

RHA



Railway Housing Association



Customer Service Standards

www.railwayha.co.uk

CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

The Association is committed to delivering high quality services 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, gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

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

We will ensure that our public offices are accessible and meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

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; and if applicable, direct them to other organisations who may be able to help
- Ensure that all staff carry photographic identification to show when visiting residents
- Offer a range of methods for customers to contact us including face to face, by letter, fax, email, telephone, text and via website
- 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 for messages within the next working day
- Acknowledge letters, emails and text messages within 2 working days and reply in full within 10 working days
- Ask all residents for their preferred method of contact and find out if they have any particular needs or vulnerabilities that need to be taken into account when delivering services
- Use plain language when communicating with customers.

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 each year to check if their circumstances have changed.
- Provide an annual summary to each applicant about our waiting lists and lettings
- 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
- Ensure each vacant property meets our lettable standard before being re-let
- Provide an energy performance certificate to each new resident
- Provide a gas safety certificate to each new resident moving into a home that has a gas supply and gas heating appliance
- 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 tenants and leaseholders
- Hold twice yearly residents' meetings at each sheltered scheme
- Hold leaseholders' meetings twice a year at each leasehold scheme
- Send a newsletter to tenants four times each year, including an annual report
- Include details of our key 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
- Contact complainants to discuss their complaint and how they would like it to be resolved
- Reply to a complaint within 10 working days of receipt
- Monitor the level of customer satisfaction with our complaints procedure
- Monitor the level of customer satisfaction with the outcome of complaints
- 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
- Provide minor adaptations within a shorter timescale if the applicant is waiting to be discharged from hospital or other exceptional circumstances
- Make a referral to the appropriate local council within 2 weeks of receiving a request for a major adaptations (for example, level access showers or stair-lifts)
- Monitor resident's satisfaction with newly installed adaptations.

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)
- Contact complainants each month (or weekly if the complaint is of a more serious nature) until the case is resolved or closed
- Monitor resident's level of satisfaction with our response to complaints of anti social behaviour.

9. HARASSMENT, HATE CRIME & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Association will not tolerate any form of harassment, hate crime or domestic violence and will take prompt and effective action.

We aim to: -

- Respond to complaints of harassment, hate crime 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, hate crime 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
- Monitor residents' satisfaction with the repairs service and any improvement works
- Inspect 10% of repairs and any repairs that cost more than £750 to check the quality of the work.

11. ESTATE MANAGEMENT

We will carry out inspections of each scheme, including any communal areas, at least twice yearly

12. 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
- Provide a breakdown of rent and service charges at the start of new tenancies
- Give 28 days notice, and an explanation, of any change in rent or service charges
- Send quarterly rent statements
- Aim to collect 100% of the rent due
- Offer advice on welfare benefits and debt advice; and direct residents to specialist advice organisations
- Minimise rent arrears and recover all debts including service charges, court costs and rechargeable repairs by taking prompt, effective and sympathetic but firm action.

13. 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, in accordance with the legislation.

14. 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 and use this information to ensure that we are meeting the aspirations of current and future residents
- 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, residents' associations, focus groups, Scrutiny Panel, Resident Forum and Board membership
- Encourage involvement by offering practical support such as child care costs, travel expenses, interpretation and translation services, hearing loops, accessible venues and refreshments
- Inform residents how their views have been taken into account and used to improve our services.

Contact Details

We provide a management service to residents' from our Head Office at Bank Top House, Garbutt Square, Neasham Road, Darlington DL1 4DR

Telephone: 01325 482125

Free phone number 0800 0287428

Website: www.railwayha.co.uk

The office is open from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm Monday to Friday. Our offices are closed at weekends, on bank holidays and between Christmas and New Year.

English

Information can be made available in other languages, or other formats such as Braille, large format or audio tape, on request.

Arabic:

يمكن توفير المعلومات بلغات أخرى و صيغ أخرى مثل طريقة بريل أو شرائط سمعية ، حسب الطلب

Bengali:

আপনি অনুরোধ করলে এই তথ্যগুলি অন্য ভাষাতে, অথবা অন্য কোনো মাধ্যমে যেমন ব্রেইল-এ বা অডিও টেপে, পাওয়া যেতে পারে।

Somali:

Faahfaahinta waxa kale oo aad ku heli kartaa luuqadaha kale, ama siyaabo kale, sida Farta waaweyn ama canjal maqal ah, waana in aad soo codsato.

Turkish:

Talep üzerine bu bilgi diğer dillerde veya görme engelliler için kabartma alfabesi ve ses bandı formatında da temin edilebilir.

Urdu:

یہ معلومات دیگر زبانوں اور دوسری صورتوں میں (نمائندہ افراد کے لیے خصوصی عبارت) یا آڈیو ٹیپ پر بھی فراہم کی جاسکتی ہیں۔

Railway Housing Association

Bank Top House, Garbutt Square, Neasham Road, Darlington DL1 4DR
Tel: 01325 482125 Fax: 01325 384641 www.railwayha.co.uk

Registered Social Landlord: A1855 Registered Charity: 216825

MEMBER OF THE HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SERVICE

