



Communication Scrutiny Report

2025

**Magnify Scrutiny Group
On behalf of Tuntum Housing Association**

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1. Who are we and what we do?

Magnify, are the customer Scrutiny Group for Tuntum Housing Association, which was established in 2015 to make the voice of the customer heard. We are customers who volunteer our time to help Tuntum to improve the services provided to customers. Currently we are:

- Mrs Barbara Douglas
- Miss Dorothy Ellis
- Mr Colin Gunter
- Miss Claire Wilson
- Mrs Jane Smith
- Miss Nikola Brown

Magnify have completed several scrutiny reviews in the past on things like the turnaround time of void properties, Tuntum's website, and the repairs service.

Our reviews are presented to the Board for consideration. They have led to significant changes in the way Tuntum works, like the changes to the website and the introduction of an online portal to log repairs and pay rent.

The main purpose of the group is to:

- Be a critical friend to Tuntum Housing Association.
- Take an independent look at Tuntum Housing Association's services, plans, and performance.
- Assess and challenge Tuntum Housing Association's performance against expected standards.
- Magnify ensures that Tuntum remains compliant with the new regulatory standards while fostering a stronger, more transparent relationship with its customers.
- Holds the Board and management team to account for performance and standards.

2. Why customer engagement is important to Tuntum.

The values of Tuntum have always meant that there is a focus on listening to the voice of the customer to drive the direction of the company.

Tuntum Housing Association provides services to Tenants, Residents and Service Users. Customers is the umbrella term that is used to describe all groups.

In July 2023, the government passed the Social Housing Regulation Act, building on the principles of the Social Housing White Paper – The Charter for Social Housing Residents. This legislation strengthens customer rights by requiring landlords to be more transparent, accountable, and responsive to tenant concerns.

The introduction of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) in England aims to improve the quality of housing services by providing a clear framework for measuring tenant satisfaction. These measures, introduced by the Regulator for Social Housing in 2023, focus on key aspects such as communication, repairs and maintenance, safety, and overall service delivery. By collecting and analysing tenant feedback

through these standardised metrics, housing providers are better equipped to identify areas for improvement and ensure they are meeting the needs and expectations of tenants. This initiative is designed to promote greater transparency, accountability, and better outcomes for tenants across the social housing sector.

In line with these reforms, Magnify provides a dedicated platform for Tuntum customers (including tenants) to hold their landlord to account and drive improvements in service quality.

By enabling all customers to provide feedback, challenge decisions, and influence key areas of service delivery, Magnify ensures that Tuntum remains compliant with the new regulatory standards while fostering a stronger, more transparent relationship with its residents.

By having Magnify in place we have a group that are able to hold Tuntum to account and help to improve the service we receive as Tenants, Residents and Service Users.

3. Why did we choose to review Communication with Tuntum?

Following on from our first couple of meetings in November and December 2024, the Scrutiny Panel discussed a wide range of potential issues for review.

A common theme coming through was the need for improved communications when looking at particular customer journeys.

We concluded that there are three important journeys requiring clear and timely communications, these are:

- the customer journey through the repairs process,
- the complaints process
- and how Tuntum communicates via the website.

These are critical in serving current and prospective customers alike. We reviewed these journeys with a view to ensuring that the channels of communication, the methods of communication and the validity in communications are fit for purpose. We thought it would be a good idea to complete a thorough review and present our findings.

4.The aim of the review

- To gain an understanding from customers and staff on what a communication journeys looks like and whether the process is fit for purpose.
- To compare Tuntum communication channels and processes to other Housing associations
- To ensure customers get what they need from the communications through these processes.

5.What we did and how we carried out our review

In order to carry out a review on communication we wanted to fully understand the process regarding the repair journey, the complaint journey and what the website provides in terms of communication to customers

We reviewed the customer journey relating to three key areas of communication, these were:

- The repairs journey
- The complaints journey
- The website

To gain an understanding of these, we met with Leroy Nutt, Customer Engagement Officer and reviewed the current process for each journey and what an ideal journey would look like and incorporate.

We also reviewed customer feedback from surveys issued to customers regarding communication and the Tuntum website.

The Repairs Journey

At present customers with Tuntum can report repair issues in several ways:

- By calling the customer contact centre and raising a repair directly with a customer service operative
- Completing a form online on the website
- Emailing repairs@tuntum.co.uk
- Coming into the head office in person

Once a repair is reported, it is either allocated to a Tuntum Direct Trade Operative (DTO) or a contractor, depending on availability. Due to the limited number of DTOs, many repairs are outsourced to contractors. After a repair is logged, the customer receives an appointment confirmation via text.

However, if a contractor is involved, the customer coordinates the appointment directly with them, which can cause a lack of oversight for Tuntum.

While this system allows customers to have input into scheduling repairs, the manual nature of the process leads to potential inefficiencies. This, in turn, makes tracking outstanding repairs more challenging and increases the workload for staff.

Automation and better tracking systems could streamline the process, saving time and reducing manual errors. Implementing technological solutions could also provide real-time data, helping to track budgets, repair types, delays, and more.

The Complaints Journey

Customers can raise complaints through multiple channels:

- By calling the customer contact centre and raising a repair directly with a customer service operative
- Completing a form online on the website
- Emailing repairs@tuntum.co.uk
- Coming into the head office in person
- By raising the issue with an employee or a representative of Tuntum in person

The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code was updated in February 2024, emphasising the need for landlords to manage complaints in a simple, effective, and customer -centred manner. When a complaint is reported, the person handling it must confirm the details with the customer, provide a timeframe, and explain the acknowledgment process. The complaint is then logged internally.

Typically, the officer responsible will make an introductory call to clarify the facts, introduce themselves, and explain next steps. There is limited follow-up unless additional information is required, or disputes need resolution. After the complaint resolution letter is drafted, the officer will call the customer to ensure clarity and address any concerns before the letter is sent, usually by post.

We identified internal confusion regarding the complaints handling code, signalling the need for further staff training.

It is crucial that all Tuntum employees, not just call centre and customer service staff, understand how complaints can be reported and the proper procedures for handling them.

Several issues were also identified, including poorly written letters that fail to clearly define all aspects of the complaint and outcome.

Additionally, actions resulting from complaints are sometimes not completed as documented.

We found that clearer communication about the complaints process on the website could alleviate customer concerns.

The Website

The Tuntum website serves as a resource for both current customers and prospective customers. The website needs to offer a wide array of information regarding Tuntum's services and organisational structure. It should provide easy access to a variety of topics relevant to customers, including but not limited to:

- **Tuntum's Performance Data:** Transparent insights into the organisation's performance metrics.
- **How to get involved:** Information and advice on how to get involved, getting your voice heard and a menu of engagement.
- **Latest News:** Up-to-date information on developments and announcements.
- **The Engage Magazine:** A publication dedicated to customer engagement and news.
- **Social Media Feeds:** Real-time updates from Tuntum's official social media channels.
- **Current Information about Tuntum:** Key details on Tuntum's present-day operations.
- **Tuntum's History:** An overview of the organisation's evolution and legacy.
- **Publications:** Access to policies, strategies, and reports that guide Tuntum's activities.
- **Leadership Information:** Information about the Board, committees, and Senior Management Team.
- **Social Values & Community Projects:** Insights into Tuntum's social responsibilities and community-based initiatives.

The website should also facilitate interaction with Tuntum in the following ways:

- **Reporting Repairs:** A streamlined process for customers to report maintenance issues.
- **Raising Complaints:** A system for addressing grievances.
- **Providing Compliments:** A means to acknowledge positive experiences.
- **Customer Feedback:** Opportunities for customers to engage and share feedback.
- **Contacting Tuntum:** Clear instructions on how to get in touch with Tuntum.
- **Raising ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour) Concerns:** A direct channel for reporting any social behaviour issues.

6. Our Key Findings

The Repairs Journey:

- The current repairs process lacks follow-up communication for customers.
- Many reported repairs are not Tuntum's responsibility, yet historically, Tuntum has serviced these repairs, creating confusion.
- The feedback channels are inadequate and need improvement to ensure customer satisfaction.
- Customers are often unaware of the process if damage is alleged to have been caused by an operative. (liability and Home Insurance)
- Communication regarding repairs, including what is Tuntum's responsibility, should be clearer.
- Administrative support for tracking incomplete repairs needs to be enhanced.

The Complaints Journey:

- The complaints process is inefficient, with customers feeling passed around when trying to raise an issue.
- The website's complaint section is difficult to navigate, and customers often struggle to understand what qualifies as a complaint.
- The process needs simplification and better communication to encourage customers to engage, including online response letters and complaint tracking and liaison.
- Compensation processes should be streamlined, and customers should be able to accept compensation online.
- There is a need for clearer communication about complaint standards and timelines, including the Housing Ombudsman's guidelines.

The Website:

- The website is outdated, text-heavy, and difficult to navigate.
 - Customers desire a simpler, more accessible design that highlights the most relevant information.
 - A focus group is already underway to improve the site, which should lead to a more user-friendly experience.
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7. Recommendations

Repairs Journey:

- Clearly outline Tenant and Tuntum responsibilities in the tenant handbook and provide a copy to all tenants.
- Implement a recharge policy for unwarranted repair services and enforce this process.
- Communicate the repair journey transparently, with automated confirmation for key steps.
- Improve internal repair communication processes, ensuring continuity and accountability.
- Better inform tenants on how to handle alleged damage caused by operatives and provide options including home insurance.
- Provide regular updates on repair progress and ensure post-inspections are scheduled.
- Explore technology solutions for repair booking, tracking and communication.
- Enhance administration support for the repairs team enabling up to date tracking of repairs.

Complaints Journey:

- Simplify the complaints process.
- Clarify timeframes, definitions and exemptions.
- Review the complaints page on the website to provide links to relevant policies.
- Streamline compensation acceptance, allowing online submissions.
- Link lessons learned from complaints to tangible improvements in service.
- Investigate technological solutions to ease the complaint process.

The Website:

- Redesign the website in consultation with customers to make it user-friendly and future-proof.
 - Ensure up-to-date and relevant information is readily accessible.
 - Improve the clarity of communication and simplify the user interface.
 - Include important features like housing officer details, rent statements, and payment links.
 - Promote customer use of the website to improve customer experience reduce and reduce call waiting times.
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8. Conclusion

Overall, we found that communication within Tuntum needs significant improvement across all three key areas: repairs, complaints, and the website.

Whilst the repairs service has shown some improvement based on recent Tenant Satisfaction Measure scores, several issues remain that could be addressed quickly and efficiently.

The complaints process whilst regulated and formatted needs simplifying and customers need to be able to identify the simple process and procedure when raising a complaint. Staff training has been identified as a requirement to ensure a consistent customer experience.

We hope that these measures will go some way to addressing the recent dip in Tenant Satisfaction Measures with Complaints Handling

Finally, we are encouraged by Tuntum's commitment to enhance customer services, particularly in repairs, complaints, and communication.

We believe Tuntum would benefit from incorporating its core values into communication strategies: — prioritising customer experience and understanding, responsiveness, and unifying processes. Trustworthiness and transparency in communication will be essential for improving customer satisfaction and service delivery.

We are confident that implementing these recommendations will result in tangible improvements for customers and enhance overall communication within Tuntum.