

Customer Care policy

Board/EG Approval: August 2024
Next Review: August 2027

Responsible Board: Ocean Housing Ltd
Responsible Executive: Managing Director of Ocean Housing Ltd

1.0 Policy Statement

- 1.1 Our aim is to provide our customers with a high-quality service that is timely and respectful at all times.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the level of service customers can expect when they contact Ocean Housing with a service query or request.
- 1.3 We will monitor our performance against this policy through a number of key metrics and aim to provide consistent high levels of customer care whilst recognising the individual needs and preferences of our customers.
- 1.4 This policy has been developed to align with the Ocean Values:
- Honest, enthusiastic, and always positive
 - Passionate about customer service
 - Quality and value in all we do
 - Innovative, ambitious and brave for the future of our business, customers and communities

2.0 Policy Scope

- 2.1 For the purpose of this policy Ocean defines customer as follows:
- our tenants, shared owners* and leaseholders*
 - housing applicants
 - authorised advocates
 - MPs and Councillors
 - other agencies and partners*

* Service offer may vary for these groups of customers depending on individual agreements

3.0 Our Customer Service Standards

- 3.1 This policy supports our Service Standards, which have been developed, in partnership with Ocean Housing tenants and residents.
- 3.2 This policy therefore intends to:

- deliver a high quality, effective, efficient service, taking in to account, individual needs
- ensure all staff are trained and professional in the service that they deliver
- treat you with courtesy, respect and consideration at all times
- ensure the services we provide are fair and free from discrimination
- treat all information confidentially
- listen to your views and needs
- store your personal information securely and in line with data protection laws
- aim to put things right if they go wrong and investigate your complaint and respond within our published timescales

4.0 Our expectations from Customers

4.1 We believe that our staff should be treated with the same courtesy and respect as customers receive and we ask the following from our customers:

- that they respect the privacy of others.
- if they have a complaint, they follow our complaints procedures and our published timescales and process.
- that abusive language, threatening or aggressive behaviour is not used against Ocean staff. We will take appropriate action against those who do so using our Reasonable Behaviour Policy.

5.0 Our Service Commitments

5.1 Visiting the office

5.2 Access to Stennack House is only accessible to the public for pre-arranged meetings by exception only.

5.3 Limited parking is available for visitors on site however, disabled parking is immediately outside of the main entrance. Reception has a wheelchair accessible toilet and baby changing facility. A hearing loop is available on request.

5.4 Customer Contact

5.5 The following table lists each method of customer contact together with the agreed service standard and process.

5.6 Our primary aim is for our customers to access information using our website, smartphone app and self-serve using the MyOcean customer portal. The portal provides 24/7 access to repairs, rent account balance and payments information together with quick links to other key services.

5.7 Information and personal data is kept safe, stored, and processed in accordance with data protection legislation.

6.0 Contact Commitment Timescales

Contact Method	Process	Service Standard
Incoming Telephone Call between the hours of 8.30am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday	Answered by the Customer Experience team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address 85% of enquires at first point of contact • Refer escalated enquires with a 10 working day response
Out of hour's incoming telephone call between the hours of 5.00pm and 8.30am and during the weekend.	Answered by Alfi Telecare and referred to an Ocean Housing out of hours supervisor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer all calls within 30 seconds
Incoming mail	Received by the Customer Experience team and scanned and electronically assigned to teams or individuals for response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 working days for response from date received
Incoming email to help@oceanhousing.com	<p>Automatically acknowledged on receipt.</p> <p>Answered by the Customer Experience team or escalated to responsible person or team if further information required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answered at first point of contact where possible • 10 working day response from date received for escalated enquiries
Website contact and forms including through the Ocean smartphone app	<p>Answered by the Customer Experience team on receipt.</p> <p>Escalated to responsible person or team if further information required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answered at first point of contact where possible • 10 working day response from date received for escalated enquiries
Live Chat during office opening hours	<p>Answered by the Customer Experience team on receipt.</p> <p>Escalated to responsible person or team if further information required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reply to chat request within 2 minutes • 10 working day response from date received for escalated enquiries

Contact Method	Process	Service Standard
Facebook Direct Message during office opening hours	Answered by the Customer Experience team on receipt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reply to message within 5 minutes 10 working day response from date received for escalated enquiries
SMS text	<p>Automated response on receipt of SMS text as below:</p> <p>BAL – for a balance enquiry PAY – to find out about your last rent payment CARD – to order a replacement payment card RENT – if rent payment help is needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediate automated response

7.0 Accessing Other Services

7.1 Service Standards

7.2 Ocean has developed a set of Service Standards in conjunction with our tenants and residents which set out our full range of services including how and when they will be delivered.

7.3 The Ocean Housing Service Standards are available to view and download on the Ocean Housing website at www.oceanhousing.com/policy-and-procedures/. A print version is available on request.

8.0 Complaints and Compliments

8.1 We have in place a range of options to raise a complaint with us including by email, on our website, through social media or by telephone.

8.2 We will acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days and respond at Stage 1 in 10 working days.

8.3 If dissatisfied, we will acknowledge the complaint in 5 working days and the Managing Director of Ocean Housing will respond at Stage 2 in 20 working days.

8.4 If we are unable to resolve the complaint, the Housing Ombudsman can be contacted at any time for advice and support.

8.5 The Housing Ombudsman contact details are as follows:

Complaint form: [online complaint form](#)
Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Phone: [0300 111 3000](tel:03001113000)

Phonelines are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

8.6 If we receive a compliment, we will record it and share the feedback with our teams.

8.7 Compliments can be recorded on our website at www.oceanhousing.com by email to help@oceanhousing.com or telephone by calling 01726 874450.

9.0 Visiting Customers

9.1 We will make appointments or visit customers in their own home if this is necessary to deal with a query or deliver a service. We may make unannounced visits where appropriate.

9.2 We will keep appointments or make contact if we must cancel or rearrange. We will ensure that our staff and contractors carry photo ID badges when visiting a customer at home.

10.0 Reasonable Adjustments

10.1 So, we understand how to best deliver our services, we will ask for personal information including age, ethnicity, first language, religion, income and any relevant vulnerabilities or health issues, these may change the way we need to provide services.

10.2 We will make reasonable adjustments and apply our Reasonable Adjustments Policy where practicable and reasonable.

10.3 A Reasonable Adjustment is a legal term described in the Equality Act (2010). It means that Ocean Housing has a duty to make reasonable adjustments where its working practices (including policies and procedures) or physical premises put a disabled customer at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with customers who are not disabled.

11.0 Translation and alternative format publication

11.1 Translation for face-to-face and published communication is available on request as are alternative format publications such as audio or large print.

12.0 MP and Councilor enquiries

12.1 Enquiries received from an MP or councilor will be logged and processed under a separate contact protocol. A written response will be provided in these cases, subject to customer authorization, within 5 working days.

13.0 Reporting and monitoring

13.1 All new members of staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction.

13.2 We will monitor our performance against this policy using feedback from the following:

- 13.3
- Outstanding contacts report
 - Customer call satisfaction survey
 - Complaints and compliments
 - Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM)
 - Quarterly Performance Bulletin

13.4 Performance and trend analysis will be reported to our tenant panel Together With Ocean (TWO) and to the Ocean Housing Board quarterly ensuring that areas of underperformance are addressed.

13.5 Our performance scorecard will be published quarterly on the Ocean Housing website.

14.0 Links to other policies and strategies

- 14.1
- Service Standards
 - Compliments and Complaints Policy
 - Tenant and Resident Partnership Strategy
 - Reasonable Adjustments Policy
 - Reasonable Behaviour Policy