



## Cloch Housing Association

# Customer Involvement Strategy & Service Standards Policy

<b>Policy Name</b>	Customer Involvement Strategy & Service Standards Policy (Replacing Customer Engagement Strategy 010 & also Customer Service Standards 060)
<b>Policy Category</b>	Housing Services
<b>Policy Number</b>	010
<b>Date Adopted</b>	01/05/2014
<b>Last Review</b>	07/12/2021
<b>This Review</b>	December 2023
<b>Next Review</b>	December 2026
<b>Equalities Impact Assessment Required</b>	Yes
<b>Link to other policies</b>	Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Business Plan 2023 to 2026
<b>Consultation</b>	Yes

## **Jargon Buster**

This section gives information on some of the unfamiliar terms used in the Customer Involvement Strategy:

**ARC** – Annual Return on the Charter. The ARC is an annual return to the Scottish Housing Regulator containing a range of information on performance and the context in which we work.

**Business Plan** – a formal statement setting out the goals of the Association and how these goals will be achieved.

**Board** – a voluntary group of representatives from the community and tenant members elected from shareholders who direct the Association's activities.

**Cloch Plus (+)** – Properties set aside for enhanced tenancy sustainment which are fully furnished to give the best outcomes for new tenants.

**Code of Conduct** – sets out minimum standards for behaviour for contact between the staff, contractors, and customers.

**Customers** – our main customers are the tenants of the association and owners to whom we provide a factoring service. We also deliver some level of service to applicants for housing, leaseholders, and owners in mixed tenure estates where we manage scheme repairs.

**Customer Intelligence/ Customer Insight** – the process of collecting and analysing detailed customer data to gain insights about customer needs, motivations, and behaviours. This enables us to shape our services to meet customer needs.

**Customer Involvement Team** – A multi-functional team from every section of Cloch HA which will work to deliver the Customer Involvement Strategy.

**Customers' Voice** – feedback and commentary from customers which we collect to enable the organisation to be responsive to customer needs and learn lessons from the feedback given.

**CX Feedback** – Software used to send tenant surveys and informational newsletters via text and email.

**Interested Tenant's Panel** – a group made up of staff and tenants who work together to develop consultation and check the progress of the Customer Involvement Strategy.

**Measuring performance** – assessment of the results at the end of or during the course of any activity.

**Monitoring** – checking progress.

**MyCloch portal** – the digital web-based platform which we have to enable customers to log into their on-line account to get information about their tenancy. We also use this for consultation.

**Outcomes** - a result we want to happen. The Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) has outcomes that landlords should achieve for the benefit of their customers and communities.

**Participation** - a two-way process involving our tenants working in partnership with us to share ideas, information and have input to decisions to improve services and shape policy.

**Procurement** - is activities related to purchasing goods, services and works at the best possible prices.

**Protected Characteristics** - The Equalities Act 2010 contains nine protected characteristics against whom any discrimination is unlawful. These are Age, Disability, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Gender (referred to as “sex” in the Act), Gender Reassignment, and Sexual Orientation.

**Registered Tenants Organisation (RTO)** – an independent group of tenants set up to primarily represent tenants’ housing and related interests. If a group registers as an RTO with their landlord, this supports the groups’ rights to information and consultation.

**RTO Register** – means a list of tenant organisations maintained by the Association.

**Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)** – The SHR regulates registered housing association landlords and protects the interests of current and future tenants and other customers monitoring performance and financial probity of social landlords.

**Scottish Social Housing Charter**- The Government’s standards that we must comply with and against which the Regulator monitors us. The charter was set after extensive consultation with tenants of housing associations and aims to reflect their key concerns.

**Self-Assessment** – assessment of the Association’s performance which is used to improve our performance & provided to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

**Social media** - a collective term for websites and applications that focus on communication, interaction, and collaboration. We will use social media to stay in touch and interact with our customers and give information.

**Stakeholders** – an individual or group that has an interest in any decision or activity of an organisation.

**Strategic Priorities** – These are sub levels of our objectives which drill down below high level to show more specific tasks or goals which we want to achieve.

**Strategic Objectives** – These are high level statements that indicate what is critical or important in our organisational strategy over the next three years.

**Strategy** – our plan which sets out the course of action that we will take achieve our goals for tenant involvement.

**Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) / Tenant Information Service (TIS)** – both are national tenant and landlord participation advisory services promoting good practice in tenant participation throughout Scotland.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This strategy document is Cloch Housing Association's Customer Involvement Strategy for 2023-2026. We have developed this strategy and will measure our success in partnership with our customers.
- 1.2 Cloch Housing Association places a big emphasis on involving customers in our activities. Working with tenants, factored owners, and other stakeholders is essential to delivering better services, and ensuring customers are able to influence decisions affecting their homes and services.
- 1.3 We recognise that times are changing, and people interact with service providers differently. We aim to continually review our approaches and experiment with new opportunities for involving customers which are effective, meaningful and achieve good value for money. As a result of this we are placing greater emphasis on digital services to enable our customers to engage with us quickly and efficiently. We also appreciate that not everyone uses or wants to use online methods to engage with us, so we will continue to explore other ways of getting people involved, where those approaches meet our objectives.
- 1.4 We accept that we need to understand our customers to be able to make sure we can be responsive to their needs and engage effectively. This means that we will continue to improve our data collection for customer intelligence.
- 1.5 We recognise our on-going legal responsibilities under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 in relation to tenant participation. We also recognise our responsibilities in delivering and monitoring our performance outcomes in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter. This Strategy will set out how we will meet both of these requirements.

- 1.6 We will ensure our customer involvement meets the requirements of Equalities legislation. Wherever possible, barriers will be removed that prevent people with any of the protected characteristics from taking part.

## 2. Our Strategic Links – What customers can expect from us

### 2.1 Our Vision

- Our ambition for Cloch Housing Association and our customers going forward ***“Homes and services which exceed customer expectations delivered by a strong and resilient organisation.”***

### 2.2 Our Values

2.2.1 Our values reflect the positive modern, forward-thinking approach that our Board and staff have towards tenants, owners, service users and each other and guide our behaviours.

- **Be Positive** in attitude.
- **Be Better** and always look to improve everything you do.
- **Be Kind** to yourself, to others and in your approach to our services.
- **Be Responsible** for yourself, your customers, and your community.

## 3. Our Strategic Objectives

3.1 We will work with our customers to influence and inform our decision making on our strategic objectives. These are:

- Invest in our current homes and grow through acquisitions.
- To offer our customers the best opportunity to succeed.
- To involve our customers and wider communities.
- To deliver innovation and collaboration.
- To sustain a caring, forward-looking culture.
- To make the best use of our resources and strengthen our organisational resilience and resources.
- To ensure safety and compliance at all times.

## 4. Our Priorities linked to Customer Involvement

### 4.1 Strategic Priority 10: Enhance tenant and community involvement.

- We will introduce new ways to capture our customers' voice.
- We will increase involvement initiatives and opportunities delivered by our Customer Involvement Team.
- We will continue with our community involvement schemes by supporting and participating in local community events.
- We will provide extra services to support tenants e.g. through our tenancy support and *Cloch Plus* furnishings project.
- We will work with local schools and young people, offering and promoting local apprenticeships.
- We will continue to build partnerships with other local community providers to promote their services to our customers and the wider community.

### 4.2 Strategic Priority 11: Develop our approach to gathering and using customer insight.

- We will review how we gather and use customer information and feedback to help shape our future services.
- We will maximise on opportunities to seek views and assess satisfaction levels from our customers.

### 4.3 Strategic Priority 12: Strengthen our digital services to support participation.

- We will continue to grow the use of *MyCloch* portal which allows our customers to engage with us and conduct business electronically.
- We will increase our use of *MyCloch* for customer surveys and feedback.
- We will continue to develop *These Homes*, which is a digital letting service designed to improve access to affordable rented properties across Scotland.
- We will develop our social media presence to widen our involvement processes.

## **5. The Scottish Social Housing Charter**

5.1 We will comply with Outcome 3: Participation which states:

- Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in an influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.
- What landlords should achieve by meeting their statutory duties on tenant participation. It covers how social landlords gather and take account of the views and priorities of their tenants; how they shape their services to reflect these views; and how they help tenants and other customers to become more capable of involvement.

We will self-assess how well we are doing against outcome 3 and ensure tenants are involved in the design of the Annual Report on the Charter and seek feedback on the content of the report from all tenants.

## **6. Our Customer Involvement Team**

6.1 To assist in delivering our customer involvement, we have set up our Customer Involvement Team (CIT) which has representatives from every section within Cloch HA.

6.1.1 Our staff representatives on the CIT are:

- Passionate about customer care
- Friendly and approachable
- Flexible around extended working hours to meet community needs.
- Able to speak with our more vulnerable customers to ensure they have influence and more capability to get involved.

And will

- Understand the needs of people from diverse, social, and cultural backgrounds.
- Be skilled in listening to and speaking to customers.
- Embrace Cloch's Vision and Values- Be Kind, Be Positive, Be Better, Be Responsible.
- Want to help develop and implement Cloch's Customer Involvement Strategy
- Work with our customers to create new methods of tenant involvement.

## **7. Customer Service Standards**

7.1 Cloch HA aims to deliver excellent services in a variety of innovative and convenient ways.

### **7.2 Our Aims**

- To deliver a personalised high-quality service to all customers.
- We will strive to ensure that your query is resolved at first point of contact through our Customer Support Team, handling at least 90% of calls made to Cloch.
- We will make it our goal to exceed the expectations of our customers.
- To effectively monitor and evaluate your satisfaction with the services that you receive.
- To listen to your views and feedback and use this to improve our services.
- To treat you fairly and with respect.
- To ensure equal opportunities of access for all in that we do.
- To ensure our contractors and those who provide services on our behalf sign up to these aims.
- To include Customer Service delivery as a key element in the recruitment and development of staff.

### **7.3 What we ask from you.**

#### **7.3.1 We ask that you:**

- Treat staff with politeness and respect. Abusive or threatening behaviour/ language is not acceptable.
- Understand that we may not always be able to provide you with a solution, however, we will try and assist you as much as possible.

#### **7.4 Our Service Standards:**

- We will be aware of our communication style and communicate in a professional manner.
- We will have a complaints policy with clear timescales.
- We will listen to your requests and take the necessary actions to assist you as much as possible.
- We will respect your rights to confidentiality and share your data with other agencies only when it is covered by our data protection policies and practices. We will tell you we are doing this where appropriate.
- We will always treat you in a courteous, friendly, and professional way.
- Where we are unable to resolve your query, we will signpost you to the relevant service that can help.

#### 7.4.1 **Telephone**

- We will answer your call within 40 seconds.
- We will give our name when we answer a call.
- We will ensure that when offices are closed, an out of hours service will be in place to handle emergency repairs.
- We will respond to all telephone messages by the next working day.
- We will always ask your permission before putting you on hold or transferring your call.
- At the end of the call, we will thank you and ask you if there is anything else we can assist you with.
- We may have to call you back. When we do, we will give you a time slot for when you can expect the call.

#### 7.4.2 **Our Written Communication**

- We will issue regular newsletters to keep you informed of the work we are doing and how we can support you.
- We will respond to any written correspondence within 5 working days where possible.
- We will respond to e-mails to our general email address within 2 working days.
- We will respond to website questions/requests within 2 working days.
- We will ensure we write in plain English and avoid jargon.

#### 7.4.3 **Meeting you in the office or at your home**

- We will ensure staff have name badges identifying themselves to you when you visit our office and staff who visit you at home will provide photographic ID.
- If we are unable to meet with you at the time agreed, we will contact you and rearrange the appointment at a suitable date and time.
- If English is not your first language, we will arrange an interpretation service.
- We have a loop system for customers with a hearing impairment.

#### **Declaration**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understood the Customer Service Standards and agree to comply with the standards.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

## 8. Ways to Get Involved at Cloch

8.1 We will develop our involvement and engagement methods going forward. Currently we involve our customers by encouraging them to:

<b>Volunteer</b>	<b>Get involved in consultation and feedback</b>
Join our Board. Become a member of Cloch HA. Join our Scrutiny Panel. Join our interested tenants panel. Set up a registered tenants group in your area. Set up a local residents group.	Give us your feedback via MyCloch online portal, telephone calls and texts to questions we may have on our services and policies. Give us your feedback in our three yearly Tenant Satisfaction Survey. Tell us on Twitter or Facebook what you think about Cloch HA. Give us your feedback on our publications including our annual report on the Charter and our regular newsletters.
<b>Have Fun!</b>	<b>Complain if you are dissatisfied</b>
Come to our gala days, community events, and area-based activities where we may have a few questions to ask you.	When you complain we will ensure your complaint is responded to and we will learn from complaints to improve what we do using 'You said, We did.'

## 9. How We will Support Customer Involvement

- We will allocate an annual budget to facilitate and grow our customer involvement.
- We will fund any registered tenants organisations (RTO)
- We will meet regularly with any RTOs or local residents' groups.
- We will provide support and training for tenants to influence our work at Cloch HA and allocate a budget for this- for example, if tenants are interested in joining the Board or want to join at scrutiny group.
- By resourcing our Community Involvement Team to support the delivery of this strategy including involving our more vulnerable customers
- To try, whenever possible, to access external funding to support our strategy action plan and to improve on our customer involvement.

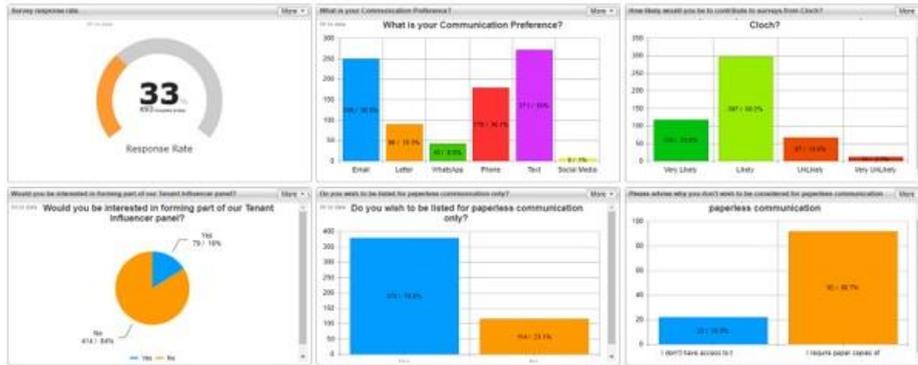
## 10. What do Our Customers Think?

10.1 Consultation has been undertaken with tenants at Elliott Court, Customer Involvement events at the waterfront Cinema and Xcite Soft Play, at our Big Bike Bash and via text survey on the strategy, action plan and customer service standards.

10.2 This Strategy will be further consulted on using the My Cloch Portal following approval by the Housing and Property Services Sub-Committee.

10.2.1 Feedback from consultation included:

- Utilise existing events more to consult using local community facilities- link in with Community Learning and Development
- Provide transport to events run by Cloch HA
- Tenants indicated they are happy to utilise text communications for tenant feedback but not all residents want e-communications.
- Require more support on use of My Cloch and potential for community wi-fi.
- Some tenants may need support to have confidence to give feedback and be more involved.
- Tenants indicated they would be willing to wait up to three minutes for calls to be answered when contacting Cloch by telephone.
- Tenants indicated they would be willing to wait up to two working days for response to a non-emergency telephone message.
- Tenants who completed our Customer Involvement Survey indicated Email and Text were the most popular methods of contact.
- Tenants stated they felt the standard of service provided by Cloch Housing was of a high standard and that they were confident their query would be resolved when contacting us.
- Over 80% of tenants who responded to our customer involvement survey stated they would be likely or very likely to contribute to future surveys.



Do you have confidence that your query will be resolved when you contact us?

[More Details](#)

Insights

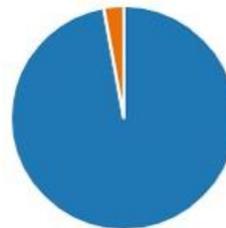
- Yes 129
- No 11



Do you feel the customer service provided is of a high standard?

[More Details](#)

- Yes 136
- No 4



## **11. Measuring Success – Our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

11.1 We will look at the following measures of success:

- Number of events held by Cloch HA to support customer involvement.
- Number of events to support customer involvement undertaken in partnership with the community.
- Overall number of attendees at customer involvement events
- ARC measure 2- “percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions”.
- ARC measure 3- The percentage of all complaints responded to in full at Stage 1 and Stage 2
- ARC measure 5- “percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord’s decision-making processes”.
- Number of staff and customers taking part in training linked to customer involvement.
- Percentage of annual budget expended on customer involvement including any external funding accessed.
- Meeting our customer service standards
- Increasing our customer feedback via CX Feedback year on year.

## **12. Review of Success**

12.1 We will monitor our action plan and report this to our Board quarterly.

12.1.1 We will review our measures of success (KPIs) every year to make sure they are correct, and we are delivering our expected outcomes for our customers.

12.1.2 We will keep our customer up to date with how we are getting on.

12.1.3 We will review the Customer Involvement Strategy every three years.

### **13. Equality Impact Assessment**

13.1 Cloch Housing Association believes in equality of opportunity, embracing diversity and promoting inclusiveness. Our Board and staff believe that embedding equality in everything we do is the right thing to do.

13.2 The Equalities Act 2010 contains nine protected characteristics against whom any discrimination is unlawful. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Gender (referred to as 2sex2 in the Act)
- Gender Reassignment
- Sexual Orientation

13.3 To ensure the inclusion of equality and diversity practices in all Cloch does and ensure that customers, employees, Board Members, contractors, and the general public are treated with fairness and respect we undertake an equality impact assessment on our key strategies and policies.