

Habinteg

Accessible homes. Independent lives.

Customer service standards

Your guide



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Introduction

Habinteg Housing Association is committed to providing accessible homes and services. We are passionate about customer care and want to continuously strive to improve our performance and the service we provide.

We value the diversity of our customers, recognising that you have varied needs and requirements. This means we aim to provide services that are accessible at times and in ways that suit your individual needs and requirements.

All our customers have the right to a friendly, non-judgemental and equitable standard of service.

Our Customer Service Standards are underpinned by key principles:

- To place our customers at the centre of everything we do.
- To enable each individual to thrive.
- Treat our customers with courtesy and respect.
- Continuously strive to improve our services.
- Listen to you, explain what we can do, and how long it may take.

At Habinteg our aim is to:

- Provide housing opportunities for disabled people, 'enabling each individual to thrive and contribute to successful communities and a truly inclusive society';
- This was our founding principle and remains so today.

Accessing services

We will ensure that our services are accessible and appropriate and that you are not disadvantaged or discriminated against because of your race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age or religion. We will ensure that we are flexible enough to provide services that meet the needs of our diverse customers.

Our customer services team, Habinteg Direct, are trained to deal with a wide range of enquiries and will try to provide you with the information you need or advise you without having to transfer you to someone else. However, if you wish to speak to someone else in any of our offices they can transfer you. We aim to:

- Answer the telephone within 11 seconds by a member of staff who will tell you their name.
- Use an answer phone or voice mail service only when absolutely necessary. We will always call you back if you ask us to.
- Acknowledge your letters and reply in full within 10 working days, if this is not possible we will let you know when you can expect a reply.
- Produce all our documents in clear language and offer versions in a range of accessible formats including other languages (where appropriate), large print, Braille or audio CD.
- Arrange a home visit if the matter is urgent such as serious anti-social behaviour or harassment.
- Make all our offices accessible, welcoming, clean tidy and safe.
- Publicly display scheme office opening hours. Head / Regional offices are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.
- Make arrangements for private and confidential interviews upon request.

Applying for a home

There are various ways to apply for a home from Habinteg. You may apply direct, be nominated by your local authority, bid via your local authority Choice Based Letting Service, internal transfer or mutual exchange. You can now apply online, view open waiting lists and browse our housing by region at www.habinteg.org.uk.

Direct from Habinteg you can:

- Request an application pack from Habinteg Direct or one of our local scheme offices.
- Download an application form or fill it in online.

Upon receipt of your completed application form we will:

- Tell you if your application has been accepted on to the waiting list and, if not, give you reasons why.
- Consider your application in accordance with our Allocations and Lettings Policy when a suitable property becomes available.

Your new home

Once you have accepted a new home we will:

- Provide you with your tenancy agreement, Tenant Handbook and sign up pack.
- Provide you with a Habinteg welcome pack.
- Ensure the property you move into is safe, clean, habitable and in good repair.

Leaving your home

If you decide to leave your home you must:

- Provide us with four weeks' notice in writing.
- Remove all rubbish, old carpets and furnishings.
- Ensure your home is clean, tidy and in good decorative order.

Paying your rent

You are responsible for paying your rent for your home in a timely manner. To assist you we will:

- Provide you with a variety of ways to pay your rent including, AllPay card, cheque, postal order, bank transfer, standing order, direct debit, 24 hour payment line and internet payment.
- Provide you with quarterly rent statements, these are also available upon request.
- Provide you with an annual service charge schedule showing a breakdown of your estate service costs.
- Notify you of any increases due by giving you a minimum of four weeks' notice.
- Make sure that any confirmed and agreed credits owing are refunded promptly.
- Notify you of any arrears of rent at an early stage, keep you fully informed on action being taken and come to a reasonable arrangement on how you will pay the arrears.

Taking care of your home

Your Habinteg Tenant Handbook informs you of your/our repair responsibilities. Where the responsibility for the repair is Habinteg's we will aim to:

- Complete it within 24 hours if it is an 'Emergency' repair.
- Complete it within 5 days if it is an 'Urgent' repair.
- Complete it within 20 days if it is a 'Routine' repair.
- Send you confirmation of the works order either by text or letter to tell you what work will be done to your home and by what date.
- Ask the contractor to contact you to make an appointment to carry out the work.
- Ensure our contractors keep to our 'Code of Conduct' and respect you and your home.

Habinteg's customer service standards

- Monitor how well contractors perform through repair satisfaction text and telephone surveys and by inspecting a proportion of all repairs that have been carried out.
- Carry out annual safety checks to your home.

Taking care of your community

We believe everyone has the right to live peacefully alongside his or her neighbours in an environment free from violence, harassment or discrimination. We aim to:

- Ensure all complaints of anti-social behaviour are treated seriously and impartially.
- Take prompt and appropriate action against anyone whose behaviour adversely affects the quality of your life or home.
- Ask for your co-operation and assistance to deal with anti-social behaviour effectively.
- Use a range of strategies and interventions to deal with anti- social behaviour and keep you informed of progress. Sometimes this process can seem to take a long time because of the legal requirements for gathering evidence from witnesses and waiting for court dates.
- Provide you with information about what you can expect from us in terms of dealing with anti-social behaviour.
- Work with other agencies, as appropriate, to help us to resolve problems and to provide you with support.
- Provide you with a copy of our anti-social behaviour guide upon request.

Taking care of your scheme

If you live on one of our schemes we will:

- Carry out an inspection of your scheme four times a year, we will prioritise remedial works as appropriate.
- Maintain the upkeep of communal areas to a standard agreed with you.
- Work with other agencies to make sure that your neighbourhood is a safe and pleasant place to live.

Adaptations to your home

If you require adaptations to your property to improve your safety or independence we may be able to help. We aim to:

- Fund and promptly carry out minor adaptations to your home.
- Assist you in obtaining a professional assessment by the Social Services Occupational Therapy Team.

Keeping you informed and involved

At Habinteg we are committed to tenant consultation and participation. You can get involved in a variety of ways to suit your preferences. To ensure we keep you informed and involved we will:

- Send you a newsletter every three months with information about us and the services we provide.
- Send you information annually about how we are performing.
- Offer to arrange at least one tenants' meeting a year on each scheme.
- Provide support to tenant representatives and help them to fulfil their role.
- Honour our commitments on tenant involvement set out in the tenant strategy, available upon request.
- Feed back to tenants especially after they have been involved in a meeting or service review.
- Offer places for tenant representatives on our board and committees.
- Provide funds for a tenant led improvement budget for each scheme, you can influence how this money is spent.

Are you satisfied?

We have a formal complaints and compliments procedure which explains how to make a complaint if you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the service we provide. We realise that sometimes things do go wrong and we will try to resolve the matter to your satisfaction.

We aim to:

- Provide a high quality service to all our tenants.
- Use complaints and other feedback to improve our services.

We also need to know when things have gone well so that we can understand our customers' expectations. If you have a compliment to make about our service or a particular member of staff, please contact Habinteg Direct, your local scheme office or write to us.

Contact details

To find out additional information please contact your local scheme office or Habinteg Direct.

Habinteg Direct

Telephone: 0300 365 3100 (call charges may vary depending on telephone provider)

Email: direct@habinteg.org.uk

Head office

Holyer House

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