

Policy

Title: Customer Care Policy

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This document relates to:

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|---|---|-------------------------|
| The calico Group | ✓ | The Calico Group |
| calico homes | ✓ | Calico Homes |
| calico enterprise | ✓ | Calico Enterprise |
|  SafeNet
<small>Empowering you to live free from domestic abuse</small> | ✓ | SafeNet |
|  ACORN
RECOVERY PROJECTS | ✓ | Acorn Recovery Projects |
|  Whitworth
Care Trust | ✓ | Whitworth Care Trust |
|  RING
STONES | ✓ | Ring Stones |

providing
quality services that
make a difference
to people's lives

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1.0 Introduction

The corporate customer care policy outlines the service standards our customers, colleagues and partners can expect when they deal with us. We recognise that there are several companies within the Calico Group and each one has different ways of delivering customer service excellence. This policy captures all that we aim to work towards. The specific service standards for each service area within the Group will continue to run alongside this policy.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

The Calico Group vision is to “Provide quality services that make a difference to people’s lives”.

This policy supports the following strategic aims;

- To be customer led in delivering excellent services
- To provide value for money in everything we do
- To realise peoples full potential
- To secure and deliver new business opportunities and partnerships

The aims and objectives of the policy are;

1. To support the delivery of the customer service strategy.
2. To ensure our customers feel valued and every experience with Calico is a positive and efficient one.
3. To help us achieve high standards in customer care and consistently high levels of customer satisfaction.
4. To help us achieve our company aims, vision and values.
5. To provide a clear document setting out our corporate customer service standards and service offers.
6. To ensure that all staff have an understanding of our corporate customer service standards ensuring that they are part of what they do every day.

3.0 Policy Description

We are committed to a high standard of customer care to ensure our services meet the diverse range of customer needs.

We will continually improve customer care by acting positively to issues, complaints and suggestions raised by our customers, partners and employees.

This policy provides the framework of customer service standards and the way we all interact with our customers and colleagues on a day-to-day basis.

4.0 Scope

The customer care policy applies to all employees, volunteers and contractors operating within the Calico Group who provide a service to our customers.

There are several companies within the Calico Group and each one tailors services in a way that meets their customers’ needs.

We recognise our customers as people who use any service within the Calico group.

Calico has an ambitious growth strategy to expand the business and diversify our activities. Therefore we expect the number of customers and the range of services we deliver to increase through the life of this policy.

5.0 Responsibility

The policy is maintained and reviewed by the Customer Service Manager.

It is the responsibility of senior managers and line managers to ensure that their service areas, staff, partners and contractors are aware of Calico's customer care policy and deliver the same high standards of service. Any further requirements of our partners or contractors are detailed in the Procurement Policy and Contractors code of conduct.

The Passionate About Customers Strategic group is responsible for the delivery of customer service staff training associated with the policy and delivery of the separate customer service strategy action plan.

Within the Homes and Community Agency co-regulation standards, Calico is responsible for the services they provide and can be held accountable by their tenants. Co regulation states that tenants should have a range of opportunities to be involved in key decisions and the scrutiny of performance and should be supported to participate effectively.

This policy will link to the work of other associated customer groups in identifying improvements to our services for example; the Customer Experience Group, Customer scrutiny panel, other Steering Groups, Senior Forum and the Step up committee.

6.0 The Calico Way

Customers are at the heart of what we do at Calico and we aim to have the right processes, people, policies and training in place to deliver customer service excellence, "The Calico Way". We want our customers to feel valued and every experience with Calico to be a positive and efficient one.

Calico recognises the importance of customer service excellence and how it can;

- Improve customer satisfaction
- Improve customer retention
- Improve the success of people completing their individual support programs
- Increase referrals
- Reduce costs
- Improve staff job satisfaction and reduce turnover
- Increase profitability
- Improve performance
- Enhance Calico's reputation

'The Calico Way' will be outlined in training modules covering the service standards and customer care skills that support and bring the Corporate Customer care policy alive. The Calico Way promotes our aim to ensure continuous improvement in customer service standards and the overall customer experience and that this is an on-going and high priority for the company.

Training will be provided through a variety of optional and mandatory courses by operational managers and members of the Passionate About Customers strategic group.

7.0 Corporate Customer Service Standards

See Appendix 1 - Corporate Customer Service Standards
See Appendix 2 - Internal Customer Service Standards

8.0 Service Specific Standards

In addition to the corporate customer service standards there are standards according to the different services used. The service specific customer service standards and SLA's support Calico's corporate service standards and are reviewed regularly and available separately.

They outline what our customers can expect when using a particular service, for example when reporting Anti-Social Behaviour, Responsive or Gas repairs, using social media or a service such as Calico Assure, or Floating Support.

9.0 Regulatory and Legal Compliance

While this policy covers the Calico group, only parts of the group are regulated.

Homes regulations:

The Homes and Communities Agency took responsibility for the regulation of social housing providers in England on 1 April 2012.

The Regulatory Framework includes both the regulatory standards which providers must meet, and the way in which the Regulator carries out its functions.

The consumer standards are:

- Tenant Involvement and Empowerment
- Home
- Tenancy
- Neighbourhood and Community

The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard is relevant to the Customer care policy and covers what registered housing providers should deliver in terms of Customer service, choice and complaints.

Supporting People service regulations:

In addition to the Corporate Customer Service Standards there are services within the Calico Group who are required to meet additional standards. Lancashire County Council Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework sets the standards for all funded services to ensure high quality services are being delivered in the following key areas;

- Fair Access, Exit Diversity & Inclusion
- Assessment & Support Planning
- Security Health & Safety
- Safeguarding & Protection from Abuse
- Client Involvement & Empowerment

Care service regulations:

The Care Quality Commission has responsibility for regulating care services. The Essential Standards of Quality and Safety sets the outcomes that care services are regulated against. Customer care runs throughout all of the outcomes but there are 3 specific outcomes that fall under the banner of involvement and information:

- Outcome 1: respecting and involving people who use services
- Outcome 2: Consent and care to treatment
- Outcome 3: fees

10.0 Monitoring

Our approach is to ensure that staff are aware of this policy; the corporate service standards and to use this policy as a guide. We will monitor the results from each part of the group to assess our customer care and satisfaction scores.

We accept that some standards noted in this policy are not easily or always measureable on every interaction for example, being polite, helpful and friendly and showing a name badge when visiting a customer.

The company performance targets are reviewed regularly in line with the corporate plan. The customer care policy and corporate customer service standards will be monitored and measured through:

- Avoidable contacts
- Behavioural styles self-assessment
- Best Companies service climate criteria
- Company Key Performance Indicators
- Complaints and appeals
- Customer contacts resolved at the first point of contact
- Customer Satisfaction surveys
- Line management monitoring as per the company Performance Management process
- Mystery shopping results
- Net Promoter score
- Observations on how staff conduct themselves with customers, colleagues and partners
- Quantity of compliments
- Quantity of and the reasons for customer complaints

11.0 Consultation

Internal and external customers were consulted on our approach to customer service in via:

- Calico Crew
- RAISE customer scrutiny panel
- Senior and Operational Managers from the respective parts of the Group
- Various customer steering and focus groups

Customers said the most important aspects of customer service were:

- Ensuring effective communication
- Keeping customers informed throughout their enquiry
- Staff understanding customers' needs and special requirements

Staff said the most important themes to customer service were:

- Having fully engaged staff living the passionate about customers behavioural style
- To have consistency in the delivery of customer service across the group

- To have systems in place to support the delivery of customer service

The above themes are explained in more detail and the progress reported within the customer service strategy action plan.

12.0 Benchmarking

This policy has been benchmarked against a variety of Housing associations, charitable organisations and UK leaders in customer service including those that have achieved Best Companies Sunday Times Top 100, Customer Service Excellence and the Institute of Customer Service 'Service Mark'.

- New Charter Housing, Community Gateway, Accord, Parkway Green, The Guinness partnership, Liverpool Housing Trust, Regenda. Trafford Housing Trust, Places for People, ISOS Housing, John Lewis and Boots.

The purpose of the benchmarking exercise was to compare the service standards provided to ensure that this policy is to an equal or higher standard. The relevant findings were used in the development of this revised policy.

13.0 Related Strategies, Policies and Procedures

This list is not exhaustive, as customer service is a theme which is covered within many strategies, policies and procedures, but some examples include:

- Customer Service Strategy
- Customer Contact and Compensation Policy
- Code of Conduct and Professional Boundaries Policy
- Community Involvement Strategy
- Digital Strategy
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Giving Something Back Strategy
- People Strategy
- Procurement Procedure
- Professional Boundaries Policy
- Service Specific policies for example Responsive Repairs and Gas
- Social Media Policy
- Successful Neighbourhoods Strategy
- Value for money Strategy
- Vulnerability Strategy

The customer care policy also supports the Performance Management scheme and the company behavioural styles which are:-

Passionate about customers

Customer focus is at the heart of what we do at Calico. This can be whether you deal with customers who live in our neighbourhoods or internal customers from other teams or partner organisations.

Rising to the challenge

Calico is an ambitious organisation that is determined to keep improving. This means that every member of staff should be supported to work at a pace and level that enables us to bring about the positive changes we want to achieve.

Committed to Calico

We all need to get the best out of our time at work and also put the best of ourselves into the work we do. To make sure we continue to achieve as an organisation we need dedicated staff to keep us moving forward.

Maximising potential

There are always opportunities for us to work smarter, not harder, and that's exactly what we need to do to make sure everybody achieves their potential. This means showing a willingness to try new things and put things right where necessary.

Inspiring leadership

We need confident managers who communicate honestly and appropriately, who lead by example and deliver on promises. They need to motivate, support, challenge and reward their teams to achieve high performance and coach their staff to unlock and develop their full potential

Appendix 1 – Calico Corporate Customer Service Standards

The customer service standards outline the levels of service that our customers can expect to receive when they contact us. We are committed to achieving high levels of customer satisfaction across all services. We will monitor our performance against customer feedback and report on the measurable service standards. Individual performance targets are reviewed annually.

A) We will always;

1. Listen, be polite, friendly, patient, honest and helpful whenever you deal with us.
2. Resolve your enquiry fully, but if for any reason we can't do this straightaway we will identify an appropriate colleague or relevant support agency that can help.
3. Keep you informed on our timescales and the progress of your enquiry.
4. Provide accessible services for all.
5. At Centenary Court, we have disabled toilets and hearing loop facilities.
6. We can provide the information you need in alternative forms e.g. large print, audio format, Braille and arrange telephone translations with the Language Line service. (Please note the written translation service takes up to 7 days).
7. Deliver our services in a way that does not discriminate against anyone.

B) When you visit the Calico Group head office we will;

1. Ensure our offices are accessible, welcoming, clean and tidy.
2. Have a wide range of customer information available on display.
3. Aim to greet you within 5 minutes.
4. Try to see you if you do not already have a prior appointment, or make another suitable appointment with the person you need to see.
5. Provide private meeting rooms if required.

C) When you telephone the Calico Group head office we will;

1. Aim to answer 80% of calls within 30 seconds.
2. Ask you to confirm your name, address, telephone and email details.
3. Aim to answer your enquiry in full at the first point of contact.
4. If we cannot fully resolve your enquiry at the first point of contact, we will pass you onto the right person or service that can.
5. Reply to any call back requests, left on the Contact Centre voicemail, within 15 minutes.
6. Reply to any call back requests left with non-Contact Centre staff within 48 hours.
7. Have up to date voicemail greetings in place, if we cannot answer our telephone.
8. Provide an out of hour's emergency repairs service, when our offices are closed.

D) When you email contact@calico.org.uk or write to Calico, requesting information we will;

1. Acknowledge receipt of your email immediately.
2. Answer your email enquiry within 2* working days.
3. Acknowledge letters within 3* working days of receipt.
4. Answer any complaint within 10* working days.
5. If we can't achieve these timescales we will contact you to explain why and agree a fresh timescale with you.
6. Use plain English, jargon free language.

* Working days do not include weekends or public holidays.

E) If a member of the Calico Group or a contractor visits you in your home, they will;

1. Allow time for you to answer the door or the telephone, if you have mobility problems.
2. Provide their name and show you their identity card.
3. Respect your property and your personal belongings.
4. Leave you a calling card, as appropriate to the service area, showing the time of our visit, with the name and a contact telephone number, if you are not at home.
5. Notify you in advance if we are unable to keep our appointment and rearrange it at your convenience.

F) If you are happy or unhappy with our customer service:

We welcome feedback on all the services we deliver, so we can continually improve how we do things. Your views are important to us and we treat them seriously.

1. If you are happy with our service please tell us so we can pass your compliments onto our staff.
2. If we've done something you are not happy with then please tell us so we can fix things as soon as possible.
3. Feedback forms are available from our offices or websites. For example, the Customer Contact and Compensation Policy and 'Have your say' form explains the Calico Homes complaints procedure in more detail.

You can get in touch by:

Telephone: 0800 169 2407 or 01282 686300
Email: contact@calico.org.uk
Online at: www.calico.org.uk/contact
Social media: [facebook.com/calicohomesandenterprise](https://www.facebook.com/calicohomesandenterprise)
twitter.com: Calico_Group

In support of our Service Standards, our customers and residents can help the Calico Group to provide an excellent service by;

1. Keeping to any agreed appointments with us or by giving us advance notice if you need to rearrange.
2. Providing as much information as you can, so Calico can understand how best to help you.
3. Knowing what your responsibilities are as a Calico customer.
4. Completing customer satisfaction surveys or by getting involved in our customer events.
5. Being honest with your feedback, so we can use this to continually improve our services.
6. If someone is speaking to Calico on your behalf, please ensure that Calico know that you have given them permission, otherwise we will not be able to help.
7. Dealing with our staff in a pleasant manner. Calico will not tolerate any rude, abusive or threatening behaviour. If this did happen, Calico will take the appropriate action and report any incidents to the police or other relevant authority.

Appendix 2 – Calico Internal Customer Service Standards

Within the Calico Group we respect our colleagues and treat them as internal customers so to provide a high standard of customer service.

We recognise that having internal service standards, in addition to our corporate service standards will help colleagues provide an excellent service to our external customers. Internal refers to all staff in all departments within the Calico group and not just those working in a customer facing environment or a back office department.

Calico colleagues achieve internal customer service excellence by;

- Taking responsibility for the enquiry and following it through
- Responding to customers and colleagues when you say you will
- Keeping colleagues informed when there are any changes to services or information or advice to customers
- Being available to assist customers and colleagues with complex enquiries
- Updating the appropriate customer contact systems to record information
- Use voicemail sparingly i.e. only when you are away from your desk, if you are unable to divert your call to your company mobile or a colleague
- Responding to voicemail messages by the next working day
- Keeping your office telephone and company mobile voicemail greetings up to date, confirming the time and date you are due back and the name and number of a colleague who can be contacted in your absence
- Highlighting to a colleague when any out of date voicemails or email greetings are noticed
- Ensuring any email 'Out Of Office Replies' are up to date