



CUSTOMER CONTACT POLICY

Policy Owner	Director of Group Operations
Document Author(s)	Housing Services Manager
Approved By	All Managers
Date approved	February 2025
Next Review Date	February 2028
Review Cycle	3 years
Communication & Training Methods	Policy to be discussed by all managers at team meetings
Is a mandatory read required?	NO
Does this policy require to go on the website?	YES
Who does this policy apply to eg GROUP or ENTITY NAME(S) NB if not all, check there is a separate policy in place	Harbour Homes
The Policy has a direct link to the following Harbour policies and procedures If there are separate procedures which require to be attached to the policy in Doctract, please ensure these are reviewed at the same time and also provided.	Customer Charter; Complaint Policy and Procedures; Responsive Repairs Policy and Procedures; Difficult Customer Policy
This policy complies with the requirements of these legal and/or regulatory documents	
Equality & Diversity Impact (EI) Assessment Status	This document was EDI Assessed by Housing Services Manager and Group Business Support Manager using the organisation's set procedure in February 2025 and is considered to be free of anything which may lead to any unfair discrimination in its application. EI Assessment records are held by the Business Support team and can be accessed on request to the Group Business Support Manager.

Data Protection Considerations	Our policies and procedures foster an approach of ‘data protection by design and by default’. In practice it means that our policies and procedures consider data protection issues, ie how to protect the data subject served by the policy or procedure; New systems, services, products and business practices involving personal data are designed and implemented to ensure personal data is protected by default; Data protection principles and safeguarding of individuals’ rights are clear in the policy or procedure; And that if the policy or procedure aims to provide service to vulnerable groups (eg children) that the personal data is treated with extra protection.
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1.	INTRODUCTION
1.1	The purpose of this policy is: • To help ensure consistency, efficiency and fairness in our approach to service delivery • To provide clear guidance to staff on the expected standards of customer care and service delivery • To provide clear information to customers on what standards of customer care and service delivery they can expect from Harbour Homes • To provide clear guidance to staff on the timescales for communication responses (internal and external).
2.	POLICY STATEMENT
2.1	A key business goal for Harbour Homes is to deliver valued services to our customers. This policy sets out our service standards around customer care and communication (internal and external). In handling all contacts with Harbour Homes customers, the standards laid out in the Customer Charter must be adhered to. All customer contacts are handled in a positive, welcoming manner. We record communication preferences and try to accommodate these where possible.
3.	RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE POLICY
3.1	Harbour Homes managers has responsibility for approving the policy. All staff have responsibility for applying the policy consistently to external customers and internal/external colleagues.
4.	POLICY FRAMEWORK
4.1	Handling Telephone Contacts

	When dealing with contacts by phone we: • Answer the phone as quickly as possible • Give the caller the name of the person they are speaking to • Forward the caller to a named member of staff to call back by the end of the following working day, if we are not able to deal with the enquiry immediately Respond by the end of the following working day if a voicemail message has been left.
4.2	Handling Emails and Contact by Letter When dealing with contact by email or letter, we will: • Respond either by email, letter, phone or in person within three working days • Let customers know when they can expect a response if we are not able to give the customer or a colleague a full response within three working days • Write to people in a format that is accessible to them
4.3	Dealing with Face to Face Contacts When dealing with people face to face, we: • Display appropriate ID so that customers know who they are talking to • Deal with enquiries at the first point of contact wherever possible and, where this is not possible, forward the query to a named member of staff who will contact the customer by the end of the following working day • Ensure our reception area is clean, tidy and welcoming with relevant information available on our services
4.4	Handling Contacts Where a Further Appointment is Required Where a customer requires an appointment to see a member of staff, we: • Arrange an appointment at a suitable time either in the office or in their home • Conduct any interviews in the office in private • Inform the customer as soon as possible if we can't keep our appointment with them
4.5	Managing Home Visits When we visit a customer at their home we will: • Ensure we are on time or, if delayed, call to let the customer know when we will arrive • Show the customer appropriate identification

	• Explain the reason for the visit • Respect the customer's home and appropriate customs • Leave a card if the customer is out, telling them how to contact us
4.6	Handling Contacts about Responsive Repairs The service standards for our responsive repairs service are no longer than: • 2 hours for emergencies • 24 hours for immediate repairs • 5 working days for urgent repairs • 15 working days for routine repairs We provide an out of hours emergency service through a 24 hour call centre. Customers can report repairs during working hours by phone); email, in person or in writing. Our contractors offer morning or afternoon appointments Monday – Friday 8am – 5pm.
4.7	Handling Contacts about Service Complaints These are dealt with under Harbour Homes Complaints Policy & Procedures, which state that: • We acknowledge receipt of service complaints within 3 working days • We respond within 5 working days for a stage 1 complaint • We respond within 20 working days for stage 2 complaints
4.8	Contact through Social Media We respond to posts/tweets on the same day wherever possible (except at weekends or public holidays when the office is closed).
4.9	Handling Emails from Colleagues The same standard applies to responses to internal emails/requests to attend meetings from colleagues as to external emails – ie these should be replied to within three working days, either by phone, email or in person. If you are not able to give a full response at that stage, you should let your colleague know when they can expect this.