

Customers come first

Tenant involvement and empowerment standard

Customer service and choice

If you contact Easy Housing you can normally expect Easy Housing staff to:

- Welcome you and deal with any enquiry in a helpful, fair and friendly manner
- Ensure that an appropriate officer is seen or appointment made within 5 minutes
- Ensure that prior appointments are kept to within 5 minutes
- Arrange for an interpreter or language signer if necessary
- Carry an identification pass and give you their name
- Answer the telephone promptly and politely within 30 seconds
- Acknowledge your letter within 5 working days and/or
- Respond to your letter within 10 working days
- Arrange home interviews in certain circumstances when you cannot visit the office

Involvement and empowerment

- We will consult you about any significant changes to our policies and on any other changes which may effect you as a resident
- Consult you about any major repairs on improvement we intend to carry out to your home or estate and wherever possible give you a choice of colours and fitting
- Make copies of all our policies, procedure, and other standard document available on request through the help desk and on the internet
- Carryout regular survey to establish residents views on the quality of our service
- Invite residents to inspect with us each of the estates we manage on a regular basis to make sure that communal areas are clean, tidy, well maintained and safe to use
- Provide advice, support and training to resident who want to set up a resident association

- Encourage residents to participate through giving the consumer panel, the leaseholder panel or the residents forum or other sub-committees and working groups
- Provide performance information about our service in newsletters and on the website

1. Consult with residents wherever legally required and always before making changes in matters of housing management, maintenance or care and support that are likely to have a substantial effect on the resident (NB for residents in care and support schemes consultation would include those that would be a party to developing their care plans).

2. Consult upon policy reviews and any major improvement to properties or changes in service delivery that is likely to have a significant affect on residents.

3. Seek regular feedback from residents by way of meetings, Consumer Panels and/or surveys in respect of the design and specification of our accommodation and the efficiency, quality and value for money of services provided by the Society. (Consumer Panels will consist of residents selected at random by the Society to meet and discuss a specific aspect of Easy Housing's work and help to identify ways in which we might improve our performance).

4. Report consultation results to the Housing and Care Committee for action as appropriate and give feedback to residents on the results of any consultation exercise undertaken and an explanation of the reason for any decisions reached following such consultation.

Responding to Complaints

If you are unhappy, you can complain using the complaint form in the online service section or write a letter to us. We will:

- Acknowledge your written complaint within three working days
- Send a full reply within 10 working days for stages 1 or 2
- Arrange a panel hearing within 6 weeks for stage 3 complaints
- Explain how you can go to the next stage of the complaints process
- Agree a timescale with you for complex complaints that might need longer to investigate
- Welcome your views if you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our services
- Record, respond to and act on any complaints

We learn from complaints and make changes/improvements as a result once we get complaints we:

- Endeavour to put things right as soon as possible
- Extend our apologies if we have made mistakes
- Learn from our mistakes so we don't repeat them
- Make complaining to us easy and straight forward

Home Standard

Quality of accommodation

- Provide safe, secure, efficiently heated weather proof homes with modern kitchen and bathroom
- Publish our planned maintenance programme on the website and through stadium voice
- Give your advice on how to pay your rent and how to claim housing benefit as well as refer you for formal debt and welfare advice if required
- Give every new tenant a sign up pack containing their tenancy agreement, our handbook and other useful information
- Offer compensation if we have made a service mistake
- Provide help and advice on any aids and adaptation you may need in your home to enable you to live there more comfortably

Repairs and maintenance

Easy Housing places great emphasis on maintaining and improving the quality of its housing stock to protect and enhance its amenity level for tenants. E.H.A will:

- Ensure all properties are maintained to a high standard
- Acknowledge in writing all maintenance requests
- Inform residents as soon as possible of the action being taken
- Complete all emergency repairs within 24 hours
- Complete all urgent repairs within 5 working days
- Complete all routine repairs within 28 days
- Carry out tenant satisfaction surveys to monitor Easy Housing and contractors performance
- Arrange for inspections and repairs to be carried out by appointment at convenient times
- Ensure contractors are efficient, courteous and tidy
- Require all Easy Housing staff and contractors to carry identification
- Provide a 24 hour emergency repair service

- Ensure tenants are consulted about cyclical redecoration or service programmes
- Pay compensation in certain cases where we fail to meet our performance targets

Tenancy Standard

Allocations

Easy Housing Association was founded in 1996 to improve and build houses and operates mainly in Brent, Harrow, and Ealing. The Association is regularly inspected by TSA to ensure the financial budgets and the allocation and management of properties is kept within their guidelines.

Our stock is situated in an area of very high demand. This policy regulates the letting of homes to housing list applicants, internal transfers from existing tenants, and referrals from other statutory and voluntary organisations. The Housing Management section deals with all matters relating to housing applications and allocations.

The Association aims to regenerate the environment by continuing to improve tenemental stock and provide new building housing in the multi-cultural area in which we operate. A degree of emphasis is placed on meeting local housing need. This is subject to the number and type of houses it has available at any one time. The Association aims to provide good quality, affordable rented accommodation to those in greatest housing need.

The Association aims to make best use of space available within its properties and will allocate void properties to appropriately sized households.

The Association has an aim of providing accommodation for those in the greatest housing need.

The Association strives to achieve a balance between various types of lettings. The Homeless Protocol in place currently provides a 'guideline' figure of 19% for homeless referrals. The Association will strive to achieve a figure of 30% to further assist the local authority to meet its statutory obligations to homeless households. This therefore leaves 70% for housing list, transfer list and other referrals. This figure will need to be reviewed on an annual basis.

Rents

In providing affordable, value for money housing services Easy Housing agrees to:

- Set rents in fair and consistent manner in accordance with our published policies
- Set assured rents at levels which are affordable to people in low paid employment
- Set charges in Care and Support schemes such as are reasonably required to meet costs
- Never increase rents or charges more than once a year without your agreement
- Provide you with a full copy statement of your rent account at least every six months
- Give at least four weeks notice of any rent increase
- Give advice and assistance on claiming benefits and arranging payments
- Never set assured rents in excess of local Housing Benefit levels
- Consult with you regularly on the standards and cost of services provided
- Publish audited annual accounts detailing service charge income and expenditure for your home
- Grant a right of appeal to the Society if you are unhappy with the set rent or charge
- Enable you to refer any increase to an Independent Rent Assessment Committee
- Give you the opportunity to meet and agree appropriate action to deal with arrears

Tenure

Neighbourhood and community standard

Neighbourhood Management

The overall Government policy on neighbourhoods and communities is set out in Sustainable Communities: building for the future - the Sustainable Communities Plan - and subsequent associated policies and strategies. They have also published strategies under the Together we can and Respect Action Plan headings.

Within this context and the strategic roles of local authorities, we want to help ensure that the homes we fund, and the way they are managed, contribute to helping individuals and families that live in them contribute to the success of their local communities and neighbourhoods. We have developed an approach which is aimed at enabling housing associations to play increasingly effective roles in delivering the wide range of services necessary to achieve and maintain mixed sustainable communities.

Our approach

We have published our Neighbourhoods and Communities Strategy which:

- Explains our objective of enabling housing associations to play their parts in successful sustainable communities;
- Sets out our key themes as the means to reaching such communities:
 - Working together
 - Sustaining mixed communities
 - Adding community value
 - Building respect
 - Empowering communities;
- Suggests that there could be a Communities Standard for housing associations so their activities could be monitored to know whether they are achieving sustainable communities in different circumstances;
- Emphasises the need for associations to actively consider their roles in different communities.
- Proposes further consultation on specific proposals
- Asks for comments on our Strategy.

Our overall object is to create the framework for housing associations to improve the quality of life of individuals and communities, by working within, and contributing to, local and neighbourhood strategies through providing affordable housing along with community facilities and services.

Or

Easy Housing Association provides a range of services to members of the communities in which we work actively seeking their involvement and responding to their priorities.

It is our full commitment to delivering and supporting activities and programmes that build the strengths of local people and the neighbourhoods which we work. We work with everyone building links with local community groups, voluntary agencies, local authorities, business, ad employers and training providers. Through our community regeneration work we aim to

improve the physical social and economic condition of neighbourhoods and develop opportunities that respond to local needs.

Our work covers the following areas:

1. Safe and secure
2. Learning and skills development
3. Employability and employment
4. Getting involved
5. Environmental
6. General advice and guidance
7. Youth development

Anti Social Behaviour

Suffering from nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour can be a stressful and upsetting experience.

We have a policy to deal with all sorts of things that can cause a nuisance from the minor to the very serious.

What we can do depends on how serious the problem is, what is causing the nuisance and how much evidence there is. We can't tackle nuisance without your help. This page explains the steps we can take and how we can help.

How you can help us tackle nuisance.

- Speak to your neighbour - they may then stop doing what annoys you.
- If your approach fails you may, where available, consider Independent Mediation to resolve the problem. These services are impartial and employ trained mediators. They will need to speak to both parties in the dispute and will endeavour to broker an agreeable resolution. (Full details of the mediation services available and how to arrange use of their services can be obtained by contacting your Housing Officer).
- Where these options fail or are not available, speak to your Housing Officer. They will be able to provide advice on what action we can take to deal with nuisance. If appropriate your Housing Officer will contact the person(s) causing the nuisance to try and resolve the problem.
- Where serious incidents occur report them to other agencies as well as ourselves. They may be able to offer alternative or more effective

solutions to your problems. Examples of such agencies include Local Authority Environmental Health Departments or the Police.

- Where we have agreed to take action we will need your assistance in recording and providing evidence. If any legal action is to be considered such information will be vital, without it it is very difficult for us to commence the legal process. Again wherever possible get other agencies involved as they may be able to assist in providing supporting evidence as well as taking or advising you on other solutions available.

What we expect from tenants, their families and invited guests.

The tenancy agreement sets out that tenants, their families and invited guests must:-

- Not cause nuisance or annoyance to others in the locality.
- Not use their home or common areas for any illegal or immoral purpose.
- To keep music to a volume which cannot be heard outside the premises.
- Not to undertake any form of harassment (including towards other members of their own family).
- Not to allow authorised pets to cause a nuisance to other residents and,
- Generally to respect the rights of other residents in the locality.

DO NOT take the law into your own hands to tackle a problem with your neighbour as this could result in action being taken against you by the Society and other agencies and may escalate the dispute.

Value for money standard

Aim: To make best use of resources by providing value for money services and developing new business. We will continue to review the structure of our organisation and make efficiency savings, ensuring we provide the best value for money while maintaining excellent services. We will also seek to build on our record of attracting new business to Easy Housing.

Governance and financial viability standard

Governance

Tenancy Service:

- Provide safe, secure, efficiently heated weather proof homes with modern kitchen and bathroom
- Publish our planned maintenance programme on the website and through stadium voice
- Give your advice on how to pay your rent and how to claim housing benefit as well as refer you for formal debt and welfare advice if required
- Give every new tenant a sign up pack containing their tenancy agreement, our handbook and other useful information
- Offer compensation if we have made a service mistake
- Provide help and advice on any aids and adaptations you may need in your home to enable you to live there more comfortably

Involving you

- We will consult you about any significant changes to our policies and on any other changes which may affect you as a resident
- Consult you about any major repairs or improvements we intend to carry out to your home or estate and wherever possible give you a choice of colours and fittings
- Make copies of all our policies, procedures, and other standard documents available on request through the help desk and on the internet
- Carry out regular surveys to establish residents' views on the quality of our service

- Invite residents to inspect with us each of the estates we manage on a regular basis to make sure that communal areas are clean, tidy, well maintained and safe to use
- Provide advice, support and training to resident who want to set up a resident association
- Encourage residents to participate through giving the consumer panel, the leaseholder panel or the residents forum or other sub-committees and working groups
- Provide performance information about our service in newsletters and o the website

Service Standards

- Communicating we will see you within 5 minutes when you visit our office with an appointment. You will wait no more than 10 minutes
- Answer 90% of telephone calls within five ring
- Respond to letter
- We will respond to e-mails within 24 hours
- Complete emergency repair within 12 hour, on urgent repair within seven day and routine repairs within 28 days
- Register our contractor to contact you to make an appointment before visiting your home for any repair work
- We will inform you by letter when your rent accounts is in arrears

Tenancy Service

- We will remove bulk refuse dumped on our estates within 5 days of notification and report abandoned vehicles to the DVLA within 10 days of notification
- Remove offensive graffiti from common area by the next working day and other graffiti within 10 working days
- Respond to your complaints about anti social behaviour within 12 hour, if very urgent or 10 working days if less urgent
- Send you a rent or service charge statement four times a year. If a specific rent or service charge statement is requested it will be send within 7 days
- Provide you with an annual service charge account which explains how your service charge here been spent
- Process your completed transfer application form ad write to you within 10 working day
- Contact every new tenant within four week of moving in order to check that they have settled into their home and offer any necessary support and advice
- Annually we will check your gas appliances to ensure they are safe and I good working order
- Maintain the external areas of your home by painting it every 6 years

Homeowners Service

- We will process your application claiming the right to acquire or buy within fourteen days
- Send you an offer notice section 125 notice) within 8 weeks if you are buying a freehold property and within 12 weeks if you are buying a leasehold property

Mission & Value

- Put our resident first
- Work together and value everyone's contribution
- Treat people a individual with integrity ad respect
- Focus on getting positive results
- Try innovative ways of doing thing to get better at what we do
- Make efficient and effective of our resources

Service Delivery Excellence

We are committed to maintaining our reputation for providing responsive services to our residents.

How we aim to achieve this:

- Through consulting with our customers and acting on feedback
- By making sure that our business plans are improving our services at their heart
- That we have service development and improvement plans which sets how we can improve each service
- An evaluation of service performance is carried out which looks at the service in particular and make recommendations on improving the service
- Our service commitment which sets out standards of customer care that you can expect

Resident involvement & Communication

We believe all our residents should have the opportunity to take part in shaping the service they receive.

We will:

- Give you a wide range of opportunities to become involved and communicate your views to us including: the management board, service development groups and forums, customer service committee, residents forum

- Actively seek to involve residents in decisions about their homes and the services we give them
- Support and train residents to become active members of our board of management
- Provide information, training, and support, enabling residents to be involved in the decision making process
- Make a special effort to involve you if you are from an under represented group
- Provide a text phone and hearing loop facility during normal opening hours for residents with a hearing impairment
- Keep you informed throughout our regular newsletter
- Make sure all the information we provide is easy to find, clear and written in plain English and translated in all relevant community languages. We provide key documents in audio format
- Provide interpreters where needed
- Update our website regularly
- Carry out a full residents and leaseholders satisfaction survey every two years, publishing the results and any action needed.
- Provide an annual resident involvement statement

Complaints

If you are unhappy, you can complain using the complaint form in the online service section or write a letter to us. We will:

- Acknowledge your written complaint within three working days
- Send a full reply within 10 working days for stages 1 or 2
- Arrange a panel hearing within 6 weeks for stage 3 complaints
- Explain how you can go to the next stage of the complaints process
- Agree a timescale with you for complex complaints that might need longer to investigate
- Welcome your views if you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our services
- Record, respond to and act on any complaints

We learn from complaints and make changes/improvements as a result once we get complaints we:

- Endeavour to put things right as soon as possible
- Extend our apologies if we have made mistakes
- Learn from our mistakes so we don't repeat them
- Make complaining to us easy and straight forward

Empty properties

We will re-let our empty properties within 28 working days on average depending upon our leaflet standards.

Neighbourhood Community/Development

Easy Housing Association provides a range of services to members of the communities in which we work actively seeking their involvement and responding to their priorities.

It is our full commitment to delivering and supporting activities and programmes that build the strengths of local people and the neighbourhoods which we work. We work with everyone building links with local community groups, voluntary agencies, local authorities, business, ad employers and training providers. Through our community regeneration work we aim to improve the physical social and economic condition of neighbourhoods and develop opportunities that respond to local needs.

Our work covers the following areas:

8. Safe and secure
9. Learning and skills development
10. Employability and employment
11. Getting involved
12. Environmental
13. General advice and guidance
14. Youth development

Financial Plan

The business plan assumes that efficiencies will continue to be made. We shall also work with our partners through their future Shape programmes to enhance the efficiency drive, and look to invest reserves to achieve further efficiencies.

Generating new business is important to the association and we aim to utilise our strengths in developing this area. A new business and grants director will be appointed who will be developing a new business strategy and three year new business plan to sit alongside this plan.

We have rigorous but flexible approach to financial management which enables resources to be diverted to where they are most needed. This backed by a solid control environment, working closely with both our internal and external auditors.

Easy Housing is targeting to:

- Acquire residential portfolios
- Manage residential portfolios on behalf of institutional and individual landlords
- Explore joint ventures to develop new homes of all tenures with other land owners
- Use its borrowing power at the competitive commercial lending rates uniquely available to RSLs- to fund residential development.
- Develop partnerships with local councils as both developer and landlord
- Structure the production of affordable housing so as to use the financial advantage of access to SHG and the association's tax status as a charitable body.
- Attract more external funding as a social enterprise

Strategic Plan for 2010-2013

BUSINESS PLAN 2010-2013

INTRODUCTION

A detailed review of our Business Plan for 2010-2013 has been undertaken and reported to Board in preparation for proposing this next year's plan.

There have been fundamental changes to our operating environment. However our work in the year to come continues the programmes set out in the three year Business Plan published in July 2007. This document identifies new initiatives or variations on those plans, reflecting innovation to:

- improve our performance
- reshape our business keeping at its heart the needs and aspirations of customers
- take advantage of new opportunities
- strengthen partnerships and raise our external profile

1. OUR VISION - Building Foundations for life

We invest all our wealth, creativity and talent in the challenge of providing more homes for the London City Region, and strive for excellence in the services we provide for all our customers. In our work we give special emphasis to:

- Involving local communities to shape how we operate
- quality and choice of services suited to our customers' needs

- thinking ahead and innovating to solve housing problems
- growing our own talent, inspiring and empowering our staff
- using the power of partnership for the benefit of our communities

1.1 Who we are and what we do

Easy Housing Association is a community based housing association, the founder and largest member of the Network Housing Group.

We build homes and contribute to the development of successful mixed tenure, mixed use communities. Our core business is providing more:

- affordable homes to rent
- low cost shared ownership
- specialist supported housing
- temporary accommodation for homeless households

We are one of a diminishing number of housing associations working in partnership with local authorities; managing high quality self contained settled accommodation for people awaiting permanent rehousing as a result of homelessness.

As an adjunct to our core business, to achieve a good mix of housing tenure and land use in neighbourhoods, we develop and manage commercial property and some homes for sale.

Our mission

Customers come first at Easy Housing Association. We provide quality homes and make sure they are better places to live in by delivering services that customers want and by building and supporting communities. We continue to expand our business so that we can make more of a difference. We use experience and innovation to make things happen.

Our values

At Genesis we;

- Put our customers first;
- Work together and value everyone's contribution;
- Treat people as individuals, with integrity and respect;
- Focus on getting positive results;
- Try new ways of doing things to get better at what we do;
- Make efficient use of our resources.

Objective

- Deliver the new homes build programme and achieve similar or higher level

programmes year-on-year.

- Expand programme of outright sale.
- Provide new and flexible home ownership and equity stakes options as part of Your Place.
- Achieve quality standards in all new homes built.
- Expand private lettings operation.
- Win new large-scale regeneration projects.
- Win new housing management contracts with existing and new partners both in the local authority and private residential sectors.
- Expand the provision of supported housing and support services.
- Further develop new products such as market rented lettings and management services to private landlords.
- Win large-scale stock transfers, subject to consideration of impact on financial capacity.
- Actively seek in a structured way new mergers and alliances with other RSLs.
- Implement strategic investment decisions by evaluating returns on various asset types.
- Review covenants with lenders.
- Expand and enhance relationships with local authorities in new and existing areas.
- Achievement of programme take-up and increased allocations for mixed programme. From 2007.
- Achievement of target for outright sale developments.
- Improvement in levels of customer satisfaction in new homes surveys. From 2007.
- Maintenance of clients' construction charter status through continuous improvement measures.
- Success in meeting targets for selling homes for shared ownership and outright sale. From 2006.
- Success in winning new regeneration, contract management and stock transfer schemes. From 2007.
- Integration achieved April 2007. Two new supported housing scheme approvals, 2007/8.
- Establish sustainable market rented lettings business. Launch 2006, sustainability established March 2008.
- Success in attracting new RSLs to join the Group. From 2007.
- Strong relationships deliver success in Genesis winning new business.
- Joint commissioning and preferred partner status achieved with new and existing local authorities.
- Projects meet or exceed target criteria including yield, internal rate of return, net present value & profit margins.
- Improved terms.

- • Improved covenants negotiated. From 20

Objective

- Deliver the comprehensive Value for Money strategy.
- Continue programme of VfM reviews.
- Complete and implement recommendations from the following VfM reviews:
 - > agency & consultants
 - > cross-cutting
 - > staff unit costs
 - > office accommodation
 - > legal services
 - > contact centre
 - > development
- Review production and monitoring of KPIs and achieve improvement in KPI outcomes.
- Carry through final stages of integration of Springboard central services into the Group.
- Merger of financial and housing management IT systems.
- Implement agreed measures to achieve high levels of integration and consistency across subsidiaries and establish Group-wide programme of continuous improvement reviews.
- Development of a centralised procurement resource, reviewing the feasibility of procuring all goods and services centrally, led by a new Head of Procurement.
- Deliver Genesis wide asset management strategies through a new Head of Asset Management and implement value for money based stock investment decisions.
- Continue to embed a VfM culture throughout all parts of the business and at all levels.
- Reduce interest costs through GenFinance to minimise borrowing costs.
- Generate returns through investment portfolios.
- Explore income generating ventures.
- Deliver the year-on-year efficiency gains as indicated in the AES.
- Deliver the VfM action plan.
- Each business area delivers planned efficiency savings.
- Implement recommendations following VfM reviews leading to reduced unit costs.
- VfM reviews deliver identified targeted savings.
- Increased levels of customer satisfaction as measured by surveys. From 2006.
- Staff integrated as part of finance and IT teams.
- Efficiencies achieved through streamlining and eradicating duplication from merged systems.
- Resources from efficiency savings are invested in enhanced services and community investment activities. From 2006.
- Streamlined and efficient procurement processes implemented delivering cost savings.
- Stock investment decisions reflect best use of assets.
- All individuals and teams operate according to strong VfM principles

- Reduced cost of funds.
- Track performance of joint vehicles.

Delivering

Objective

- Build up leadership capacity through further development of the leadership programme.
- Implement workforce, HR and learning and development strategies to ensure that Genesis can recruit a highly skilled, diverse and motivated workforce, including the provision of career development opportunities.
- Continue to develop and promote a reward package to support the retention of a high performing workforce.
- Build the role of the staff consultative group Genesis Forum and support the role of staff representatives to enhance staff engagement across the Group.
- Develop and deliver an action plan arising from results of the staff survey to ensure issues that matter to our staff are addressed.
- Develop new and more frequent methods of gauging staff opinion through surveys.
- Consult, design and implement disability, gender and race equality schemes for the Group. Take action to redress any identified pay gaps and achieve a workforce that reflects the communities we work in.
- Staff turnover is reduced. From 2006.
- Greater accountability and ownership is demonstrated by improved performance management and KPI performance.
- Staff well-being is promoted and sickness absence rates reduced. From 2006.
- Programme of awareness raising and education about health issues in place.
- Vacant posts attract larger numbers of quality applicants. From 2006.
- Levels of staff satisfaction as measured in surveys improve and achieve top quartile among G15. 2007.
- Implement staff survey action plan.
- Implement attendance strategy.
- Workforce profile reflects diverse communities
 - including at management levels.
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- Easy Housing staff have robust and targeted learning and development plans with clear business outcomes.
-