



GROUP SERVICE STANDARDS POLICY

| POLICY IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST | |
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| Policy Guardian: | Chief Executive |
| Author: | Business Services Director |
| Version number: | 2.0 |
| Approved by Chief Executive on: | April 2016 |
| Governing Body Approved: | April 2016 |
| Effective from: | April 2016 |
| Due for review on: | April 2019 |
| Diversity compliant: | Yes |
| Equality Impact Assessment required: | Yes |
| Data Protection compliant: | Yes |
| Health & Safety compliant: | Yes |
| Procedure implemented: | |
| QL system changes made: | |
| KPIs / reporting arrangements implemented: | |
| Training Completed: | |
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| Posted on website: | |
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| Business Services – Implementation Review: | |

This document can also be provided in large print, braille, audio or other non-written format, and in a variety of languages.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Caledonia Housing Association Group (“the Group”) comprises Caledonia, Cordale and Bellsmyre Housing Associations. One of the Group’s key strategic objectives is the delivery of quality homes and services that are affordable, sustainable and valued by our customers. We are committed to providing high quality customer service and delivering our services in such a way that our customers are treated with fairness, courtesy, civility and respect.
- 1.2 The Group’s Customer Service Strategy provides a framework for our customer service aims and has been developed to ensure that we achieve high levels of customer satisfaction with the Group, and the services we provide, by focussing on key customer priorities. Linked to this, the Group has developed a range of service standards to advise our tenants and other customers on the level of service that they can expect from us. The standards will also be used to assess our performance in relation to customer service activities. This will involve identifying where we are performing well and also where we may need to improve. The standards will have three inter-linked elements:
- achieving the Scottish Social Housing Charter;
 - Customer Service Standards; and
 - Service Delivery Standards for key service activities.
- 1.3 Information on our service standards will be published and made readily available to existing customers and the wider community. We will also publish information on our performance against the standards on a regular basis.

2 THE SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER

- 2.1 This Charter was developed by the Scottish Government and introduced through the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. It sets out the standards and outcomes that all social landlords have to achieve in providing their housing services. It contains sixteen standards and outcomes and covers important areas such as our repairs services, neighbourhood management, how we allocate our homes and tenant participation. The standards and outcomes are summarised in Appendix One.
- 2.2 The aim of the Charter is to improve the quality and value of the services social landlords provide by:
- stating clearly what tenants and other customers can expect from social landlords, and helping them to hold landlords to account;
 - focussing the efforts of social landlords on achieving outcomes that matter to their customers; and
 - establishing a basis for the Scottish Housing Regulator to assess and report on how well landlords are performing.
- 2.3 The Group recognises the importance of these aims and is committed to achieving the standards and outcomes detailed in the Charter, and also to being accountable to our tenants and other customers for how well we do this. Linked to this, we will ensure that our performance management and reporting systems show how well we are achieving the outcomes; identify any areas where we need to improve; and enable us to report to our tenants and other customers and the Scottish Housing Regulator.

3 CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

- 3.1 Our Customer Service Standards detail the level of service that customers can expect when they contact the Group with a service query or request. Our aim will be to achieve

high levels of customer care on a consistent basis whilst also recognising the individual needs and preferences that customers have. The standards are detailed in Appendix Two (the contact details within the published versions of these will be amended to reflect each Association within the Group).

4 SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

- 4.1 The Group provides a wide range of housing and tenancy support related services. In order to ensure that these are provided to a consistently high standard we will consult with our tenants and other customers when we develop, review and implement Service Delivery Standards for key service activities. These will also link to the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter and to our Customer Service Standards.

5 CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

- 5.1 The Group recognises that service complaints represent an important source of customer feedback that can be used to improve levels of customer service. Information and guidance on our Complaints Handling Procedure is readily available through our Associations' websites, at our offices and on request from any member of staff. Information from our complaints activities will be used to inform our overall assessment of how well we are achieving the Group's service standards.

6 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 6.1 The Group's Equality and Diversity Policy Statement provides information on our commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity, including our approach to meeting legal requirements and regulatory expectations. Our service standards are founded on the basis that all our customers are different and an individual in their own right. The Group will act to provide all services in such a way that everyone is treated fairly regardless of their personal characteristics. We always try our best to find out what our tenants and customers individual needs are, and understand how we can meet them. We also firmly oppose all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

7 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 7.1 Our customer service aims are based on striving for continuous improvement through the management, delivery and monitoring of our service activities. Our performance monitoring systems, in line with this, will incorporate the service standards detailed in this policy as well as means of monitoring our performance against these. This will also involve providing feedback on the standards to our customers and the Group's governing bodies in line with the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The outcomes from our monitoring and review work will also be used more widely to inform future reviews of the Group's Customer Service Strategy.
- 7.2 Also, we recognise the important role that all members of the Group's staff team have to play in achieving our customer service aims. Performance monitoring outcomes will also be used therefore to inform learning and development opportunities for the staff team and the development of the service related policy and procedure guidance that underpins their work.

APPENDIX ONE – THE SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER: STANDARDS AND OUTCOMES

| THE CUSTOMER/LANDLORD RELATIONSHIP | |
|---|---|
| 1: Equalities | Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that 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: Communication | Social landlords manage their businesses so that 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. |
| 3: Participation | Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with. |
| HOUSING QUALITY AND MAINTENANCE | |
| 4: Quality of housing | Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by April 2015 and continue to meet it thereafter, and when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair. |
| 5: Repairs, maintenance and improvements | Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done. |
| NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY | |
| 6: Estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes | Social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure that tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe. |
| ACCESS TO HOUSING AND SUPPORT | |
| 7, 8 and 9: Housing options | <p>Social landlords work together to ensure that people looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them; and tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options.</p> <p>Social landlords ensure that people at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.</p> |
| 10: Access to social housing | Social landlords ensure that people looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being housed. |
| 11: Tenancy sustainment | Social landlords ensure that tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations. |
| 12: Homeless people | Local councils perform their duties on homelessness so that homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; |

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| | are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed; and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to. |
| GETTING GOOD VALUE FROM RENTS AND SERVICE CHARGES | |
| 13: Value for money | Social landlords manage all aspects of their businesses so that tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay. |
| 14 and 15: Rents and service charges | Social landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers so that a balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services, and how far current and prospective tenants and other customers can afford them; and tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including any details of individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants. |
| OTHER CUSTOMERS | |
| 16: Gypsies/Travellers | Local councils and social landlords with responsibility for managing sites for Gypsies/Travellers should manage the sites so that sites are well maintained and managed. |

APPENDIX TWO – CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

GROUP CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

We aim to provide a high quality service by providing our services in line with the following standards.

Our staff team

We will.....

- Greet customers politely and say who we are
- Deal with your enquiry in a professional and friendly manner
- Organise an interpreter, signer, translation or alternative format if you need this
- Keep you informed of the progress being made with your enquiry
- Contact you no later than the next working day if you need to arrange a home visit
- Deal with your enquiry in a confidential manner and ensure your personal privacy

Contact by telephone

We will.....

- Aim to answer your call within 30 seconds
- Try to deal with enquiries there and then without passing you on to someone else
- Tell you the name of the person who will contact you if we need to refer on your enquiry
- Contact you again no later than the next working day if we cannot answer your enquiry immediately
- Provide direct dial telephone numbers wherever possible and appropriate

Contact in writing, by email and through social media

We will.....

- Acknowledge emails, social media enquiries and letters that require a response by the next working day (that's not counting Saturdays and Sundays)
- Reply to emails and social media enquiries within 3 working days
- Reply to letters, that require a written response, within a maximum of 10 working days
- Provide clear responses that avoid the use of jargon
- Provide a contact name and details on all correspondence

Visiting our offices

We will.....

- See you within two minutes of your appointment time
- Provide a separate interview room if you wish to discuss your enquiry in private
- Try our best to deal with your enquiry if you call in without an appointment
- Arrange an appointment with the relevant staff member if they are not available when you call in
- Ensure as far as possible that our offices are fully accessible to those with physical disabilities or other mobility difficulties

Visiting you at home

We will....

- Display official identity badges
- Introduce ourselves and explain the reason for the visit
- Let you know if we will be delayed beyond the appointment time
- Leave a visit calling card if we were unable to speak to you

Service complaints

We will....

- Provide advice and assistance on how to make complaint if you are unhappy with any aspect of our service
- Fully investigate and respond to all complaints in line with our Complaints Handling Procedure

Involving you

We will....

- Provide clear up to date information on the services that we provide and our decisions on these
- Involve customers in regular reviews of our service activities and standards
- Provide opportunities for customers to provide feedback on our services and how well we deliver these
- Let you know what we have done in response to customer feedback and complaints

How you can help us

It is very important to us that all customers are treated with fairness, courtesy and respect. Likewise, please be patient, courteous and polite when you talk to us – it will be appreciated by our staff team.

How to get in touch

We always welcome suggestions on how we can improve our services, so if you have any ideas on this we would be delighted to hear from you. You can contact us in person, by telephone, in writing or by e-mail at:

Cordale Housing Association
1 Red Row
Renton
G82 4PL

Tel 01389 721216

Email: info@cordalehousing.org.uk