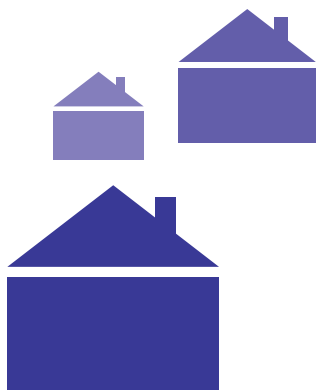
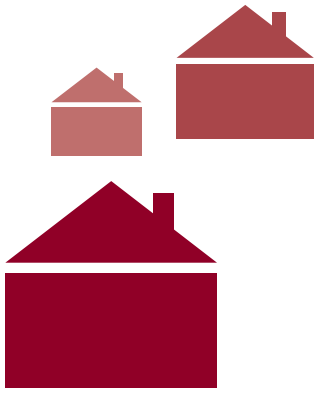


**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**  
**HOUSING SERVICE STANDARDS**  
**INBHEAN SEIRBHEIS TAIGHEADAIS**  
**CHOMHAIRLE NA GÀIDHEALTACHD**



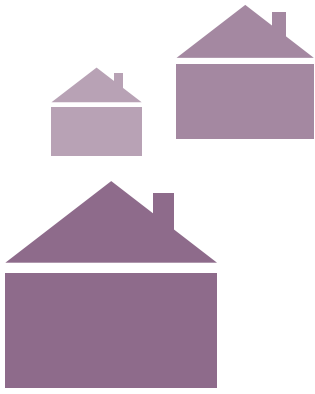
**TENANTS ARE OUR BUSINESS**



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# HOUSING SERVICE STANDARDS

## INBHEAN SEIRBHEIS TAIGHEADAIS

We deliver a range of housing services and we care about the quality of these services.

This booklet contains information about the standard of housing service you can expect as a tenant or customer of The Highland Council's Housing & Property Service.

We will work with our tenants and customers to help us develop how we measure these standards, to see if we are meeting them, and to help identify what we need to do to improve or change them.

If you are interested in how we will do this and would like to take part as a tenant volunteer you can contact us by:

Telephone: **01463 702863**

Email: **housingandproperty@highland.gov.uk**

Website: **www.highland.gov.uk/livinghere/housing/**

## CONTACTING THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

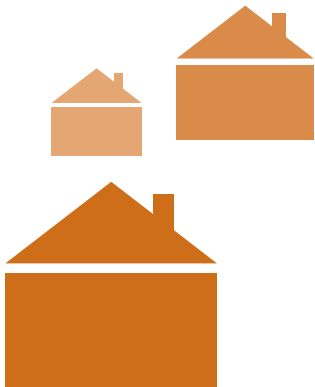
The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX

### GENERAL ENQUIRIES

Telephone the Highland Council Service Centre: **01349 886606**

### *Service Centre Opening Hours*

8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and from 9am to Noon on a Saturday



## COMMENTS & COMPLAINTS





### BEACHDAN & GEARANAN

Full details of the Council's Comments and Complaints Policy is available at:  
**www.highland.gov.uk/comments**

Call us on: **01349 886606**

Email us at: **service.point@highland.gov.uk**

### We will:

-  Welcome comments or suggestions which could help us to improve our services.
-  Encourage you to let us know if you feel we have done something wrong.
-  Encourage you to let us know when we fail to do something we said we would do.
-  Encourage you to let us know if you feel you were not treated courteously or efficiently by a member of our staff.










## CUSTOMER CARE STANDARDS

### INBHEAN CÙRAM

### LUCHD-CEANNAICH

The Highland Council's Customer Service Strategy places customers at the centre of service delivery.

#### To achieve this we will:









-  Aim to become more convenient for customers.
-  Make it easier and quicker for customers to interact with the Council.
-  Make sure that all customers have equal access to the services they need.
-  Invest in training and development to ensure that staff have the relevant skills and training to deliver excellent customer service.
-  Answer phones within 10 rings.
-  Reply to correspondence within 10 working days.
-  Deal with complaints within 10 working days.

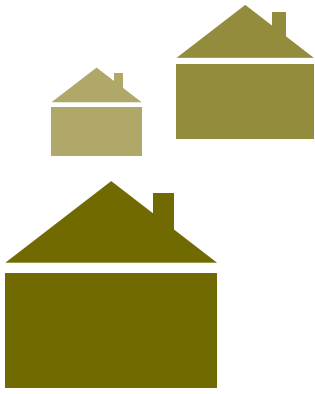


## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

### CO-IONANNACHD CHO THROMAN

#### We will:

-  Produce information in other formats if you ask us to.
-  Provide translation and interpretation services where these are needed.
-  Make sure all our staff are trained in equality and diversity.
-  Offer equality and diversity training to our tenant organisations and active tenants.
-  Undertake Equality Impact Assessments of policies.
-  Use plain English in our information.
-  Make sure our offices meet disability access standards.
-  Make sure we visit you at home if you are not able to call into our local offices because of a physical disability.



# TENANT PARTICIPATION STANDARDS

## INBHEAN COM-PÀIRTEACHAS






### LUCHD-MÀIL

The Tenant Participation Action Plan sets out our commitments in full.

#### In summary:




#### INFORMATION

##### We will:

-  Provide all new tenants with a Tenancy Handbook.
-  Produce the 'Highland Tenant Update'.
-  Make information on Tenants Organisations available on request.
-  Make information on all council policies available on request.
-  Publicise information on forthcoming consultations in the Highland Tenant Update. and invite involvement in the consultation process.





#### CONSULTATION




##### We will:

-  Consult with tenant groups and individual tenants with an interest in areas of policy and service delivery.
-  Provide information on the policy or issue, how it will affect tenants, how and in what timescale tenants can make their views known, how and when the final decision will be taken, and who the contact officer is.
-  Provide feedback on all consultations.

#### PARTICIPATION





##### We will:

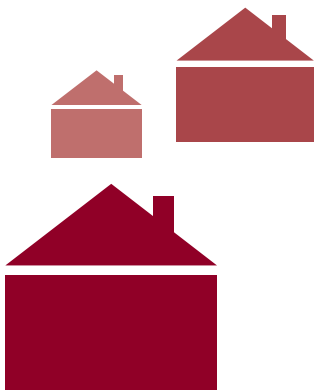
-  Involve Registered Tenants Organisations and Tenant Area Forums in the policy process either by identifying issues, or developing proposals.
-  Provide briefing papers to Registered Tenants Organisations on areas of Housing policy or service development.
-  Use flexible participation methods to suit the circumstances, e.g. focus or working groups, surveys, meetings, newsletter, sample phone surveys.
-  Agree the membership, purpose, chair, secretariat, role & remit, venue and decision- making powers of any working groups.

-  Involve Registered Tenants Organisations and Tenant Area Forums in monitoring progress and outcomes of the Tenant Participation Strategy and Action Plan.
-  Provide Registered Tenants Organisations and Tenant Area Forums with access to independent Tenant Participation Advice.
-  Provide Registered Tenants Organisations and Tenant Area Forums with training to support effective participation.

## MEETINGS

### We will:

-  Give a minimum 10 working days notice for invitations to meetings from all stakeholders.
-  Make sure that all stakeholders ensure representatives or replacements are fully briefed.
-  Provide a set of minutes for meetings which stakeholders have attended.
-  Hold meetings in accessible venues, with interpreting or support services available if necessary, by prior arrangement, and with resources for crèche facilities available if required.











# ALLOCATIONS SERVICE STANDARDS

## INBHEAN SEIRBHEIS SÒNRACHAIDH








## APPLICATIONS

### We will:

-  Manage applications through Highland Housing Register which is a common register designed to make applying for housing in Highland more straightforward.
-  Accept application enquiries at any Highland Housing Register (HHR) landlord.
-  Treat all applications and enquiries equally, and handle them fairly and consistently.
-  Process applications within 10 working days.
-  Treat customers personal details sensitively and with respect to confidentiality.
-  Provide customers with '**prospects**' information to help make choices about where they would like to be allocated a house, and make sure their expectations are not unrealistically raised.
-  Manage complaints within the complaints policy.
-  Monitor customer satisfaction with applying for housing to help improve our services.

## ALLOCATIONS

### We will:






-  Give customers 2 days to respond to an offer of housing.
-  Complete any additional work identified to make the house suitable for occupancy prior to occupancy or by agreement.
-  Provide all customers with a Tenancy Handbook at the start of their tenancy.
-  Support customers to complete Housing Benefit Forms and register with energy providers.
-  Offer customers a settling in visit from their Housing Officer within 6 weeks after the tenancy starts.
-  Monitor customer satisfaction with their new tenancy to help improve our services.
-  Offer customers a decoration allowance where there is damage to decoration.



## CHANGES OF TENANCY ATHARRACHAIDHEAN GABHALTAIS

### We will:



Agree to reasonable requests and we will give you a decision within 28 days if you have applied to exercise your right to:









-  Succeed to a tenancy
-  Assign your tenancy
-  Sub-let your tenancy
-  Take in lodgers
-  Mutual Exchange



## MANAGING EMPTY HOUSES CUMAIL RIAN AIR TAIGHEAN FALAMH

### We will:

-  Make sure houses are empty for as short a time as possible (we will tell you what our targets are and whether we are meeting them).
-  Make sure that we limit the amount of rent we lose from empty houses (we will tell you what our targets are and whether we are meeting them).









-  Make sure that when you give notice on your tenancy, an acknowledgment letter and advice on what you have to do before leaving the property is issued within 1 working day.
-  Make sure that a “pre termination” inspection is carried out within 10 days of notice being received.
-  When a tenant is transferring to another HHR partner property, inspections will normally be made within a target time of 3 working days, or 5 working days where this is appropriate in more rural areas.
-  Inspect all empty houses within 2 working day of receiving the keys from the tenant who moves out.
-  Make sure repairs to empty houses are completed within their target times (we will tell you what our targets are and whether we are meeting them).
-  Make sure all empty houses meet our minimum letting standard before the new tenant moves in.
-  Make sure that the former tenant is informed about outstanding items that are the former tenant's responsibility within 10 working days of the void inspection.
-  Offer you the chance to view a property you have been offered.






## COLLECTING RENT & RECOVERING MONEY WE ARE OWED

### A' TOGAIL MÀIL & A' TRUSADH FHIACHAN

#### **We will:**

-  Make sure we offer Housing Benefit advice to new tenants and carry out a rent check when we visit new tenants for the first time.
-  Make sure we offer a range of convenient ways for you to pay your rent, such as paying in cash through Paypoint, by direct debit, or by debit or credit card at our Service Points.
-  Make sure we consult you each year on any rent increases and give you notice before we increase your rent.
-  Make sure we provide help and advice if you are having problems paying your rent, including referring you to our Money Advice and Income Maximisation Team or the Citizen's Advice Bureau or to tenancy support if you agree to it.
-  Make sure we send you a rent statement every quarter.
-  Make sure we contact you within 7 working days of you first falling behind with your payments, so that your debts do not become difficult to manage and we can agree realistic arrangements for you to repay the money.
-  Make sure we try to contact you face to face or by telephone before issuing the Notice of Intention to Seek Possession.
-  Make sure we ask you to meet with us to discuss solution to your arrears before we go to court to ask the sheriff to end your tenancy if you are not paying your rent.










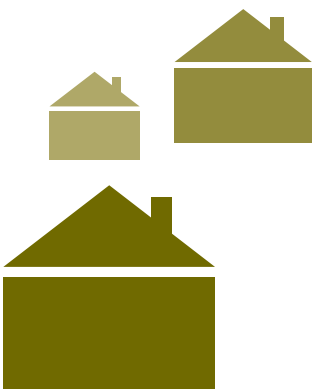
-  Make sure we ask you to meet with us before we go ahead with any eviction to ensure you get advice on benefits, debt management and homelessness.
-  Make sure we work with you right up to the eviction date to try and resolve any arrears issues.
-  Make sure we give you the final balance on your rent account and any other tenancy related debt within 14 working days of you giving up your tenancy.



## **DAY-TO-DAY REPAIRS** **CÀRAIDHEAN LÀITHEIL**





### **We will:**

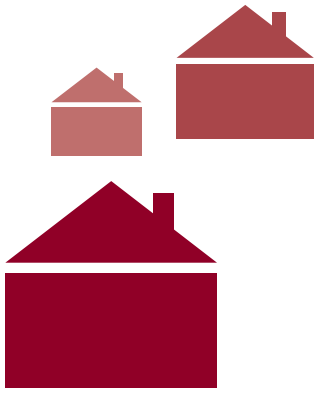
-  Offer you a number of different ways of reporting repairs including an out-of-hours telephone service and appointments for certain types of repairs.
-  Complete any emergency repairs within 24 hours (we will respond immediately if the situation needs to be made safe).
-  Complete all high priority repairs within 3 working days.
-  Complete all routine repairs within 20 working days.
-  Inform you of what priority we have given the work and make suitable access arrangements with you.
-  Inform you if the repair qualifies under the Right to Repair legislation.
-  Carry out all legal duties relating to your property including annual gas safety services.



## **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS** **LEASACHAIDHEAN CALPA**

### **We will:**






-  Write to tell you that your home is included, when we will carry out the work and who the contractor is.
-  Supervise the contractor's work to make sure it is carried out to a satisfactory standard.
-  Offer you a decoration allowance if this is required following works.
-  Let you know about any choices available to you in the programme and ask you how satisfied you are with the improvement.



## **ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR SERVICE STANDARDS**

### **INBHEAN SEIRBHEIS GIÙLAN MÌ-SHÒISEALTA**

#### **We will:**

-  Investigate all complaints in terms of the Anti-Social Behaviour Charter, including complex complaints that involve a multi agency response.
-  Inform you of the action that can be taken to resolve the problem you have reported and keep you updated.
-  Investigate complaints about minor breaches of tenancy conditions within 10 days, including updating you by phone, letter or visit.
-  Carry out an initial investigation and assessment on complaints about Antisocial Behaviour, where the behaviour is of a serious and persistent nature, within 5 days, including updating you by phone, letter or visit within 5 working days to advise of the assessment.
-  Follow up complaints about severe Antisocial Behaviour within 2 days.










## **SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICES**

### **SEIRBHEISEAN TAIGHEADAIS TÈARAINTE**

#### **SHELTERED HOUSING WITH WARDEN SERVICES**




#### **We will:**

-  Provide and maintain a telecare alarm in every sheltered house - which enables you to call for assistance should you need to.
-  Provide a 24 hour, 7 day a week call handling service to take your telecare calls.
-  Provide a warden service which includes a daily check on your safety and wellbeing.
-  Agree a personal 'Tenant Service Plan' which will set out the service you will receive from your warden.
-  Update your Tenant Service Plan at least one every six months.

-  Assist you in maintaining your home and advice you about issues such as repairs should this be necessary.
-  Help you to liaise with other agencies to receive more specialist care and support should you need it (e.g. with Health or Social Work).

### **SHELTERED HOUSING WITHOUT WARDEN SERVICES (AMENITY HOUSING)**





We will:

-  Provide and maintain a telecare alarm in every amenity house – which enables you to call for assistance should you need to.
-  Provide a 24 hour, 7 day a week call handling service to take your telecare calls.
-  Assist in referring you to the appropriate services should you require enhanced telecare services.



## **ADAPTATIONS LEASACHAIDHEAN**


We will:

-  Provide you with information and advise should you want to know about adaptations to your home.
-  Assist in referring you to relevant professionals for an assessment for an adaptation.
-  Carry out the adaptations works to your home which are agreed and assessed by a professional, usually by an Occupational Therapist.
-  Keep you fully informed and involved with any adaptation works to your home.



## **TELECARE TELECARE**

We will:

-  Assist in referring you to the appropriate services should you require telecare and live in mainstream housing.


















# STANDARDS FOR TENANTS

## INBHEAN DO LUCHD-MÀIL

This publication tells you about our commitment to the standard of housing services we provide to you. Your tenancy agreement sets out your commitment to us.

### When you sign your tenancy agreement you agree to:

-  Pay your rent on time and in full.
-  Occupy and furnish the property.
-  Decorate and keep the house clean and tidy.
-  Behave reasonably at all times and make sure your visitors do the same.
-  Keep noise to a reasonable level.
-  'Get on' with your neighbours.
-  Prevent pets from being a nuisance to neighbours, staff & contractors.
-  Prevent illegal and dangerous activities in your home.
-  Put your rubbish out for collection.
-  Clean any common areas such as stairs, landings and bin areas.
-  Cut any grass and hedges that form part of your garden.
-  Keep your home adequately heated and ventilated.
-  Report any repairs required or damage caused.
-  Allow access for inspections and repairs.
-  Allow access for essential gas and electrical safety checks.



To request this information in an alternative format  
e.g., **large print**, computer disk, audio tape,  
or suitable language, please contact:  
**01463 702863**

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