



Solihull
Community Housing
Shaping our neighbourhoods

Customer Experience Strategy

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Introduction

In recent years, the social housing sector has seen a seismic shift towards a more customer-centric approach, which recognises the importance of providing a positive customer experience for customers. The Regulator for Social Housing has revised and strengthened its consumer standards, which set out what better quality social housing and services look like, and the need for housing providers to build stronger relationships with customers. The Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code, the Building Safety Act and the Better Social Housing Review all have similar themes running through them, which all place our customers, their views, and their experiences, front and centre.

Our Strategic Vision is clear; to create better homes and thriving communities. This is underpinned by our values- we are not just concerned with what we do, but how we do it. Listening to our customers, being inclusive, embedding a positive organisational culture and supporting customers is central to our approach. SCH are fully committed to putting the customer at the heart of everything we do and our ambition is to deliver an excellent customer experience. This Customer Experience Strategy provides a blueprint for how we plan to do this and answers the questions:

- How do we consistently make this happen across all SCH services?
- How do we consistently apply this across the whole journey that the customer takes?
- How do we ensure that our delivery is in line with our customers' needs and preferences?
- How do we ensure we are meeting our legal and regulatory responsibilities?

Benefits of implementing a customer experience strategy

- Higher customer satisfaction – transactional and perception
- Meeting the individual needs, preferences and priorities of customers
- Meeting the diverse needs of communities more effectively
- Value for money
- Allocation of resources effectively and efficiently
- Better customer engagement which results in better service design and delivery
- Higher staff satisfaction
- Meeting our regulatory and legislative responsibilities
- Builds trust in the SCH brand.

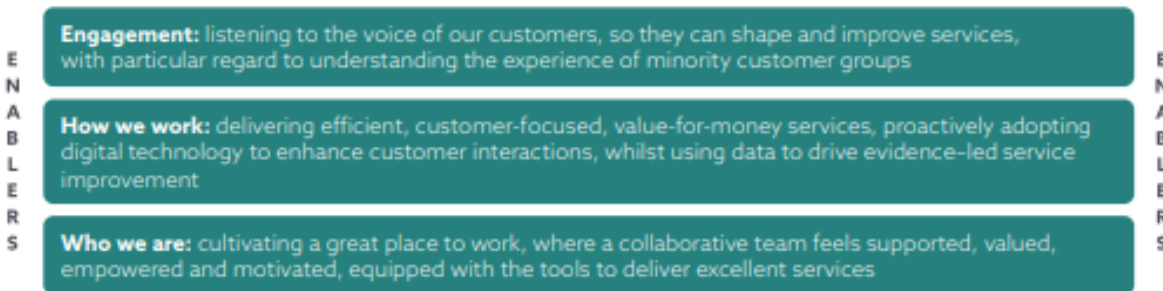
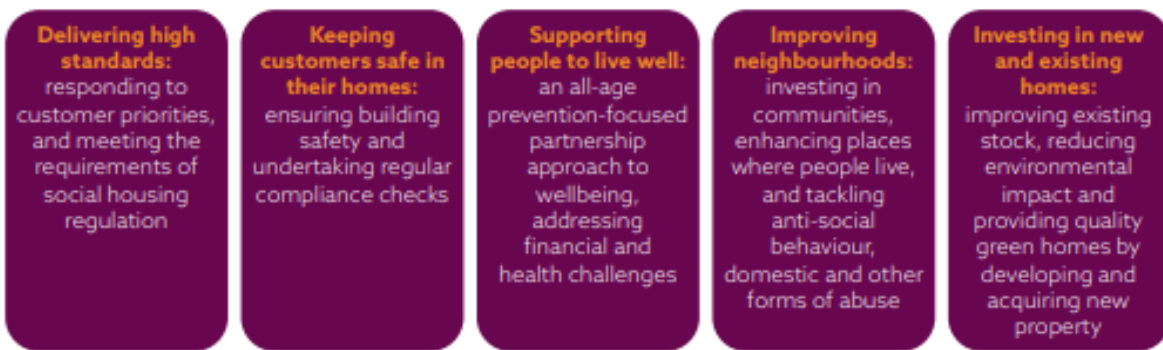
Development of the strategy

The themes of the Customer Experience Strategy have been developed based on:

- What our customers have told us is most important to them through customer insight and engagement activities
- Our vision, commitments and values
- Our Delivery Plan
- Our legal and regulatory responsibilities

Delivery Plan Themes 2024-25

Providing accessible, affordable housing solutions for those in need



2. Definitions

What is 'customer experience'?

Customer experience is the overall perception and interaction a customer has with SCH. It is defined by all the touchpoints, interactions and experiences customers have with SCH across all aspects of their journey. This can be in relation to the end-to-end journey a customer takes when receiving a specific service (such as a repair or homeless application) or it can be in relation to the customer's holistic perception of their experience of SCH built over time and over a number of interactions and journeys.

Customer experience is influenced by various factors related to:

- the people customers interact with
- the quality and responsiveness of services delivered
- the systems and processes involved.

However, the customer experience is also influenced by less tangible factors. Every interaction a customer has with SCH elicits some sort of emotion; good, bad, happy, sad, frustrated, content. The emotional connection or lack of connection felt by the customer has a huge bearing on their experience of SCH.

A good customer experience is one that meets or exceeds the customer expectations, and creates positive, easy interactions at every stage of the customer journey. It involves building strong relationships with customers, anticipating their needs and consistently delivering, leaving them feeling satisfied and valued.

Chloe's experience


Perception built over time











-  2015 Housing application
-  2018 Move into SCH home
-  2019 Leak fixed
-  2020 Shielding: weekly call from SCH
-  Reports partner moved out
-  2021 Bathroom replaced and broken window replaced
-  2022 Reports ASB and electrical testing
-  2023 Rent arrear and money advice support
-  Lock fixed on front door

Pete's experience

End to end service

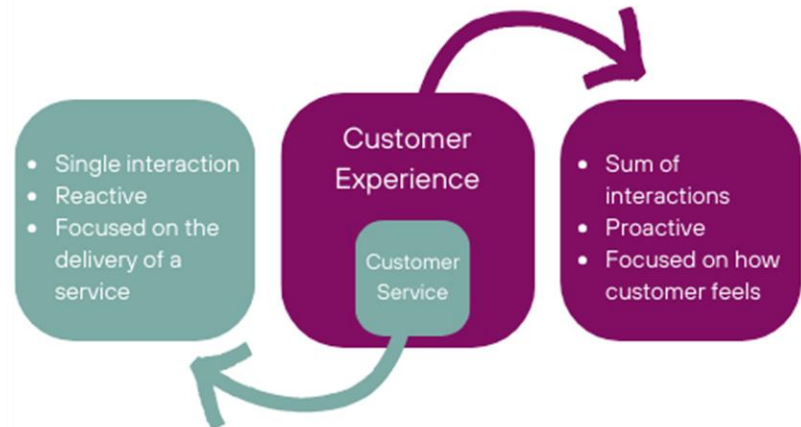


-  Leak in bathroom
-  Report to advisor in contact centre
-  Receive text to confirm appointment
-  Operative attends
-  Second visit booked to fix once dried out
-  Text received as appointment has to be changed
-  Second operative attends
-  Completes satisfaction survey

What is the difference between Customer service and Customer experience?

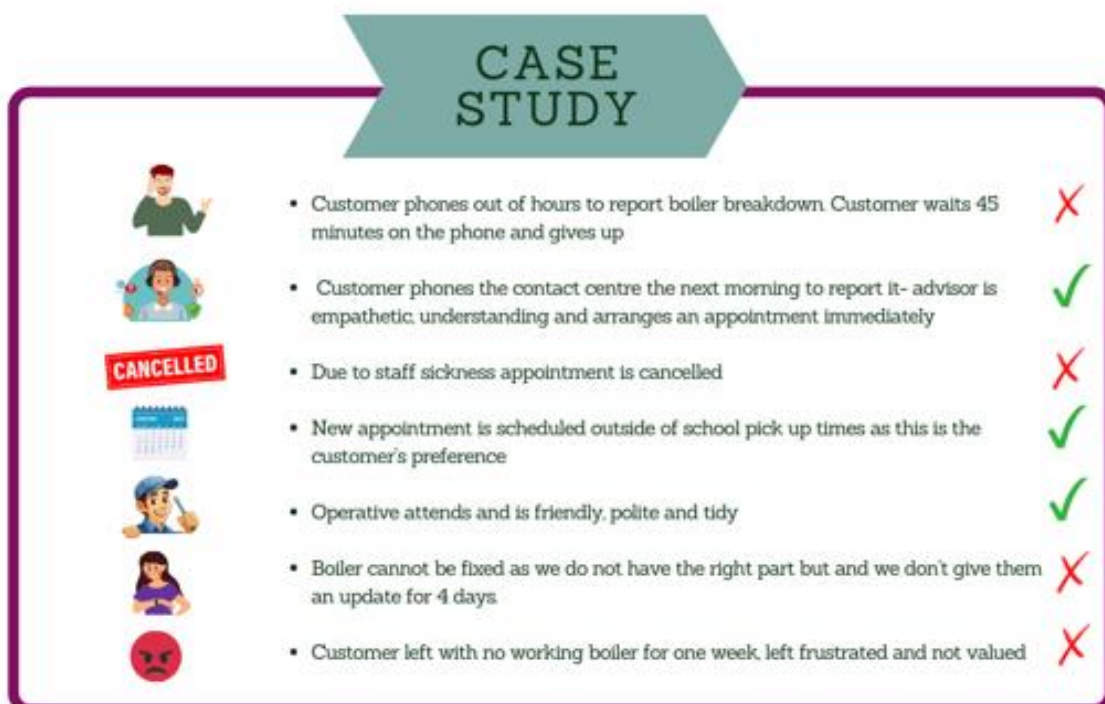
Customer service is the way in which we provide support, assistance and services to customers on an individual, transactional basis. Customer service can be provided through a number of channels such as phone, email, digital or in person interactions. Customer service is evaluated by customers based on a number of characteristics such as:

- Responsiveness
- Knowledge and expertise
- Empathy and understanding
- Problem solving
- Professionalism
- Personalisation
- Outcome



Customer Experience is quite simply the sum of all these interactions throughout the delivery of a service or over a period of time. It's more than the conversation on the phone with a contact centre advisor, the email replied to by the Home Options team, a visit from a neighbourhood officer, the complaint response letter they received, or the leaking tap fixed by an operative.

A customer can experience elements of good customer service yet have a bad overall customer experience:



3. What our customers have told us

Customer insight has been the key driver in the development of the CX strategy. Insight has been drawn from across multiple sources including:

- Quarterly TSM perception survey
- Transactional surveys
- Complaints
- Engagement activity including the Big Conversation

What matters most to our customers:



Summary of resident feedback:



Keep me safe

- In my home
- In my neighbourhood



Keep my home maintained

- Reasonable level of upkeep
- Immediate environment clean



Listen, act and follow up

- Simple, transparent, considerate

4. Vision



- We think Customer first; process, systems and property second.
- Strong relationships are built with customers by default, based on respect, insight and understanding.



- We are a learning organisation; we use what we know to continually improve the experience for our customers



- We create trust and understanding through transparent, compassionate and timely communication



- We strive to deliver good quality, consistent operational services based on strong foundations.



- We invest in our people, so they are equipped to deliver a great experience to our customers.



- Customer satisfaction is in Q1 in all TSMs.

5. Themes



Theme 1: Customer Focussed Culture

‘Putting Customer at the heart of everything we do’

Developing a positive, customer focussed culture based on fairness, courtesy and respect, is the single most important influence on shaping and delivering a great customer experience. The culture sets the foundation for how we value and prioritise customer needs, and how staff interact with customers. Delivering services with compassion, and without stigma or marginalisation has never been more important in the housing sector.

A positive, customer centric culture, coupled with a culture where we invest in our people, also fosters high levels of staff engagement. Engaged staff are more motivated, passionate and committed to delivering excellent customer experience. They are more likely to go the extra mile, solve problems creatively and build lasting relationships with customers.

This strategy also acknowledges that there needs to be a balance between being customer focused, whilst managing expectations, deliver for residents, but within the constraints of our resources, and meeting and exceeding customer aspirations and expectations, whilst acknowledging the regulatory and legal frameworks we are working in.

Guiding principles

- SCH is built on a culture of fairness, courtesy and respect
- We are customer service officers first, specialist officers second
- We see the customer in their home, not a property that we manage
- We empower staff by providing learning and development opportunities for staff to develop the right skills to support a positive internal and external customer experience culture.
- We support staff to make customer centric decisions whilst managing customer expectations.
- Services are designed to provide a consistent experience across all touchpoints, channels and services.
- We show empathy and understanding towards customer needs and concerns.
- Building relationships with customers is ‘what we do’
- We are diverse and inclusive by default
- We celebrate good customer experiences and good customer service

- We live and breath the heart values when dealing with customers.
- We use complaints and other customer insight to drive learning, service development and delivery and decision making.

How will we achieve this?

- Strong Customer Promise
- Customer First Development Programme – develop and embed a robust and ongoing development and training programme across the organisation for
 - Our leaders
 - Our managers
 - Our people
- Delivery of a good customer experience embedded into the onboarding, probation and PDR processes.
- Strengthen our complaints process and ensure learning is embedded across SCH.
- Develop and embed a new Voice of the Customer Framework across the organisation.
- Customer service accreditation
- Pilot and roll out of Every Contact Counts initiative.
- Develop a culture of challenge – challenging poor CX practices and behaviours.
- Implement initiative to challenge social housing stigma.
- Stronger onboarding for residents to ensure all residents understand roles and responsibilities, standards and accountability.
- Review and implement new Service Standards in conjunction with residents

Links to:


- People Strategy
- Organisational Development and training plan
- Customer Service Standards
- Complaints Policy
- Customer Voice framework
- Engagement framework



Theme 2: Understanding and responding to our customers' needs

'Everyone Matters'

Understanding and taking into account customers' diverse needs, tailoring services to ensure fair access and providing a more personalised service is fundamental to delivering a good customer experience.



One of the biggest changes in recent regulation is the strengthening of this requirement. The Social Housing Regulator are very clear about the need for good customer data and how this is used to deliver more personalised services. The Building Safety Act also places responsibilities on organisations to know who is living in their high-risk buildings, and to make this information available to the regulator.

The Housing Ombudsman is also clear that housing providers need to focus on the individual circumstances of customers and that we need to be more flexible and agile and to adapt and evolve core services to better meet the needs of vulnerable customers. Knowing who is ‘behind the front door’, coupled good property will allow us to do this more effectively.

Guiding principles

- We strive to understand who our customers are and what their needs and preferences are.
- We have a detailed understanding of customers living in high-risk buildings.
- We use customer information in all day-to-day interactions to tailor the experience to the individuals’ preferences and needs,
- We have a good understanding of the different customers and communities we serve and their diverse needs and provide the right support and access to services to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for customers.
- We understand that customer and property information go hand in hand.
- We use customer information and our understanding of our diverse communities to inform service design and develop future services.

How will we achieve this?

- Collection and storage of data through the ‘Everyone Matters’ campaign.
- Strengthen the mechanisms used to maintain customer data, primarily through the data strategy.
- Further development of the Inclusive Service Register to:
 - Include transient needs and vulnerabilities
 - Ensure it is applied across the organisation
 - Focus on training.
- Provide a range of adjustments to tailor responses and services delivery based on customer need.
- Targeted support for:
 - mental health and neurodiversity
 - Provision of wellbeing
 - Financial hardship
 - Cost of Living
- Review the self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Spotlight report – A relationship of Equals to ensure all recommendations are actioned or in train.

- Implementation of the data, knowledge and information strategy to ensure good data quality, governance and infrastructure is maintained.
- Use data to 'know our silence', with a focus on damp and mould and mental health.
- Develop customer profiles to target service delivery, support and communications
- Pilot and roll out of 'Every Contact Counts' initiative.
- Ensure that customer profile data is considered and integrated into service and policy development, delivery plan and decision making
- Analyse TSM and transactional customer surveys by customer profile information to ensure fair access to services.

Links to:

- Additional Needs Policy
- Understanding our customers policy – 'Everyone Matters'
- Data, Knowledge and Information Strategy



Theme 3: Strong customer voice

'Using the customer voice to codesign, influence and improve services'

Our customers have told us that listening to their views and acting on them is one of their top priorities. We recognise that customers' views and experiences provide one of the richest sources of insight and intelligence and consideration of customers' views should be at the heart of our decision making and service delivery.

We know that not listening to customers can not only lead to lower satisfaction and poorer performing services, but it can lead to tragedies such as Grenfell and the death of Awaab Ishak. As a result, the transparency, influence and accountability consumer standard has strengthened the requirements on housing providers; previously housing providers only had to ensure that tenants were given the opportunity to be involved in the landlord's decision making; the new consumer standards now goes much further, as providers must now take tenants' views into account in their decision making about how to deliver landlord services, and are required to demonstrate this to the regulator. Providers also need to open themselves up more to effective and meaningful tenant scrutiny, so that customers can hold them to account.

The Building Safety Act also requires significant resident engagement through the bespoke Building Safety Engagement strategies.

Guiding principles

- 'Nothing about you, without you' principle
- Strong scrutiny and resident engagement arrangements are in place to involve residents in setting priorities, service design and performance management.
- We have specific engagement arrangements in place for our high risk buildings to ensure that residents' voices are heard and acted upon
- We learn from complaints and other customer insight, and make service improvements as a result of what we learn
- We continually monitor services to ensure we are delivering what we say we will.
- We use customer insight, data and feedback to inform all of our decision making and service design
- The SCH culture allows us to really hear what customers are telling us, both directly and indirectly, and to act on what we hear.
- We ensure we close the loop with customers, so they know what has changed as a result of their involvement and feedback

How will we achieve this?

- Continue to deliver a strong engagement framework that is reviewed biannually to ensure it is fit for purpose
- Support and facilitate a resident scrutiny function – Review arrangements in light of the new consumer standards to ensure they are fit for purpose.
- Develop and embed the voice of the customer framework across the organisation to collect, analyse, act on and feedback
- Maintain Tpas accreditation.
- Regularly ask a sample of customers who have experienced our services to tell us about their experience through transactional surveys, TSM surveys, telephone surveys and focus groups.
- Provide specific opportunities to codesign and influence the Delivery Plan and future priorities
- Implement a 'check and challenge' approach (mystery shopping, resident audits etc)
- Resident Voice section to be included in all ELT, committee and board reports.

Links to:

- Engagement framework
- Building safety engagement strategy statement
- Performance framework
- Voice of the Customer framework



Theme 4: Well-connected customers

'Making it easy for customers to navigate the services and support provided'

Customers have been clear with us that they want services that are easy to access; that they only want to tell their story once, They want digital services are useful, but digital should not be the only way to access services.

Well-connected customers make the customer journey easier, more accessible, creates efficiencies and increases both customer and staff satisfaction.

Key principles:

- We strive to understand customers' communication preferences and use this as far as possible in day-to-day transactions.
- Staff have access to 360-degree view of the customer
- Customers can access SCH in the way that best suits them; digital is by choice not be default.
- We provide digital and self-serve services that are easy to use, fast, reliable and inspire confidence
- We provide choices for people to engage with us, on their terms.
- We maintain a full Contact Centre operation.
- We invest in technology where it adds value
- We acknowledge that well-connected internal customers are as important as external customers when providing a good customer experience

How will we achieve this?

- Implementation of One SCH to provide:
 - 360-degree view of residents
 - Case management
 - Customer portal
 - Chatbot
 - Workflow functionality
- Collection of more robust communication preference data through Everyone Matters
- Embedding of ISR
- Support customers to be digitally included though the implementation of a digital inclusion programme
- Contact centre workforce review
- Review of website, including accessibility

Links to:

- Additional Needs Policy
- Understanding our customers policy – ‘Everyone Matters’



Theme 5: Great Communication

‘Creating trust and understanding through transparent, compassionate and timely communication’

Good communication

The way we communicate with customers has a huge bearing on the experience they have with us, both from a transactional and perception perspective.

Customers have told us that maintaining good communication with them is one of the most important things we can do. They have told us that keeping them informed when they are receiving services is fundamental and the way we communicate is important. Customers have said that generally, we delivery good services, but sometimes the way we communicate isn’t as good as it should be. We have heard this, and ensured this was a key theme within this strategy.

We also have various responsibilities through the new consumer standards to provide good corporate communications about services and our performance, and further legal requirements are made through the Building Safety Act to provide significant information to customers in high-risk buildings.

Key principles

- We have a strong framework for providing proactive communication to ensure customers are well informed.
- We interact and communicate with customers with compassion, clarity and regularity.
- We consistently communicate at key touch points throughout the customer journey.
- We equip staff with the right tools, learning and development opportunities to ensure there is a consistency in approach and behaviours towards communications.
- There is a variety of communication methods to meet customers’ needs.

How will we achieve this?

- Strong Customer Promise (customer service standard)
- Stronger customer culture (see theme 1)
- We strive to understand customers communication preferences and use this as far as possible in day-to-day transactions
- Develop clear, consistent service standards and protocols for individual communications from staff
- Development of a communication Toolkit to support staff.
- Training on how to communicate written/verbally
- Maintain multichannel communications
- Tailored communications based on customer profiles
- Specific, tailored building safety communications
- Undertake a programme of customer journey mapping to understand communication touchpoints. (to build into the business process maps)
- Review of website, including accessibility
- Review of translation services

Links to:

- External comms policy
- Building safety engagement statement
- People Strategy
- Training and development plan
- Organisational development plan

Effective and efficient operational services that are delivered consistently, have a positive effect on overall customer experience. Based on what residents told us, we have committed to 'getting the basics right' in the 2024/25 Delivery Plan.



Theme 6: Brilliant Basics

'Effective and efficient operational service delivery'

Guiding principles

- We will provide brilliant basics across core housing services.
- We will strive to understand the customer journey and reduce pain points.
- We will have clear service standards in place, so customers understand the service offer
- We will learn from complaints and other customer insight to improve services
- We will always consider how service design impacts on the customer experience.

How will we achieve this?

- Use the business process mapping to ensure services deliver value, quality and meet needs and priorities of the customer and communities we serve.
- Review our customer journeys and provide our customers with effective and efficient service delivery- Customer journey mapping to identify the pain points.
- Implement a more robust Service Improvement Programme
- Review service standards with residents.
- Implement a check and challenge approach (mystery shopping, resident audits etc)

Links to:

- Service Standards
- Operational policies and procedures



Theme 7: Keeping customers safe in their homes

Customers have also told us that keeping them safe in their home is their number one priority for SCH to get right. The Building Safety Act and other recent safety legislation is holding housing providers to account in a way never seen before in the sector. Customer safety is the number one priority for SCH and as such Theme 7 sets out our customer facing, customer safety commitments

Guiding principles

- We take a 'Safety first approach'
- Customers' safety is fundamental
- Building safety communication and engagement is at the heart of what we do
- We are professionally curious in all of our interactions with customers to ensure we are keeping customers safe

How will we achieve this?

- Specific building safety communication and engagement strategy
- Provision of mandatory building safety information to all customers in high risk buildings
- Regular customer safety information in the newsletter, on social media and on the website
- Development and implementation of building and resident safety forum
- Review building safety agreements yearly
- Regular building safety engagement activity
- Dedicated customer safety section on the website
- Pilot and rollout of Every Contact Counts initiative
- Regularly ask residents if they feel safe and follow up where people state they do not.
- Attend and contribute to community safety partnership meetings

Links to:

Building Safety Strategy

Building safety resident engagement plan

External communications policy



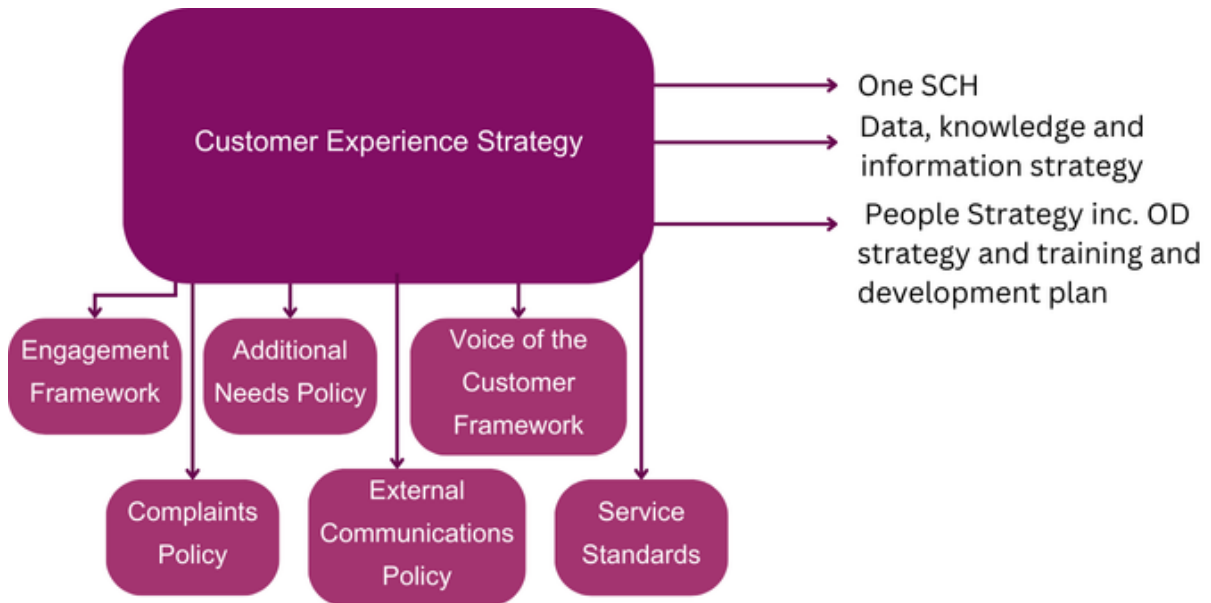
Enablers

We need to have the right resources, processes and systems in place to enable us to meet the objectives of this strategy.

These are:

- Implementation of Netcall
- Reliable customer facing systems and process that enhance the customer experience
- Reliable internal systems that support service delivery and enhance the customer experience
- Implementation of the Data, Knowledge and Information Strategy
- Accurate up-to-date customer data
- People Strategy – Organisational development and training plan and training
- Resources to deliver the strategy across operational and back office teams

6. Overview of Customer Experience Framework



7. Measuring Success

- Above median in all perception TSM is year one
- Q1 in all perception TSM is year two
- Less than 5% of complaints moving to stage 2
- Increased staff satisfaction over 2 years (measured through NPS)
- Increase in outcomes from customer engagement.
- Increase use of ISR by staff (insight report)
- All staff complete customer first development programme within one year of implementation
- Customer service accreditation
- Retain Tpas Accreditation

8. Road Map



	2024			2025				2026			
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Develop Customer first development programme											
Strengthen our complaints process and ensure learning is embedded across SCH.											
Develop and embed a new Voice of the Customer Framework across the organisation											
Pilot Every Contact Counts initiative											
'Everyone Matters' campaign.											
Strengthen the mechanisms used to maintain customer data											
Implementation of the data, knowledge and information strategy (over 5 years)											
Review SCHape panel arrangements											
Resident voice section to be included in all ELT, committee and board reports											
Review of website including accessibility											
Develop clear, consistent Service Standards and protocols for individual communications from staff											
Development of a communication Toolkit to support staff.											
Review of translation services											
Provision of mandatory building safety information to all customers in high-risk buildings											
Development and implementation of building and resident safety forum											
Review the self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Spotlight report - A relationship of Equals											
Begin roll out of Customer first development programme (1 year)											
Embed CX into the onboarding, probation and PDR processes											
Develop a culture of challenge - challenging poor CX practices and behaviour											
Review and implementation of new Service Standards											
Use data to 'know our silence',											

	2024			2025				2026			
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Implement a check and challenge approach											
Phase one One SCH implementation											
Develop customer promise											
Programme of customer journey mapping to understand communication touchpoints											
Implement a more robust Service Improvement Programme											
Further development of the Inclusive Service Register											
Implement initiative to challenge social housing stigma											
Review engagement framework											
Contact centre workforce review											
Review Building safety agreements											
Roll out Every Contact Counts initiative											
Implementation of a digital inclusion programme											
Customer service accreditation											
Stronger onboarding for residents to ensure all residents understand roles and responsibilities, standards and accountability											
Develop customer profiles to target service delivery, support and comms											
Tailored comms based on customer profiles											