

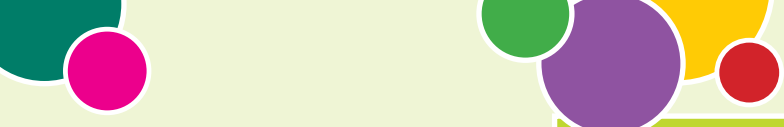


Taff

Housing Association

Customer Service Standards





Taff is committed to delivering high quality services that meet the needs of all our customers. To help us do this, we have developed the following Customer Service Standards with our customers and staff.

These standards will be applied to all customers, regardless of their background, beliefs, religion or customs, in line with our Equal Opportunities Policy.

Our Aim:

Every time we deal with any of our customers, we aim to provide them with the best service possible according to their needs, as quickly as we can.



General Principles

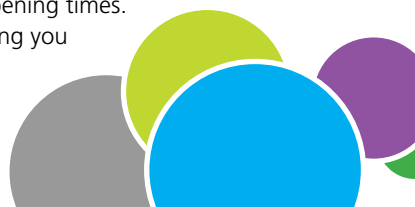
- We will always be polite and respect your beliefs, religion and customs.
- We will be flexible in the way we provide services to you so that we can take account of individual needs.
- If we cannot do something you ask, we will explain why and work with you to reach an alternative solution.
- We will always try to communicate with you in the way which suits you best.
- We will provide you with the name of the person who deals with your query.
- Our staff will be trained to deal with queries straight away so that we can provide you with a quick and accurate service.
- We will consult all our customers regularly to ensure we are aware of your priorities and so we can continually improve the services we offer.
- We will regularly monitor our services to ensure they meet our customers' needs.

Contact by Telephone

When dealing with calls from our customers, we will ensure that they can speak to someone who can answer their query as quickly as possible.

If we cannot answer your query straight away, we will explain why and will arrange for someone to contact you within 24 hours. If a specific person is not available, we will advise you when they will be able to speak to you and give you the opportunity to speak to someone else who can help.

We will provide an answerphone service outside our office opening times. If you leave a message asking us to return your call, we will ring you within 24 hours of the office opening (earlier if possible).



Letters/Email/Text

If requested, we will provide copies of documents intended for our customers, and any of our policies.

If appropriate, we can arrange for translated summaries of these documents to be provided in the language of your choice and/or in large print, Braille or other formats.

All our written documents and letters will be written as clearly as possible and we can offer other formats such as CD ROM or DVD, where appropriate.

We will ensure that we provide a reply to your letters, emails and texts within 10 working days (or sooner where possible). If we are not able to fully answer your query within 10 working days we will contact you to explain why and let you know when we can answer you more fully.

We will send out any forms or documents you need within two working days.

In The Office

Our reception area will be kept clean and tidy, and will remain open during lunch times.

If you find it difficult to communicate in English, we will always try to provide a member of staff who can communicate in the language of your choice.

If appropriate, we can also offer you the use of Language Line, a hearing loop or an interpreter if you require such assistance.

We will always try to have someone available who can answer your query when you come to the office. If this is not possible, we will contact you with an answer to your query as soon as we can or make an appointment for you to see someone who can answer you.

Home Visits

When we make an appointment to see you, we will always try to make it at a time that suits you.

If we do have an appointment, we will arrive on time and make every effort to deal with your query. If we are unable to call at an agreed time, we will contact you as soon as possible to re-arrange.

All our staff will carry ID badges which you can ask to see when they arrive.

Our Contractors

We have developed a code of conduct which our contractors must follow. This requires them to keep any appointments they have made and work as quickly and tidily as possible.

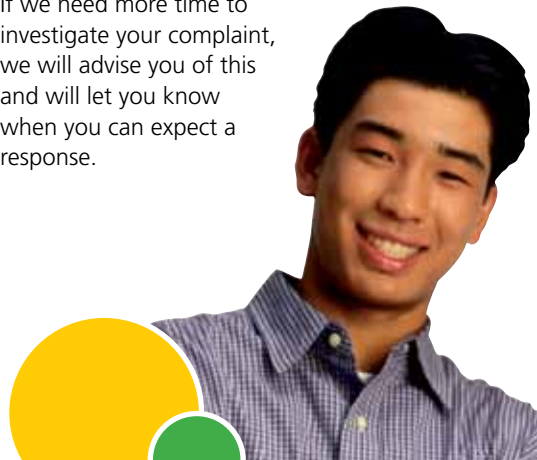
All our contractors will carry ID badges which you should ask to see when they arrive.

Our contractors will offer an 'out of hours' service for emergency repairs only.

Complaints

If you complain we will give you a response within 5 working days.

If we need more time to investigate your complaint, we will advise you of this and will let you know when you can expect a response.



Repairs

We will carry out repairs within the following times:

Emergencies – 24 hours

These are repairs where there are immediate health, safety and security risks to persons, or a risk of serious damage to property. The repair will be attended to and completed or made safe within 24 hours.

Urgent – 5 working days

These are repairs which seriously inconvenience tenants but do not cause danger.

Non-urgent repairs – 30 calendar days

These are serious defects which may cause damage to the building if not dealt with promptly but do not seriously inconvenience tenants.

Further details about timescales for repairs, and what priority your repair will fall into, can be found in Chapter 11 of 'Your Home'. If your repair is delayed for any reason we will let you know why. We will publish our performance on repairs annually.

You will be given the opportunity to give us feedback on every repair that you report by completing a satisfaction questionnaire.

Rent Collection Customer Service Standard

Taff Housing Association is committed to providing high quality services to our tenants and customers. This service standard tells you what level of service you can expect from us when we follow our rent collection procedure.

Before your tenancy

- When we offer you a property we will tell you how much we expect the weekly rent to be.
- When you accept a tenancy with us we will complete a financial health check with you explaining how much housing benefit you may be entitled to, and we will assist you to complete all housing benefit forms.
- If you have other debts or support needs we will refer you to the most appropriate agency that can assist you if it is not us.

During your tenancy

- We'll contact you within six weeks of your tenancy start date to check you have moved in and discuss any problems with your rent.
- We'll send you a rent statement every three months.
- We'll give you at least four weeks' notice of any rent increases.
- We will try to contact you either by letter, telephone or in person should your account fall into arrears.
- We will notify you if your Housing Benefit is suspended or cancelled.
- If you fall into arrears, we will work with you to make a realistic agreement so you can clear the debt within a reasonable time.
- If you are having difficulties paying your rent we will give help and advice or we will refer you to the most appropriate agency that can assist you if it is not us.
- We will assist you with any rent or benefit queries you may have in confidence.

- We will try to provide you with the most convenient ways in which you can pay your rent.
- We will make you aware of the action that we intend to take if you fall into arrears and we fail to reach an agreement for repayment.
- We consider eviction as a last resort and discuss this with you before taking legal action.

At the end of your tenancy

- If you give us notice that you intend to end your tenancy we will talk to you about what debts may be outstanding and what you will need to do to avoid any rechargeable debts.
- If you leave with debts outstanding we will try to contact you to agree a repayment plan.
- We will only undertake legal action if other attempts to reach an agreement with you fail.

Anti-social Behaviour Service Standards

Taff Housing Association is committed to providing high quality services to our tenants and customers. This service standard tells you what level of service you can expect from us in dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB).

When dealing with cases of ASB, our Housing Management Service will do the following:

- Respond to reports of ASB within the agreed timescales.
- Gather information and investigate complaints where possible.
- Take appropriate action to address cases.
- Work with appropriate partner agencies such as the police or social services.

- Offer support to both victims of nuisance and alleged perpetrators of nuisance.
- Monitor and close cases as required.
- Seek feedback on our case management.

Responding to reports of ASB

We group our responses into three categories so that we prioritise our work.

Category 1 –

Within 24 hrs (normal working day)

Cases involving:

- Racial harassment.
- Hate crime related ASB.
- Harassment related to race or hate crime.
- Damage to property that leaves you unable to occupy.
- Children being at risk.
- Physical assault.
- Any other form of ASB requiring a priority response.

Category 2 –

Within 3 working days

Cases involving:

- Drug dealing.
- Serious harassment or any other criminal behaviour.
- Criminal threats.
- Serious damage to property.
- Persistent noise nuisance.
- Disputes between neighbours.
- Intimidating or aggressive behaviour.
- Children creating a nuisance.
- Vandalism (relatively minor damage to property).
- Drug/solvent/alcohol abuse.
- Verbal/written harassment.
- Any other form of ASB requiring an urgent response.

Category 3 – Within 5 working days

Cases involving:

- Pet nuisance.
- Untidy gardens.
- Illegal rubbish dumping.
- Minor noise pollution.
- Access disputes.
- Litter.
- Property condition.
- Car repairs.
- Abandoned vehicles.
- Any other activity, which may be to the detriment of peaceful enjoyment of the home.

We will arrange a home or office appointment to interview the person who reported the incident. During the interview, we will complete an interview form and agree an **ACTION PLAN** with you, which will detail how we will address the behaviour.

We will also attempt to interview the person accused of causing the problem and any witnesses within **three working days** of our interview with the complainant.

We will carry out any emergency repairs needed due to anti-social behaviour within 24 hours of it being reported.

Racial Harassment and Hate Crime

If you report an incident of racial harassment or hate crime to us, we will provide you with advice, assistance and information about what to do. We will do this on receipt of your report.

We will arrange for you to see your Housing Officer within 24 hours of receiving your report.

During this appointment we will agree an action plan with you, which will detail how we will address the behaviour.

If appropriate, we will work with other agencies, such as the police, to assist us in addressing the problem.

We will carry out any emergency repairs needed due to the harassment within 24 hours of it being reported.

tel: 029 2025 9100 or email: info@taffhousing.co.uk

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