



<b>CUSTOMER SERVICE</b>
<b>CUSTOMER CARE POLICY</b>
<b>April 2025</b>
<b>Next Review Due April 2028</b>

Policy on :	Customer Care
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Compliant with Charter :	<p><b>Charter Ref No. 1: Equalities</b></p> <p>Social Landlords perform all aspects of their housing service so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every tenant and other customer have their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.</li> </ul> <p><b>Charter Ref No.2: Communication</b></p> <p>Social landlords manage their businesses so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.</li> </ul> <p><b>Charter Ref No.3: Participation</b></p> <p>Social Landlords manage their business so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants &amp; other customers find it easy to participate in and influence landlords' decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.</li> </ul>
Compliant with New Regulatory Framework:	<p><b>Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management: Standard 1,2 and 4.</b></p> <p><b>Standard 1:</b> The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.</p> <p><b>Standard 2 :</b> The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities</p> <p><b>Standard 4:</b> The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies</p>

	and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose
<b>Compliant with Community Engagement Strategy:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Compliant with Equal Opportunities :</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Compliant with Business Plan:</b>	<b>Objective 2: <i>Refine our Customer Service &amp; Support Model</i></b> <b>Objective 4 <i>Harness Digital Technologies</i></b>
<b>Date of Board Approval</b>	<b>28 April 2025</b>
<b>Date for review :</b>	<b>April 2028</b>
<b>Responsible Officer :</b>	<b>Director of Housing</b>

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

We are committed to delivering an excellent service to all of our customers. The policy sets out the standards and quality of service the customer can expect to receive from Paisley Housing Association.

The Association is open and accountable for what it does. We understand and takes account of the needs and priorities of our tenants, service users and stakeholders. Our primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.

## **2.0 Principles**

We have developed this policy to ensure that all service users are always treated as a valued and respected customer during their dealings with us.

## **3.0 Aims & Objectives**

- Ensure our customers believe that they have experienced the highest standard of customer care in their dealings with us
- Ensure that no customers are excluded from any area of service we provide
- Promote and increase awareness of service standards so customers have criteria to measure performance
- Maintain and continually improve our service to ensure that customers are receiving the highest possible standards of customer care
- Provide clear, concise information and assistance from assured, pleasant and well informed members of staff
- Provide relevant, accurate and accessible information
- Communicate with customers in the format best suited to the customer e.g. telephone, email, text, whatsapp, in person visit etc.
- Ensure that tenants are clear about the level of service they can expect from our staff
- Ensure that customers are clear about the response timescale for dealing with their enquiries
- To ensure that staff members are clear about the level of service they are expected to provide
- Ensure staff members are fully informed about their roles and responsibilities and have the support to carry these out in an exemplary manner

## 4.0 Definition

Customer care refers to how people are treated when they interact with a company. It encompasses all experiences with the company and its employees. Customer care focuses on creating an ongoing relationship with the customer by providing a personalised experience and fulfilling their needs.

## 5.0 Legislative Framework

This policy reflects “Good Practice” and complies with the following legislation;

- The Housing (Scotland) Act, 2001, 2010 & 2014
- The Scottish Social Housing Charter
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of Information Act (Scotland) 2002
- The Equalities Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998

## 6.0 Scottish Housing Charter

The Association in preparing this policy and related procedures has given consideration to and sought compliance with The Scottish Social Housing Charter in respect to;

### **Charter Ref No. 1: Equalities**

Social Landlords perform all aspects of their housing service so that:

- Every tenant and other customer have their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

### **Charter Ref No.2: Communication**

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

### **Charter Ref No.3: Participation**

Social Landlords manage their business so that:

- Tenants & other customers find it easy to participate in and influence landlords' decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

## **7.0 Equality & Diversity**

We are committed to preventing discrimination and providing equal opportunities for everyone. In applying this policy, we will not discriminate against any individual, household or group on grounds of race, gender, sex, marital status/civil partnership, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, language, social origin, disability, age or any other personal attribute.

We will make this policy available in alternative formats such as large print or Braille on request. Translation services for other languages can also be made available and where practical we will arrange for an interpreter if you speak a language other than English.

An EIA was considered by Alan Graham in April 2025. We were satisfied that this policy does not have any obvious negative impact on protected groups but this will be reviewed in April 2028.

## **8.0 Wider Framework**

We recognise that the delivery of excellent Customer Care is an essential requirement for all policies and services provided to our customers. As well as this policy, reference should also be made to the following policies;

- Complaints Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Unacceptable Actions Policy
- Code of Conduct for Contractors
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Tenant Handbook

## **9.0 Our Customers**

Our customers are anyone we come into contact with during the course of our work and include:

- Tenants
- Sharing Owners
- Owners
- Housing Applicants
- Members of the public
- External Agencies
- Contractors and Consultants

Although this policy is mainly aimed at external customers, the standards set will also be applied to dealings between staff within the organisation and Board Members.

## **10.0 Customer Care Standards**

### **10.1 Website**

Our website will be kept up to date with information including our;

- Office opening hours
- When we will be closed for staff training/public holidays
- Staff Contact details
- Policies
- Services we offer
- News
- Complaints process
- Customer Care Standards
- Performance against the Scottish Social Housing Charter

### **10.2 Contacting Us**

When you contact us we will:

- Treat you with dignity and respect at all times
- Try and get you to the right person to deal with your query first time
- Listen to you and respond to your needs as quickly and efficiently as possible
- Be friendly, professional and accessible to you and take a pride in what we do on your behalf
- Say when we can and cannot help and explain what action you can expect from us
- If we cannot deal with your enquiry by return, we will acknowledge your contact within 1 working day and respond within 5 working days. If it is a complex matter, we will respond within 10 working days. Some areas of business have set times attached to them for e.g. complaints, Freedom of Information Requests (FOI), allocation appeals, requests to assign a tenancy. This might mean we have a different response time in dealing with your request. We will tell you when this applies
- Do what we say we will and keep you informed at all times
- Let you know what you can do if we fail in our service to you

### **10.3 Visiting Our Office**

When you visit our office we will:

- Make sure your query is dealt with as quickly as possible to minimise waiting time and disruption to you
- Not keep you waiting when you have arranged an appointment
- Keep you informed if there is a delay in your appointment
- Provide you with a comfortable accessible waiting area in our reception
- Provide an interview room so that you may talk to a member of staff in private
- Provide a mini loop system to assist with interviewing deaf and partially hearing customers

- Provide meeting and toilet facilities for wheelchair users

If you are unfit to come to the office and need a home visit, we can arrange this for you. We can also consider requests for a male or female staff member.

#### **10.4 Telephoning Our Office**

When you telephone our office, we will:

- Answer the telephone promptly
- Let you know who you are speaking to
- Let you know when we are putting you on hold
- Let you know when we are transferring calls and who your call is being transferred to
- Take clear messages and email the appropriate member of staff immediately
- Return all calls by the end of the day (unless you have been advised otherwise)
- Have an answering machine available for the times when the office is closed or the phoned is engaged. If you leave a message for a member of staff who is not available, we will phone you the same day or the next morning.

#### **10.5 Written Correspondence**

When writing to you we will:

- Provide you with information which is written in plain English and is jargon free
- Provide you with clear and accurate explanations about decisions which have been made
- Respond to written correspondence from you within our target timescales which are 5 working days unless it is a complex issue requiring investigation in which case it will be 10 working days
- Where requested, and where reasonably practicable, we will endeavour to make individual documents available in a variety of formats such as large print, braille or a language other than English
- Where it is not possible to make document available in another format, we will arrange an appointment where interpreting services will be available

#### **10.6 Information and Openness**

When providing you with information we will:

- Publish comprehensive and accurate information about the services we provide to you
- Respond to requests from you to see information held about you promptly and no longer than 20 working days
- Only gather information about you if we need it for a specific purpose
- Treat information about you in confidence
- Respond promptly to provide information in a range of formats and languages

## **10.7 In Your Home**

When visiting you at your home we will;

- Make sure all frontline members of staff visiting your home wear their name badge and have some form of identity
- Never enter your home uninvited unless we have appropriate authority to do so
- Behave in a professional and courteous manner
- Always explain the reason for visiting you
- Let you know what will happen following on from the visit

House visits are normally carried out within office hours. Please let us know if this is a problem for you.

## **10.8 Customer Consultation**

Your views are important to us. We encourage you to tell us what you think about our services and we will:

- Consult with our customers regarding key service user policies and service plans
- Consult with our tenants annually on our rent and service charges
- Consult with our tenants on our planned maintenance priorities
- Make sure the consultation timescales makes it possible for you to get involved
- Use a variety of methods of consultation including, focus groups, interested individuals, the Association's website, Tenant Surveys, texting, New Tenant Visits and any other suitable mechanism which suits your needs
- Use the feedback you provide to improve our services and to influence policy making
- Publish the results of any consultation process on our website and our newsletters

## **11.0 Our Expectations of You, Our Customers**

We appreciate that the relationship between our customers and ourselves is a two way process built on mutual trust and respect. We expect that our customers will appreciate the standard of care extended to them and respond in a positive manner. We think it is reasonable to ask our customers to:

- Be polite, courteous, non-abusive and non-threatening always
- Treat our staff with respect
- Come prepared and bring all necessary documentation with you where possible
- Comply with all reasonable requests made by our staff
- Appreciate that from time to time we may not be able to help you

Where our staff are not treated with respect, we may have to restrict our service to you. Where this is the case, you will be advised of the reason and the restrictions to be put in place. This will be in accordance with our Unacceptable Actions Policy.

## **12.0 Complaints**

The Association aims to ensure that the service provided to residents is of the highest quality. Despite our best efforts, mistakes do happen. If you feel we have let you down, our complaints system serves for you to tell us about it and try to put it right. It also gives us the chance to keep an eye on the quality of services we provide. We aim to:

- Provide an easy and straightforward system for service users to obtain information and record a complaint. You can make a complaint by telephone, in writing, in person at our office, email or via a feedback form on our website
- Provide you with timescales in dealing with your complaint
- Keep you informed about how your complaint is progressing
- Provide a means to resolve the complaint whenever possible.
- Report in our annual report on complaints we have received, our timescales for responding to these and the number of complaints upheld
- Improve service delivery by learning from and acting upon information obtained
- Provide information via our newsletters on learning outcomes from complaints and changes we make to our service from these lessons

With your help we can identify problems, resolve them quickly and prevent them from happening again.

Copies of our Complaints Policy are available on request from our office and on our website.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is the final stage of the complaints process.

## **13.0 Performance Management**

We will set targets which are challenging but also realistic and let you know what these are and what you can expect from us. We will:

- Publish an annual report on our performance against the Scottish Housing Charter
- Ensure our staff members are being trained and developed to provide you with the best possible service
- Be committed to the principle of continuous improvement in the services we deliver to you

- Publish minutes of our Board meetings on our website

## **14.0 Training**

To ensure that our staff provide the highest quality of service to our customers, we will identify individual training and support needs for staff at induction and through our annual appraisal process and where there has been a change in legislation or good practice that will impact on an area of service we provide.

## **15.0 Responsibility**

The Board is responsible for approving the Policy

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for

- Reporting to the Board on our performance in Complaints against our KPIs

The Director of Housing is responsible for;

- Development and review of this policy

Section Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring staff are trained in the delivery of all aspects of their role
- Ensuring staff consider excellent customer service in all their tasks
- Ensuring timescales for responding to customer enquiries are complied with
- Ensuring procedures are being followed and identifying any performance issues

All Staff are responsible for;

- Providing excellent Customer Service
- Complying with timescales in dealing with enquiries received
- Applying this policy & carrying out internal procedures

## **16.0 Data Protection/GDPR**

When implementing the policies and procedures of Paisley Housing Association all staff and Board members must adhere to and be aware of the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (“the GDPR”).

In situations where there may be any doubt about the requirements of the above, the Association may seek the views of its legal advisors.

## **17.0 Review**

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Association every 3 years. Amendments to the policy will be made in the interim to respond to any changes in legislation and to reflect any changes in any of the Association's related strategies, policies and procedures.