

INTRODUCTION

Yorkshire Housing aims to be one of the best providers of homes and support. Our customers deserve the highest quality services and this is why we are committed to working together with our tenants and residents to deliver excellent customer service by 2012.

Our values are **respect, reliability** and **enthusiasm**. We will work to embed these values in everything we do, building customer confidence in our services by providing easy access and delivering excellent standards of customer care; working to resolve queries quickly, effectively and to the customer's satisfaction.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Yorkshire Housing is committed to ensuring that all customers are able to access services in a way that meets their needs and lifestyle.

Our objectives are to:

- Offer customers choice in how to access services
- Deliver a service that is responsive to the diverse needs of customers
- Provide an excellent standard of customer care

In developing this strategy we have consulted with both customers and staff, looking at current practice and listening to our customers as they have articulated how they wish to access services in future. We will continue to work together with customers to deliver a service that both meets customers' current needs and is responsive to changing lifestyles and aspirations.

OBJECTIVE: OFFER CUSTOMERS CHOICE IN HOW TO ACCESS SERVICES

The majority of customers have told us that they prefer to contact the organisation by telephone. We also recognise that customer demand for email and web enquiries is increasing, whereas the use of local offices is decreasing. Our customers want a service that is easy to use and responsive to their needs. Wherever possible, they want their enquiries to be resolved fully at the first point of contact.

Whilst telephone contact has emerged as customers' first preference, we also recognise the importance of dealing with complex or personal queries face to face by a member of staff committed to supporting the customer through to the resolution of their enquiry. This relationship is fundamental in the delivery of a high standard of customer care.

CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE

In response to the increasing demand on telephone access, we will establish a dedicated Customer Service Centre that will be the primary point of contact for customers.

The service will be accessible via a single telephone number and will also handle text, email, fax and web enquiries. Opening times of both the Customer Service Centre and local offices will be reviewed to reflect customer demand. We will continue to offer 24 hour access to essential services such as repairs.

The aim of the Service Centre will be to resolve the majority of queries to the customer's satisfaction at the first point of contact. We will focus on building relationships with our customers, investing time and resources on the initial contact to ensure that sufficient information is captured to facilitate a resolution to the customer's satisfaction. This will both increase satisfaction and reduce future demand on the service.

Enquiries of a more personal or complex nature will be passed to neighbourhood teams once initial data has been captured and when an appointment has been arranged with the customer.

The Customer Service Centre will be a centre of excellence for developing our understanding of customer needs and aspirations. This information will be used to deliver services more effectively to our diverse customer base. The Service Centre will monitor peaks in customer demand. It will use this information to identify inefficient processes, to predict future traffic and improve standards of service.

HOME VISITS

In accordance with our focus on delivering excellent services in our neighbourhoods and building strong relationships with our customers, we will continue to recognise the essential role of home visits in delivering an effective service. Though contact will primarily be initiated by the customer via the Service Centre, we will ensure that a home visit is scheduled where more complex dialogue or support is required. This will take into consideration the type of query raised and the individual needs of the customer.

Neighbourhood Officers, dedicated to specific areas, will work as customer advocates, supporting customers and ensuring that their needs are met. Appointments will be offered at a mutually convenient time, potentially mirroring the opening times of the Customer Service Centre. Officers will have access to induction loops and language line services where necessary.

SERVICE ACCESS POINTS

Services will be delivered primarily by the Customer Service Centre and in customer's own homes. We will therefore evaluate the viability of local offices as service access points, taking into consideration concentrations of customers, location of key regional towns and cities and existing Local Authority agreements. All offices will be DDA compliant and will incorporate meeting space for customers and staff.

Local presence will be maintained by scheduling and publicising regular scheme surgeries, estate walkabouts and resident involvement activities.

WEB SERVICES

Yorkshire Housing recognises the increasingly important role that the internet will play in providing access to services 24 hours a day. In addition to giving access to essential information for potential customers and employees, we will continue to invest in the development of interactive services for tenants. We will build effective links with other service providers or initiatives, such as Choice Based Lettings schemes, where they will benefit the customer.

Web services will continue to be redesigned to take into consideration new technologies and customer behaviour. Statistical analysis and usability studies will be used to ensure a high degree of accessibility, to improve the user experience and to measure success. We will ensure that web services are accessible from a variety of devices such as mobile phones and PDAs.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

We recognise that new technology is changing the way in which customers are accessing services. We will therefore consider opening up new channels of communication, such as SMS or Digital TV, where it will add value to the customer experience.

In order to deliver this vision it is important that we acquire an effective Customer Relations Management system. This tool will allow the capture of essential customer data, ensure the effective processing of customer enquiries and provide vital statistics that will be used in the management of the service.

It is also important that all staff have access to the necessary systems that are required to provide up to date information to customers. For this reason we will consider Electronic Document Management as a way to increase the efficiency of the service, providing easy access to customer files and correspondence, regardless of geographical location.

What we will do	How we will measure success
Establish a Customer Service Centre by 2012	<p>80% of customers know how to contact the organisation and find the service easy to use</p> <p>80% of customers are dealt with satisfactorily at the first point of contact</p> <p>95% of customers are satisfied with the response they receive</p>
Provide a consistently high standard of reception services, in locations that reflect the needs of customers	<p>Facilities Strategy developed by 2011</p> <p>All offices are DDA Compliant Accessibility aids such as induction loops and translation services are available and staff are trained on how to use them</p> <p>Mystery Shopping/Tenant Inspectors (TBC)</p>
Ensure that services are available at a time that suits customers	<p>Review opening times by 2012</p> <p>Review 'out of hours' services as part of the Customer Service Centre project</p>
Develop the website to enable customers to access services 24 hrs a day	XX% of website users find the service easy to use and effective in resolving their enquiry (TBC)

What we will do	How we will measure success
Consider new ways of providing access to services, such as SMS and Digital TV	(TBC)
Maintain a strong presence in our neighbourhoods	By summer 2010, a comprehensive schedule of scheme surgeries and estate walkabouts will be available to customers

OBJECTIVE: DELIVER A SERVICE THAT IS RESPONSIVE TO THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF CUSTOMERS

It is essential that we build a greater understanding of our customers' individual needs, so that we are able to provide services that are responsive to the different lifestyles, cultures and aspirations of our customers. We will use this knowledge of our customers to tailor services more appropriately to their individual needs

WORKING TOGETHER

We recognise the importance of involving customers directly and indirectly in the development of services. Priorities will be agreed and monitored in conjunction with our customers and our success will ultimately be measured by customer satisfaction.

Using customer insight techniques we will collate customer satisfaction information, enabling us to undertake more detailed analysis of customer behaviour. Analysis of this data will provide valuable knowledge that will be used to predict and where possible reduce demand for services.

An Equality Work Group will be established that will monitor and improve services to our diverse customer base.

CUSTOMER PROFILING

It is essential that we gather the necessary information about our customers in order to understand their needs. We will therefore continue to gather information, such as preferred communication method or language, which can then be used to tailor services more appropriately to the needs of customers.

CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS

We will consider how we communicate with our customers to ensure that the right information is delivered in the right format, to the right person and at the right time.

We must consider whether the formats that we currently use are appropriate to our customers. We will review standard letters, newsletters, information leaflets and handbooks, to ensure that we deliver a consistent message that conveys our values. Process mapping will also help us to schedule communications more effectively so that customers receive information at an appropriate time.

We will also be flexible in the way we communicate, using our knowledge of our customers to tailor the communication to meet their needs, including in large print or in an alternative language.

What we will do	How we will measure success
Improve our knowledge of customers	<p>Customer profiling 90% complete by 2012</p> <p>Training on how to use customer information to deliver services more effectively, delivered to staff, contractors and partners by 2011</p>
Communicate effectively with our customers	<p>Customer communications plan developed by October 2010 and fully implemented by April 2011</p> <p>XX% of customers across all strands of diversity are satisfied with the communications from Yorkshire Housing</p>
Eliminate discrimination and promote good relationships with our customers	<p>Equality & Diversity action plans completed by XXXX</p> <p>Equality & Diversity training provided for all staff at induction by April 2010</p>

OBJECTIVE: PROVIDE AN EXCELLENT STANDARD OF CUSTOMER CARE

It is essential that we build a greater understanding of our customers' individual needs, so that we are able to provide services that are responsive to the different lifestyles, cultures and aspirations of our customers. We will use this knowledge of our customers to tailor services more appropriately to their individual needs

SERVICE STANDARDS

Service Standards for all service areas will be established following customer consultation. In order to achieve the desired consistency of services, it is necessary that service standards are fully embedded across the organisation. Standards must be incorporated into behavioural competencies in order to inform the recruitment of new staff and to support the personal development of existing staff.

DEALING EFFECTIVELY WITH COMPLAINTS

Yorkshire Housing will seek to create an environment where staff are encouraged to participate fully in service delivery and resolve problems when things go wrong. It is appropriate that any complaints are resolved by the appropriate team, in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Officer, who works as customer advocate to resolve the complaint to the customer's satisfaction.

We must continue to build upon established processes whereby we effectively learn from complaints and feed back into service review and continuous improvement.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Yorkshire Housing recognises that our staff are instrumental in delivering the highest standard of customer care. We will ensure that staff are fully trained and equipped to deliver this service. Training for staff will focus on three key topics; what excellent customer service looks like, how we will deliver this service and how we can put things right when they have gone wrong.

MEASURING PERFORMANCE

Performance will be measured by how well the service achieves our customer service standards. This intelligence will then feed back into the service through a process of continual improvement, revising service levels and developing procedures in order to deliver more customer focused services.

We will aim to be recognised with a National Customer Service accreditation such as 'Customer Service Excellence' by 2013.

What we will do	How we will measure success
Develop Customer Service Standards for all areas in consultation with customers	Service Standards in place for all service areas by September 2010 Performance against all service standards monitored by September 2010
Enable our staff, contractors and partners to deliver excellent customer care by providing the appropriate training and support	Training programme developed and delivered to all staff, contractors and partners
Deal with complaints effectively	Complaints policy and procedure reviewed by 2011 80% of customers are satisfied with the response to their complaint
Introduce a reward and recognition scheme for staff that promotes excellent customer service	
Deliver an excellent standard of customer care	XX% of customers rate the standard of customer service as excellent Mystery Shopping Achieve accreditation for delivering excellent customer service by 2013