

CUSTOMER CARE POLICY

Status: Approved

Policy Lead :	Director of Customer and Communities
Owned By :	Customer Experience Manager
Date Approved:	January 2026
Approved By :	BHA Operations Committee
Review Date:	January 2029
Regulatory / Legislative Considerations/ References	<p>This policy shall be reviewed by BHA's Executive Team before tabling for approval by BHA's Operations Committee.</p> <p>The policy should be considered as an essential document to BHA's fulfilment of its duties under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 including provision of housing services in line with the Scottish Social Housing Charter and compliance with the standards set out in the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework.</p>
Other documents to be read in conjunction with this policy :	<p>This document should be read in conjunction with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BHA's vision and values • BHA's complaints policy • BHA's unacceptable behaviour policy • Scottish Social Housing Charter • SHR Regulatory Framework • Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 • UK General Data Protection Regulation

Policy Title:	Customer Care policy
Purpose / Aim of policy:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To set out how we provide customers with an outstanding customer experience during their contact with BHA; To define BHA's expectations for our colleagues across our customer contacts; and To achieve the principles of Standard 2 of the Regulatory Framework, considering the needs/priorities of customers
Scope of Policy:	Provide definition around our approach to responding to customer enquiries and our timescales for doing so.
Definitions:	Detailed definition of expectations around customer care is provided in sections 3-13
Specific detail related to each strand in the scope:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our colleagues Home visits and visiting our offices and buildings Urgent and routine call backs Telephone calls, emails, social media and letters Out of hours services Equalities Our contractors and key partners Complaints Expectations of our customers Monitoring Service standards
Approval Source:	BHA Operations Committee
Equality Impact Assessment:	No adverse equality impacts were identified during the assessment.
Sustainability Assessment:	No direct implications or requirements.
Partnership Assessment:	BHA colleagues will work in partnership with other organisations where appropriate to meet customers needs and aspirations.
Glossary of Terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is the system we use to manage and record interactions with customers and stakeholders. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) is the updated principles for data protection. Routine callbacks are callbacks categorised as non-urgent with a 4-working day timescale to complete. Routine replies are replies categorised as non-urgent with a 4-working day timescale to complete. Urgent callbacks are callbacks categorised as high priority with a 1-day timescale to complete. Urgent replies are replies categorised as high priority with a 1-day timescale to complete.
Risk Implications:	A strong and well defined customer care policy ensures a fair and consistent contact approach for every customer. This ensures BHA delivers against in policy and legal obligations, that statutory deadlines are met and that we take a person-centred approach to customer contact.

1. INTRODUCTION

Berwickshire Housing Association (BHA) is committed to delivering outstanding customer experience. Our customer care policy and service standards tell you how we will do this and what you can expect from us.

2. POLICY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This policy aims to set out how we provide customers with an outstanding experience during any contact with BHA by defining expectations for our colleagues across our customer contact types. The objective of the policy is to set out the means of achieving the principles of Standard 2 of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework which focuses on the needs and priorities of our customers and wider stakeholders.

3. OUR COLLEAGUES

All BHA colleagues should subscribe to the values of the organisation and demonstrate these through our core behaviours. During any interaction with our colleagues, you should expect any member of our team to:

Be friendly and act sensitively and professionally at all times;

- Provide their name and the reason for their call or visit. If visiting you at home, they should have their BHA identification card on their person at all times and present this on arrival;
- Be attentive to your needs, listen to your concerns and communicate outcomes and next steps with you effectively;
- Organise an interpreter, signer, translation or alternative format if you need this;
- Treat any information you provide in confidence and in accordance with GDPR regulations;
- Be proactive with information and advice that is clear, concise and relevant to your enquiry;
- Keep you informed of the progress of your enquiry and do what they say they will do; and
- Arrive on time for meetings and let you know if delayed.

4. HOME VISITS

Our customer-facing teams are based in our communities as your local BHA representative. During a visit to your home, our colleagues will:

- Provide their name and the reason for their call or visit. If visiting you at home, they should have their BHA identification card on their person at all times and present this on arrival;
- Respect your home;
- Take an accurate record of your meeting which will be agreed with you, including next steps or actions following your meeting, and log the details on our CRM system as soon as possible after visiting your home; and
- Leave a calling card if you are not at home at the time of their visit with their contact details.

5. COLD CALLING

There are instances where BHA may visit your home without an appointment, but our approach is always to conduct cold calling professionally to ensure a positive customer experience. When booking a repair with us, you may be offered a cold calling appointment which allows our contractor to visit you if they are in the area without an appointment.

Cold calling and visits to your home without appointments should always be done for legitimate business purposes in line with our responsibilities as a landlord.

Where we cannot make contact with you by phone, and/or have concerns about your safety or wellbeing, we may complete an unannounced visit to your home. Our colleagues may approach properties to look or listen for any signs that the occupant may require urgent assistance. This will always be carried out professionally and is never to be intrusive as part of our approach to ensure customers are not at risk, in danger or experiencing any form of medical distress.

Where there are emergencies or urgent contact requests relating to repairs to your property or your tenancy with us, we will attempt to contact you at your home via a welfare check to ensure your safety.

6. OUR OFFICES AND BUILDINGS

BHA's colleagues are patch-based to ensure we can visit you where you feel most comfortable. For the times that it is not possible to visit you at home, and for accessing our buildings in our communities (for example, our independent living courts), you should expect BHA buildings to:

- Be clean and tidy, and free from health and safety risks;
- Be accessible to disabled people as far as reasonably attainable;
- Provide induction loops and translation services as required;
- Provide privacy for personal and private discussions; and
- Have clear and legible signs displaying how to contact us.

7. URGENT AND ROUTINE TIMESCALES

Our callback timescales are Urgent (1-working day) and Routine (4-working days) notwithstanding unexpected absence and illness. We define these contacts as follows:

Urgent (1-working day)	Immediate risk to safety, wellbeing or urgent assistance required
Routine (4-working days)	All other enquiries

Our customer experience team will aim to resolve your contact without referring your enquiry to a specialist colleague and where they need to refer your enquiry, they will do so to the assigned colleague for your address for housing, repairs or planned maintenance/assets.

In the event the assigned officer is unavailable or absent, your enquiry will be assigned to the appropriate member of our team who is covering in their absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will enquiries be escalated to service leads for routine service requests. The customer experience team are empowered to escalate your contact based on their triage and risk assessment of the nature of your enquiry.

8. TELEPHONE CALLS

BHA's customer experience team handle all contact via our freephone telephone number.

Our team can be accessed on **0800 652 8104** for all enquiries relating to housing registrations and your tenancy. We will:

- Aim to answer your call within 60 seconds;
- Greet you politely and say who we are, and deal with your enquiry in a professional and friendly manner;
- Have a 24-hour voicemail facility to leave messages for non-urgent enquiries;
- Offer a callback facility for responses at a more suitable time;
- Try to deal with your enquiry without passing you onto someone else. If we need to refer your enquiry to another colleague, we'll tell you who will contact you and by when; and
- Advise whether your callback is an urgent callback (within 1-working day) or a routine callback (within 4-working days).

9. EMAILS, SOCIAL MEDIA AND LETTERS

BHA's customer experience team will log all communications in our CRM system. This includes emails into our main customer mailbox at info@berwickshirehousing.org.uk, social media enquiries through Facebook at [BHA](#) and letters posted to our head office at **55 Newtown Street, Duns TD11 3AU**:

- Emails are monitored during the day and are acknowledged by an email reply and logged on your customer record within 1-working day;
- Emails regarding repairs will be diagnosed and issued in line with our repairs priorities: emergency – within 6 hours; urgent – within 3 days and routine – within 10 days. In the event we can't issue work from the information provided, our team will call you if the works described are urgent and reply to your email if the work is of a routine nature to confirm details;
- Emails regarding housing registrations, your tenancy or estate will be logged on your customer record in our CRM system and replied to as urgent (within 1-working day) or routine (within 4-working days);
- Social media mailboxes are monitored regularly, with acknowledgement messages advising emergencies should be reported to us via 0800 652 8104. Any enquiries received via social media are logged on your customer record and responded to in our urgent or routine timescale;
- Letters will be logged and date stamped on the day of receipt, then logged on your customer record in our CRM system; and
- Letters will be replied to as urgent or routine tasks and will generally be followed up with an initial phone call or attempt to visit.

10. OUT OF HOURS SERVICES

During weekends and holidays, BHA operates a 24-hour out of hours service for emergencies which is supported by on-call BHA colleagues by calling 0800 652 8104.

Our out of hours service will only deploy trades to emergency situations and may request escalation via a BHA colleague to contact you and advise on any further actions required before our office reopens. If your enquiry is not an emergency, you will be advised to call back when our offices reopen.

11. EQUALITIES

Our policies and practices are built on an understanding that all of our customers are different and should be treated as individuals.

This includes, but is not limited to, making information available in large print, alternative languages or via audio recording, provision of accessible buildings and venues for consultation and community meetings and digital/analogue availability of all our key documentation.

Any such requests are entered into our CRM system to ensure future correspondence is provided in the required format or provision of alternative measures is in place.

12. OUR CONTRACTORS AND KEY PARTNERS

Our contractors and key partners work alongside us to deliver projects and investment across our communities. When they visit your home, they will:

- Be friendly and professional while in your home, providing identification on arrival;
- Raise any concerns about welfare or safety of any household member confidentially back to BHA; and
- Ensure all areas are left clean and tidy when any work is undertaken.

13. COMPLAINTS

We know that we won't always get things right and welcome complaints as a way of improving our services to customers. We'll explain how to make a complaint to BHA if you are unhappy or dissatisfied with any area of our service. Where we can, we'll try and rectify your complaint there and then. If this isn't possible and we need to investigate your complaint, we'll respond in line with our complaints policy.

14. EXPECTATIONS OF OUR CUSTOMERS

BHA expects all customers to show the same respect towards our colleagues and will not tolerate any rudeness, abusive remarks or violence in any manner towards our people. Customers consistently showing such behaviour will be contacted in line with our Unacceptable Behaviour Policy and could face restrictions on access to our services.

15. MONITORING

We will continue to review this policy and our commitments with customers on an annual basis, making amendments for BHA Operations Committee approval as required.

16. SERVICE STANDARDS

Our service standards are set out at Appendix 1 for your information.

BHA'S SERVICE STANDARDS

You can contact us in any of the following ways:

- By phone on Freephone 0800 652 8104 24 hours a day for emergencies
- Via our website at www.berwickshirehousing.org.uk
- By email info@berwickshirehousing.org.uk
- In person by appointment at one of our offices at 55 Newtown Street, Duns TD11 3AU, or 38 Church Street, Eyemouth TD14 5DH
- Via social media at BHA (Berwickshire Housing) on Facebook

Contacting us	
We will:	By when:
Answer your call into our freephone number	Within 60 seconds
Acknowledge your enquiry (email, social media, letter)	Within 1-working day
Respond to urgent enquiries	Within 1-working day
Respond to routine enquiries	Within 4-working days
If unable to respond in full within this time, we will keep you advised of progress	Every five working days
We will provide publications and other information in different formats or languages	Upon request within 5 working days
Looking after your home	
We will:	By when:
Attend emergency repairs	Within 6 hours
Attend urgent repairs	Within 3-working days
Attend routine repairs	Within 10-working days
Safety check all gas and solid fuel appliances within your home	Once a year
Ensure your home has a valid electrical inspection condition report (EICR)	Every 5 years
Ensure your property has a valid Energy Performance Certificate	Every 10 years
Provide 24-hour emergency repairs via our freephone number 0800 652 8104	Outside of normal business hours, or during colleague training
Visiting your home	
We will:	By when:
Our colleagues and contractors will visit your home	By appointment generally
All our colleagues and contractors visiting your home will present identification	Upon every visit
Our colleagues and contractors will be friendly and professional	Upon every visit
Your tenancy	
We will:	By when:
Consider your request to assign your tenancy to another household member and provide you with our decision	Within 28 days
Consider your request to sublet your tenancy and provide you with our decision	

Consider your request to alter your home and provide you with our decision	Within 28 days
Consider your request to run a business from your home and provide you with our decision	
Consider your request to mutual exchange with a tenant from another landlord and provide you with our decision	
Registering with us for rehousing	
We will:	By when:
Process your housing application	Within 5-working days
Complete a health assessment with you where required	Within 10-working days
Complaints and compliments	
We will:	By when:
Give our decision on a stage 1 complaint (or advise you if further investigation is needed)	Within 5-working days
Give you our decision on an extended stage 1 complaint where further investigation is needed	Within 10-working days
Provide you with a full response to a stage 2 complaint	Within 20-working days
Write to you to thank you for complementing our colleagues or services	Within 5-working days
Rent services	
We will:	By when:
Provide you with a variety of convenient ways to pay your rent	Always
Correct any error on your rent account	Within 5-working days
Provide you at least 28 days' notice of any rent increase	Within 28 days
Offer you advice and support to help you to pay your rent	Upon referral
Regularly monitor accounts in credit and contact you to offer refunds	Monthly
Provide you with a rent balance and/or statement	Upon request
Estate management	
We will:	By when:
Action reports of untidy or poorly maintained gardens by visiting and issuing a first warning letter	Within 3-working days
Inspect communal areas in flatted blocks	Every 8 weeks
Ensure playparks in our management have a safety inspection	Every year
Data requests	
We will:	By when:
We will acknowledge Subject Access Requests and respond in full to requests made under Section 7 of the Data Protection Act 1998	Within one month
We acknowledge Freedom of Information Requests and respond in full to requests.	Within 20-working days