

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY**

### **Regulation & Legislation**

This policy is linked to the following regulation and legislation:

The Housing Corporation's Regulatory Guidance states that where they so wish, residents are supported enabling them to obtain the knowledge and skills needed to play an effective part in investment in, and management of, their homes and neighbourhoods. They are encouraged and supported to explore options; and finally, services are shaped around the customers needs.

This Policy meets the requirements of the Audit Commissions Access and Customer Care Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE 30).

### **Link to Corporate Values**

- Listening to, involving and consulting with our customers to empower them to play an active role in planning and delivering our services.
- Offering choice to our customers wherever we can.
- Ensuring equality of opportunity and recognising diversity for all our customers, treating everyone fairly and without discrimination.

### **Statement of Purpose**

This Policy details our approach to Customer Care which enables us to achieve the high quality of customer services that we strive to provide. We aim to ensure that our service provision is accessible to all our customers.

Customer Care forms the basis of all our activities and is embedded in the culture of our organisation. We offer all our services in a friendly, efficient, effective and professional manner in keeping with the principles of Best Value. Customer Care relates to the accessibility of all our services to all our customers.

### **Our Approach**

- 1.1 By the term customers we mean both internal and external customers. This includes tenants, leaseholders, and all people who use or have used a service provided by Sentinel, and employees and teams within the organisation. It also incorporates other organisations that may have an interest in any aspect of service delivery provided by Sentinel.

### **Our Policy**

#### **We will:**

- 2.1 **Consider customers to be the reason for needing to excel in all that we do.**
- 2.2 **Understand our customers' needs and do what we can to meet them.**
- 2.3 **Strive to excel in all that we do by challenging the way we work and constantly seeking to improve the services that we provide.**
- 2.4 **Treat everyone fairly and sensitively, recognising the diversity of all our customers.**
- 2.5 **Offer choice wherever we can in terms of service delivery.**
- 2.6 **Maintain and develop new homes and communities to create a safe, decent**

environment for all.

- 2.7 **Empower our customers by involving them in decision making and the shaping of our services.**
- 2.8 **Recognise when we get it wrong and do whatever we can to put it right.**
- 2.9 **Seek views, feedback and ideas from our customers to help us grow and implement change together.**

### **Equality and Diversity**

This policy is crucial to spreading the message of Equality and Diversity to our employees and to our customers. We will apply the policy fairly and sensitively in all our work.

### **Financial Impact Assessment**

Customer Services is the mechanism through which we interface with our customers. The financial cost of everything we do is monitored according to the financial regulations. This is a low risk.

### **Risk Assessment**

Perception of a given activity can be more important than the result of the activity itself. As such perception management is key to the work of the organisation. This is a medium risk.

### **Consultation**

The stakeholders below have been consulted on the following dates:

Policy Committee (direction setting) with the Chief Executive: 24<sup>th</sup> January 2007

A2 Housing Group: 29<sup>th</sup> January 2007

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council: 29<sup>th</sup> January 2007

Staff Representatives Group: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2007

Tenant and Leaseholder Forum Group: 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> February 2007

East Dorset Housing Association: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2007

Whitefriars Housing Group: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2007

Hampshire County Council: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2007

Hart District Council: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2007

Rosebery Housing Association: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2007

Rushmoor Borough Council: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2007

### **Monitoring and Review**

The operation of this policy will be regularly reviewed by the Customer Services Manager, in conjunction with the Policy & Strategic Initiatives Officer, with adequate consultation of staff and customers. The outcome of that review will be communicated to the appropriate committee of the board.

### **Approval Stages**

Named Departmental Sign off: Miriam Morris

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> January 2007

Named Director Sign off: Val Bagnall

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> January 2007

Committee Approval Date: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2007

Implementation Date: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2007

