

THIS IS ACE! YOU SAID... WE DID

HERE YOU'LL FIND SOME OF THE ACE ACHIEVEMENTS THAT WE'VE IMPLEMENTED OVER THE LAST YEAR, BASED ON WHAT YOU SAID WAS IMPORTANT TO YOU. THIS IS JUST A SELECTION FROM OVER 70 REQUESTS AND A FULL DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST FROM THE QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE TEAM.

Communication

Contacting MHP

1 You said Because of the lack of my details on computer system, when I call you ask 20 questions about me.

We did We told you our new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system would alleviate this.

And now... CRM is now working in Spirita, and further work to improve the system is in progress before it goes live in London.

2 You said Why does it take so long on the phone? I want to speak to an officer directly and not listen to holding music.

We did New technology will not necessarily resolve this, but CRM and Delivering Excellence training undertaken by staff will mean a quality service when you speak to an officer.

And now... Delivering Excellence training has now been completed by over 400 staff, with 55 undertaking further training as coaches. Performance management protocol standards have been agreed and are being rolled out across the businesses.

3 You said Staff need to know who is who and who does what.

We did Our intranet was redesigned last Christmas and now has a more up to date staff directory. We have also developed our staff training through a Customer Service Toolkit.

And now... The Customer Service Toolkit was implemented on 1 October 2007. This training tool

will help staff answer queries more effectively. We are now working on further improvements so staff can access information more easily.

4 You said We don't like automated systems.

We did Automation is likely to stay but the CRM system, Internet, and staff training will provide a better quality service.

And now... Some of our customers are starting to use the web-based automated systems. For those people who prefer to contact us this way, we have plans to improve automation.

5 You said The cost of calling, especially from mobiles or phone boxes, is expensive.

We did The cost of phoning from a mobile depends on each individual contract, but as we develop our CRM systems the time you spend on the phone will be reduced. We are also considering a standard Freephone or lo call number.

And now... We will be rolling out our Freephone number in MHT London over the next six months.

6 You said Messages and calls should be logged.

We did Our new CRM system will address this.

And now... All calls are now being recorded in North Thames and we are working on a logging system.

7 You said When on NRG business I want to speak directly to the relevant officer.

We did We are considering voicemail for certain staff.

And now... Most staff phones are diverted to mobiles when people are out of the office.

However, regional North Thames staff are not

currently able to transfer to mobile phones.

We need to ensure all our phones have the functionality for internal phones to be transferred to mobile phones, and that there are protocols for team duty rotas.

How we communicate with you

8 You said Please update the Tenants' Handbook.

We did The Tenants' Handbook was updated and replaced in 2007 with the Welcome Pack.

9 You said MHT is selective about what it tells residents.

We did We involved residents more in the production of publicity.

And now... NRG members have been involved in communications about ACE. In addition a survey was included in Everyone magazine in 2006 for feedback on the magazine. Residents were asked if they would like to be part of ongoing input into communications and from these responses focus groups on Everyone and the intranet were undertaken. Communications research is carried out on an annual and ongoing basis using this pool of interested residents and from requests which bring new names. Our annual reviews, which include performance information, are available on our website. We provide NRG representatives with performance information (bARTs) regularly.

10 You said Promote examples of excellence.

We did The Communications Team promotes examples of excellence in Everyone, the local and national press, the Internet and websites.



And now... In 2007, the Communications Team created a visual icon – 'ACE in action' to use as a stamp of authority for stories demonstrating excellence. This is used in articles that appear in Everyone and on the intranet. The team is constantly on the lookout for examples of excellence from around the Partnership and is proactive about gathering 'good news' PR stories on an ongoing basis. It also promotes examples of excellence in local MHP newsletters, and press cuttings books with clippings of 'good news' articles that have appeared in the press are available in reception areas. These are updated and circulated monthly.

11 You said Newsletters are just PR documents. They should be more 'chatty'.

We did The Communications Team is keen to develop the content of local newsletters. Having carried out research with residents in 2006, it has started to use this feedback and incorporate suggestions into local newsletters.

And now... Regional newsletters have become more 'chatty' and satisfaction has risen. However, we must do more and ensure residents are

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involved in the draft newsletters, and in North Thames this can be done via the CFG. In 2007 the Communications Team built on the survey work that it completed with residents by holding focus groups to look at Everyone magazine and to discuss newsletter content. It has now made changes based on the feedback from these groups. For example, the writing has become less formal and wider issues have been incorporated, i.e. environmental stories, and the use of more (real life) case studies. It has also made it easier for residents to feed back information to the Publications Manager with a 'useful contacts' page. In addition, the team hosted resident 'user testing' of the website to get feedback from residents. We will continue to work with residents to adapt and grow our communications for their needs.

12 You said Use notice boards in offices and a virtual one on the Internet to tell us about important information and communal repairs.

We did We plan to do this in the future.

And now... We are making much more use of estate notice boards in schemes and will be using the Internet as an updating facility. We write to all residents personally about planned repairs.

13 You said Use text messages (some residents agreed and some disagreed).

We did This is being piloted in the Midlands and our IT team are investigating rolling this out to other parts of the business.

And now... The use of texting is spreading across the Partnership. It is a key priority and we need to do more, for example with arrears, appointments, information, transfer applications, complaint reference numbers, etc.

14 You said Communication and information are key – residents have the right to information.

We did At MHP we are pretty transparent. Residents do have the right to information and we are always happy to hear from residents regarding the type of information they would like.

And now... The Communications Team develops a range of information at the request of the businesses to ensure that residents have the information they want. The team is also available to work with the NRG to develop information for residents. This is an ongoing process and the team is happy to work with residents directly in helping them develop communications tools and information. The Communications Team will shortly have its annual meeting with the NRG communications portfolio holders.

Service

Staff issues

15 You said Procedures are designed for the convenience of staff, not customers.

We did We will involve residents in setting service standards and maintaining involvement in ACE.

And now... We do this on an ongoing basis and the NRG is involved through the portfolio holders.

16 You said Get rid of the 'it's not my job' response.

We did Delivering Excellence Customer Service training will help staff to understand how best to meet the needs of our residents.



And now... See the previous comments on Delivering Excellence which is being extended to Spirita. Ownership and responsibility is the cornerstone of Delivering Excellence training, followed by coaching.

17 You said We have to report things time and time again.

We did Our CRM system will help us know more about our customers when they call.

And now... See the previous comments on CRM. In addition there is a review of mWorld as the businesses have identified that we need a fully integrated housing management IT system.

18 You said Staff should be given the chance to work towards a customer service qualification.

We did Our Learning and Development team is investigating this. Delivering Excellence is a customer service qualification.

And now... NVQs for customer service staff are being planned for next year. The first customer service staff will be registered in March 2008, and will complete the qualification within 12 months

in London and Spirita. Managers are being trained as NVQ assessors.

19 You said We want specific staff to deal with high level anti-social behaviour.

We did We have an ASB policy and good guidance for staff, and a new system to track ASB cases. North Thames will pilot specialist staff.

And now... The use of specialist staff is being trialled in London. We also have training and a toolkit for staff.

20 You said Names of officers should be given out.

We did Delivering Excellence Customer Service training will request that staff do this.

And now... This should be standard practice now.

Local services for you...

21 You said You want more surgeries on estates.

We did Mobile working will mean staff can deliver a better service on estates. There are three

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different mobile working projects planned as part of the ACE programme:

- StepForward staff – Mobile Working Project
- Surveyors – Mobile Working Project 2. A pilot was conducted for this last summer.
- Neighbourhood Officers – Mobile Working Project 3. We need to further review how we can deliver surgeries and other local contacts.

And now... Mobile working, surgeries and estate visits all offer ways of bringing services to you.

22 You said Housing officers need to be on the estates more often.

We did Mobile working will enable neighbourhood officers, surveyors and support workers to deliver more services on site.

And now... There are regular estate inspections on the larger estates and mobile working for support workers. The roll out to other staff such as neighbourhood officers and surveyors is being considered but no firm date for implementation is available.

Using technology

23 You said Improve the website – more information about rent accounts, payments on line, reporting repairs and logging ASB.

We did Having implemented the first resident's self-service we need now to improve on this.

And now... We are revamping our websites and will re-launch these in spring 2008. We will continue to improve our information on an ongoing basis and in response to feedback.

24 You said Provide technology to enable staff to

order repairs and look up rent accounts on site.

We did Handheld PCs allowing mobile working will be rolled out. Estate inspections will be available on the Internet.

And now... See previous comments on mobile working.

Knowing about residents and services for specific needs

25 You said We need to help residents who don't speak English or who have problems with literacy and numeracy.

We did We developed a range of formats for all important customer service information. This needs more thought to develop effective services.

And now... We are extending our range of communication channels, including making information available in different formats and languages.

Complaints are 'gold'

26 You said If you write to us you just get a phone call to fob you off or nothing at all.

We did We try to resolve complaints quickly, so sometimes contact you by phone, but you should always have a written reply if you want one. We are reviewing our complaints procedures and we would welcome your involvement.

And now... The complaints procedures have been updated with input from residents through focus groups. A new case management system is being rolled out over the next few months and has gone live in Spirita. If residents have specific



concerns about their complaint they should contact their local office.

27 You said What comeback is there for tenants if they are not satisfied with services?

We did Tenants can escalate their complaint to the Director and ultimately the Housing Ombudsman if they are not satisfied.

28 You said Admit it when you are wrong.

We did We implemented Delivering Excellence training.

And now... See previous comments on Delivering Excellence training. Complaints are reviewed to ensure lessons are learned.

Rent

29 You said Sort out payments which are stuck in the system and not showing on statements.

And now... Our Finance Department and the businesses are now working together to reduce the amount of times this happens.

30 You said We want more advice about paying rent.

We did We developed a comprehensive sign up pack and FAQs for Customer Service staff.
And now... The new handbook is in place and local offices can provide further advice.

31 You said Look out for early warning signs on arrears and bring in debt counselling services.

We did We developed customer profile information which will have benefits across many areas. We compiled local information about advice agencies, evaluated the North Thames Welfare Benefits pilot and made arrangements with advice agencies.

And now... Any potential problems can be discussed with local Income Teams. Contact is made in the early stages if residents fall into arrears. Information about sources of help with debt is available from local businesses.

32 You said Use space on rent statements more effectively.

We did Revise standard letters to include

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information on local areas.

And now... Current technology doesn't allow us to automatically insert local information into letters. However, we are developing new letters which we hope to pilot soon at Roundshaw Homes, to include a limited field written by the officer to make them more relevant to each resident. We hope that new technology – currently scheduled for 2009 – will allow more flexibility.

Repairs

33 You said Contractors make you take the day off work when the job takes 30 minutes. Improve the appointment system for repairs.

We did The new appointments system should help with this.

And now... Appointments are now available for many repairs calls.

34 You said You need proof that you have reported a repair – a job number.

We did CMS will alleviate this.

And now... All repairs generate a satisfaction slip that is sent to tenants when the repair is reported.

Involvement and feedback

35 You said Tenant representatives should be involved in void inspections.

We did This happens in the Midlands and can be considered elsewhere.

And now... A void review is in progress and

residents will be consulted. MHT London is looking at how best to involve residents given the wide geographic spread of properties.

36 You said My offers to be involved are not taken up.

We did We try to involve people where they have shown an interest and the Menu of Involvement sets out options. However there is more to do in this area.

And now... This is ongoing and the NRG is actively seeking to encourage residents to get involved. We will be launching a resident involvement database which will be connected to CMS and will record every resident who wants to get involved and how they want to do this.

37 You said You only involve us if there is time or it's a necessity.

We did We are investing in improving options for involvement.

And now... We aim to involve residents in a variety of ways. In Spirita the Local Committees are set up, as well as groups for residents with specific interests such as repairs. In London the current model is being reviewed as part of the amalgamation of North and South Thames.

38 You said MHT needs more publicity on resident involvement.

We did We developed a resident involvement section on the website, as well as more promotion by neighbourhood officers of the Menu of Involvement annual survey. We produced a DVD in signed and community languages and there is an annual training programme for staff.



And now... Details of how to get involved can be obtained from local offices, the websites and leaflets. The NRG has its own website for residents. There is training available for staff.

39 You said Involve residents in setting service standards.

We did We involved the NRG in developing an annual efficiency statement and service standards.

40 You said Provide training for resident representatives.

We did We will develop a training programme.

And now... In progress – the NRG has had several sessions and has an ongoing commitment to resident training and capacity building. MHP held a training for involvement pilot programme in June/July 2007. Several residents took part and the pilot is being evaluated. We are looking into rolling out an annual training programme across the business in 2008.

Community investment and estate improvements

41 You said We want more facilities for children and young people.

We did We will develop this within community investment strategies.

And now... Each business has its own community investment programme.

Development

42 You said Get it right before you get bigger.

We did This is what ACE is all about!