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Department		Operations

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Notes

Customer Care Policy

Abertay's Mission Statement

“Abertay aims to enhance the quality of life in our communities.”

1. How we designed this Customer Care Policy

This policy has been drafted based on best practice guidance from the Chartered Institute of Housing and SFHA. We have also used the principles outlined in the Scottish Social Housing Charter in relation to service delivery. These are:

Standard 1 Equalities- *“every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognized, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.”*

Standard 13 Value for Money- *“tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay”*

2. Other policies that support our Customer Care policy

Code of Conduct for Contractors
Code of Conduct for staff
Complaints Policy
Tenant Participation Policy
Data Protection Policy

3. Definitions

This policy uses the following terms:

Customer – this is someone who directly uses our services such as a waiting list applicant, tenant or owner.

Stakeholder – this covers people or Organisations that we deal with in the course of delivering our services and includes suppliers, contractors, members of the Common Housing Register, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) and Dundee Health & Social Care Partnership.

4. Our customer care principles

Principle 1 - We will design our services from a customer perspective

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This means that we will identify the purpose of a service, and what matters about how it is delivered, from a customer point of view. We will then design the service to make sure that we do those things, and only those things, that matter. If we make sure that there is no duplication, unnecessary paperwork or bureaucracy then the outcome will be a better service for our customers

We recognise that customer needs can vary from customer to customer and also that they change over time. We will therefore continuously monitor our services to ensure that they reflect the current needs of our customers and are flexible enough to respond to the individual needs of each customer.

Principle 2 - We will deliver our services:

- **first time and one-stop**

We aim to deal one-stop with customer demands (whether in person, by phone or other method) at the point of first enquiry and to ensure the CSA Team provide superb service to our customers.

For example, if a tenant phones in to report a repair the Customer Service Assistant taking the call will be able to deal with the request and arrange an appointment for tradespeople to carry out the repair. In this example the tenant has been dealt with 'first time' (they only had to make one call) and it has been dealt with 'one-stop' (they only had to speak to the person who answered the phone and were not passed on to someone else).

Sometimes an issue may need a specialist to deal with it but when this happens the member of staff first contacted will take responsibility for identifying the right person to deal with the issue and ensure that it **is** dealt with.

- **at a convenient time and place**

We will provide our services in a variety of ways to provide choice to our customers about how they deal with us – office, retirement complexes, telephone, mail, email, internet and home visits.

We will offer an appointment system for repairs, home visits and for customers who wish to arrange a convenient time to visit the office.

We will continuously review our operating hours and methods of service delivery to ensure they are flexible enough to match the needs of our customers. We will provide an out of hours' emergency repairs service.

Our premises will always comply with current legislation regarding accessibility and will be clean and welcoming.

- **in a professional but friendly way**

We will be knowledgeable, courteous, friendly and helpful at all times.

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Our target is to answer the phone within 10 seconds. We will ensure that any lost calls are kept to a minimum of 5% or less of total calls answered. The public counter will be manned at all times during opening hours and we will seek to have sufficient staff on duty to ensure there are no queues or waiting time.

We will respect customer confidentiality and privacy and provide private interview rooms when required. Our Data Protection Policy ensures that we comply with relevant legislation on the security of personal data that we hold.

When visiting customers at home we will tell you who we are and display proof of identity. We will treat your home with respect and clean up after carrying out any work.

- **using clear and simple communication**

We will ensure that all our communications are clear and easily understood. We will follow the best practice guidance of the Plain English Society and avoid the use of jargon or bureaucratic language.

Where appropriate we will ensure that written information is provided in special formats - e.g. large print, audio tape, ethnic minority languages etc.

Should English not be the customers 1st language then we will use the 'Happy to Translate' toolkit if appropriate. Staff members are also able to use the services of the Translation Service to help facilitate with sign ups and viewings etc.

Principle 3 - We will measure our performance and use this information to design improvements to our services

- We will measure our performance and share this information with our customers and stakeholders by publishing it annually in newsletters and annual reports.
- Performance will be measured against the principles outlined above as well as best practice benchmarks prescribed by the SHR, SHN and SFHA
- We aim to contact every tenant at least once a year to consult with them on the quality of our service and improvements that could be made.
- We aim to provide the highest quality service at all times. However we recognise that there may be times when people are dissatisfied with our performance. We will always try to resolve problems directly with customers in such cases but we also have a formal complaints procedure which ensures that customers can make a complaint in a variety of ways The Link to Complaints procedure is here: <M:\Procedures\Current Procedures\Complaints>. All Stage 1 complaints can be escalated to Senior Management if the customer remains dissatisfied.
- We will conduct customer satisfaction surveys and specific consultation events to get feedback on our performance and consult on improvements.

5. Policy Review

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We will review this policy in light of any comments, suggestions or complaints made either informally or formally by our customers. We will also review the policy to take account of any changes in legislation, best practice advice or changes in other relevant policies.

The policy will be reviewed every 4 years or in the event of a change in legislation.