



CUSTOMER CARE POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Linstone Housing Association is committed to providing the very highest level of service to all customers.

Our Customer Care Policy is based on the principles for Public Service contained within the Citizen's Charter. It specifically details the service delivery you can expect from every member of Linstone's staff.

2.0 LINSTONE'S AIMS

- To strive to continuously improve the service we offer.
- To listen to customers views.
- To define clearly the standards we will employ to achieve these aims.

3.0 OUR OBJECTIVES

- To provide a responsive service which meets the needs of all our clients
- To ensure equal access to all services for all customers
- To ensure that our customers have good access to Linstone Housing Association particularly in terms of information
- To listen to customer opinion and make changes if appropriate.

This will be done by various means e.g. customer satisfaction surveys; meetings; "one to one" discussions, etc.

- To ensure that staff are highly trained and have the devolved responsibility to make decisions
- To operate with integrity in an open and honest way

4.0 OUR STANDARDS

4.1 Access

- we will aim to make our office(s) suitable for those with impaired mobility
- we will try to ensure that our office takes account of the needs of children
- we will positively employ Health and Safety practices
- we will produce written information on our policies which will be readily available to all customers
- our written work will use 'plain English' and avoid use of technical terms and abbreviations
- we will publish details of our performance
- we will ensure information is available in other languages and in formats suitable for the hearing/sight impaired if appropriate
- we will consider the needs of our customers when deciding office locations
- we will have on display the key points of our Customer Care Policy

4.2 In the Office

- we will see customers within 5 minutes of arrival
- we will carry out all interviews in private and in strictest confidence
- we will ensure that you deal with a named member of staff
- customers will be treated in a polite and friendly manner
- if a prior appointment is made the customer will be able to see the member of staff they want
- if no appointment has been made you may not be able to see the person straight away. The receptionist will advise how long the customer can expect to wait for an interview and/or offer an alternative member of staff

- we will offer an appointment within 10 working days if the member of staff the customer wishes to see is not available or if the customer prefers not to wait.

4.3 On the Telephone

- we will answer calls within eight rings
- the customer will be told who they are speaking to
- if the required member of staff is not available we will either:-
 - i) advise when they can be contacted
 - ii) offer an alternative
 - iii) take a detailed message
- we will aim return calls within 1 working day with either a direct reply or a timescale for action

4.4 At Home

- we will meet requests for a home visit within a maximum of 10 working days
- staff will carry identification badges or a letter of authorisation and will introduce themselves by name
- as with office interviews, discussions during a home visit will be treated in strictest confidence
- if we require to cancel a home appointment (in the event of sickness/emergency) we will notify the customer as a matter of priority and make a mutually acceptable alternative within 10 working days
- if the customer requires to cancel a home appointment we will make a mutually acceptable alternative within 10 working days
- if a home visit is made either with or without an appointment and the customer is not home a "no access" card will be left briefly detailing:-
 - i) who called
 - ii) the purpose of the visit
 - iii) the telephone number to call to rearrange the visit
- We would expect our Contractors to comply with our Code of Practice
- If a home visit is made in the evening there will usually be two staff in attendance for security reasons.

4.5 By Letter

- we will reply to written correspondence within a maximum of 10 WORKING DAYS

If we cannot give a full reply within this timescale a letter will be sent detailing when a response will be available

- all letters will be acknowledged in writing on receipt
- all letters will give full details of the name and position of the person dealing with the enquiry
- our written correspondence will use plain English and avoid using jargon/abbreviations

5.0 **MAKING A COMPLAINT**

Whilst Linstone Housing Association is committed to providing a first class service and giving our customers as much input and choice as possible, there may be occasions when customers are unhappy about the service provided or about Linstone in general.

If this is the case Linstone Housing Association feels it is very important that customers tell us about it. We will ensure the matter is fully investigated and a satisfactory solution achieved. For this reason we welcome complaints as a method of monitoring our performance/service delivery and will use the complaints procedure as a tool to help us continually improve.

5.1 Who can use the Complaints Procedure

- Anyone who receives or requests a service from Linstone Housing Association e.g. tenants, owners, contractors, housing applicants etc.
- Anyone acting on behalf of someone receiving or requesting a service from Linstone Housing Association e.g. solicitor, MP, councillors, Citizens Advice Bureaux.
- Tenants/Residents Associations

5.2 What can Customers Complain about?

Customers can complain about any aspect of Linstone's service with which they are unhappy:

Examples:

- i) a repair which hasn't been carried out properly
- ii) if information is requested, but not provided
- iii) unreasonable behaviour of staff/contractor/committee member
- iv) if a housing application has been improperly processed
- v) if we fail to achieve our guaranteed standards

Complaints about neighbours will be dealt with under our Anti-Social Policy and Procedure, unless the complaint is about the way a Neighbour Dispute was handled – when this policy will come into effect.