

Housing Services

Service Standards



Our Promises To You

What you can expect from us....

We want you to be happy with the services that we provide.

To help us achieve this we have worked with tenants to find out what you would like us to do, and how you would like to be treated.

We've looked at key areas within Housing Services, and agreed standards so that you know what service you can expect from us.

This booklet explains our service standards. Please use the information in the booklet to make sure that these standards are being met. If you think we are not keeping our promise to you, let us know by contacting us on 01922 614505, or email webmaster@caldmorehousing.co.uk.

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Customer Care

We want you to be satisfied with the service you receive, and know what service you should receive, every time you contact us.

We aim to:

- Answer the phone within 30 seconds.
- Provide our name when responding to your enquiry.
- Resolve your enquiry at the first point of contact, or provide you with the details of who can help.
- Communicate in plain language.
- Provide interpreting and translation services as required.
- Provide facilities for customers with hearing and sight impairment.
- Make sure our office is accessible, tidy, clean and safe.
- Display the office opening times and adhere to them.
- Make sure that if the person you wish to speak to is not available, we will take a message and request that they call you back within one working day, or advise you of any expected delays.
- Provide comment cards for your feedback/suggestions.
- Return your call within one working day if you have left a message.
- Provide facilities so you can be seen in private.
- See you within ten minutes at our service enquiry point.
- See you within fifteen minutes of an appointment time, but if we cannot we will explain why and let you know when you will be seen.
- Reply to letters, faxes, and emails within five working days.
- Inform you within five days if we are unable to resolve your enquiry within the agreed timescale, and to provide you with the new timescale.
- Involve our customers in any decision with regards to customer care standards.

- Publish our customer service standards and our performance against them.
- Have well trained Officers that are polite, helpful and friendly.
- Adhere to the Associations policy on dealing with complaints.
- Wear a name badge when we're in the Office or in the reception area.
- Let you know immediately if your appointment has been changed.
- Not discriminate against customers due to age, disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or religion.
- Provide you with access to a internet linked computer.
- Keep a record of all request for access aids.
- Consult with you regularly on opening times.
- Keep a record of all customer who use the internet.
- Report to Committee on Customer Service performance.

We will monitor these standards by:

- Making it easy for you to make a complaint, comment, suggestion or compliment.
- Monitoring our complaints to ensure that we learn from them.
- Advising you of any changes that result from your feedback.
- Publicising our standards so that customers are aware of the service they should receive.
- Monitoring and providing performance information against standards.
- Training and supporting our staff in customer care.
- Using customer surveys to regularly gather customer feedback, and publicise the findings to our customers.
- Carrying out a reception survey so that we can get your views of the service that you have received.
- Keeping a record of all customers who use the internet.
- Inviting you to comment on our service through the Caldmore Tenant Federation and Matrix inspectors.

Rent Arrears

We aim to provide a firm but fair approach for those tenants who fall behind with their rent. We will offer advice and assistance to tenants who cannot pay their rent and take firm action against those who will not pay their rent.

We aim to:

- Ensure rent accounts are managed efficiently and in accordance with procedures.
- Have a complete understanding of different types of arrears and personal circumstances and the recovery methods appropriate to each case.
- Provide early advice and support to prevent arrears occurring or escalating.
- Inform you of the amount of rent and other charges you need to pay and how and when.
- Contact you as soon as your account falls into arrears.
- Provide advice and assistance if you have any worries about not being able to pay your rent.
- Help you make practical re-payment plans that fits in with your means, if you are unable to pay the debt in full.
- Assist you to claim any Housing Benefit you are entitled to and forward your claim to Walsall MBC.
- Liaise with Walsall MBC to ensure any out standing Housing Benefit is paid promptly.
- Provide welfare benefit advice to help you to maximise your income.
- Keep you informed at all stages of the arrears procedure giving you every opportunity to make payments.
- Communicate with you by phone, email, letter and home visits.
- Respond to enquires or complaints relating to your rent account within 3 working days.
- Take firm and decisive action against you if you default in line with our arrears procedure.

- Write to you using plain English making our letters easy to read and understand.
- Visit you to discuss matters in the privacy of your own home.
- Provide you with a rent statement on a quarterly basis.
- Provide you with a copy of your rent statement on demand.
- Listen sympathetically if you have financial and other problems.
- Refer you to Independent Money Advice Service for more specialist debt advice.
- Provide a variety of payment methods and information on where and how to pay your rent.

We will monitor these standards by:

- Monitoring and taking prompt action on any complaints.
- Measuring the number of home visits.
- Measuring Housing Officer Performance.
- Inviting you to comment on our service through the Caldmore Tenants Federation.
- Keeping a record of dates we send out statements.
- Monitoring number of cases entered into court.
- Monitoring number of evictions due to rent arrears.
- Monitoring number of referrals to Money Advice Project.

Lettings Allocation

Allocations of Caldmores properties are made in accordance with our Selection & Allocations Procedure. We also provide advice and assistance to offer you choice and to ensure you make the right decisions for you.

When dealing with your application we will:

- Provide you with Housing advice and inform you of your housing options.
- Offer a private interview room to discuss your housing options.
- Keep everything you say confidential at all times.
- Offer fair treatment to all service users inline with our Equal Opportunities Policy covering issues such as age, sex, race, disability and sexual orientation.
- Begin the process of the application within 2 working days of receiving the completed form.
- Call you in for an interview within 7 working days.
- If more information is required – you will be given 3 working days to provide the outstanding documents.
- Advise you in writing the outcome of our decision within 2 working days of your interview.
- Review our waiting list every 6 months.
- If you are already our tenant you will automatically be registered with Homeswap per.
- Assist you with your mutual exchange request within 5 working days.
- Have an appeal process if you feel we have unfairly assessed your housing need or not accepted you onto our waiting list.

When allocating properties we will:

- Start the process of letting from the moment we know it will become empty.
- Ensure that offers of accommodation are suitable to your needs.
- Make all offers in writing giving you 3 working days to make a decision.
- Arrange an accompanied viewing at the earliest possible time.
- Where properties are refused and following your letter of appeal, if your reasons for refusal are reasonable we will consider you for alternative accommodation.
- Carry out a pre-tenancy interview to establish any change in circumstances and offer welfare benefits advice.
- Keep you informed of when property will be ready for you to move in.
- Arrange sign up at a time that is suitable to you.
- Sign you up as a 'Starter Tenant' if you are a new tenant, explaining our tenancy conditions and providing information to support you to help you maintain your tenancy.
- Fully explain all terms and conditions of the tenancy.
- Explain our arrears procedure and how to prevent falling into rent arrears.
- Help complete a Housing benefit form if needed, verify all information and send completed form to the Civic Centre.
- Set up a payment agreement if you are responsible for paying your own rent.
- Work out your Housing Benefit entitlement if you are on low paid income.
- Offer you Floating Support if you require additional help.
- Provide you with a Welcome Pack giving you useful information about the services we offer.
- Arrange a new tenant home visit within 6 weeks of you moving in.
- Make sure our properties meet our let-table standards.
- Provide you with a copy of our let-table standards.

We will monitor these standards by:

- Analyzing the feedback from our tenant satisfaction surveys.
- Keeping a log of all new tenancy visits and follow up any concerns.
- Taking prompt action on complaints.
- Monitoring the number of mutual exchanges through Homeswapper reporting tools.
- Measuring our void turnaround.
- Monitoring reasons for refusing properties and take action if needed.
- Providing feedback to Board of Management or Caldmore Tenant Federation on performance.

Tenancy Support

We aim to provide a flexible service within a range of low to medium level of support to individuals who are vulnerable and living in general needs accommodation.

We aim to:

- Help you understand your rights and responsibilities as a tenant of Caldmore and support tenants who never held a tenancy.
- Give you advice and assistance with your rent rebate and maximise your income.
- Help you deal with neighbour disputes and issues involving neighbours.
- Help support both victims and perpetrators of disputes.
- Help in accessing other Support Services.
- Liaise with Support Services on your behalf.
- Arrange for adaptation work to be assessed and carried out where a member of your household has a disability.
- Help you sustain your tenancy.
- Work with tenants for whom communication barriers have created vulnerability.
- Give advice on emergency accommodation.
- Work in partnership with our Own Floating Support Services and any other Service in the area.
- Only contact other agencies with your permission unless someone's safety is at risk.
- Help you to find alternative accommodation if you want to move.
- Consult with you about any changes to your tenancy agreement or the service you receive from us.
- Attend case conferences with other external agencies to alleviate any hardship relating to your current accommodation.

We will monitor these standards by:

- Taking prompt action on any complaint.
- Monitoring reasons why tenants leave our properties.
- Monitoring number of referrals to Floating or other Support services.
- Keeping a record of all our vulnerable tenants and tenants who are at risk.
- Keeping a record of all starter tenancies and monitor reasons if any fail.

Leaseholder

Caldmore is committed to meeting its responsibilities to Leaseholders and Shared Ownership under the terms of their leases, and to providing you with quality services and management and maintenance of your home.

We aim to:

- Offer the same standards of customer care and the same performance standards to leaseholders and shared owners as to our general needs tenants.
- Provide you with accurate and timely information about the services you receive, the cost of those services and the amount due in service charge payments.
- Review your service charges and confirm if we need to adjust your payments in accordance with legislation.
- Consult in accordance with the requirement of legislation and on any proposed changes to policy or practice which will affect the management of their homes.
- Work towards the development of resident groups.
- Work with you to consider issues such as leaseholder satisfaction with the level and quality of services provided and the way in which charges are determined.
- Work with you to enhance the service we currently provide you.
- Make available to all prospective leaseholders who are in the process of purchasing a property, full and factual information relating to your rights and obligations before purchase.
- Collect all monies due from you under the terms of the leases.
- Consult you prior to carrying out major works at your Scheme.
- Work with Agencies with the aim to making the area around your home a better place to live.

We will monitor these standards by:

- Monitoring and taking action on any complaints.
- Monitoring the number of tenants groups set up.
- Having all accounts audited by Grant Thornton Auditors.
- Monitoring and set targets for debt collection.

Estates Service

We aim to be proactive in identifying potential problems in open space and communal (where we have open spaces) areas, we will check fire alarm systems each week and we will inspect communal sites and litter pick in these areas.

We aim to:

- Visit each communal site every 4 weeks and carry out an Estate inspection, at this estate inspection we will check the following:
- Visit each communal site every two weeks to carry out a litter pick, this will include internal and external.

- We will carry out a weekly alarm test usually carried out on a Monday, in the following properties:

Abandoned vehicles
Unauthorised parking
Drug waste sites
All balconies, stair wells and landings are clean.
Bin store area is clear of rubbish
Rubbish and a litter pick is being done
Any other issue that requires the inspectors attention.
Any anti social behaviour (ASB) that needs to be reported to the ASB officer.
Ground maintenance
Grass cutting
Trees
Floor
Damage to property
Roof
Any hazards
Communal door
Communal lighting
Pass on information to other agencies.

Head office
White Hart
Maryvale Court
Church/Ramsay
Holly House
Bentley New Drive
St Catherine Church
Mill court
Cottrell Court
Thornbrook/Lowernorth street
102 Pershouse street
Wollaston court
Newmore Gardens
Alma Street

- Assist Housing officers, customer services and Asset Management in changing locks to properties.
- Manage and administrate all fobs to communal entrance systems.
- Meet with contractors on site to encourage the easy running of works and access to various parts of the stock.

We will monitor these standards by:

- Monitoring the work standards by doing regular Health & Safety random visits, Carrying out a risk assessment
- Monitoring Estate Officers work to check the officer is adhering to the Fire alarm, estate inspection and litter picks by visiting with the estate Officer site on random, each fortnight.
- Inviting you to comment on our service through Caldmore Tenant Federation.
- Recording the estate inspections, both electronically and on hard copies which will include follow up action and regular nuisance issues which would form part of our strategic approach to these areas.
- Making complaints received from customers will become part of the assessment and possible change of practise, if favoured by customers

Anti-Social Behaviour

Managing Anti-Social Behaviour is more than just tackling ASB. Caldmore Housing association recognises the need to develop a service which is more about managing your community and providing services which cover the following areas.

We aim to:

- Take early action on tackling ASB before it gets serious.
- Keep customers up to date with details on your ASB case's on a fortnightly basis until the case is closed.
- Contact customers within one working day of any reports of category A, anti social behaviour and within 5 days for category B, anti-social behaviour .
- Provide an out of hours ASB hotline, which will allow customers to report ASB as it happens. Any calls logged out of the hours by this service will be followed up on the next working day.
- Review our ASB policy every three years. Our current policy statement is available on request.
- Where necessary use professional witnesses to gather sufficient evidence in order to tackle ASB in your area.
- Support customers in dealing with these issues we will provide you with guidance and support appropriate to your needs.
- Caldmore housing will interview all new tenants at the tenancy sign up stage to ensure that every family member understands the terms of tenancy.
- Where appropriate, adopt a sensitive lettings policy in order to assist in minimising potential ASB.
- Give all residents will have access to A-Z leaflet of support available in their local area, identifying agencies that can assist you in dealing with issues around ASB and support.

We will monitor these standards by:

- Always notifying you what is happening with your case.
- Always listening to what is being said and this will be checked through with you before we finish conversation.
- Checking cases on random to make sure procedures are being met.
- Monitoring the anti-social behaviour hotline to make sure information and case notes are sent to us within 24 hours of being reported.
- Making all information available in plain English and will provide translation or interpreting services on request.
- Always treating cases with discretion and confidentiality.
- Setting up four groups so that customers have a decision making role in how we deal with anti-social behaviour.

Consultation & Involvement

We will aim to involve and consult with all our customers, partners and stakeholders. Create new opportunities for involvement and good communication.

We aim to:

- Regularly ask our customers what they think of our services.
- Use this information to continually develop our service to meet the needs of our customers.
- Encourage and support tenant empowerment and involvement.
- Encourage the tenant representative at focus group meeting, Caldmore Tenants Federation, to monitor our services.
- Support and meet with all tenant groups to provide advice and help to make things happen.
- Have at least one board member who is also a tenant.
- Encourage tenants to participate and be involved with our Committee meetings.
- Keep tenants informed about what we are doing in variety of ways, including our local gossip magazine, annual report and website.
- Consult with tenants on changes that we are considering to their home, environment or the services we provide.
- Provide training for residents who have said they would like to be involved or which to develop their capacity.
- Keep a list of all those who have expressed an interest in getting involved.
the day and evenings

- Support tenant who wish to get involved by assisting with child care and travelling cost
- Be flexible with meeting venue during

We will monitor these standards by:

- Keeping minutes of all of the meetings we attend.
- Keeping a list of all board members.
- Keeping a record of all surveys and questionnaires we do.
- Keeping a record of service development involving tenants.
- Keeping copies of all information we produce.
- Keeping an up-to date list of all tenants involved.
- Keeping copies of constituted tenants groups.
- Keeping a record of all Good neighbour agreements.
- Keeping evidence of consultations.
- Keeping a record of all tenants who have attended training.

Landscaping

We will maintain and preserve the landscaped areas, where there is Caldmore housing land, keep areas looking tidy and remove waste when required or requested.

We aim to:

- On two separate programmes one for summer and winter carry out a scheduled programme.
- The programme will cover the following categories:
 - Grassed areas
 - Borders
 - Pruning & Trimming Trees
 - Hard surfaced areas
 - Drain grids/Channels
 - Gullies
 - Moss
- The operation duties to cover the above will include:
 - To mow the grass
 - Cut and trim edges, margins, corners
 - Rake cuttings, trimmings, fallen leaves,
 - clear storm damage
 - Dig over and remove all weeds
 - Clear general rubbish
 - Cut back Hedges & prune shrubs
 - Prune climbing shrubs to clear gutters
 - Prune trees to clear paved areas
 - Lopping dead branches
 - Swept & cleared off litter, rubbish, leaves, storm damage
 - Weeds removed
 - Apply weed killer.
- In addition to these duties, collect rubbish dumped in our communal areas, where we fail to source evidence of the perpetrator.
- Annually staff will take part in an Estates Day to work with partners and stakeholders to improve areas.
- Consult with tenants with a view to undertaking any environmental or major communal work on grounds.

- Support and meet with all tenant groups when requested to provide advice and help them to, undertake their own garden projects i.e. garden vegetable patches.
- Have regular risk assessments to make sure we are working safely in accordance with HSE regulations and protect us, members of the public and domestic animals.
- Encourage and meet with environmental targets i.e. the protection and encouragement of wildlife.
- Protect the public by safely removing needles and other harmful substances, in an appropriate manner.

We will monitor these standards by:

- Monitoring the work standards by doing regular Health & Safety random visits, Carrying out a risk assessment.
- Monitoring that landscape operatives are adhering to summer and winter programme of works, these schedules will be available to all members of the public, community groups and residents groups to help us assist with meeting these standards and assure good customer satisfaction. These will be carried out by the landscape supervisor and estate service manager.
- Recording missed appointments and keeping customers informed at all times.
- Displaying schedules of work, tenant magazine, website, notice boards blocks of flats.
- Asking tenant's to comment on the standard and quality of work through questionnaires and report to Committee on the performance of the team.

English

If you would like this publication in alternative languages or formats, please contact us on 01922 728 243.

Bengali

আপনি যদি এই প্রকাশনাটিকে অন্য ভাষাগুলিতে বা ফরম্যাটে পেতে চান, অনুগ্রহ করে, আমাদের সাথে 01922 728 243 নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

Gujarati

જો આપને આ પ્રકાશન અન્ય ભાષા અથવા પ્રકારમાં જોઈતું હોય તો કૃપા કરી 01922 728 243 નંબર પર અમારો સંપર્ક કરો.

Hindi

यदि आप यह प्रकाशन वैकल्पिक भाषाओं या प्रारूपों में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया हमसे 01922 728 243 पर संपर्क करें।

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਕਲਪਕ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਵੰਨਗੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ 01922 728 243 'ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Caldmore

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