

Saffron

Customer Annual Report
2018/19



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Welcome

Our Annual Report lets you know about some of the things we have been doing over the past 12 months as well as what we will be doing in the future. We do see high levels of customer satisfaction with the services we provide but we know we can always do better.

Over this past year Saffron has seen a number of changes in its senior executives and in its strategic direction. We have welcomed our new Executive Director of Operations, Hannah Harvey, who is already reshaping how we deliver our services and in May our new Chief Executive James Francis starts with us.

We have developed a new way of offering services to our more vulnerable customers and have started a programme to change the way we deliver all of our services making them more in keeping with what you, our customers tell us you want and to reduce our costs so we can invest more in your homes and building new homes for the future.

How did we do?

Over this year we have seen our performance improve in many areas and whilst we are working to improve these further at the end of the year:

Current Arrears – the amount owed to us through rent arrears was 3.2%

Lettings – on average it took us 38 days to relet a home down from 67 days last year.

Customers told us they were satisfied with our services 88% of the time.

The time people have to wait for phone calls to be answered has reduced from 8 minutes to 2 minutes

We completed 93% of routine repairs on time

We received 36 complaints for every 1,000 properties

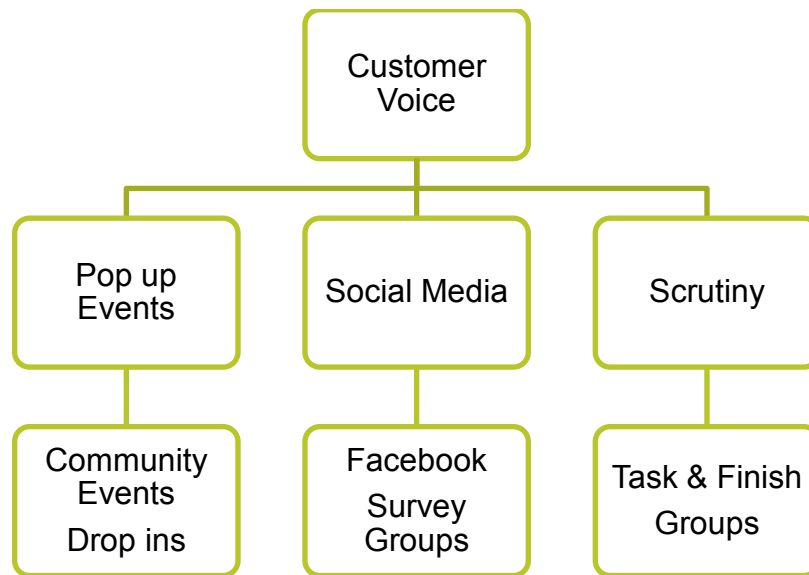
We built 300 new homes

Listening to you

During this year we have worked with our involved customers to set up a new way of engaging with our customers and to build on the work done by the Customer



Advisory Panel. Customer Voice, the name of the new group will work with Saffron to listen to what our customers tell us at pop-up events, write to us or about us on social media and talk to us about through. They will be reviewing Saffron's performance information, satisfaction results, complaints information and service and business priorities in order to agree annual consultation plan.



Some of the things that have changed as a result of your feedback

- We have listened to your views about the role of the Housing Officer and as a result have established a separate Income Management Team.
- We have introduced a new method of paying your rent through All Pay, making it quicker and easier for you to make your rent payments including an App and Direct Debits.
- We have reviewed a number of policies including the Feedback and Complaints Policy and reduced this from a 3-stage process to a 2 stage process and set timeframes for responding.
- Tenancies can now start on any day and not just a Monday giving you more flexibility for moving in to your new home.
- We have asked you how you wish us to engage with you and communicate with you and are taking this forward in our Engagement Strategy.



Over 480 customer members of chat groups giving us feedback
5 regularly involved customers on our formal group growing to 7
745 customers on the dedicated Saffron Facebook Page
10 customers attended the Ministers event on the Green Paper
1,245 customers have responded to specific service surveys

Complaints

We may not always get things right, but when we don't we want to make sure we put it right quickly and learn from it.

This year we introduced our new Feedback Policy and we are now recording in more detail the complaints we receive and what they are about. This has meant that we have seen an increase in the number of complaints recorded, but what is important to us is what we do about the complaints and use what we learn to start to reduce these.

Number of Complaints received last year: 387

Number of complaints upheld: 261

Top causes of upheld complaints:

Repairs: Poor Service: 75

Communication: 60

Repairs: Contractor Services: 30

Repairs: Delay: 27

Service Delivery: 15

Repairs: Missed Appointments: 13

We use your feedback to shape what we do and to improve how we do it. All staff will be going through customer service training to strengthen their understanding of working with customers.



Our main area to improved, based upon the complaints we have received is repairs. This year we will be introducing mobile working so we can get repairs done more quickly and right first time more often.

Taking Care of our Homes

We know that investing in your home is important to you and that it makes business sense. Our homes are always ageing with components and elements coming to the end of their lives as well as the toll of everyday wear and tear. The money we spend improves the standard of our customer's homes by creating better living conditions and homes that are cheaper and easier to heat. This can help improve both the general health and the wellbeing of our customers. The investments also serve to protect the long-term value of Saffron's assets.

Last year we invested £3.6m in our existing homes, about 10 per cent of our turnover, replacing wiring, heating systems, kitchens, bathrooms, roofs and windows. The work we undertook in each of these areas last year was:

| Budget Area | Completed Works |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Electrical Re-wires | 74 |
| Kitchen Improvements | 111 |
| Bathroom Improvements | 110 |
| Window Replacements | 140 |
| Roof Replacements | 113 |
| Door replacements | 123 |
| Central Heating Replacements | 279 |
| Oil Tanks | 55 |



We also spent £7.7 million on day-to-day repairs and grounds maintenance. Last year we did the following:

| Budget Area | Completed jobs |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Day to Day Maintenance | 12093 |
| Void Property Maintenance | 450 Properties - 2238 Jobs |
| Grounds Maintenance | 3384 |
| Appliance Servicing & Repairs | 5028 Services |
| Planned Maintenance | 531 |
| Electrical Testing/Remedials | 652 |
| Security Lighting & Smoke Detectors | 253 |
| Sheltered Mechanical & Electrical | 836 |
| Sewage Treatment Plants & Septic Tank | 580 |
| Fire Safety Works | 394 |
| Paths/Roads and Street Lighting | 19 |
| Asbestos Removal | 692 |
| Loft Insulation | 55 |
| Condensation/Damp Works | 151 |
| TPM Misc. Works | 1069 |
| EPC Data Collection | 145 |
| Aids and Adaptions | 195 |
| Structural Alterations | 119 |

Keeping you safe

Ensuring you are safe in your home is our top priority. We take fire safety very seriously and we have a dedicated team specialising in fire risk assessments.

To help keep you safe we:

- install smoke alarms in every home and smoke alarm systems in some of our flats.
- inspect our communal areas regularly to ensure that they are well maintained and clear.
- check fire alarms and emergency lighting in communal areas regularly
- make sure all fire escape routes are free from obstruction so that you can escape in an emergency.



Last year we:

Carried out 1270 fire risk assessment actions.

spent £252k on fire safety improvements

spent over £8k rubbish from our estates.

Achieved:

- **100% compliance with fire risk assessments**
- **100% compliance on gas servicing**
- **100% asbestos compliance**
- **100% electrical safety checks completed**
- **99.94% of homes now have an electrical check every five years**

Homes and Communities

We know that you care about your home and it has to be right for you and your family. We work with all our local authority partners to ensure that you find the right home in an area that suits you.

Last year we relet **605 homes**. The time it takes us to relet our properties was more than we wanted and during the year we have taken steps to reduce this including the introduction of a specialist voids team to carry out maintenance on our empty homes as well as a review of the ways we repair and let homes to new customers.

Following this we have set ourselves a stretching target for the next three years to improve the time it takes from when someone moves out to when a new tenant moves in.

The introduction of the voids team and the void review have already seen significant improvements. The average time from April – September 2018 was **68 days**, the average time from October to March 2019 was **37 days** for a typical void.

One of our key roles is to collect the rent due and we understand that sometimes paying their rent can be difficult for some of our customers. The introduction of Universal Credit is now affecting more customers which can make things harder for some. Our experienced income officers support customers to find solutions to



problems with debt, unpaid bills, benefits and budgeting. This helps to make sure our customers have the best chance of managing and sustaining their homes with us.

Sometimes, though, we do have to take action to ensure that rent and other charges are paid. Last year we had arrears of 3.2 per cent against our target of 3.4 per cent an improvement on the 3.6 per cent we saw in the previous year. Improved internal focus and good customer engagement influenced this reduction. It is an area of the business that continues to be important and the way we manage arrears will be going through a full review this year.

We also had to obtain injunctions to gain access to homes to carry out gas servicing. Legally we have to service gas boilers and fires every year and if we are not given access we have to ask the courts for permission to enter the property without a tenant's permission. The cost of every injunction is £308 and this is passed back to the customer to pay.

We take Anti-Social Behaviour very seriously and during this year we have dealt with over **281 cases**. Our aim is to sustain tenancies and address behaviour that is putting an individual's tenancy at risk.

The table below gives you an understanding of how we have managed our legal processes in the last year.

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Possession Orders obtained | 97 (80 SPOs + 17 FPOs) |
| Evictions Rent | 23 |
| Evictions Other (squatters) | 3 |
| Injunctions Gas | 22 |
| Injunctions ASB | 2 |



Contacting us

In 2017 we set up our Contact Centre to receive all our incoming calls and to manage these at the first point of contact. In addition to the 82,000 calls we take the call centre also receives over 12,000 emails a year and 4,000 visits to our reception each year.

During this year we have worked to improve our service and have seen the time people have to wait to speak to someone on the phone reduce from 8 minutes to 2 minutes and we are still improving, with the number of abandoned calls reducing to less than 11 per cent. We have introduced a call back system which means you can ask for us to call you back and you do not lose your place in the queue.

Looking Ahead

Last year we introduced our new Corporate Plan which sets out what we plan to do, and how we will deliver it over the next three years. We have set a clear vision that we will provide quality homes and understand that this will enhance the life chances for our customers.

Our vision is

Quality homes for positive futures

Our mission is

‘To develop and manage homes across Norfolk and Suffolk for people in need, and through our services enhance their life chances ’

for

Our values which govern how we will do this are:

Professional

Accountable

Collaborative

Evolving



Our Key Aims

Customer Service

We will provide quality landlord services and create a service culture for our customers making it easy for them to do business with us.

People and Culture

We will invest in our people and our systems to maximise efficiency and ensure we realise our full potential.

Homes

We will actively manage our existing homes and deliver new affordable housing to provide quality homes for current and future customers.

Money

We will remain financially strong, maximising value for money and creating capacity to build and invest in our homes and services.

Governance

We will operate in a culture where strong governance, compliance and risk management is business as usual.

Focus for this year

You, our customers will be at the centre of everything we do. We are listening to your views on your homes and the future so we can provide high-quality services for you. We know that you value your homes and our services and also want us to do more in your communities. We want to make doing business with us easy and, at the moment, access to our services can be improved.

One of our key priorities for 2019/20 is to make sure that you can get in touch with us using the method that suits you best. We know that many customers prefer to contact us through the website, so we are working to create the option to do more on line. This includes plans to enable you to report a repair and book an appointment on line without having to call us.

We will be working with Customer Voice to ensure that we actively listen and act upon your concerns. Through this group we will be reviewing a number of our



services to ensure that we are providing the best service to all our customers and develop a more streamlined approach to these,

We will be continue reviewing our offer to our older and more vulnerable customers and we will be working with partners to develop more extra care accommodation and supporting our customers into this accommodation

We have another busy year ahead and look forward to working with you to continue to move Saffron forward in a positive direction.





Saffron Housing Trust is a Registered Society and an exempt charity, registered in England by the Financial Conduct Authority
Register Number 32427R. Regd Office: Saffron Barn, Swan Lane, Long Stratton, Norfolk, NR15 2XP

