

Tempo

Keeping you up to speed on our activity

Weekly update for our Stakeholders



30 March 2017

Weekly update on the National Housing Prime and Regional Primes

Our ambition for ServiceMark

It's been three months now since our Customer Service Centre in Liverpool set out their ambition to work towards ServiceMark accreditation by the Institute of Customer Service. For the first month or so I really challenged the team on 'why' they wanted to move towards becoming an accredited centre. I'd walk around the office asking people at random 'why?', and I received all sorts of answers. Here are my favourites:

1. Because we want to improve our service
2. Because our customers deserve the best
3. Because we deserve it too

I asked a few of the team to explain it to our customers on social media. The response we received was a mix of support (we're glad you want to improve) and disapproval (is this a joke? You guys suck!). Ok, so I understand that most people on our social media channels are there to complain because we've let them down in some way, and I need to take that into account. I understand that one of our customers walked into the Institute of Customer Service office and told them not to give us the accreditation. I'd argue that is exactly why we should be aiming for accreditation.

Anyway, I learned from our customers that we've not explained very well that ServiceMark is just for our Customer Service Centre, not our operations on site. We're talking about our telephone advisors, our housing allocations staff, our complaint management teams, our regional prime helpdesk and our local customer service centres. I've also learned that all of the angst we received, typically aimed at operational delivery, is 100% in housing. No negative feedback is being given about the support we provide to the Regional Prime Estate where our customers work (this is four out of our five contracts). So two big themes:

1. It's all about housing
2. The Customer Service Centre staff are actually doing ok (but we want to do better)

Based on customer feedback, the team have drawn up an action plan. This is how the ServiceMark framework supports our continuous improvement in a very structured way.

First we gain feedback (a formal survey of staff and customers), then benchmark ourselves against the UK Customer Satisfaction Index, and finally implement an action plan to improve our weaknesses. We shared our action plan with the Institute of Customer Service last week. Apart from a few minor suggestions, they seem pretty happy with what we are trying to accomplish. There are 83 actions on our plan, but here are the headlines:

1. Create more meaningful customer engagement through our Customer Engagement Forum and on our social media channels
2. Support operational improvements by providing excellent customer insight
3. Develop 'guiding principles' for our customer service staff, create a culture of 'helpfulness' and measure it through customer satisfaction at an individual level
4. Invest in digital customer service channels, talking to customers on every channel they want to talk to us on
5. Get our processes right and customer communications clear
6. Improve our product knowledge - be experts in what our contracts deliver

7. Manage a truly effective complaints management process
8. Clearly communicate the 'you said, we did' with our customers and our customer service staff

It feels good to have a plan. The whole team get together every Friday morning for our ServiceMark Scrum to discuss progress against actions and activities. Individual ownership and empowerment sits at the heart of what we're trying to do, so I am continuing to encourage the team to make videos to introduce themselves in person and explain what they're working on to improve. We'll keep on posting these videos on our social media channels and we welcome any and all feedback.

Stuart Jones
Communications and Customer Service Director

Grounds maintenance: looking forward to summer

We've been busy making sure we're ready for the summer. With a determined effort by our grounds maintenance supply chain partners to improve on past performances.

During the winter we introduced our "weather forecasting portal", which was instrumental in our ability to accurately monitor incoming inclement weather systems. This enabled us to respond quickly to prevent the build-up of snow and ice in operational areas. The establishments we serve were kept up and running, allowing our customers to work in a safe environment. This, combined with our establishment specific "winter service maintenance plan", has ensured we delivered a robust service though the winter.

Looking ahead to the summer, we've introduced a bi-weekly grounds programme for our site delivery teams. This includes a review of completed and upcoming jobs, with stakeholders, to give transparency and improve communications.

This summer will also see the introduction of a new approved residual herbicide that has a long lasting residual effect, lasting between three and six months. This will combat weed growth on hardstanding areas and was something we were keen to improve on.

Our grounds maintenance supply chain partners have continued to invest heavily in new machinery. We have two new "JCB Fast Track" tractors and airfield grass cutting machinery. They will assist Central (East) Airfield maintenance to ensure we can respond in rapid time to ensure that the operational effectiveness of our airfields are maintained. Our supply chain have also forecast a 30% overall increase in resource from 2016 to assist in enhancing our service delivery across all patches.



Our RAF Shawbury airfield grass collection system was implemented in late 2015 to reduce the amount of grass that was affecting operations. It has improved and increased operational flying since introduction. It's the only operation of its kind in the UK and continues to be an effective solution to the unit's long standing concerns.

With the successes of winter behind us, we will use our new machinery, increased labour and new plans to continue to deliver a good grounds maintenance service across all patches throughout the summer.

Six sites get a lightning upgrade

In late 2016 Defence Munitions were asked by the Inspector of Explosives at Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) to improve the storage of laden road trailers to protect from lightning. To do this six sites; Beith, Crombie, Longtown, Kinteton, Plymouth and Gosport received funding to install a Defence Ordnance Safety Group compliant Lightning Protection System. Together with Defence Infrastructure Organisation, we have rolled this project out and are approaching successful completion of the programme at all six sites.

Working with our specialist contractor Lightning Protection Services we were able to accelerate the programme to meet MOD guidelines and the Inspector's tight timescales at no extra cost. From a budget perspective it is great that the projects are to be completed within this financial year.

Mike Condron, DIO and Kenny Falconer, DE&S were very supportive in working with us to gain the necessary approvals in good time and supporting the projects at each depot. The value of the works came to circa £920k across the six site, which is being delivered against a firm price agreement.



The full programme of works are on track and assets are being handed back. Crombie and Longtown have finished and have been handed back. Beith is complete but the handover is still being arranged. Plymouth and Gosport have also been completed and Kinteton will be finalised this week.

The lead Project Manager was Ian Sutherland from Rosyth. He was supported by Darren Upton, Michael Mitch, Ed Dunkley and Ifor Williams from across the UK. Everyone worked together to ensure this project was a success. Our Customer Service Director praised the project team, stating *"this shows what can be achieved in a short space of time under real pressure with a collaborative approach, motivation and willingness to complete works to target"*.

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