



**CIH HOUSING
BRIGHTON
PEOPLE & PLACE**

The Trials of Mrs Tranter: When Murder Mystery Meets Customer Centricity

Steve Hayes, director of corporate affairs and communications, Green Square Accord





When murder mystery meets customer centricity

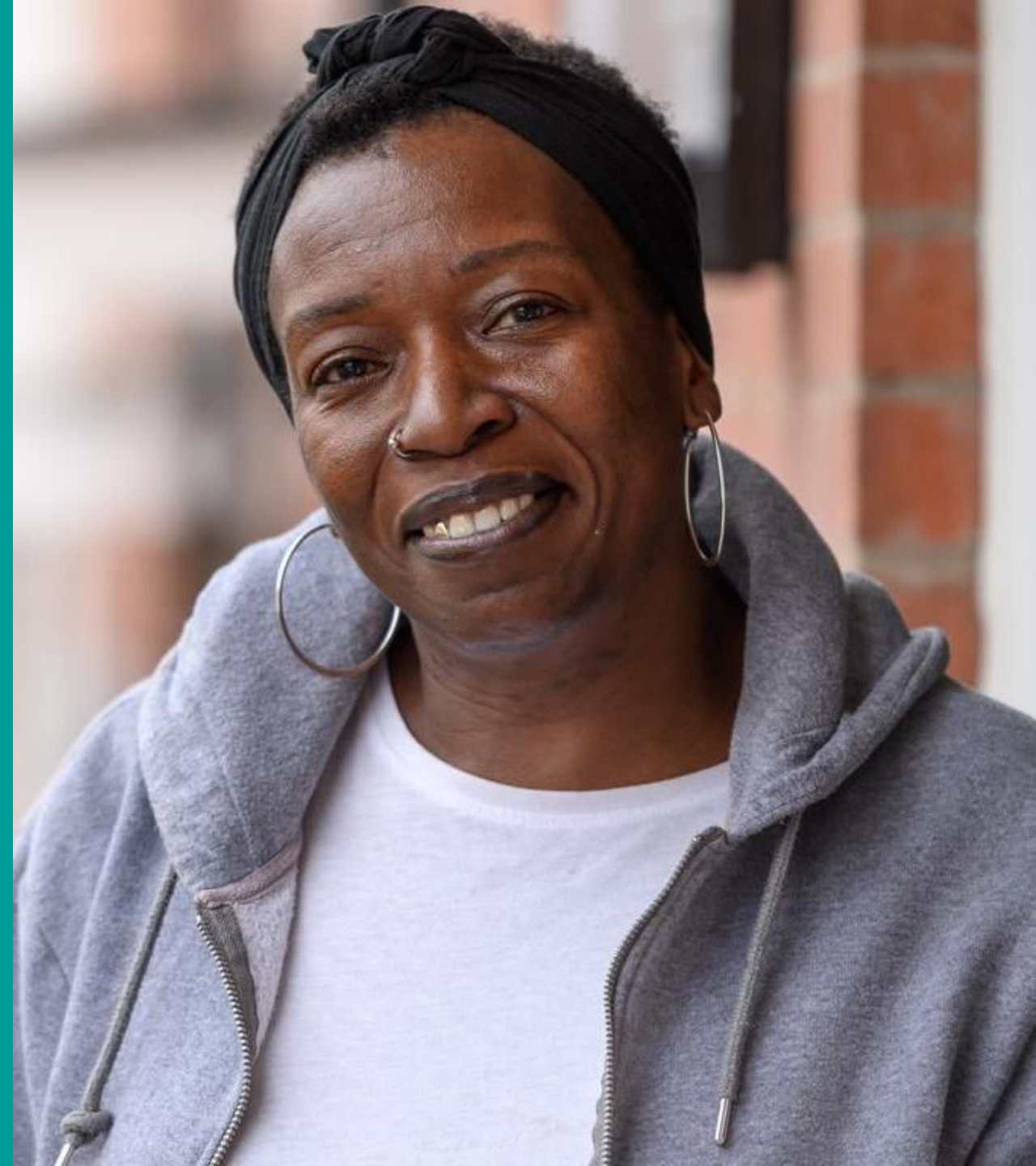
Steve Hayes

Director of Corporate Affairs and Communications at GSA



Who we are

- We own and manage 25,000 homes across the West Midlands and South West
- 1,600 colleagues across a diverse range of teams
- Formed from a merger in 2021



Are we customer centric?

Most housing organisations are focused on the right things:

- Clear customer standards and strategies
- Strong regulatory focus on complaints, damp and mould and safety
- Colleagues who genuinely care

And yet...

- Inconsistent service experiences
- Siloed decision-making and working
- Customers bear the consequences

Key challenge: How do we move from *knowing* customers matter to *acting* like they matter - consistently?



The context

- Increased pressure and scrutiny: more regulation, increased expectations – Consumer Standards, Awab's Law
- Rising complaints and compensation – GSA was subject to a special investigation by the Housing Ombudsman
- Colleagues distant from the reality facing our customers – especially in roles not on frontline
- A culture with clear expectations articulated but not truly embedded
- Clear need to engage colleagues in a meaningful way on their role in the experiences of customers



A quick poll

Do you think your colleagues feel connected to your customers and their experiences?

slido.com #trantercih



Customer centricity can feel abstract

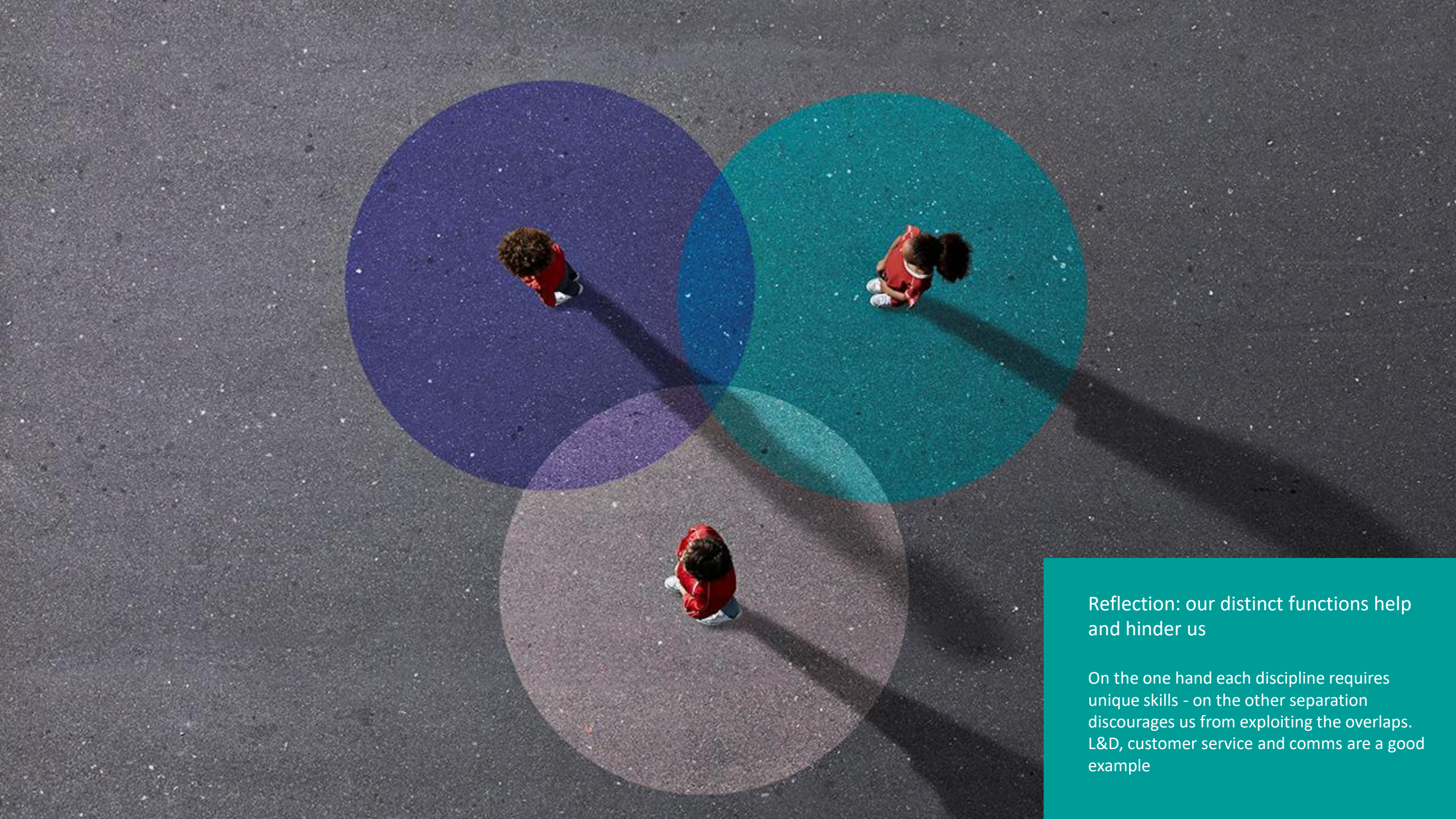
- Words on posters
- KPIs on dashboards
- Someone else's responsibility

What customers experience:

- Confusion
- Frustration
- Repetition
- Small failures becoming serious problems

We wanted to make that experience real for colleagues.





Reflection: our distinct functions help and hinder us

On the one hand each discipline requires unique skills - on the other separation discourages us from exploiting the overlaps. L&D, customer service and comms are a good example

A different approach

- What if learning and engagement felt more like an experience?
- If it was participatory rather than passive, emotional rather than abstract, and grounded in the experiences of our customers
- Could we design something colleagues self-served and experienced together, rather than it being cascaded down?
- Could we find a high-impact, low-cost way to embed our culture and expectations around customer service?



The Trials of Mrs Tranter

- An immersive, murder-mystery-style experience built from real customer complaints and service failures
- Colleagues became detectives, investigating what led to a poor customer experience
- Designed around common complaint themes and areas which impact customers and our organisation most – damp and mould
- Story-driven, interactive evidence pack
- Self-serve – eliminating the need for costly facilitation and enabling teams to experience it on their own terms





Reflection: the inspiration is often out there

Leaning on our experiences as a consumer can help us make crucial breakthroughs and harness techniques which can help us tackle work challenges

The activity

- High-quality pack gives a professional feel - instant impact in terms of making this something people want to do
- Immersive and interactive content, made to feel as real as possible – e.g. the calls follow our script, the logs look like our systems
- Mix of print and online enables a diverse mix of teams to engage in a way which suits them – but most wanted to do this in person
- Refreshable answer pads – usable up to 20 times

Not who's to blame, but how did this happen?

Hi team. I need your help.

Mrs Tranter, one of our customers, has had an experience with GSA which was far from ideal and ended with a complaint which was upheld by the Housing Ombudsman.

The case has attracted significant media attention and our Board has asked to urgently see a full report of this case. I need your collective brainpower to work out what went wrong.

I've quickly pulled together this folder for you with the evidence and resources you should need to work out what happened. Sorry, it's a bit jumbled up, so it may be a good idea to try and get it in order - I've made a start on a timeline for you.

Here's what I need you to do:

- 1 Work through the evidence and establish what the main points of failure in Mrs Tranter's case were. By this I mean the significant things that we did or didn't do which made the situation worse and led to the complaint ending up with the Ombudsman
- 2 Work out where we didn't live our GSA Way commitments. It's important we see where we didn't live and breathe our culture and behaviours and I've included some reference material to help you work that out.

Just this morning, we received the Housing Ombudsman's draft report into this case, and I've included this in an envelope for you along with the evidence. This will give you the chance to check if your answers match what the Ombudsman felt went wrong in Mrs Tranter's case.

It's important you don't open the envelope with the Ombudsman report in it until you've finished, written down your answers and are ready to check them against the report. We need to be thorough and learn our own lessons to make sure this doesn't happen again.

When you've finished, have a conversation reflecting on what it felt like to work through a case like this, how the work of your team or group is connected to the outcomes (either directly or indirectly) and what you could do to help to avoid cases like this escalating in the future. There is a section on the answer notepad where you can note down your reflections.

Having looked at everything in the folder I think it should take 60 to 90 minutes to complete.

Good luck team!

Mandy

Mandy Letchford
Director of Customer Experience

PS:- I've put digital versions of everything in this file and some other useful resources (e.g. procedures) in a folder which you can find at bit.ly/gsa-complaint or by scanning this QR code



What colleagues do

Teams work through:

- Call recordings
- Emails and logs that mirror real systems
- Timelines of decisions and handovers
- Conflicting information and assumptions

They answer three simple questions:

- What went wrong for the customer and what were the points of failure?
- Where didn't we live our values?
- What could we do differently to avoid this happening again?

Answers provided in the form of a Housing Ombudsman-style report to further demonstrate impact.



A glimpse inside the activity

Customer Case File:

The Trials of Mrs Tranter

Please read me before you start...

URGENT

PS - I've put digital versions of everything in this file and some other useful resources (e.g. procedures) in a folder, which you can find at bit.ly/gsa-complaints or by scanning this QR code

Lakeside Walk
General Practice Surgery

GreenSquareAccord
10 Brindleyplace
Birmingham
B1 2JB

Thursday 19th October 2023

Ref: Mrs Tranter's severe asthma

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding a patient who lives in one of your properties.

Susie Tranter has been a patient of mine since birth and suffers from severe asthma. I saw her for a recent appointment in which she advised me she has had a significant flare up of her condition in recent months. She explained to me that her condition had worsened in recent weeks due to damp and mould in the property and showed me some pictures.

While I cannot be certain the conditions in her home have caused her asthma to get worse, I am concerned that at the very least the damp and mould in her bedroom could have contributed to this.

I would ask that you do what you can to investigate and resolve this issue as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,

L. Swift

Dr Louise Swift
General Practitioner, Lakeside Walk GP Surgery

Telephone: 01248 567 843
Address: Lakeside Walk GP Surgery, 136, Kilnnet Road, Chippendale, DN15 6TR

Green Square Accord
8 January 2024 10:36

Our how we're doing monthly performance infographic shows our performance for the three most important areas of customer service for our landlord service (our contact centre, repairs, and complaints resolution) based on what our customers have told us.

Our infographic shows the areas where we still need to make improvements and highlights those where we are performing well. You can view our January 2024 infographic here: bit.ly/4U1Qc12

How we're doing

January 2024

6 1

Like Comment

Susie Tranter
You're not doing well. Months trying to get damp problem in my house solved. Complained and promised action before Christmas and nothing done. Asthma worse and living with mould. When will someone at GSA get this sorted?

6d Like Reply 11

Just some of the recent headlines...

Asthmatic mother's mould hell

Mo Chi

Housing Ombudsman Service

Draft Ombudsman report in here. Don't open this until you're finished and ready to check if your findings match.

ANSWERS

S Tranter

Screenshot of Susie Tranter's record, taken today. Might be helpful...

Name	Susie Tranter	code	018755	Number	X2
Sex	F	Current Lead Tenant		Date of Birth	10/09/79
Address	AM753462A	Date of Death		Email	susietranter883@gmail.com
Phone	07645 482589	English			

Home Purchase History | Universal Credit | Cases | Contacts

Person UDCs | Owner Accounts | Supplementary Data | Person Contacts

Employment History | Tenancy History | Work Items | Medical / Disabilities

THE GSA WAY

Our culture and behaviours

This might be useful...

- We are curious and ambitious**
Embracing change
Being proactive in shaping improvements
Learning from our mistakes
- We are supportive and caring**
Valuing differences
Building strong relationships
Listening and seeking solutions
Doing things safely and looking out for one another
- We believe our customer is everything**
Knowing what matters to our customer
Putting their needs first
Keeping our promises
Owning to the end
- We are business-minded for social purpose**
Taking pride in what we do and why
Holding the most of our resources, working efficiently
Being dynamic and working at pace
- We are one team**
Contributing to the bigger picture
Owning our performance and sharing success
Communicating clearly
Challenging respectfully

GSA Way Flipbook | Behavioural Framework

Recorded call
Scan to hear

Starting with leaders

- We knew engaging our leaders early was essential for this activity to land
- The activity was piloted at the leadership conference - leaders were the first to experience it followed by a feedback workshop
- This enabled us to make important tweaks before wider rollout
- It also generated enthusiasm and made our leaders advocates and accountable for the rollout



The rollout

- Tweaks following pilot, then leaders given first chance to order - 100 packs ordered in first two weeks
- 300 colleagues take part in first wave – Finance/Procurement/Gas Teams among those to use it as the focal point of away days
- Wider communication campaign results in another 100 orders
- Easy to order via simple form
- QR link to survey and welcome letter encouraging teams to give feedback and post pictures on intranet



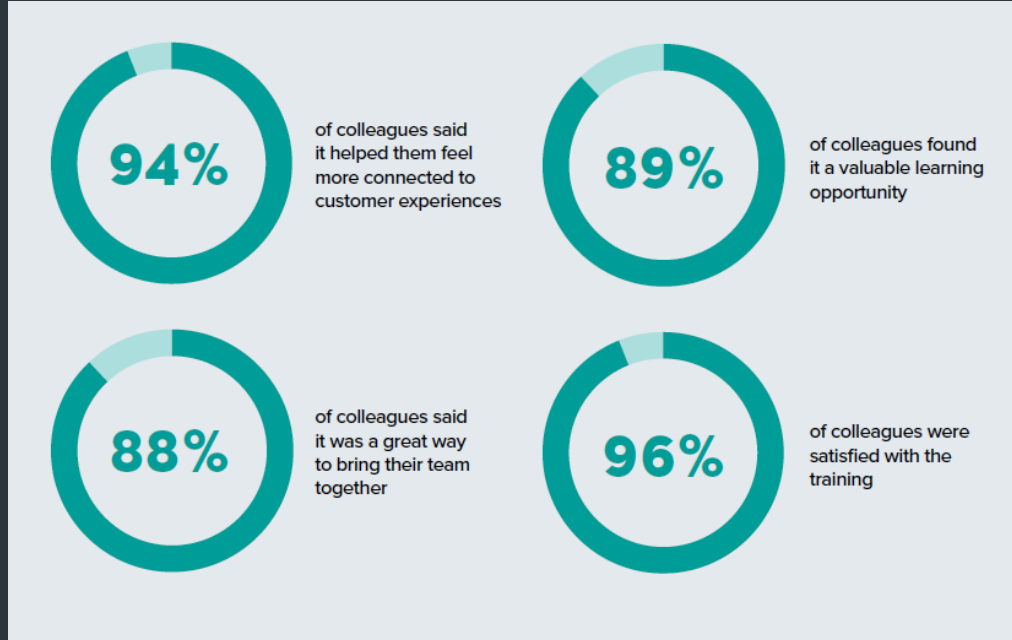
The outcome: take-up

- Between March pilot and December 2025 650 colleagues completed the activity
- Participation from all parts of our organisation – from corporate services to care and support
- Colleagues share feedback and post on intranet resulting in further momentum and interest

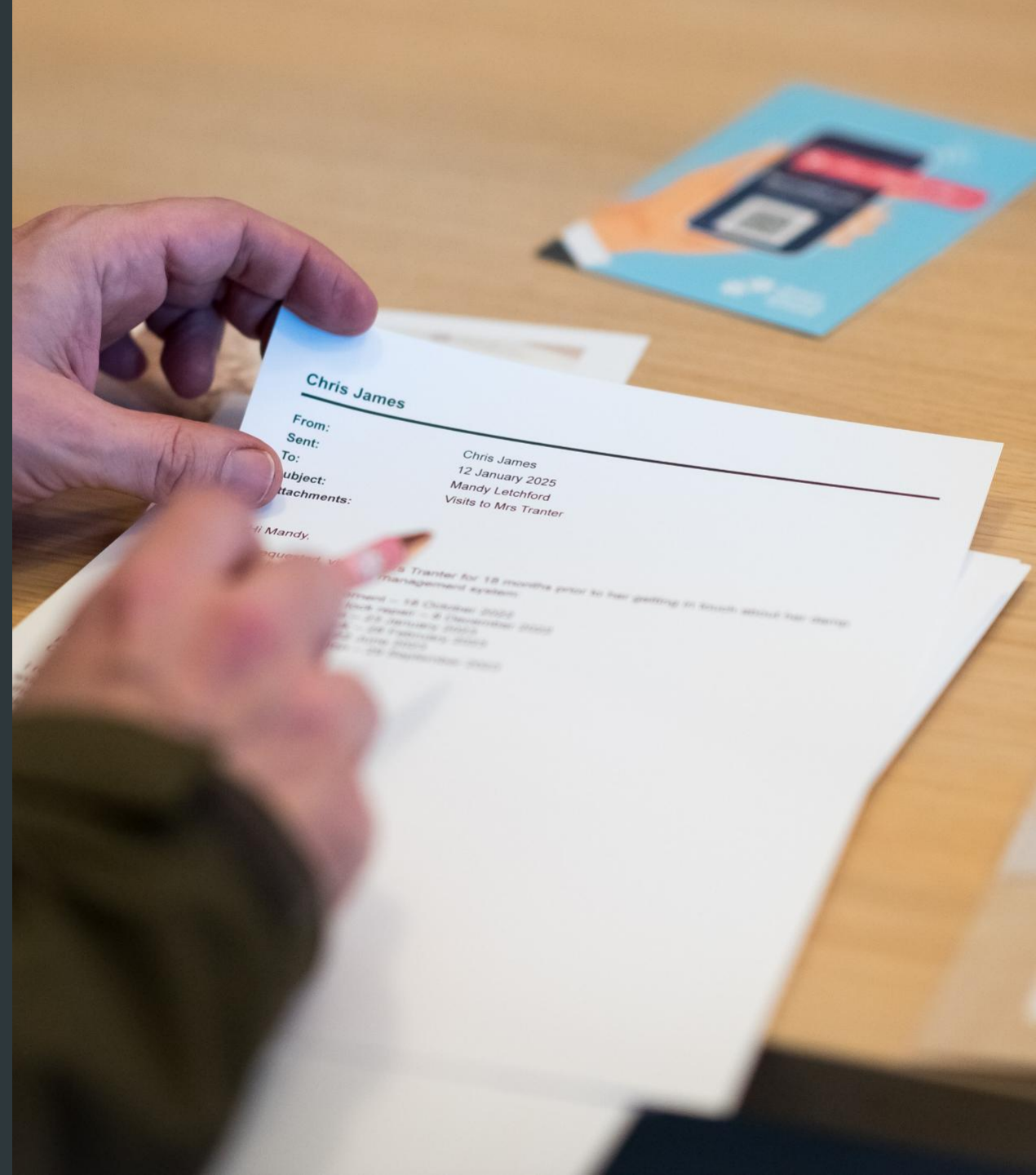


The outcome: feedback

Feedback captured from the survey sent out with the activity – based on more than 100 responses:



Overall satisfaction with activity: 4.82/5



The outcome: feedback

Feedback captured through annual colleague engagement survey showed greater connection to customer:



of colleagues strongly agreed they understood their role in delivering great service (up from 89.1% in 2024)



strongly agreed they understood what mattered to customers (up from 88.5% in 2024)



The outcome: operational

Between March pilot and December 2025:

- Complaints fell 43% from 597 to 340
- Stage 1 complaints responded to on time increased from 86.8% to 92%

Housing Ombudsman feedback:

“Your performance sets a great example. Thank you for your dedication to maintaining high standards in complaint handling and service delivery. We look forward to seeing these figures continue to improve over the coming year.”



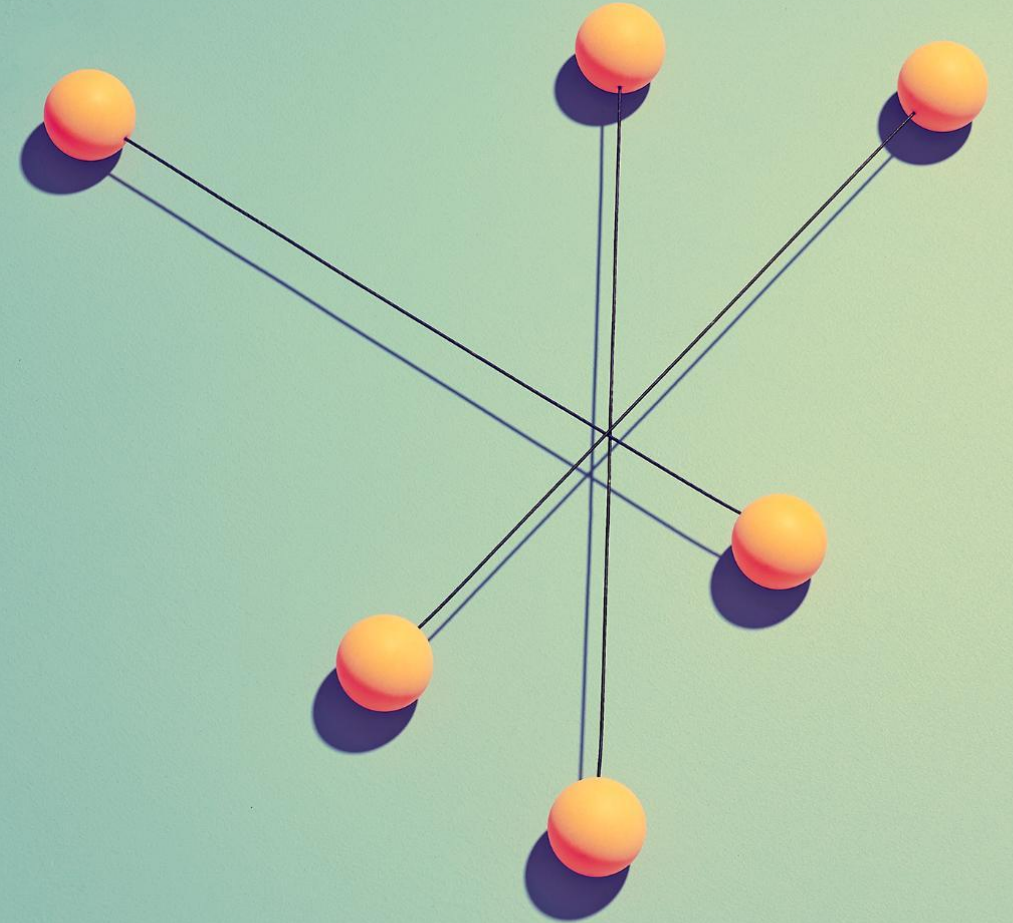
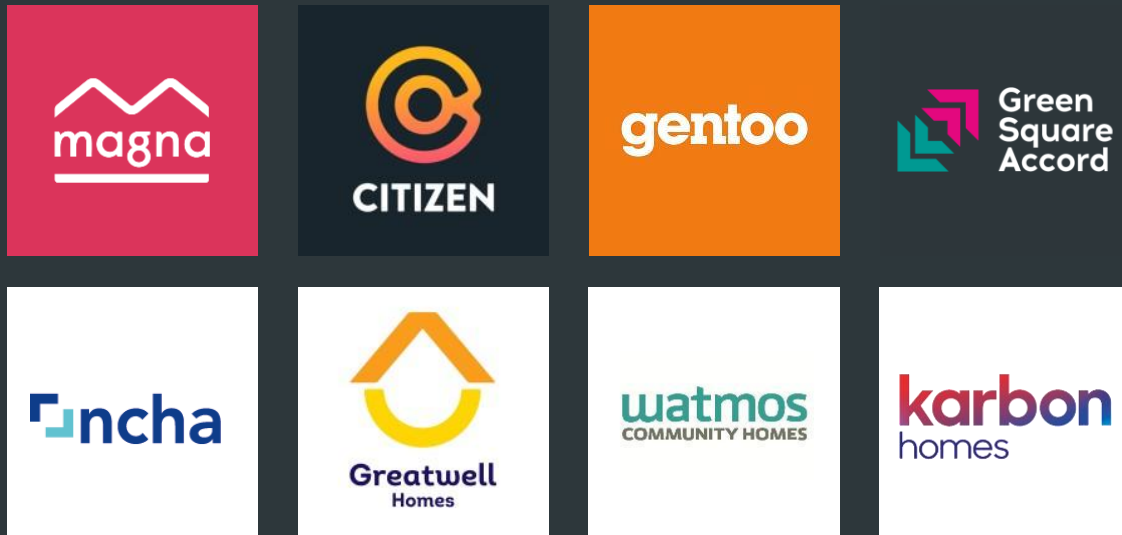
Legacy: at GSA

- Evidence of lasting operational improvement and cultural impact which we now need to build on
- A lasting and meaningful conversation about customer and customer impact which is changing the way colleagues understand their role and providing a clearer link between work we are doing to improve and our values
- Quick wins and changes to how we work resulting from the sessions
- A tried and tested method of engaging colleagues on critical issues which we will repeat



Legacy: our sector

Mrs Tranter has been adopted by seven housing associations with many others considering adopting the approach:



A way to go ...

- We still have a long way to go on our journey to being a great social landlord and maintaining a connection between our colleagues and customers
- We must continue to drive down complaints, improve our services and engage our colleagues to become a more customer centric organisation
- This has been a very important step on that journey and has engaged our colleagues in a meaningful, lasting way



Some lessons

- Customer centricity sticks when it is felt – the more we can make it real for colleagues the more we connect their actions and decisions to our customers and help to deliver change
- Experimenting with new ways of engaging can help you to make crucial breakthroughs – try it!
- We must get comfortable operating in the spaces between functions – it's where we can deliver the biggest impact
- The answers are often already out there – lean on your experience as a consumer
- We should share more! We're not in competition like many other sectors are and we must use that to our advantage



Thank you

steve.hayes@greensquareaccord.co.uk



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Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Through Collaboration

Chris Grose, managing director, Chris Grose Training and Consultancy

Tracey Downie, chief executive, Womens Pioneer Housing

Gina Di Marino, resident & neighbourhood engagement lead, Adur & Worthing
Councils



ASB – Intervention and Partnerships

Chris Grose Training & Consultancy

Linked 

Learning from Maladministrations: 7 Key Themes...

Risk
Assessments

Noise

Hate crime and
harassment

Action Plans

Communication
and Complaints

Multi-agency
co-operations

ASB and
Repairs

Action Plans

TIPS include:

HOS found that action plans are either not carried out at the start of a case OR actions were not being carried out in line with commitments

- Keep it simple
- Don't over commit (what is in your locker?)
- Take credit where you can
- Could anyone else assist? (Remember HOS findings on partner agencies...)
- When closing a case – refer back to your Action Plan – (improves satisfaction)

Risk Assessments



Chris Grose
Training & Consultancy

TIPS include:

- Compliance shouldn't compromise purpose
- RAM 'must not' be robotic
- Build Rapport = build trust
- Be comfortable with the uncomfortable
- Professional judgement matters
- Don't treat a risk assessment like a menu!

No Risk Assessments
at the start of the case
OR evidence that risks
are prioritized
'throughout' the case

Communication



Chris Grose
Training & Consultancy

TIPS include:

HOS consistently finds a lack of communication OR poor communication as a key theme in severe maladministration

- What would your ideal outcome be? (at the start of a case)
- Don't bark without being able to bite!
- Be consistent with your language
- When making reasonable adjustments – ensure that these are followed
- Regular contact, regular contact, regular contact

Multi-agency co-operation

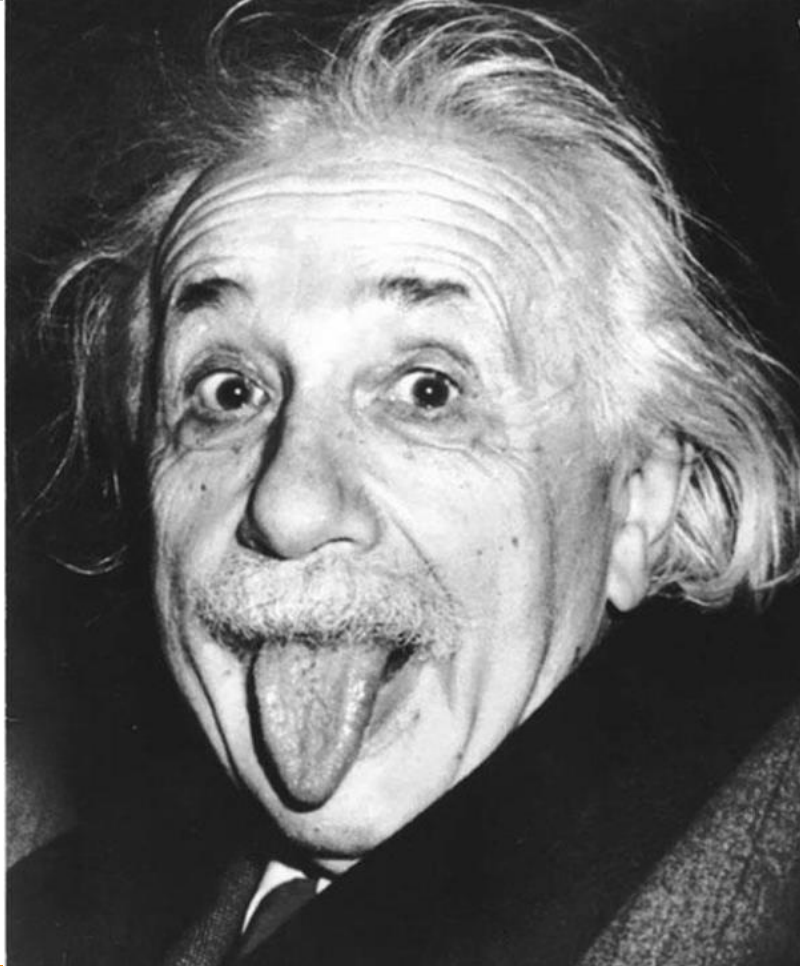


TIPS include:

HOS found a lack of 'proactively' engaging with partner agencies and an over reliance on waiting for other agencies

- Show respect, but don't be disrespected!
- Always remember the purpose (sharpen your tools...)
- Some partner agencies have statutory duties – that's worth remembering!
- Enforcement action – sometimes you don't need to wait for the police (You might be waiting for a long time!)

Do we really learn lessons?



‘Doing the same thing
over and over again and
expecting different
results.’

Albert Einstein’s
definition of insanity

Partner agencies – It's Pointless!!



Thank you for listening

chris@chrisgrosetraining.com

www.chrisgrosetraining.com



Case Study – Tackling ASB in partnership

Older single
woman in
sheltered scheme

Physically and
verbally abusive
to staff &
residents

High level of fear
& anxiety in
scheme

Case Study – Tackling ASB



Women's
Pioneer Housing
Est 1920



Key takeaways



Impact statements



Care, support &
comms for residents



Legal knowledge



Considered plan for
partners & residents



Timescales



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A Sector in Transformation

Dr Bekah Ryder, research and insights manager, Altair Ltd

Elizabeth Skillen, quality assurance and standards officer, Brent Council

Tom Arey, director, PFP Thrive

Colette Norman, head of membership, Chartered Institute of Housing



Voices of the Future: Building Tomorrow's Housing Sector

Dr. Bekah Ryder

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Altair



Chartered
Institute of
Housing
Futures

March 2026

What did we set out to do?



Find out the experiences, goals, and perspectives of young people (35 and under) working in the housing sector - first research project of its kind



Online survey with 900+ responses



Five focus groups with 16 participants

What did we find?



- Young professionals are passionate about housing's social purpose and making a difference.
- Most entered housing by chance, not choice.
- Many have found a meaningful, varied and challenging career in housing.
- But there are frustrations with career progression, pay, voice and influence, wellbeing, and inconsistent support.
- Nearly seven in ten plan long-term careers, but passion without influence and growth risks disengagement.

Takeaways: Housing employers



What young housing professionals want from work:

- Meaningful work that makes a difference to people's lives.
- Collaboration and a shared sense of purpose.
- Celebration of achievements.
- Greater awareness of careers in housing.
- Opportunities for growth.
- To have their ideas considered.
- Support for wellbeing.

How you can support this:

Read the report and recommendations.

Deliver greater consistency in workplace frameworks to ensure equal access to opportunity and enhance performance. This includes:

- Recruitment: Investigate and action initiatives targeting youth employment.
- Inductions, training and development, pay, policies...
- Managers: upskilling and protecting capacity to ensure access to learning and development, mentorship, support.
- Employee voice strategy.
- Mental health plan.

Thank you

To everyone who supported the research, whether through completing the survey, speaking in a focus group, or sharing the link to participate.

This research would not have been possible without the generous support from the following organisations: PfP Thrive (part of the Places for People Group), South East Consortium (SEC), Karbon Homes, Hightown Housing Association, Riverside, English Rural, National Housing Maintenance Forum (NHMF), Hyde Housing, Devonshires, and Mobysoft.

The volunteers on CIH Futures' board, particularly Dean McGlynn who initially proposed the survey, Halisha Kaur, Meghan Rank, Lizzie Skillen, and Lucy Owen. Thanks also to Elly Hoult for her support.



Altair



[Read the report](#)





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