

## CASE STUDY

# SOHA HOUSING CONTINUES ITS CUSTOMER SERVICE JOURNEY WITH SUPPORT FROM SGS UNITED KINGDOM LTD

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Since starting its Customer Service Excellence (CSE) journey in 2010, and achieving certification the following year, Soha Housing is improving its service each year.

Soha Housing is a registered housing association, building new homes and managing a stock of 6,000 in Oxfordshire and surrounding areas.

### WHY CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE?

*"We had worked hard to improve our customer services and we wanted some recognition for our standard of customer service,"* says Maureen Adams, Director of Customer Services and Operations.

CSE is a certification that provides tenants with a greater insight into Soha Housing's work.

*"It offers a way to prove to our residents that we take customer service seriously. Our residents can scrutinise our services and report back to the board,"* says Maureen Adams.

### SGS INVOLVEMENT

Soha Housing is strongly customer focused.

*"The SGS auditor came with a wealth of experience from other sectors,"* says Maureen Adams. *"He put us in touch with Customer Journey Mapping. This revealed areas we could improve, identified by our tenants, and flexible ways we could do that."*

Soha Housing's CSE performance is monitored annually by SGS.



*"This allows us to show we are doing the best we can for our customers, that they are getting a good service from us, and that we spend the money wisely,"* says Maureen Adams.

### Benefits of CSE certification

#### CONSISTENT STANDARD OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

Soha Housing now places the call centre at the core of their approach to customer services. Their standards are applied right across the organisation.

#### CUSTOMER SERVICE CHAMPIONS ACROSS THE ORGANISATION

Customer service champions help Soha Housing design and deliver customer standards and targets. The business sees this as giving us business advantage by anticipating the services and approaches its customers will want.

#### BENEFITS TO CUSTOMERS

Customers can see what is happening in the organisation and how this affects their homes and services. They feel more involved, and more confident of their ability to effect change.

#### ESTABLISHED MYSTERY SHOPPER PROGRAMME

This enables Soha Housing to increase its capacity by involving its customers in the running of the organisation. Customers learn new skills – such as reporting and making presentations at board level. Soha Housing uses the results of this programme to improve customer service.

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### ADVICE TO OTHERS TAKING THE CSE JOURNEY

*"CSE allows organisations to look beyond the housing sector for new ideas," says Maureen Adams. "With SGS, you get a critical friend. You have a conversation around the process rather than a tick sheet to be signed off against the criteria. We find that more valuable than other traditional methods of checking against standards. It's more intuitive, more focused and it gives us all a sense of direction."*

SGS auditor Tom Banks adds:

*"Since my first audit in 2011, it's clear that Soha Housing always puts residents first. There is a deep understanding of the various individual communities within the overall housing stock and of the depth of talent that is available there. As a result, Soha Housing gives tenant groups real jobs to do to achieve sound and sensible outcomes while building further capacity and confidence among residents."*

### ABOUT SGS

SGS is the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company. SGS is recognised as the global benchmark for quality and integrity. With more than 80,000 employees, SGS operates a network of over 1,650 offices and laboratories around the world.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION:

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**WHEN YOU NEED TO BE SURE**

