

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Policy and Oversight Board

Date: 18 September 2024

Subject: Resident Experience Briefing

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SUMMARY

This briefing paper provides a summary of the resident experience when accessing services at H&F. It provides an overview of:

- Customer access journey
- Resident Experience Access Programme original aims and objectives
- REAP Refresh
- Digital Inclusion Strategy current position
- Resident experience culture change work
- Co-production work

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For the Board to note and comment on the report.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Corporate Plan and the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	Having effective systems in place to monitor feedback from residents enables opportunities to improve services for our residents' benefit.
Creating a compassionate and inclusive council	Understanding difficulties our residents face in dealing with our services where residents are experiencing their most difficult circumstances or have complex needs
Doing things with local residents, not to them	Learning from our residents' feedback enables us to ensure that we are delivering services that meet their needs. Utilising co-production groups to

	redesign services that are part of the programme.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Providing a service that meets residents needs provides value for money, utilising new technology to provide opportunities to reduce costs and improve outcomes.
Taking pride in H&F	Providing accessible and effective services to our residents and businesses makes Hammersmith and Fulham an attractive place to live work and do business in.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	A more efficient service increases the opportunity for digital delivery and better facilitates sustainable service delivery.

BACKGROUND

1. This briefing paper provides a summary of the resident experience when accessing services at H&F. It provides an overview of:
 - Customer access journey
 - Resident Experience Access Programme (REAP) original aims and objectives
 - REAP Refresh
 - Digital Inclusion Strategy current position
 - Resident experience culture change work
 - Co-production work

2. As part of the REAP refresh detailed further in this briefing paper, we will focus on the wider customer experience across the council to ensure consistency of service and the service provision across all channels. Enhancing the use of the current technology we have in place and exploring new opportunities where the landscape has changed. Managing expectations clearly and improving customer updates and notifications will be key to delivering an improved customer journey.

Current Customer Access Journey

3. Too often, our view of our residents is fragmented; we often fail to appreciate that one resident can use multiple services because we view the resident experience through a service lens.

4. Our services do not share a consolidated customer fulfilment centre. Technical or specialist skilled staff who cost the council more are delivering simple transactions within services, rather than concentrating on specialist and qualified advice. We have 162 published telephone numbers on our website where residents can contact us.

5. Standards are inconsistent as we don't have a corporate wide view of what good service looks like or what our residents can expect from us. This can create confusion for residents who will have a different experience depending on what part of the council they are contacting.
6. We are working hard to improve the resident experience, irrespective of the channel they choose. Our revised resident access model means that we can use automation with our systems in the background, to handle high volume repetitive tasks, so that backlogs will be eliminated, residents are able to increasingly self-serve online at their convenience if they are able and we can speed up access to services for those that need support most.

Resident Experience Access Programme Aims

7. The aims of the Resident Experience and Access programme are to significantly change the way that residents interact with the council by:
 - providing a consistent approach and standard for resident access across all council services
 - bringing more council services online so that residents can self-serve from initial contact to fulfilment and move towards digital solutions
 - providing an assisted digital offer so that vulnerable residents and those who are digitally excluded can still access the services they need
 - delivering the forecasted benefits for the programme

REAP Refresh

8. We are currently working on a plan to move into the next phase of the programme.
9. Since the programme commenced in 2019 demand for services has grown. The Covid-19 pandemic, and subsequent increased demand for council services, disrupted the service landscape in a way which wasn't envisaged when we modelled demand in our 2018 business case.
10. Subsequently, we have continued to face increased demand on day-to-day services due to the cost-of-living crisis which has meant that a new group of residents, typically in employment, have engaged with us for the first time to access support. The REAP programme has continued to progress moving services online but in a more piecemeal transactional way than was originally envisaged by the business case.
11. The proposed refresh will focus on the delivery of a bolder and more ambitious reset of our end-to-end resident experience through a slightly revised access model that considers new technology advancements since the programme was initiated in 2019.
12. Our proposal will be that we further change the way our staff work, giving them the digital frameworks, systems, processes, and automation they need to be able to support residents and other stakeholders across all customer-facing

channels whilst reducing our cost base and driving efficiencies in line with the original REAP business case.

13. The clear vision for resident access transformation shall result in the realisation of:
 - A culture that puts resident's needs first, with processes and service delivery designed around what users need to get done, not around the ways we currently do it, or around specific technology products
 - Enhanced digital services that are straightforward and convenient, providing 24/7 access, that maximise the opportunity for all sections of society making simple transactions simple to access, and with high quality support/advice for the more complex
 - High quality assistance for those who find digital less easy to access than traditional forms of contact e.g. telephone / in person, to support the council's commitment to digital inclusion
 - Consistency in the quality of the customer service experience, across channels and across services
 - Consistency in customer feedback/tracking ability of service resolution progress, across channels and across services
 - Reduced cost of service delivery
14. The vision recognises that initial contact is the first impression that a customer will get of our service offering and our aim is a redesigned front door for excellent and efficient customer service through all channels of contact. The aim of the reset is to agree to proceed to a single digital pathway for all resident contact to ensure that there is a consistent and high-quality customer experience for resident access across all channels and services. This means that no matter what channel a resident chooses to use, the process would be the same at the first point of contact with either residents accessing this directly or through assisted self-serve and our staff using the same pathway.

Digital Inclusion Strategy

15. The Digital Inclusion (DI) Strategy was coproduced with the Digital Accessibility Group (DAG), VCS and internal departments. The DI Strategy was originally presented to SLT on 23 August 2023 and then taken to POB on 18 September 2023. POB approved the strategy. Thereafter an action plan was further developed with service areas from across the council on 30 November 2023. The strategy is now in its final stages of approval and will be taken to Cabinet on 7th October 2024.

Resident Experience Culture Change

16. REAP is all about improving the resident and customer experience whichever way or contact channel the customer chooses to engage with us through. Many residents will need to engage with their local council for support or to raise service requests and they do not have a choice of which council they use; this is why it is fundamental that all services, team and staff at LBHF ensure an excellent experience every time. REAP has a workstream to focus on culture

and customer service to improve customer satisfaction. This can ensure we build on a good reputation, deliver service effectively minimising unnecessary contact and ensuring a good customer experience.

17. The REAP programme developed five values and behaviours which are linked by a golden thread to the council six key priorities. These five values and behaviours are in place to guide the council's staff in their interactions with customers and residents. They are:

- Customer and resident focus
- Collaborative
- Courteous
- Committed
- Challenging

18. To deliver change and drive improvement, back in 2021 we created bespoke workshop sessions: these are interactive sessions that focus on the customer and resident service, journey and experience. Delving into the values and behaviours in different service areas. The interactive sessions are 2.5 hours and look at the way our resident and customers want to interact with us, their expectations and how we can deliver a good service. We have delivered the workshop session to over 300 staff (including the two largest main contact centres). We also delivered two bespoke internal customer workshops to Digital Services and People and Talent.

19. The sessions continue to be available to book in groups of 12 or more through the Learning Zone and are part of our Corporate Induction programme for all staff.

Customer Satisfaction and Feedback

20. The aim of this REAP workstream is to improve and build on the customer satisfaction surveys and insight council wide. In 2021 the main survey in use was for the LBHF website feedback with a few other service areas gathering customer satisfaction and insight in various ways. We have now implemented customer satisfaction surveys across all main Netcall (our telephony solution) Contact Centres, with callers having the option to complete a customer satisfaction survey at the end of the call. We have implemented a QR customer satisfaction survey at 145 King Street for face-to-face services and implemented surveys for feedback on complaint handling which are available on every stage 1 and stage 2 complaint response. We have comprehensive surveys within Housing Repairs which are in place and being reviewed.

21. There are multiple feedback systems in use that have the right functionality for a service or the communication channel needs. Within this REAP workstream we will be developing a Business Intelligence Feedback dashboard to incorporate all customer satisfaction feedback for an overall view for analysis and monitoring. We are currently in the process of developing the libraries feedback survey and aiming to start work with the Libraries Service to introduce this in Q3.

Co-production Work

22. Co-production work was an active response to the Disabled People's Commission (DPC) findings and recommendations in 2016 and the subsequent report in 2018.
23. Based on the recommendation of the Disabled Peoples Commission Report, the Disability Access Group (DAG) group was set up in June 2022, comprising 12 residents and 9 Council officers across 4 departments.
24. DAG now has 14 residents (both disabled and non-disabled) and 16 officers across 9 departments, (REAP, Comms, Digital Services, Co-Production, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Housing, AALS and Independent Living).
25. It is the first co-production group of its kind, comprising of all residents, both disabled and non-disabled, and the issues it discusses span more than one council department. Members have a high level of digital aptitude for a resident group.
26. There have been 19 DAGs held so far, the last in August 2024. They are well attended by an engaged and enthusiastic membership. The August DAG contained an interactive session which will help us understand residents' expectations of customer service from the council and feedback from this is included in our presentation pack.
27. Refreshing the REAP programme will enable us to further engage with the homelessness, older people's and poverty commissions so that we have a detailed view of customer need.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – The resident and customer experience at LBHF