



TOLLCROSS  
housing association

## Customer Service Standards Policy

Prepared By	Anne Fitzsimons, Corporate Services Director
Policy Created	November 2015
Date of Last Review	NA
Date of Current Review	24 <sup>th</sup> June 2019
Date of Next Review	May 2022
Reviewed By	Audit & Business Sub-Committee

CORPORATE FIT	
Internal Management Plan	✓
Risk Register	✓
Business Plan	✓
Regulatory Standards	✓
Equalities Strategy	✓
Legislation	✓

On request, the Association can provide services for an interpreter, preferred method communication for those with hearing impairments and translation of all our documents, policies and procedures in various languages and other formats such as computer disc, tape, large print, Braille etc. These can be obtained by contacting the Association's offices.

## 1. Introduction

Tollcross Housing Association Limited is a customer-focused organisation and is committed to providing our customers and prospective customers with quality information and service delivery. We provide appropriate training for our staff members and develop effective methods of seeking customer feedback and appropriate methods of reporting this information.

As we shall ensure treatment of customers is always courteous and helpful it is expected that staff, in return, are treated with dignity and respect at all times.

The Association's contact details and opening hours are as follows: -

Repairs, Factoring, Finance, Housing, Rent, Applications and all other Enquiries	
868 Tollcross Road Glasgow G32 8PF Tel 0141 763 1317	
E-mail:	<a href="mailto:info@tollcross-ha.org.uk">info@tollcross-ha.org.uk</a>
Website:	<a href="http://www.tollcross-ha.org.uk">www.tollcross-ha.org.uk</a>
Opening Hours	
Monday to Thursday	9.00 am – 5.00 pm
Friday	9.00 am – 4.00 pm

## 2. Equality & Diversity

- 2.1 The Association's Equality and Diversity policy outlines our commitment to promote a zero tolerance to unfair treatment or discrimination to any person or group of persons, particularly on the basis of any of the protected characteristics<sup>1</sup>. This includes ensuring that everyone has equal access to information and services and, to this end, the Association will make available a copy of this document in a range of alternative formats including large print, translated into another language or audio.
- 2.2 We are also aware of the potential for policies to inadvertently discriminate against an individual or group of individuals.

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<sup>1</sup> The Equality Act 2010 identifies the "protected characteristics" as age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment and sexual orientation.

To help tackle this and ensure that it does not occur, best practice suggests that organisations carry out Equality Impact Assessments to help identify any part of a policy that may be discriminatory so that this can be addressed (please see section 6 of the Equality and Diversity Policy for more information).

- 2.3 In line with section 6.3 of the Equality and Diversity Policy, the Association will apply a screening process based on that recommended by the Equality and Human Rights Commission to ascertain whether each policy requires an Impact Assessment to be carried out. The screening process was applied to this policy and it was decided that an impact assessment is not required.

### **3. Legislative & Regulatory Framework**

- 3.1 Standard 2 of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management states: *"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."*
- 3.2 More specifically and in relation to this Customer Service Standards Policy, Standard 2.4 states: *"The RSL seeks out the needs, priorities, views and aspirations of tenants, service users and stakeholders. The governing body takes account of this information in its strategies, plans and decisions."*

### **4. Risk Management**

The Association has considered the potential risks of providing mis-information to customers. We regularly update public access information, such as summary information about our complaints process. In order to ensure correct information is provided at all times, all staff are made aware of information contained within these documents (via informal and formal training). Failure to do so could damage the Association's reputation.

We also ensure consultation is undertaken to include views and feedback from tenants and local residents when reviewing this policy. This is carried out in a variety of ways such as Performance Improvement Network/Loops (PIN/PIL), local community events, via our website and encouraging feedback via quarterly newsletters.

### **5. Commitment**

Our commitment to customer care is underpinned by the Association's strategic key theme – "Engage with Tenants and Customers".

We shall establish a range of ways for our service users to engage with us and participate in decision-making processes, where appropriate. This will be evidenced through on-going work with the Performance Improvement Network and Loops (PIN & PILs), learning from customer complaints/compliments and customer satisfaction surveys.

## 6. Definitions

The following is a list of who we consider to be our 'customers' and with whom we interact or provide a service to: -

- Tenants
- Residents (e.g. owners and sharing owners)
- Applicants
- Staff
- Other private, public and voluntary sector organisations and agencies we work with (e.g. the Scottish Housing Regulator, local authorities, contractors, consultants and other Housing Associations)
- Other members of the public and anyone else who interacts with us

## 7. Service Level Objectives

### 7.1 Overall Objectives:

- We will deliver high quality services making the best use of our resources.
- We will keep you advised of our activities and consult with you when major changes to services are planned.
- We will use your views to improve the quality of our service.
- We will treat you fairly and with respect.
- We will respond to your enquiries and complaints.
- We will always be approachable and professional.

### 7.2 Specific Objectives:

- a) We shall ensure all staff receive regular training on customer care throughout their employment period and will incorporate the customer service standards within the comprehensive induction programme for Staff and Committee members.
- b) We shall prepare and review policies in consultation with Staff, Committee and local residents and members of the Performance Improvement Network (PIN), to maximise opportunities to meet the service standard requirements identified as well as working within the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management and good practice. For example when reviewing the Complaints Handling Policy, we shall contact those people who have made a complaint in the most recent year to obtain their input prior to completing the review.

- c) We shall undertake a variety of customer satisfaction surveys: -
- I. **Post-repair** – we shall seek 15% response from surveys issued after repairs have been carried out. These shall be carried out by our Maintenance team.
  - II. **Post-contact** – the Association has commissioned an independent agency to carry out monthly surveys on our behalf. Whether you have contacted us by personal visit (either to the office or home visit), telephone, in writing by e-mail or letter, we shall seek your permission to pass your contact details onto this agency.
  - III. **Satisfaction Survey** – at least every 3 years we shall undertake a survey of no less than 50% of our tenants to ascertain overall satisfaction with services provided by the Association.
  - IV. The Corporate Services Director shall ensure the outcome of each of these surveys is published in the appropriate edition of the Association's Newsletter. We shall also publish the results on our website, [www.tollcross-ha.org.uk](http://www.tollcross-ha.org.uk).
- d) In order to continually improve the quality of service we provide to you, we shall set realistic, yet challenging key performance indicators (KPIs). We monitor KPIs with the findings being reported to Committee at least quarterly within the appropriate meeting schedule. We also report to our customers via the Association's newsletter and publish these results on our website, [www.tollcross-ha.org.uk](http://www.tollcross-ha.org.uk).
- e) Engagement with our regulatory bodies, such as the Scottish Housing Regulator and the Care Inspectorate are another method of ensuring the Association maintains its commitment to continual improvement. A summary of the report findings and proposals for areas of improvement will be published both in the Association's newsletter and on our website, [www.tollcross-ha.org.uk](http://www.tollcross-ha.org.uk).

## 8. Customer Service Standards

In order to ensure that everyone is clear about the acceptable standard of service, the Association has prepared the following Customer Service Standards. These standards shall be publicised in each of our offices and on our website, [www.tollcross-ha.org.uk](http://www.tollcross-ha.org.uk).

### 8.1 Visiting the Office: We shall: -

- a) Ensure the office is open during the published hours and display notices in advance of ad-hoc closure, such as training.

- b) Make sure our office is adequately staffed.
- c) Make sure the staff members have photographic ID badges identifying themselves to you.
- d) Wear a uniform and be dressed in a neat, tidy and business like-fashion at all times.
- e) Promptly greet you in a courteous, respectful and professional manner.
- f) Deal with your query as quickly as possible to minimise your waiting time.
- g) Direct you to the appropriate member of staff where the staff member who greets you cannot answer your query.
- h) Arrange an appointment that suits you if you require.
- i) Not keep you waiting when you have arranged an appointment.
- j) Keep you informed if there is a delay in your appointment.
- k) Provide you with a tidy, comfortable and accessible waiting area.
- l) Make sure there is informative information available for you to take away.
- m) 'Sign-post' you to an appropriate agency or person who can help if we cannot.
- n) Ask your permission for an independent agency to contact you to check on your experience with us.

## 8.2 Home Visits: We shall: -

- a) Ensure staff have photographic ID badges when visiting your home.
- b) Never enter your home uninvited.
- c) Always explain the reason for the visit.
- d) Arrange a date and agree a timeframe that suits you.
- e) Contact you if there is a delay or if we cannot attend the appointment, giving you a reason for this.
- f) Ask your permission for an independent agency to contact you to check on your experience with us.

## 8.3 Telephone Calls: We shall: -

- g) Provide you with a range of options when you call to help you get through to the correct department.
- h) Ensure the telephone is answered by a Staff member during the published office opening hours in a friendly, courteous and professional manner.
- i) Ensure that if the specific staff member you are calling is not available, you will either have your call taken by another member of staff, or you will have the opportunity to leave a message on the answer machine.
- j) Ensure the main switchboard answer machine is on during office closure times and that it clearly indicates that the office is closed. You will be given an option to either be put through to our emergency out of hours contractor (option 1) or to leave a message to be addressed the next working day (option 2).

- k) Ensure that other answer machine messages are responded to as quickly as possible.
- l) Aim to answer calls within 6 rings.
- m) Confirm you have called Tollcross Housing Association and let you know who you are speaking to.
- n) Establish the reason for your call and either take appropriate action or pass your call onto the relevant Staff member.
- o) Aim to have telephone enquiries resolved at the first point of contact.
- p) Ask your permission for an independent agency to contact you to check on your experience with us.

#### 8.4 E-mails & Letters: We shall: -

- a) Ensure the 'out of office assistant' is set to inform you when the staff member you have e-mailed will be back in the office (e.g. confirming a period of annual leave). This will inform you to contact another member of staff if the nature of your message is urgent.
- b) Acknowledge receipt of correspondence received within 3 working days.
- c) Ensure your correspondence is passed to the appropriate person for action.
- d) Contact you within 5 working days (depending on the nature and urgency of your correspondence) to discuss your query or provide a written response thereafter. This response will set out clearly the explanation about decisions that have been made.
- e) Ensure we write in plain English and avoid jargon.
- f) Where identified, we provide correspondence in varying text size, language and other formats such as computer disc, tape or Braille.
- g) File the correspondence in your Tenancy File. This correspondence forms part of the information audit undertaken annually and either retained or disposed of in line with the Association's Data Retention Policy.
- h) Ask your permission for an independent agency to contact you to check on your experience with us.

## 9. Our Expectations of You

The relationship built between ourselves and our customers is based on trust and respect. We expect that our customers will appreciate the standard of care extended to them and respond in a positive manner.

With this in mind, we think it is not unreasonable to ask you to: -

- a) Treat our Staff with respect by being polite and courteous.
- b) Not be abusive or threatening in your attitude, words or actions.
- c) Provide information requested within the timescales indicated.
- d) Meet the terms of reasonable requests made by our Staff.

- e) Understand that sometimes we just simply cannot help you. Where this is the case, we will make every effort to help you source the agency(ies) who can help.

## **10. General Data Protection Regulations**

The Association will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own Data Protection and Data Retention Policies. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in Tollcross Housing Association's transparency statements (e.g. employee, tenant, housing applicant).

## **11. Breaches of the Customer Service Standards Policy**

Through our independent post-contact surveys, we intend to encourage our customers to inform us of where we went wrong or did not meet your expectations. Where you express dissatisfaction, you will be asked if you would like the Association to contact you about this. It is your right to refuse this offer, however where you feel we have breached the policy so significantly, we would expect you to give the Association an opportunity to take remedial action to resolve the issue to your satisfaction. This would be handled within the Association's Complaint Handling Procedure.

This assists the Association as it strives for continual improvement, which in turn should improve the service delivery to our customers. You can obtain a copy of the Complaints Handling Procedure upon request or download it from our website, [www.tollcross-ha.org.uk](http://www.tollcross-ha.org.uk).

## **12. Policy Review**

This policy shall be reviewed every three years or sooner as deemed necessary by the Management Committee.