



Caring, Committed, Connected, Creative

# CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

March 2011

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**Eildon** is always keen to improve its services to our customers. We listened to many of you, about what standards you expect from us and used what you told us to develop Customer Service Standards.

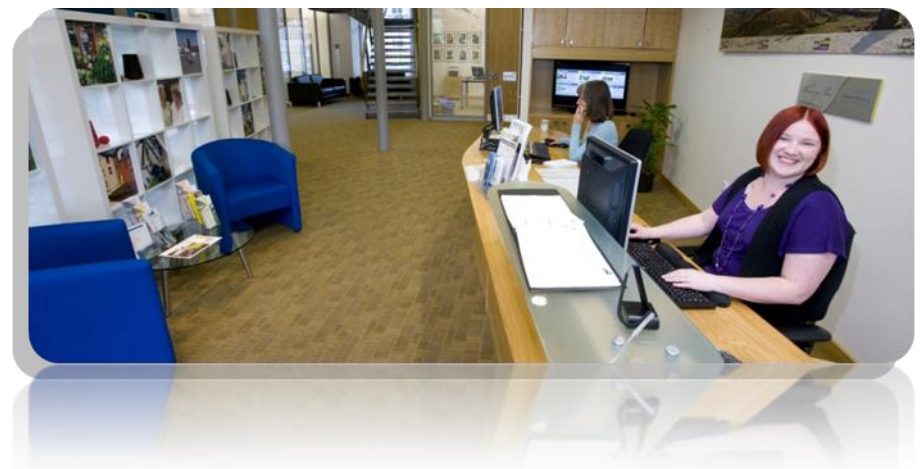
When you use our services you have the right to be treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. Customer Service is at the heart of everything we do and we want to do it well, all the time. This document sets out minimum service standards against which we can be measured.

By giving us valuable feedback we can report back to you on how you feel we are measuring up ...complaints and compliments all welcome! We hope that these Customer Service Standards meet your expectations.

## First Impressions

In all your contact with Eildon Housing Association we will:

- Treat everyone who uses our services fairly and equally
- Be honest and courteous at all times
- Respect your right to confidentiality
- Ensure, by listening to you, that your needs are identified and understood
- Wherever possible, see things from your point of view
- Keep any personal information secure, confidential and in accordance with data protection legislation
- Always identify ourselves by name or by name badge
- Make sure what we do and how we do it takes into account the needs of people with disabilities and those whose first language is not English





## Helping you on the phone

Our Weaving Shed office is open:

**Monday – Thursday: 8.45am – 5.00pm**  
**Friday: 8.45am – 4.00pm**  
**Office Telephone No. 01750 725900**  
**Housing Services 0845 604 3733**  
**Repair Reporting 0800 032 0380**

When we answer the phone we will:

- Answer promptly
- Identify and introduce ourselves
- Only transfer your call if this is necessary – we will tell you who you are being transferred to and tell the person taking the call who you are and the nature of your call
- If the person you wish to speak to is unavailable, your call will be returned within one working day

Outside our opening hours, you will hear a message routing your call to another number for emergencies **0845 604 3733**

## Clear writing

When you write to us we will:

- Acknowledge letters within 1 working day and respond within seven working days or, for more complex issues, we will acknowledge receipt within seven days and advise you of the progress of your enquiry
- Reply in plain English, in a standard format and avoid using technical terms and jargon
- Reply in your preferred language if that is not English and you have told us your preference
- Ensure all letters have the name and job title of the person sending the letter
- If you send a fax, we will respond to you as outlined above

## Contacting us by email

If you wish to correspond by email you should send your message to [enquiries@eildon.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@eildon.org.uk). You will receive an automated acknowledgement. The email will then be sent to the addressee or to the most appropriate person. As with letters, this is to ensure we have a record of when your correspondence was received. We will:

- Respond by email or letter within seven working days of receiving your first email OR
- For more complex items / issues, acknowledge receipt and within five working days, and aim to write advising you of the progress of your enquiry within two weeks

**Note: We ask that you send all emails to [enquiries@eildon.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@eildon.org.uk). If you email an individual member of staff directly, we are not able to monitor the response and ensure you receive a reply within the correct timescales.**

## Visiting you at home

Our Housing and Property Management staff spend the majority of their time out-and-about in your local area, bringing our services to you. Most of the time they will make an appointment to visit you at a mutually convenient time. They may also pop in to see you from time to time without an appointment, to find out how you are doing, to make sure you are happy with our services or to ask for your views and ideas on a new policy or procedure we are developing. When we visit you at home we will:

- Arrive within 10 minutes of a pre-arranged appointment, or telephone to advise of any delay
- Leave a calling card when contact has not been possible
- Tell you in advance if we need to cancel an appointment
- Identify and introduce ourselves and show you our ID card
- Treat your home with respect
- Request that you do not smoke during our visit (this is in line with legislation banning smoking in the workplace)
- Be sensitive if we are discussing awkward issues such as rent arrears or neighbour disputes
- Confirm in writing any agreed actions from the meeting within five working days

## Visiting us in the office

While we are most likely to visit you at home, there may be occasions when we give you an appointment to visit our Selkirk office. You may also request an appointment to speak to a member of staff there.

- If you have a pre-arranged appointment with a member of staff, they will meet you within five minutes of the agreed time
- If you do not have a pre-arranged appointment, we will tell you how long you may have to wait to see the person you want to see, so you can decide whether to stay or make an alternative appointment
- If the person you want to see is not in the office and there is no alternative member of staff who can help, you will be given an appointment to return to the office or a date / time when we can visit you at home
- We will discuss confidential matters with you in a private area
- We will provide a comfortable environment (with disabled access wherever possible)
- We wear identification badges and provide you with details of our name and designation.

## Repairs and maintenance

One of the most important services we provide is the repairs and maintenance service. We want to ensure that we carry out any repairs for which we are responsible quickly and efficiently. How quickly we carry out a repair depends on what kind of repair it is. Definitions and examples are given in the Tenants' Handbook. Generally speaking, however, there are three categories which have different response times:

<b>Emergency</b>	<b>Urgent</b>	<b>Routine</b>
2 hours	3 working days	15 working days

We will:

- Take repairs requests by telephone, in person, by letter or email or through the online form on our website [www.eildon.org.uk](http://www.eildon.org.uk)
- Take note of as many details as possible in order to diagnose the problem and arrange for the correct work to be carried out
- If appropriate, arrange for an inspection of the repair once it has been completed
- Arrange repairs appointments between 9am and 5pm, via our contractors
- Contact you in advance to re-arrange the appointment if we are not able to attend on the original date agreed with you, via our contractors
- Aim to complete the repair within one visit
- Aim to meet your expectations about the quality of work by carrying out regular satisfaction surveys
- Carry out inspections of 10% of complete repairs to measure value for money
- Ensure that gas safety inspections are carried out at least annually

## Major repairs and improvements to your home

We are committed to maintaining your home to a high standard by replacing items such as kitchens, bathrooms, windows and central heating when this is needed. We will also ensure that the outside of your property is kept in good condition by replacing roofs and external doors and painting communal / external areas when required. We have published a five year planned maintenance programme which is reviewed annually. Copies are available to all tenants in the newsletter and on our website. When we plan to carry out maintenance work in your home or communal areas, we will:

- Write to you to give notice of what we want to do and tell you when we intend to carry out the work
- Give you the opportunity to make choices where possible, such as about the style of a new kitchen or the colour of paintwork
- Give you a contact phone number to report any problems with any work that is being carried out
- Take care of your property and possessions and protect them to the best of our ability from damage, dust and paint
- Reconnect and test all services such as water, gas and electricity as soon as possible at the end of the working day
- Supervise the work to make sure it is going well and is being carried out both to our and your satisfaction
- Ask your opinion when the work is complete to ensure you are happy with it

## Money matters

We put most of the income we receive from rents into providing a high quality management and maintenance service, improving existing properties and building new homes. In addition to a basic rent, some tenants also pay a charge for services they receive such as the maintenance of common garden areas and communal stair or window cleaning.

When tenants do not pay their rent it means we have less money to provide these services, so we work to ensure that all tenants pay their rent in full and on time. In order to ensure we manage our rents effectively we will:

- Offer a wide range of ways to pay rent, including by Direct Debit, through Allpay and online via our website
- Give you 28 days' notice of any increase to your rent or service charges
- Offer you help and advice if you have difficulty paying your rent
- Make early contact with you and maintain contact should you fall into arrears
- Give you advice on claiming Housing Benefit
- Set up realistic repayment schedules to enable you to pay any arrears
- Offer you the service of our Financial Inclusion Team for money and welfare rights advice
- Take legal action against you if you do not make sufficient regular payments and you have not contacted us
- As a last resort, consider eviction when all other attempts to resolve the situation have failed

## Managing our developments

Making sure our developments are maintained to a high standard is very important to us. It determines how they are perceived and valued, both by our tenants and by the wider community. In order to create and maintain a safe and secure environment for all those living on our estates we will:

- Carry out regular inspections to gardens and common areas, including footpaths, and take appropriate action where required
- Where possible, offer tenants the opportunity to accompany us on our inspections
- Record our findings and check to ensure that any work carried out is up to our standard
- Remind tenants whose gardens are untidy of their agreement to maintain their gardens
- Remove offensive graffiti within 24 hours
- Where it is provided, maintain a high quality cleaning and grounds maintenance service
- Liaise with the police, community wardens and local authority environmental health and cleansing departments, where

## Renting a property from us

Our income is also affected by the length of time it takes us to re-let our properties and the amount we need to spend on vacated properties to bring them up to a standard suitable for re-let. In order to ensure that our houses are let as quickly and as fairly as possible we will:

- Set annual targets identifying how long it should take us to let a house – these targets will be published and we will let you know how we are performing
- Inspect properties, when a tenant advises us they wish to end their tenancy.
- Inspect all empty properties within three days of receiving the keys from the previous tenant
- Ensure all properties meet our minimum “lettable” standard before the new tenant moves in
- Ensure that new registrations for housing are processed within two working days
- Publish on our website and in our newsletter details of how many people applied for each property, how long they had to wait to be housed and whether a priority pass was used

## Equal opportunities

Equality and diversity underpin all our activities and services. When delivering our services, we never discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, colour ethnic or national origin, religion, marital status, family circumstances, political or sexual orientation, medical condition or disability.

To ensure we achieve this we will:

- Monitor the ethnic background of tenants and those who apply to us for housing
- Monitor the disabilities of our tenants
- Use plain English in our leaflets and publications and provide them in other languages if necessary
- Provide information on CD or in large print if you request it
- Provide the services of interpreters and signer for the hard of hearing

## Complaints and Compliments

Our commitment is to provide high quality services. Occasionally, however, things can go wrong. If this happens, we want you to tell us about it. Complaints are an important source of information on how we were performing so we encourage you to let us know if our service has fallen short of your expectations.

Compliments are also an important source of information to us and when we receive these we will acknowledge this.

- Treat every complaint seriously and impartially
- Formally log your complaint and send you an acknowledgement within three working days
- Reply to your complaint within 10 working days of the acknowledgement and, if this is not possible, keep you informed of the progress of your complaint
- Let you know about any improvements we have made to our services as a result of your complaint
- Publish the number of formal complaints in our tenants' newsletter and report where we have made a change / improvement to our services as a result of a complaint

