



Customer Service Strategy

Be the right choice for our customers

There has been a fundamental shift over the last 5 years in both changing expectations of customers across all sectors and in the way these services are delivered. Customers now expect to be in control, choosing how and when to access services, and want organisations to be there when they need them. Loyalty and trust with organisations has also changed significantly, with the role online reviews and social media now play in informing buying behaviour and levels of trust with an organisation. The impact of Brexit, rising populism in politics and the tragedy at Grenfell Tower have all contributed to organisations needing to significantly adapt their approach to delivering services that are open, transparent and demonstrate respect both ways.

From an economic perspective, whilst employment is currently high, the changes to the benefit system and public sector cuts following the financial crash in 2008 has led to a number of customers who are in real social and financial hardship and to ensure sustainable tenancies, will require an intelligent and cross working approach to ensure support for those most vulnerable in the community.

The accelerated use of technology to enable services, making it easy to do almost anything from the mobile phone, to the opportunity through 5G to enable smart homes, neighbourhoods and cities, means the next 5 years are going to lead to a new wave of innovation in services and the home, with customers expecting these to be available, irrespective of private, public or not for profit service providers.

Combining this with the change in demographics in our operating area, with a known aging population who want to stay in their home for as long as possible, alongside millennials who have grown up with technology, generally more demanding and who will make up 75% of the workforce by 2024, expectations and the need to reflect these changes in our service delivery become paramount.

There are three fundamental priorities customers within the housing sector expect:

- The quality of my home and usability of space
- The Neighbourhood as place to live
- Easy to contact and get my problem resolved

Our Customer Service strategy covers the period to 2023 and incorporates these priorities along with the changing expectations of customers, regulatory changes regarding transparency and customer engagement, and the opportunity to harness innovation and technology to improve the experience. Success will be measured by ensuring all services across all tenures achieve a satisfaction score within the range of 7-8.5 out of 10, with the top five priorities consistently in the upper range.

This will be achieved through the following five Objectives.

Objective

1. Customer First: Reflecting the changing expectations of our customers

This will focus on ensuring all core services are delivered superbly and consistently with proactive updates. Clear standards are in place and new service offers reflect priorities within different customer groups. Customers are actively involved in shaping and designing services and are in control with access to information to enable them to live their lives.

- **Customer offer and standards:** Clear and transparent customer offer detailing the standards for how all services are delivered and measured, ensuring consistency and quality of service in the home. This will be designed with customers with an expectation that standards will be enhanced.
- **Tailored service:** Clear customer offer by tenure and defined customer groups reflecting the different needs of customers and enabling choice by tailoring core services by c20%. These offers will help address particular needs, from a young family moving in, to helping target social hardship.
- **Customers in control:** Develop all contact channels to make it easy for customers to get what they need, when they need it. Invest in online services to ensure 100% of services can be accessed directly.
- **Automating query management and communications:** Removing the need for customers to have to contact us by providing automated updates and answers to keep informed at all stages of the query.
- **Customer information at our fingertips:** Fully integrated mobile working to deliver right first time and reduce the customer effort and time involved.

Measures of success: Overall Quality of my home/Easy to contact and get my problem resolved/Overall satisfaction with service

2. Flexible & Local: Making a sustainable change in our communities

Clear priority in ensuring our resources, effort and impact can be seen and felt at a community/neighbourhood level. Clear local priorities reflected in decision making and investment, targeting "place to live" alongside maintenance of the home. Partnering to support building brighter futures, whilst also providing a support service to help the most vulnerable.

- **Neighbourhood Ownership:** Plan & prioritise services that meet the needs of each community at a local level (with local action plans), by creating local community hubs, improving communication and creating community intelligence to tailor services locally, with support from partners. Identify opportunity for people to volunteer in the community.
- **Generating and allocating income for local community investment:** Maximising income from commercial opportunities and reinvest in community priorities and tackling social hardship (linked to tailored service). Investment overseen via the Service Committee.

- **Partnering for results:** Working strategically with partners and development to understand local housing need, community priorities and role other partners can play, to establish clear blueprint for housing and support at the local level.
- **There when you need us:** Providing support when its needed to support tenancies and flexing services to meet demand. Provide more intensive “wrap around” service with partners to support those most vulnerable and help with ASB, training, employment and money advice.

Measures of success: Neighbourhood as a place to live/ Easy to contact and get my problem resolved/Overall satisfaction with service.

3. **Customer Voice:** Customers shaping and co-designing our services

Ensuring customers have every opportunity to work with VIVID in the design, delivery and priority of services. Creating a joint framework with customers to enable two-way communication, that is transparent, open and reflects customers priorities.

- **The customer voice is heard:** Develop a forward-thinking customer engagement strategy to improve both formal and informal customer feedback. Adopt a customer charter or code with customers and the Board and create a new service committee that brings together customers, Board members and senior staff to oversee the priorities and delivery of service.
- **Co-designing services with Customers:** Involve our customers in setting and regularly reviewing our customer offer and service standards. Involvement as we procure or design new services.

Measures of success: Quality of my home/ Neighbourhood as a place to live/ Easy to contact and get my problem resolved/Overall satisfaction with service.

4. **Proactive & Preventative:** Reducing customer need and reason to contact

By focusing on the intelligence, we already have on customer contacts, applying insight and understanding, we plan to reduce the need for customers to have to contact us. By understanding what is important to customers in the home, introduce new services and improvements to the home to reflect the role IoT can now play in helping customers to live their lives more independently and with the least disruption from VIVID.

- **Insightful action:** Using insight from customer feedback, trends, patterns and analytics to drive decision making to deliver the core service superbly and tailor service to improve first time fix. Utilising demand insight to better maximise resources with live dashboard reporting. Deliver productivity improvements, identifying and re-investing savings of 7% of operating costs by year 4 of the strategy.
- **Smart Homes & Neighbourhoods:** Use sensor technology in our homes and communities to reduce failure demand and support independent living. Invest in IoT technology to automate compliance checks and provide notification of early failures. Take advantage of 5G and ensure connectivity in our communal common areas.
- **Effective Maintenance:** Develop a property services strategy to better utilise capacity and capability within the trade’s teams. Improve fix at first contact through effective multiskilling of trades to over 50% (15% today), freeing capacity, contractors and need for multiple visits. Upskill the estate teams to carry out local communal repairs and invest in automation in the supply chain.

Measures of success: Quality of my home/ Neighbourhood as a place to live/ Easy to contact and get my problem resolved/Overall satisfaction with service.

5. Maximising Talent: Providing customers with expert advice & support to help create a brighter future

Ensuring current and future colleagues are sufficiently skilled and equipped to resolve queries at the first point of contact and ensuring we are recruiting for talent, alongside experience, opening new roles to a wider and more diverse group in our communities.

- **Moving from transaction to adding value:** Free staff from routine transactional activity to focus on helping customers on more complex queries. By increasing customer self-service and automating routine transactions, all front-line roles will increase depth of knowledge to become multi-disciplined, including customer experience, trades and neighbourhood teams.
- **Our workforce reflects local talent:** Have a clear plan to employ people that reflect the diversity of the community with the right mix of knowledge and attitude. Provide extra support for customers to take advantage of the opportunities in VIVID and increase the number of apprentices, trainees and graduates to 20% of our vacancies. Through partnerships with schools and colleagues, increase female trades to 10% of all roles..
- **Leadership:** Develop a culture where managers take full ownership and responsibility to make decisions and develop a one team ethos across all management levels. Invest time with managers to help support creativity within the teams and a safe environment to explore new ways of working.
- **Recognition:** To be recognised as an employer of choice in Hampshire and beyond, achieving consistently high levels of satisfaction and recognition through ICS accreditation to be able to compare with the best service providers in the UK. Winning awards in each professional vocation across all UK sectors to recognise “the best we can be” in delivering our core services brilliantly.

Measure of Success: Employee engagement score/Awards from professional industry bodies/ External accreditation