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Your guide to our . . .

Customer service standards

Setting expectations on the level of service you should receive

Glen Oaks
HOUSING ASSOCIATION



This document sets out the standards of service you, as a customer, can expect to receive from us and how to let us know if we are not meeting the standards.

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Glen Oaks Housing Association is committed to providing high-quality customer services that meet the needs of our tenants. We value our tenants and want you to be rewarded when you follow the guidelines in your tenancy agreement with us.

Who are our customers?

Our customers are all potential and actual tenants, sharing owners and owner occupiers, plus any individual, agency, partner or organisation seeking information or a service from us.

What are service standards?

Service standards are service commitments by an organisation. They confirm how specific services will be delivered and explain the quality of service you can expect.

We are committed to providing the highest standard of customer care for all our customers and understand the importance of delivering a first class service to you.

We will ensure that our services are fair and accessible to everyone – regardless of race, religion, colour, sexual orientation, gender, age or background.

All customers will be treated with respect, dignity and patience and experience a consistently professional service that is friendly and courteous.

How we monitor our performance

We review our standards on a regular basis with our customers and report any changes in our newsletters. We also monitor our customer satisfaction levels through regular surveys. You will also receive feedback on any improvements we intend to make as a result of our survey results.

We have a Service Improvement Group, which is made up of tenants and prospective tenants on our waiting list. This group has been set up to scrutinise our services on a regular basis and ensure our standards meet the needs of our customers.

Complaints

The purpose of our standards is to highlight the high standards of customer care you can expect from us. If you feel we have fallen short of these standards please let us know. You can do this by contacting our office and speaking to a staff member or by requesting a copy of our complaints leaflet and policy. This information is available at our office and can also be downloaded from our website at www.glenoaks.org.uk

Our key service standards

Our staff will:

Be polite, friendly, courteous and helpful.
Treat all customers fairly with respect and dignity.
Wear identification badges in the office and when working outside the office.

Our office will:

Be clean, tidy and welcoming with comfortable seating.
Have disabled access to services where possible. For customers who are unable to access our office, we will make suitable alternative arrangements.
Have an induction loop system to help those with a hearing impairment.
Provide rooms to discuss issues in private.
Display information about our services on our reception TV screen and have leaflets available for you to take away.

When you visit our office:

A member of staff wearing a name badge will greet you promptly with a smile.
If you have an appointment you will be seen on time.
If there is a delay we will tell you and keep you informed of what is happening.
If you have not made an appointment and the member of staff you want to speak to is available, you will not be kept waiting more than 10 minutes. If the staff member is not available we will aim to make an alternative appointment.

We have a Duty Officer available in our office every day to assist you with any housing queries.

If you have a housing enquiry or wish to speak to a Housing Services Officer, you will initially see the Housing Services Officer who is on duty that day.
If you wish to speak to a specific Housing Services Officer we will try to arrange an appointment that day or, if they are unavailable, we will arrange a mutually convenient appointment.

When we receive a telephone call we will:

Answer promptly and apologise if there has been any delay.
Acknowledge callers in a polite and courteous manner, stating our name.
Wherever possible, ensure you get through to someone who can deal with your query.
When transferring calls we will give you the name of the person or department that you are being transferred to.
Provide you with the option of leaving a message if the staff member you wish to speak to is unavailable.
Respond to phone messages within one working day.

Our phone system allows calls to be transferred to the full department if one member of the team can't answer it.

When our office is closed we will:

Provide a voicemail facility so you may leave a message. The recorded introduction will advise what you should do if your call is urgent or an emergency.

When we receive letters or emails we will:

Acknowledge them within 3 working days and provide a full reply within 10 working days.
Where there is a requirement to respond within a 28 day statutory timescale (e.g. assignments, alterations etc.), we aim to respond more quickly, normally within 10 working days. If we cannot meet any timescale we will send a letter explaining the reason for the delay and tell you when you can expect a full response.
Ensure all our correspondence is clear, easy to understand, written in plain English, free of jargon and provide a contact name and telephone number.
When required, make arrangements for correspondence to be sent in relevant languages, large print, Braille or audiotape.
If there are problems with availability of postal services, we will (when practical) deliver correspondence by hand.
If we cannot respond to your email we will give you an alternative name and details of whom you can contact.
We will monitor any issues in responding to letters or emails within these agreed timescales.

When we visit you at home we will:

Where practical, arrange the appointment in advance and at a date and time convenient for you.

(Please note that whilst we will make appointments for most home visits, there may also be occasions when we will visit you at home unannounced).

If we believe you may have reading difficulties or are visually impaired, we will advise you of the appointment by telephone.

Ensure all staff have identification badges that should be presented to you if they visit your home.

Leave a calling card when a home visit is made and you are not at home. This will provide details of the staff member's name and telephone number to enable you to arrange another visit.

We encourage you to check ID cards of all visitors (including Glen Oaks staff) before allowing them into your home.

Our housing management service

Housing applications

We will:

Provide you with an application form and a Summary of the Allocation Policy which explains how the waiting list operates.

Assist you with the completion of forms if required.

Invite you into our office for an interview within 10 days, to discuss your choice of areas and inform you of the timescales for potential offers. This will allow you the opportunity to provide any additional information that may support your application.

Notify you of your points information within 10 working days, as long as all necessary information has been received.

Review our waiting list annually and ask you to confirm if you still wish to remain on the list. If no reply is received after 2 reminders, your application will be cancelled.

Rent

We will:

Offer a variety of convenient ways to pay your rent including: direct debit, standing order, cheque, Allpay card, 24-hour phone payments, card machine in our office. You can also phone our Housing Services staff who can take a credit or debit card payment. Payments can also be made via our website.

Send you an annual statement of your rent account.

Consult you before any changes are made such as a rent increase. This will be by letter and our quarterly newsletter.

If you get into financial difficulties, we will:

Advise you of assistance available, such as making you an appointment with one of our dedicated welfare rights staff.

Make sensible and realistic arrangements for repayment of arrears.

Neighbour complaints

We will:

Investigate all complaints fully, monitor and respond within the relevant timescales.

Make clear to all tenants that any form of harassment will be viewed as a serious breach of the tenancy agreement.

Keep you informed of the progress of your complaint.

Neighbour complaints are divided into three categories depending on their seriousness and nature.

Category A Extreme – 24 hours

Drug dealing, violent conduct, racial abuse, criminal behaviour or harassment.

Category B Serious – 3 working days

Frequent disturbances, vandalism or damage to property, threatening or abusive behaviour.

Category C Minor – 28 working days

Other nuisances or disputes, noise complaints, running a business, pet nuisance, stair cleaning, boundary disputes or family disputes affecting neighbours.

Further details of the neighbour complaints process can be found in [Booklet 11 – Anti-social behaviour](#). You can also get further information from your tenancy agreement.

Our repair service

We will:

Provide a 24-hour repair reporting service with an on-call service to deal with emergencies outwith office hours

Respond to repairs within the relevant timescale.

Emergency – 4 Hours

Threat to life or fabric of building, e.g. flooding.

Urgent – 3 working days

Impact on your day to day living e.g. loss of TV signal.

Routine – 10 working days

All other repairs e.g. repair to skirting boards.

To ensure you are satisfied with your repair, we will:

Ask you to fill out a satisfaction form once your repair is complete.

Inspect a percentage of completed jobs to ensure quality of workmanship is of a high standard.

If you are a Gold Service tenant, we will:

Respond to your repairs within the enhanced timescale, in line with our Gold Service Policy. [See Booklet 5](#) of this handbook for more details.

Emergency – 4 hours

Response time for emergency is the same for all of our tenants.

Gold Service Urgent – 1 day

Impact on your day to day living e.g. loss of TV signal.

Gold Service Routine – 5 days

All other repairs e.g. repair to skirting boards.

Right to Repair

If your repair falls under the Right to Repair scheme, we will:

Make sure that you are aware of your rights under this scheme, which sets out timescales you should expect for certain qualifying repairs to be completed e.g. loss of heating or a blocked drain.

Provide you with information on an alternative contractor if we fail to respond within agreed respond times.

Ensure if you are eligible for compensation that you receive it.

Gas safety

We will:

Carry out an annual gas safety check in every property with a gas supply.

Give you notice in advance of the annual safety check being carried out.

Ensure you understand the importance of this check for you and your neighbours' safety by providing you with this information.

Notify you if we need to force access into your home to carry out the check (if you have failed to give us access) and advise you how much this will cost.

Planned maintenance

When carrying out the renewal of major items in your home, we will:

Consult with you on major work and planned maintenance contracts, offering you a choice on items where appropriate.

Ensure that programmes of work are detailed in our newsletters.

Advise you at least two weeks before work commences, that a contractor has been appointed to carry out work in your home.

Visit you with the contractor to discuss the work and any specific requirements.

Post-inspect all work.

Issue a satisfaction survey within three months of completion of the work.

Alterations and improvements

We will:

Respond within 5 working days to all requests that you may have to alter or carry out improvements to your home e.g. fit laminate flooring

Compensate you for certain improvements at the end of your tenancy if we had previously agreed to them being carried out.

Home owners

If you are a home owner and we factor your property we will:

Issue you with an account statement detailing all charges four times a year.

Offer a number of easy methods of payment including: direct debit, standing order, cheque or postal order, Allpay payment card, 24-hour phone payments, card machine in our office or online via allpay.net.

Provide you with a copy of our quarterly newsletter that will include updates relevant to you as an owner.

Issue you with an annual satisfaction form that will be used to improve our service.

Issue you with an annual census form to ensure we maintain an up to date record of your information such as contact details.

Communicating with and involving customers

We will:

Promote our service standards in leaflets, posters, at tenancy sign-ups and on our website.

Provide you with a handbook that is updated regularly.

Encourage customer feedback on our services in a variety of ways. For example comprehensive satisfaction survey every three years, follow up surveys after you have received a service, repairs or close cleaning.

Use this information to continuously improve and develop our services.

Regularly update our website.

Provide you with four newsletters and an annual report each year.

Create opportunities for you to get involved at a level and in ways that meet your needs, such as the Service Improvement Group.

Contact Us

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 go@glenoaks.org.uk

 [Glenoakshousing](https://www.facebook.com/Glenoakshousing)

 [@GlenOaksHousing](https://twitter.com/GlenOaksHousing)

Our office opening hours are:

Monday, Tuesday & Thursday: 9am - 5pm

Wednesday: 9am - 1pm

Friday: 9am - 4pm

Our office is closed for staff training from 1pm every Wednesday.



Charity No. SCO34301

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