

Our Commitment

The Commitment to Quality means that customers of the Association can expect the highest levels of service across all aspects of the business.

The Shire Housing Association Commitment to Quality makes core commitments on:-

- Tenant participation & consultation
- Housing management services
- Allocations
- Repairs services
- House sales
- Dealing with enquiries and complaints
- Contracts & development
- Care & Repair

Our Commitment to Quality is designed to give service users more say about the day to day services we provide.

The Commitment to Quality is open for comment by any of our customers and represents a genuine commitment by the Association to deliver the best possible service to local residents.

The Commitment to Quality document has been issued to all tenants and is issued to new tenants at the commencement of a tenancy.

Service Provision

In all our dealings with you we will:-

- treat all service users in a fair and equal manner
- be punctual and reliable
- identify ourselves by name and where applicable carry identification

If you write to us we will:-

- acknowledge your letter upon receipt.
- answer your letter within 5 working days. If we cannot provide a reply within this time we will acknowledge your letter and give you a date by which you can expect a detailed response.
- use plain English and avoid the use of jargon, technical descriptions or abbreviations.

Customer Service Standards

- ensure that all letters are signed by the person sending the reply or at the very least a contact name and telephone number are given on the letter.
- we will adopt these standards when dealing with email and will if necessary consider a separate specification.

If you telephone us:-

- staff are available to answer telephone calls between 8.45am and 4.45pm Monday to Friday.
- outside office hours we will provide answering machine service giving emergency contact information.
- we will answer incoming calls within 5 rings.
- staff will tell you their name.
- should the person you require not be available, another staff member will take action or ensure that the person required returns the call.
- staff will return calls within one working day.

If you call personally at our offices:-

- we will make all practical efforts to make our offices accessible to everyone.
- facilities will be provided for personal or confidential discussions.
- Should interview room be in use visitors will be asked if they wish to make alternative arrangements e.g. a home visit or appointment.
- all callers will be dealt with promptly, visitors with an appointment will be seen within 5 minutes of the specified time.
- appointments for staff who are not immediately available will be made within 5 working days.

If you wish a home visit from us:-

- home visits can be arranged for any staff member to call.
- home visits will be made within 5 working days of the request.
- should we need to cancel a meeting at short notice e.g. due to weather conditions, another appointment will be made within 5 working days.
- where an unexpected is made "no access" card will be left to advise who called and request contact be made to arrange a convenient date.

Tenant Participation And Consultation

In line with the Tenant Participation Strategy we will:

- consult with customers in line with current legislation

- communicate regularly with tenants by providing a quarterly tenants newsletter and other adhoc information as appropriate.
- provide a full range of information leaflets on services.
- actively promote the formation of representative groups.
- provide financial and practical support to groups both during and after formation.

To help us achieve better services tenants are encouraged to make full use of the information and support provided and to let us know of ways in which we can enhance the support we offer.

Housing Management Services

Rent Collection

We will:-

- offer a range of ways for customers to pay rent
- give advice on maximising income and budgeting
- assist with the completion of applications for Housing Benefit
- deal with arrears cases in a sensitive but firm manner
- send customers a rent statement every 6 months

To help achieve a better service tenants are asked to:-

- pay rent and/or complete Housing Benefit applications on time
- seek our advice immediately if there is a problem paying your rent

Antisocial Behaviour

We will:-

- respond to all complaints of antisocial behaviour within a maximum of 5 working days.
- respond to incidents involving threats or actual violence or racial harassment on the day on which the complaint is made.
- offer mediation services where appropriate.
- where necessary liaise with our partners to bring about a solution to severe or emergency cases.

To help achieve a better service tenants are asked to:-

- report incidents of antisocial behaviour to the Association.
- show respect for neighbours by behaving in a responsible and considerate manner and adhering to the conditions of tenancy.

Environmental Services

We will:-

- inspect gardens and open spaces within estates every fortnight.
- carry out regular maintenance to all open spaces under our ownership.
- ensure that the communities we serve are as safe as possible and remain pleasant places to live.

To help achieve a better service tenants are asked to:-

- maintain their gardens in a neat and tidy condition
- report any issues of safety or concern to the Association

Allocations

We will:-

- operate a system of allocating houses which is fair and non-discriminatory.
- assess applications for housing within 5 days and advise the applicant accordingly.
- ensure that allocations are made according to the organisations lettings plan and that applicants are given a reasonable chance of obtaining housing.
- widely publicise our allocations policy.
- issue post allocation/nomination customer satisfaction form re letting process also a pre satisfaction survey for allocations.

To help achieve a better service all applicants are asked to:-

- ensure that they provide all information requested by us
- advise of any changes which will affect the application

Repairs Services

We will:-

- carry out repairs within stated timescales
 - ⇒ Emergency repairs within 2 hours (to repair or make safe)
 - ⇒ Emergency Repairs - complete job if parts etc not available within 24 hours
 - ⇒ Urgent repairs within 3 working days
 - ⇒ Routine repairs within 5 working days
 - ⇒ Pre-inspection within 2 working days
- operate the statutory right to repair scheme
- operate a compensation for improvement scheme for tenants
- carry out satisfaction surveys for all repair and contract work
- recharge for repairs which are necessary due to acts of neglect or wilful damage which are proven to be the fault of the customer or their family or visitors.

To help achieve a better service tenants are asked to:-

- report any repairs as soon as you are aware of a problem
- look after your property and avoid unnecessary repairs work

House Sales

We will:-

- process house sales as quickly as possible within the timescales laid down by statute.
- provide advice and assistance on the sales process to those tenants who qualify to buy their home.
- keep purchasers informed as to the progress of their application to buy.
- annually remind tenants that they may have a Right To Buy.

To help achieve a better service applicants are asked to:-

- ensure that all information requested by us relating to the application to purchase is supplied.

Enquiries & Complaints

We will:-

- acknowledge receipt of complaints within 1 working day and issue a full response within 5 working days.
- review suggestions concerning service delivery regularly and where possible implement them.
- ensure that complainants are advised of the Associations review and appeal procedures and that these are understood.
- respond fully to enquiries made by the Public Services Ombudsman.

To achieve a better service people with a complaint are asked to:-

- let us try to resolve complaints within the stated timescale
- clearly identify the complaint, preferably in writing

The Responsibilities of the Tenant

- to live in your property as your main home
- to look after your property
- to behave in a responsible way
- to advise Shire Housing Association if it is not meeting its commitments under this Commitment to Quality

Help Us To Get It Right

The Association welcomes comments and suggestions concerning any aspect of the services provided. All suggestions and comments will be considered by the Board through our reporting process. Where complaints regarding service delivery are made they will be considered quickly and where necessary acted upon.

Help us to get our Commitment to Quality right and use your voice.