



## CUSTOMER CARE POLICY

**Status: Approved**

<b>Policy Lead :</b>	Executive Director – Customer Experience
<b>Owned By :</b>	Customer Experience Lead
<b>Date Approved:</b>	17 January 2023
<b>Approved By :</b>	BHA Board
<b>Review Date:</b>	January 2026
<b>Regulatory / Legislative Considerations/ References</b>	<p>This policy shall be reviewed by Operations Committee before tabling for approval by BHA’s Board.</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>
<b>Other Documents to be read in conjunction with this policy :</b>	<p>This document should be read in conjunction with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BHA’s vision and values</li> <li>• BHA’s complaints policy</li> <li>• BHA’s unacceptable behaviour policy</li> <li>• <a href="#">Scottish Social Housing Charter</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">SHR Regulatory Framework</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Housing (Scotland) Act 2010</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">UK General Data Protection Regulation</a></li> </ul>

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>Customer Care policy</b>
<b>Purpose / Aim of policy:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To set out how we provide customers with an outstanding customer experience during their contact with BHA;</li> <li>To define BHA's expectations for our colleagues across our customer contacts; and</li> <li>To achieve the principles of Standard 2 of the Regulatory Framework, taking into account the needs and priorities of our customers</li> </ul>
<b>Scope of Policy:</b>	Provision of initial service standards and definition around contact and response timescales and actions to support our ambition to deliver outstanding customer experience
<b>Definitions:</b>	Detailed definition of expectations around customer care is provided in sections 3-13
<b>Specific detail related to each strand in the scope:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our colleagues</li> <li>Home visits</li> <li>Our offices and buildings</li> <li>Telephone calls</li> <li>Emails, social media and letters</li> <li>Out of hours services</li> <li>Equalities</li> <li>Our contractors and key partners</li> <li>Complaints</li> <li>Expectations of our customers</li> <li>Monitoring</li> <li>Customer commitments</li> </ul>
<b>Approval Source:</b>	BHA Board (to be reviewed by Operations Committee)
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>	In fulfilment of the <b>Access</b> pillar of the Customer Experience Strategy, an equality impact assessment is still required to be carried out ( <i>to follow</i> )
<b>Sustainability Assessment:</b>	No direct implications or requirements.
<b>Partnership Assessment:</b>	BHA colleagues will work in partnership with other organisations where appropriate to ensure customers' needs and aspirations are fulfilled.
<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	<p><u>CRM – Customer Relationship Management</u> <i>This is the system we use to manage and record interactions with customers and stakeholders.</i></p> <p><u>GDPR – General Data Protection Regulations</u> <i>These are the updated principles for data protection.</i></p> <p><u>QR code – Quick Response code</u> <i>These are square shaped barcodes which store data and internet links that can be scanned by mobile phones to allow speedy access directly to a website.</i></p> <p><u>Routine call back</u> <i>These are call backs categorised as non-urgent with a 4-day timescale to complete.</i></p>

	<p><u>Routine reply</u> <i>These are replies categorised as non-urgent with a 4-day timescale to complete.</i></p> <p><u>Urgent call back</u> <i>These are call backs catergorised as high priority with a 1-day timescale to complete.</i></p> <p><u>Urgent reply</u> <i>These are replies categorised as high priority with a 1-day timescale to complete.</i></p>
<b>Risk Implications:</b>	N/A

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Berwickshire Housing Association (BHA) is committed to delivering outstanding customer experience and exceeding your expectations in everything we do. Our customer care policy and commitments 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 staff 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 professional.
- 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.
- 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.
- Act sensitively and professionally at all times.
- 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 being made with 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:

- Arrive on time to meet you and let you know as soon as possible if they are running late.
- 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.

- Leave a calling card in the event that you are not at home at the time of their visit with their contact details.
- Minimise interruptions as far as possible; and
- Present BHA identification on every visit and ensure this is on their person at all times.

## **5. OUR OFFICES AND BUILDINGS**

BHA's colleagues are patch-based to ensure we can visit our customers in the area they 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 at all times.
- Be free from health and safety risks.
- Be accessible to persons with disabilities as far as reasonably attainable.
- Provide induction loops and translation services as required.
- Provide privacy for personal and private discussions.
- Have clear and legible signs displaying how to contact us and how to book appointments for home or office visits; and
- Display our website and social media information (including QR codes) for easy access to information and signposting.

## **6. 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 20 seconds.
- Greet you politely and say who we are.
- Deal with your enquiry in a professional and friendly manner.
- Have a 24-hour voicemail facility for customers to leave messages for non-urgent enquiries.
- Try to deal with your enquiry there and then without passing you onto someone else. We'll tell you who will contact you and by when if we need to refer your enquiry to another member of our team; and
- Advise you whether your call back is an urgent call back (within 24 hours) or a routine call back (within 4 days).

## **7. EMAILS, SOCIAL MEDIA AND LETTERS**

BHA's customer experience team will log all other 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 logged on your customer record.

- Emails regarding repairs will be diagnosed and issued in line with our repair's 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 works are 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 24 hours) or routine (within 4 days) with an email reply sent within 24 hours in all cases to acknowledge your enquiry;
- Social media mailboxes are monitored throughout the day and messages are logged on your customer record;
- Messages regarding repairs will be diagnosed and issued with any other enquiries acknowledged within 24 hours and replied to as urgent or routine.
- 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.

## **8. 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. This service is provided by SPS Doorguard and is available on our freephone number **0800 652 8104**.

Housing and technical colleagues provide on-call cover on a rota basis, with the leadership and executive team available for additional support, complex circumstances, or authorisation.

## **9. EQUALITIES**

Our policies and practices are built on an understanding that all our customers are different and should be treated as individuals. BHA is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity which includes our approach to meeting our legal obligations and the expectations of the Scottish Housing Regulator. We place the utmost importance on providing an outstanding experience to our customers and use the information customers share with us to help us understand and meet their needs.

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.

## **10. 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.
- Provide their BHA identification card on arrival and have this on their person at all times.

- Be attentive and listen to your needs and concerns and communicate any information back to BHA.
- 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.

## 11. COMPLAINTS

We recognise that we won't always get things right and welcome complaints as a way of improving our services to customers. We will provide advice and assistance on 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. In the event this is not possible, and we need to investigate your complaint, we'll respond in line with our complaints handling procedure.

## 12. 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. Persons consistently showing such behaviour will be contacted in line with our Unacceptable Behaviour Policy and could face restrictions on access to our services.

## 13. MONITORING

Our mission is to provide an outstanding experience to all our customers through services that provide value for money and invest in our communities. We will continue to review this policy and our commitments with customers on an annual basis, making amendments for BHA Board approval whenever required.

## 14. CUSTOMER COMMITMENTS

<b>We will:</b>	<b>By when:</b>
Answer your call into our freephone number	Within 20 seconds
Acknowledge your enquiry (email, social media, letter)	Within 24 hours
Respond to urgent enquiries	Within 24 hours
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
Attend emergency repairs	Within 6 hours
Attend urgent repairs	Within 3 days
Attend routine repairs	Within 10 days
Safety check all gas appliances within your home	Once a year
Our colleagues and contractors will visit your home	By appointment

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All our staff and contractors visiting your home will present identification	Upon every visit
Our colleagues and contractors will be friendly and professional	Upon every visit
Process your housing application	Within 5 working days
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
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 of receipt of the request. This period may be extended by two further months, taking into account the complexity and number of requests.
We acknowledge Freedom of Information Requests and respond in full to requests.	Within 20 working days
Provide 24-hour emergency repairs via our freephone number 0800 652 8104	Between 5pm and 8.45am on week days, between 8.45am and 10.30am on Wednesdays and over weekends