

# Customer Service Panel

## Chair's Report

### Topics Discussed & Presenter

1. Under/over occupancy (best use of stock) and managed moves – Carol Smith (Head of Localities and High Rise Living)
2. Hub update – Lisa Chatwin (Head of Customer Contact)
3. Customer First Update – Huw Davies (Consultant information, data and applications) and Lisa Haynes (SME Housing Operations)

### Observations, Recommendations & Actions

1. Carol gave the panel an overview on the Statutory Framework that Platform Housing Group must follow (e. Equalities Act 2010, Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 and Housing Act 1996). Carol detailed the process in which properties are acquired and then rented out and that this can change depending on the locality. It was discussed that some may choose to downsize their homes due to under occupancy charges, spare bedroom subsidies and the bedroom tax 2014. However, a lot of people will remain in their family homes until they are elderly. Platform have made the decision to limit purchasing homes built by external property developers and will now buy their own land to build their own homes. Allowing more control over factors such as number of bedrooms and bedroom sizes. **NO ACTIONS.**
2. Lisa Chatwin gave an insightful and positive presentation on the improvements and ongoing work happening within the Hub. The panel was shown data from December 2024 compared to December 2023, showing a significant improvement in average wait times, call backs and satisfaction from calls. Lisa also shared data regarding digital contact via the customer portal, online chat bots and emails – where there have also been significant improvements. The top 5 reasons customers contact the hub are repairs, enquiry, tenure management, tenancy enforcement (usually surrounding ASB), damp/mould and account balances. The panel was told about the induction process for staff joining the hub that was previously 4 weeks but will now be 6-8 weeks in order to better prepare them). Case studies were shared with the panel, and it was discussed how technology could better help the hub identify customers with varying needs that may require more specialist support.

**ACTION:** Lisa will meet with the EDI team to discuss the potential of bettering the support offered to customers who require additional support.

3. Huw Davies and Lisa Haynes gave an update on PHG's Customer First Programme – detailing past and planned future progress. Every customer will have the option to opt out of providing data, but the programme aims to help customers understand the importance of Platform having up to date relevant information and how this will help a customer in the long run.

**NO ACTIONS**

## Chair's Thoughts

The topics covered at this panel meeting led to great participation and questions asked by panel members. The meeting was informative and detailed clearly where Platform Housing Group has made improvements, particularly when it comes to the Hub. The panel looks forward to hearing about future updates and learning more about the topics covered.