**Feedback from special interest forum 28 March**

**Introduction to awareness, access and understanding projects**

What would like to see from landlords?

**Proactive Landlords**

* Proactive engagement from landlords, informing residents of their rights, sign-posting through positive communications and not just during the complaints process.
* A culture within landlords to promote HOS as a free independent service.
* Provide comms in many formats and channels, and have programme to repeat the message at different stages throughout the tenancy.
* Simplify their internal processes.

**Resident Groups**

* Resident Panel to engage with local residents groups to promote HOS.
* Resident forums to raise the profile in their communities and schemes.
* Resident Panel to be “Nominated Ambassadors” for HOS, sharing their membership with other resident groups within HA’s, announce in HA resident groups, promote in the community.

**Local & Community Approach**

Connect with landlord resident groups, share information and “marketing” material.

Promote within Local Authorities, GP surgeries, CAB, Libraries, Schools

Provide up to date information packs to MPs, LA & councillors

**What the Housing Ombudsman can do to increase awareness**

* Educate landlords.
* Provide simple guidance.
* Build on “Make it in Right”  - posters, media coverage, bill-boards etc.
* A physical presence by our services at landlord & resident focused events &
* conferences.
* Use channels that would ensure the widest reach.
* Use channels (TV, Radio, Social Media) that are broadcasted in non-english to reach a more diverse wider audience.
* Check with different customer personas that it works for them, it is accessible.
* Joined-up working with other agencies, service– SHAC /
* Make the process simple, resident get disengaged/frustrated.
* Provide resident guidance about the timescales and requirements
* Be clear about what the Service can do and what we can’t do for residents
* Consider the hours of service to improve access, or alternative options.
* Publish positive stories, a very powerful way of getting the message across.
* Recognise that English is not everyone’s first language, build in options.

**Digital**

* Create a social media presence for the digitally engaged
* Utilise messaging services, SMS, WhatsApp, Twitter, FB, Instagram,
* Develop digital “short-sharp” adverts
* Simplify the Website.
* Have simple clear step by step processes.
* Have words in pictures, simple diagrams.
* Recognise that not everyone does digital
* Consider a shopping style approach.  Browse, select services, provide information, register, update, two-way comms, complete, feedback.
* The younger generation opt for digital.  Awareness is less, linked to fact that they see their time in social housing as temporary and much more of a transient population, seeking to move on quickly.

What barriers do residents face.

* Customers don’t understand it.
* It sounds to complex and complicated.
* Individuals lack confidence to start the process, it’s the government.
* ‘sIt’s too hard to do.
* Customers are exhausted  / apathy by the landlord process and still trying to get their problem fixed.
* Landlords don’t want resident to go to HOS.
* Limited access channels.
* HOS has a bad reputation among some resident groups.
* HOS process complicated, gathering evidence to raise the complaint.
* It’s processes are not aligned for its diverse customer base – vulnerabilities, language.