

# STEVE BIKO HOUSING ASSOCIATION

## CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS



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# CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

We aim to provide the best service we can for all our customers. We consider our customers to be everyone we come into contact with and deliver a service for.

SBHA is regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency, which sets standards that contain the outcomes that housing providers are expected to achieve. We always aim to go beyond these standards and provide an excellent and continually improved service.

This document identifies the standards of service that you can expect to receive when accessing the range of services we provide. If we fail to deliver then we have processes in place for you to raise your concerns or complaints. We would also like to hear from you if we excel in our delivery.

## A PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

We will:

- ◆ Be polite and respectful at all times, treating you as an individual and being sensitive to cultural differences
- ◆ Give you our name when dealing with you
- ◆ Use plain, jargon-free language when contacting you
- ◆ Be honest and open in our dealings with you, ensuring you are made fully aware of all the options open to you.
- ◆ Deliver our services in a way that does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of sex, age, race, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation or marriage or civil partnership.
- ◆ Communicate with you in a way that best suits your needs e.g. letter, email or phone.

Respect your confidentiality at all times, by;

- ◆ Providing private interview facilities.
- ◆ Ensuring we comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 in relation to any personal information we hold about you
- ◆ Never discussing your private affairs in front of others without your permission.
- ◆ Treating personal details in the strictest confidence
- ◆ Providing personal details we hold on you in accordance with Data Protection Act 1998 and after receiving your written request and £10 charge, within 40 days of receipt at our office.

## MEETING OUR CUSTOMERS' NEEDS

We will help our customer's understand information we give them, by;

- ◆ Treating you as an individual and being sensitive to cultural differences
- ◆ Offering translation/interpreting if English is not the customers first language, on request
- ◆ Providing key documents in large print if requested
- ◆ Providing Google Translate on our website.

## TELEPHONING SBHA

You can contact us on 0151 734 4933 (local rate calls, however you will not be charged if you get free inclusive calls on your landline or mobile phone tariff).

Our opening hours are

Monday – Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm; except Thursdays: 1.00 pm to 17.00pm

Outside of these hours and during Bank Holidays our 24 hour emergency repairs service will be available on : 0300 123 2030

- ◆ When you contact SBHA all calls will be answered within 3 rings.
- ◆ If we are unable to take your call, you will be put through to our voicemail, where you are able to leave a voice message that we will aim to respond to you within 2 working days.
- ◆ If your call requires transferring to another member of staff, we will tell you in advance who we are transferring you to.
- ◆ If you leave a message for a member of staff and leave your contact details, we will call you back within 2 working days.

(We recommend that you keep a record of who you speak to, in case you need to refer back to your conversation at a later date).

## VISITING OUR OFFICE

3 Yanwath Street Liverpool L8 0XP

### **Our opening hours are:**

9.00am – 5.00pm Monday, Tuesday Wednesday & Friday

1.00pm – 5.00pm Thursday

Closed on Bank Holidays.

### We Will;

- ◆ Display our opening times
- ◆ Have a range of SBHA information available on public display
- ◆ Ensure our reception area is clean and tidy.
- ◆ Ensure our office is accessible.
- ◆ Greet everyone within 5 minutes of visiting our office.
- ◆ Provide private interview rooms, should you wish to speak to staff privately.
- ◆ See you within 5 minutes of your pre-booked appointment time.
- ◆ When you visit the office and do not have an appointment. try to see you and keep waiting times to a minimum, or make a suitable appointment time for you, . All callers without an appointment will be seen by an Administrator who will deal with your query, or refer you to other staff who are available.
- ◆ Keep appointments, or ring you to re-arrange if the member of staff you are due to see is unavailable

## **CONTACTING US BY EMAIL AND LETTER**

We will:

- ◆ Reply to your letter within 5 working days of receiving it. (General correspondence)
- ◆ Reply to your email within 3 working days of receiving it. (General correspondence)
- ◆ Use plain, jargon free language in all correspondence.
- ◆ Ensure all correspondence has the name, job title and contact number of the staff member dealing with your enquiry.

(please note that timescales for translated documents will vary)

## **VISITING OUR WEBSITE**

We will:

- ◆ Ensure our website contains useful, up to date information
- ◆ Respond to any queries received from the website within 3 working days

## **VISITING YOU IN YOUR HOME**

- ◆ Our staff and contractors will carry and show their identity cards at all times. If a password has been set up for you then they will quote this to you
- ◆ Arrange Home Visits with you during office hours 9.00 am – 5.00pm. If you are not available during office hours, we will try to accommodate alternative times, but cannot guarantee this.
- ◆ If we have to cancel an appointment, we will let you know at least 24 hours in advance (unless in an emergency), if possible and make a new appointment
- ◆ If you are not at home when we call, we will leave a card notifying you of our visit
- ◆ Contractors working in your home must abide by our policies and procedures

## GETTING INVOLVED WITH SBHA

We will:

- ◆ Be guided by current Quality Engagement Standards, utilised by Tpas tenant engagement experts and the Homes and Communities Agency
- ◆ Inform tenants of the different roles and involvement opportunities and consultation methods.
- ◆ Support you if you choose to be involved and ensure that we do our utmost to make it easier to become involved.
- ◆ Monitor the impact of our involvement activities and use these findings to develop our Services
- ◆ Provide you with feedback after taking part in any consultation with SBHA.

## APPLYING FOR A SBHA PROPERTY

- ◆ An application pack is available to collect from our office at:  
3 Yanwath Street Liverpool L8 0XP
- ◆ If unable to attend our offices an application pack will be sent out within 24 hours of receiving your request
- ◆ We will provide you with our policy and clear guidance on meeting our criteria to be accepted onto our waiting list. This is available with the application pack and also from our office and website [www.stevebikoha.org](http://www.stevebikoha.org)
- ◆ All applicants will receive a written decision of being accepted onto our waiting list or not, within 28 days of the office receiving a fully completed application and requested documents.
- ◆ All current applicants will be contacted on a 12 monthly basis, to confirm whether they still wish to be re-housed. The applicant will have 14 days to respond
- ◆ We advise all applicants to also apply to Property Pool Plus in addition to applying to Steve Biko Housing Association.
- ◆ At the point of offering you a home, provide detailed information on the property itself and the area you will be moving into and what to expect of SBHA as a landlord and what we expect of you as a tenant.

## HIGH QUALITY REPAIR SERVICE

We will;

- ◆ Provide you with the Steve Biko Housing dedicated repair line telephone number: 0300 123 2030. You can also call in person to our Yanwath Street Office to report a repair.
- ◆ Arrange an interpreter in your own language on request.
- ◆ Ensure all repairs reported to Steve Biko Housing Association repairs line, outside of normal working hours are dealt with by our message handling service. In the case of an emergency (please refer to your tenants handbook), a Contractor will be instructed to attend. ***If not an emergency, the repair will be dealt with in the usual manner.***
- ◆ Pre-inspect a number of repairs, to ensure accurate information is given to our Contractors. You will be advised during your call that a pre-inspection appointment will be arranged and the pre-inspection will take place within 14 working days of you reporting the repair to us.
- ◆ Completing telephone surveys on a proportion of completed repairs, to ensure work is carried out to our agreed standards of service. We will use your comments to improve our service.
- ◆ Inspect a sample of work carried out, to monitor the quality of workmanship to ensure Steve Biko Housing Association and our tenants receive Value for Money
- ◆ Monitor our performance in dealing with your repair requests and publishing the results
- ◆ Undertake planned and cyclical works to maintain the quality of our homes

## REPORTING A REPAIR

We offer a range of methods for customers to report a repair. You can

- ◆ Call our Repair Line on 0300 123 2030
- ◆ Call our office on 0151 734 4933
- ◆ Visit our office
- ◆ Contact us via our website [www.stevebikoha.org](http://www.stevebikoha.org) (non-emergency repairs only).

If you report an urgent or routine repair, we will:

- ◆ Ask you a number of questions regarding your contact details, property and the nature of the repair. Giving us as much information as possible about your repair makes it easier for us to help you and to find the most appropriate resolution
- ◆ Advise you of the priority and timescale that has been allocated to your repair.
- ◆ Aim to complete your repair “Right 1<sup>st</sup> Time”. The length of time your repair will take depends on the type of work involved.

SBHA has 3 repair priorities (due to change in April).

| PRIORITY No. | REPAIR TYPE            | TIME FRAME   | DEFINITION  | EXAMPLES   |
|--------------|------------------------|--|---|--|
| 1            | EMERGENCY              | WITHIN 24 HOURS  | Repairs needed to avoid danger to health, or that pose a risk to safety.                          | Gas Leak,<br>Burst Water Pipe<br>Serious Electrical Fault.<br>No heating (Oct to April)<br>Securing premises after break-in.<br>Blocked WC (if no alternative WC)                                    |
| 2            | URGENT                 | WITHIN 3 DAYS  | Repairs that are a major cause of discomfort or inconvenience                                     | Minor plumbing leak<br>Overflow discharging<br>Minor electrical fault<br>No heating (May to Sept)<br>Faulty exterior lighting<br>Blocked WC (if an alternative WC)<br>Loose bannister or stair tread |
| 3            | ROUTINE                | WITHIN 21 DAYS   | Repairs that do not cause immediate damage to occupiers, the building or neighbouring properties. | Repair to kitchen unit<br>Easing internal door<br>Defective floor tiles (no trip hazard)<br>Repair to plasterwork<br>Leaking gutter<br>Refixing bath panel   |
|              | OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCY | WITHIN 4 HOURS BETWEEN 5PM AND 9AM ALL DAY SAT & SUN AND BANK HOLIDAYS | These are "make safe" repairs and may require a follow up visit to complete the repair.           |  |

## GAS SAFETY CHECKS

It is a legal requirement that we carry out an annual Gas Safety check to ensure that you and your family are safe. This is usually completed at the same time as the annual servicing of appliances.

We will

- ◆ Contact you when your Gas Safety check is due
- ◆ Carry out an annual Gas Safety Check for your home, by a qualified contractor
- ◆ Offer a range of appointments to suit your needs
- ◆ Give you a copy of your Gas Safety Certificate

It is essential that you allow access to carry out the Safety check. If you fail to do this, legal action will be taken, which will incur considerable cost to the tenant.

## COLLECTING YOUR RENT

We will

- ◆ Offer you a range of convenient methods for paying your rent and other charges, including Direct Debit, paypoint outlets, by telephone, text or online. Some of these methods offer a 24 hour a day facility
- ◆ Signpost you to independent third party advice on benefits, Housing Benefits and debt management services
- ◆ Contact you at an early stage if your account goes into arrears or arrears increase. We will always initially look to enter into a payment arrangement without the need for further action
- ◆ If required, take prompt and reasonable action to recover any monies owed to us and if necessary take action through the Courts which could lead to eviction.
- ◆ Provide you with rent statements every quarter, or within 10 working days of receiving a request
- ◆ Share information over the phone with you about your rent account (after correctly answering security questions to confirm your identity, or speak to a third party after receiving written permission from the tenant)

## TRANSFER REQUESTS

When dealing with transfer requests, we will make every effort to help applicants choose housing that will meet their needs.

- ◆ A transfer application form is available to collect from our Yanwath Street office and on request one can be sent out to you within 10 working days
- ◆ Your fully completed transfer application alongside requested evidence, will be considered and decision made as to whether it has been accepted or rejected within 28 working days of receipt
- ◆ SBHA also provide tenants with the option of joining Homeswapper. Please ask at Yanwath Street or ring us on 0151 734 4933

## COMMENTING ABOUT SHBA SERVICES

We welcome you telling us how you feel about the service we have provided and want to make it easy for you to do so. The feedback we receive helps us to develop and improve our services in the future. You can make a complaint, compliment, comment or suggestions by;

- ◆ Contacting us via our website [www.stevebikoha.org](http://www.stevebikoha.org)
- ◆ Completing a complaint form.
- ◆ Writing to us
- ◆ Completing our annual Customer Service Surveys
- ◆ Attending our Tenants Meetings, Coffee Mornings or Focus Groups.

We will make it easy for you to question any of our decisions by;

- ◆ Sharing information on in our Newsletter/Website
- ◆ Putting right mistakes you tell us about and inform you when we have rectified them
- ◆ Investigate your complaint following our published complaints procedure

## SERVING OUR CUSTOMERS AND THE COMMUNITY YOU LIVE IN

We will be positive in our efforts to you and your local community by;

- ◆ Actively promoting issues of concern to the community with local and national politicians and policy makers
- ◆ Supporting community based ventures which bring benefits to local people
- ◆ Participating and implementing programmes that enable local people to gain in skills, confidence and increase employability
- ◆ Promoting, assisting and facilitating community based initiatives that fit into the Aims, Objectives and Values of SBHA
- ◆ Working in partnership with other social landlords and organisations to co-ordinate our activities to develop and support the local community

## KEEP YOU INFORMED OF OUR PROGRESS AND PERFORMANCE

Ask what you think of our service and act on what you say by;

- ◆ Carrying out surveys and telling you the results
- ◆ Having a service improvement plan based on the outcome of these surveys
- ◆ Consulting you on how best to develop our services
- ◆ Giving you details of our performance annually, this information will include
  - ◇ Level of rent arrears
  - ◇ Number of empty properties
  - ◇ Amount spent on repairs
  - ◇ Amount spent on offices and staff
  - ◇ Number of properties let each year
  - ◇ Number and type of property within our stock
  - ◇ Repair response performance
  - ◇ Rent levels and rent increases/decreases
  - ◇ Invite you to our Annual General Meeting

## YOUR COMMITMENT TO US

You can help us provide you with the best possible service by;

- ◆ Being familiar with your tenancy agreement and handbook
- ◆ Providing full, accurate information
- ◆ Telling us promptly of any changes in your circumstances
- ◆ Keeping appointments or letting us know as soon as possible if you need to cancel
- ◆ Provide us with access to your home to carry out your annual gas safety check and tenancy audit visit
- ◆ Being polite when dealing with our staff and contractors; we do not tolerate abusive language or threatening behaviour. We may be unable to deal with your enquiry if this happens.

If you have any ideas on service standards you would like us to consider, we will be very pleased to hear from you.

Please contact us on 0151 734 4933 or write to us via our website [www.stevebikoha.org](http://www.stevebikoha.org) or at:

3 Yanwath Street | Liverpool | L8 OXP