

# Customer & Communities Committee



## 1. Cover Report

<b>Date</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
<b>Agenda Item &amp; Title</b>	<b>4.3 Complaints Update and Plans for Scrutiny</b>
<b>Report Ask /Purpose</b>	For Approval
<b>Forward Planner</b>	Standing Item Quarterly Information
<b>Report Author</b>	Tanique Daley, Customer Insight Coordinator
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<b>Confidential</b>	Not Confidential
<b>Recommendation</b>	Members are asked to note and comment on the report.

**Fits with Corporate Plan**



**Narrative: The Complaints Review fits with MSV's Corporate Plan. People, to provide excellent customer service and customers influencing what we do.**

### Link to Strategic Risk Register

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Customers	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Safeguarding Tenants
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Health and Safety Compliance	<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Income Collection and Customer Financial Hardship
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Government Policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6. Sector Reputational Risk
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. Cyber and Data Security plus GDPR imp	<input type="checkbox"/> 8. Business Continuity
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. Long Term Funding	<input type="checkbox"/> 10. Financial Viability
<input type="checkbox"/> 11. Growth & Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/> 12. Development
<input type="checkbox"/> 13. Asset Management	<input type="checkbox"/> 14. Property Services
<input type="checkbox"/> 15. Safeguarding Staff and Loss of Skills	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 16. Regulatory and Legal Compliance

<b>Risk &amp; Risk Appetite</b>	No associated risks.
<b>Customer Voice &amp; Insight</b>	Reviewed by customers with the support from MSV's Customer Insight Coordinator. Engaged with both colleagues and customers throughout the process.
<b>VFM</b>	Neighbourhood services remain under review to ensure VFM is achieved in operational delivery and forms part of MSV's VFM strategy.

<b>Financial Implications</b>	Financial implications from any recommendations are managed by the relevant department leads. Controls are in place to ensure spending is monitored in year spend to manage any potential overspends. Realistic timeframes to consider budgets requirements.		
<b>EDI Impact</b>	Equality, diversity, and inclusion underpins all work undertaken by Scrutiny and the services are tailored according to the customers' needs.	<b>EIA Attached?</b>	NO
<b>Environmental &amp; sustainability</b>	Neighbourhood services remain under review to ensure all operations consider the environmental and sustainability impact.		

## 1.1 Executive Summary

Customer volunteers from MSV's Scrutiny panel carried out a review on our complaints process from May to July 2024. This report provides a summary of the review and recommendations based on the findings.

## 2. Report

### 2.1 Introduction

MSV's Scrutiny panel is a collective group of customer volunteers interested in helping us improve our services. Twelve members of the group volunteered to participate in this review.

Since this review started, we have recruited two additional customers who have joined the Scrutiny 'pool' and one member resigned, our current membership remains at 15. Members can select the reviews they would like to take part in, allowing them to volunteer at times to suit their own personal commitments.

Several members of the panel have been proactive and taken part in a podcast with the Head of Property Care and Head of Customer Experience. This podcast can be found on our external website. Two panel members will also attend the TPAS National Conference on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> July representing MSV.

### 2.2 Aims of the Review

The scrutiny panel agreed to do a deep dive into the complaints process from the customer's perspective following the implementation of the new Complaints Team, policy and procedure. Complaints have remained a critical area for the business. Over the last four years, complaints have steadily increased across the business and the sector. The panel recognise that complaints management truly is an essential component of customer service and business. Not only is it a means to gather valuable customer insight, but it also helps MSV to progress to improvements that lead to reduced costs and increase customer satisfaction.

The Scrutiny Panel wanted to ensure MSV were making changes that would improve the customer journey and guarantee MSV's commitment to continuous learning through feedback, influence and enhancing and advocating the customer voice.

The panel explored the following:

- All relevant policies and procedures.

- All channels of communication including letters, leaflets and forms.
- Tested all the different platforms a customer can log a complaint.
- Assessed all relevant websites and links.
- How effective communications sent to customers are related to the process.
- Explored the different methods used to contact customers.
- Assessed all the relevant data and themes identified
- Explored best practice in relation to EDI and other vulnerabilities.

### **2.3 The Review**

The exercise launched in May 2024, to enable panel members to carry out a thorough review of the service area, we sought documents and liaised with key colleagues throughout. This included:

- The Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Compensation Policy
- Communications sent to customers
- All relevant KPI's
- Interview with the Complaints Feedback Lead and Head of Customer Experience
- All complaints reports
- Panel members also drew on their personal experience having been through the complaints process themselves

Panel members scrutinised the information provided and interviewed colleagues from across the business to gain further understanding about the service and answer any questions or queries.

### **2.4 Findings and Recommendations**

The group highlighted the following areas of good practice:

- The Complaints Policy and Procedure is well written.
- Acknowledged the different platforms available to customers to make a complaint as best practice.
- The implementation of a team as a valuable and much needed resource.

The panel developed a list of recommendations to be considered, which have been reviewed by colleagues in Customer Experience. Based on the review findings, the panel would like to recommend the following changes to help improve the customer experience when processing a complaint.

- To ensure continuity there must be one point of contact for the customer from start to finish and their direct contact details must be included in the first acknowledgement letter sent customers
- MSV must include a sentence within the acknowledgments letter asking the customer if they need any "reasonable adjustments to support them throughout the complaints process"
- MSV must develop and promote a leaflet and other forms of communications highlighting the difference between a complaint, service request and a dissatisfaction to avoid confusion and misunderstanding for the customers. Within the Complaints leaflet MSV must highlight all the different tools available to customers regarding vulnerability to raise awareness among customers.
- MSV must develop a complaints diary for customers, the customer will be able to log who they have spoken to, time, date, notes etc this way both MSV and the customer will have a log of the complaint.

- MSV must confirm what matrix they are using to carry out the quality checks and how often they will be carried out. MSV must also clarify how they intend to measure the "expectation" placed on staff.
- MSV must confirm when the complaints panel will be in place and when all staff received their refresher and communication training.
- The complaints team must return in 3 months to provide an update regarding the service and different ways of working as well as provide the data and evidence e.g. future promise and kickstart
- Customers with ADHD, dyspraxia, learning disability and autism, often suffer from memory loss, less concentration, struggle with the technical language used, struggle when someone is speaking fast and require additional support. MSV must put additional support in place for these customers. MSV must consider asking the following question on forms and letters "Do you are someone in your household have an educational Health Care Plan" if yes can we have a copy
- MSV must consider an easy read policy, procedure, letters and or a telephony system/process when dealing with vulnerable customers to ensure they are not receiving a lesser service, which negatively impact them mentally. This will ensure they are not excluded from the ability to complain.
- MSV must provide clarity on whether the 12 months to raise a complaint can be changed.

Two panel members are currently going through the complaints process. The panel will use their experience to test the effectiveness of the new complaints process in real time and feedback at our 3-month update with the complaint's teams. They will provide feedback regarding their experience.

## **2.5 Customer Experience Update**

The recommendations form part of MSV's commitment to improve services and the customer experience. This is done by ensuring the customer voice is at the heart of what we do and is reflected throughout the business.

Included in the recommendations are key themes to improve the service by focusing on people and effective communication, ensuring services are accessible for all customers regardless of locality, ethnicity or vulnerabilities. The panel focused on delivering an effective service where customers have access to information, fairness and continuity from start to finish.

Our Customer Experience team continues to deliver operational services for our customers and will continue to do so at a time when demand for services is increasing. They continue to adapt to the needs of the business and customers, by proactively looking at the way they work, being flexible in their approach, building capacity amongst the teams and collaborating with other teams and departments across MSV especially the Customer Voice and Influence Team.

Several key actions have been completed to improve services:

- Ongoing training regarding communication and the importance of the customer voice.
- Improving capacity linked to data and insight.
- Investment of new communication channels to engage with customers e.g. webchat, new VR systems
- The involvement of scrutiny panel regarding key decisions regarding our customer contact center
- More collaboration amongst departments e.g. the new Complaints Panel, Nibbles and Natter
- The appointment of a new Customer Experience Manager
- Mandatory training including soft skills and communication training for staff.

- Complaints handling training for assistant managers in property care

## 2.6 Next Steps

- The Scrutiny Panel will receive quarterly updates relating to the recommendations outlined for the complaints policy from department leads, first update due in October 2024.
- Work with panel members to review the process used to carry out the review, implementing any improvements on any future work of the group.
- Scrutiny to receive a personal update from the Complaints Team within 3 months to review the effectiveness of the new process e.g. Future Promises, Kickstart meetings and review any changes in data to see if improvements have been made. This will also be monitored via our Scrutiny Tracker
- Scrutiny panel to receive specific deadline for recommendations outlined.
- Two scrutiny members to attend the TPAS conference on 11-12 July 2024.
- Scrutiny members to undertake relevant training for their individual learning and development needs.
- CVI to undertake a large recruitment drive to recruit new members and expand our current panel to ensure the scrutiny is representative of our communities and the voice of customers is heard across our stock.

### 3. Recommendation

To approve the recommendations made by MSV's Scrutiny Panel.

### 4. Further Supporting Information

None