



**Drumchapel
Housing**

Co-operative Limited

Customer Service Standards policy

Date Approved by Board:
Due for Review:

February 2018
February 2021

Customer Service Standards policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Drumchapel Housing Co-operative Limited is a customer-focused organisation and is committed to providing our customers and prospective customers with quality information and service delivery. We aim to provide appropriate training for our staff members and develop effective methods of seeking customer feedback and appropriate methods of reporting this information.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 The Co-operative's contact details and opening hours are as follows:

Address: 4 Kinclaven Avenue, Drumchapel, Glasgow, G15 7SP

Telephone: 0141 944 4902

Main E-mail: enquiries@drumchapelhc.org.uk

Website: www.drumchapelhc.org.uk

Opening Hours: Monday to Thursday 9.00 am – 5.00 pm

Friday 9.00 am – 4.00 pm

2. Legislative and regulatory framework

- 2.1 Standard 2 of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework 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." More specifically and in relation to this Customer Service Standards Policy, Standard 2.3 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."

3. Risk management

- 3.1 The Co-operative has considered the potential risks of providing information to customers. We regularly update public access information, such as summary information to housing applicants. 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 Co-operative's reputation.

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- 3.2 We also ensure consultation is undertaken to include views and feedback from tenants when reviewing the policy. This is carried out in a variety of ways such as community events, questionnaires, consultation register and encouraging feedback via newsletters.

4. Equality and diversity

- 4.1 The Co-operative's Equality and Diversity policy, which was approved by the Board in April 2017 following tenant consultation, 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 characteristics¹. This includes ensuring that everyone has equal access to information and services and, to this end, the Co-operative will make available a copy of this document in a range of alternative formats including large print, translated into another language or by data transferred to voice. The Equality and Diversity policy is programmed for the next review in April 2020.
- 4.2 We are also aware of the potential for policies to inadvertently discriminate against an individual or group of individuals. 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).
- 4.3 In line with the Equality and Diversity Policy, the Co-operative 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 required. Please refer to Appendix 1.

5. Core values

- 5.1 Our commitment to customer care is underpinned by the Core Values adopted by both staff and Committee members:

¹ 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.

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Excellence - We are committed to providing a quality, customer focused service that demonstrates value for money, delivered by great staff. We will publicise information on how we are performing, welcoming challenge and feedback to continuously improve the effectiveness and relevance of the service we provide.

Accountability - Our Board and senior staff team will provide strong strategic leadership and oversight, with non-senior staff at the forefront of delivery, ensuring tenants' interests are protected in all that we do. We will ensure that our actions are transparent.

Partnership working - We will work collaboratively with all sections of the local community. This includes working collectively and individually with our customers, other registered social landlords, and statutory and voluntary sector partners working in Drumchapel to improve the lives of our residents. We will continue to be a proactive member of the local community, seeking out new, innovative ways to address issues that impact our residents.

6. Definitions

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

- a) Tenants
- b) Applicants
- c) Staff
- d) Other private, public and voluntary sector organisations and agencies we work with (e.g. the Scottish Housing Regulator, local authorities, contractors, consultants and other Registered Social Landlords)
- e) Other members of the public and anyone else who interacts with us

7. Service level objectives

7.1 Overall objectives

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

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Specific objectives

- a) We shall ensure all staff receive regular training on customer care throughout their employment period and incorporate the customer service standards within the comprehensive induction programme for staff and Committee members.
- b) We shall prepare and review policies and procedures in consultation with staff, Board and tenants to maximise opportunities to meet the needs' identified as well as working within the Scottish Social Housing Charter's guidance. This policy was revised in consultation with the Tenants Panel.
- c) We shall undertake a variety of customer satisfaction surveys:
 - i) Reactive repairs –we shall seek 100% customer feedback at the point of service delivery to gauge satisfactions levels and inform service development.
 - ii) Settling in visit – we shall visit every new tenant within six weeks of their tenancy start date to obtain feedback on the quality of their home and standard of service.
 - iii) Satisfaction Survey – we shall carry out a satisfaction survey every 3 years to ascertain how we are performing and obtain feedback in relation to services provided by the Co-operative.
 - iv) The Depute Director shall ensure that key information from the Satisfaction Survey is published in the Co-operative's newsletters, Annual Report and on our website:

<https://scottishhousingconnections.org/drumchapel-housing-co-operative/>
- d) In order to continually improve the quality of service we provide to you, we shall set realistic, yet challenging targets and these shall be reported to Board Management every 3 months.

8. Customer service standards

- 8.1 In order to ensure that everyone is clear about the acceptable standard of service, the Co-operative has prepared the following Customer Service Standards.

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8.2 Visiting the Office: We shall:

- a) Ensure the office is open during the published hours.
- b) Make sure our office is adequately staffed.
- c) Make sure the staff members have name badges identifying themselves to you.
- d) Wear either a uniform or be dressed in a neat, tidy and business-like fashion at all times.
- e) Promptly greet you with a smile.
- f) Provide a translator service if required and requested with reasonable notice.
- g) Deal with your query as quickly as possible to minimise your waiting time.
- h) Arrange an appointment that suits you if you require.
- i) Not keep you waiting when you have arranged an appointment, wherever possible.
- j) Keep you informed if there is a delay in your appointment.
- k) Ensure that our waiting area is accessible and comfortable.
- l) Provide useful information in relation to our services, local events and opportunities that you can take away.
- m) 'Sign-post' you to an appropriate agency or person who can help if we cannot.

8.3 Home Visits: We will:

- a) Never enter your home uninvited except where we have a statutory duty or we have given prior notice of a forced entry in conjunction with sheriff officers.
- b) Always explain the reason for the visit.
- c) Arrange a date and time that suits you.
- d) Contact you if there is a delay or if we cannot attend the appointment, giving you a reason for this.
- e) Wear a name badge to identify ourselves to you.
- f) Ensure a translator is present if required and requested with reasonable notice.

8.4 Telephone Calls: We will:

- a) Ensure the telephone is answered by a staff member, during the published office opening hours, in a friendly, courteous and professional manner.

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- b) Ensure the answer machine is switched on during office closure times and that it clearly indicates that the office is closed with accurate information for reporting a repair or leaving a message.
- c) Ensure that answer machine messages are responded to within 24 hours or the next available working day where the message is left during a public holiday break.
- d) Confirm you have called Drumchapel Housing Co-operative and let you know who you are speaking to.
- e) Establish the reason for your call and either take appropriate action or pass your call onto the relevant staff member.
- f) Ensure that where the appropriate person is not available to take your call, they will call you back within a reasonable timeframe.

8.5 E-mails & Letters: We will:

- 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) Ensure your correspondence is passed to the appropriate person for action.
- c) Contact you within 5 working days (depending on the nature and urgency of your correspondence) to either discuss or provide a written response to your query. This response will set out clearly the explanation about decisions that have been made.
- d) Ensure we write in plain English and avoid jargon.
- e) Where identified, we provide correspondence in varying text size or alternative language formats.
- f) File the correspondence in your electronic Tenancy File on our Housing Management System and manage your data in accordance with current data protection legislation and the Co-operative's Data Protection & Access to Personal Information Policy & Procedure.

9. Our expectations of you

- 9.1 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.

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

- a) Treat our staff with respect.
- 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) Let us know of any adjustments you require in relation to office accessibility or language formats.
- f) Understand that sometimes we just simply cannot help you. Where this is the case, we will try to direct you to the most appropriate agency.

10. Breaches of the customer service standards policy

10.1 Breaches of the Customer Service Standards Policy should be actioned through our Complaints Handling Policy & Procedure. A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Co-operative's actions or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the Co-operative. This allows the Co-operative to investigate your concern and where possible take remedial action.

10.2 This assists the Co-operative in its strive for continual improvement, which in turn should improve the service delivery to our customers. You can obtain a copy of the Complaints Handling Policy & Procedure upon request or download it from our website: <https://scottishhousingconnections.org/drumchapel-housing-co-operative/>

11. Policy review

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

12. GDPR Privacy Statement

12.1 The Co-operative will gather and use certain information about individuals in accordance with GDPR. Staff members have a responsibility to ensure compliance with the terms of the privacy policy and to collect, handle and store personal information in accordance with relevant legislation. The Fair Processing Notice (FPN) details how personal data is held and processed.

APPENDIX 1

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is further action required?

Yes

No

Is the action achievable?

Yes

No

Timescale for action

NA

1. Aims of the policy

a) What is the purpose of the policy?

- The policy outlines the Co-operative's standards when providing a service to our customers.

b) Who is affected by the policy/who will benefit from the policy and how?

- Drumchapel tenants
- People who live in our area of operation and housing applicants
- Staff and Management Board
- Contractors and consultants who are required to observe the policy
- Partner agencies and other organisations who contact us
- Anyone who has any reason to contact us

c) Who is be responsible for delivering the policy?

The entire staff team on a day-to-day basis, the Director and ultimately the Management Board.

d) How does the policy fit into our wider or related policy initiatives?

The policy directly contributes to two of our strategic objectives:

- Providing an excellent service
- Your view is important to us

We may refer to other policies when investigating. These will include:

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- Code of Conduct (Board Members)
- Code of Conduct (staff)
- Equality and Diversity policy
- Complaints Handling policy

2. What do we already know about the diverse needs and/or experiences of our target audience?

Do we currently have information on:

Age	Yes	✓
Disability	Yes	✓
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Yes	✓
Pregnancy and Maternity	Yes	✓
Race	Yes	✓
Religion and Belief	Yes	✓
Gender	Yes	✓
Gender Reassignment	Yes	✓
Sexual Orientation	Yes	✓

2.1 Whilst we require to update and broaden the information we have on tenants and other customers, we would expect all of the protected characteristics to be represented within this target audience.

2.2 The policy helps us ensure that we are continuing to provide efficient and effective services that are responsive to the requirements of all groups, and allows us to become aware of areas where service improvements may be required.

Tenants

2.3 As at 2.1 and 2.2, above.

People who live in the local area and housing applicants

2.4 As at 2.1 and 2.2, above.

Staff and Management Board

2.5 All staff and Board receive training on the Co-operative's Customer Service Expectations and are conversant with the process to be followed.

Contractors and consultants and partner organisations

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2.6 Any contractors or consultants working for or representing the Co-operative are made aware of our commitment to equality and diversity as well as customer service.

3. **What does the information we have tell us about how this policy might impact positively or negatively on the different groups within the target audience?**

Different groups can expect to receive slightly different service. Where information is available to tailor our service to better address the needs of a group then we will endeavor to do so. This may include changes in our communication approach for those who are disabled, language translation services or amended meeting venues to suit needs.

3.1 **Age**

Anyone can use the Co-operatives services regardless of age. Whilst most services are catered towards adults over the age of sixteen, we will continue to provide a professional customer service standards to all customers. If someone believes that they have been unfairly treated because of their age, then not only would we investigate this as a Stage 2 complaint, but we would also seek to invoke action under the terms of our Equality and Diversity policy. We offer help in making complaints to anyone experiencing what could sometimes be considered an age-related condition, such as requiring information in larger typeface owing to deterioration in eyesight.

3.2 **Disability**

The Co-operative ensures that our Customer Service Standards is accessible to everyone irrespective of any disability that may exist. We actively publicise the availability of the policy, alongside other documents, in alternative formats for people who may have visual impairment or hearing problems, and will visit someone at home to assist them with any part of the process if they have mobility problems or if they would prefer not to come to the office for any reason.

We do not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of someone's disability and anyone who feels that they have been subject to disability discrimination is encouraged to use the Co-operative's complaints procedure. Such complaints would be investigated as a Stage 2 complaint and we would also seek to invoke action under the terms of our Equality and Diversity policy.

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3.3 Marriage and Civil Partnership

All individuals contacting the office who happen to have a partner would be treated identically whether they are married, in a civil partnership or are co-habiting.

Equally, we do not treat anyone differently because they are not married, not in a civil partnership or do not have a partner – ie because they are single.

We do not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of someone's marital/civil partnership status and anyone who feels that they have been subject to this sort of discrimination is encouraged to use the Co-operative's complaints procedure. Any complaint that we had treated someone differently owing to their marital/civil partnership status would be investigated as a Stage 2 complaint and we would also seek to invoke action under the terms of our Equality and Diversity policy.

3.4 Pregnancy and Maternity

All individuals contacting the office who happen to be pregnant or in a period of maternity would be treated identically to all other complainants.

The procedure is explicit that we do not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of someone's pregnancy or maternity and anyone who feels that they have been subject to this sort of discrimination is encouraged to use the Co-operative's complaints procedure. Any complaint that we had treated someone differently owing to the fact that they are pregnant or in a period of maternity would be investigated as a Stage 2 complaint and we would also seek to invoke action under the terms of our Equality and Diversity policy.

3.5 Race

All individuals contacting the office should be treated in accordance to their needs no matter their race. We will endeavor to make appropriate adjustments where someone has informed us that they require translation services or any other reasonable need. We do not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of someone's race and anyone who feels that they have been subject to this sort of discrimination is encouraged to use the Co-operative's complaints procedure. Any complaint that we had treated someone differently owing to their race would be investigated as a Stage 2 complaint and we would also seek to invoke action under the terms of our Equality and Diversity policy.

3.6 Religion or Belief

We do not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of someone's religion or belief and anyone who feels that they have been subject to this sort of discrimination is

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encouraged to use the Co-operative's complaints procedure. Any complaint that we had treated someone differently owing to their religion or belief would be investigated as a Stage 2 complaint and we would also seek to invoke action under the terms of our Equality and Diversity policy.

3.7 Gender Identity

All individuals are afforded equal access to the procedure, irrespective of their gender identity and their complaints are handled equally under the terms of the policy.

We do not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of gender, and anyone who feels that they have been subject to gender discrimination is encouraged to use the Co-operative's complaints procedure. Any complaint that we had treated someone differently owing to their gender identity would be investigated as a Stage 2 complaint and we would also seek to invoke action under the terms of our Equality and Diversity policy.

3.8 Sexual Orientation

We intend that everyone is afforded equal access to the procedure irrespective of their sexuality and that their complaints are handled identically under the terms of the policy.

We do not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of someone's sexuality, and anyone who feels that they have been subject to discrimination in relation to their sexual orientation is encouraged to use the Co-operative's complaints procedure. Any complaint that we had treated someone differently owing to their sexuality would be investigated as a Stage 2 complaint and we would also seek to invoke action under the terms of our Equality and Diversity policy.

4. Do we need to carry out a further Impact Assessment?

4.1 No.

5. How will we monitor and evaluate this policy to measure progress?

5.1 The Depute Director is responsible for overseeing performance of key elements of this policy and preparing feedback updates to Director to inform the Board. Trends and further action will be discussed and implemented by the Management team on a regular basis.

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We will also produce articles for newsletters, website and in the Annual report which is sent to tenant members and made available in alternative formats where required.