



CUSTOMER SERVICES AND STANDARDS POLICY 2021

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

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

- ✓ meet service users' needs;
- ✓ are easy for service users to access and use;
- ✓ service users can help to influence.

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

- ✓ find out what service users 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 service users the way their views have altered our services.

2.0 SETTING STANDARDS IN SERVICE DELIVERY

2.1 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 made available on our website and published in our Newsletters. Following the completion of our large scale survey held in 2019, we have set the following targets for 2021/2022.

Activity	Target
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service	92%
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	91%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	89%
Percentage of new tenants satisfied with condition of their home	96%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in.	85%
Taking into account the accommodation and the services Ochil View Housing Association provides, to what extent do you think that the rent for your property represents good or poor value for money?	77%

2.2 The Association will often use smaller scale surveys when seeking feedback on specific services or policies. We will encourage participation in consultation through the use of monthly prize draws for all who participate by completing 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.

2.3 We have a range of other engagement opportunities available for our tenants to communicate with us on the services we provide such as: -

- ✓ Feedback through My Home
- ✓ Focus Groups
- ✓ Register of Interested Tenants
- ✓ Registered Tenants Organisations
- ✓ Estate Walkabouts

2.4 Our Tenant Engagement & Communication Strategy 2021 will set out how we will develop and support engagement opportunities and how we will communicate with tenants. The Strategy has an Action Plan which also sets out the objectives of the Strategy in more detail. This will continually be reviewed and updated as it progresses with a formal review every 3 years.

3.0 INVOLVING SERVICE USERS

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

3.2 We may involve service users in the planning, design, reporting and analysis of a survey. If we are only issuing a survey to a sample group, then we will ensure it reflects the composition of our service users and all groups are included.

3.3 We will use a variety of methods to consult with service users including: -

- ✓ By Post
- ✓ Online Surveys
- ✓ Face to Face
- ✓ By Telephone

- ✓ By Text Message or Email

3.4 We will report to our decision making Committees how the views of service users have been considered in developing our services. We will report back to service users on how their views have been considered.

3.5 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.

4.0 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

4.1 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.

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

4.3 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. This includes the following performance indicators that are reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator in the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) each year:

- ✓ 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 2)
- ✓ Percentage of all complaints responded to in full at stage 1 and 2 (Indicators 3 & 4)
- ✓ Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making process (Indicator 5)
- ✓ Percentage of Homes meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (Indicator 6)
- ✓ Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home (Indicator 7)
- ✓ Average length of time to complete emergency repairs (Indicator 8)
- ✓ Average length of time to complete non-emergency repairs (Indicator 9)
- ✓ Percentage of reactive repairs carried out in the last year that were completed Right First Time (Indicator 10)
- ✓ Percentage of properties requiring a gas safety record that had a gas safety check and record completed by the anniversary date (indicator 11)
- ✓ Percentage of tenants who had repairs and maintenance carried out in the last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service (Indicator 12)
- ✓ Percentage of tenants satisfied with the landlord's contribution to the management of the neighbourhood they live in (Indicator 13)
- ✓ Anti-social behaviour cases which were resolved in the last year (Indicator 15)
- ✓ Void loss as a percentage of collectable rent (indicator 18)

- ✓ Percentage of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money (Indicator 25)
- ✓ Rent collected as a % of rent due (indicator 26)
- ✓ Average length of time to relet properties (indicator 30)

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

5.1 Ochil View Housing Association recognises the importance of good communication links with its service users and will aim to ensure that information produced is provided to service users in a range of ways. The methods used will be suited to the specific needs of different groups of service users. 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 recordings for service users 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 recordings for service users who have visual impairments on request or where it is apparent to staff that such material is provided;
- ✓ Produce newsletters for tenants three times per year;
- ✓ Produce information regarding proposed changes to policies practices or services which could affect service users;
- ✓ Make information about its services available at its offices and other venues used by service users;
- ✓ Provide information on the Associations website, Facebook page, Twitter account and other social media services;
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Invite tenants to attend Estate Walkabouts and publish results of these

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

6.1 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

7.1 Ochil View Housing Association has the following policies with regards to Data Protection, Access to Information and Confidentiality:

- ✓ Access to Information Policy 2019
- ✓ Data Subject Request Policy 2019
- ✓ Privacy Policy 2019

These policies set 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

8.1 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

9.1 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 service users 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.

9.2 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

10.0 To enable the better understanding of our Customer Services Standards, the Association has published a Guide to our Customer Service Standards, this is attached to the Policy.

11.0 REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed at least every 5 years

Linda McLaren
Housing Services Manager
13 August 2021

Policy Review Process and Consultation

Consultation with Tenants	June 2021
Reviewed by Senior Management Team on	27th July 2021
Recommended by the Customer Services Committee on	5 th August 2021
APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT	
Date of Next Review	August 2026

For Approval



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, homeowners 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 service users 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
- ✓ Publish the dates on our website
- ✓ Post a message on our social media pages e.g. Facebook and Twitter
- ✓ Place a notice on the tenant portal My Home
- ✓ 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 these dates and 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
- ✓ Post a message on our social media pages e.g. Facebook and Twitter
- ✓ Place a notice on the tenant portal My Home
- ✓ Send a text message in advance

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 us on: 01259 722899

Email us at: service.userservices@ochilviewha.co.uk

Text us on: 07860020474

Our website is at 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 and tell you who you are speaking to 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 suitable to 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:

- ✓ 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 another appointment.

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:

- ✓ 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.

Please note the Customer Service Standards set out above 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.

When we hold public meetings, we will:

- ✓ Ensure that public meetings are arranged as far in advance as possible, to meet the needs of those attending;

- ✓ Provide assistance to those attending such as providing transport, help with transport costs or the 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 any such incident 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 can find further information in our Unacceptable Actions & Expected Behaviours Policy.

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 can 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 this 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;
- ✓ Maintain relevant information on our social media pages i.e. Facebook and Twitter;
- ✓ 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 Engagement & Communication 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 service users 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, 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 in the Association's policy and/or procedures;
- ✓ Reply to participants in consultation to advise them of the outcome of consultation or publish the results on the Associations website;
- ✓ 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 General Data Protection Regulations.

Further information is available in our Access to Information Policy and Privacy Policy. Both these policies are available on our website and paper copies are 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.

For Approval