

KINGDOM HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

CUSTOMER RELATIONS POLICY

1. Statement of Intent

- 1.1 We are committed to customer participation in our policy formation and decision making processes. This policy sets out the ways in which we will enable our customers to influence matters that significantly affect them and empower them to become more involved.
- 1.2 We are committed to equality and diversity and the prevention of discrimination. We will endeavour to promote inclusion and representation and will do all we can to prevent discrimination against individuals and groups as a result of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, colour, creed, age, class, caring responsibilities, marital status, physical ability or mental health.
- 1.3 It is our intention that all information will be produced in plain English.
- 1.4 We will endeavour, when requested, to provide information in larger print, audio format, Braille or another language.
- 1.5 As part of our overall business strategy, we have adopted a Sustainability Policy. The principles of that policy will be applied to the implementation of this policy.

2. General Principles

- 2.1 Although the legislation refers to Scottish Secure, Short Secure and Short Scottish Secure tenants, this policy also covers our sharing owners and occupants. It will therefore be known as our Customer Relations Policy rather than Tenant Participation Strategy.
- 2.2 One of our main objectives is to develop and sustain relationships with our customers in order to meet the needs of the organisation and enable all parties to play a role in the provision of a high quality service at an affordable cost.
- 2.3 We believe there are tangible benefits resulting from customer participation. On the issue of service delivery for example, we take the view that only by involving and seeking the views of customers, can we respond to their needs and expectations.
- 2.4 Customers have a vital role with regard to feeding back information relative to design features, affordability and security. These are important elements in the design process for new-build, re-development and improvement programmes. This feedback ensures both immediate and longer-term benefits to the living conditions of our customers.
- 2.5 The legislation also states that social landlords are required to:
 - Develop and implement their tenant participation strategy.
 - Put in place arrangements for registering tenants' organisations.
 - Consult individual tenants and tenant groups on any housing issues that are likely to significantly affect them.

We have fulfilled these statutory requirements and will continue to develop them in consultation with customers.

- 2.6 In order to meet our main objectives, we have developed an Action Plan which is attached as an appendix to this policy.
- 2.7 As part of the consultative process, we will circulate an annual Policy Digest to all customers for consultation and comment on any housing related policies reviewed over the course of the year. Any comments received will be considered prior to final approval of the policies by the Committee of Management.
- 2.8 The results of our large scale Customer Satisfaction Survey, carried out in 2006, confirmed that there was limited interest in becoming regularly involved in our work. However customers indicated a willingness to participate by responding to telephone and postal surveys, mystery shopping and consultations exercises on an ad hoc basis. Encouraged by this, and with advice and assistance from Research Resource, the consultants who carried out the survey, the Customer Relations Panel was established in March 2008. The panel is made up of over 300 customers and will now be the main vehicle for obtaining customer feedback on the services that we provide.
- 2.9 We will encourage customers to participate on the Customer Relations Panel.
- 2.10 We will invite a representative member of the Customer Relations Panel to sit on relevant Policy Sub-Groups, where they will have the opportunity to influence and contribute to Kingdom's housing related policies.
- 2.11 We will always seek to involve and include customers and/or community groups when considering any wider action initiative that may affect them.
- 2.12 We will continue to promote membership of the Association and will monitor the level of membership on a regular basis.
- 2.13 Membership of the Association provides the opportunity to attend and vote at general and special meetings. Members may also seek nomination to the Committee of Management.

3. Role of the Housing and Support Services and the Development and Property Services Departments

- 3.1 The Housing & Support Services Department is responsible for:
 - Management of the Customer Relations Panel.
 - Production of "The Resident".
 - Production of the "Policy Digest".
 - Annual report on Kingdom's participation activities.
 - Review of this policy.

- 3.2 The Development and Property Services Department is responsible for:
- Carrying out a number of surveys including Project Completion, Repairs, Stage 3 Adaptations and Care and Repair.
 - Providing a brief for our consultants for focus groups or surveys which cover areas within the responsibility of the department.
 - Providing articles for the two editions of “The Resident”.
- 3.3 Any senior member of Housing Services staff will be able to provide advice or interpretation of this policy.

4. Monitoring and Review

- 4.1 The Director of Housing and Support Services will provide an annual report of activities falling within the Customer Relations Policy to Committee of Management.
- 4.2 We will consult with customers on this Policy and will publicise an annual report on its progress to all customers as part of the overall consultative process.
- 4.3 The Customer Relations Action Plan will be considered and reviewed on an annual basis.
- 4.4 This policy will be reviewed no later than 5 years from the date of implementation, which will be the date the policy is approved by the Committee of Management or earlier if deemed appropriate.

APPENDIX 1
CUSTOMER PARTICIPATION ACTION PLAN
April 2008 – March 2009

A summary of the routine activity contained within the policy is provided as well as other specific actions planned for the year.

We will:

- Plan the participation of the Customer Relations Panel in three focus groups, two postal surveys and one telephone survey.
- Publish summaries of the work of the Customer Relations Panel and send to all customers annually.
- Provide regular updates on the activity of the Customer Relations Panel to the Committee of Management.
- Publish two editions of The Resident in June and December 2008.
- Publish the Policy Digest in December 2008.
- Produce an annual report on our Customer Relations activities to the Committee of Management.
- Carry out a project completion survey with all customers of new developments, approximately three to six months after completion.
- Carry out post allocation surveys of new build and re-let properties approximately one month after allocation in order to determine satisfaction with the allocation process.
- Carry out an annual survey on all stage 3 adaptations carried out throughout the year.
- Carry out an annual survey of the care and repair and small repairs activity during the year.
- A rolling satisfaction survey will be carried out on a 20% sample of the repairs we carry out.

KINGDOM HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED
CUSTOMER RELATIONS POLICY (DRAFT)

This policy is drawn up with reference to Section 53 of The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 which states that every Local Authority Landlord and Registered Social Landlord must prepare a tenant participation strategy for promoting the participation of tenants under a Scottish Secure tenancy or a Short Scottish Secure tenancy.

Reference made to the following sources and other guidance:

This policy meets all aspects of the housing standards chapter on tenant participation and the audit requirements of Communities Scotland.

“Partners in Participation” The National Strategy for Tenant Participation 1999
Tenant Participation Strategy – Castlehill Housing Association 2003
Fife Council Tenant Participation Strategy and Policy 2003/4
Briefing Note – Tenant Participation Advisory Service
Precis – A good practice framework for tenant participation in Scotland – Communities Scotland March 2004

Cross Reference to Performance Standards for social landlords and homelessness functions: Guiding Standards GS1.2 and GS2.2

Prepared by: Stephen Cairns

Reference to the current policy : February 2005

Draft 1 Directors Review/Discussion by circulation

Sub Committee Review of Policy : 3rd March 2009

Policy audited by Kingdom’s solicitors

Presented for approval to Committee of Management on :16th March 2009

Policy Approved Yes

Next review date: No later than March 2014