



Salvation
Army Homes

Customer Service Strategy

2030

Executive Summary

The development of this Customer Service Strategy has taken place at a time of change within Salvation Army Homes following a recent rebrand and structural changes within its housing services.

Externally there has been an increased focus on Consumer Regulations within the Housing Association sector.

The Customer Promise element of this strategy has been devised in partnership with residents and stakeholders with the aim of bringing clarity to what customers can expect when requesting a service from us. Our commitment to Servant Leadership and customer inclusion has never been stronger and will continue to grow over the lifetime of this strategy.

We have recently reviewed and updated some of our key operational service strategies. In 2024- 25 we published our Supported Housing Strategy, the Older Persons Strategy and a new Development and Growth Strategy.

The Customer Service Strategy supports the delivery of our corporate strategy 'Pathway to Excellence 2030' the objectives of which are:

- Deliver excellent customer service
- Invest in our existing homes
- Deliver more homes to help residents achieve independent living
- Be a great employer
- Maintain our financial strength

This strategy is complemented by the Supported Housing Strategy 2030.



Strategic Context

Current and proposed Government policy changes will have a significant effect on the service to customers in the social housing sector.

The Regulator of Social Housing updated its regulatory standards for social housing landlords in April 2024 introducing Consumer Regulation with four new standards: Neighbourhood and Community Standard, Safety and Quality Standard, Tenancy Standard and the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.

We were pleased with the C2 Grade in our Regulatory Assessment in 2024. However, the C1 grade is firmly in our sights.

Housing associations work in a challenging environment. Income is derived primarily from rent. Rents are below market levels. This is to enable customers unable to access other tenures to have a chance of finding some form of decent and safe accommodation. Alongside this, we face increasing demands and costs. The challenge has never been greater. We proudly work to provide accommodation to those in need, many of whom are vulnerable and require support. We believe in being transparent with customers so they can understand our service offer and its boundaries.

The delivery of this Customer Service Strategy will enable us to serve our customers and develop positive relationships that give them opportunity to be safe and transform their lives.



Resident Voice & Co-Production

Residents in Supported housing are constantly engaged in a range of co-production activities (see Supported Housing Strategy). This will continue and at the same time, we will strengthen the impact of the resident voice & co-production in general needs & older persons housing.

In developing this strategy, we reflected on our last two STAR annual surveys (2023 and 2024). These surveys provided insight into levels of satisfaction and highlighted areas that need improvement. In Supported homes, customer satisfaction averaged 96%, but in General Needs it is 74% and in Older Persons Accommodation we only achieved 63%.

In addition, our Together 4 Residents (T4R) Scrutiny panel have reported findings on areas such as Customer Service, Damp & Mould management and the management of Anti-Social Behaviour. These reports have highlighted we need to engage more customers and improve communication. These themes are also emerging from Lessons Learnt from complaints.

Nearly 100 customers have been involved in developing the “Customer Promise” and the new “Resident Handbook”. We fully intend to expand engagement across our service.



The above graph illustrates the words used and heard by us from residents. We will continue to engage and strengthen our co-production approach with residents.

We recognise we are more than a landlord. Customers need and/or seek support because they have experienced difficult situations that have adversely impacted upon them. We are committed to adopting a “trauma informed approach” to how we work. This involves, understanding and empathising with residents to offer them the opportunity to first stabilise and then transform their lives. It is our intention to submit our approach for recognition against a recognised trauma informed practice accreditation measure during the life of this strategy.

We will continue to use resident insight to improve the service and meet their expectations and needs.

What we do now – Organisational context

1873 units Supported Housing

- 456 units of directly managed
- 1025 units across 22 TSA Homeless services, including registered care homes.
- 402 units with other managing agents
- 248 HMA units – providing asset management support to the TSA

Covered by Customer Service Promise
Annual STAR survey
Fully developed approach to Co-production
Resident consultation and events at schemes
Transactional Surveys

291 units Older Persons Housing

- 275 flats
- 18 bungalows
- 5 schemes with an on-site scheme staff

Covered by Customer Service Promise
Annual STAR survey
Resident events at schemes
Transactional Surveys Included in scope of T4R Scrutiny reports
Behind the Door insight

1296 units General Needs Housing

- Predominantly one person flats and includes some repurposed schemes that were formerly supported housing.
- Between 250–300 of our general needs tenants receive floating support from other providers

Covered by Customer Service Promise
Annual STAR survey
Piloting activities at schemes
Transactional Surveys included in scope of T4R Scrutiny reports
Behind the Door insight



Our 'Customer Promise'

Our mission is **Safe homes. Transforming lives.**

Our Customer promise is to:

- Provide a safe, secure and well maintained place to live.
- Actively involve residents in delivering service improvements
- Work in a way, where we take time to understand the person and seek to work with them.
- Positively welcome complaints and feedback as opportunities to learn.

How we'll do this:

- Make it easy for you to speak to us and listen without judgment
- Always be helpful
- Create an environment built on mutual respect, that feels safe and secure
- Do what we say we will and keep residents informed

The aims of our Customer Services Strategy

Key objective 1

Deliver excellent customer services

The 2024 STAR Survey reported resident satisfaction as follows:

Satisfaction / Tenure Stream	Older Persons housing	General Needs housing	Supported / directly managed housing	Supported - Agency housing
Well Maintained Home	73%	73%	81%	73%
Safe Home	76%	75%	85%	68%
With Repairs	58%	65%	71%	71%
Overall	63%	71%	96%	71%

Our target is to achieve 80% customer satisfaction (general needs and older persons) and 95% (supported) by 2030.

Our commitment is to:

- Put the customer first and make our service easy for them to access
- Demonstrate our SPIRE values and trauma informed approach in all contacts with customers, partners and colleagues.
- Demonstrate a strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion by getting to know the diverse resident groups and their needs better.
- Complete our Behind the Door project in 2025 and to launch the Scheme Profiles project to enable us to use customer insight and data to shape and inform the service we provide
- Strengthen customer involvement at all levels within the organisation: Operations Committee membership; Together for Residents Scrutiny Group; Scheme Champions Network; Supported Housing Co-production groups and Resident Associations
- Survey a representative sample of customers annually



- Undertake transactional surveys on a regular basis, such as repairs satisfaction and new tenant surveys to obtain feedback to help us improve our approach
- Review and improve our digital and telephony platforms to enable customers to have a great experience when contacting Salvation Army Homes
- Enable tenancy sustainment through annual tenancy visits, welfare advice and signposting to other agencies.
- Achieve recognition for our approach through a Customer Accreditation award
- Ensure fair allocation and lettings of our homes to new residents.
- Engage customers in "co-production" opportunities, inviting them to help deliver the services they want, such as providing feedback on contractor performance.
- Where “co-production” opportunities exist then customers will be asked to help us deliver the services they want; for instance, we will seek feedback on the performance of contractors
- Tackle the issues that affect customers – litter, fly tipping, anti-social behaviour so that the neighbourhoods and schemes are attractive and safe
- Introduce learning opportunities for residents such as apprenticeships
- Continue to improve our complaints handling service and learn from complaints
- Implement the Older Persons strategy action plan.

Key objective 2

Invest in our existing homes

The STAR survey showed resident satisfaction in our repairs and maintenance service to be at 69%. This is well below the standard we want to achieve.

Our commitment is to:

- Provide safe and well-maintained homes – invest to modernise them and meet safety standards.
- Create psychologically informed environments (PIE) to improve the psychological and emotional wellbeing of people accessing or working in our services.
- Coproduce material with residents.
- Pilot furnished property scheme offer.
- Ensure our responsive repairs service provides resilience, pilot different delivery models and help residents diagnose repairs.
- Make available to customers details of our major works and programmed improvement projects. We will ensure customers are involved in the process, offering choice of design, colours and finishings wherever possible.
- Have a plan for all our homes to achieve energy efficiency targets so residents can spend less on heating.
- Review all housing schemes to ensure they meet current and future needs of residents





Key objective 3

Deliver more homes to help residents achieve independent living

We will work with Local Authority partners to identify projects that enable the achievement of respective strategic ambitions with regard to provision of homes for residents.

Our commitment is to:

- Identify options for delivering cost-effective refurbishment / development opportunities.
- Identify opportunities for delivery of new build accommodation.
- Enable people to live independently to live in their own homes for as long as possible.

Key objective 4

Be a great employer

Effective Customer service is delivered by our people.

Our commitment is to:

- Ensure all staff receive training on Customer Service, Equality & Diversity Awareness and Trauma Informed Practice to enable them to work in a safe, informed and customer focused way
- Ensure residents are involved in recruitment of staff
- Support the ongoing growth of the Servant Leadership ethos by ensuring that teams and individuals have opportunities to talk about scenarios to share good practice and to capture learning in order to sharpen our focus on customer service
- Empowering our people to make decisions, take informed risks that enable the service to be delivered effectively. This is a “learning culture” not a “blame culture”
- Work with The Salvation Army to develop partnership projects for debt advice, gaining employment and volunteering opportunities.





Key objective 5

Maintain our financial strength

To ensure our services are financially viable our commitment is to:

- Produce Scheme Insight Documents to identify poor performing less energy efficient homes.
- Involve residents in procurement decisions to provide effective and efficient services.
- Promote social value to provide additional benefits to residents.
- Review our service model and where possible, utilise technology to enable us to be more efficient in the delivery of services.
- Support residents in the goal to transform lives, by helping them understand the importance of staying debt free.