



Customer Voice Report Quarter 4

2023/2024

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Executive summary

Quarter four – This report summarises where Beyond Housing has made positive changes to services following feedback from customers and the most recent and planned engagement activities.

Enhancements to services



Several changes and enhancements have been made in consultation with customers, including the reintroduction of a pest service along with their desired service levels and communication preferences for the ground maintenance service. Read more on pages 9-10.

Spotlight – Ombudsman complaint changes



The Housing Ombudsman Service released a revised version of its Complaint Handling Code in February 2024. This became statutory on 1 April 2024, meaning that all landlords are obliged by law to follow its requirements. We introduced changes to our complaints process based on the new code across quarter four to ensure we were compliant with the new code. Read page 11 for more details.



Pest service:



What customers are telling us

- **Validation and assessment** – Customers want their pest issues to be acknowledged and investigated thoroughly
- **Holistic support** – Customers seek a wider range of support from the service
- **Open communication** – Customers want pest reports to be treated holistically and connect them with appropriate housing or tenancy management services if needed
- **Detailed explanations** – Customers want clear explanations regarding the outcome of pest investigations along with support and guidance, even when the issue falls outside our direct scope.

What we are doing



- **Refocussed services** – We've refocussed the pest control service to tackle rats, mice and wasps
- **Validation and assessment** – The service uses a triage system to prioritise customer needs to ensure investigations are allocated efficiently, focus on the severity of infestations and the specific support each customer requires
- **Clear communication** – We've established service level agreements to guarantee timely communication with customers. They'll be kept informed throughout the process, from initial contact to resolution, and connected to other service areas if support is needed
- **Empowering resources** – The website has been revamped to include the latest and most effective methods for customers to handle pest infestations that fall under their responsibility.

Celebrating great customer service

Here are some examples of the great customer service we provided in Q4:

Keeping our customers safe

In response to serious anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents in Grangetown, our Communities team collaborated closely with the police, the homeless team, and social care. Together with partner agencies, we relocated at-risk families to safer areas within the country and secured properties to protect both our assets and neighbouring residents.

The gas team, schedulers, repairs, communications, and the entire Grangetown team demonstrated remarkable teamwork in finding innovative ways to continue providing essential services to the community. The team successfully regained possession of two properties where households had been causing distress to customers in the area.

As a housing association, our powers to reclaim properties are limited. However, the team explored all available avenues to support affected customers and proactively prevent anti-social behaviour within our communities. We worked closely with the police and local authorities, leveraging their powers alongside our own to find effective resolutions. ASB cases are inherently complex, requiring careful consideration and action.

Throughout this process, everyone involved worked tirelessly to gather evidence and progress enforcement actions in collaboration with Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council and the police. The team's efforts extended beyond enforcement alone—they organised victim support, strengthened security measures, and ensured regular check-ins by a security firm to enhance customers' safety and peace of mind.

Their dedication and hard work are commendable, and they should take immense pride in this accomplishment.

Protecting our vulnerable customers

In response to information about cuckooing—a practice where individuals take over someone's home for exploitation—the Communities team acted swiftly to support the affected customer and secure the property. During a property visit, they discovered that the electric meter had been tampered with, posing a significant fire risk and endangering the safety of customers.

A touch of Christmas cheer


Just before Christmas, the Supported Living team assisted a customer and her young son who had moved into one of our homes last March. Their previous home was unsafe, and the landlord decided to sell the property instead of making repairs.

The new home only had flooring in the kitchen and bathroom, with the rest being bare concrete. Determined to provide a more comfortable and secure home for this customer, the team explored options for carpeting the entire property.

In a display of holiday spirit, C&M Carpets in Guisborough generously offered to fit carpets throughout the entire home as a goodwill gesture! Despite the tight timeline before the Christmas break, the team swiftly arranged for the carpets to be installed on Friday 22 December.

Thanks to the combined efforts of everyone involved, this deserving family was able to enjoy a much warmer and more comfortable Christmas in their new home.

The feedback from the customer shows the impact this had:



"It's just nice my son can run around with no slippers on. His feet are warm, and I don't have to worry about him catching himself on the metal grippers that were there before. I can't believe how fast it happened either, starting with a passing comment to you. Thank you for thinking about me, there's no way we could have afforded to carpet the whole flat by ourselves. Christmas with a carpet was brilliant, we could sit on the floor and open presents together rather than sitting on a cold concrete floor."

The Damp and Mould team also identified weapons within the home and promptly reported this to the police for investigation and risk mitigation. Colleagues from various departments collaborated to enhance security at the customer's home, preventing further break-ins and associated risks. Some colleagues remained on-site to ensure the safety of gas and electricity supplies while securing the property.

Customers said, we did:

Engagement with customers has influenced several changes and enhancements to our service.



Customers told us:

They felt unsafe and were concerned about anti-social behaviour in Cornfields House, Bankfields.

What we did:

In response, our housing officer took proactive steps and conducted door knocks in collaboration with partners and explored crime prevention solutions, including additional locks and alarms.

Customers told us:

They needed more parking and safer parking provision in the locality and increased lighting at Ghyll Brow.

What we did:

We used the feedback to support a request for funding from the neighbourhood improvement tier two. (Currently awaiting a decision).

Customers told us:

The food bank at the Rainbow Centre in Scarborough was struggling to meet local demand.

What we did:

A housing officer applied to the Travis Perkins social value fund and successfully secured £500 for the centre and started an internal campaign with colleagues for food donations. This proactive approach meant the food bank was able to continue supporting the increasing needs of local customers.

Customers told us:

After consultation, customers of Dovedale Court expressed their preference for purple and white as the paint colours for the communal areas within the block.

What we did:

We shared the colours with the Capital Works team to prepare for when the painting starts.

Customers told us:

In March, customers of Thrushwood Crescent in Marske expressed their eagerness to kickstart a transformative project. Their vision was to convert an area of land adjacent to their homes into a flourishing arboretum. They reached out to us to bring this idea to life.

What we did:

Collaborating with the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), the resident-led project successfully secured a £1,800 Beyond Housing grant through the White Rose Forest's Trees for Climate programme. This grant aims to enhance the natural environment in the area. Alongside tree planting, the grant also facilitated the installation of birdsmouth fencing around the green space to protect it from foot traffic and vehicles, and help preserve the area for generations to come.

Customers told us:

They loved the £1 partnership offer with Stephen Joseph Theatre in Scarborough (150 customers used the scheme in 23/24 providing over £3,000 in discounts).

What we did:

We strengthened the partnership with Stephen Joseph Theatre even further and introduced six new show offers for 24/25.

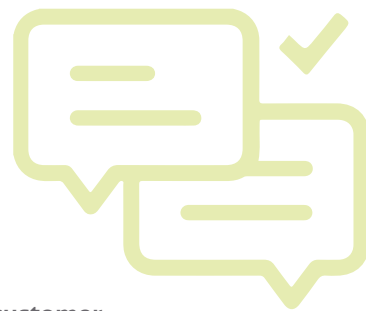
Customers told us:

Customers (including members of the on-site social group) at Bell Close in Seamer, expressed their desire for support in upgrading their communal garden area. Their goals included encouraging new members to participate and launching an intergenerational garden project in collaboration with the neighbouring school.

What we did:

Our dedicated estate caretaker fixed and added raised beds to enhance the garden's structure, planted fruit trees to enrich the green space, and power-washed and painted outdoor furniture and fencing for a fresh look.

Customer compliments – Celebrating success



While gathering feedback to enhance our services is crucial, recognising and celebrating customer satisfaction is equally important. We receive positive feedback through various channels, from casual remarks to thoughtful gestures like cards and flowers. In the last quarter (Q4), 47 formal compliments were received from our customers. Let's take a look at some of these highlights...

Great advice

I'm really happy with the repair to my emergency light. The staff were polite, cleaned the area and did a great job. They thoroughly explained the procedure for testing and were extremely helpful.

Impressive

The gardeners did an excellent job today pruning the bushes all along the side of my home. It's the best team of gardeners I've ever had. They did a thorough job.

Tidy job

Really friendly, did a fantastic job, cleaned up after himself and is a credit to Beyond Housing.

Added value

Thank you to the joiner who was putting up my bannister today. He noticed some lifted carpet and tapped it down for me as it was a potential trip hazard.

Impressive

I'm impressed and pleased with all the work the operatives have done in my home. It looks a million times better because of them.

Added value

Professional, caring and thoughtful. Even put the blinds back up. No mess. Spotless.

Considerate

Amazing job, lovely pair of guys. Nothing was too much trouble. Went out of their way to make me happy and comfortable whilst in my home. Big thank you.

Considerate

We are disabled and nothing was too much trouble for them. Their attitudes were spot on, both men deserve to be complimented on their work and attitude.

Caring

Thank you for listening. Today is the first time since becoming a customer I have started to feel properly heard.

Speedy service

Thank you to the joiner and call handler for their swift response about the issue with my door. I'm grateful for how quickly it was resolved and the advice the operative gave me.

Neighbourhood improvement projects

We're committed to making a positive difference in the neighbourhoods where our customers live. Neighbourhood improvement projects are driven by a commitment to listen to customers and empower teams to take action. By providing them with the resources they need, we enable them to drive real change in the places customers call home.

These projects go beyond bricks and mortar. They're about fostering a strong sense of community spirit and contributing to the overall regeneration of our neighbourhoods, creating a better place for everyone to live, work, and thrive.



Robin Hood Close – From obstacles to opportunities

Following feedback from customers in Robin Hood Close, Castleton, we're pleased to see the positive transformation of the bricked raised flower beds. After hearing concerns from customers about their appearance, accessibility issues, and damp pathways, we've listened and taken action. We've completely removed the beds, and the response has been fantastic.

Customers are already enjoying the renewed space, praising its brighter and more welcoming feel. We're thrilled that this change has made a real difference to their daily lives.

Waverton Gardens and Whale Hill – Creating a safer neighbourhood

Customers in Waverton Gardens and Whale Hill are now enjoying a safer environment thanks to collaborative efforts to reduce anti-social behaviour caused by off-road motorbikes.

In response to customer feedback, the Asset team, working closely with surveyors, housing officers, local councillors, and the designing out crime officer, implemented targeted measures at two locations:

- **Waverton Gardens – Pathway barriers were installed to deter motorbike access**
- **Whale Hill – A chicane was replaced to improve safety and restrict motorbike use.**

These improvements have reduced anti-social motorbike activity, creating a more peaceful environment for customers. Additionally, the pathway barriers at Waverton Gardens have enhanced accessibility for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

Customer voice



Trust



Satisfaction

"Providing a great service"

Customers shape grounds maintenance improvements

A commitment to a well-maintained community starts with understanding customer needs. To ensure grounds maintenance services meet expectations, we listened to customers about their desired service levels and communication preferences.

Here's what they told us about the service:

- **Reliability is key**
Residents prioritised reliable service delivery, particularly those with service charges that included grounds maintenance
- **Proactive approach**
The ability to anticipate and address potential issues before they arise was seen as valuable
- **Clean and tidy environment**
Leaving the grounds clean and tidy was another resident expectation, with unfinished work being promptly reported.

"What an amazing job the grass cutters have done, I'm really impressed and happy with it."

(Tennyson Close in Grangetown)

Here's what they told us about communication:

- **Accessibility**
Customers desire dynamic work schedules readily available across multiple channels: website, phone IVR, social media, and live chat
- **Personalisation**
Customers expect targeted communication informing them when we will be in their area and the work planned
- **Transparency**
Timely updates are crucial at key points, including initial planned schedules, any changes (planned or unplanned), and completion confirmation (with feedback opportunities)
- **Issue resolution**
For reported issues, customers expect clear progress updates and prefer us to avoid using generic 'leave it with us' messages.

Based on this feedback, we've made several improvements:

- **Schedule transparency**
We published the grass cutting schedule on the website with two-week grass cutting windows, which allows flexibility for weather while ensuring seasonal maintenance
- **Direct communication**
We sent out emails to customers to share the schedule with them and how they can access it on the website

- **Service information**
The website now details service expectations, including litter removal before cutting, chemical usage, hedge/shrub management, and seasonal bedding updates
- **Issue resolution**
We have put a 24 hour service level agreement in place to contact customers back when they raise an issue about the ground maintenance service
- **Performance monitoring**
Internal performance indicators track service delivery against customer expectations. Examples include percentage of area cut on schedule and quality inspection results.

"The grass team have been working hard around the area and the shrubs look amazing. I like how they are keeping the area clean as they move along. Well done!"

(Saltburn-by-the-Sea)



Trust



Satisfaction

"Access to services"

Customers shape refocussing of pest service

Customers have expressed concerns about the pest control service, highlighting the importance of having access to the service and a more comprehensive and empathetic approach. Here's a breakdown of their key points:

Validation and assessment

Customers want their pest issues to be acknowledged and investigated thoroughly, regardless of who resolves the problem. They expect us to be invested in finding the root cause, even if it involves collaboration with external parties

Holistic support

Pest problems can often be symptoms of other underlying issues. Customers seek a wider range of support from the service, including assistance with cleaning, hoarding, or financing repairs they might be responsible for

Open communication

Reporting a pest problem can be a window into other struggles customers might be facing. We need to view their reports holistically and connect them with appropriate housing or tenancy management services

Detailed explanations

Customers want clear explanations regarding the outcome of pest investigations. Blanket statements like "we don't do pest control" are unhelpful and create a sense of detachment. They expect a level of support and guidance, even when the issue falls outside of our direct scope.

Service improvements

Based on this feedback, we've have:

Refocussed services

We've refocussed the pest control service to tackle rats, mice and wasps

Developed a triage approach

The service implements a triage system to prioritise customer needs. This ensures resources are allocated efficiently, focusing on the severity of infestations and the specific support each customer requires

Enhanced communication

We've established service level agreements to guarantee timely communication with customers. They'll be kept informed throughout the process, from initial contact to resolution

Strengthened resources

The website has been revamped to include the latest and most effective methods for customers to handle pest infestations that fall under their responsibility.



Customer scrutiny



Trust



Satisfaction

"Shaping services"

Beyond Housing is committed to listening and learning from customers and recognises that our customers are the experts on the services they receive from us. With this aim, Beyond Housing has a range of opportunities planned over the next year for customers to help shape the services they receive.

Asset management scrutiny

Scrutiny of property standards will occur over a 12-week period, with customer involvement over four days.

Day 1: Focus on the property standard at void

Customers will assess the standard of Beyond Housing properties at different points in the re-let process.

Day 2: Focus on the property standard at re-let

Review and visit a minimum of one property where works are underway while the property is void and review and visit a minimum of two properties where the property is at pre-void sign off status – works have been completed to return property to re-let.

Day 3: Processes and service plans – How services are delivered to customers

Presentation on the key processes and procedures relating to both days by the appropriate service manager together with a presentation of key service plans; including budget, spend, component replacement programmes, and scheduled service improvement initiatives.

Day 4: Focus on 'you said, we're doing'

The relevant director(s) will present findings from feasibility assessments and service improvement plans.

Customers that participate will provide insight into customers' wants, needs and expectations, which will be used to inform opportunities for continuous improvements, with the next two scrutiny opportunities focusing on two key areas of Beyond Housing's services; neighbourhood management and asset management.

Neighbourhood management scrutiny

Scrutiny of neighbourhood management will occur over a 12-week period, with customer involvement over four days.

Day 1: Neighbourhood assessments

Customers will visit and assess a chosen estate on a scale of 'bronze', 'silver', 'gold', and 'platinum', while detailing observations and opportunities for consideration.

Day 2: Localised action plans

Customers will visit a minimum of one neighbourhood which Beyond Housing has identified as an area for localised improvement actions. The relevant housing operations manager will present the localised action plan proposal to involved customers.

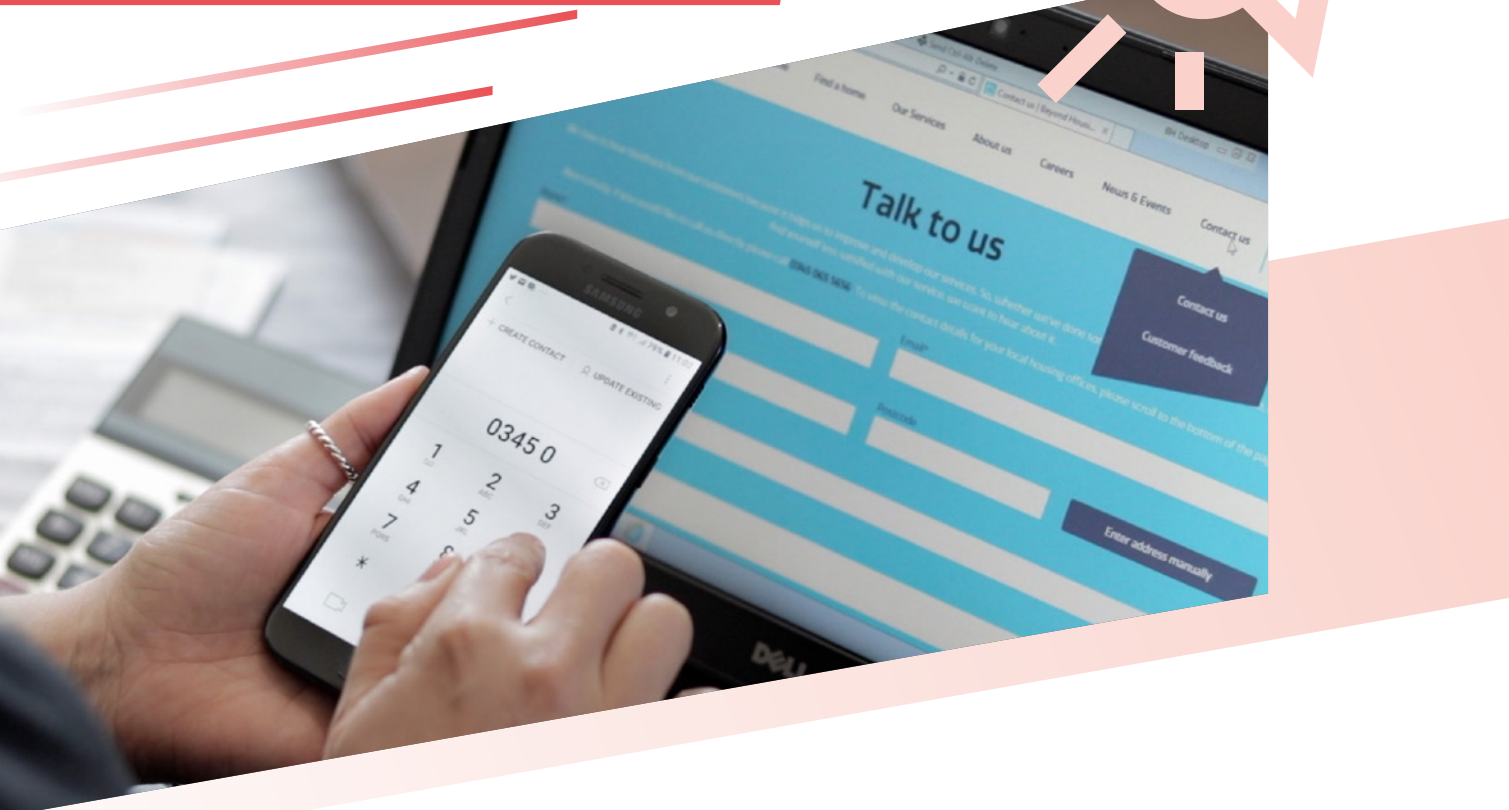
Day 3: Processes and service plans – How services are delivered to customers

Question and answer sessions with relevant senior and operational managers. Presentation of key service plans; including budget, spend, 'place' programmes, and scheduled service improvement initiatives.

Day 4: Focus on 'you said, we're doing'

The relevant director(s) will present findings from feasibility assessments and service improvement plans.

Sector spotlight



Ombudsman complaint changes

The Housing Ombudsman Service released a revised version of its Complaint Handling Code in February 2024. This became statutory on 1 April 2024, meaning that all landlords are obliged by law to follow its requirements. We introduced changes to our complaints process based on the new code across quarter four to ensure we were compliant with the new code.

The code aims to achieve best practice in complaint handling and ultimately provide a better service to customers.

Key areas in the code include:

- **A universal definition of a complaint**
Our customers have several ways of communicating with us to let us know how we are doing; with the updated complaint definition in the new code, we can ensure that a customer is heard and understood no matter how they express their dissatisfaction

- **Removal of 'informal' complaint stages**
Previously, certain instances of customer dissatisfaction could be recorded for information only to help with complaint learning. Now all expressions of customer dissatisfaction require formal acknowledgement and action to resolve
- **Providing easy access to the complaints procedure and ensuring customers are aware of it**
Making it easier for customers to access the complaints procedure is key to ensuring their voice is heard. We have a dedicated area on the Beyond Housing website so customers are clear on the route they can take
- **Creating a positive complaint handling culture through continuous learning and improvement**
A key element of our complaints process is to learn from customer dissatisfaction and use what we learn to put things right, ensuring what we learn from one customer influences the experience for all customers.

The new code has helped us strengthen our complaints process and ensures the customers' voice is heard whenever a customer is dissatisfied, which improves our ability to understand and improve the experiences that matter most to our customers.

Making a difference in Dormanstown

Locality partnership meeting

Beyond Housing hosted a locality partnership event in January, bringing together statutory agencies, charities, and community groups to build a comprehensive plan to improve the Dormanstown area.

The event focused on understanding the lived experiences of Dormanstown residents and the challenges they face.

Key issues identified included:

- **Higher rates of health and employment deprivation** compared to national averages
- **Environmental concerns**
A significant number of fly-tipping reports (952 to the council) highlighted the need for improved waste management

- **Limited car ownership**

This suggests a need for better public transportation options or alternative transport solutions

- **Crime concerns**

Dormanstown experiences higher levels of violence, criminal damage, burglary, theft, and handling stolen goods.

The event fostered a spirit of collaboration, with partners brainstorming solutions and identifying opportunities for improvement. This collective effort highlighted the power of working together to make a real difference in Dormanstown.

Beyond Housing is actively driving the locality plan forward. This includes the successful launch of a Community Spring Clean with our partners. We are continuing discussions to determine the next steps and ensure a positive impact on Dormanstown.

What will make a difference?

As well as hosting a face-to-face consultation with customers in Dormanstown West, we also gave the opportunity to our wider customers to share their thoughts. This below summarises the key findings from the survey:

Customers identified several key priorities for their homes and community:

- **Quality maintenance**
Timely repairs completed to a high standard
- **Well-maintained homes**
Keeping homes in good condition
- **Safety and security**
Feeling safe within homes and the wider community. This includes addressing concerns about anti-social behaviour, particularly the use of off-road bikes
- **Clean and green spaces**
Customers desire better upkeep of open spaces and communal areas so that they are free from issues like flytipping, litter, overflowing bins, and pests (particularly rats).

The survey revealed customers' aspirations for their homes and community:

- **Improved cleanliness**
A cleaner and more aesthetically pleasing environment across open spaces and communal areas
- **Enhanced safety**
Customers desire to feel safe within their properties and throughout the community
- **Stronger communication**
Customers expressed a desire for more frequent and effective communication with Beyond Housing
- **Efficient repair service**
A more responsive and reliable repair service was a key request
- **Transparency and partnership**
Customers want transparent agreements between Beyond Housing and themselves
- **Investment in properties**
Customers expressed a desire for increased investment in their homes, allowing them to feel proud of where they live.

The feedback from customers provides valuable insights and will be utilised to inform future decisions and service improvements.

Customer engagement – The year so far

February

Feet on the street

Beyond Housing colleagues completed estate walkabouts, engaging with customers and responding to their questions.

Tenant satisfaction measures

Following on from the first round of TSM data collection in October 2023, the second round of data collection was completed.

Church Lane North, Grangetown – Residents drop-in

We provided an opportunity for customers to discuss their experiences of the regeneration works and feedback any comments or requests.

Ghyll Brow, Glaisdale – Parking consultation

Customers living at Ghyll Brow were consulted on the area of land used for parking and how to improve/utilise it more effectively. We also gave customers an opportunity to discuss any neighbourhood issues.

Ayton Drive estate, Redcar – Paving

We carried out a consultation with local customers to look at providing community paving improvements.

Dovedale Court, Redcar – Communal painting options

Local customers were provided with the opportunity to choose their preferred block paint colour from a range of options.

March

Church Lane North, Grangetown – Residents drop-in

We provided another opportunity for customers in the Church Lane North area to engage and discuss the ongoing regeneration work in the area. The drop-in provided an opportunity to discuss any issues with their specific homes and wider feedback on the regeneration of the area.

Customer summit

This year's customer summit brought together customers and colleagues to discuss opportunities for improving our digital services.

April

Improving spaces and communities

As part of the Dormanstown locality plan, customers expressed a need for support with waste removal from gardens and homes. In collaboration with partners, we organised a community spring clean where 10-12 tonnes of waste and over 150 bags of rubbish were collected and removed.



Customer engagement – What's coming

May

Income management policy review

A three-year review of the income management policy is planned to give customers an opportunity to engage with us on whether the policy continues to meet their needs.

Feet on the street

Beyond Housing colleagues will complete estate walkabouts, engaging with customers and responding to their questions.

Church Lane North, Grangetown – Community activities

Commencement of engaging activities with the local community, schools, and existing groups. Focusing on enhancing the newly developed green open space and the health and wellbeing for all who live there.

Beech Walk, Eastfield – Open space consultation

We will be seeking feedback from all residents who live and use the open space in Eastfield to gather input on potential future uses of this area.

June

Barrowcliff, Scarborough – Clean up event

A large community clean-up event will be held. This partner-led event (Barrowcliff Big Local) will be supported by Beyond Housing with a large skip, estate caretaker resources, and colleague volunteers. All community members are invited to participate.

Leaseholder consultations

Considering impending legislature changes contained within the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Bill, we are seeking to consult with customers on the new leaseholder handbook and enhance customer communications with the development of a leaseholder forum.

Burnside, Scarborough – Fencing consultation

We will be seeking local feedback from customers on improvements to communal fencing as part of the Eastfield locality plan neighbourhood project.

Neighbourhood management policy review

We will be conducting a one-year review of the neighbourhood management policy, where customers will have the opportunity to provide feedback on whether the policy continues to meet their needs.



