



# Customer Service Standards

A guide to the quality of services  
you can expect from CHP

COMMUNITIES ♦ HOMES ♦ PEOPLE

# Standards of service

**This booklet is about the quality of service you can expect from us, our commitment to treating you fairly, and how you can give us feedback on the services we provide.**

These standards have been agreed in consultation with tenants and we will monitor them regularly to continuously improve our services. We will publish our performance results and discuss these with the residents who help us to run the company. We will also publish results on our website and in our newsletters. We welcome and use suggestions, compliments and complaints to improve services.

### **Caring for our customers:**

We do not accept any form of discrimination against any person (for example because of their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, marital status or age). Please contact us on 0845 155 3000 if you feel you have been discriminated against.

**We promise to maintain the following standards of service and, whenever we deal with you, we promise to:**

- Treat you with respect and offer you a polite and helpful service;
- Make sure you have easy access to our services by providing a variety of ways to contact us;
- Make sure that we use plain English and clearly explain any technical terms or jargon;
- Promote equal opportunities and treat you fairly;
- Respect any special needs you may have and make sure you receive the appropriate level of service.



### **We expect you to:**

- Be polite to our staff and contractors
- Report any concerns and issues
- Tell us how we can improve our service

### **Treating people fairly**

#### **We treat people fairly by:**

- Making sure our offices and website are easy for people with disabilities to use and that we can be easily contacted;
- Providing a range of equipment and adaptations to homes to improve the quality of life for frail residents or those with disabilities;
- Finding out about our individual customers' needs so we can provide a personal and tailored service;
- Providing information in a range of formats and languages.

### **Communicating with all our customers effectively**

#### **When you ask us for information we will:**

- Make sure we communicate with you in the most appropriate way that meets your needs;
- Tell you which formats and languages we can provide our information in;
- Offer you an interpreter;
- Provide you with translated material within five working days;
- Provide facilities, such as Typetalk or minicom services, for customers who have speech or hearing difficulties;
- Offer you a portable hearing loop if our offices do not have a loop installed;
- Make sure that our staff are trained to deal with your request when you ask us to communicate in different ways.



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### Confidentiality and Data Protection

We regularly ask for information about you as it helps us to plan our services and make sure we are not discriminating against any individual or group. This information is covered by the Data Protection Act 1998.

We monitor how effective our policies are by assessing them against the law and other legal codes of practice. We use all the information we collect to identify any changes we need to make in the way we work.

### Getting in touch and keeping you informed

#### What you can expect

**Our residents have told us they prefer to contact us by telephone and we will:**

- Make sure you can contact us easily in normal working hours and out of hours for emergencies 24 hours a day, 365 days a year;
- Answer your call promptly – most calls within 30 seconds;
- Tell you our name when answering your call;
- Make every effort to deal with your enquiry and only transfer you to another individual when it is appropriate or necessary to do so to provide the best response to you;
- Record calls for training and quality purposes;
- Give you the opportunity to leave a message at busy times (excluding repairs) and we will call you back within one working day.



### **When you write or send an email we will:**

- Reply within 10 working days;
- Send an automatic reply to emails when we are away from the office for more than one working day and give you an alternative contact name;
- Include in the letter or email the name, job title and contact details of the staff member dealing with your enquiry;
- Use plain English in all documents which feature our residents 'Seal of Approval'.

### **If you wish to see a member of staff in person you can arrange an appointment for a home visit or go to Atholl House in Chelmsford town centre.**

### **When you request a home visit we will:**

- Offer an appointment within five working days of your request and arrange a reasonable and mutually convenient time;
- If, because of unavoidable reasons, we cannot keep the appointment, we will let you know as soon as we can, and rearrange a date and time convenient to you.

### **When we visit your home we will:**

- Always show our identification;
- Leave a card if you are not at home, which you can use to arrange a future convenient date and time to meet us;
- Clearly explain the nature of our visit if we have to visit your home without an appointment.



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### **Atholl House:**

- Is open from 9.00am.to 5.00pm. Monday to Friday;
- Should our office ever need to be closed during normal opening hours, we will let you know at least seven days in advance (other than in an emergency) by putting up a notice in reception, posting a message on our website and a message on the telephones, and request details of the closure is announced on local radio. The notice will include information on when the office will re-open and who to contact in an emergency;
- Reception will be clean, tidy, safe and suitable for all our customers, including people with disabilities;
- Employees will wear a badge that says who they are;
- Relevant leaflets and information will be displayed in the reception area;
- We aim to make you feel welcome when you arrive and see you within five minutes;
- We offer a private interview area for confidential enquiries;
- Translation or interpreting facilities are available on request (you can bring along your own interpreter if you wish).

### **To keep you informed we will:**

- Advise you of any plans that affect you or your home;
- Send you a copy of the 'Your Home' newsletter every four months;
- Update our website as required;
- Provide information in other formats and languages on request.



### What we will measure

Measurement	Our target
Percentage of telephone calls answered within 30 seconds	80%
Percentage of telephone messages returned within one working day	100%
Percentage of enquiries dealt with at the first point of contact	87%
Percentage of customers who arrive without an appointment that are seen within five minutes	90%

## Complaints, compliments and suggestions

### What you can expect

#### If you make a complaint we will:

- Try to resolve it informally first, and to your satisfaction;
- Tell you how to make a formal complaint if you remain dissatisfied;
- Acknowledge your formal complaint within three working days;
- Fully investigate your complaint and inform you of the outcome in writing within 10 working days, setting out the findings of the investigation and the action proposed;
- Where we need more time to investigate we will give you a date by which we will respond fully;
- Admit when we have made a mistake, agree with you on how we will remedy it and take action to put things right.



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- Keep you informed of the progress of agreed action;
- Give you the right of appeal if you are not satisfied with our response;
- Publish how complaints have helped improve services.

### What we will measure

Measurement	Our target
Percentage of formal complaints resolved at different stages of the formal process	Stage one – more than 70%
	Stage two – less than 15%
	Stage three – less than 5%
	Ombudsman – less than 1%
Percentage of formal complaints acknowledged within three working days	100%
Percentage of formal investigations completed and information provided to complainant within 10 working days	96%
Percentage of complainants satisfied with the way their complaint was handled (process not outcome)	90%



## Paying rent

### What you can expect

#### **When setting and accounting for rent we will:**

- Calculate rent levels according to government policy and guidelines;
- Consult leaseholders about increases in charges;
- Offer you a range of methods of payment;
- Issue a payment card within 10 days of request;
- Set up or amend direct debits within three working days of request;
- Send you a statement of your account every three months and give you a mini-statement within one working day of request;
- Offer to give you advice on getting welfare benefits and managing debt.

#### **When collecting unpaid rent or other charges we will:**

- Take early, prompt, and appropriate action to tell you of any arrears on your account;
- Take a firm but fair and sympathetic approach where there is hardship so that you do not lose your home;
- Offer you advice on benefit entitlement and how to manage debt;
- Work out how much housing benefit you may be entitled to and help you to apply for it if necessary;
- Take steps to evict people who persistently refuse to pay money they owe the company;
- Recover money owed by former tenants.



### What we will measure

Measurement	Our target
Percentage of payment cards issued within 10 working days from request	100%
Percentage of direct debits set up or amended within three working date from request	100%
Percentage of rent collected per year compared to rent receivable	99.0%
Total amount owed from current tenants compared to total rent receivable	1.95%
Percentage of rent owed by former tenants	1%

## Antisocial behaviour

### What you can expect

**We take all reports of antisocial behaviour very seriously and, when responding to reports of antisocial behaviour or neighbour disputes, we will:**

- Listen to your complaint in a sympathetic way;
- Investigate reports of serious cases, such as domestic abuse, hate related incidents, or racial harassment within one working day;
- Investigate all other reports within five working days (three days for youth nuisance) and explain what we are able to do;
- Ensure privacy and confidentiality is preserved whenever possible;
- Agree with the victim what support they need and take appropriate action to meet all reasonable expectations;
- Offer mediation where it is appropriate;



- Record and monitor all complaints of antisocial behaviour and explain why and when we close the case;
- Work in partnership with other agencies and consider remedies, including legal action, to combat antisocial behaviour and crime;
- Keep you regularly informed of agreed actions and outcomes.

### What we will measure

Measurement	Our target
Percentage of antisocial behaviour cases resolved at the first stage	85%
Percentage of antisocial behaviour complainants satisfied with the overall handling of their complaints	87%
Percentage of serious antisocial behaviour cases where an investigation began within one working day, an initial plan of action agreed with the victim and their support needs arranged	98%
Percentage of youth nuisance cases where an investigation began within three working days, an initial plan of action agreed with the victim and their support needs arranged	90%
Percentage of less serious antisocial behaviour cases where an investigation began within five working days, an initial plan of action agreed with the victim and their support needs arranged	95%
Percentage of cases where victims or complainants were contacted to discuss reasons to close a case	100%



# Repairs and maintenance

## What you can expect

### When we carry out repairs or maintenance we will:

- Ensure our tradesmen and contractors treat you with courtesy, respect your home and take account of any reasonable requests or customs;
- Show you suitable identification and explain the reason for the visit to your home;
- Telephone you straight away if we cannot make the appointment and arrange another time;
- Inspect a proportion of repairs to check for the quality of works;
- Measure satisfaction with the standard of work and your overall experience of the service;
- Fully investigate cases where you are unhappy with a repair.

## Day to day repairs

### When you report a repair we will:

- Offer an appointment as agreed with you (for non emergency repairs) between 8.00am and 4.00pm Monday to Friday;
- Offer you the choice of morning (8.00am – 1.00pm), afternoon (12.00pm – 4.00pm), all day (8.00am – 4.00pm) or avoid school run (10.00am – 2.30pm) appointments (for non emergency repairs only);
- Respond to emergency repairs within 24 hours;
- Respond to urgent repairs within seven calendar days;
- Respond to other repairs within 28 calendar days (we are working towards quicker response times in 2009/10, please see 'Our Promises');
- Provide a 24-hour, 365 days per year, service for emergency repairs when our offices are closed;
- Complete the majority of jobs in one visit.



### Planned repairs and major work

#### **When we carry out planned repairs or improvements to your home we will:**

- Consult with you before any major work is undertaken in your home;
- Give you at least 28 days notice of any work that is likely to cause you significant disruption;
- Give you a range of choices in design and colours for kitchens and bathrooms;
- Appoint a designated officer as a single point of contact during major works to your home.

### Aids and adaptations

#### **When you request aids or adaptations to your home we will:**

- Carry out minor work, such as grab rails, within 28 days;
- Give you information on how to get funding for major works (for example, stair-lifts) from the relevant local authority and help you to complete paperwork to apply for the grant;
- Work with you and the local authority to get your need assessed;
- Take into account your personal needs to reduce the inconvenience when carrying out the work;
- Begin at a date and time convenient to you but no later than 28 days from the date of the initial inspection by a contractor or our own team;
- Ask you for your opinion about the quality of the work and your overall satisfaction;
- Carry out a post inspection on all completed major works;
- Act as your advocate in respect of liaison with other agencies in the event of an unexpected delay with their response.



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### Gas safety

**We carry out gas safety checks in your home and will:**

- Employ a qualified engineer to service our appliances in your home at least once in any twelve month period, and a gas safety check on any appliances that are your responsibility (for example, a cooker);
- Offer you at least four opportunities for an engineer to gain access to your home so that we can check the gas boiler;
- Ensure that we keep in touch with you in order to gain entry and, if necessary, start legal proceedings to obtain access to your home;
- Give you a copy of the gas safety certificate.

### What we will measure

Measurement	Our target
Percentage of emergency repairs responded to within 24 hours and repairs completed or property made safe	98.6%
Percentage urgent repairs completed within 7 days	98.6%
Percentage of routine repairs completed within 28 days	98.6%
Percentage of repairs jobs post inspected	10%
Percentage of minor adaptations carried out within 28 days	100%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall responsive repairs service	95%



Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall planned maintenance service	100%
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Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall adaptations service	100%
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Percentage of homes with a valid gas safety certificate	100%
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## Looking after estates and neighbourhoods

### What you can expect

#### When providing estate management services we will:

- Provide dedicated housing management staff for each area and relief cover in their absence;
- Tell you about your tenancy / lease conditions and explain your rights and responsibilities;
- Explain what will happen if you breach your tenancy / lease conditions;
- Consult residents about any changes that are needed to estates and neighbourhoods and set aside money for community-led environmental improvements;
- Enforce tenancy conditions where we find unacceptable conduct and behaviour, for example untidy gardens and dumped rubbish;
- Ensure communal areas in blocks of flats are cleaned every week including shared bin stores;
- Keep communal grassed areas to the agreed standard;
- Inspect all communal areas at least once every month;



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- Remove offensive or obscene graffiti within 24 hours and all other graffiti within 20 working days;
- Monitor and respond to reports of vandalism on empty properties within 24 hours, carry out the necessary investigations and make them safe;
- Carry out post inspections to work carried out in communal areas;
- Organise and invite you to an estate walkabout in your area at least once a year;
- Keep communal areas and facilities in a clean, tidy and safe condition, being well lit and well maintained.

### What we will measure

Measurement	Our target
Number of estate walkabouts in which tenants and other agencies took part	25
Percentage of reports of abandoned cars dealt with within five working days	95%
Percentage of reports of abandoned properties investigated within one working day	100%
Percentage of offensive or obscene graffiti removed within 24 hours of being reported	90%
Percentage of post inspections received of repairs in communal areas to blocks	95%
Percentage of blocks cleaned weekly	100%
Percentage of home visits made within six weeks from tenancy sign up date	100%



## Involving residents

### What you can expect

#### **When providing estate management services we will:**

- Listen to you and use your suggestions to improve our services;
- Ensure that you are consulted prior to making changes to policies that have a direct impact on you;
- Offer a range of opportunities for getting involved with CHP with an indication of the time commitment involved;
- Assess the effectiveness of resident involvement and consultation and tell you how it has made a difference and improved our service to you;
- Maintain a profile of our residents to enable us to provide services that are tailored to individual needs;
- Identify and gather views of all sections of the communities we serve to ensure that their views and opinions are heard;
- Provide resources, training and professional support to enable residents groups to fully participate;
- Meet reasonable expenses incurred for attending meetings and other events;
- Aim that the membership of our Board, employees and tenant representative bodies reflect the community we serve.



### What we will measure

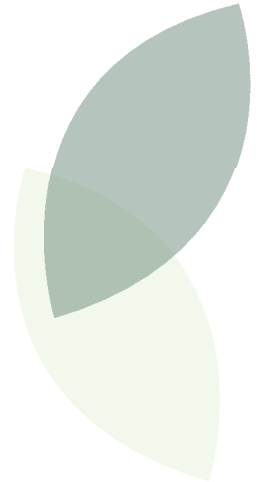
Measurement	Our target
Increase resident satisfaction with opportunities for participation in management and decision making	65%
Percentage of service related policies introduced or revised with tenant consultation	100%
Provide a report to residents on CHP's performance	Annually
Provide an annual report to residents on impact of Resident Involvement	Annually

## Letting homes and housing options

### What you can expect

**When you enquire about applying for a home with us we will:**

- Give you details of the local authority so that you can contact them directly about your needs and circumstances (if you are not already a CHP tenant);
- Place your name on our transfer list (if you are an existing tenant and want to move), and help and support you in making an application for an alternative home with the local authority or another landlord



**When we receive your nomination and details from the local authority we will:**

- Arrange a viewing within four working days, confirm what work is to be carried out to the property, and provide you with a copy of our Lettings Standard;
- Ask you to complete a housing application and assessment form to confirm your housing needs. We may take up references from your previous landlord if necessary;
- Make a decision regarding your application for housing and make a formal offer or rejection in writing (with clear reasons why we think you are unsuitable for the property) within five working days of the viewing;
- Give all applicants who are rejected for housing the opportunity to appeal against our decision;
- Make arrangements for you to receive keys to your new home and sign a tenancy agreement within seven days of the property becoming ready for letting;
- Give you a copy of the tenancy agreement and a welcome pack, and explain the information as necessary;
- Give you decoration vouchers (where applicable / required) and help you to complete housing benefit and other welfare benefits forms as necessary;
- Arrange for a member of staff to visit you in your new home within six weeks to answer any questions and deal with any concerns that you may have;
- Ask for your views on the quality of the property and the lettings process.



### What we will measure

Measurement	Our target
Percentage of pre-termination inspections carried out within seven days of notice received	85%
Viewings completed within five working days of nomination received	95%
Percentage of rejections informed in writing with opportunity to appeal	100%
Percentage of sign-ups completed within seven days from property becoming ready for letting	100%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of the property let and the lettings process	95%
Average time to re-let properties	24 days for re-lets



## Sheltered housing and support services

### What you can expect

**When you live in our sheltered housing, or receive support, we will:**

- Make sure that you have a support plan which is regularly reviewed;
- Make daily contact with sheltered housing residents who request it or need it;
- With your agreement, put you in touch with other agencies that may be able to provide specialist help and support;

- Encourage you to take part in social activities and resident involvement and consultation opportunities;
- Provide a service called Telecare that provides 24-hour, 365 days a year, contact for reporting emergencies;
- Make sure schemes are clean, safe, secure and well maintained;
- Specify service charges that may apply in addition to rent for a property.

### What we will measure

Measurement	Our target
Percentage of sheltered scheme residents that are satisfied with Telecare provision	95%
Percentage of residents who have a support plan	100%
Percentage of residents whose support plan is reviewed on an annual basis	100%

## Right to Buy and leaseholder services

### What you can expect

#### We will:

- Tell you whether you have the Right to Buy and, if so, provide a Right to Buy application pack within five working days;
- Issue a Landlord's Reply Notice 2 within four weeks if your application is accepted;
- Aim to complete the Right to Buy offer process within 12 weeks if your application is accepted;

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- Send you a service charge statement each year;
- Issue estimated service charge bills by the end of April each year;
- Provide a breakdown of the previous year's actual service charges within 10 working days request;
- Offer you the services of our Welfare Benefits Advisor when you need it;
- Provide a copy of the Leaseholders Handbook;
- Provide you with a Summary of Cover for your buildings insurance;
- Consult you fully under the terms of Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, as amended by the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002.

### What we will measure

Measurement	Our target
Percentage of Right to Buy enquiries responded to within five working days	100%
Percentage of Landlord's Reply Notice 2 issued within four weeks of an accepted application	100%
Percentage of leaseholders who are sent a service charge statement twice a year	100%
Percentage of leaseholders who have received estimated service charge bills by the end of April each year	100%
Percentage of leaseholders who are sent actual service charge bills by the end of September each year	100%
Percentage of leaseholder who are in service charge arrears of more than eight weeks	2%



## **Our promises for 2009 Voted for by our residents**

### **1 Carry out quicker repairs**

To reduce target timescales for urgent repairs to within five calendar days (previously seven) and routine repairs to within 21 calendar days (previously 28).

### **2 Call you back**

We will deal with your enquiry at first point of contact but, if we need to put you through to a voicemail, we promise to call you back within one working day.

### **3 Consult you on new services**

When starting new, or reviewing established services, we will ask you your views to make sure they are what you want.

### **4 Provide more homes for families**

Provide more family homes by providing incentives and assistance for people under-occupying to move into smaller and more affordable accommodation.

### **5 Recruit a team of volunteer residents to check on repairs**

Volunteers will telephone you five minutes after a repair has been completed to check your satisfaction with the quality of the work and your satisfaction with it. This will be done a minimum of once a month.



# Please contact CHP if you would like a copy of this document in large print, British Sign Language DVD, on CD or in another language.

Przewodnik : Standardy obsługi klienta:

Proszę się z nami skontaktować jeśli pragnęliby Państwo copię tego dokumentu dużym drukiem, na DVD w Brytyjskim Języku Migowym, w innym języku albo na płycie audio (CD). (Polish)

顧客服務標準

顧客服務標準指引。倘若您需要本檔以大字體、英式手語DVD、另外一種語言或音頻 ( CD ) 格式提供，請聯絡我們。(Cantonese)

Müşteri Hizmet Standartları Kılavuzu

Lütfen bu belgenin büyük baskılı hali, İngilizce DVD veya farklı dillerde ya da ses (CD) ortamı gibi talepleriniz olması durumunda bizimle irtibata geçin. (Turkish)

গ্রাহক পরিষেবা মানদণ্ড সংক্রান্ত একটি নির্দেশনা

আপনি যদি এই নথিটির একটি কপি বড় প্রিন্টে, ব্রিটিশ সাইন ল্যাঙ্গুয়েজ ডিভিডিভিতে বা অডিও (সিডি) ফরম্যাটে পেতে চান, অনুগ্রহ করে, আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন। (Bengali)

## If you have any queries please contact CHP:

**Tel:** 0845 155 3000

**Minicom:** 01245 613188

**Email:** enquiries@chp.org.uk

**Fax:** 01245 613001

**Visit:** Atholl House, 65a Duke Street,  
Chelmsford, CM1 1LW

**Write to:** Myriad House,  
23 Springfield Lyons Approach,  
Chelmsford, CM2 5LB

[chp.org.uk](http://chp.org.uk)

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Second Edition



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

