

## Liberty Update

The current gas contract is now entering the final 6 months of a 48 month contract. The procurement of a new contractor is now well underway and is on time for an October the 1<sup>st</sup> start date. The contract has at times been quite unsteady and has given cause for concern. There have been times of numerous complaints about the service provided by Liberty. The reasons for this are numerous and include issues with staffing levels, bad management and a general lack of commitment.

Eight months ago we met with the Director of Liberty and asked that the then, current Contract Manger, be removed from contract and replaced. We then had an active part in the interviewing of the new Contracts Manager. Once the new Contract Manger was in place we then introduced a 45 point improvement plan. This plan had issues, objectives, milestones and completion dates. Weekly meetings were held between ourselves and Liberty to discuss and update the improvement plan, ensuring that it was on track. Initially these discussions took place weekly face to face with daily phone calls as and when necessary. Over time most of the improvement plan was met on time. Some of the improvements are as follows;

- Complaints responded to usually the same day. Historically un-responded to.
- Greater communication between our Admin team and Liberty Admin team.
- Since having a dedicated engineer for voids it has been running very smoothly. Good feedback all-round.
- Winter planning in place and running smoothly.
- Heaters held in stock.
- Tool box talks monthly with all engineers, SBC Gas Manager attend these.
- Weekly meetings with Dave Sandford to discuss and update improvement plan and any issues, plus daily phone calls.
- 45 plus point improvement plan in place with actions and deadlines.
- We are looking at cost savings such as alternatives to scaffold.
- Dedicated contact for damp surveyor.
- More training for all engineers such as Baxi training.
- Supervisor and lead engineer call me directly in an effort to sort out issues as they arise.
- More quality checks to be undertaken including checking the competency of all engineers monthly.
- New phone line provider has meant that there has been very little disruption to service unlike previously.
- New reports being received daily and other being set up in order to give us greater visibility of the contract.

- All engineers have new PDAs and are able to order parts while they are still at the address. These orders are processed by an embedded Parts Centre member of staff.
- Liberty's call back feature for the call centre is up and running.
- Service programme attached successfully condensed with the peak now into the summer period using the MOT style servicing programme through 2019, this enabled the release of engineering resource to support the peak demand in repairs through the autumn/winter periods. This is working well
- Through collaborative working with the SBC gas team actual LGSR compliancy has been and remains at 100% consistently
- Sub contract labour was engaged September to December inclusive to support the completion of the ASV programme through those months; thus facilitating release of direct labour to support the increase in repairs demand during that period – Any new contractor recruit are engaged following the strict Liberty Gas induction process including testing both gas theory and practical work pre-engagement, this includes a full e-learning programme where candidates have to pass a induction check/test on different 9 different elements including asbestos awareness
- Although so far we have experienced a relatively mild winter there has been a significant increase in the repair demand which commenced in October 2018 this has been satisfactorily managed, during December first time fix rate dropped to 78.83% (Typically running at around 87%) however the focus was applied to those properties with no heat and or no hot water and this rate was typically maintained at circa 6-7 daily (Includes new repairs from previous day), with all these properties reported into SBC daily and all typically had an appointment to repair
- At 21st December as we moved into the Christmas holiday period we had only 3 properties with no and or no hot water all 3 of these properties had an appointment to repair on or before Christmas Eve 24th December and were ultimately left fully operational through the actual Christmas break
- Van stock review completed and new high value stock levels are with the repair engineering work force this too will improve the FTF rate
- Stocks of temporary heaters remain available reviewed daily and restocked to suit with engineers having direct access via supervisor/lead engineer should their personal stock on vehicles become exhausted
- Resource in terms of gas qualified operatives/engineers currently available on the ground to support servicing, repairs and reactive installation is currently at 13 which exceeds optimum numbers and includes 11 gas qualified engineers

- Overall the Liberty Contact centre has continued to improve month-on-month and during the period from 24th December – 2nd January all lines including day time & OOH's all calls being answered with an average speed of 51 seconds
- Within the call centre system there is also a call back facility for residents when there is just a service enquiry or a request to re-date a service appointment for example (Non-urgent enquiries) where we commit to call the customer back to close their enquiry – This call back is dealt with locally and responded to by the Stevenage dedicated administration team who typically call the customer back within 2hrs

### Complaints

Complaints have continued to fall most months and many are not upheld or only partially upheld.

#### **Outcomes of complaints January**

Upheld	Not upheld	Partially upheld	Total
7	8	3	<b>18</b>

#### **Outcomes of complaints December**

Upheld	Not upheld	Partially upheld	Total
7	5	4	<b>16</b>

We are also receiving a number of compliments about the engineers.

The contract is now well managed and responsive to our needs and the needs of our customers.

### Winter Plan

#### **Resource Plan**

During the winter season in the gas heating service delivery industry we will usually see an increase in call volumes to our contact centre as a result heating breakdowns in properties. This typically will occur through October to March; as a business Liberty has experienced many winter seasons and have an ongoing analysis of the results; learning lessons with a view to continuous improvement to facilitate consistency in our service delivery through the winter period. There will be three dedicated, including the Team Leader, administrators in support of the contract; also Liberty have a dedicated standalone contact centre based in Knowsley to support and ensure the calls from residents and the client are answered quickly and efficiently. All of these staff members have been involved in working with the SBC team through the summer period to date. They are all contract specifically trained; enabling them to deliver a service to an excellent standard as they are contractually

obliged to provide and of course at least achieve the expectations of our client/residents. With the anticipated increased demand in winter calls; Liberty's extended contact centre staff are also trained with a view to manage all. The Knowsley contact centre includes the out of hours team which of course is available 24hrs 7 days per week 365 days a year. There are currently 10x gas engineers, 1x plumber/wet worker and 1x electrician dedicated on contract. Liberty have also actively started to compress the servicing programme back into the summer period (This commenced over summer 2018) resulting in a reduction in volumes of annual servicing required through November-February releasing resource availability to support emergency breakdown & repairs on site.

On a daily basis Liberty will monitor weather reports to enable them to prepare for any adverse weather conditions effectively. The winter plan is to cope with all aspects of the season; Liberty Gas remain confident both the residents and clients will see consistency as we strive to achieve the excellent service we provide. All staff will be prepared for the winter season to ensure when required they can be available to work evenings/weekends in an effort to maintain consistency with our service delivery.

### **Emergency Contacts & Escalation**

John Fisher – Supervisor – In the field overseeing all aspects of the contract – 07469 150343

Dave Sandford - Contract Manager - Manages all aspects of the contract – 07880 034725

Ian Craig – Operations Director – 07780 034714

### **Temporary Heaters**

There will be 50 boxed oil heaters held at the local store; there will also be a stock of 100 heaters at the local store/SBC offices for re-stocking in the field when required. Heaters will also be on the Manager & Supervisor vehicles in support.

### **Customer Care**

Due to the increase of breakdowns we are likely to experience an increase in complaints/queries for compensation. Liberty's Enfield administration team in conjunction with Liberty Gas Supervisor are now consolidated and prepared for the upturn in resident contact. Liberty Gas now produce a daily "no heat & no hot water" report looking at yesterday's events and prioritising those properties for attention. As such Liberty Gas will endeavour to attend all properties with no heating & hot water the next day with a view to achieving full customer satisfaction with this major occurrence.

Liberty Gas has provided SBC with a link to the Liberty Group web site with a view to SBC applying to their own site. This link will take our customers direct to the “winter boiler problems” page; within that is suggestions to “soft fixes” that can be safely applied by the customer and may fix a problem quickly thus avoiding the customer have to wait for an engineer visit – Link detailed below

<http://www.liberty-group.co.uk/reporting-winter-boiler-problems>

Should there be a catastrophic failure in the Enfield office and with systems; there is a fall back contingency and administration support will be diverted to an alternative centre or where required/appropriate incoming calls will divert through to mobile phones placed in the office.

Contractors to provide provision to supply hot water and central heating to residents

There is no provision to supply temporary means of hot water, only to get residents systems working as soon as possible with efficient use of van stock. In the event a part is not immediately available from van stock then the repair engineer will be briefed with a view to making an appointment to return within 48hrs directly with the resident whilst the engineer is on site. Should this event occur during an Out of Hours visit the parts will be ordered the following morning, resident contacted by phone, an appointment made, and an engineer to return within the time frame referred to above. All engineers are briefed with a view to immediately escalating to a supervisor/manager; in any event when a boiler is turned off/disconnected for any reason. This process is applied at all times of the year, the supervisor/manager oversee the progress of the repair to ensure the property have services reinstated quickly & efficiently. In the event of any delay, the resident & client will be immediately informed and both supplied with an anticipated target completion date.

### **Training Requirements**

The Office Manager, Contract Manager and all relevant administrators are fully conversant with Liberty Evo operating system, the dedicated administrators have a working overview of individual administrator roles, as well as their specific day-to-day role as such; can lend support if required. In addition non-contract responsible administrators also have a working overview and will be used as contingency in the event additional administration support maybe required. The entire engineering group have the continued benefit of regular tool-box-talk sessions including briefings relating to operational contract specific requirements; this includes technical on site coaching where it is deemed appropriate.

### **Adverse Weather**

Through continuous monitoring and in the event that adverse weather reports are declared Liberty will endeavour to make reactive and appropriate adjustments with a

view to maintaining acceptable service delivery levels. We will be apprised of any anticipated negative impacts to the service delivery. During adverse weather events Liberty will prioritise breakdowns in terms of resident vulnerability; this may result in the delay of non-essential works; affected residents will be supplied with a non-urgent target completion date. It is not the intention of Liberty to cancel any planned maintenance work but in the event this becomes necessary it will be to ensure the any breakdowns are prioritised with a view to achieving minimal disruption to service delivery during these periods. In an event regular maintenance work is to be postponed the resident will be contacted and alternative appointments confirmed. All vehicles will be furnished with the winter packs to include de-icer, locked-icer, night before de-icer, screen wash, squeegee & sponge scraper, demister. In anticipation of extended periods of snow and ice road conditions it is proposed that a number of "snow socks" for vehicles will be available at local offices (Enfield) to be issued for use on vehicle as selectively required (grip is achieved through friction, coupled with specially developed high tech textiles. Snow socks are quick and easy to fit and remove - no special training is required). In really extreme periods of extended adverse weather the Liberty business has access to a suppliers nationally who will hold and make available 4x4 vehicles to Liberty, these vehicles can be requisitioned on demand by the business and will underpin the ability for Liberty to maintain a urgent emergency service during these extended periods of inaccessible areas due to restrictions caused by adverse ice & snow conditions.

### **Parts & Boiler Supplies**

Liberty's parts suppliers will increase stock levels in their outlet to reflect the increased volume of potential work during the winter season. The Liberty Gas parts usage is carefully reviewed as an ongoing process throughout the year to ensure we have sufficient and correct levels for the stock that are maintained. The suppliers will increase the ordering time lines available to Liberty; thus ensuring there is minimal delay for the delivery of spares to engineers, this should keep disruption to residents at a minimum. Liberty Gas will have available at the head office location a significant/appropriate level of spare parts stock, this can be drawn upon in the event of planned closure during the festive period for example; or in the event our supplier has an unplanned closure due to adverse weather.

This with a view to maintaining an acceptable service delivery ensuring wherever possible any resident is not compromised through waiting for parts, thus maintaining services relating to heating and hot water supply.

One combination boiler & one system boiler will also be held at the Liberty Gas office. The Contract Manager & Supervisor have access to the Liberty Gas office if engineers require parts.