

		Customer Service & Complaints Policy					
		Doc No: P006					
Version No	Title	Author	Draft Date	Approved By	Approval Date	Live Date	Review Date
2	Customer Service & Complaints Policy	P Latham	Feb 2025	Board	Feb 2025	Feb 2025	Feb 2028

1. Introduction

This policy seeks to set out Eldonian Community Based Housing Association's (ECBHA's) policy positions regarding all areas of its customer services, standards and our response to put things right when things go wrong.

This policy sets out how ECBHA intends to comply with the relevant legislation and regulatory requirements and guidance.

ECBHA seeks to be transparent with all stakeholders regarding its performance, compliance and assurance with this policy.

The policy is relevant to all ECBHA employees, residents, contractors and other person's or other stakeholders delivering or affected by activities and ECBHA homes and services.

2. Customer Promise, Service & Estates Standards

2.1 Policy Position

ECBHA will publish:

- A Customer Promise, this is a high level document that outlines the customer service standards that and all ECBHA residents and stakeholders can expect when receiving services and communications with the association.
- Defined Service Standards, more detailed specifications regarding standards of service that can be expected regarding particular topics, for example gardening and communal areas cleaning.

These will be reviewed annually based on the feedback from customers received through the year and emerging changes to the operating environment. Customers will be consulted regarding proposed changes and changes will be approved by the ECBHA Board.

The current Customer Promise can be found in Appendix A

The current Service Standards can be found in Appendix B

The current Estate Standards can be found in Appendix C

3. Complaints

3.1 Definitions

Compliments: We define a compliment as any feedback which tells us that we have provided a service well, or how helpful a member of staff (or another person acting on our behalf) has been.

Comments: We define a comment as an idea, suggestion, or opinion on how we can improve our services.

Complaints: Both the Housing Ombudsman and ECBHA define a complaint as: ‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.’ Such expressions of dissatisfaction may relate to:

- The standard or failure of a home or service.
- Action or lack of action in response to a request for service.
- Failure to follow an approved policy or procedure.
- Perceived poor attitude or performance of ECHBA staff or contractors.

What we don't define as a complaint:

While we don't make blanket exclusions and look at each situation individually, there are some things that we usually don't define as a complaint under the scope of this policy:

- A first-time request for service or advice or making initial contact to report a fault or defect. A service request is defined as a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.
- An initial request for an explanation of a decision made.
- A report about a neighbour dispute, anti-social behaviour, or harassment, these are covered by a separate Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. However complaints can be made about of and how ECBHA has responded to ASB reports
- A query about organisational policy.
- Where the matter being complained about is or has been the subject of legal proceedings. Legal proceedings are defined as a claim which has been issued in a Court.
- This policy does not deal with contractual disputes.
- A complaint about services provided or decisions taken by another organisation, over which ECHBA has no control.
- Attempts to have a complaint reopened and/or reconsidered which has already been through our complaints process and where a final decision has been reached.
- Negative feedback and dissatisfaction expressed through a survey.
- A complaint about something that has occurred over twelve months previously and has not previously been raised with the association.

- A complaint about something that the complainant has been aware of for over twelve months but has not previously been raised with the association.

If we consider a topic to not be within the scope of this Complaints Policy, we will write to the individual explaining our reasons for this decision and outline that they can raise this with the Housing Ombudsman if they don't agree with the decision.

3.2 Policy Position

ECBHA committed to delivering high quality services. However, we recognise that having a clear and accessible approach to complaints and feedback is essential to ensure that, on occasions when things go wrong, that the organisation put things right and learns lessons accordingly.

We aim to ensure that we:

- Provide accessible methods for residents and the wider public to raise complaints and other feedback.
- Record and acknowledge complaints and feedback and be clear about our intentions.
- Investigate complaints swiftly, fairly, thoroughly and appropriately.
- Recognise when things have gone wrong and apologise for errors and failures.
- Take action to put things right and agree appropriate redress.
- Ensure those providing complaints and feedback are kept informed.
- Learn from complaints and feedback to both prevent repeat occurrences and inform wider strategic and operational development.
- Provide ongoing training to staff, Respond to, record and monitor complaints and feedback in compliance with legal and regulatory requirements including compliance with The Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code 2024.

We will listen to and take seriously any complaints made about members of staff, which may include attitude, behaviour, misconduct, discrimination, or criminal activity. Such complaints will be investigated under separate management policies and procedures. In some cases, we may not be able to provide detailed feedback about action taken against a member of staff. However, we will attempt to provide as much information as possible following any investigation.

We will not normally investigate complaints over matters that occurred in excess of twelve months old, unless there are exceptional circumstances (for example: if the customer has been ill, hospitalised or requires additional support or advocacy services to help them make a complaint). We will always consider each case on an individual basis. If a complaint is about a health and safety or safeguarding issue, we will investigate these, regardless of the 12-month limit.

An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.

ECBHA seeks to be a customer focused organisation, however when things go wrong, we commit to the following general policy commitments:

- Complaints, compliments, and comments are welcomed and seen as a way of gaining valuable insight into the services we offer.
- We want to know where a home or service may have fallen short of expectations so that we can put things right.
- We will listen to our customers, treat them with respect and work hard to get the right outcome for them and the organisation.
- We are committed to fairness and equality for all and aim to have a flexible, open, and transparent approach to customer feedback.
- To offer assistance and support to enable those customers who do not feel able, for whatever reason, to make a complaint themselves.
- ECBHA makes no differentiation between ‘informal’ and ‘formal’ complaints. All complaints will be processed in the same manner.
- All staff will be aware of the complaints policy and be able to receive a complaint and pass it to staff with specific complaints handling responsibilities.
- On occasion it can be unclear if an individual is reporting a complaint. The word compliant doesn’t necessarily need to be used, however staff are empowered to seek clarification if an individual wishes for a matter to be considered a complaint.
- ECBHA, doesn’t want its complaints process to be cumbersome, therefore it has only two internal stages, the initial complaints response and the opportunity to appeal. For clarity, a complaint acknowledgment or request for clarification is not consider an initial or appeal response.
- If an individual is not satisfied with a complaints appeal response, in most circumstances there will be an opportunity for them to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman. ECBHA will fully cooperate with the Housing Ombudsman.
- We will monitor the satisfaction with complaints and report both internally and externally as agreed and required. We will not see the volume of complaints as a negative or positive, however we will periodically check with residents that they are aware of the complaints procedure and how they can use it.
- If at any point ECBHA is not complying or is at risk of not complying with the Housing Ombudsman Code, we will ensure that the Ombudsman and the ECBHA Board are promptly notified of such non-compliance.

3.3 ECHBA Principles ‘Making it Right’. All ECHBA staff and contractors will adopt and embrace the following guiding principles:

- We will have a positive approach to all customer feedback and ensure it is welcomed. All expressions of dissatisfaction will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately and in confidence.
- We will be responsive, approachable, and helpful at all stages of the complaint’s procedure. We want individuals to have a fair opportunity to have their complaint heard.
- No customer will suffer any disadvantage as a result of making a complaint.
- We are committed to making it easy for customers and other stakeholders to provide feedback – positive or negative – and will use this opportunity to learn about our strengths and understand our weaknesses and improve.
- We will be flexible in our approach and help our customers through the complaints process in a way that works best for them.
- We will take ownership of a complaint, act quickly to identify the problem and put it right straight away. Our focus is always on resolving issues at the first stage wherever

possible. We will be mindful to Housing Ombudsman guidance regarding remedying complaints are appropriate.

- When a complaint is received, ECBHA will be conscious of potential conflicts of interests, both of the individual making the complaint and any staff or third parties that implicated within it. If any conflicts are suspected, the Chief Operating Officer will provide a close oversight. If the Chief Operating Officer has a potential conflict, the complaint will be overseen by a different member of the Leadership Team.
- The complaint handler will be able to act sensitively and fairly and have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes quickly and fairly, having access to staff at all levels to facilitate quick resolution of complaints. Telephone contact should always be our first channel of response to our customer unless the customer has stipulated differently.
- We will keep individuals informed throughout the complaints process and where the issue is complex and requires further investigation or review, we will respond within agreed timescales. We recognise that quality as well as time is important.
- If a complaint involves contractors and/or third parties' complainants will not be asked to follow separate or concurrent complaints policies and procedures. A complaint received by ECBHA regarding a contractor will be responded to by ECBHA.
- We will keep clear, transparent, and accurate records and can account for the decisions we have made. Complaints will be logged on the housing management system.
- We will have clear service standards and simple and accessible procedures to support this policy, so that customers know what to expect. We will involve our customers in reviewing processes to make sure they are inclusive and fit for purpose.
- When responding to complaints, we will provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.
- We will ask customers how satisfied they were with how we handled their complaint and how satisfied they are with the solution and use this data to learn and make necessary improvements.
- We will monitor all comments, compliments and complaints received and provide feedback to customers about how we will use this information to improve our services.
- We will ensure that this policy and the ECBHA self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman code will be made available and accessible to our customers via website, in the residents newsletter, training and as part of our regular correspondence with our customers. Hard copies will be made available on request.

Anyone who receives or requests a service from ECHBA or is affected by a decision or action taken by ECHBA or is an advocate of such a person. These may include:

- Tenants and members of their households.
- Leaseholders and shared owners.
- Housing applicants.
- Representatives of complainants such as friends, with their written permission.
- Agreed and authorised representative and/or advocates.
- MP's and elected officials.
- Former tenants.
- Parents/Carers.
- Stakeholder.

ECBHA recognises the benefits of working with external agencies, which can provide a complainant with greater support tailored to their individual needs can be beneficial in ensuring fair access to the complaints service.

We are happy to receive customer feedback in a variety of ways and formats to ensure fair access to all customers, including:

- By phone
- In writing
- By e-mail
- In person
- Via the ECBHA's website and resident portal.

ECBHA has a limited social media presence that is for the sharing of information only, therefore the organisation does not interact regarding complaints via social media.

3.4 Anonymous Complaints: It is good practice to investigate all complaints even if the source of the complaint is unknown. Therefore, anonymous complaints will be recorded, along with details of any actions taken.

3.5 Additional Complaints During Investigations: Where a resident raises additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related, and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued and the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues will be logged as a new complaint.

3.6 Housing Ombudsman: The Housing Ombudsman Service offers free, impartial, and independent advice for the resolution of unresolved disputes between landlords and tenants. Complainants can escalate the matter to the Ombudsman service once they have exhausted this policy or if ECBHA has not reasonably complied with this policy and/or its associated procedures.

As per the definitions section of this policy, in some instances ECBHA may consider a matter raised to be outside the scope of the Complaints Policy. When this occurs, the individual has the right for this to be considered by the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman instructs ECBHA to progress a matter as a complaint then it will abide by this instruction.

A small number of situations would instead be referred to different Ombudsman type schemes for further redress. Where we believe this to be applicable, we will make you aware in our response letters.

3.7 Unreasonable Behaviour: Separate ECBHA policy positions regarding, 'Managing Unreasonable Behaviour' is in place, relating to those relatively few customers whose actions or behaviour we consider unreasonable whilst making their complaint. In addressing unreasonable behaviour and requests, ECBHA will be mindful of known vulnerabilities of the individual and its responsibilities under equalities legislation.

3.8 Complaints Handling Responsibilities: All staff must be willing to and be aware of how to receive a complaint from residents and other parties. The ECBHA Housing Officers have a

designated responsibility for the day-to-day progression of complaints cases. Their actions are overseen by the Chief Operating Officer who is also designated Complaints Officer contact with the Housing Ombudsman. Housing Officers and the Chief Operating Officer are all empowered to take actions to resolve complaints promptly within the provision of the organisations Standing Orders and associated schedules of delegations.

The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for ensuring that responses to complaints at stage 1 and stage 2 are different members of staff.

The Housing Ombudsman Code requires a member of the governing body (or equivalent) be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC'). For ECBHA this role is undertaken by the Chair on the Board. The MRC is responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance.

If the Housing Ombudsman carries out an investigation, the outcomes will be reported to the Board and residents as appropriate. In such instances the Ombudsman may request the self-assessment against the code be reviewed, ECBHA will comply with any such requests.

3.9 Stages to our Complaints Process

ECBHA follows a two staged complaints management process.

Stage 1 – Initial Response

One of our designated complaints handlers will make contact within 5 working days of first raising your complaint to discuss this with you. Will also explain what will happen next. If there is a straightforward answer, we will aim to provide a resolution there and then.

We will acknowledge your complaint in writing, confirming our understanding of your complaint and the outcome you are seeking to put things right. We will also let you know who your point of contact will be and provide you with a complaint reference number.

We will then investigate your concerns and agree the actions we can take to put things right. We will respond in writing within 10 working days from acknowledging your complaint. Our written decision will explain the outcome of the investigation, how ECBHA intends to resolve the complaint and the timescales for doing so.

Stage 2 – Appeal

Our aim is to work with you to resolve all complaints at stage 1, however if you are unhappy with all or part of our response, you can escalate your complaint to stage two of our complaints procedure for a final response. You may want to provide further information about your complaint; however, you are not required to do so.

We will acknowledge your escalation to stage 2 within 5 working days of first raising this with us. Your complaint will then be reviewed independently by a member of our Leadership Team who will respond in writing within 20 working days with our final response.

Housing Ombudsman Service

The best way to get your complaint resolved is by talking to us. However, you can also contact the Housing Ombudsman Service for help and advice at any time.

If you have exhausted our complaints process and remain unhappy with the outcome, you can refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service, and they will consider investigating it for you. Their service is free independent and impartial.

Extension of Time

If we cannot respond at Stage 1 and/or Stage 2 within the target timescale we will contact you to ensure you are aware of the contact handling your complaint, we will explain why there is a delay and seek to agree with you a different timescale. If we cannot agree with you a reasonable extension of time we will outline the extension of time that we are applying and why in writing. An extension of time will only exceed an additional 10 working days in very exceptional circumstances. If we request an extension of time and you do not think this is reasonable, you can raise this with The Housing Ombudsman Service.

Follow on Actions

When we respond to a complaint, this may not mean that all matters that need to be addressed are concluded. Follow on actions may be needed. When this happens, we will outline what still needs to happen, when it is anticipated to be completed and how we will let you know that these follow-on actions have been concluded.

You can contact the Ombudsman directly on:

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

4. Compensation

4.1 Policy Position

As part of our commitment to customer care, we will pay compensation in the circumstances explained in this policy. The Association aims to meet the challenging performance targets it has set. However, sometimes the standards are not met, and this could cause inconvenience to residents or even result in financial loss.

Any of the following can claim compensation:

- Tenants
- Leaseholders
- Applicants for housing (missed appointments)

Representatives acting on behalf of any of the above Residents claiming compensation still have a legal right to seek redress from ECBHA where this is appropriate. However, residents should always ensure they have a suitable insurance policy to cover their own property and contents.

Compensation will be considered when:

- We have not delivered our services as per our policies e.g., repairs are not completed with-in agreed timescales.
- A home or part of a home can not be used due to a poor repair or lack of repair.
- We have not adhered to tenancy or lease agreements.

Any reported fall in standard in the delivery of grounds maintenance and communal cleaning will be dealt with promptly by Eldonian staff in accordance with the agreed service contracts, default charges and determinations. Should the service not improve then the association is liable to pay compensation. The relevant contractor will then be recharged for the full charge of the compensation.

The association is not responsible for situations which have been caused by the resident, or non-performance of external agencies which are beyond our control.

The amount of compensation will depend upon what is being claimed for:

- **Breakdown or loss of service:** Where a service or facility is not being provided e.g., the communal heating has broken down, the service charge policy allows for a refund of the overpaid services at the end of each accounting period.
- **The property or part of the property cannot be used:** If the property is rendered uninhabitable, we will assess if there is a need to pay compensation in exceptional cases whilst the works are being complete. Where a room cannot be used this would not usually be deemed an issue for the payment of compensation.
- **Overdue repairs:** If emergency and urgent repairs are not completed within the time stated we will pay £10 in compensation, plus £2 per day for each day the repair remains overdue up to a maximum of £50. This money is paid because of poor service and should cover the cost of phone calls to the office.

Evidence of any charges incurred should be reviewed before compensation is awarded.

We cannot pay compensation when:

- Contractors cannot get into the property home.
- Contractors cannot obtain spare parts and have kept the resident informed.
- Extra work is required, and the contractor has kept the resident informed.
- The service or facility is unavailable due to severe weather conditions or vandalism. This applies particularly to lifts and door entry systems.
- There is a Possession Order or Suspended Possession Order against the tenant.
- There are arrears on the claimants rent account.

Exceptional circumstances: The association acknowledges that the loss of some services may cause considerable inconvenience and distress for residents. In such cases (e.g., breakdown of carline links, or a lift beyond our published response times) the Association will use discretion to decide whether additional compensation may be payable. In such cases, the weekly service charge (per element), or rent may be reimbursed partially or in full for a complete week (Monday Sunday) that the item has been unavailable.

Where there is evidence that an ECBHA employee failed to keep an agreed appointment without giving 24 hours' notice of cancellation, compensation of £10 will be paid. If unforeseen

circumstances prevented the appointment from being kept e.g., severe weather conditions, or staff sickness, then compensation is not payable.

Other circumstances: There may be other circumstances where ECBHA has caused financial loss or inconvenience to the tenant and will consider paying compensation. There must be evidence to support such a claim.

The Housing Officer will investigate your claim and submit a proposal to the Chief Operating Officer to approve compensation to be paid, if any.

Case Handling: All complaints are logged, so we would expect the resident to contact us to confirm any request for compensation. This can be done in the usual ways, by phone, in writing, in person at any the office, or by e mail.

Where financial loss has been suffered, written evidence must be provided (e.g., invoices or quotes). All claims will be dealt with in accordance with our complaints and appeals policy.

All claims will be acknowledged as soon as possible. In line with our complaints procedure, a full reply detailing the Association's decision and the amount of compensation, if any, will be sent in writing.

If you are to receive compensation for the loss of a service or facility, then the amount will be credited to your rent or service charge account. You will receive a cheque for other kinds of compensation. If your rent account is in arrears, any compensation payment may in certain circumstances first be used to clear this debt. Any remaining sum will be paid to you.

5. Roles, Responsibilities & Reporting

The Board has overall responsibility for ensuring these policy positions are fully implemented to ensure full compliance with the regulatory standards, legislation, and codes of practice.

The Board will receive regular updates on the implementation of this policy through:

- The provision of key performance indicators and other relevant data on a quarterly basis.
- An annual self assessment against The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, including an analysis of ECBHA'S complaint handling performance of the policy.
- Any identified non-compliance with the policy being raised with the Board through the Chief Executive Officer's operational exception reporting.
- Periodic policy compliance assessment within the internal audit programme.
- Any service improvements made as a result of learning from complaints

The Chief Operations Officer is responsible for overseeing the operational implementation of this policy, supported by the wider ECBHA staff and leadership team.

Any non-compliance will be flagged by the Chief Operating Officer to the Chief Executive Officer in the first instance who will agree an appropriate course of corrective actions and necessary reporting and disclosures. Depending on severity and urgency this will be raised with the Chair

for approval and the full Board made aware within the operational exception reporting at the next Board meeting or sooner if necessary.

It is the responsibility of all staff to support the implementation of this policy.

6. Data Recording, Sharing and Protection

Requirements for data recording has been outlined within each topic area within this policy. Overall it is further highlighted that, in line with the ECBHA ICT & Data Strategy, the organisation seeks to record data within its housing management system, SDM in the first instance as a secure and consistent repository. For any documents that are not suitable for this location, a secondary secure location for records is provided within the ECBHA SharePoint. Both locations are subject to robust back up arrangements.

Delivery of this policy may require the sharing of data with third party contractors and agencies. Some of this data will include personal data regulated under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) provisions. Data sharing protocols will be put in place as necessary and appropriate consents sought and recorded to maintain compliance.

Data will only be shared for the purpose of delivering this policy and will only be retained inline with the National Housing Federation (NHF) data retention guidelines.

7. Monitoring & Review

We will monitor the performance of this policy and seek to identify areas for improvement. This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or sooner if required by statutory, regulatory, or best practice.

8. Equality Impact Assessment and Diversity

In implementing this policy, we will adhere to The Equality Act 2010, ensuring that the appropriate advice and assistance is given to those that are disadvantaged in anyway.

We aim to treat all customers fairly and equitably. An equality impact assessment has been carried out. Where customers require additional support, we will endeavour to provide a service that reasonably meet the needs of a particular individual or household.

Appendix A

ECBHA Customer Promise

The Association is committed to delivering a first-rate customer care experience and we promote clear values throughout our organisation. We conduct our affairs with honesty and integrity, and we want you, our customers, to feel satisfaction with the quality of your home, the neighbourhood you live in and the service you receive from us.

Key Principles:

- Communicate and provide information in ways that meet individual needs
- Manage enquiries, requests, and concerns promptly
- Provide accurate, relevant, and up to date information and advice
- Always maintain confidentiality

We Will...

- Treat everyone as an individual, with dignity and respect.
- Promote equal access to our full range of services.
- Provide translation and interpretation solutions where requested.
- Provide a wide range of methods to allow you to communicate with us.
- Provide accurate, relevant and up to date information and advice.
- Advise you of how we are performing and provide feedback on our policies and services.
- Keep any personal information secure and in accordance with data protection legislation.
- Operate a complaints procedure in line with the Ombudsman model policy.
- Provide a range of opportunities at different levels for customers to become involved.
- Consult with residents on a range of issues relevant to the management of their home and tenancy.
- Promote involvement in community initiatives.
- Carry out customer satisfaction surveys on the services we provide to residents.
- Carry out regular stock condition surveys to ensure the Association's properties.
- Have a planned maintenance programme in place.
- Look for cost-effective ways of achieving higher standards.
- Ensure that when allocating properties, they meet our published letting standards.
- Advise if any repairs you have requested are rechargeable.
- Allow you to identify a suitable time for the repair to be carried out, either morning or afternoon.
- Provide an out-of-hours service for emergency repairs.
- Not unreasonably refuse any request from residents for them to carry out alterations or improvements.
- Operate a right to compensation scheme for qualifying improvement works.
- Engage professional, competent maintenance contractors who adhere to our contractor's Code of Conduct to carry out your repair.
- Litter pick all common areas, including shrub bed areas of landscaping,

- Clean all common areas
- Carry out small joinery works and building & labouring works such as repairs to fencing, slabs, paths & graffiti removal as required.
- Have a zero tolerance to anti-social behaviour and will take action against any tenant who has been found guilty of anti-social offences.
- Ensure all neighbour nuisance and disputes are acted on and resolved quickly, in line with policy.
- Ensure all tenancy disputes are dealt with quickly and action taken against any tenant who is in breach of their tenancy conditions.
- Accept applications for housing and advise applicants of other opportunities for housing that exists, to maximise their ability to be housed or re-housed as required.
- Accept and consider all Mutual Exchange applications received.
- Accept and consider any Transfer Application from our existing tenants.
- Provide advice and signposting for tenants who are elderly or disabled and may need their home adapted to cope with age, disability, or caring responsibilities.
- Refer tenants to external agencies for specialist support and assistance if tenants require it.
- Ensure that our rents are affordable and value for money by benchmarking our charges against those of other landlords within our peer group.
- Consider affordability each year when setting new rents and any increases will be assessed to ensure we meet the costs of the repairs, planned maintenance and services which we provide.
- Ensure that details of any increase or decrease in rents and service charges are sent to tenants at least 28 days before they come into effect.
- Review the service charges with the actual costs of the services and make any adjustment up or down, depending on the outcome of the review.
- Manage arrears properly and effectively and ensure we continue to set challenging targets for rent collection.
- Ensure we provide a wide-ranging choice of methods for paying rents and take advantage of new technology to enable access to rent payment channels 24/7.
- Provide and signpost access to welfare rights advice.

In return we ask that you...

- Treat our staff with courtesy, respect, and dignity.
- Tell us about any help you may need to access our services.
- Contact us if you need help to understand any information, we send you.
- Give us your views and suggestions to help us improve our services.
- Carry out any internal decoration/minor repairs that are your responsibility.
- Ask our permission before making any alterations or improvements to your home.
- Take pride in your area and pick up your litter and dog fouling at all times.
- Maintain your garden and area around your home to a clean and tidy standard.
- Be considerate and reasonable towards your neighbours and make sure family and visitors do the same.

- Tell us if you have any concerns about the estate management service or antisocial behaviour service. Call the Police where appropriate and keep us up to date with what is happening
- Offer advice and signposting to vulnerable tenants and those who are at risk of losing their tenancy and provide assistance to sustain their tenancies.
- Talk to us to identify your rehousing options.
- Keep us informed of any changes to your circumstances.
- Act on advice and signposting to services and other organisations that can assist you to sustain your tenancy.
- Pay your rent in advance
- Let us know immediately if you have any difficulty paying your rent.

Our contractors will...

- Confirm their identity before entering your home.
- Comply with health and safety legislation and relevant codes of practice.
- Respect your home and culture.
- Be polite and helpful.
- Identify if you are satisfied with the quality of repair before they leave your property.

In return we ask that you...

- Cooperate with us in arranging a suitable time for staff and/or external contractors to access your property.
- Keep any appointments that you have with us or let us know in advance if you need to reschedule.
- Report any repairs or maintenance issues as soon as you become aware of them.

The Association's Equal Opportunity and Diversity policy outlines our commitment to promote a zero-tolerance approach to unfair treatment or discrimination to any person or group of persons, particularly based on any of the protected characteristics. This includes ensuring that everyone has equal access to information and services.

Appendix B

ECBHA CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

At ECBHA we are committed to maintaining customers' homes, communal spaces and neighbourhoods and we want to ensure that all customers receive a high standard of customer service all of the time.

We also really value customer feedback. We see this as essential in helping us to improve our service delivery and in meeting our customer's needs. Our Customer Promise sets out the standard of service customers can expect and reflects our commitment to delivering these services.

Our Service Standards:

OUR CUSTOMERS:

At ECBHA we have around 1000 residents whom are at the heart of everything we do.

COMMUNICATION:

We provide a range of ways for customers to access our services and get in touch. You can contact us via: Telephone, Email, In Person at the ECBHA Office contact, Website, In writing, Via our Self Service Residents Portal.

OPENING HOURS:

Our Offices are generally open 8.30am – 5pm Monday to Friday, with occasional closures due to situations such as staff training and events.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US:

If you contact us by telephone we aim answer your call within 60 seconds and provide an optional ring back service during busy periods.

If you contact us via email, or our website we will: Respond to your message within three working days.

Seek to resolve 80% of customer enquiries first time.

If we cannot resolve your query we will seek to resolve this as quickly as possible, keeping you updated on progress.

Occasionally we may need to meet with you face-to-face. If we do, we will agree a suitable appointment date and time, wear an ID badge and let you know who is helping resolve your query, leave a card if you are not in, asking you to make further contact with us.

We will aim to listen to you and be positive, helpful and professional, be open, honest and transparent.

Appendix C

ECBHA ESTATE SERVICE STANDARDS

Our Estate Service Promises:

- We promise to send you a service charge statement each year. These will detail costs for any communal services.
- We promise to send you the communal gardening and cleaning schedule if requested.
- We promise to publicise the dates and times of estate inspections on the Eldonian Homes website - You are welcome to attend.
- We will support tenant inspectors will carry out spot checks on the quality of cleaning and gardening services.
- If we are unable to keep an appointment, we will contact you and make alternative arrangements.
- We will aim to complete 80% of repairs on the first appointment.
- We will send a confirmation text, call or letter for all appointments.
- We will make every effort to ensure that we diagnose all repair requests correctly to ensure the correct tradesperson arrives.
- We will ensure customers are not left without cooking, heating or washing facilities whilst work is being completed.
- We will write to you with confirmation that your home is on the planned works programme and explain who will contact you in relation to the works.