

PEABODY TRUST CUSTOMER PANEL

End of Year Summary 2008

A year of change



In April 2007 we wrote to all of the members of the Customer Panel asking whether you wanted to remain a member. We also campaigned to find new Peabody residents who wanted to have their say. We now have over 120 Customer Panel members! Many of you made valuable contributions last year, giving us vital feedback and viewpoints on a range of issues and programmes. Your participation has been key to the work we are doing to improve services to you.

This leaflet briefly summarises the main Customer Panel consultations that have been carried out since 1 April 2007. For more information on any of the projects mentioned here, or on other Customer Panel consultations, please contact the Policy Helpline on **020 7021 4457** or email policy.helpline@peabody.org.uk.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Customer Panel last year. We look forward to working with you during 2008/09.

What you said: Key points

When you filled out your Customer Panel application form, you had the opportunity to let us know your key areas of interest. The following consultations involved those of you who indicated an interest in the areas of complaints, estate modernisation, resident communications, rents and service charges, and tenancy management.

Complaints Panel Stage 3 volunteers

You said: 50% asked to be added to the list of volunteers to be resident representatives on the Stage 3 Complaints Panel.

“When I had a stage 3 complaint, the volunteer who was there to assist me was a great help so if I can offer this service I would be happy to.”

Other comments you made were:

- More people should be volunteers for the Stage 3 Complaints Panel to stop the same people from being involved every time.
- I think it is a good step forward for the Trust to invite more customers to be involved in the complaints process.

We did:

- The Quality Assurance Team now have a larger and up to date list of volunteers to call on for stage 3 complaints meetings. Training and guidance will be arranged soon for these volunteers.

IMPROVE programme

You said: 60% registered an interest in being involved in our nine-year IMPROVE programme of open space improvements.

“I have lived in a Peabody flat for the past 23 years and I have worked as a volunteer gardener with the Wild Life Trust on sites throughout London.”

Other comments you made were:

- In addition to improving the general view around me I am also an enthusiastic supporter of team-work and of giving tenants the opportunity of becoming practically involved in enhancing their landscape and meeting others.
- I believe that a greener environment adds a more spiritual dimension to a person's daily life and if chosen, I would be as resourceful as I could in helping to develop this idea for the good of my fellow tenants.

We did:

- Customer panel members have been involved in the initial evaluation of tender submissions for IMPROVE architects. This has involved looking through the tender packages, participating in architect site visits, and feeding back to Peabody staff.
- A group of volunteers has been set up to be involved in the IMPROVE programme on an ongoing basis. This group has been involved in the initial selection process of landscape architects and will monitor the IMPROVE programme as it progresses.

Housing Ombudsman Service

You said: 55% responded to survey from external consultants regarding awareness of the Housing Ombudsman Service as part of the complaints process.

“The Housing Ombudsman Service looked into my complaint when I wasn't happy with the response I received at stage 3. Although it didn't change the outcome, it did make me feel that the decision by the Trust was a fair one.”

Other comments you made were:

- Before now, I didn't realise the Housing Ombudsman Service could actually offer services such as mediation.
- When I contacted the Housing Ombudsman Service, it took nearly a year for them to send a reply to me.

We did:

- As a result of this consultation, we have been involved in a focus group with other large housing associations and external consultants working for the Housing Ombudsman Service. We are discussing how to better advertise the Housing Ombudsman Service to our customers, and how to use the services they offer, for example, advice and mediation services.
- As a result of the consultation, we have made recommendations to the Housing Ombudsman on how they can improve their service to customers.

Peabody Trust branding

You said: 90% said that redesigning the Trust's brand was a positive step in the right direction.

"I think it is a really good idea to involve residents in branding discussions as the Trust can get a feel of what it is like to be a Peabody customer and put this into the designs."

Other comments you made were:

- It's good to see that Peabody want to modernise their branding.
- Peabody is moving in the right direction and it makes sense that the branding changes with the organisation.

We did: • Following your comments, we are now working with a design and branding consultant to bring our brand up to date to reflect a modern Peabody Trust.

Revenues service

You said: 53% said that you didn't mind who you spoke to about your rent but would be happier if you received a prompt and helpful service. 60% said that you wanted to be able to meet with someone in person to discuss your rent account.

"It's good to have direct contact with the Revenues Team."

Other comments you made were:

- I like using the online payment scheme, it's much better than the payment card at the post office.
- Being able to pay my rent quickly is really important to me.

We did: • We have introduced a freephone telephone number so that customers can pay their rent over the phone. Also, a link has been set up to the AllPay rent payment scheme on the website so customers can pay their rent on the Peabody Trust website.

- We have employed Welfare and Benefit Advisors to be able to provide a more effective and appropriate revenues service to customers.

Satellite dishes

You said: 70% provided comments about our current Satellite Dishes policy.
50% said that they wanted to see the limits on satellite dishes changed.

“The satellite dishes policy is a very controversial one because not everyone realises that you can't just have a satellite dish if you want one.”

Other comments you made were:

- Lots of people in my block of flats have put up satellite dishes without permission and then they had to take them down again.
- Maybe the limits should be increased because it seems harsh that customers have limited choice in this area.

We did:

- Our policy has now been changed. The numbers of satellite dishes that we allow has been increased from 1 to 2 on houses and small blocks of flats, and from 2 to 4 on larger blocks of flats in line with planning permission requirements.
- Before 2012, we will be taking part in the Digital Switchover project and will be upgrading all of the television aerials that it has a responsibility for to digital aerials. This will mean that customers will be able to access a range of digital services through an aerial without the need for satellite dishes.