

## Excellence Matters

### Objective

Southern Housing Group (SHG) wanted to inspire their 700 customer-facing staff to move from 'good to excellent' and to clearly align the service they are providing with a new set of service standards. Steps won a competitive tender to win this work, with a unique interactive offering. As Pam Bhamra, Director of Housing at SHG highlighted, 'We were looking for a training programme that was a little bit different from the traditional types of learning. We wanted something that was 'real' and relevant to the work that we do, highlighting to people how they could improve the level of service they were currently delivering.'

### Our Approach

Pre course:

We conducted in depth research to gain an understanding of the organisation, visiting SHG's contact centre, offices and residential properties and conducting interviews with a cross section of managers and staff from all departments. We also undertook a detailed analysis of data from customer surveys, staff surveys, complaints reports, call logs, mystery shopping and internal service standards to inform the programme. 'We were impressed with the level of research. It felt like Steps really knew us and the programme felt very realistic,' said Dawn Powell, Learning & Development Business Partner at SHG.

In order to generate anticipation and excitement about the programme we helped SHG to develop a communications plan, which included us producing a series of images which were developed into posters and postcards for use across the business. We also liaised with SHG's e-learning partner, Kineo, to create a blended through-line from e-learning to the live workshops and to ensure that our programme reflected and built upon the key messages.

Training Workshops:

We delivered half-day workshop for groups of 25 delegates, including:

**Interactive drama** to quickly create engagement and impact (as well as fun/humour where appropriate) and highlight key behavioural examples of poor customer service.

**Facilitated discussion** – what is good and bad customer service? What are the barriers to improving customer service? How can they be overcome?

**Principles** of exemplary customer service such as the AURA model, question/listening skill models.

**Behavioural models** - Transactional Analysis, bringing this to life through drama.

**Action planning** – encouraging a commitment to individual actions (Stop, Start, Continue) and team actions/meetings.

We also facilitated post-course workshops for managers, focusing on how to run follow-up team meetings and create a group commitment to a customer service improvement plan, using models including GROW and Situational Leadership.

## Evaluation & Outcomes

There was a 14% increase in participant confidence levels post-course, 99% of attendees would recommend the course to colleagues, and other feedback has been consistently high:

- Overall quality of the course: 93% Good or Excellent
- Quality of facilitators: 94% Good or Excellent

SHG are currently in the process of monitoring and collating longer term evaluation data and have received ongoing support and consultation from us throughout this process.

Dawn Powell was quick to praise the initiative. 'Steps' training was so engaging, it hit the mark, Everybody enjoyed it, but everybody understood that first and foremost they were learning. Crucially, rather than being receivers - they said they felt part of the training.'

The programme delivered,' comments Pam Bhamra. 'It raised customer care and service excellence up the agenda for everybody across the organisation. That's what we wanted - for people to understand the role that they play and how they can improve at a very individual level. Steps helped us achieve this.'