

# ALMOND HOUSING ASSOCIATION

## CUSTOMER CARE STRATEGY



### Our approach

A Housing Association is just a lot of empty houses, flats and garages without customers! As a customer focused social housing provider, we want to deliver the best service for the best value, not just in the sector but nationwide. We can't do this if we don't know our customers; we need to know their views and aspirations in order to meet their expectations. It is important our customers can access our services with minimal effort, it should be easy for them to contact us in whatever method they prefer, whether it be by phone, in person or digitally.

### Our objectives

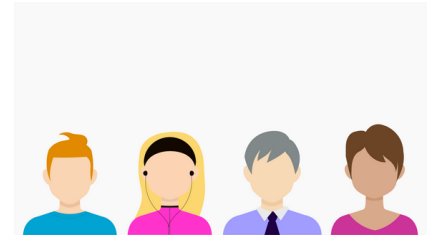
- 1** Knowing our customers: We will use knowledge of our customers to enable service delivery to be pro-active and to be tailored to individual need.
- 2** Accessing our services: Our customers should be able to access our services at all times and with minimal effort.
- 3** Removing barriers: We will identify any barriers to effective service delivery for specific customer groups.



To ensure we meet our objectives, we'll be putting in place a range of metrics to monitor and measure our progress throughout the life of this strategy.

# ALMOND HOUSING ASSOCIATION

## KNOWING OUR CUSTOMERS



### Our Customers

Housing providers traditionally hold basic information around their customers. If we want to be able to offer better services, we need to know our customers better. At the start of 2022 we have started a customer census and profiling exercise to get to know them better. This means knowing things like household circumstances, transport and even things like how long it might take them to answer the door! We can then use this information to make our services more personal and better suited to individuals needs.

This data will also feed into a rent policy review to ensure that how amenities and services are charged is easy to understand and straightforward to calculate.

We need to keep our information up to date and this means looking at putting in place a customer care programme to ensure our information is current and relevant. We can also ensure that our customers are getting all the advice and assistance they need to help make their property a home.

We will continue to check with our customers about how they feel about the services we provide. This means wider and more regular customer feedback surveys than the traditional 3 year cycle. Finally, we need to look further than just how satisfied people are with the services we provide and consider what their aspirations are for future customer services. A customer aspiration survey is planned in the later part of the strategy to ensure we are planning for the future with their views in mind.

### Our activities:

- Analyse customer profiling and census data to tailor services to individuals.
- Implement a customer care programme to ensure profiling data and information is up to date and relevant.
- Full rent policy review.
- Customer aspiration survey.



### Our measures of success:

- Customer profiles have information regarding their particular needs and requirements to tailor services.
- Customer care programme underway with dates planned in.
- A new rent policy review underway.
- A customer aspiration survey approved and ready to launch.



# ALMOND HOUSING ASSOCIATION

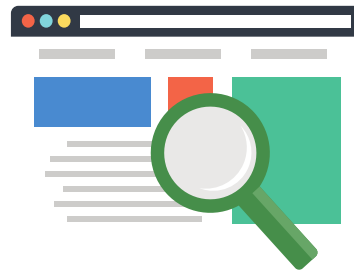
## ACCESS TO SERVICES



### Access to Services

Accessing our services with the minimum of fuss is a primary goal of our strategy. There are several things we have planned in order to achieve this. Behind the scenes we intend to upgrade our systems to install a brand new customer relationship management (known as a CRM) program which keeps all our interactions with them in one place, which should bring efficiencies for colleagues and customers. We plan to integrate the CRM with our phone system further enhancing the customer experience and providing quicker and more efficient reaction times on our side.

We'll introduce feedback methods integrated with our new CRM system to help improve customer experiences. This means giving customers direct access to services online outside standard hours such as reporting repairs, comments or complaints, checking account statements and paying balances.



It is not enough for us to say that we want to improve customer services, it is important that we can prove it too. We'll work with an independent third party accreditation provider to ensure we meet best practice and to reassure customers we're open to challenge.

### Our activities:

- Implement the CRM System understanding wants, needs and software capabilities.
- We'll implement an integrated phone system into our new CRM software
- A new customer portal designed and to be launched during the plan period.
- Progress towards customer care accreditation will be started.

### Our measures of success:

- Installation and operation of a customer relationship management system by the end of 2022/23.
- New telephone system and customer portal integrated with the CRM.
- Customer Service Accreditation process underway by year three of the strategy.



# ALMOND HOUSING ASSOCIATION

## REMOVING BARRIERS



### Removing Barriers

Our services cannot only be accessed via one or two routes. For example, applying for help with rent or completing a housing application cannot only be done over the phone or online and in English.

We have a program planned on customer journey mapping to ensure that our services are easy to access for everyone, regardless of circumstances or language. This means mapping out key services with colleagues and customers to ensure that they are easy to access and use. As part of getting to know our customers, the profiling exercise will also allow us to look at how we can remove any barriers to access our services from the information we receive.

As part of our ongoing services to ensure those who cannot continue to manage aspects of their properties, our popular garden scheme will be reviewed. This will ensure that the service continues to be sustainable, cost effective and helping those who need it most.

Finally, the customer care accreditation covers how we link with groups who may face barriers to accessing services.

### Our activities:

- Journey mapping exercises carried out for principal service areas such as repairs, comments and complaints, payments and allocations.
- Identify any barriers to access to our services for minority or hard to reach groups via an access audit with the support of a Diversity and Inclusion specialist.
- Garden scheme review carried out.

### Our measures of success:

- Reduced customer effort tracked and scored.
- Greater customer satisfaction on key performance areas.
- New garden scheme
- Improved score from engagement with more difficult to reach groups.

