

RAILWAY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

The Association is committed to delivering high quality services at all times, that provide value for money to our customers. We have consulted with residents and staff to set standards for our services. These standards are about meeting the needs and expectations of our customers and creating a service of which we can all be proud.

If we fall below these standards we will apologise and try to put things right.

This leaflet sets out the main service standards that customers can expect. We will monitor the key standards and publish the results in our residents' newsletter.

1. Equality & Diversity

All customers will be treated fairly and equally irrespective of race, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, disability, age, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.

We can provide information in large print, Braille, on audio tape and language translations on request. An interpretation service is also available.

We will ensure that our public offices meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

2. Customer Care

We will: -

- Aim to be easy to contact, helpful, responsive and efficient.
- Provide a clean, safe, accessible, comfortable, user friendly office environment providing appropriate levels of information and service.
- Treat all customers with courtesy and respect at all times.
- Treat all enquiries and information confidentially, in accordance with our Data Protection policy.
- Clearly and honestly explain the reason(s) if unable to help a customer
- Provide telephone lines open between 8.30 am and 4.30 pm Monday to Friday with an out of office hours service for reporting of emergency repairs. Occasionally, it may be necessary to use an answer-phone during office hours. However, this will only be used during exceptional circumstances and will be checked at least once each hour for messages.
- Reply to letters within 10 working days

RAILWAY HOUSING ASSOCIATION CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

3. Applications for Housing & Re-letting Vacant Properties

We will let vacant properties to those applicants in greatest housing need from the client group for which the property is designated; making best possible use of available stock and where possible creating balanced communities. We will: -

- Aim to assess new applications for housing within 14 days.
- Contact all applicants twice each year to check if their circumstances have changed.
- Set and monitor a target time for the re-letting of vacant properties.
- Set and monitor a target for the number of vacant properties that are re-let each year to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) applicants.
- Aim to visit each new resident within 6 weeks of the start of their tenancy .

4. Mutual Exchanges

In response to a request to carry out a mutual exchange, we will reach a decision and notify the applicant(s) within 42 days of receiving the application.

5. Contact with Residents

To keep residents informed we will: -

- issue an information handbook to new residents and leaseholders
- offer each resident a twice yearly home visit
- hold twice yearly residents' meetings at each sheltered scheme
- hold leaseholders' meetings twice a year at each leasehold scheme
- send a newsletter to residents four times each year, including an annual report
- include details of our policies and other useful information on our website and in the residents' newsletter

6. Complaints

We will try to resolve complaints effectively and as quickly as possible. We aim to: -

- acknowledge receipt of a complaint within 2 working days
- reply to a complaint within 10 working days of receipt
- monitor the level of satisfaction with our complaints procedure
- inform residents of any changes that are made to policies and procedures as a result of a complaint

7. Disabled Adaptations

We are committed to the provision of adaptations in order to restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity for individuals and their families. We aim to: -

- provide minor adaptations (for example, grab rails or lever taps) within 4 weeks of receiving a request
- make a referral to the appropriate local council within 4 weeks of receiving a request for a major adaptations (for example, level access showers or stair-lifts)

RAILWAY HOUSING ASSOCIATION CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

8. Anti Social Behaviour

We aim to ensure that all residents enjoy their right to peace, quiet and security in their homes. We will: -

- respond to complaints of anti social behaviour within 10 working days (in exceptional circumstances where the complainant may be at serious risk, we aim to respond within one working day)
- monitor resident's level of satisfaction with our response to complaints of anti social behaviour

9. Harassment & Domestic Violence

The Association will not tolerate any form of harassment, and will take prompt and effective action. We aim to: -

- respond to complaints of harassment or domestic violence within 5 working days (if the complainant may be at serious risk, we aim to respond within one working day)
- monitor resident's level of satisfaction with our response to complaints of harassment and domestic violence

10. Repairs & Maintenance

We are committed to providing safe, comfortable homes that are well maintained. We will aim to: -

- Complete emergency repairs within 24 hours
- Complete urgent repairs within 7 days
- Complete routine repairs within 31 days
- Carry out annual safety inspections of all gas appliances that are owned by the Association.
- Consult with residents before carrying out any planned maintenance or improvement work
- Survey residents after every repair and improvement works to find out their opinion of the work
- Visit to check 12% of repairs that are completed

11. Debt Recovery

We aim to avoid rent arrears and other debts arising by taking preventative action, providing good advice on benefits and reinforcing the importance of prompt payment. We will: -

- offer a number of different ways for residents to pay their rent and other charges
- send quarterly rent statements
- collect 100% of the rent due
- Minimise rent arrears and recover all debts including service charges, court costs and rechargeable repairs by taking prompt, effective and sympathetic but firm action.

RAILWAY HOUSING ASSOCIATION CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

12. Access to Information

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 customers have the right to ask to see information held about them by the Association. We aim to respond to requests for access to personal information within 40 days.

13. Resident Involvement

We are committed to the rights of residents to be involved in the management of their homes. Opportunities will be promoted to encourage involvement in all aspects of service delivery to a level that is appropriate to the wishes of both individuals and residents' groups. We will: -

- Consult with residents about any major changes to our services.
- Regularly survey residents for feedback on the quality of our services.
- Monitor the level of resident's satisfaction with the types of activity we offer for involvement in the management of their homes. These currently include surveys and questionnaires, suggestion scheme, residents' associations, focus groups, armchair monitoring and Board membership.
- Encourage involvement by offering practical support such as child care costs, travel expenses, accessible venues and refreshments.

14. Suggestion Scheme

This scheme was set up in response to a request from our residents so that they could easily submit their ideas for improving our services. We aim to: -

- Acknowledge the receipt of a completed suggestion form within 3 working days.
- Reply to a suggestion within 10 working days to advise the resident of the outcome.
- Publicise any changes to services made as a result of a resident's suggestion.

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