

# Customer Care policy

**Board/EG Approval:** August 2021  
**Next Review:** August 2024

**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. This policy sets out the level of service customers can expect when they contact Ocean Housing with a service query or request.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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

## 3.0 Our Customer Service Standards

- 3.1 This policy supports our Service Standard Commitments, which have been aligned and developed, in accordance with the National Housing Federation (NHF), Together With Tenants (TWT) Charter.
- 3.2 This policy therefore intends to:
  - deliver a high quality, effective and efficient service
  - 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 10 working days

## 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, we ask that they follow our complaints procedures and the timescales and process set out therein
- 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. Further information about our full range of service standards can be found in our Service Standard Commitments.

5.6 Our primary aim is for our customers to access information using our website and smartphone app and self-serve using the MyOcean customer portal. The portal provides 24/7 access to planned maintenance and 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

6.1 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"> <li>• Answer 70% of calls within 60 seconds</li> <li>• Address 85% of enquires at first point of contact</li> <li>• Refer escalated enquires with 10 working day response</li> </ul>
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 out of hours supervisor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer all calls within 30 seconds</li> </ul>
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"> <li>• 10 working days for response from date received</li> </ul>
Incoming email to <a href="mailto:help@oceanhousing.com">help@oceanhousing.com</a>	<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"> <li>• Answered at first point of contact where possible</li> <li>• 10 working day response from date received for escalated enquiries</li> </ul>
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"> <li>• Answered at first point of contact where possible</li> <li>• 10 working day response from date received for escalated enquiries</li> </ul>
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"> <li>• Reply to chat request within 2 minutes</li> <li>• 10 working day response from date received for escalated enquiries</li> </ul>
Facebook Direct Message during office opening hours	Answered by the Customer Experience team on receipt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reply to message within 5 minutes</li> <li>• 10 working day response from date</li> </ul>

		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"> <li>• Immediate automated response</li> <li>• 10 working day response from date received for escalated enquiries</li> </ul>

## 7.0 Visiting Customers

- 7.1 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 will keep appointments or contact them if we have to cancel or rearrange. In return, we ask that they inform us in advance, if they are unable to make an appointment. We will ensure that our staff and contractors carry photo ID badges when visiting a customer at home.

## 8.0 Reasonable Adjustments

- 8.1 We will make reasonable adjustments and apply our Reasonable Adjustments Policy as required or when requested. 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.

## 9.0 Translation and alternative format publication

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

## 10.0 Complaints and Compliments

- 10.1 Complaints and compliments will be addressed within the timescales and procedures as set out in our Compliments and Complaints policy.
- 10.2 Performance against the set timescales will be published quarterly on the Ocean Housing website and presented to our tenant group, Together With Ocean (TWO). In addition, TWO will receive anonymised details of all complaints received monthly for review.
- 10.3 Key performance indicators are reported to Ocean Housing Board quarterly with an annual review.

## **11.0 MP and Councillor enquiry**

- 11.1 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 authorisation within 5 working days.

## **12.0 Reporting and monitoring**

- 12.1 All new members of staff will receive training on this policy as part their induction. It is expected that all staff will familiarise themselves with this policy, follow it and ensure that any member of staff who reports to them does the same.

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

- Outstanding contacts report
- Customer service standards commitments survey
- Customer call satisfaction survey
- Complaints and compliments
- Number of Ocean smartphone app downloads
- Percentage of enquiries dealt with at the first point of contact

- 12.3 Performance and trend analysis will be reported to TWO twice a year and to Board annually ensuring that areas of underperformance are addressed. Our performance scorecard will be published quarterly on the Ocean Housing website.

## **13.0 Links to other policies and strategies**

- Customer Service Standards Commitments
- Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Tenant Partnership Strategy
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Reasonable Behaviour Policy