



Rural Stirling

HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Our Standards

Introduction

Rural Stirling Housing Association is committed to providing a high quality of service at all times. These service standards set out the level of service you can expect from us. You can help us maintain standards by letting us know when we fail to meet our expectations so that we can put things right and continue to improve what we do. We also welcome feedback on good service.

We will monitor how we perform against these standards and report to you annually

At all times we will

- be polite and helpful
- treat you fairly and with respect
- identify ourselves by name
- respond quickly to your enquiries
- listen to you and ask for your view on our services
- give information in ways you find it easy to understand
- take into account your needs if you have a disability or if your first language is not English
- keep personal information secure
- respect your right to confidentiality

Contacting us

You can contact us in the way that suits you best. This can be by telephone, in writing, by email or in person by coming into the office or asking us to visit you at home.

Our office at Stirling Road Doune FK16 6AA is open Monday- Thursday 9am-5pm and on Friday 9am-4pm. We will publicise the dates that the office is closed because of public holidays in our newsletter, on our website www.rsha.org.uk , and at our office.

Our telephone number is **01786 841101**

What can you expect from us?

When you telephone us we will:

- answer the call as soon as possible—in no more than six rings
- tell you which member of staff you are speaking to
- if the call is to be transferred, pass on your name and details of your enquiry to avoid you having to repeat yourself
- offer to take a message and arrange a convenient time for person you want to speak to will call back
- use our answer machine only when necessary – for instance out of office hours or to allow for public holidays or staff meetings and training
- if we are using the answer machine, we will leave a message which gives details of how you can have an emergency repair done

When you write or email us, we will

- reply to your letter or email within 5 working days
or
- if we cannot give a full reply within 5 days, we will write to you explaining why and tell you when you can expect a full reply. We will aim to give a full reply as soon as we can, but within 20 working days at the most
- give you a reply that
 - is addressed to you personally
 - contains a clear and accurate explanations about the decisions that have been made
 - is easy to read and understand
 - contains the name and job title of the staff member sending the letter

When you visit our office we will

- make sure that the office reception area is welcoming and comfortable
- ensure that the reception and interview facilities are accessible for people with disabilities
- provide up to date information about the Association and our services
- ensure an interview room is available so that you can discuss personal and confidential matters in private

If you have made an appointment to see someone

- we will see you within 5 minutes of your appointment time

If you haven't made an appointment

- see you within 15 minutes
or
- If the staff member you want to see is not available and there is no-one else who can assist you, we will arrange a mutually convenient time for you to meet them, either in the office or at your home

When we visit your home we will,

- be on time and, if delayed, let you know when we expect to arrive
- show you identification and introduce ourselves
- explain the reason for the visit
- respect your home, your privacy and reasonable customs.
Contractors working in your home must follow a code of conduct
- be sensitive if we are discussing sensitive issues such as rent arrears or neighbour disputes and treat these matters with strictest confidence, discussing them with the **tenant** only
- let you know what will happen following the visit and confirm this, in writing, within 5 working days of the visit
- leave a card if you are out asking you to contact us

When you give us information we will

- treat all information we have about you sensitively and in confidence
- work to make sure that the information we hold about you is correct
- only hold information about you that is important for our work
- let you look at your tenancy records within 20 working days of receiving a request from you
- work within the rules of the Data Protection Act

When we give you information we will

- provide information that is up to date and accurate
- is easy to understand, with no jargon
- provide information about our service from our office and on our website
- send you our newsletter, Rural Matters, at least three times a year
- send you our Annual Report and Performance report once a year
- keep our website up to date

Delivering our services:

When dealing with your application for housing we will

- process your application form within 5 working days and let you know how many points you have been awarded
- update your application within 5 days if you let us know about any change in your circumstances and will write to you if there these changes have affected your points level
- provide clear information about our properties and their availability, and how to apply for housing
- provide information on other local housing options and signpost you to other agencies that may be able to assist you
- write to you every year to review your application and provide you with up to date information about stock turnover and availability

When delivering housing management services we will

In tenancy management

- provide you with written tenancy agreement and tenants handbook at the start of your tenancy so that you understand your rights and responsibilities
- visit you in your new home within 6 weeks of your tenancy beginning to help you with any issues you may have
- ensure that you have the name and contact details of your housing officer

In payment management

- provide you with a range of ways to pay your rent
- consult with you on annual rent increases and give at least 4 weeks' notice of any increase
- provide you with a rent statement annually, or more frequently on request as well as when we write to you if you have rent arrears
- provide you with advice on welfare benefits and tax credits and signpost you, where necessary, to sources of advice on debt management
- contact you quickly when you miss a rent payment
- provide you with the opportunity to clear arrears in affordable instalments
- maximise income from all service users by taking a firm stance on arrears

In estate management

- carry out monthly estate inspections to make sure our estates are kept in a good condition
- take action against tenants who breach their tenancy conditions
- liaise with other agencies to ensure that they meet their obligations within our estates

In managing neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour

- respond to any issues within five working days, or within 1 working day for very serious issues
- deal with any issues sensitively and in confidence
- keep complainants informed of progress and outcome of investigation
- liaise with police and other agencies where appropriate

When delivering property maintenance services we will:

When you report a repair

- let you know when the job will be done and which of our contractors will do it
- offer you a two hour time slot if the contractor needs access to your home to do the work
- complete jobs within set times unless otherwise agreed by you
 - emergency – within 4 hours
 - urgent – within 3 working days
 - routine – within 10 working days

- aim to do the job 'right first time' and let you know if this isn't possible
- make sure that the contractors doing the work adhere to our code of conduct and
 - are polite and respectful in your home
 - provide confirmation of their identity
 - turn up when they say they will
 - clean up after themselves
- provide an emergency repair service for you to contact when the office is closed
- provide you with an opportunity to feedback on our performance in carrying out repairs and maintenance

When carrying out planned or cyclical repairs or improvements we will

- offer an element of choice wherever possible i.e. choice of work surfaces during kitchen replacement
- provide an opportunity to discuss works beforehand
- give at least 10 working days' notice of start date
- take care when working in your home
- ask for your opinion on the completion of the work

What can you do to help us?-

Your responsibilities to help us achieve our standards

- be polite when speaking to us
- do not use threatening or abusive language or behaviour
- read the information we send you
- let us know if you change your phone number
- give us the information we ask for, when need it
- keep appointments you make with us or tell us in good time if you can't
- give us feedback -good or bad – so we can improve our service to you
- take care of your home and let us know when repairs are needed
- give us access to your home to carry out repairs or safety checks
- behave in a considerate way to your neighbours
- pay your rent and other charges on time

Learning from you

Feedback is important to us we want to know what you think of the service and how we can make better. We will do this by:

- surveys and questionnaires after you've received a service from us (i.e. a day to day repair)
- commissioning an independent tenant satisfaction survey every three years, with interim surveys in between
- learning from feedback and complaints

Giving feedback on our service:

You don't have to wait to be asked to take part in a survey. We are always keen to hear your comments views or suggestions. Don't feel that you can only tell us things when things go wrong. We want to know when we do things right and we want your suggestions and ideas about how things could work better. Call us on 01786 841101 or email enquiries@rsha.org.uk

What if things go wrong?

We aim to provide a high quality service but we know that sometimes things go wrong. If you are unhappy about something please let us know and we'll do our best to put things right as soon as possible. We have a 2 stage complaints process in place to deal with situations where our service has not met our high standards. We welcome the opportunity to address your complaints and you can contact us by email, by post, over the phone or in person at our office. Complaints will be dealt with as quickly as possible and handled sensitively. We aim to resolve your complaint at the first point of contact within 5 working days. Our staff will always check that you are happy with the outcome.

If we cannot resolve your complaint at the front line, or if you are unhappy with the response, we will refer your complaint to our investigation stage. Your complaint will be investigated by and signed off by a member of the senior management team.

We aim to resolve all complaints in the way described above. However if you are still unhappy we will tell you how to contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to take the issue further.