

Access and customer care January 2008
Action plan

**Recommendations from YHN mystery shoppers
Access and customer care action plan - 2008**

Recommendation	Action needed	Who is responsible	Deadline date	Completed
Scenario One – Applying for a property				
Staff should be able to provide many options on how to apply for a property. This include the at the property shop, at any housing offices, on line by sending on out in the post.	Your Choice Homes Training for staff. Training to include all the ways that customers can apply for property.	Debbie Duffy John Urwin Barbara Healy	30 April 2008	
Staff should be aware that YHN no longer use Language line and that we use the National Interpreting service to support customers whose first language is not English. It would also be helpful to customers if we explained	Remind staff about National interpreting service and ARCH via email Area based briefings for staff in Housing Management. Managers to check with all staff that they are giving out the correct information on the interpreting service.	Gillian Davidson Area Directors	18 January 2008 January 2008, February 2008, March 2008	

<p>what this service was to potential new customers.</p> <p>Customers can also contact any housing office direct and we can provide an interpreter to translate the conversation if they have any queries about applying for a property.</p>	<p>Briefing note for all staff to support area briefings, including information about how to request dial out for doing interpretation over the telephone.</p> <p>Check whether NIS is now language line to avoid potential confusion for staff</p>	<p>Area Directors</p> <p>Heather Nixon</p>	<p>March 2008</p> <p>29 February 2008</p>	
<p>Scenario two – Anti social behaviour</p>				
<p>Some offices were insistent on getting the address of the customer before they would provide any information. This was a general enquiry and the address was not needed to answer the question on ASB.</p>	<p>Area based briefing sessions for staff To advise staff to listen to customers questions. It is not always necessary to get the address to answer the query. We can provide advice without getting the address.</p>	<p>Area Directors</p>	<p>January 2008, February 2008, March 2008</p>	
<p>Staff did not offer the customer to ring a local office and use the interpreting service.</p>	<p>Area based briefing sessions for staff. Managers to make sure that staff know how to use the National Interpreting service dial out service so customers can contact offices over the telephone to use the interpreting service.</p>	<p>Area Directors</p>	<p>January 2008, February 2008, March 2008</p>	
<p>Customers felt it would</p>				

have been appropriate for staff to give out a YHN leaflet on ASB as the interpreting service would have been explained through the strap lines.	Produce information leaflet that staff can give out to tenants	Allison Hodgson	31 March 2008	
Staff were helpful in giving out the 101 leaflets however our customers felt that it meant that YHN did not deal with ASB and that it was a police matter. Customers recommended that staff explain the work that YHN do alongside reports to the 101 number.	Include this information in the ASB leaflet being produced	Allison Hodgson	31 March 2008	
In one case a customer was reporting racial harassment and they were informed to ring the 101 number as by dialling 999 this was wasting police time. The customer recommended that the difference should be explained a bit clearer.	This issue will be addressed with the manager of the office concerned	Relevant Area Director	29 February 2008	
Some staff provided an excellent service and explained about the	Email to all staff to remind about support available	Gillian Davidson	18 January 2008	

support agencies that are available in Newcastle to help with issues of racial harassment. However this was not consistent across the city.	Area based briefings for staff in Housing Management to check that staff know about the support agencies for racial harassment.	Area Directors	January 2008, February 2008, March 2008	
Some offices would not deal with the enquiry on ASB as it was not their local office. However they should have still been able to answer the customer's questions about how to report ASB and about the interpreting service available.	Area based briefings for staff in Housing Management. All offices should be able to provide advice and support about ASB.	Area Directors	January 2008, February 2008, March 2008	
Some officers explained how YHN tackle ASB however again this was not consistent across the city.	Area based briefings for staff in Housing Management. Managers to make sure that staff provide a consistent approach to tackling ASB.	Area Directors	January 2008, February 2008, March 2008	
Scenario 3 – Making a complaint				
Staff did not address the vulnerability of the customer who was partially	Area based briefings for staff in Housing Management. To make	Area Directors	January 2008, February 2008,	

sighted who wanted to make a complaint.	sure staff listen to the question and address the vulnerability issue within this scenario. Briefing note for all staff to support area briefings	Area Directors	March 2008 February 2008, March 2008	
No staff offered to take the telephone number and ring the customer directly so that they could speak to someone about their complaint.	Area based briefings for staff in Housing Management. To make sure staff know what the complaints policy and processes are. A briefing note will be produced for staff	Area Directors	January 2008, February 2008, March 2008	
Some staff were excellent at providing information about the complaints process however this was not consistent across the city.	Area based briefings for staff in Housing Management. To make sure staff know what the complaints policy and processes are. A briefing note will be produced for staff	Area Directors	January 2008, February 2008, March 2008	
Some staff were not aware that there was a complaints form.	Area based briefings for staff in Housing Management. To make sure staff know what the complaints policy and processes are. A briefing note will be produced for staff	Area Directors	January 2008, February 2008, March 2008	

Staff all knew that we could provide the information in Braille or audio but did not offer other support mechanisms such as a home visit or a telephone call.	Area based briefings for staff in Housing Management. To make sure staff know about the range of ways in which we can support customers. A briefing note will be produced for staff	Area Directors	January 2008, February 2008, March 2008	
Scenario 4 – Tenant Involvement				
There was a lack of understanding about tenant involvement. There had recently been an article in Homes and People along with staff receiving an internal briefing about involvement but still the questions on involvement were not answered well.	Area based briefings for staff in Housing Management Tenant Involvement Team to meet with Community Housing Office Teams every 6 months to update about involvement	Area Directors Tenant Involvement Manager	January 2008, February 2008, March 2008 Ongoing	
Very few staff knew about the city wide involvement compact and it was not available in housing offices.	Add tenant and leaseholder involvement compact to staff intranet Look at possibility of adding search facility to staff intranet	Tenant Involvement Manager Communications Team / IT Manager	29 February 2008 30 September 2008	
One member of staff defined involvement as	This issue will be addressed with	Relevant Area Director	29 February 2008	

'tenants who are involved in ASB or who are behind in their rent'.	the manager of the office concerned			
Some staff were giving out the incorrect documents about getting involved.	Make sure these documents are included in leaflet folder for all CHOs	Tenant Involvement Manager	29 February 2008	
General				
Staff on reception should wear a fixed badge as it was difficult to see their names if they were wearing their staff identity cards around their neck. All staff should wear a name badge.	All staff to be instructed to wear name badge at all times	All managers	29 February 2008	
There should be a poster in each office advertising that YHN use the National Interpretation service, so customers whose first language is not English know that this support is available.	Agree standard set of posters for offices to display due to limited wall space NIS language cards should be displayed on reception desk. Check if these cards are available from NIS	Principal Housing Manager (operations)	29 February 2008	
Customers recommended that the free phones are made more private.	Fit privacy hoods where it is possible to do so	Principal Housing Manager (operations)	31 January 2008	Completed
Offices to make sure that				

<p>there are signs offering private interviews for confidentiality. Also a sign stating that if you would like to speak to an officer of the same sex then to request this at reception.</p>	<p>Signs should be displayed on all offices. Monthly checks of offices to be carried out</p> <p>Additional spot checks to be carried out</p>	<p>Housing Service Managers</p> <p>Operational Support Co-ordinators</p>	<p>29 February 2008</p> <p>Monthly from February 2008</p>	
<p>Offices to check that the signs for the hearing loop system are prominent at the reception area.</p>	<p>Signs should be displayed at all offices. Monthly checks of offices to be carried out</p> <p>Additional spot checks to be carried out</p>	<p>Housing Service Managers</p> <p>Operational Support Co-ordinators</p>	<p>Monthly from February 2008</p> <p>Monthly from February 2008</p>	
<p>All service standards should be available in local offices.</p>	<p>Repairs service standards are out of date</p> <p>Customer Service standards have been under review – need to be circulated to all offices</p> <p>Introduce system for monitoring and replenishing of supplies</p>	<p>Performance Management and Policy</p> <p>Performance Management and Policy</p>	<p>March 2008</p> <p>March 2008</p>	
<p>In the West Denton Office this was not accessible to all customer due to the lifts and the automatic doors being out of order,</p>	<p>Inform manager – Mandy Rudd of this issue (copy to Neil Scott)</p>	<p>Heather Nixon</p>		
<p>If staff are transferring a call to another officer they</p>	<p>Area based briefings for staff in Housing Management.</p>	<p>Area Director</p>	<p>January 2008,</p>	

should inform the customer that they are doing this.			February 2008, March 2008	
Staff should listen to the question more and not be insistent on getting the address to deal with the enquiry.	Area based briefings for staff in Housing Management Include as part of customer service training for all staff	Area Director Gillian Davison	January 2008, February 2008, March 2008 On going	
Staff to know how long it would take to order a document in Braille or audio.	Introduce standard for maximum length of time for translations	Communications Manager	29 February 2008	
The mystery shopper who visited the Cruddas Park office felt that the counter was too high for wheelchair users.	No action - office is compliant with Disability Discrimination Act	N/A	N/A	
Parking in front of the entrance at the Gosforth office made it difficult to access the ramp. The mystery shopper felt this was dangerous for anyone visiting in a wheel chair or motorised scooter. They also felt that ramps were not wide enough as there was no room to turn if in a	No action - office is compliant with Disability Discrimination Act	N/A	N/A	

wheelchair.				
Some offices publicised in the service standards have been closed and the telephone numbers do not re direct customers or inform them of a new number to contact.	Information should be updated as documents are reviewed Add message to Newburn Office line informing customers of new telephone number to dial	Principal Housing Manager (operations)	29 February 2008	
Some offices were not clearly sign posted especially those not strategically located.	This issue was highlighted as part of our mock inspection and since December new signs have been ordered.	Principal Housing Manager (operations)	March 2008	

