



## **CUSTOMER SERVICES POLICY AND STANDARDS 2015**

### **1.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

The Association is committed to providing an effective, caring and responsive service to its customers. Our overall objective is to ensure that our statutory, regulatory and contractual duties are fulfilled and that we provide services that:

- ✓ meet customers' needs
- ✓ are easy for customers to access and use
- ✓ customers are able to influence

We aim to achieve this by using a range of methods to:

- ✓ find out what customers need and want
- ✓ deliver services which meet their requirements
- ✓ seek their views about services and taking these into account in decision making
- ✓ report back to customers the way their views have altered our services

### **2.0 SETTING STANDARDS IN SERVICE DELIVERY**

We will monitor the effectiveness of the services we provide by offering opportunities for tenants to rate the service we provide and make comments for their improvement. The main method of doing this will be three yearly Customer Satisfaction Surveys which will be conducted, to the standards required by the Scottish Housing Regulator, by Independent and accredited social research contractors. The results and the action plan arising from them will be reported to our Involved Residents Group and Registered Tenant Organisations, and published in our Newsletters.

We will encourage participation in consultation through the use of monthly prize draws for all who participate by returning surveys, comment cards or text messages. All who do so will be entered into a prize draw and a monthly prize of £30 will be won.

We will monitor the level of satisfaction with our strategic services, through large scale surveys commissioned each 3 years. Following the completion of a survey in 2013, we have set the following targets for 2016

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Target</b>
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service	95%
Percentage of tenants who have had repairs and maintenance carried out in the last 12 months satisfied with the service	95%
Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and outcomes	95%
Percentage satisfied with opportunities to participate in decision making	90%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	95%
Percentage of new tenants satisfied with condition of their home	95%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in.	85%

### **3.0 INVOLVING CUSTOMERS IN PLANNING**

Prior to amending any aspect of Policy or Service which will have a significant effect on services to tenants or other customers, we will develop a consultation plan setting out who is to be consulted, how the consultation is to take place and over what period.

We will use a variety of methods to engage customers in strategic and specific planning:

#### **3.1 Strategic Planning**

We will involve service users in the planning, design, reporting and analysis of surveys. We will ensure that samples reflect the composition of our customers and all groups are included

#### **3.2 Specific Policy and Service Review**

- ✓ Consultation with Involved Residents and Registered Tenants Organisations
- ✓ Use of service- specific surveys and consultation with affected customers

We will report to our decision making Committees how the views of customers have been taken into account in developing our services. We will report back to customers on how their views have been taken into account.

We will review the Consultation Plan and whether it achieved its objectives. Our aim is to identify appropriate and effective tools of consultation which achieve good levels of participation.

During the life of this Policy, the Association will consider whether it can establish a programme of Tenant Led Inspections to influence service development.

#### **4.0 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

We set a broad range of targets in relation to performance in our Corporate Management Plan and Policy statements. These documents are available, on request, to the public.

We will report annually to customers in respect of targets set and on our annual achievements in terms of performance achieved. We will invite customers to comment on our targets and performance, and take their views into account where possible.

The Association will provide such information in a clear, comprehensive and accessible format that allows tenants to identify how well the Association is performing in key areas of service to tenants including:

- ✓ Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service (Indicator 1)
- ✓ Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services (Indicator 3)
- ✓ Percentage of 1st and 2nd stage complaints resolved by the landlord  
Percentage of all Complaints Responded to within the SPSO timescales (Indicator 5)
- ✓ Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making process (Indicator 6)
- ✓ Percentage of Homes meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (Indicator 7)
- ✓ Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home (Indicator 10)
- ✓ Average length of time to complete emergency repairs (Indicator 11)
- ✓ Average length of time to complete non-emergency repairs (Indicator 11)
- ✓ Percentage of reactive repairs carried out in the last year that were completed Right First Time
- ✓ Percentage of properties requiring a gas safety record that had a gas safety check and record completed by the anniversary date (indicator 15)
- ✓ Percentage of tenants who had repairs and maintenance carried out in the last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service
- ✓ Anti-social behaviour cases concluded within timescale (Indicator 19)
- ✓ Rent collected as a % of rent due (indicator 30)
- ✓ Void loss as a percentage of collectable rent (indicator 34)
- ✓ Average Calendar Days to relet properties (indicator 35)
- ✓ Average weekly charge per apartment size (context 17)

Information will be presented in a format and manner to enable our performance to be compared with other landlords that are local and provide comparable services in our area of operations.

#### **5.0 COMMUNICATION**

Ochil View Housing Association recognises the importance of good communication links with its customers and will aim to ensure that information produced is provided to customers in a range of ways. The methods used will be

suitable to the specific needs of different groups of customers. To achieve this aim, the Association will:

- ✓ Arrange to provide written communications in different languages, where appropriate
- ✓ Arrange for language interpreters, including sign language, to be present at interviews, where appropriate
- ✓ Provide audio tapes for customers with reading difficulties on request or where it is apparent to staff that such material is provided
- ✓ Provide information in large print, Braille or on audio tape for customers who have visual impairments on request or where it is apparent to staff that such material is provided
- ✓ Produce newsletters for tenants twice a year and involve tenants in the design and content;
- ✓ Produce information regarding proposed changes to policies practices or services which could affect customers
- ✓ Make information about its services available at its offices and other venues used by customers
- ✓ Maintain a web site and Facebook page
- ✓ Provide written information and hold meetings for tenants when we carry out investment work in their homes
- ✓ Monitor the effectiveness of communications through customer surveys

## **6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

Ochil View Housing Association has an Equalities and Diversity Policy which is designed to eliminate discrimination on unlawful or unfair grounds and to promote positive action where necessary to redress the effects of past discrimination and to promote equality and diversity in all aspects of the Association's business.

## **7.0 CONFIDENTIALITY**

Ochil View Housing Association has an Data Protection, Access To Information And Confidentiality Policy (2010 )which sets out how the Association will conduct its business in an open and accountable manner whilst, at the same time, ensuring that personal and commercial confidentiality is maintained where appropriate. The Association is registered with the Information Commissioner, and will manage Personal Data in accordance with the terms of its registration.

## **8.0 LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS AND POSITIVE FEEDBACK**

We aim to provide services that meet customer's needs. However there may be occasions on which we do not do so. We positively welcome complaints as feedback on the services we provide. We have set out our approach to dealing with complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction in our Complaints Handling Procedure. This is published on our website and a paper copy is available on request.

We also analyse and assess learning opportunities that arise from positive comments and feedback

## **9.0 TRAINING**

The Association will ensure that all appropriate staff receive formal training on the subject of customer care and will ensure that all staff understand the importance and value of good customer relations with a view to providing polite, helpful, friendly and courteous service at all times. It is the responsibility of staff who deal directly with customers to record expressions of feedback and complaints within our Complaints recording system. It is the responsibility of managers to seek to collate the views of tenants in expressions of feedback and complaints and use these to enhance service delivery, where possible.

The Association will ensure that formal written policies and procedures are in place for all aspects of its activities and that these are understood by staff. It will aim to minimise the likelihood of mistakes through effective staff training, supervision, performance management and performance monitoring.

## **10.0 PUBLISHED CUSTOMER SERVICES STANDARDS**

To enable the better understanding of our Customer Services Standards, the Association has published a Guide to our Customer Service Standards and a copy is attached to this leaflet as Appendix One.

## **11.0 REVIEW**

The policy will be reviewed at least every 5 years

Graeme Wilson  
Head of Customer Services  
07 January 2016

### Policy Review Process and Consultation

Reviewed by Involved Residents Group	22nd July 2015
Reviewed by Management Team on	4 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
Recommended by the Customer Services Committee on	12 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
<b>APPROVED BY THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ON</b>	26 November 2015
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	<b>November 2020</b>



## **GUIDE TO CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Ochil View Housing Association Limited is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 and with the Scottish Housing Regulator No HAL 213. Ochil View Housing Association Limited is a recognised Scottish Charity No. SC033130. Our Property Factor Registration Number is PF000367.

We operate within Clackmannanshire and the western part of Fife to provide high quality, affordable social rented housing. As a landlord and property manager the Association provides a range of services to residents but it also offers advice and information on housing options to members of the public.

Our Customers include tenants and members of their households, applicants for housing, former tenants, home owners who receive management and property maintenance services from Ochil View. These standards do not apply to commercial or voluntary organisations with which Ochil View may have contractual or partnership agreements.

In all its activities the Association is committed to providing the highest possible standard to customers both in the quality of the services and their delivery. These Customer Service Standards set out these standards so that everyone knows what they can expect from the Association and what to do if we fail to achieve these.

At all times we will:

- ✓ Treat you with courtesy and respect.
- ✓ Deal with your enquiry efficiently and in a professional way.
- ✓ Ensure that our staff are able to provide you with the highest possible standard of service.
- ✓ Avoid the use of jargon.
- ✓ Treat you fairly, irrespective of your status in regard of your age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation.
- ✓ Provide the assistance you need to communicate effectively with us, including a loop system for people with impaired hearing and interpretation and translation services where required.
- ✓ Make our offices and our services accessible to everyone.
- ✓ Treat all information you provide us with in the strictest confidence.
- ✓ Fulfil any commitment we make to you.

## **2. CONTACTING US**

Our Office opening hours are 9:00 am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday. Sometimes we will close the office for staff training or for other reasons. We will do this only if absolutely necessary. If this happens we will:

- ✓ Publish the dates of any planned office closure in our Tenant's Newsletter and on our website
- ✓ Send a text message if the closure is at short notice

The office is closed on Public Holidays, including:

- ✓ Christmas
- ✓ New Year
- ✓ Easter
- ✓ May Day

We will advise you of any other holidays on which we are closed. We will advise you by:

- ✓ Including this information in our Tenant's Newsletter
- ✓ Publishing this information on our website and Facebook page

When the office is closed we will:

- Have an answering machine message on our telephone that gives information about when the office will reopen and how to contact our emergency repairs service
- Have an emergency repairs service in place

**You can contact us by:**

Writing to: Ochil View Housing Association, Ochil House, Marshall Alloa FK101AB

Telephone on: 01259 722899

Email to: [customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk)

Text: 07860020474

Our website is at [www.ochilviewha.co.uk](http://www.ochilviewha.co.uk)

Outside office opening hours, contact details and a message can be left on the Association's answering machine. All messages will be dealt with on the day they are left (if the office reopens on that day), or the next working day.

**When you phone us we will:**

- ✓ Answer the phone quickly.
- ✓ Greet you in a friendly and consistent manner.
- ✓ Speak clearly.
- ✓ Identify the Association and state who you are speaking to
- ✓ Keep the time your call is put on hold to a minimum and advise you of any delays in dealing with your enquiry.

If we cannot immediately answer your enquiry we will give you a timescale for getting back to you or identify the most appropriate person within the organisation for you to talk to.

If the person you need to speak to is not available, you will be given the choice of:

- ✓ Speaking to another member of staff.
- ✓ Leaving your contact details and the officer you wish to speak to will call you by the close of business unless you have been told otherwise.
- ✓ Leaving a message that will be attended to as soon as possible.
- ✓ Arranging an appointment to speak to the officer.

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

- ✓ Provide offices that are accessible for people with disabilities.
- ✓ Display useful information about the Association and its services
- ✓ Deal with you as soon as possible, identify ourselves and ask you the nature of your enquiry or who it is you wish to speak to.
- ✓ Make sure our reception area is clean and tidy
- ✓ See you within 5 minutes of your appointment time. If we cannot do this, we will tell you what the cause of the delay is.
- ✓ Try to see you within 10 minutes if you do not have an appointment, however, if unsuitable an alternative appointment can be arranged
- ✓ Offer translation or interpreting service if required
- ✓ Offer you a private interview room

If the frontline staff cannot deal with your enquiry we will identify the most appropriate person for you to talk to and, if they are not available, we will give you the choice of:

- ✓ Speaking to another member of staff.
- ✓ Leaving your contact details and the appropriate member of staff will contact you by the close of business that day unless you have been told otherwise.
- ✓ Leaving a message that will be attended to as soon as possible.
- ✓ Arranging an appointment to speak to the most appropriate member of staff

**When we make appointments to meet with you in your home or in the office we will:**

- ✓ Make the appointment for a time to suit you. This will be outside our office opening hours, if necessary
- ✓ Tell you as soon as possible if we cannot keep the appointment.

**When we meet you either at home or in the office we will:**

- ✓ Conduct ourselves professionally at all times.
- ✓ Be polite and courteous and never use bad or offensive language.
- ✓ Introduce ourselves clearly and show you proof of identity. If you are in any doubt if a caller to your home claiming to be from the Association is genuine please do not hesitate to call the office before letting them into your house.



- ✓ Not use the facilities within your house without your permission.
- ✓ Respect your home and all reasonable customs of behaviour
- ✓ Have shoe covers which we will wear to protect your floor coverings, on request.
- ✓ Be adequately prepared for the meeting.
- ✓ Explain ourselves clearly and in a manner that you understand, avoiding the use of jargon or unnecessary legal terms.
- ✓ Offer to help you with any forms that you need to fill in that are directly connected with your tenancy or your application for housing.
- ✓ Respect your right to confidentiality and to seek your permission to discuss personal tenancy issues in front of anyone else present.
- ✓ Give you accurate and relevant information and advice.
- ✓ Make sure your enquiry is dealt with as quickly as possible and, where appropriate, keep you updated on what is happening.
- ✓ Leave a card if you are not at home when we called, advising who called, when they called, the reason for the visit and how to contact us to rearrange

Contractors and Consultants who visit your home on the Association's business are required to observe the same standards of behaviour

#### **When you write to us or email us we will:**

Please note the Customer Service Standards set out below refer to general enquiries, for specific matters such as Complaints, or matters related to your Tenancy other times for response are set out in the relevant Policy

- ✓ Acknowledge receipt of your letter or email within 5 working days.
- ✓ Deal with your enquiry and send you a written response within 10 working days or, if there is a delay, write to you with an explanation.
- ✓ Provide you with a clear, understandable written response to your enquiry.
- ✓ Where appropriate, advise you of your right to appeal if you are not happy with the response.
- ✓ Give you a contact name and number for further information or discussion.
- ✓ Where appropriate, provide you with a pre-paid envelope if you are required to return paperwork to the office.

#### **When we hold public meetings we will:**

- ✓ Ensure that public meetings will be arranged, as far as possible, to meet the needs of those attending.
- ✓ Provide assistance such as help with transport costs or costs of dependent care to enable interested parties to attend meetings.

#### **What we will expect from you:**

It is important to remember that, as a customer of the Association, you are also expected to conduct yourself correctly. The Association will not accept verbal or physical abuse of staff and when in contact with staff you are therefore required:

- ✓ Not to use bad or offensive language or to be verbally abusive or aggressive.

- ✓ Not to threaten staff either verbally or physically.
- ✓ To treat staff courteously and with respect.
- ✓ To be patient and allow staff time to get the information you require.

If you do not meet these standards of behaviour, we may warn you and then end the meeting with you if the behaviour is repeated. If you are physically aggressive or assault members of staff we will terminate the meeting immediately and advise the Police. We will record this and we may limit the contact we have with you in the future as a result.

This and this may affect our ability to provide a service to you, or the service our contractors are able to provide to you.

You are also asked to recognise our legal right to work in a safe environment and you are therefore asked to respect and co-operate with any request from staff not to smoke in their presence during any meeting in your home.

### **Keeping you informed about our activities and services**

The Association wants to make sure that you are able to make informed choices and decisions on all matters relating to your housing and your housing options. To this end we will:

- ✓ When you report a repair to us we will keep you fully informed about the progress of that repair until it is satisfactorily completed
- ✓ Provide you with the information and advice you may need to make your decision. If we are not able to do these ourselves we will seek to assist you in finding appropriate agencies to help you.
- ✓ Clearly display our own information leaflets as well as those provided by other relevant organisations and services in our office and provide useful links on our website
- ✓ Publish all our Policies on our website. Paper copies are available on request
- ✓ Publish details of our performance in meeting both internal and external standards and targets.
- ✓ Maintain a relevant, informative and up-to-date website.
- ✓ Produce an Annual Review of our activities.
- ✓ Produce Newsletters for residents

### **Consulting you about the services we provide to you:**

The Association has a Tenant Participation Strategy and is committed to consult all service users. We welcome the opinions and comments of service users on how we can make improvements. We will therefore:

- ✓ Complete large scale surveys of service users view's as required by the Scottish Housing Regulator
- ✓ Carry out surveys of service users on various aspects of the services and information we provide.
- ✓ Encourage people to submit their comments, opinions and views about the service(s) they receive.

- ✓ To plan consultation in advance to ensure we are consulting with the correct customers in the most effective ways
- ✓ Encourage service users to give feedback, positive or negative about the service they receive.
- ✓ Make use of the information we gather in surveys, consultation exercises or via submitted comments and suggestions to improve the range and standards of services we provide.
- ✓ Consult with service users on any new or reviewed policies that deal with the services they receive from the Association.
- ✓ Consult with any Registered Tenants' Groups, the Involved Residents Groups and the Register of Interested Tenants
- ✓ Report the result of any consultation exercise to the Association's Customer Services Committee for consideration.
- ✓ Where appropriate incorporate the results of consultation the Association's policy and/or procedures.
- ✓ Reply to participants in consultation to advise them of the outcome of consultation
- ✓ To review consultation exercises, participation rates and effectiveness to try and increase participation rates in the future

### **3. PROTECTING THE INFORMATION WE HOLD ABOUT YOU**

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 rules of the Data Protection Act.

Further information is available in our Data Protection, Access to Information and Confidentiality Policy. This is available on our website and a paper copy is available on request

### **4. MAKING AN APPEAL OR COMPLAINT**

Unfortunately, there may be times when we get things wrong and you do not agree with a decision made or feel aggrieved at the way you have been dealt with by a member of staff. On these, hopefully rare, occasions the Association wants to be given the opportunity to investigate what went wrong and, if necessary, take steps to put it right.

The Association has a Complaints Procedure and a copy is on our website and a paper copy is available on request.