

Customer Experience (CX) Strategy 2024 - 2026

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Introduction and Purpose

The overall purpose of our first Customer Experience strategy is to set out a framework for delivering One Manchester's customer experience (CX) and to embed a customer first approach across the whole business with CX at the centre of service delivery, and the responsibility of all colleagues.

The strategy takes into account what we must deliver on in term of increasing regulation and legislation that is becoming more prescriptive in addition to One Manchester's aspiration of being a truly customer first organisation, delivering a best in class service.

CX is the view formed of One Manchester by our customers perception of every interaction with us; it's the way our customers feel about us beyond any transactional activity. The CX strategy will ensure that this is at the heart of everything we deliver and not simply something that is "nice to have."

Service design and service delivery without understanding the CX can lead to poor service delivery, service blind-spots, and higher costs to serve. Understanding, and improving on, our CX leads to a wealth of positive benefits including a more inclusive service, improved customer satisfaction (CSAT), a reduction in complaints/ complaint escalations, lower customer effort, and increased engagement through increased trust.

We are operating in a challenging environment. Our customers are still impacted by the cost of living, and customer satisfaction across all sectors has decreased over the last 12 months but we view CX as much wider than "customer service"; the value of CX comes from identifying the key expectations of the customer that influence the overall customer experience. Designing and aligning services to make sure these expectations are met consistently delivers value to the customer, and value for the organisation.

CX is the responsibility of every One Manchester colleague and the success of the strategy is reliant on buy-in from all colleagues. Historically CX has been viewed as a separate function carried out by a handful of colleagues rather than in integral part of everything we do which his strategy aims to address.

We acknowledge we are at the start of CX journey and need to collaborate with our customers to co-create the CX our customers want, however we do have a wealth of insight from various sources which has fed into the key strategy principles

Key Principles

- 1. Insight for action:** To understand our customers, and our customers' needs, we need to collect the right data and ensure we use this insight to drive action.
- 2. Know our customers:** If we understand our customers' we can deliver the right inclusive services.
- 3. Culture and Behaviour - Customer First:** We want the culture at One Manchester to be customer centric.
- 4. Continuous Improvement:** It is important we learn from feedback and adapt and tailor our services around customer needs.
- 5. Be the Best:** We always want to deliver best customer experience in all that we do, looking inside and outside of sector to learn from the best.

What we know about our Customer Experience currently

Through discovery work, complaints, compliments, tenant satisfaction measures (TSMs) sentiment analysis and feedback from our Customer Scrutiny Panel we have an understanding of the current CX at One Manchester and what is important to our customers. The primary, or underlying, theme of the majority of negative experiences is poor communication. As such, communication is a cross cutting theme of all the key principles.

Being kept updated is so important to our customers and they want One Manchester to live our values particularly around honesty and accountability. We are not consistently getting this right.

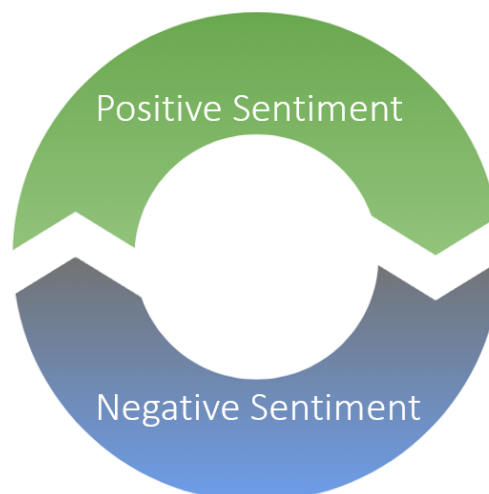
Easy to deal with; Colleague behaviour; Keeping informed; Complaints process

They talk to you politely and they listen. They are very good at that

Any time I call - they respond - so no issues and they treat me with respect

You need to help tenants a bit more. Especially ones with illnesses and mental health

Nobody was listening to me. I had to go to social media to get any action



I've always had good communication and they always get back to us

They do all the safety checks and I feel safe in my home

I was told someone would call me back but no one did

I am really frustrated, I don't know what is happening at One Manchester

Complaints speed; Listening; Updating; Appointments; Chasing; Respect

Principle 1 – Insight for action

Data and insight plays a vital role in how we know our customers and is gained from a variety of sources, including:

- Tenancy experience visits to every customer, every year
- Complaints
- Compliments
- Consultation events
- TSM surveys
- Customer journey mapping
- MP & Councillor enquiries

In addition to meeting statutory requirements, and reporting on statistics, it is vital that once we have collected insight it is turned into action.

Our customers are giving their time to engage in the complaints process, complete surveys, and attend consultation events so it is our responsibility to ensure we use that insight effectively.

Our approach to Insight for action means that all decisions should be based on insight rather than assumptions and the customer voice has to be listened too.

The Customer Experience Team will carry out a minimum of 50 customer journey mapping sessions with customers per year to better understand service failure, and pain points, from a customer perspective. This Insight will be shared with teams across the organisation and form service improvement actions which will be monitored to completion and shared with our customers.

Complaints are a valuable learning tool and as such One Manchester do not actively target a reduction in the number of complaints received by our customers, but we do aim to better learn from complaints and reduce escalations of complaints by carrying out fair and thorough investigations at stage 1, providing reasonable redress, and monitoring any outstanding actions through to completion ensuring customers are updated and informed on any next steps. Where customers ask for escalation we will thoroughly and robustly question and review the process and outcome from the stage 1 complaint to try and resolve the issue for the customer. Where we find we haven't got it right, complaints learning will be shared across the business via team meetings and action learning sessions.

Principle 2 – Knowing our customers

Knowing our customers is the foundation of our CX strategy. In order to offer a quality service to all does not mean we offer an equal to all and therefore we have to know and understand our customers better and their individual needs for us to achieve our aim of being a genuinely customer first organisation. Great work has already taken place over the last 12 months to complete circa 4,000 Tenancy Experience visits, alongside the new ways of working in Neighbourhoods including offering

face to face contact at community hubs. We will continue to get behind every door to carry out tenancy experience visits at every home in turn building trust with our customers by strengthening the relationship between customers and colleagues and ensuring we act upon the data we receive at these visits i.e. recording vulnerabilities, first language, communication preferences etc

Although our Customer Voice function is in its infancy valuable work has been completed to recruit to a Customer Scrutiny Panel and carry out 60 customer consultations during FY23/24.

The recruitment of two new Customer Voice Business Partner's demonstrates our commitment to ensuring the customer voice is listened and heard, and acted on, across the business. We will continue to consult with customers on the repairs service to ensure the new service offer is co-designed with our customers. We understand services need to be designed with CX in mind and co-creating services from the outside in with our customers is integral to getting this right.

We know from the recent Housing Ombudsman spotlight on "Relationship of Equals" that vulnerable customers can often go unheard. As such, we will develop and implement a vulnerability strategy and a reasonable adjustments policy to ensure we tailor the needs of our service to the specific needs of our customers to offer a quality service to all.

We will also introduce triaging into our complaints process so ensure we fully understand why our customers are dissatisfied, and what actions we can take to resolve that dissatisfaction in addition to any reasonable adjustments required to ensure the service is fully accessible. This will lead to better quality investigations and outcomes, and importantly better quality complaints learning. The Housing Ombudsman find maladministration in circa 73% of their investigations where complaint handling was a factor of the complaint so this is an area we need to improve upon.

Principle 2 – Culture and Behaviour: Customer First

The success of the strategy is reliant on One Manchester and its colleagues adopting a customer first approach and demonstrating the correct behaviours to embody this.

Customer insight explains that we are poor at communicating effectively and poor communication leads to dissatisfaction, complaints, and lost trust. We can have the right policies and procedures in place, and carry out the correct actions, but this can be undermined by poor communication and/or behaviours. Communication must be empathetic and tailored to individual customers: it is not one size fits all.

One tactical initiative we will carry out to help imbed the CX strategy is a workshop / focus group with colleagues from across the business to better understand their barriers to providing a customer focussed service. This will allow us to identify any process changes required before we design and deliver customer first training to colleagues.

We must be respectful of all our customers at all times. In addition to customer first training we will review our service style across all our interactions. Our service style is effectively our service personality and is a way we can meet our customers emotional needs as well as practical needs. We aspire to create trust by being clear, honest, and accessible to our customers. Our service style will be co-designed with our customers to effectively form a contract between One Manchester and our customers across our service provision including our tone of voice, timescales to respond to emails and callback requests, how and when we will make ourselves available in the community, what support we will offer and transparency around what services we will and will not provide.

Principle 4 – Continuous Improvement

In order to ensure our customer experience evolves with the needs of the customer, and that we apply any learning from both negative and positive feedback it is important that we embrace continuous improvement.

During the last 12 months we have made strides in this direction. We have implemented lessons learned sessions following Housing Ombudsman (HOS) determinations, and created a CX action plan to capture, monitor, and complete actions generated from complaints, customer journey maps, and lessons learned sessions.

To build on this we will produce a bi-annual “you said we did” report for our customers detailing the feedback and learning we have received and the actions we have carried out as a result.

One Manchester has already taken the decision to go above and beyond with perception surveys, surveying 200 customers per month against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures. The Insight & Performance team will work closely with the Customer Experience team to ensure

that the data across all areas is reviewed on a monthly basis with any emerging themes or declining satisfaction being investigated and tactical initiatives implemented throughout the year.

We will measure customer satisfaction by customer demographics from the key TSMs to ensure the results of the training of colleagues and implementing service standards are leading to a quality of service and improving customer experience to all customers.

In addition to our own HOS determinations we will review the determinations and recommendations of other housing providers and apply that learning to our own services and complaint handling.

We will also carry out gap analysis against any HOS spotlight reports to identify areas for improvement or non-compliance.

To “future proof” One Manchester and consider our customers of the future including, but not limited to, exploring the use of AI and its associated innovations whilst developing a framework around what we will and will not use AI for keeping customer first, customer connection, and potential digital exclusion in mind throughout.

Principle 5 – Be the Best

Embracing the previous 4 principles will go a long way in making One Manchester a sector leader in CX but having “Be the Best” as one of our key principles demonstrates our desire to do the right thing by our customers and provide the best possible service out of choice rather than as dictated by regulation or redress

We accept that housing associations are not well known for innovation in the CX space, and as such we want to learn from good practise outside of the sector as well as in. This is reflected in our HEART values as Enterprising.

Being the best is not about the big occasional gestures it is being consistently good at getting the basics right by delivering an inclusive service, creating a positive customer experience, and delivering on promises in order to meet our customers emotional and practical needs.

Being the best at what we do is positive for colleague morale and attracting new colleagues to One Manchester as well as providing our customers with the best possible customer experience. A best in class reputation has other direct and indirect benefits to customers too including commercial opportunities for partnerships and funding etc

Being the best creates trust and goodwill between us and our customers leading to more positive engagement and understanding if we do get something wrong, as will happen on occasion.

Creating a meaningful Omnichannel allows us to improve our knowledge and information management, make every contact count and improve the customer experience.

One Manchester are members of the UK Institute of Customer Service which allows us access to data from across different sectors and learning opportunities from other sectors. Although the commercial sector is predominantly more transaction there are consistent factors that are important to customers such as trust and ease of use. Ultimately we would like to be service mark accredited by the institute by FY27.

Measuring Success

The success of the CX strategy, and more importantly the experience we provide, will be measured in a variety of ways including:

- TSM's
- KPI's
- Complaint escalations
- HOS determinations
- Regular reporting

The objectives and actions within this strategy will be reviewed and updated on a monthly basis and reported to the Leadership Team monthly, and Customer and Communities Committee quarterly.

Risks

The key risk to this strategy, as with all CX activity, is that it is seen as the responsibility of a few colleagues in the business rather than as a key part of everyone's role. This is something we aim to address by increasing customer consultation across the business as well as colleague consultation, and training, around being customer first.

Key Objectives and Action Plan

The objectives of this strategy will meet these principles through creating a consistently customer first approach across the organisation. The main strategic objectives for 2024/25 will form part of an action plan for 2024/25.