



## Offering our community more than a home

### Customer Care Policy

Management Committee submission:	August 2023
Last approved:	25 June 2019
Approved:	29 August 2023
Review date:	August 2026

#### CHA Objectives:

- To manage the houses provided, in a professional and cost effective manner, for the benefit of our local community and the environment.
- To ensure that our resources are adequate to deliver our objectives by investing in our people, demonstrating value for money and through robust procurement practices.
- To promote social inclusion by applying principles of equality and diversity to everything we do.

#### Regulatory Standards:

- The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.
- The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these objectives.
- The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.
- The governing body and senior officers have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective.

***This policy can be made available on request in a variety of different formats, such as on audio CD, in large print and translated into other languages.***

## **Introduction**

It is the aim of Clydebank Housing Association (and our representatives) to provide its customers with the highest quality of customer care. We further aim exceed our customers expectations with the service standards we provide by showing kindness and compassion.

We intend to fulfil the principles outlined in the Scottish Social Housing Charter's outcomes and standards, which include: -

### **The customer/landlord relationship:**

1. Equalities – 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 – 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.

Clydebank Housing Association has the following core values, which are integrated into our working practices and approach to interacting and dealing with people.

### **“Offering our community more than a home”**

We will achieve this by ensuring customers are always our priorities and by being....

- **Respectful** – we will treat all our customers with courtesy and respect
- **Accountable** – we will be open, honest and approachable and act with the highest integrity at all times
- **Responsive and Informative** – we will listen, respond and inform through effective and timely communication
- **Professional** – we will ensure we have the appropriate skills and strive for excellence in all aspects of our service

The policy has been developed to:

- Ensure that all service users know they will be treated as valued and respected customers and in line with our Equalities Policy
- Ensure that no customers are excluded from any area of service delivery
- Promote and increase awareness of our service standards so customers have criteria to measure performance such as the level of service they can expect and our timescales for dealing with their enquiries
- Encourage feedback on our standards and whether our staff are meeting them, to ensure that customers are receiving the highest possible standards of customer care

### **Who are our customers?**

Our customers are anyone who we provide a service to and interact with to provide a service and include:

- Tenants

- Sharing Owners
- Owners
- Housing Applicants
- Job Applicants
- Centre81 tenants
- Centre81 & Gym81 service users
- CHA Power Ltd customers
- Clydebank Social Economy Centre tenants
- Registered tenants organisations
- Members of the Association
- Members of the public
- Social media users
- Local media
- Board room hire customers
- Electric car charging point users
- Contractors
- Consultants
- Councillors
- Suppliers
- Local Authorities
- Other Housing Associations
- The Scottish Housing Regulator
- The Scottish Government
- Lenders; and so on

## **Customer Care Standards**

### **1. At all times we will:**

- Be polite and helpful
- Treat everyone fairly and with respect
- Listen to you and ask for your view about our services
- Give information in ways you find easy to understand
- Not keep you waiting without an explanation
- Admit when we have made mistakes and try to put things right
- Invest in our staff training and development and staff support to provide you with the best possible service
- Be committed to the principle of continuous improvement in the services we deliver to you

### **2. When you telephone us we will:**

- Answer the call quickly
- Tell you who you are speaking to
- Offer to take a message or arrange to call you back if the person you need to speak to is not available
- Call you back if you are cut off for any reason
- Reply to telephone messages within one working day (24 hours)\*
- Provide a telephone service for emergency repairs outside our opening times
- Use our answer machine only when it is necessary

- Arrange for a translation service if you do not speak English

*\* we will ‘sense check’ the request/repair and respond sooner where appropriate ie. emergency repair timescales start at the time we receive the call*

### **3. When you write to us we will:**

- Reply to your letter, fax or email within 5 working days. Let you know if we can’t give a full reply within 5 working days, e.g. investigation of a complaint
- Reply to your Housing Application form within 10 working days
- Respond using language that is easy to read and understand
- Provide information to you in the best format for you, such as large print, in another language, or on audio CD or USB

### **4. When you need information from us we will:**

- Make it as easy as possible for you to request information (ie. we do not need most requests in writing)
- ‘Sense check’ the request and prioritise sooner than our timescales for response where appropriate
- Open our offices at 77-83 Kilbowie Road, Clydebank G81 1BL (Tel: 0141 9411044) from 9am - 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am–4pm on Friday; with the exception of the first Wednesday morning each month between 9am-2pm when the office will be closed for the purpose of staff training. Details of public holiday closures/other essential closures will be notified to you through our newsletter, telephone answer message, poster case at reception, social media accounts and on our website
- Make sure that our office, social media accounts and website contain up-to-date information on our services
- Strive to provide you with exactly the information you have requested
- Provide information which is useful and easy to understand
- Write in plain English with no jargon

### **5. Information we will provide to you:**

- Produce a newsletter at least four times a year and an Annual Report once a year
- Produce other newsletters, when we have any new information to give you; and
- Provide you with a statement of your Rent Account annually for those tenants not in receipt of housing benefit paid directly to the Association
- Provide owners with factoring invoices twice a year
- Respond to information requests under Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation within the timescales stated and per our Policy

### **6. When you give us information we will:**

- Treat all information we hold about you sensitively and in confidence
- Work to make sure the information we hold about you is correct
- Only hold information about you that is important for our work

- Work within the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) including timescales for disposal of information

**7. When you want to make an appointment we will:**

- Arrange an appointment at our offices, in your home or online
- Make the appointment for a time to suit you see you within 5 minutes of it
- Tell you as soon as possible if we cannot keep the appointment

**8. When you visit our office we will:**

- Greet/acknowledge you straightaway
- Make sure our reception area is accessible and welcoming
- See you within 5 minutes of your appointment time
- Try to see you within 10 minutes if you do not have an appointment, however, if unsuitable, an alternative appointment can be arranged
- Offer a translation service if required
- Offer you a private interview room
- Provide a meeting room that is accessible for people with disabilities
- Maintain and promote an induction loop facility in our reception area, interview rooms and board room

**9. When we visit your home we will:**

- Be on time or, if delayed, call you to let you know when we will arrive
- Show you suitable identification
- Explain the reason for the visit
- Respect your home and all reasonable customs
- Leave a card if you are out, telling you how to contact us

**10. When you make a complaint we will:**

- Reply to your complaint within 5 days or sooner, except where detailed investigation of your complaint is required. In that event, we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 3 working days of receiving it, advise you who is dealing with your complaint and respond to you within 20 working days or sooner
- Tell you how to take the complaint further if you are not satisfied; and
- Monitor complaints and any trends or themes arising to help us learn from them and improve our services
- If we get it wrong we will:
  - Apologise
  - Make every effort to put it right
  - Amend/improve our procedures accordingly
- Report on our complaints performance quarterly to our Management Committee

**11. When you contact us on social media we will:**

- Acknowledge receipt of your message by automated response
- Reply to you within 5 working days or sooner

## **12. When you report a repair we will:**

- ‘Sense check’ the request/repair and respond sooner than our timescales for response where appropriate ie. emergency repair timescales commence as soon as we receive a call
- Provide professional, competent maintenance contractors who will:
  - Be polite, professional and respectful whilst in your home
  - Provide you confirmation of their identity
  - Strive to complete jobs within our published timescales
- Provide an out-of-hours service by way of our emergency contractor and providing emergency numbers
- Operate the Right to Repair

## **13. When providing information about your payments we will:**

- Consult with tenants over annual rent increases
- Usually give tenants at least one month to respond to consultations
- Give at least 4 week’s written notice before your payment amount is changed
- Provide you with a statement of your rent account or factoring account on request
- Offer you a variety of ways to pay your accounts
- Advise you of our independent welfare rights service, provided by the Citizens Advice Bureau
- Provide you with the opportunity to clear arrears by agreed instalments
- Maximise income from all service users by taking a firm action on arrears

## **14. When you wish to apply for a job with us we will:**

- Apply the principles of our Recruitment Charter (included within our recruitment packs)
- Respond to your request for an application by the end of the next working day
- We will acknowledge receipt of your applications by return email as soon as possible
- We will provide constructive feedback to unsuccessful interviewees

## **15. Ways in which we support excellence in customer care:**

### **15.1 Communication and Support for Staff**

We consistently and continuously try to increase and enhance communication and support within our staff team so that they can correctly inform/advise our customers, including:

- Modern and informative housing system, internal intranet, telephone system and timekeeping software
- Induction process which highlights the importance of customer care and complaints management
- Regular staff meetings and staff training including customer care and complaints

- Staff have access to a wide range of information and advice in a central location
- Sharing of good news and good practice is encouraged
- Staff are encouraged to further their learning and development
- Range of employment benefits and internal recognition including Employee of the Year Award

## **15.2 New Tenant Initiatives**

- Starter pack
- Gym81 voucher
- Café81 voucher
- Decoration voucher
- Welcome Card from the Chief Executive
- Welcome card from the Caretaker (Radnor Park)
- New tenant gift (Radnor Park – distributed on behalf of our residents group)

## **15.3 Existing Tenant Support**

- Welfare rights service
- Tenancy sustainment service
- Hygiene/cleaning packs
- Food/fuel vouchers
- Digital lending library
- Monthly ‘cuppa and a chat’ sessions with the Chief Executive
- Bike storage in estates
- Community benefits secured from all large contracts
- High level of quality communications
- Regular, popular events
- World kindness day celebrations
- Free electric charge points in estates
- Financial and in kind support to residents groups
- 24/7 Tenant Portal
- Access to Centre81 services
- Kindness vouchers/tokens

## **15.3 Supporting tenants and Other Customers**

- Formal and informal community benefits
- Chief Executive and Estate Management thank you cards
- Access to Centre81 services (Centre81 is our community centre)
- Support to local groups with similar aims

## **16. What can you do to help us?**

Your responsibilities to help us achieve these standards include:

- Being polite when speaking to us
- Paying your rent, service charges and factoring management charges on time

- For tenants to take reasonable care of your home
- Reporting to us any repairs we are responsible for as quickly as possible
- Giving us access to your home to carry out repairs and safety checks
- Repairing things you are responsible for as quickly as possible
- Behaving in a responsible way towards your neighbours and other people
- Keeping an appointment we made with you, or telling us if you can't keep it
- Read the information we send you
- Give the information we ask you for when we need it
- Give constructive feedback in order that we can improve our services to you

## **17. Monitoring**

We will monitor our customer care standards in a wide variety of ways including through:

- Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- Tenant Satisfaction Surveys
- Owner Satisfaction Surveys
- Repairs & Maintenance Satisfaction Surveys
- Tenancy Sustainment Satisfaction Surveys
- Complaints upheld/service improvements/trends/themes
- Compliments register
- Internal audit
- Telephone system monitoring
- Translation/interpretation records
- Regular Health and Safety audit of premises
- Equality & Disability Action Plan review
- Report to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) (ARC report)
- Social media accounts
- Data protection reports
- Annual report performance
- Publications
- Consultation paperwork
- Arrears Policy

## **18. Performance Management & Feedback**

We will provide you with information (through our quarterly newsletter) on key areas of our performance in customer care and in particular, complaints.

Your views are important to us and we encourage you to tell us what you think about our customer care service, good or bad – we want to hear from you. Your ideas for improvement will be considered for a future policy review.

## **19. Equal Opportunities**

Clydebank Housing Association is committed to promoting social inclusion by applying principles of equality and diversity to everything we do.



Clydebank Housing Association will ensure equality of opportunity across the full range of our activities, including both employment and service provision.

We will not discriminate on the grounds of Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, and Sexual Orientation.

Accordingly, we will monitor the composition of our Governing Body, our Staff and our Tenants to enable positive action to be taken, where necessary, ensuring that our services are accessible to all.

## 20. Linked Policies/Documents

- Equal & Diversity Policy
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Information in Different Formats Procedure
- Tenant Participation Strategy
- Communications Strategy
- Customer Engagement Policy
- IT Strategy
- Data Protection Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Complaints Handling Procedure
- Factoring Complaints Handling Procedure
- Tenant/Owner/Repairs and Maintenance Satisfaction Survey Results
- Repairs & Maintenance Policy
- Right to Repair Policy
- Training (Staff & Volunteers) Policy
- Recruitment & Selection Policy

## 21. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in consultation with our customers and staff in 3 years or sooner as dictated by good practice or changes in guidance or legislation.

### For Office Use Only – Required Actions

Customer Consultation Required/Arranged	Yes
Intranet Update	Yes
F Drive Update	Yes
Website Update	Yes
Leaflet change required?	Yes
Newsletter Promotion?	Yes
Other information updated, e.g. posters, automatic email responses, post cards, answering machine messages, etc.	Yes
Equality Impact Assessment completed	Yes