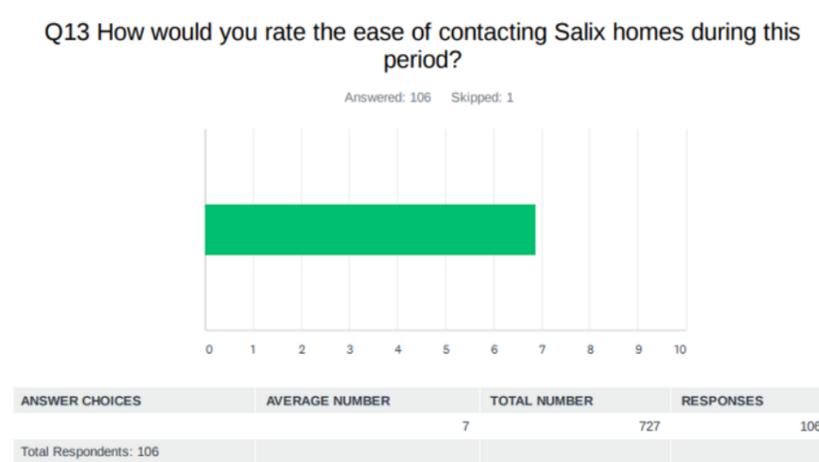


Fig 10 – ease of contacting Salix Homes during the period of 15th March to date survey completed.

Customers completing the survey were asked if they felt that their neighbourhood has changed during the COVID-19 pandemic and the following themes emerged:

- Increased sense of community
- Increased amount of antisocial behaviour and neighbourhood issues
- Concerns about the cleaning of and use of communal areas
- Concerns about neighbours not adhering to the Government guidelines

Customers completing the survey were asked for suggestions as to how Salix Homes could have handled customer communications during the COVID-19 pandemic better and the following themes emerged:

- The information was very clear
- Understanding what repairs are urgent
- The process of reporting non-urgent repairs
- Satisfaction with the regular calls

The following themes emerged from the staff focus group:

- That each service area took responsibility for communicating with customers locally
- Personalised text messaging had increased to get in touch with the customer base
- Multiple communication methods are preferred by staff, including the provision of video calls
- Lack of internet access presents an issue with communicating with some customers
- That a new Hybrid Mail system had been set up and was being utilised by staff

The following themes emerged from the High-Rise Living forum:

- The lack of reception presence impacted some customers
- The group would have preferred increased communications about the communal cleaning schedules

Strengths

- Overall communications were accurate, and customers felt well informed about the organisation's approach to COVID-19
- Salix Homes recognise that they are not the correct authority to discuss health matters and national approaches
- Customer wide written communications are utilised carefully in consideration of the high costs
- Support available from the Spirit of Salford was communicated to customers.
- Community spirit has grown during the pandemic
- The regular calls to vulnerable customers were well received and supported customer-wide communications

Areas for improvement

- Communications in relation to the classification of urgent and non-urgent repairs aren't clear
- Customers living in accommodation with communal areas would have preferred to know the cleaning schedules considering the pandemic
- Customers experiencing anti-social behaviour or neighbour issues reported the ease of contacting Salix Homes as more difficult than the overall ease of contacting Salix Homes about other issues
- Customers were unclear about the processes for reporting non-urgent repairs during the pandemic

Recommendations

6. Salix Homes should build on the increased sense of community in partnership with other organisations in line with their ambitions to become a gateway organisation. Community cohesion work and activities should be delivered through the CVS, supported by Salix Homes including the provision of spaces, where possible.

7. Salix Homes should recognise that customers prefer different types of communication in different scenarios and should take steps to better understand customers communication preferences in the context of what is being communicated. For example, one customer may prefer to receive contact about repairs via text message but receive contact about anti-social behaviour in writing.

8. Upon understanding communication preferences, Salix Homes should adapt to how they communicate with customers based on customer preference.

9. If future customer wide communications are provided include the following:
9.1 Encouragement for the customer to update their own contact details using their MySalix account

9.2 Direction to where further communications may come from (Facebook, email and text messages)

9.3 Information as to where customers can access support about their rent and further support through the Spirit of Salford Network.



10. Consideration should be given to the tone of communication to encourage good neighbourliness and looking after mental health.
11. COVID-19 communications should include positive language, encouraging togetherness, support and community cohesion
12. Display the cleaning schedules (date and time last cleaned) in the communal areas of buildings, including the lifts
13. Salix Homes approach to handling anti-social behaviour should be communicated clearly to customers
14. Clarify what repairs are urgent and non-urgent on the website and other relevant communications
15. Salix Homes should consider the use of WhatsApp as a communication tool; specifically, for income collection, raising repairs and community links
16. Salix Homes should make video conferencing available to customers who would prefer to meet with a member of staff face to face
17. Salix Homes should consider the provision of free WiFi in high rise blocks and communal spaces

3.3 What was Salix Homes' approach to supporting vulnerable customers during COVID-19

Salix Homes identified customers who were vulnerable during the pandemic on the basis of initial customer priority groups:

- Priority 1 – Customers over 70 years of age with a recorded disability or long-term health condition (351 Customers)
- Priority 2 – Customers over 70 years of age without a recorded disability or long-term health condition. (1234 Customers)
- Priority 3 – Customers under 70 years of age with a recorded disability or long-term health condition (416 Customers)

Additional groups who were identified as vulnerable included all customers living on Duchy Caravan Site, as Salix Homes are aware that statistically, the gypsy and traveller community are more at risk from health concerns due to links with health services and the level of engagement with support services.

Vulnerable customers were identified based on the Government guidance for people shielding during the pandemic. Other customers identified included those who had self-referred for NHS support and customers who were identified by direct contact with a member of staff.

The Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system was used to identify vulnerable customers. The data in the system varies in quality from tenancy to tenancy.

Salix Homes telephoned those customers identified on a twice weekly basis to check on their welfare. Customers were assigned a dedicated officer who called them during the pandemic, the calls reduced to one call per week on 15th June 2020. During the period of 20th March 2020 until 2nd August 2020, 24,528 conversations were held between officers and customers, of these, 453 referrals were made, 288 for support from the Spirit of Salford Network and 165 within Salix Homes.

Salix Homes worked closely with the Spirit of Salford Network so customers could access support delivered by the community and voluntary sector across the city. As part of their recruitment process for volunteers, anyone who will be involved with vulnerable children or adults will undergo a DBS check and a rigorous selection process.

Consideration was also made to victims of Domestic Abuse and it was found that Salix Homes works closely with other agencies, attend MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) to identify any relevant support that Salix Homes can give to victims of Domestic Abuse and that Salix Homes have appropriate referral routes in place. It was found that victims of Domestic Abuse are supported by Salix Homes through regular contact, which continued during the pandemic.

It was found that support for victims of Domestic Abuse during the pandemic should be delivered by the Local Authority and other relevant agencies (for example; Women's Aid); as they are the best-placed professionals to appropriately support victims of Domestic Abuse.



The following themes emerged from the telephone survey with customers who had received the regular calls:

- Strong relationships between officers and customers had emerged
- Customers valued the calls
- Customers were didn't expect the calls
- Overall feedback was very positive
- Customers had started to obtain support from elsewhere, such as family members and very few customers reported that they were still shielding
- Very few customers expected that they will need support in the future

The following themes emerged from the telephone surveys with the customers who had received support from the Spirit of Salford Network:

- The support given by the Spirit of Salford network was critical in ensuring people had food and medicine
- Customers receiving support were very happy with the support that they received
- Some customers identified that they may need similar support in the future, dependent on the circumstances

The following themes emerged from the staff focus group about the regular calls:

- Officers valued the calls as they wanted to help during the pandemic
- Officers who didn't usually speak to customers on a regular basis found that the calls gave them a better knowledge of Salix Homes' customers
- Officers used their autonomy and skills to support the customers that they called.
- Officers found that leadership during the pandemic was effective

The additional theme emerged from the staff focus group:

- An increased amount of advice and support has been provided by Salix Homes for customers who experienced a loss of income due to the pandemic

Strengths

- The combination of the regular calls to vulnerable customers and the partnership with Spirit of Salford provided a seamless approach to supporting those customers who had been identified by Salix Homes as vulnerable during the pandemic
- The personalised approach to the regular calls created positive relationships between officers and customers during a time of crisis and staff felt autonomous in building effective relationships
- The partnership with Spirit of Salford ensured that Salix Homes could direct its resources effectively during the pandemic and as a result, Salix Homes ensured that focus remained on the delivery of core services and supporting vulnerable customers through the regular calls
- Support for customers affected by the loss of income during the pandemic has been available through the income collection team and contact centre

Areas for improvement

- Salix Homes knowledge of its customer base is limited by the data in the CRM system
- Specialised Universal Credit advice is only available from three Universal Credit advisors, one full time and two part-time officers

- Salix Homes didn't recontact customers who initially stated they didn't want a regular call

Recommendations

18 In consideration of Salix Homes plan to stop making regular calls to customers by Friday, 4 September 2020 the following recommendations have been made for the process:

18.1 Customers to be informed during their next call with an officer that the regular calls are coming to an end and that there will be one further call the following week if the customer wishes.

18.2 Salix Homes should give officers autonomy as to how best to conduct the conversation with the customer based on their knowledge and experience of the customer and conversations should not be scripted.

18.3 Salix Homes should check that the customer's record is up to date.

18.4 Salix Homes should ensure that the customer knows how to access support in the future.

19 In event of the regular calls being required for a significant amount of time again, Salix Homes should re-contact customers who chose not to accept support initially; the panel suggests a timeframe of around six weeks.

20 Salix Homes should record which officer conducted the regular calls in the customer record and in event of the regular calls being required again, where possible, officers should be allocated the same customer contact.

21 Customers should be encouraged to update their data using the suggested following methods:

21.1 Utilising all customer contact to update the customer's record; specifically, through the call centre where staff should be equipped to know the benefits of updating the customer's record and can discuss these benefits with the customer.

21.2 Communications should be delivered to customers in an accessible and friendly way to explain how data is used at Salix Homes and the benefits of updating their record.

21.3 Utilising all communication methods to remind customers to update their record.

21.4 Utilising the customer sign up process to update the customer record.

22 Salix Homes should consider increasing the provision of Universal Credit advice in preparation for anticipated job losses at the end of the government's furlough scheme.



Key considerations about our approach

In writing this report, the scrutiny panel has considered their approach to scrutiny and have made the following observations and recommendations;

This scrutiny piece has been created entirely digitally, meetings have been held over Zoom video conferencing and documentation has been received by the panel electronically. Scrutiny panel members were recruited from the scrutiny pool using an online survey. The customer wide survey was also completed digitally. Telephone surveys have been utilised to get the views of those receiving regular calls and those who had accessed support through the Spirit of Salford.

This scrutiny piece has been created in 8 weeks, unlike Salix Homes' previous approach to scrutiny, which would usually take around 16 weeks.

Strengths

- The delivery of this scrutiny piece indicates that customer scrutiny can be achieved online and remotely
- The timescale that this scrutiny piece has followed has allowed this piece to be considered alongside Salix Homes' Build Back Better plans
- The timescale that this piece has followed has enabled the scrutineers to provide recommendations back to Salix Homes in a timely manner, in preparation for potential further impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

Areas for improvement

- Digital scrutiny can result in some views being missed

Recommendations

18 Salix Homes should find a way to include digitally excluded groups in further scrutiny work including in recruitment and the training of panel members.

19 Salix Homes should continue the task and finish approach to scrutiny projects.

Appendix 1: Specific Requests: Relevant documentation – approach to Business Continuity Management

1.1 Approach to Business Continuity Management including:

- Original BCM plans
- The Business Continuity Management journey

Appendix 2: Specific requests: Relevant documentation – Customer Communications during the COVID-19 pandemic

- 2.1 Copies of customer-wide communications during the period of 1st March 2020 – 15th July 2020 including:
- Written correspondence
 - Email correspondence
 - Text Messages
 - Social Media posts
- 2.2 Approach to identifying and communicating with customers affected by:
- Sudden loss of income
 - Risk of eviction
- 2.3 Approach to identifying and communicating with customers with:
- Outstanding repairs
 - Outstanding gas servicing



Appendix 3: Specific requests: Relevant documentation – Approach to supporting vulnerable people during the COVID-19 pandemic

- 3.1 Approach to identifying vulnerable people to be offered regular calls including:
- Salix Homes' definition of a vulnerable person in the COVID-19 pandemic
 - The method taken to identify vulnerable customers
 - Timeline for contact with vulnerable customers
 - Whether continuous assessments were taken to identify if any additional customers became vulnerable during the pandemic
- 3.2 Approach to working with the Spirit of Salford network:
- Due diligence process for volunteers visiting customer's homes

Appendix 4: Lines of discussion for the focus group with front line employees

- What kind of support did Salix provide to customers during the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - What is your view of the support provided?
- What were the main concerns for customers during the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - In your view, how were these concerns addressed by Salix?
- Did you experience any challenges in obtaining support for customers?
- Do you think Salix Homes should have done anything differently?



Appendix 5: Lines of discussion for qualitative telephone interviews with a selection of vulnerable customers who had received regular contact during the COVID-19 pandemic

1. How would you describe the support that was given to you from Salix Homes during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. Were you happy with the support that was given to you? (discussion points: frequency, length of time to get in touch and quality)
3. Did you experience support from the Spirit of Salford network? Y/N
 - a. If yes, what was your experience of that support?
4. Do you think Salix Homes should have done anything differently?
5. Do you think you will need ongoing support from Salix Homes in the future?

Appendix 6: Lines of discussion for qualitative telephone interviews with a selection of vulnerable customers who had received support from Spirit of Salford during the COVID-19 pandemic

1. How would you describe the support that was given to you from Spirit of Salford during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. Were you happy with the support that was given to you?
3. Do you think you will need ongoing support from the CVS in the future?
(Discussion points: what kind of support and where from)



Appendix 7: Customer-wide survey questions

- How would you rate the quality of communication from Salix Homes about the COVID-19 pandemic (1 very poor – 10 excellent)
 - How would you rate the frequency of communication from Salix Homes about the COVID-19 pandemic (1 very poor – 10 excellent)
 - How relevant was the communication from Salix Homes about the COVID-19 pandemic (1 not at all relevant – 10 highly relevant)
 - How would you rate the communication overall from Salix Homes about the COVID-19 pandemic (1 very poor – 10 excellent)
 - Who would you expect to receive communications from about:
 - Health
 - Services
 - Support in your area
 - National approaches to COVID-19
 - The Government
 - Local Authority
 - NHS
 - Community and Voluntary Sector
 - Salix Homes
 - Other: _____
- Did you report any anti-social behaviour or Neighbourhood issues during the period 15th March to today Y/N
 - If Y, how would you rate the ease of contacting Salix Homes during this period? (1 very difficult – 10 very easy)
 - If N, go to next question
- Did you contact Salix Homes about anything else during the period 15th March to today? Y/N
 - If Y, how would you rate the ease of contacting Salix Homes during this period? (1 very difficult – 10 very easy)
 - If N, go to next question
- Please rank which kind of communication you value the most from Salix Homes (1 is the most valued)
 - Written communication
 - Text messages
 - Email
 - Telephone
 - Social Media updates
- Do you have any suggestions about how Salix Homes could have handled our customer communications during the COVID-19 pandemic better? Y/N



- If Y, next question
- If N, go to next question

• Do you feel that your neighbourhood has changed during the pandemic? Y/N

- If Y, how and free text box
- If N, go to next question

Appendix 8: Lines of discussion - focus group with the High-Rise Living Forum

- What was your expectation of communications from Salix Homes during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What was your experience of communications from Salix Homes during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Do you think Salix Homes should have done anything differently?

Salix Homes

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