

Two Castles Housing Association



WITH CHARITABLE STATUS.

If you require more information
please contact the Housing Officer
for your area

North West Region

3 Castle Street Carlisle
Cumbria CA3 8SY
Tel: (01228) 547463
Fax: (01228) 597822

Catherine Mill Catherine Street
Whitehaven Cumbria CA28 7QT
Tel: (01946) 591848
Fax (01946) 591880

3 Angel Yard 21-23 Highgate
Kendal Cumbria LA9 4DA
Tel: (01539) 733319
Fax: (01539) 730175

North East Region

154 New Bridge Street
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 2TE
Tel: (0191) 2614774
Fax: (0191) 2619692

customer service
standards



Two Castles Housing Association 

Opening more doors for more people

customer service standards

We have Customer Service Standards which we strive to achieve in all areas. We have tried as far as possible to make this information easy to interpret and easily accessible. This may lead to a difference of opinions on exactly what it means, if this happens we will try to reach agreement with you, but the final decision must rest with us.

Rehousing

We will:

- Advise how as a Housing Association we may be able to help you
- Publish our allocation policies
- Tell you in writing whether or not you are eligible for rehousing and the reasons for that decision
- If you are accepted on to the rented housing waiting list, we will give you a written acknowledgement, a reference number, a summary of your preferences, your points total, and information on how often houses become vacant in the area

- Correspondence is replied to politely and promptly within 10 working days
- Forms and literature requested by you are sent out promptly

We will ensure that if complaints arise we have:

- A formal complaints system for investigating and responding to complaints and claims for compensation made by you
- A system to resolve complaints effectively and speedily within time targets
- A system to apologise if the complaint is justified and take appropriate remedial action and, where relevant, pay you appropriate compensation

We will at all times treat all customers equally.

This policy is written in plain language. This may lead to a difference of opinion on exactly what it means. If this happens we will try to reach agreement with you, but the final decision must rest with the Association.

customer service standards

Customer Care

We will, if unable to provide the service you require, advise you of the availability of these services through other agencies.

We will ensure our offices:

- Publicise opening times - permanent changes to be notified in advance
- Are kept clean, comfortable and tidy
- Have well stocked supplies of information leaflets in public areas

We will ensure our staff:

- Arrange appointments with you
- Carry proof of identity and introduce themselves to you
- Keep appointments or notify you in advance of cancellation
- Leave a calling card if a home visit is made with no reply

We will ensure:

- Telephone calls are answered promptly
- Forms are easy to understand and complete
- Forms are regularly reviewed and revised

If you are offered a house we will provide information about the offered property and the tenancy or lease including:

- Main points of tenancy agreement or lease
- Details about the property and its amenities
- Guidance on the operation of heating and alarm systems etc.
- Information and advice on rent and service charges
- We will ensure it is in a reasonable condition

When you sign for the tenancy or lease.

We will:

- Give you a copy of the tenants' handbook and the relevant Housing Corporation booklet
- Explain the terms of the tenancy
- Provide a Housing Benefit and Council Tax Claim Form, helping you to complete it if required
- Provide a Gas Safety Certificate

customer service standards

If you need to move, we have systems in place to help you. These are our:

- Transfer Scheme
- Mutual Exchange Scheme
- H.O.M.E.S.

You can ask to see information held regarding your application with us. You may have to pay us £10 to cover our costs.

We also operate and publicise formal complaints and appeals procedures. These are available if you are dissatisfied with your treatment at any stage in our rehousing process.

Repairs and maintenance

The Association will ensure that all publicity, literature and communications regarding repairs and maintenance will be clear, concise and easy to understand.

Resident Participation

We publish a Resident Participation Policy and make it readily available.

We provide a quarterly newsletter to which staff and residents can contribute.

Resident Surveys will be carried out from time to time.

Estate Management

All offices are accessible by public transport and open during normal working hours.

We can by exception arrange appointments outside office hours.

We will provide concise, clear, easy to understand information on all estate management procedures.

We will, in cases of breaches of the Tenancy Agreement, take measures available to enforce the provisions of the agreement or Lease.

customer service standards

We will provide information on the amounts payable, the frequency of payments, when it is to be paid and other charges payable. All information will be clear and concise.

We will give you one calendar month's notice of rent or service charge increases.

If you are a Leaseholder we will comply with the terms of your Lease.

We will provide you with a Tenants Handbook.

We have an Arrears Policy which we use to control arrears, however we will work closely with you, keeping you informed about what steps we are taking.

The Association will tell you:

- What is your responsibility and what is ours
- How quickly we will do certain types of repairs
- How to arrange access arrangements and appointment systems
- How to identify and report repairs
- How, by recorded message to report emergency repairs out of hours
- How you have a statutory right to repair if you are a tenant
- What our policy and procedure on repairs, improvements and alterations made by yourself says, this includes your rights to compensation
- How we will not pay the contractor, in cases where for example, his work is not satisfactory due to poor workmanship

Our Standard Terms and Conditions for contractors require them to treat you with courtesy and respect. A copy of this is available if required.

customer service standards

The Association has a formal customer complaints procedure with time targets for investigating and responding to complaints and claims for compensation.

We will ensure that repairs and maintenance are carried out to a satisfactory standard, however we operate a policy which allows you to claim compensation from the Association if we fail to do what we should. A copy of our Compensation Policy is available if requested.

We will have simple and convenient arrangements for reporting repairs and emergencies out of office hours.

We will work out mutually convenient times for doing repairs. As much notice as possible will be given when access is required.

We include penalties in repair and maintenance contracts as we are liable for payment of compensation if we break an appointment, without letting you know in advance.

Repairs, improvements and alteration carried out by tenants:

- We will if we default in our duty, have arrangements to enable you to carry out repairs to your home and implement the statutory right to repair if appropriate
- We will permit you to make alterations and improvements to your home, subject to approval and any legal requirements
- We have arrangements for compensating secure tenants at the end of the tenancy for improvements they have made
- We will provide if required, information about the procedure for obtaining permission to carry out improvements and alterations

Rent and Service Charge Collection, Accounting and Arrears Recovery

We issue individual rent and service charge statements on request.

We will ensure all publicity, literature and communication on rent, service charges and arrears is clear, concise and easy to understand.