**Resident Scrutiny Meeting – Complaints**   
**17 January 4pm 2022 via Zoom**

**Minutes**

**In Attendance:**

**Scrutiny Members:**

Lia Voutourides (LV), Trudy-Ann Campbell (TA), Derek Sheppard (DS), Sammy McNeil (SM), Ruth Samuels (RS)

**Origin Staff/External:**

Andreia Vieira (AV) - Resident Engagement Coordinator, Michael Guest (MG) - Scrutiny Independent Mentor, Elena Boyle (EB) - Head of Customer Experience

**Apologies:**

Daniel Gatswirth (DG) – Scrutiny member

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| **Welcome and Introductions** | |
| AV and LV welcomed everyone - DS & TA will join the meeting late.  LV agreed agenda will need to be flexible as EB will be attending the meeting. Agenda might vary. | |
| **Reviewing scrutiny to date– All** |
| LV and EB had discussed at the spotlight meeting about the low numbers in attendance at the scrutiny meeting and finds that it makes the process impossible. LV the data they received is not sufficient, it is missing information and is vague.  EB previously worked with small scrutiny groups, suggested choosing a smaller scope and look at elements. This piece of work does not stop here. Suggested the group look at this scrutiny piece of work in phases? Identify within each phase what we want to look at, this approach won't require as many people. EB needs to make changes to the service and wants to use what we have to date if the group agrees.  MG agrees scrutiny works with a small group, but those individuals need to be committed. Suggested producing recommendations on what we currently have, especially for team moral. MG has a practice paper available and ready to use.  EB we can only make recommendations on the data available to us, there will be a point where we need to draw the line and use what we have. Suggested revisiting the data to see what is missing. Need to decide what's the scope, what data we have available and how can we move forward with what we have. This door won't be closed forever. EB left meeting due to audio  MG suggested with the current scope to work backwards and see what we have.  EB re-entered meeting. Would like for us to start delivering some recommendations, knowing that we will continue to work with each other and engage with residents in improving complaints. EB is conscious the team needs a complete revamp and has held this off waiting for the group's recommendations. Suggested scrutiny continue with what they currently have. EB confirmed Usama manages the contact centre and the complaints team currently report directly into EB.  DS Entered the meeting.  SM shared her recent experience with making a complaint to Origin. Used different communication methods such as email and WhatsApp. She has still not received an outcome and re-raised the ASB complaint. EB clarified the difference between a complaints process and an ASB complaint.  LV summarised what had been discussed for DS. Was happy with the suggestion of quarterly meetings to review complaints.  EB suggested the group could look at topics individually, such as, how to report a complaint, complaint handling, complaint letter writing, staff training and escalation to stage two. There's an opportunity for the group to work in partnership with the changes being made to the complaint's team/process.  LV happy to look at the work in chunks as they can break down the work. Believes the data is a big issue. Wants confirmation of who collects the data?  EB explained Customer Relation Management (CRM) system is used to pull reports. Customer satisfaction data is a combination approach, use a market researcher called ‘Quest’.   DS believes there are pros and cons to a small scrutiny group. Believes the biggest breakdown with complaints is the policy. | |
| **Policy and Procedure – All** |
| EB believes the preliminary should not be included in this complaints piece as you will end up with a big piece of work. Suggested the group finds a topic and puts together a list of questions relating to this topic for EB to provide any further information/data needed to the group for recommendations.  Suggested areas of focus could be; 1) How long it takes to manage and investigate a complaint to get it to resolution 2) The quality of the outcome and learning that it drives  RS joined the meeting.  LV thinks it is important to marry the work the group is doing with EB’s work. Once they tackle the procedures, suggested they could possibly review the policy.  EB would like clear guidelines as to when she is going to receive the questions and recommendations from the group.  DS wants to know how staff follow the policy, what is different now to 6 or 12 months ago? EB twelve months ago housing ombudsman's code of practice came into effect. There was a period that all housing associations saw a decrease in the number of complaints due to the lockdown, but in the summer when the restrictions eased, they all saw the backlog of demand. EB’s priority is complaints and resident engagement now. Wants the group to agree what their area of focus will be.  DS how many days do Origin allow themselves to satisfy a stage one complaint? EB confirmed it is 10 working days to conclude in line with the housing ombudsman timescale, if we cannot respond within 10 days then we can agree an extension with the resident of up to 20 working days.  DS how many days to Origin allow themselves to satisfy a stage two complaint? EB confirmed the housing ombudsman guidance is when the resident requests for a stage one to become a stage two, the landlord has 20 days to consider it. Once they have accepted it, they then have 10 days to conclude it, or they can agree and extension. Most housing associations use the 20 days to delay the process, we do not do that at Origin, it takes immediate effect.  EB suggested a topic for the group which is our adherence to the timescales and why we take so long.  If the group go with the two topic suggestions made earlier, there could be some good recommendations, only issue is staying within the scope. MG agreed with the scope and how hard it is to stay on track, it is easy to get distracted with other topics. A recommendation could be to return to a particular topic later.  TA joint the meeting.  LV agreed doing things in chunks sounds like a good idea. Trusts EB and the work she is doing but the way in which the data was historically presented does raise questions and builds mistrust.  EB suggested another topic could be how we report on our complaints performance so more residents can hold us to account. The complaints data could be published on our website monthly.  EB wanted to confirm when she would receive topics/questions by group and the timeframe for recommendations to keep the board updated.  LV confirmed they would discuss that today, there might be data needed from EB that is currently missing but happy to give a timescale. Wanted confirmation that if group focus on topics it can be done piecemeal, and the group will remain as they are in numbers. EB is happy with this and wanted group to confirm they are happy with his approach too.  TA believes the issue is the time is takes to receive information/data from Origin. EB confirmed that if the group can send over specific questions, EB can then process the data to answer these specific questions. If we can agree when we want to make the recommendations by, EB will work towards this date.  TA made a point that there will always be questions as there are different departments at Origin. For example, repairs was highest complaints and this is an external contractor making it harder to enforce the policy. EB our legal responsibility does not change if it is an external contractor, Origin need to be good with contractor management. There at two-weekly and monthly contract review meeting with repairs and we are in contact with them multiple times a week.  TA believes this is relevant as the highest complaints were in relation to repairs. EB we need to be mindful to not go outside of the scope, but we can park these ideas and questions and come back to them. We need to agree the parameters and do the best job within that.   LV confirmed to EB that by the end of this meeting they would agree timescales and happy to communicate with EB directly by the end of this week.  EB left meeting. | |
| **Next steps – All** |
| LV wanted to confirm with group if they are happy to review smaller chunks as the group is small, is everyone happy to proceed with a piecemeal approach? MG advised this is a good approach, unfortunately not much choice due to what the group has available to them. This will help team moral due to a sense of achievement.  DS, LV and AV confirmed that they are down to six residents, with DG to help outside of meetings due to work constraints.  LV went over EB’s suggestions for topics  1) How long it takes to manage and investigate a complaint to get it to resolution 2) The quality of the outcome and learning that it drives 3) Stage 1 and Stage 2 time frames, does origin adhere to these and if not, why do they take longer?  DS confirmed that he had it down as the first two topics/questions, and the duration of the stages could tie in with question one.  TA said the data in relation to how long a complaint takes will only say what it needs to say. If we stick to one area, we will not get all the information we need.  LV confirmed that we could investigate the adherence and why it takes so long following from EB’s suggestion.  TA suggested question; how many complaints are outside of the contracted time.  DS is still waiting for this information from EB and wants to know how many complaints were resolved at stage 2, they were not given this figure. Believes the preliminary needs to be looked into.  LV suggested we focus on the chunks and make a big point about the data being inaccurate as there is missing data on the preliminary, but we can't focus on this as there is no information. We can focus on this as our next chunk.  TA can we also look at after a complaint is completed with and outcome, what is lessons learnt? There needs to be a formal response and an acknowledgment. All agreed this will be included in question two.  SM has experience of this and is not happy with the outcome. There is no feedback, and it isn't being handled well through the different communication methods. LV what is being done to ensure all staff have access to information across the platforms. SM confirmed the communication between platforms is lost as staff often do not have an understanding.  MG this is an issue about communication, the concern is not the complaint but how you treat it. Maybe the scope should be around communication? TA agreed with this.  DS believes the WhatsApp is being run by a bot. Any communication method should go through to the correct department, therefore we need to deal with preliminaries. LV agreed communication is a problematic area, there needs to be action and communication.  DS believes the scope we should go with is quality and learning and later look into compensation, preliminaries and how long it takes to manage complaints. This is what he would like to see in the report and recommendation.  Group agreed on the three areas (highlighted in yellow above)  LV clarified to group that at this stage we are not writing a report yet, we are picking topics to focus. We can make recommendations later about the size of the team for example. DS confirmed that after first report they need to agree on what to focus on next, such as compensation. | |
| **Actions** |
| Group to send their questions and data requests (based on the areas agreed) to LV  LV to send groups questions data requests to EB by end of the week.  **Next Meeting – To be confirmed, was not discussed.** | |