

**Approved by Housing and Property Services
Sub-Committee 29 August 2019**

Date Issued	June 2009
Department	Corporate
Title	Customer Care Policy
Objective	To ensure that all of our staff and customers are aware of the high standards of service we aim to provide.
Responsible	Director of Housing
Next Review Date	August 2024

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 We are committed to delivering an excellent service to all of our customers.
- 1.2 This policy sets out our approach to achieving the highest standards of Customer Service and we will use it consistently in the delivery of our services.
- 1.3 We will produce detailed procedures for staff to follow and ensure that our staff are trained to deliver an excellent service.
- 1.3 We will aim to achieve the relevant Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes, particularly outcome 1 which states “every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect and receives fair access to housing and housing services”

2.0 Our Customers

- 2.1 Our customers are all of the people we come into contact with in the course of our work and include:
 - Tenants
 - Sharing Owners
 - Owners
 - Homehunt applicants
 - Members of the public
 - Local Authorities
 - Contractors and Consultants
 - Other organisations that we work with
- 2.2 Although this policy is mainly aimed at external customers, the standards set will also be applied to dealings between staff within the organisation and Management Committee members.

3.1 General Principles of Customer Care

3.1 In delivering this policy we will ensure that we adhere to our values:

professional, honest, reliable and friendly;

and that the following general principles are followed at all times:

- We will put our customers first and respect their rights, needs and opinions
- Our staff will always give their names when in contact with customers
- We will be polite, open, and truthful
- We will provide relevant, accurate information in Plain English or other formats such as audio cd
- We will listen to our customers, find out what they want and try to provide it
- We will comply with our Openness and Confidentiality Policy
- If we cannot help, we will explain why and, wherever possible, suggest someone who can
- For those customers who cannot come to our office, we will visit them at home

4.0 Visiting Our Office

4.1 Our office and web office will be open at times to suit our customers. Opening hours will be well publicised on our website, at the office, and, periodically, in our Newsletter. We will carry out adhoc surveys to ask for tenants' views on our opening hours to make sure that we continue to meet customers' needs.

4.2 Our office will be friendly, welcoming, comfortable, clean and tidy. We will provide adequate seating, private interview space and a range of information leaflets.

4.3 Where customers have special requirements, we will make any arrangements necessary including providing an induction hearing loop and interpreting services. Information about these services will be displayed in our office reception.

4.4 Customers will be encouraged to make appointments to see the person they need to see and avoid having to wait. Where an appointment has been made the customer will not be kept waiting. If a delay is unavoidable, we will tell the customer the reason for any delay and keep them informed about the likely waiting time.

4.5 Where an appointment has not been made, we will try to ensure that the customer sees the person they need to see and will tell the customer how long they may have to wait. If the staff member is not available or the

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customer is unable to wait, we will offer an appointment or the services of another staff member.

- 4.6 If we cannot help, we will always try to direct the customer to someone who can and make a referral where we have arrangements in place to do so.

5.0 Our Web Office and Website

- 5.1 Our web office will normally be staffed during the same opening hours as our head office.
- 5.2 Customers using the Live Help facility have the option of being provided with a written record of the advice given to them.
- 5.3 All information on our website will be clear, up to date and accurate.
- 5.4 Our aim is to provide 100% of services online, so that customers can access our services at times to suit them.
- 5.5 We will do all we can to ensure that anyone who wants to can use our website by using software designed to help people with particular needs, for example by subscribing to services such as “Browsealoud”, providing text resizing, translation tools, etc.

6.0 Written Communication

- 6.1 All letters and e-mails sent to customers will be clear, easy to understand and read, and will be written in Plain English.
- 6.2 Where we are unable to respond fully within the target response time, we will write explaining the reason for the delay and say when we expect to make a full response.
- 6.3 All letters will be sent in the name of the person dealing with the matter and will contain clear and accurate explanations about decisions that have been made. E-mails and SMS text messages will be sent from a central mailbox but will contain clear contact information.

7.0 Telephone Calls

- 7.1 We operate an automated telephone system which provides a range of options customers can select to get through to the department they want to speak to.
- 7.2 All telephone calls will be answered as quickly as possible. Staff will greet callers in a polite and courteous manner stating their name.

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- 7.3 During opening hours, we will only use Voicemail when staff are unavailable. Recorded messages will be audible and accurate, and callers will be offered the option of leaving a voicemail message or being called back when the staff member is available.
- 7.4 We use answer phones when the office is closed. Recorded messages will be clear, audible and accurate and will always give the caller the option of leaving a message. Messages will also inform callers of who they should contact in case of an emergency.
- 7.4 We will respond to answer phone messages at the earliest possible opportunity.

8.0 Home Visits

- 8.1 Where required, we will arrange appointments to visit customers at home during office hours. The customer will always be offered the option of changing the appointment to a time more suited to them.
- 8.2 If we are unable to keep an appointment, for example due to staff absence, we will notify the customer as soon as possible, explain why we cannot keep the appointment and arrange another appointment at a mutually convenient time.
- 8.3 All staff will carry identification and will show it to customers before entering their home.
- 8.4 We will explain the reason for visiting and what, if any, action will be taken following the home visit.
- 8.5 If the customer is not at home, staff will leave a calling card detailing who visited and why with contact information. Sensitive information will not be noted on calling cards.
- 8.6 We will usually make an appointment before visiting customers. However, there are occasions when staff may visit without prior notice, for example if they notice an issue with a property whilst passing by, or if they have had difficulty contacting a customer.

9.0 Customer Feedback

- 9.1 We will consult with customers on issues that affect them as detailed in our Tenant Participation Strategy.
- 9.2 When we consult or ask for feedback we will make sure that:

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- We provide all the information customers need to allow them to make an informed response
- We provide reply paid envelopes to customers who are not paper-free
- Customers can respond on line if they prefer to
- We use the feedback to improve our services and influence our policies
- We report the results to our customers

10.0 Customer Satisfaction

10.1 We will use a variety of methods to measure customer satisfaction including:

- A full, independent, Tenant Satisfaction Survey every three years
- Repair satisfaction surveys for every repair we arrange
- Post contract satisfaction surveys
- New development feedback surveys
- Post allocation feedback surveys
- Financial Inclusion Service feedback surveys
- Periodic surveys on specific services such as stair cleaning or garden care
- Short surveys on specific topics issued with our Newsletter

10.2 We will use the information gained from these surveys to improve our services and influence our policies.

10.3 We will report the results of these surveys, and what we are doing as a result, to our customers through our Newsletter and on elha.com.

11.0 When We Get Things Wrong

11.1 Although we will always strive to deliver excellent service, we acknowledge that we will sometimes make mistakes and will not always get things right first time.

11.2 We will make it easy for customers to complain, formally or informally, by publicising our Comments and Complaints Policy and making it readily available to anyone who wants to use it. Our website includes various ways for customers to give feedback, such as contact forms, “praise or grumble” and the Live Help service, as well as giving on-line access to, and information about, our comments and complaints service.

11.3 When we make mistakes we will apologise, put things right as quickly as possible and use the experience to improve our service in the future.

12.0 Monitoring and Review

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- 12.1 In consultation with staff we will set targets for all aspects of Customer Care and these targets will be reviewed annually.
- 12.2 We will report our performance against these targets to the Audit & Assurance Committee annually; and on elha.com, Performance 365 12 We will also publish performance results in our annual Performance 365 report.
- 12.4 The Director of Housing will ensure that this policy is reviewed by the Management Committee every five years.