

## CLYDESDALE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

**Policy:** Customer Focus Policy & Standards  
**Date:** 12 June 2019  
**Lead Officer:** Depute Chief Executive  
**Review Date:** June 2022

### **Regulatory Standards: Standard 1**

The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.

#### **Guidance**

- 1.1 The governing body sets the RSL's strategic direction. It agrees and oversees the organisation's business plan to achieve its purpose and intended outcomes for its tenants and other service users.
- 1.2 The RSL's governance policies and arrangements set out the respective roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of governing body members and senior officers, and the governing body exercises overall responsibility and control of the strategic leadership of the RSL.
- 1.3 The governing body ensures the RSL complies with its constitution and its legal obligations. Its constitution adheres to these Standards and the constitutional requirements set out below.
- 1.4 All governing body members accept collective responsibility for their decisions.
- 1.5 All governing body members and senior officers understand their respective roles, and working relationships are constructive, professional and effective.
- 1.6 Each governing body member always acts in the best interests of the RSL and its tenants and service users and does not place any personal or other interest ahead of their primary duty to the RSL.
- 1.7 The RSL maintains its independence by conducting its affairs without control, undue reference to or influence by any other body (unless it is constituted as the subsidiary of another body).

### **The Scottish Social Housing Charter**

#### **1. Communication**

Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

#### **2. Participation**

Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

**Clydesdale Housing Association will provide this policy on request at no cost, in large print, in Braille, in audio or other non-written format, and in a variety of languages.**



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## **1. Introduction**

This document sets out our approach to achieving the highest possible standards of customer care. It is intended to be used consistently across each department and will form part of the planning, resourcing and delivery of our services.

## **2. The Scottish Social Housing Charter**

The Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter) is the key service delivery document developed by tenants for tenants. There are 16 outcomes in the Charter (not all of them are relevant to the Association). These are further broken down into key performance indicators and reported on annually. This annual return is called the Annual Report on the Charter (ARC). The Association is required to report to tenants each year on its performance against the key performance indicators.

There are three main areas within the Charter which are particularly relevant to this Policy. These are:

- Equalities
- Communication
- Participation

Each of these three areas has a separate Policy document which outlines the Associations' approach to delivering these outcomes.

## **3. Policy Objectives**

Clydesdale Housing Association is committed to providing the highest possible standard of service to you, our customers, within the resources available to us. We are committed to continuously improving our services to you and will on an ongoing basis, ask your opinion on how we can do this. We will use this feedback to improve service delivery to you. We will be open and honest in our practices, and promise to treat you as we would wish to be treated ourselves.

We have developed Customer Focus Standards which set out the standard of service you are entitled to enjoy.

Clydesdale Housing Association will ensure that:

- Our Customer Focus Policy and Standards are delivered to you
- Our Customers believe that they have experienced the highest standard of customer care in their dealings with us
- That a corporate approach to Customer Focus is adopted and sustained by us
- That we will not be complacent and will respond to your needs and aspirations on an ongoing basis

- Customer Focus Standards and behaviours outlined in the policy should apply equally to staff, agents, contractors, suppliers and anyone who does business in the name of Clydesdale Housing Association.

#### **4. Customer Focus Charter**

- Quality  
We will deliver high quality services making the best use of our resources.
- Commitment  
We will treat you fairly and with respect. We will deliver our promises to you, on time.
- Responsive  
We will be responsive to your enquiries and complaints. We will keep you advised on our activities and consult with you when major changes to services are planned. We will use your views to improve the quality of our services. The Complaints Handling Procedure is readily available to tenants and customers.
- Approachable  
We will always be approachable and professional.

#### **5. Definitions**

We have chosen the term “Customer Focus” because we believe it reflects more accurately, our approach to your needs and aspirations. Customer Focus to us means that our customers are at the forefront of all our activities.

Our customers are anyone who we provide a service to, or interact with to provide a service on your behalf and include:

- Tenants
- Sharing owners
- Owners
- Applicants to our housing list
- Staff
- Local Authorities
- The Scottish Government
- Contractors and consultants

#### **6. Achieving the Policy Outcomes**

Our performance in achieving the policy objectives will be monitored as follows:

- (a) **Performance Against the Customer Focus Targets.** This will be done by carrying out customer feedback surveys in relation to the

targets we have set and the processes we have in place. We will use a variety of methods including telephone interviews, interviewing a sample of customers who come into our office and where we have got it wrong, through our Complaints Procedure.

- (b) **Customer Satisfaction Feedback.** We will conduct formal customer satisfaction surveys every 3 years. On an ongoing basis, we will gather feedback from 40 of our tenants who have had a repair carried out in the previous month. The results will be used to improve service delivery.
- (c) **Policies and Procedures.** Customer Focus will be an essential feature of all our service user policies and procedures which will be made available to you.
- (d) **The Scottish Housing Regulator Thematic Studies.** The Scottish Housing Regulator from time to time carries out thematic studies in different areas of service delivery. The Association will consider recommendations made and adopt good practice examples where possible.

The above list is not exhaustive and the Association welcomes any suggestions from our customers on how we can improve our services.

## **7. Customer Focus Standards**

### **Customer Interaction**

What is meant by customer interaction? When you contact us we will:

- Use your preferred method of contact relevant to the issue we would like to raise with you or contact you about
- Treat you with dignity and respect at all times
- Listen to you and respond to your needs as quickly and efficiently as possible
- Be friendly, professional and accessible to you and take a pride in what we do on your behalf
- Say when we can and cannot help and explain what action you can expect from us
- Do what we say we will and keep you informed at all times
- Let you know what you can do if we fail you

### **Visiting the Office**

When you visit our office we will:

- Make sure our reception area is adequately staffed.
- Make sure your query is dealt with as quickly as possible to minimise waiting time and disruption to you

- Encourage you to arrange interviews with our staff by prior agreement as we would not like to disappoint you if you arrive speculatively to see a member of our staff
- Not keep you waiting when you have arranged an appointment
- Keep you informed if there is a delay in your appointment
- Provide you with a comfortable accessible waiting room
- Make sure there is interesting and informative information available for you to take away
- Where we cannot help, point out who can

### **Written Correspondence**

When writing to you we will:

- Provide you with information which is written in plain English and is jargon free
- Respond to written correspondence within our target timescales as detailed in Appendix 1 of this document
- Provide you with clear and accurate explanations about decisions which have been made

### **Information and Openness**

When providing you with information we will:

- Publish comprehensive and accurate information about the services we provide to you
- Respond to requests from you to see information held about you **as** outlined in our Privacy Policy.
- Provide every tenant with a Fair Processing Notice outlining what information we collect about you and how this is used.
- Not gather excessive information about you
- Treat information about you in confidence
- Respond promptly to provide information in a range of formats and languages
- The Association has a Facebook page and website where information is regularly updated.
- The Association is committed to providing a “paperless” service to tenants who provide an up-to-date e-mail address and expressed a desire for this service.

### **In Your Home**

When visiting you at home we will:

- Make sure all members of staff visiting your home carry an identification card with them
- Never enter your home uninvited unless we are required to as part of our obligations as a landlord.
- Behave in a professional and courteous manner
- Always explain the reason for visiting you
- Let you know what will happen following on the visit

- Not turn up at your house without a prior appointment unless there is a justifiable reason for doing so.

### **Customer Consultation**

Your views are important to us. In line with our Tenant Participation Strategy and Action Plan we will encourage you to tell us what you think about our services and will:

- Consult with our customers regarding key service user policies and service plans
- Make sure the consultation timescale makes it possible for you to get involved
- Use a variety of methods of consultation including newsletters, focus groups, interested individuals, the Association's web site and any other suitable mechanism which suits your needs
- Use the feedback you provide to improve our services and to influence policy making
- Publish the results of any consultation process using one of the methods detailed above

### **Performance Management**

We will set targets which are challenging but also realistic and let you know what these are and what you can expect from us. We will:

- Provide you with information on targets we set to improve our efficiency in key areas of our service delivery.
- Be committed to the principle of continuous improvement in the services we deliver to you

### **Equal Opportunities**

We are committed to equality and diversity in all areas of our service delivery to you. We will:

- Not discriminate against you regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- Ensure we are communicating with under-represented groups to ensure they have access to our range of services
- Arrange to visit you at home if a disability prevents you from attending our office
- Make sure information can be presented in a suitable range of formats and languages
- Make sure that where possible, we deliver the services to meet your particular needs, failing which, make a reasonable adjustment to accommodate your needs.

## **8. Our expectations of you, our customers**

We appreciate that the relationship between our customers and ourselves is a two way process built on mutual trust and respect. We expect that our customers will appreciate the standard of care extended to them and respond in a positive manner.

The Association has an extensive range of Service Delivery Policies and associated procedures which are developed based on The Scottish Social Housing Charter, The Scottish Housing Regulators Regulatory Framework, Legislation and Good Practice.

We think it is reasonable to ask our customers to:

- Be polite, courteous, non-abusive and non-threatening at all times
- Treat our staff with respect
- Come prepared and bring all necessary documentation with you
- Comply with all reasonable requests made by our staff
- Appreciate that from time to time we may not be able to help you
- Manage your expectations of the service we can provide to you
- That you do not make repeated complaints about issues already dealt with or resolved

## **9. Breaches of Policy Objectives and Standards**

We recognise that from time to time we may fail to deliver the standard of care you are entitled to. We actively encourage you to voice your concerns to us and we will make sure you know how to do this.

The principal aim of our Complaints Procedure is to resolve your dissatisfaction if possible, and to learn from our mistakes. The Complaints Procedure aims to make sure any complaints you have are treated fairly and sympathetically to ensure wherever possible a satisfactory outcome and to prevent any recurrence of identified problems to improve our service.

## **10. Policy Review**

This Policy will be revised every three years or earlier if changes to legislation or service delivery require it.

In achieving the policy objectives, ongoing monitoring will include involvement or consultation with tenants and or the Customer Scrutiny Panel or other appropriate tenant group.



## **APPENDIX 1: CUSTOMER FOCUS TARGETS**

### **Telephone Calls**

1. 90% of all telephone calls will be answered within 5 rings
2. 75% of all telephone enquiries will be resolved at the first point of contact
3. 90% of return calls to customers should be made within 24 hours
4. The use of voicemail will be restricted to 30% of staff time
5. The answer machine will only be used between the hours of 1.00 and 2.00pm and after 5.00pm 100% of the time.
6. You will be treated in a friendly, professional and courteous manner 100% of the time.
7. Answer phone or voice mail messages will be answered within 24 hours or the next available working day where the message is left on a public holiday 100% of the time.

### **Attending the Office**

8. 90% of all customers should not be kept waiting more than 5 minutes for their enquiry to be dealt with
9. 90% of all customers who have made a prior appointment should not be kept waiting more than 5 minutes.
10. We will endeavour to see 75% of our customers who have not made a prior appointment

### **Customer Correspondence**

11. 100% of all customer correspondence will be acknowledged within 3 working days
12. Staff will provide customers with a response to all enquiries within 10 working days. Where this is not possible, an interim letter will be sent out at the end of 10 working days explaining the cause for delay. (A full response will be provided as soon as is reasonably practical.)
13. An immediate automatic response is sent to the customer who has contacted the Association by email explaining that a response will be provided within 10 working days

### **Visiting your Home**

14. 100% of all appointments made to your home will be carried out within the date and time agreed with you. NB. This will not be possible if a staff member is off sick and there is no other member of staff available to make the visit. You will however be contacted to make you aware of the reason for non-attendance.
15. Re-schedule any missed visits within 3 days of return from staff absence.

16. We will provide you with feedback on the outcome of your visit 100% of the time.
17. We will follow-up any other issues raised with you during the visit, 100% of the time.
18. We will conduct ourselves in a professional, helpful and courteous manner 100% of the time.
19. In most cases, provide you with notice of our intention to visit your home but reserve the right to call unexpectedly to discharge our responsibilities as a landlord. If possible and practical, you will be contacted to let you know we intend to visit.
20. We will make sure that all staff and contractors visiting your home carry a clearly visit identification card with photograph.

### **Applications for Housing**

21. The Association is part of South Lanarkshire Council's Common Housing Register – "Homefinder". As a partner organisation we are required to comply with an agreed set of standards for:
  - Processing your application on Homefinder – 5 days to include the following:
  - Providing you with a new applicant statement including points awarded (provided all supporting documents are received at time of application)
  - Copy of appeals leaflet