

Verity Close Open House



Outcomes

25 Verity Close, 25 June 2019

Purpose of the Open House

This event was an opportunity to **show residents the progress** in refurbishing empty properties and **get their feedback** on the home to inform future works.

This is a landmark moment as it is **the first flat refurbished** for a resident to move into **under the Local Lettings Plan (LLP)**, a plan designed to alleviate overcrowding and give residents access to appropriate housing on the Lancaster West estate.

25 Verity Close is a one-bedroom flat on the second floor of a semi-detached building in Verity Close.

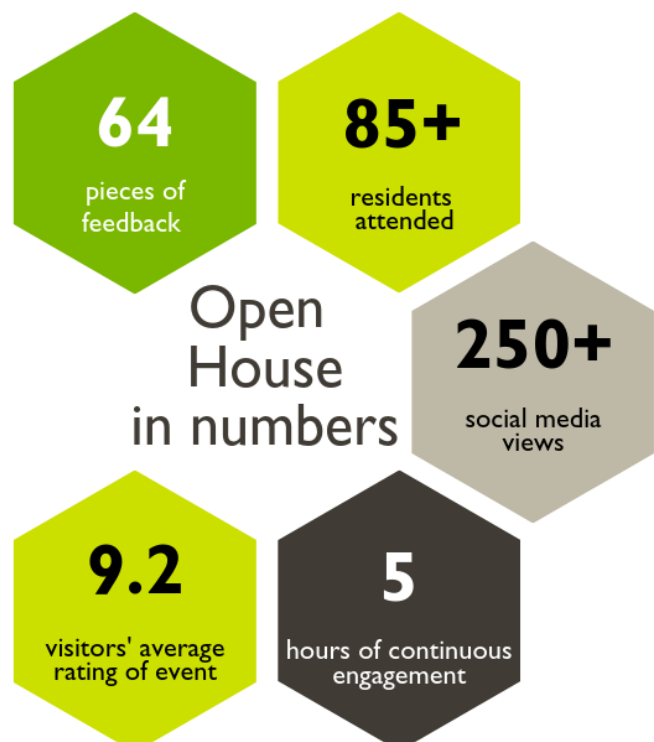
Feedback from Residents

The feedback on the bathroom, kitchen and finishing in the flat was overwhelmingly positive. Residents said that they “loved” the flooring, the doors, the change of boiler, and dimmable lights. They also said that the workmanship was of much better standard than what they had previously seen on the estate.

The most well-received part of the flat was the bathroom, with residents commenting “absolutely amazing, love it”. A few residents liked the provision of a bidet hose and felt that the bathroom was more bright and beautiful, with a very nice toilet, bath, and tiles. However, some residents have indicated a concern over having no windows in the bathroom.

Residents also liked the kitchen and bedroom. One resident commented that they liked that they could have a TV in the bedroom, and many residents expressed that they liked the deep sink and the flooring for the kitchen. One resident commented that it was “lovely, nothing to change”. There was nevertheless some concern about needing better ventilation in the kitchen as well.

While residents were generally impressed with the workmanship, residents expressed an overriding concern over ventilation and the “small flat space”. Some comments included “more space is needed”, “quite small bedroom”, “bigger bath needed”, and for the kitchen, “space for more appliances”. This may be because some visitors were looking to the LLP to



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find bigger property for larger families, and so felt that the flat was too small. A resident said that future Open Houses should show 3, 4 and 5-bedroom flats.

Some residents also expressed a sense of distrust, commenting “doubtful it will be delivered. We shall see when it happens”. Additionally, one resident has expressed “I hope the drains are fixed” in relation to the bathroom.

Table 1: Sample of feedback (see full list in appendix)

Positive Feedback (Total: 21)	Other Feedback (Total: 14)	FAQs (Total: 4)	Other Concerns (Total: 7)
“The finish is beautiful”	“Smart meter needed”	“Unsure of space for kitchen appliances”	“more space is needed”
“I want to move in today”	“Lack of ventilation, no windows”	“Where would a busy working couple put a dishwasher and tumble drier”	“doubtful it will be delivered, we shall see when it happens”
“Very very nice, doesn’t feel like social housing”	“Viewings of properties with 2,3,4 bedrooms”		“If only a couple lives her, why would they need so much room in the kitchen but not the bedroom”
“High standard, never expected this 😊 !”			

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Lessons Learned

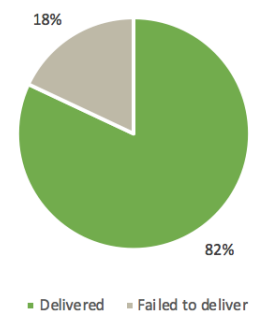
What went well:

The Open House was well attended, with a steady flow of people visiting throughout the day (2pm – 7pm). The time-slot allowed different groups of people to see the flat at their convenience. Visitors also appreciated the complimentary water and apples provided at the Open House.

In addition, logistically the rota went well. Everyone came during their allotted time and we had a mix of complementing skills.

The communications and promotion of the Open House was effective. The email sent through Mailchimp was opened by 287 individuals, equivalent to an open-rate of 65.9%. On Instagram, we posted a chain of real-time coverage of the Open House. In particular, the 360 degree videos recorded in different languages (the video in Arabic reached 117 views, and the video in Somali reached 75) achieved very high view rates, allowing residents that had language barriers or schedule constraints to see the flat virtually. Most of the residents also shared that they came to know of the Open House through the WhatsApp messages with their peers, and through the mobile text message sent by LWNT (82% delivered, 18% failed to deliver).

Text message campaign



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Things to improve and recommendations:

- Prep and staffing**
- Completing flat prep day before** ¹ The preparation was rushed. This was due to several reasons, but completing set-up of the flat the day before would reduce issues.
 - Longer renovation-to-open-house period** ² Where possible, we would benefit from having a longer period between completing renovations and the Open House (front door was fitted day-of). This will give the team more time to remove clutter and set up for the Open House.
 - Adding FAQs in invitation** ³ Residents could benefit from receiving FAQs about the renovations and LLP, which we could include in future invitations. This would pre-empt questions and help in briefing staff too.
 - Neighbourhood Management presence** ⁴ The Neighbourhood Management should be present for the open viewing. We should have at least 3 staff present at any time during the event (this may be subject to change depending on the size of the flat).
 - In-flat briefing** ⁵ The team would also benefit from having a thorough briefing *in the flat* before the Open House. Staff would be familiar with features so can inform guests.
- Signage**
- Fixing posters firmly** ⁶ Each poster should have 6 glue dots, and we also need more widespread wayfinding arrows in the estate.
 - Four, large sandwich boards** ⁷ There should be 4 sandwich boards that need to be bigger (A2) and we should also have A1 softboards at the event to allow more room for post-its
 - Signs on features** ⁸ Attaching the foam board descriptions to the corresponding features it explains will help residents to easily see the descriptions in context, and avoid having residents to cross-reference from the foam boards to the flat around them
- More systematic greeting process**
- Tracking numbers** ⁹ The high attendance wasn't systematically tracked, as some didn't sign out on the sign-out sheets (the total visitors was probably higher than 85).
 - Pro-active greeting and staff dedicated to front door** ¹⁰ Some residents came into the flat without being greeted or asked about anything. Everyone should have an initial greeting. A dedicated person should be on the door with an iPad to sign in (collecting name, mobile address, email, how they heard about the event) and ask for their consent to collect and store their information (GDPR compliance)

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Communications and Tech

- Multilingual captions** ¹¹ While the multilingual promo videos were very popular on Instagram, the captions for those videos should have been in their respective languages as well (ex: video in Arabic should have an Arabic caption).
In hindsight, we should have produced promotion videos in more languages, including English.
- Other channels** ¹² Additionally, we should make the videos available outside of Instagram, ideally accessible through a link (possibly hosted on Youtube).
- Video accessible** ¹³ Video recordings should also be available on the staff iPads so that if residents could not go up the stairs (limited mobility capabilities) to see the flat in person, we could still make them feel welcome by explaining the features of the flat through the video.
- More IG content** ¹⁴ We could post more content on Instagram (while being careful not to overflow the channel) making sure that each post is intentional and adds value.
- Staff member dedicated to comms** ¹⁵ A dedicated comms assistant on the day to take photos, do IG live, take videos in-flat would be better. Responsibilities for this were diffuse on the day.

Collecting feedback from residents

- Scoring** ¹⁶ We should apply a scoring system (1-10) to help quantify and standardize the feedback from residents – each post-it should have a score from 1-10 on it. Could also be done on an iPad when visitors leaving.
- Staff dedicated to feedback** ¹⁷ Having dedicated staff to help with collecting feedback would also be helpful.
- Larger softboards** ¹⁸ Softboards should be larger (A1) to accommodate more post-its
- Guiding feedback** ¹⁹ Being more explicit about what kind of feedback we want in post-it format

Local Lettings Plan (LLP)

- LLP briefing for staff** ²⁰ Many residents had questions about the LLP. We should include key LLP information in the briefing of staff, and we could also include LLP infographics at the Open House.
- Bring LLP forms** ²¹ We should also bring LLP application forms to Open Houses to allow residents to easily make an application if they're interested.
- LLP interest iPad registration** ²² Using the iPad to register residents' interest in the LLP and noting that we have given them a form

Health and safety

- Avoid over-crowding (fire safety)** ²³ Attendance was extremely high (especially considering the proportion of 85 residents to the total number of residents in Verity

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Close of about 160 people, though not all visitors were Verity residents). This highlighted the need for better crowd management and concerns around fire safety.

Staff should track attendance and ensure that if at maximum, crowd management is carried out. This might be making sure that new arrivals are notified that we currently reached capacity within the flat. It might also involve ushering out residents who have seen the flat and have questions.

Strategies of how to manage and keep new arrivals outside the flat, and alternative viewing capabilities (e.g.: showing the video recording of the flat) should be considered beforehand, and staff briefed about what to do in those situations.

First Aid

- ²⁴ There should be at least one first aid kit and one qualified first aid practitioner present at the Open House. This should be annotated in the rota so that coverage is clear.

Flat features

Appliances present

- ²⁵ Having a full kitchen installed, so residents can see the appliances in-situ

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Appendix I: Full Resident Feedback

This section shows the resident comments in full. Where a comment was repeated, it's indicated in the table box, for example "x 2".

Comments that commonly appeared are shaded in grey.

Comments that were noteworthy for being original are shaded green.

Appreciation of the deep sink and the flooring samples were valuable insight. Residents also pointed out the small size of the bath, that more sockets in the bedroom would be good, and that the flat was particularly hot (this may have been due to the number of people inside and it was a hot day outside). A resident had an interesting insight on the stigma around social housing – the flat felt too “nice” to be social housing. A young man in his late teens – important for being in an age range that is rare at these events – mentioned smart meters: it's common among his neighbours to run up high utility bills without realising and a smart meter might help address this.

Positive feedback that was very common revolved around the flooring, the bidet hose feature, internal fire doors and the high quality of the finishing.

	Kitchen	Bathroom	Bedroom	Fixtures and fittings	Overall
What residents liked	Like the deep sink	I love it I want everything	Love it, I'll take it	Great selection of flooring	I like it all
	Like the flooring	Bright and beautiful	This is beautiful, really lovely xxx	Nice walls	Its finish is beautiful
	new kitchen!	Absolutely amazing love it	Yes!	I like the floor x 2	The house is good
	extractor fan in the kitchen where no window	Could a b-day be better in here	Lighting dimmer switch fab	We love doors and flooring	I love - from no 22
	lovely nothing to change	Love the bidet tap x 3 Like the tiles	TV part in bedroom	Internal fire doors! Workmanship is much better standard	I love it yeah yeah yeah It looks amazin
		Nice toilet and bath		Amazing! :)	I want to move in today

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	Dimmer switch is great, heating, love all the doors	I love it all - flooring smh
	I like the fire doors, want them	High standard - never expected that!
	Like the doors	It's very very nice - doesn't feel like social housing
	Like the light	I don't want to go back to my flat after I've been here
		I love everything - amazing work!

	Kitchen	Bathroom	Bedroom	Fixtures and fittings	Overall
Things that could be improved	too few places for fridge/appliances	Bath too small x 2	More sockets	No place for aerial ports	Too hot no Ac/lack of ventilation x 3
	ventilation kitchen and bathroom	Hope you fixed the drains			Freeholders and leaseholders are they getting work inside their homes?
		"Finish" minor snags in bathroom			Where would a busy couple put a dishwasher/tumble-dryer?
		Needs a bigger window			Where would you put a sofa? Only a single chair seems to fit? TV?
					Where would you put a sofa/TV in living room?
					Windows: bigger and more?
					More space is needed
					Too many doors

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Letter boxes

Doubtful it'll be delivered - we'll see when it happens

Smart meter needed! People spend and then get high bills before they realise

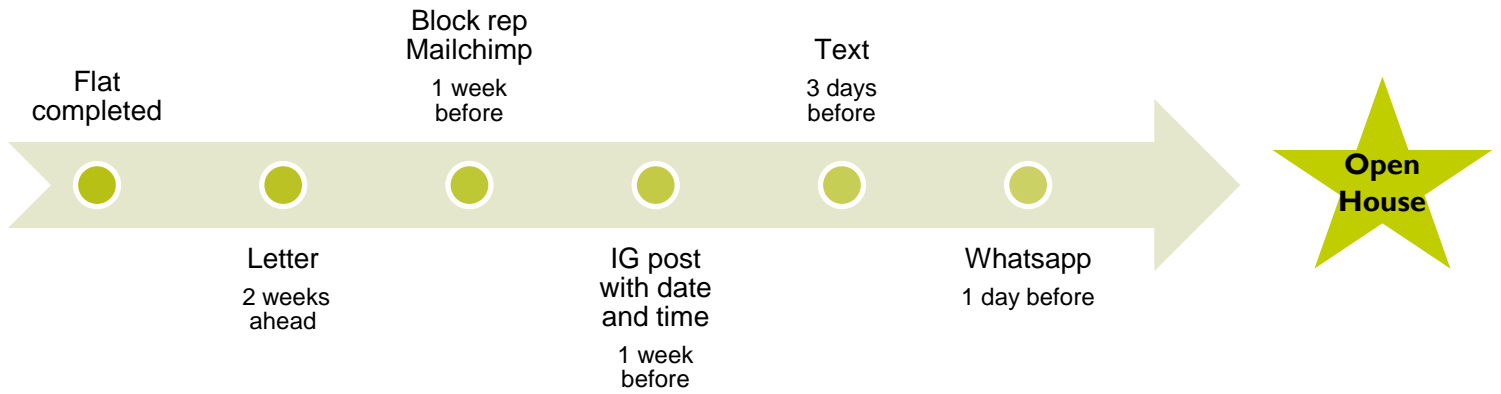
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Appendix 2: Communications Timeline



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Appendix 3: Materials needed

- Main Softboards
- Posters through doors



- 360 video, multi-lingual
- Door mat
- 4 x Fruit and tea
- 4 x Chairs and easels
- iPad and application/tool for registration
- 4 x sandwich boards

- Scoring/rating cards
- LLP application forms
- First aid kit
- Lanyards ask me badges
- Sign in sheets with rating
- Wayfinding signs
- Glue dots (6 per poster)