

customer service standards

this leaflet aims to set out Ashton Pioneer Homes customer service standards and performance targets - this helps us to ensure that our customers receive the service standards we have committed to providing



customer service standards

Introduction

This leaflet aims to set out Ashton Pioneer Homes Customer Service Standards and performance targets. It also highlights how we are able to measure these standards. This helps us to ensure that our customers receive the service standards we have committed to providing.

Monitoring the Service

We use various methods of checking that we are meeting our targets and this could include:

Mystery Shopping

We test our compliance by using an independent Company to mystery shop our Customer Services. We will also use our own customers via the Residents Panel to test the services we provide.

Management Checks

Our Management Team and Team Leaders will be expected to monitor staff members and make regular spot checks of services.

Information Technology

We will regularly update our computer system on receipt or completion of tasks.

Paper Records

We will maintain written records of visits and contacts made by our customers.

Inspection

Will we carry out inspections to 10% of completed repair work and we will post inspect all repair work carried out in our empty properties.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

We will check the levels of our customer satisfaction by sending out questionnaires for every repair that we complete. We will also test levels of customer satisfaction by regularly sending out customer satisfaction surveys.

Residents Panel

A panel of our own customers will work closely with us to help to continuously improve the services to local residents. They will review and advise on draft policies before they go to our Board for approval, decide which policies require reviewing, give feedback on our service standards on an annual basis and review performance reports.

Customer Care

General Standards

We will ensure:

- Staff will wear clothing that is clean, presentable and smart. If necessary it will also be suitable for the work which they will be carrying out
- We will clearly display the times that our office is open in an appropriate place
- We will ensure that our office is open as advertised
- We will ensure that our reception area is kept clean and tidy and is well lit
- All our staff will wear name badges at all times and carry appropriate identification when conducting home visits
- A Housing Officer will be available by appointment during office hours
- We will provide a 24 hour, 7 days a week concierge and CCTV service
- All staff will be given sufficient training to enable them to deal with routine enquiries at the point of contact with a customer. If they are unable to answer the enquiry they will signpost to the relevant agency and/or support services

Target – 100% Monitoring – Mystery Shopping, Management, TSS

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Telephones

We aim to ensure that telephone calls take priority over other tasks.

- Calls will be answered within 5 rings
- You will be greeted with appropriate salutation for example, 'Good morning/afternoon, Ashton Pioneer Homes and name of the Customer Services Officer who is speaking, How can I help you?
- We will return calls left on our answer machine within 24 hours, or if necessary pass on a message to the appropriate person
- We will provide a 24 hour telephone service for emergency repairs ▼

Target – 95% Monitoring – Mystery Shopping, TSS, Management

Accessible Services

We aim to provide services accessible by all.

- We provide an office that is locally based and consult customers' views on office opening hours
- Our office has a customer reception and interviewing rooms that are accessible to prams, pushchairs, wheelchairs and people with mobility difficulties
- We will carry out home visits to those people who can not access our office personally because of mobility or other difficulties
- All relevant information/leaflets will be available in Bangla, Urdu and Gurjerati and in a format suitable for those with visual or auditory difficulties
- We will provide access to interpretation services as appropriate
- Our office and on site staff will have access to a hearing loop for our customers with hearing difficulties
- Members of APH staff accessible on site 24 hours a day ▼

Target – 100% Monitoring – Mystery Shopping, Management, TSS

Written Communication

All our written material, including letters, newsletters, flyers and leaflets, will use plain English and avoid the use of jargon.

- All our letters will be dated and printed on Company letterhead paper, they will be from named individuals and clearly understandable
- All incoming correspondence from our customers will be date stamped on receipt and a reply will be sent within 5 working days
- An interim reply will be sent if a full detailed answer can not be provided within the 5 working days and a full response will be received within 10 working days
- Requests for forms or literature will be dispatched within 1 working day
- On request we will provide leaflets in different languages ▼

Target – 95% Monitoring – TSS, Mystery Shopping, Management

Email & Text

In addition to contacting us via telephone or letter we will also encourage our customers to contact us via email or text.

- All emails will be responded to within two working days. Staff will include their name, job title, Company address and contact telephone number on the email
- If we are unable to answer your email within the above timescale we will send you a holding response within 2 working days and a full response within 10 working days
- All texts will be responded to within two working days
- We will keep records of emails and texts sent to us ▼

Target – 95% Monitoring – TSS, Mystery Shopping, Management

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Comments, Compliments and Complaints

Comments and Compliments

Ashton Pioneer Homes will actively encourage our customers to make comments and suggestions regarding the services we provide

- We will provide a comments and compliments box in our reception area and encourage customers to make comments/compliments using our C Cards. We will also make these available in all our communal areas
- Our Senior Management Team will consider all suggestions and endeavour to implement good ideas

Complaints

Ashton Pioneer Homes really do appreciate our customer's complaints. This is not only because it gives us the opportunity to investigate the service we provide but also to repair any damage which may have been caused. Most importantly we want to keep you as a customer!

- If we are unable to respond to your complaint immediately, we will acknowledge receipt within 1 working day and a full response will be sent within 5 working days
- On request, customers will be made aware of the Complaints Procedure and given an explanatory leaflet. For further information about our Complaints Procedure please read leaflet – Comments, Compliments and Complaints ▼

Target – 95% Monitoring – Mystery Shopping, Management

Ashton Pioneer Homes Commitment to Customers

Customer Information and Feedback

We are committed to keeping tenants fully informed about our performance and our activities and in order to ensure that we provide services that are relevant and responsive for our customers we will regularly seek their views about the level and quality of service in the following areas:

- Repairs and maintenance service
- Quality of service from staff when visiting/contacting the office
- Use of complaints procedure
- Newsletters/Annual Report

In addition to this we will also:-

- Send all our tenants a newsletter at least 3 times a year. This will include articles on any information and performance that we feel is important for our customers to know about our service
- Bi-annually we will conduct a tenant satisfaction survey and collect views on what tenants think of how we provide our services
- Provide a Welcome Pack and information to all new tenants
- Publish our annual report on our performance and make it available for all our tenants
- Provide tenants with a summary of our key policies and procedures via the Tenants Handbook and other publications, and full copies of policies will be provided on request
- Advice leaflets on all our services will be displayed in our reception area and will be available in Bangla, Urdu and Gurjerati and in a format suitable for those with visual or auditory difficulties, on request
- Display information bulletins in noticeboards in our reception area and across our estates ▼

Target – 95% Monitoring – Mystery Shopping, Management, Resident Panel

Tenant Participation

- We will ensure that our tenants can individually or collectively participate with Ashton Pioneer Homes at a level of their choice
- All new tenants will be encouraged to join the Residents Panel

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- We will actively promote joining our resident groups via our newsletters and bulletins
- Resident groups will have reasonable access to our managers
- Resident groups will be given the opportunity to participate in service reviews and inspections
- Resident groups will have the opportunity to participate in major policy development and decisions
- The Company rules allow 5 tenants to be a member of our Company board. The tenant representatives will be full members of the APH Board of Management and its committees with equal debating and voting rights as other members

Consultation

APH will ensure that tenants are fully consulted on all issues which are likely to affect them. In particular detailed consultation will be carried out on:-

- Proposals to alter tenancy agreement
- Proposals for significant change
- Policies and procedures that affect the management of our housing
- Level and standards of service offered by the Company
- Costs of services provided by the Company
- Plans to carry out improvements to individual tenants homes
- Plans to carry out improvements to environment (including any redevelopment work)
- Plans to develop new houses.
- Plans to develop community initiative including employment and training.

A variety of consultation methods may be used, including:

- Letters
- Personal visits

- Tenants meetings
- Consultation with recognised tenants groups
- Public exhibitions
- Customer Surveys
- Customer Panels

Target – 90% Monitoring – TSS, Management, Mystery Shopping

Housing Management

One of our main priorities is to assist and advise applicants in housing need and to minimise the number of empty properties that we have.

Housing Applicants

- We will input all new applications within 4 working days and send you an acknowledgement letter
- We will accept nominations in line with the agreement we have with the Local Authority
- Applications for housing will be reviewed as a minimum every 12 months
- Applications to exchange properties will be visited within 10 working days and a decision will be made within 28 days

Empty Properties

- 95% of all our empty properties will be inspected within 1 day
- 95% of abandoned properties will be visited within 24 hours of notification
- 95% of all our empty properties requiring repair works will be ready to let within 28 working days
- 95% of empty properties will be clean, secure and meet our letability standard before they are made ready to let

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- 95% of properties will be let within 5 working days of repair work being completed

New Tenants

All new tenants will be:-

- Assisted at sign up to complete an application for Housing Benefit and if requested provided with a trial calculation of benefit due
- Be visited by a Housing Services Officer within 6 weeks of the tenancy commencement date
- Be visited again by a Housing Services Officer after 9 months of the tenancy commencement date

Target – 95% Monitoring – Paper records, IT, Mang, TSS

Neighbourhood Support

Ashton Pioneer Homes does not and will not tolerate anti-social behaviour. This will be made clear to all our tenants living on our estates. We want you to enjoy your home and get on well with your neighbours. We will work hard to prevent things going wrong and work with you to help resolve problems

- All reports on anti-social behaviour will be investigated
- Anyone suffering from anti-social behaviour will either be visited in their home or offered an interview within 5 working days
- We will provide camera surveillance across our neighbourhoods and ensure our cameras are monitored by a member of staff 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Members of the Neighbourhood Services Team will regularly patrol your neighbourhood and will respond to your reports of a problem if you need help
- We will ensure staff are trained to deal with problems like noise nuisance from neighbours, harassment and racial harassment
- We will carry out any action agreed and confirm with you our progress

- In more serious cases we will take court action to get an injunction or possession order
- We will write and advise you if we close the case

Target – 95% Monitoring – Management, Computer, Paper Records, TSS

Caretaking and Cleaning

Hi-Rise Blocks and Maisonettes

We offer a 24 hour, 7 day a week cleaning and caretaking service. We will:-

- Clean each tower block, which includes being swept and mopped from top to bottom twice a week, including all squares, communal areas and lifts
- Display in notice boards in every tower and maisonette block, the day which your own block is to be cleaned and when/who last cleaned
- 95% of graffiti reported will be removed the same day
- Clean and mop the communal areas of maisonettes twice a week
- Check all communal parts at least 2 times a day, disposing of rubbish, spot cleaning as required, clean lift car floors, check chute rooms and chutes for blockages and conduct a perimeter litter pick
- Provide a rapid reactive cleaning service to clear up any cleanliness problems in communal areas as reported by service users

Target – 90% Management, Paper Records, Block Reps

Repairs, Maintenance and the Environment

Repairs and Maintenance

Our target timescales:-

- 95% of Emergency Repairs will be completed within 24 hours

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- 95% of Urgent Repairs will be completed within 2 days
- 95% of Routine Repairs will be completed within 28 days
- 95% of Major Repairs will be completed with 28 days
- All follow up work from out of hours emergency calls will be ordered within 24 hours
- We will offer an appointment time with a two hour leeway if a single trade repair is to be carried out in your home and aim to attend on time 95% of the time
- We will offer you an appointment time with a two hour leeway for a pre inspection repair and aim to attend on time 95% of the time
- All our repairs will be carried out by a competent operative, using appropriate materials and equipment
- We will check a minimum of 10% of all completed repairs
- We will inspect 100% of all repair work carried out in our empty properties

Target – as stated above Monitoring computer records, paper records, Inspection of completed works

Improvements and Planned Maintenance

- We will publish our plans for carrying out improvement works in tenants homes on an annual basis
- All tenants will be given a choice of styles and colours when new kitchens or bathrooms are fitted
- You will receive 4 weeks written notice of our intention to carry out improvement works in your home and be visited at least 5 days prior to the work commencing
- We will inspect 100% of all major improvements, as well as repairs to empty properties

- All improvements taking more than one day to complete will also be checked at least once whilst the work is being carried out

Target – 100% Monitoring – paper records

Environmental Services

In order to improve and maintain an attractive physical environment we will:-

- Visit to inspect reports of environmental blight eg overgrown hedges within 3 working days, abandoned cars within 24 hours
- Grass communal areas will be cut fortnightly during the growing season (March – October)
- The cutting of hedges and tree pruning in communal areas will take place twice a year
- We will litter pick our estates on a daily basis

Target – 95% Monitoring – mang checks, paper records

Rent Payments and Money Advice

Rent Payments

- We will offer a wide range of methods to enable you to pay your rent. These will include:- at our cash office, via Direct Debit or Standing Order, cheque, postal order, via our quick pay box in our reception area and our Neighbourhood Services Team can be contacted out of hours
- All our Customer and Housing Service teams are trained Verification Officers for Housing Benefit. By appointment, they will help you complete the necessary forms and estimate your entitlement to Housing Benefit
- All tenants will be issued with a rent card
- All tenants will receive a statement of account four times a year

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- All tenants will receive a new rent card once a year
- When we increase your rent we will give you 4 weeks notice in writing

Money Advice

- For those tenants with multiple debt problems debt counselling will be provided, more serious cases will be referred to the appropriate agency
- We will take legal action against those tenants who do not pay their rent
- Tenants who fall more than 2 weeks in arrears will be contacted by our Customer Service Team and/or their Housing Services Officer, to arrange repayment and provide benefit advice
- For those tenants who do fall behind with their rent, we will offer them repayment agreements that reflect their ability to pay
- We will not tolerate persistent non payment of rent and in more serious cases we will commence legal action. This could lead to eviction.