

# **BCHA CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

We are committed to providing you with excellent customer services at all times that are effective, efficient and economic.

This strategy sets out what you can expect from us and what we expect of you as our customers.

We are committed to working closely with you to ensure that you are able to influence and shape the customer services we provide and the future direction of BCHA. This commitment is identified in our Resident Involvement Policy (June 2009) which sets out our key principles.

## **2. AIM**

This strategy has been developed to identify how we will deliver our commitment to excellent customer services as outlined in our policy

## **3. SCOPE**

This strategy affects all BCHA customers including tenants and their families, Beechdale residents including leaseholders, other landlords' tenants and homeowners. It will also affect prospective BCHA tenants, our employees, Board and prospective Board members, contractors, other stakeholders and external agencies.

## **4. INFORMATION and SERVICE DELIVERY**

Information provided to you will be clear, accurate, easily accessible and up to date. It will also be timely in accordance with our Customer Service Standards, Customer Service Policy and Communication Policy.

For customers who are vulnerable, visually impaired, have hearing difficulties or speak a language other than English we will ensure that you are provided with information in appropriate formats; for example, translations, qualified signer, home visits, hearing loop (in our office or mobile loop), large print and audio tapes.

We are committed in getting to know who are customers are and we will collect profiling information from our tenants to determine their age, ethnicity, religion and other factors. We will use this information to understand your needs and to recognise that different customers have different needs and/or preferences.

Having identified those varied needs/preferences we will aim to provide services to you that are tailored accordingly.

We recognise that some of you do not access our services. We will make every effort to contact you to ensure that we identify any barriers that stop you from accessing our services and remove them appropriately.

## **We will also:**

- Ensure that our reception service is operated by efficient, helpful and customer focussed staff, whether customers contact us in person, by telephone, email or fax
- Ensure that our reception area is accessible to everyone, safe and clean with adequate seating provision
- Adhere to and display our opening hours adjacent to our front gate, on our front door and on our website. They are also published in our tenant handbook.
- Adhere to the non-smoking legislation at our office and when we visit you at your home
- Provide you with an out of hour's service to respond to emergency repairs.
- Have Customer Service Standards that are set and agreed with customers. We will monitor and review them regularly and publish our performance against them.
- Provide leaflets on the services we provide that will be published widely in plain language and be freely available as above.
- Operate complaints and compensation procedures to deal with any perceived failure in our services
- Communicate in plain language, providing interpreting and translation services when required
- Offer a website that is up to date, relevant and interactive where possible
- Make sure our offices and events are accessible to everyone
- Obtain customer satisfaction on services and use customer surveys/informal feedback to drive valuable learning lessons and improvements to services
- Respect customers' privacy, offering private interviewing facilities and home visits.
- Wear visible identification when we see you at our offices
- Carry identification and show it to you when we visit you at your home
- Have well-trained and confident staff that have the skills and knowledge to do the job
- Ensure that all our staff are trained and know where to direct customers and/or how to deal with complaints
- Ensure that if our staff behave in an unacceptable way (see below section on unacceptable behaviour) they will face disciplinary action as appropriate, which may lead to their contract of employment being terminated.

## **What we ask of you:**

- To treat our staff and anyone working on our behalf with courtesy and respect
- To provide us with the information and documentation we need to help you
- Respect the non-smoking legislation at our office and when we visit you at your home
- Tell us when we do not meet expectations and give us your views and suggestions
- Avoid unacceptable behaviour

## **Unacceptable behaviour includes:**

- Verbal abuse of any kind, including racist, sexist and discriminatory comments
- Threatening behaviour or intimidation/aggression of any kind
- Any act of physical violence
- Being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol

Customers who fail to behave in an acceptable way may have their access to services modified and/or face legal action.

## COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

We define a complaint as being **any expression of dissatisfaction in our services**, by whatever method. This includes when a customer believes we have done something wrong or we have failed to do something we should have done.

We will make it easy for customers to make a compliment, comment or a complaint and will offer a wide range of methods for reporting them.

### We will

- Deal with complaints and appeals as quickly as possible and certainly within the timescales set
- Ensure our complaints process is easily accessible, well publicised, versatile and easy to use
- Provide support to help you through the complaints process
- Treat you fairly throughout the complaints process and respect any desire for confidentiality
- Investigate each complaint thoroughly and provide you with the opportunity to talk through the problem with a Manager as appropriate
- Keep you informed, in writing or by any other agreed format, of progress whilst your complaint is being investigated
- Delegate responsibilities and a 'sorry budget' so that front-line staff can make decisions and resolve issues as quickly as possible
- Take your comments seriously and welcome any compliments and/or suggestions for improving the way we do things.

### What we ask of you:

- Tell us when you feel we don't get something right
- Tell us if we are inconsistent in our approach
- Tell us if we don't keep our promises as set out in our service standards
- Tell us if we don't keep an appointment with you without letting you know beforehand
- Let us know if you are unhappy with a service from our contractor/s
- Give us the opportunity to put things right – tell us what you would like us to do when things go wrong
- Tell us if you have an idea or suggestion for improving the way we do things

## 5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

No individual will be unjustifiably discriminated against on the basis of their gender, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religious or political beliefs, disability (physical, mental or learning), marital or civil partnership status, social background, family circumstance, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, spent criminal convictions, age or for any other reason.

We will be proactive in being inclusive by providing translations, large print, audio etc; by providing childcare and holding events at different times of day and in different locations, if appropriate.

## **6. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Staff will receive training in relation to our Customer Service Policy and this related strategy. This strategy supports the delivery of our commitment to excellent customer service and will form part of the induction process for new Board Members and staff.

We will also train and support our staff in providing excellent customer care.

## **7. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

In accordance with our policy, an accurate database will be maintained to record all formal and informal compliments, comments and complaints. This recording system will be used to monitor outcomes, improvements to services, customer satisfaction and trends.

We will monitor complaints to ensure we learn from our mistakes and put in place processes to help prevent them from happening again.

We will monitor our performance against service standards and test them by use of Tenant Auditor mystery shopping.

This policy will be formally reviewed on a three yearly basis, or earlier in response to service demands and good practice guidelines. This policy is due for review in June 2012.

## **8. ACTION PLAN**

This strategy is supported by an action plan, the Customer Service Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP is monitored regularly (at least monthly) by the Senior Management Team. Progress will be reported on an exceptions basis to the Board or relevant committee. Progress will also be reported to the Tenants' Forum and customer interest groups as appropriate.

## **9. OTHER RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS**

Customer Service Policy  
Customer Service Improvement Plan (SIP)  
Tenant Compensation Policy  
Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy  
Resident Involvement Policy and Strategy  
Data Protection Policy  
Communications Policy  
Continuity and Openness Policy