



**North London Muslim
Housing Association**

Customer Care Policy

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Introduction

This document identifies the policies, standards and procedures to be followed by the Association's staff in the ways in which services are provided and how tenant / customer or both should be treated.

Policy

The Association recognises that the majority of its tenants have language difficulties and are on very low incomes. NLMHA therefore believes in a strong customer care ethos and believes that this can best be demonstrated if it offers efficient, cost effective services, which takes into account the tenants circumstances and is relevant to their needs.

We Aim to Achieve This By

- Providing a customer oriented service which is value driven and puts customer first
- Providing a high standard of service within the Associations' resources
- Employing staff who are informed and helpful and who can access languages that tenants understand.
- Setting and monitoring service standards and to take action to improve if necessary.
- Being open to our customer's ideas.
- Providing tenants with information about policies and services.
- Advising tenants on how to access services.
- Providing opportunities for tenants to influence decisions on the type and range of services offered.
- Respecting their right to confidentiality.
- Responding to complaints positively and quickly.
- Putting right errors which come to light or are brought to the Association's attention.

Background

There is an expectation from recipients of services that the Association should be responsive to their needs. The Association is committed to meeting their customer's expectation, getting it right first time, and if we don't, we try to put it right as quickly as possible. We will operate in a spirit of fairness and equality of opportunity for all our customers. We will act against discrimination of any form. We are also committed to the requirement of the Tenant Guarantee to define standards and to judge our performance against those standards.

The Office

The office is open from 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Monday to Friday (excluding Public Holidays). Every effort will be made to ensure tenants will have an initial assessment interview by an officer within 10 minutes of visiting the office if they visit the office on a day when their Housing Officer is not on duty.

It is expected that officers will be courteous and helpful, and may be able to access an interpreter where necessary.

The Telephone

Telephone enquiries will be answered within five rings. The person answering will be courteous and helpful. If they are unable to help, a message will be taken and the relevant officer will contact the tenant within 24 hours. If it is known that the officer will be absent for longer, this will be explained without necessarily revealing the reason for the officer's absence. If the matter requires urgent attention, the telephone call or a message will be passed to any member of the housing team who will decide on the action they wish to be taken.

Correspondence

Correspondence requiring a response will be acknowledged within 5 working days. A full response will be completed within 10 working days. The response will be in plain English, free of jargon and the officer dealing with the letter will sign the response in their own name and state the title of their post.

Translation into Different Languages

We operate mainly in English, however we may be able to help in cases where the service of interpreters / translators is needed.

Accountability - Service Standards

The Association is committed to achieving high service standards in Housing Management. The guidelines set out in the Tenant Guarantee will be used by us as the basis for monitoring our performance in the delivery of services. The Association will seek the views of tenants regularly and the outcome will be reported to the Board of Management. These will be taken into account when decisions about services are being considered.

Consultation on Housing Management Services

The Association wishes to involve tenants in the management of their homes and will seek tenants' views about changes which will directly affect them and will seek their views about the services provided. The outcome of their responses will be considered when decisions about future services are made. NLMHA aims to keep tenants informed and publishes two newsletters each year which gives information about our activities. We positively encourage tenants to contribute to and write articles for the tenants' news letter.

Right to Information

The Association will conform to the requirement of the Tenant Guarantee to provide tenants and applicants with information about our policies and procedures on the main areas of housing management. A Tenant Information Pack is available to all tenants which provides information on a range of policies. Leaflets are available for applicants on the Association's Allocation and Complaints Policies Procedures.

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 2018 gives members of the public a right to see any information about them which is held by the landlord in a computerised form. The Association is committed to this requirement and will inform tenants in writing if they intend to disclose personal data to an organisation for research the request. This is separate from the Association's obligation to assist the police and other statutory bodies with information in the performance of their duties. The Association will only provide that information which is, in its opinion, relevant to the investigation.

Access to Personal Files And Information

The Association is committed to extending the rights of tenants to information held about them and will allow tenants access to their personal file and other manually

maintained records about them, and will respond positively to tenant's requests for amendment to their records if the tenant believes information held about them is incorrect.

Complaint

It is recognised that despite the associations' standards, there may be occasions on which tenants are dissatisfied with the service because standards have not been met. The association will use its best endeavours to resolve complaints before tenants feel obliged to take legal action or take the matter to the Ombudsman service. When a complaint is received, the head of department is responsible for undertaking an initial investigation to ascertain the facts of the case and to respond to the complainant within 10 working days. It is expected that the investigating officer will seek to resolve the problem to the satisfaction of the complainant if it is on the basis of poor service delivery. However, a positive outcome may not be possible if the complaint is about a policy decision. Policies will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant to the needs of the majority of tenants.

Confidentiality

The Association recognises the tenants' right to have information held about them kept in a confidential manner. The association accepts fully the responsibility set out in the Data Protection Act and Access to Personal Information Act and undertakes not to divulge information except in circumstances allowed for in the relevant Acts.

Compensation

It is recognised that there may be occasions on which the service provided does not meet the Association's service standards or obligations. When this happens, the Association may make a payment in compensation for the inconvenience suffered. This will not affect the tenant's statutory rights. Compensation may also be payable for the loss of the use of some or all of their home or for qualifying improvements to their home.