

getting information

Customer Involvement

Blackpool Coastal Housing believes in access for all. To ensure the services provided by Blackpool Coastal Housing are accessible, information can be made available in a variety of formats and languages.

For more information about these services please telephone 01253 477900 or email enquiries@bch.co.uk



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W celu uzyskania szczegółowych informacji na temat świadczonych usług, proszę zadzwonić pod numer 01253 477900 lub wysłać e-mail na adres enquiries@bch.co.uk.



En Blackpool Coastal Housing creemos que la información debe estar al alcance de todos. Para asegurar que los servicios de Blackpool Coastal Housing son accesibles podemos ofrecer información en diversos formatos e idiomas.

Para saber más sobre estos servicios, póngase en contacto con nosotros en el teléfono 01253 477900 o por email enquiries@bch.co.uk



Blackpool Coastal Housing 公司相信每個人都有存取之權利。為確保您能使用 Blackpool Coastal Housing 公司的服務，資訊會以多種格式和語言提供。

有關這些服務的詳情資訊，請致電 01253 477900，或傳送電子郵件至 enquiries@bch.co.uk



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National Standards

In April 2010 the Tenant Services Authority introduced a new regulatory framework that included new National Standards that BCH must meet:

1. Tenant Involvement & Empowerment
2. Home
3. Tenancy
4. Neighbourhood and Community
5. Value for Money

Local Offers

Throughout 2010 BCH consulted a wide range of its customers to understand what their preferences and priorities are in relation to each of the National Standards. Following this in-depth consultation we have now created a series of 'Local Offers' that represent a shared vision for the level of services you can expect from BCH.

The Empowerment Local Offer is:

'To provide our customers with the skills, confidence and opportunity to influence and scrutinise BCH services at a level that suits them'

In order to deliver this Local Offer we will achieve:

- A new customer-led scrutiny structure that is; independent, formal and has authority
- A wide range of involvement activities that allows customers to influence all BCH services at a level and time that suits them
- A network of involved tenants that feel empowered to effect change
- A network of involved tenants that are confident and have the correct skills to participate effectively
- A network of involved tenants that accurately reflects our customer base
- Meetings that are well organised and promote an inclusive culture

We have made every effort to make sure the information in this document is correct. Blackpool Coastal Housing cannot accept any liability for loss or damage of any kind resulting from any errors.

1

Introduction

What is Customer Involvement?

At Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) we are committed to making sure that customers are placed at the heart of everything we do. That's why we have a dedicated Customer Involvement Team working to involve customers in shaping and improving the services we provide. We actively encourage customers to get involved in our services, at a level and pace they feel comfortable with. By developing a range of different involvement methods, and involving as many customers as possible, this helps us to ensure that the services we provide are both wanted and needed. Our Tower of Involvement, described in Section 5 of this booklet, demonstrates the different involvement methods we offer and highlights what influence customers can have on the services they are involved with.

Why should you get involved?

- First and foremost, your views are important to us! You can make a real difference by providing your opinions which help us to continuously improve and develop our services.
- As a customer you are best placed to tell us what is good and not so good about the services you receive and how you think we can improve.
- Being involved will also help to increase your, and others, satisfaction with our services as these will be improved and developed based on your views.
- To gain knowledge, share your experiences and meet new people.

What difference does being involved make?

A great deal! Here are just some of the improvements and developments made as a result of customer involvement in the past year:

- After suggestions from and working in partnership with the Disability Forum, a Disability Awareness Film was produced and viewed by all BCH staff. It showed them how small changes to their working practices can have real benefits for tenants with disabilities.
- A specific quarterly Rents Newsletter has been developed with the Rents Improvement Panel to provide relevant news and information.
- Many documents, such as Viewpoint, have been changed according to the views and comments made by members of the Reading Panel.
- Magnifier sheets have been issued to all partially sighted tenants to replace large print documents. This has created cost savings and increased satisfaction levels.

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Support

Our Customer Involvement Team will provide information and advice and will support you in whichever involvement method or methods you choose. There may be a variety of reasons why you feel you are unable to get involved, but we can provide a wide range of support:

Transport problems?

We can arrange transport for you, or pay your travelling expenses if you travel to meetings by public transport. Alternatively, if you do have a car, we can also reimburse the cost of your journey.

Caring responsibilities?

If you look after a relative or friend, we can pay for the costs incurred for someone else to provide care whilst you attend any meetings.

Children?

If you have children we can arrange childcare to ensure your children are looked after when you are at a meeting.

Lack of knowledge or experience?

No specialist knowledge or experience is needed. We will help and support you throughout your involvement. We can also provide specific training where necessary, such as committee skills and first aid training for our affiliated Tenants and Residents Associations.

3

BCH Academy

Every customer who gets involved with BCH has the opportunity to attend our BCH Academy. The BCH Academy has been designed to increase customer representatives' knowledge across a wide variety of housing related areas. The more knowledge and understanding you can draw on, the more effectively you can challenge our performance and procedures, which helps to improve service delivery for all.

The course has been split into eight key housing related sections, known as modules, and each lasts between two and three hours. The modules included in the Academy are: Social Factors Affecting Housing, Housing Finance, Housing Tenancies & Housing Law, Anti-social Behaviour (ASB), Supported Housing, Leasehold Management, Repairs & Maintenance and Service User Engagement.

Each of the Academy tutors is a Senior or Service Manager within BCH and has a wealth of experience and knowledge about their module topics. The tutors have all been trained and have earned a specific teaching qualification (Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector), all of which ensures that each module is tailored to meet a range of learning styles.

The Academy is supported by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and all customers who graduate from the scheme are awarded a certificate on behalf of BCH and the CIH.

4 Recognition

The Customer Involvement Awards

Each year, the Customer Involvement Team organises an Awards Ceremony to thank customers who get involved for their hard work throughout the year. Every actively involved customer is invited to attend the Ceremony, which is held to recognise and celebrate their involvement and dedication in improving and developing our services. The Ceremony is also an opportunity to celebrate the fantastic contribution made by individuals, community groups and agencies in developing and strengthening your communities.

The Awards cover a variety of categories, such as the 'Good Neighbour' Award or 'Outstanding Contribution to the Community', and nominations are submitted by Blackpool Council tenants and leaseholders. A panel of judges, which is usually made up of BCH Board Members and Senior Management Staff, then makes a decision on the award winners. Nominated individuals, community groups and agencies are also invited to the Awards to celebrate their achievements.

5 Tower of Involvement

Whether you have a couple of hours every few months or a day each week to offer, we have a variety of different ways for you to be involved. The Tower of involvement demonstrates the ways you can be involved, how your involvement will affect services and how much time you would need to commit.

The number of towers shows the amount of involvement and influence you would have in shaping and developing our services:



Access to information and the opportunity to provide feedback on our services



Involvement in shaping and developing our services



Direct decision making and scrutinising of our services

The number of clocks demonstrates the amount of time you would need to commit:



No longer than half an hour each month



Two hours each month or less



A few hours each month

Green Warden Scheme

As a Green Warden, you keep an eye on your local area and help us to monitor the Grounds Maintenance contract by completing a score sheet on a monthly basis. The aspects you will rate include grass cutting and edging, litter, grass cuttings on pathways, and the maintenance of paths, shrubs and bushes. This type of involvement is ideal for those of you who want to be involved from the comfort of your own home and can spare no more than half an hour each month.

Customer Suggestion Scheme

If you don't want to attend meetings or be regularly involved but have an idea on how we could improve or develop our services this is the scheme for you! You can pick up Suggestion Cards from your local Housing Office or from any BCH Community Centre. Any relevant suggestions we receive will be considered by a panel of customers and passed to Senior Management for investigation. Good ideas could receive a reward of up to £50.

Survey Group

As a member of this group, you will be sent 4 surveys throughout the year so that you can give us your views about a variety of the different services we offer and other housing related topics. You can choose to complete the surveys either by email, telephone or by freepost and each survey will take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.

Newsletter Contribution

The Viewpoint newsletter is produced on a quarterly basis and provides information on our services and other relevant topics. It also includes Community News and a What's On Guide to provide information on your local area and news of events. We welcome articles and good news stories from you and your local community.

Annual Conference

We hold a yearly conference to give all customers the opportunity to provide their views on our services. The conference usually includes a mixture of information stalls and consultation sessions and is open to all tenants and leaseholders.

Reading Panel

The Reading Panel helps us to produce information which is relevant and easy to understand. Before we publish any new documents, they are sent to the Panel who proof read them, make comments and suggest areas for improvement. Once the comments are returned, the necessary changes are made and the document is published, displaying the tenant friendly logo to show it has been customer tested. There are no meetings to attend and this type of involvement takes no longer than one and a half hours per month.

enGAYge

A group for lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) customers, which provides the opportunity to meet with other members of the LGBT community and a dedicated LGBT member of staff. This informal social group also has a direct input in improving the services we provide and focuses on local community issues. Meetings take place once a month at a gay friendly venue and last no longer than 2 hours.

Disability Forum

Open to any customer who has a disability or caring responsibility, the Disability Forum meet on a quarterly basis to discuss relevant disability issues. They also work to improve the services BCH provides, helping to ensure that these are fully accessible. Meetings last no longer than 2 hours and are held at an accessible community venue.

Customer Inspectors

There are two different types of customer inspectors:

Empty Homes Inspectors help us to monitor the standard and quality of workmanship in our homes before they are re-let. Inspections are completed on a monthly basis and take approximately one hour.

Decent Homes Inspectors monitor the standard of major improvement works in our homes in partnership with our partnering contractors. Inspections are completed on a monthly basis and take approximately one hour.

Mystery Shopping Scheme

This scheme helps us to ensure that the services we provide are being delivered to a high standard. Trained customers 'test' certain aspects of our services to ensure that they are continually meeting your needs. By testing services and completing evaluation forms based on your experience, you can help us to improve and develop our services. A different service area is 'tested' once a quarter and you would need to spare around 7 hours per quarter.

Service Improvement Panels

There are nine specific Service Improvement Panels which scrutinise the delivery and performance of a particular service area. The Panel meetings take place on a quarterly basis and are an opportunity to meet with Service Managers to discuss performance information, satisfaction levels and service improvements.

The Panels are:

- Involved Panel
- New Home Panel
- Repairs Improvement Panel
- Property Improvement Panel
- Safer Communities Panel (anti-social behaviour)
- Rents Improvement Panel
- Sheltered Housing Panel
- Homeownership Panel
- Neighbourhood Improvement Panel

Customer Board Members

By becoming a Customer Board Member you will oversee the strategic delivery and management of our services. Currently there are four tenants and one leaseholder on the Board and positions are held for 3 years. Vacancies usually become available each year, and at other times if someone retires early from their post.

Tenant Liaison Forum (TLF)

Made up of representatives from our affiliated Tenant and Resident Associations, the TLF meets once every two months with senior management from BCH and Blackpool Council. Currently the main consultative group, they discuss policy changes and service improvements. Workshops also take place on a bi-monthly basis to set the agenda for forthcoming meetings and to discuss improvements or developments.

If you are interested in any of the above involvement activities please contact a member of the Customer Involvement Team by contacting the team on 01253 477911 or customerinvolvement@bch.co.uk

6 Tenants and Residents Associations

Tenants and Residents Associations are groups made up of council tenants and residents living in a defined area. They work in partnership with us and other agencies to represent their local area and help to improve and develop the services you receive.

There are several Tenants and Residents Associations affiliated to Blackpool Coastal Housing and Blackpool Council. Each group has an elected committee who work under the terms of their agreed constitution. These groups provide an ideal opportunity to make improvements to your local community and to our services.

Our current affiliated Tenants & Residents Associations are:

- Bostonway Residents Association
- Grange Park Residents Association
- Ingthorpe North Tenants & Residents Association (Kincraig, Portree and Stronsay Area)
- Linden, Edmonton & Washington Residents Association
- Melbourne, Brisbane & Hobart Residents Association
- Munster Avenue Residents Association
- Friends of Horsebridge

Affiliated Tenants and Residents Associations are supported by the Customer Involvement Team who provide information, assistance and also attend meetings. Grant funding is available to cover the running costs of the group, including printing, postage and equipment. For groups who do not claim any grant support, the Customer Involvement Team will provide support up to the value of the grant.

If you are interested in attending or joining one of the Tenants & Residents Associations or perhaps setting up a new association please contact a member of the Customer Involvement Team.

7 Service Standards

We have a number of service standards which have recently been developed in partnership with the Tenant Liaison Forum. These standards demonstrate the level of service we will provide and our performance targets. The customer involvement service standards reflect the range of opportunities for involvement, emphasise dialogue with customers and the support that we will give to Tenants and Residents Associations:

- We will provide all new customers with a customer involvement menu.
- We will ensure that there are a wide range of involvement activities, so that customers can be involved at the level that suits them.
- We will consult our customers on:
 - rent and financial issues;
 - planned maintenance issues including the Decent Homes programme of works;
 - the state of their neighbourhood;
 - policies and procedures;
 - service and performance monitoring
- We will ensure that there is fair representation in customer involvement activities based on the BCH customer profile.
- Every new customer who joins a customer involvement group or activity will receive a welcome pack.
- We will provide all active customers with the opportunity to take part in the BCH academy.
- We will provide expenses to customers who are involved in activities, including travel, carer, stationery and communication costs.
- We will ensure that impact assessments are completed after every involvement activity and improvements are made from these.
- We will carry out an annual impact assessment on each involvement activity to ensure that they are providing service improvements and are of use to BCH in partnership with customers.
- We will send out a minimum of four editions of the Viewpoint newsletter each year.
- We will publicise the date and venues of Service Improvement Panels two months in advance. Minutes will be made available on the BCH website and are available on request.

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HOMESTOP

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fax: 01253 477950
email: homestop@bch.co.uk
website: www.bch.co.uk

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

telephone: 01253 477555
fax: 01253 477923
email: asb@bch.co.uk

ASB Out of Hours Hotline

Freephone 0800 073 0184

Customer Involvement

telephone: 01253 477911
fax: 01253 477950
email: customerinvolvement@bch.co.uk

Rents Team

telephone: 01253 477942
fax: 01253 477921
email: rent@bch.co.uk

Repairs

freephone 0800 073 0184
fax: 01253 477950
email: repairs@bch.co.uk

Repairs Out of Hours Service

freephone 0800 073 0184

Right To Buy and Leasehold Management

telephone: 01253 477984
fax: 01253 477950
email: homeownership@bch.co.uk

Sheltered Housing

telephone: 01253 477898
fax: 01253 477950
email: shelteredhousing@bch.co.uk

Tenancy and Estate Management

- Grange Park
telephone: 01253 477969
- Mereside & South Blackpool
telephone: 01253 477968
- Queens Park & North Blackpool
telephone: 01253 477971

All Management Areas

email: yourtenancy@bch.co.uk

More information about all services provided by Blackpool Coastal Housing can be found on our website www.bch.co.uk