



**Customer Service  
Strategy  
2024 – 2027**

## Foreword

This Customer Service Strategy puts our customers voices at the heart of Castlehill Housing Association (CHA) and how we deliver our services now, and in the future.

CHA aims to become truly customer-driven, making connections between the people we serve and the sustainability of our business by meeting the current and future needs of customers and stakeholders. The conversation between CHA and customers will be ongoing as we become the customer-driven organisation we aspire to be.

This strategy sets out our commitment to customers and includes our aims for improved service delivery across all aspects of our business.

## Introduction

The Scottish Social Housing Charter was introduced with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. Registered Social Landlord's (RSL's) must meet the Charter standards and outcomes, and the Scottish Housing Regulator monitors how landlords do this.

The Social Housing Charter helps to improve services social landlords provide by stating clearly what customers can expect from services, focusing efforts on delivering what is important to customers, and providing a basis for the regulator to monitor performance.

This Customer Service Strategy relates to **how** each of the 16 Outcomes will be delivered by CHA.

Copies of the Scottish Social Housing Charter are available from our office or online at [The Scottish Social Housing Charter \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

## Our Vision

CHA's vision is "To be recognised as a leading provider of high-quality affordable homes in North-East Scotland and as an organisation that cares about people."

To fulfil this vision, we must fully engage with our customers and seek to continually improve and evolve to meet the changing needs of customers and the standards of service that they expect. This strategy sets out how we will do that over the next three years.

CHA owns and manages 1900 homes across Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, and Moray. We provide housing management services to customers living in general needs, housing for older people and very sheltered housing schemes.

Our customer base is diverse, and CHA actively aims to adapt to the needs of the individual providing a person-centred approach to our dealings with customers and stakeholders. Throughout the delivery of this strategy, we will recognise the differing priorities and requirements of our customers and ensure that everyone receives a consistently excellent service.

## Our Objectives

- To provide high quality affordable housing, and an efficient, responsive, and personal housing management and property service.
- To provide appropriate support services to sustain independence and quality of life.
- To contribute towards sustaining rural communities through providing housing, associated employment and using local contractors, where appropriate.

## Our Values

- Communication
- Customer Service
- Respect
- Embracing Change
- Accountability

Castlehill values help us to ensure that our people are the right “fit” for Castlehill – that their ways of working and behaviour are aligned with the culture of the organisation. This assists us to work together to deliver our objectives and ensure our customers receive consistently high-quality services.

The Association believes that quality services can best be delivered by ensuring that, as far as possible, front-line staff build up direct relationships with tenants, customers, or other service users.

Housing and Property Services staff each provide a service to a distinct group of properties. In this way they get to know their tenants, and deal with the full range of issues that may arise during a tenancy.

Housing Support staff from the Key Project work with individuals who need additional support, and to be effective it is essential that trust is built up between the support worker and tenant.

In our Older People’s Housing, the on-site presence of our scheme-based staff is central to building relationships and keeping people safe and secure in their own homes.

Care and Repair staff provide a service which is based on home visits, primarily to older and disabled residents across a range of tenures. They aim to provide a holistic service which can address ‘quality of life’ issues, as well as assisting with repairs and improvements to their home.

## Aims of our strategy

We understand that it is the fundamentals of the services CHA provide that truly matter to our customers. We know that our customers care most about good quality, well-maintained homes, value for money services and ease of communication with the Housing and Property Services teams.

Using the input and experience of our customers will ensure that we get the basics right first time. Key customer contacts such as reporting a repair or making a rent payment should be quick, simple and with as little customer effort as possible.

Regardless of the department or member of staff a customer is engaging with, the service should be of a consistently excellent standard.

### **1. Provide a quality customer experience and deliver customer service excellence**

Services should be easy to access with minimal effort from customers. We understand that customer service excellence should be consistent across the organisation no matter which team or which member of staff the customer is engaging with. We aim to answer customer enquiries at the first point of contact and get it “right first time.”

### **2. Increase customers online access to our services**

Digital technology is increasingly easier to use. Over the life of this Strategy, we aim to introduce online services to enable our customers to access information and services online at any time. We aim to encourage our customers to use our online services and we will support people to do this where needed.

### **3. Encourage customer participation**

CHA has a robust Tenant Participation Strategy which details all the ways in which CHA customers can become involved with the organisation to help shape our services. Castlehill Registered Tenants Organisation (CaRTO) were formed in 2017 from an existing Tenants Panel. CaRTO are an independent, autonomous group who work in partnership with CHA, and they meet every month to discuss and influence housing and property services.

A renewed focus on involving our customers will ensure that they find it easier to talk to us. We will open new channels of communication that reflect the preferences and lives of our customers including social media and a customer portal. We understand that many of our customers value face to face and telephone contacts with us. By offering increased online services for our wider customer base, we will free up staff time and capacity to invest in those traditional communication styles with customers who need it.

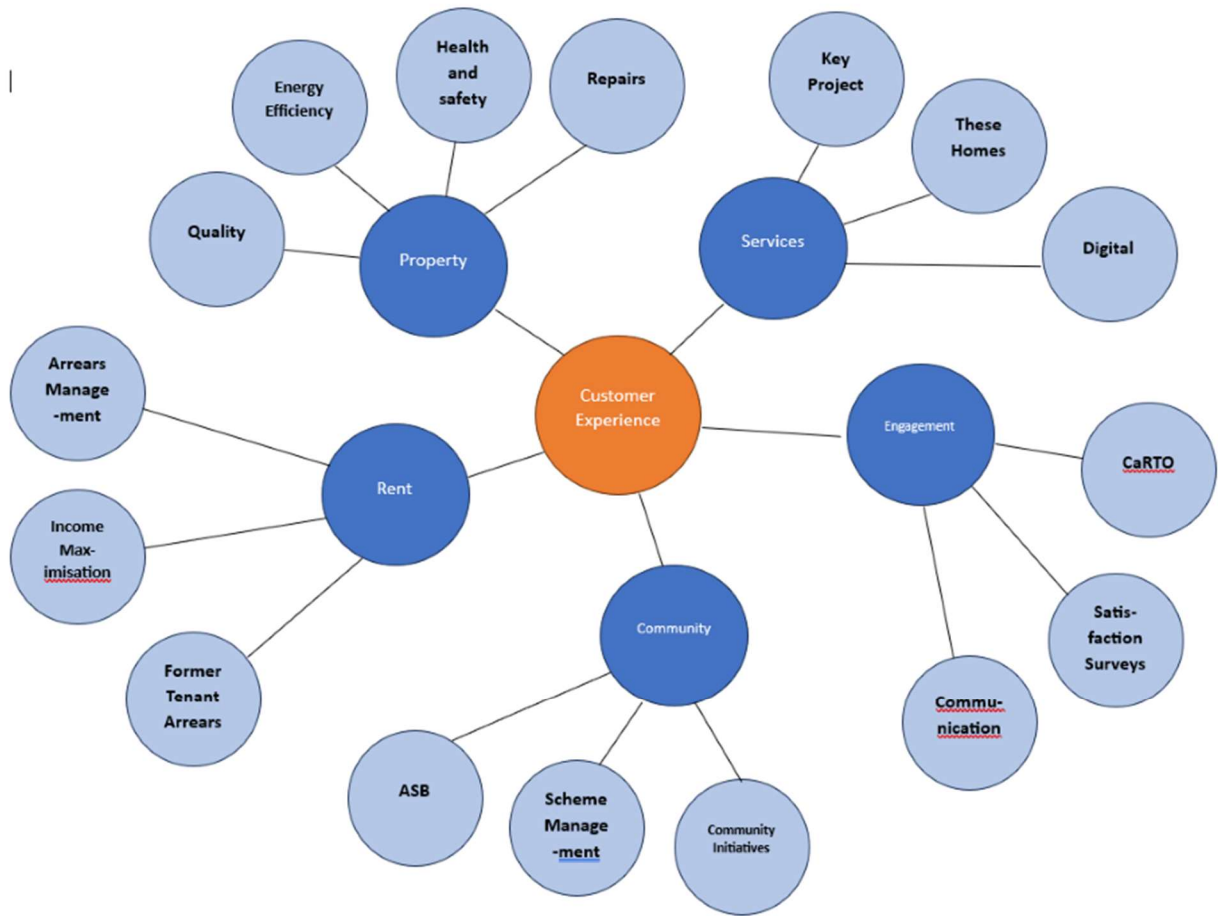
## **How we developed this strategy**

This strategy has been developed using input from our customers through routine satisfaction surveys and other forms of customer feedback. The strategy explicitly states the ways in which we will fulfil our responsibilities as an RSL, how we will hold ourselves accountable and how we will deliver continuous improvement.

The following is a list of inputs used in the development of this strategy:

- Tenant Satisfaction Survey
- Repairs survey
- Colleague input
- CaRTO input
- Performance data
- Benchmarking – SHR (Scottish Housing Regulator) and SHN (Scottish Housing Network)
- Telephone statistics
- Complaints

# Customer Experience Map



## Knowing Our Customers

CHA aims to use the information our customers give us to gain insight into where to effectively target and personalise services.

We will record demographic data including:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Family and marital status
- Employment status
- Income level

We will use other information to plan our services for our customers including:

- Geographical location

- Lifestyle
- Life stage
- Interests
- Past behaviours
- Why and how the customer interacts with CHA
- What the customer wants and needs
- Content consumption habits

## Customer Service at Castlehill – the story so far

CHA's main aim has been to improve the opportunities for our customers to become involved with the work of the Association and to shape services around customers' input.

To move forward, it is key to document what has already been achieved and how that helps us as we continue our journey to becoming truly customer driven.

- Re-structured the Housing Services Support Team to provide reliable and consistent contact handling.
- Re-structured the Property Services Team with specialist focus on both repairs and compliance.
- Reviewed Property and Housing Officer patches.
- Delivered Customer Service refresher training to all staff.
- Using our Housing Management System to effectively manage customer contacts and case management providing a consistent and measurable service.
- Progression from Tenants Panel to CaRTO, an independent and autonomous tenant group who work in partnership with the Association to offer opportunities for customers to participate.
- Developed a Key Project IT solution to monitor referrals, cases, benefits, and financial gains for individuals requiring support with their tenancy.
- As we know that first impressions count, we have a process for new customers that ensures they are provided with all the information they need to sustain their tenancy and be happy in their new home.
- We record the preferred method of communication for our customers.
- Customers can feedback on our services through the three-yearly Tenants Satisfaction Survey as well as more regular service specific satisfaction questionnaires.
- We use customer feedback to inform the procurement and contract management of services E.G. Grounds Maintenance and Cleaning contracts.
- We ensure that our customers voices are heard at Management Committee meetings, ensuring that their concerns and priorities are addressed at the top level of the organisation.
- All Policies that affect our customers are available on our website enabling them to hold us to account.
- All frontline staff have had Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) model complaints training.
- We have introduced a set of Customer Service Standards

## What will the strategy deliver?

Over the coming three years, this strategy will deliver on our three key aims by carrying out the following objectives.

### 1. Provide a quality customer experience and deliver customer service excellence

1. Map, analyse, monitor and improve our customer journey. Take a strategic approach to tracking the customer experience and satisfaction through feedback and monitoring mechanisms including Customer Relationship Management software to track the speed and outcomes of customer contacts.
2. Gain Customer Service Excellence Accreditation.
3. Reduce customer effort. Customer effort refers to how much effort a customer must exert to get an issue resolved, a request fulfilled, or a question answered. Customer effort is measured by surveying customers at the end of their contact asking if they agree that their interaction was easy.

## **2. Increase customers online access to our services**

1. Deliver a 24/7 Tenants portal for digital access and self-service.
2. Provide mobile devices for Housing and Property Services Officers with access to our Housing Management System to allow them to spend more time with customers in our communities making them more visible and accessible.
3. Improvements to the Website including news section.

## **3. Encourage customer participation**

1. Work with customers, communities, and CaRTO to support customer initiatives and deliver community benefits.
2. Publish our organisational performance information so that our customers know how well we are performing.
3. Every customer who gives us feedback on our services will be given a response which will include information on how the feedback has impacted the way we work.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

We believe that these tangible outcomes will have a direct impact on our customers experience of their homes and our services. By harnessing the insight and knowledge of our customers, services will improve. We will measure our success in the following ways:

- Completion of regular staff training
- Customer Satisfaction through real-time feedback on service delivery
- Customer enquiries dealt with at first point of contact and “Right first time”
- Thematic surveys based on specific service delivery topics
- Three yearly Tenant Satisfaction Survey
- Achieving and retaining Customer Service Excellence accreditation
- Telephone statistics
- Establish and measure our customer effort score
- Increase tenancy sustainment
- Improved organisational performance
- Value for money

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