



2025 - 2029



# Customer Access Strategy

## St Leger Homes of Doncaster

Providing homes in neighbourhoods that people are proud to live





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# Foreword

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**Our customers are at the heart of everything we do and I believe that putting the customer first is not just a regulatory requirement, but a fundamental principle that drives our mission and values and ambition to deliver great services. But to deliver great services we need to ensure that access to our services is the best it can be – that access is easy, accessible, efficient and meets all our customers' needs. This Customer Access Strategy sets out our commitment to deliver this.**



Chris Margrave, Chief Executive

Supporting the regulation of social housing's consumer regulations is important to us, but our commitment goes beyond compliance. Providing excellent customer service is the right thing to do. It is integral to building trust and fostering good relationships with our customers.

When we speak to our customers about what they want when they access our services, they tell us how important it is to them that access is easy and that they are not kept waiting too long. They also say they want to access services at a time and in a way that suits them. Because this is important to our customers, that makes it important to us.

The main drive of this strategy therefore is to ensure we continue to provide a range of different access channels that our customers, including our future customers want to use, so that they experience great customer service regardless of their access channel of choice.

I hope after reading the Strategy that you feel the aims of the strategy, and actions we want to deliver will help us achieve that. Enjoy the read.



Chris Margrave  
*Chief Executive, St Leger Homes of Doncaster*



# Introduction

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**This Customer Access Strategy provides the strategic direction for the business over the four years, setting out a number of actions we will deliver to make it easier for all our customers to access our services, regardless of their personal circumstances, in a way and at a time that suits them, and which is efficient for both the customer and the organisation.**

Customers can access our services in a number of ways, by phone, email, in person, using our web and our portal. To support our diverse range of customers we provide a text reporting service for customers who are speech impaired or hard of hearing. Our website includes a language translation service and we can also access a verbal translation service in the office or out on site for those customers whose first language is not English. We provide various documents in braille, on request.

The Strategy supports the delivery of one of our aims in our Corporate Plan - Investing in our communication channels; increasing opportunities to access our services when and how it suits you.

Quality of access to housing services and making it easy for our customers to contact us is a regulatory requirement and is something we value, not because we have to do it, but because it is the right thing to do.

Following consultation with our customers, our strategy for customer access is to provide a range of access channels so customers have a choice about how they contact us, whilst at the same time encouraging customers to access our services digitally at a time that suits their needs and lifestyles.

By maintaining a channel of choice approach we ensure that all customers, regardless of how proficient they are using technology or whether they have access to technology, can reach us in a way that is comfortable and convenient for them.

The Strategy also acknowledges the need to adapt and evolve in response to the changing landscape of customer service. As technology advances, more customers are seeking digital access options that offer greater flexibility and convenience. To meet these demands and ensure we are not left behind, we are committed to expanding our digital access channels. This includes offering services through digital platforms.

By offering a combination our approach to access is about choice, recognising one size does not fit all, but also recognising by offering a combination of traditional and digital access channels, we can ensure that we remain responsive to the diverse needs of our customers while also positioning ourselves for improved service delivery by allowing staff to focus on more complex customer enquiries.

This strategy of choice of access channels can lead to higher levels of customer satisfaction and engagement, as customers feel more in control of how they interact and carry out transactions with us.

Our employees play a part in ensuring ease of access to our services. They are pivotal in creating a positive experience. The strategy emphasises the importance of staff being able to understand and meet the individual needs of customers whether they are interacting with a customer over the phone or face to face or impacting on customer access in a back office role. The actions focused on employee development will support an approach whereby staff focus on customer, rather than service first, delivery.



# Overview

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## Who is the Strategy For

This Strategy is for anyone who needs to access our services.

## Our Key Objectives

1

Improving the overall customer experience: Ensuring that customers have a positive experience when accessing services, regardless of their channel of choice.

2

Making it easier for customers to do business with us: Reducing barriers for customers, while ensuring that our services are accessible and inclusive for all, regardless of diverse backgrounds and needs.

3

Increasing the use of digital channels and self-service: Encouraging customers to use digital methods for accessing services.

4

Understanding our customers better: Gathering insights to ensure our access channels meet the needs of customers.

## **Our Ambition is to be**

An organisation which makes it easy for all our customers to access our services, regardless of their personal circumstances, in a way and at a time that suits them and in a way which is efficient for both the customer and the organisation.

## **Links to other Strategies**

This Strategy is cross-cutting. It is closely aligned to our IT Strategy and is supported by our Equality and Diversity, our Data Smart and our People strategies.

## **Actions we will take to achieve our objectives**

To help deliver the customer access strategy, we have set ourselves a number of actions to achieve our key objectives. These are set out from page 8 onwards. These actions are designed to improve the overall customer experience, make it easier for customers to do business with us, increase the use of digital channels and self-service, and better understand customer needs.

To ensure we continue to get the basics right first time, we have included actions to ensure we do not lose sight of improving our traditional access channels. Our employee focused actions ensure that our employees have the skills and display the right attitude for customers to have a positive experience when accessing our services.

Overall, staff play a vital role in ensuring that customers have a positive experience when accessing services. Their skills, attitudes, and interactions are integral to building trust and fostering good relationships with customers.



## Improving the overall customer experience:

Ensuring that customers have a positive experience when accessing services

Action	Outcome
Implementing a revised mystery shopping experience to gauge the level of service provided at key access points.	Ensure we have a mechanism that provides independent check and challenge on how we are delivering our services at our key access channels so customers can benefit from consistently high standards across all access points.
Providing clear instructions and support for customers to use digital and self-service channels.	Ensure that customers are not excluded from accessing our services digitally and we increase the number of digital transactions.
Working collaboratively across teams to build the knowledge of the Customer Access Team	Support the delivery of right first-time advice at the first point of contact and improve the customer experience, reducing the need to hand off customers to other members of staff
Putting protocols in place across the organisation to ensure the same level of access when using direct phone line contact to back-office teams	Ensure consistency of customer service regardless of which channel of access the customer chooses.
Investing in staff training to improve the customer experience by emphasising the value of customers in any contact.	Support the delivery of right first-time advice at the first point of contact so customers benefit from knowledgeable and well trained staff to improve the customer experience.

Explore potential advantages of using software to gather and analyse customer feedback and sentiment from different sources in one place.

Have a comprehensive understanding of our customer feedback so the organisation can make informed decision to improve the overall customer experience.

Review/implement an access induction pack for new tenants.

Ensure all new tenants receive the same information and support about the different ways in which they can access our services so they can make an informed decision about how they wish to contact us. New tenants will feel well-informed and supported from the start.

Implement a number of digital support days using digital champions from across the business to deliver training across the borough.

Enhancing digital literacy among our customers, increasing the adoption of digital services, and ensuring that all customers, regardless of their proficiency with technology, can access our services efficiently and effectively. Customers will become more confident in using digital services, leading to greater adoption and satisfaction.

Balance performance measures so that they capture and measure the quality of contact and not just quantitative measures.

Be able to ensure sufficient time is made available to hold meaningful conversations with customers. This will lead to more meaningful and satisfying interactions, ultimately enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty.



**Making it easier for customers to do business with us:**

Simplifying processes and reducing customer barriers, while ensuring that our services are accessible and inclusive for all, regardless of diverse backgrounds and needs.

Action	Outcome
Promote the use of home visits, where other channels are not accessible to our tenants	Ensure that all our tenants regardless of their personal circumstances are able to access the services they need.
Investigate opportunities to use use our automated telephone system to support improved access to services.	Enhance the accessibility and usability of our services.
Review direct access to back-office services to ensure they are accessible and easy for customers to use.	Ensure consistency of customer service and a customer first approach regardless which area of the business the customers is dealing with.
Review the use of self-service access points available at Civic and Balby Bridge receptions.	Improve self service access and reduce the wait time for customers at our receptions.
Identify and explore with business colleagues where services can be increasingly channelled to an online option to expand our online offer.	Increase the opportunities for customers to access more services on line, freeing up resources to deal with more complex issues and making it easier for customers to access our services at a time that suits their needs,
Review procedures in place for customers to contact for emergency reasons during telephony outages, during and outside of normal office hours.	Ensure continuity and reliability of services for customers to be able to access critical services.

Review the use of CRM and implement any required procedural changes, to ensure all relevant interactions are being captured within our Housing Management System.

Ensure we are compliant with the recommendations of the housing ombudsman's KIM spotlight report and have full transparency of all customer interactions to ensure we improve the customer experience and nothing is missed which will impact on the customer.

Rationalise the number of email addresses available for customers to contact us and review who responds.

Ensure customers are clear about which email address to use and will increase accountability and ownership for the enquiry across teams.

Ensure those without telephone access can reach key services through a phone available in an area office.

Customers who do not have access to a telephone will still be able to reach essential services. This will ensure that all customers, regardless of their personal circumstances, can access the support they need, leading to a more inclusive and equitable service delivery.

Pilot virtual viewings using video.

To improve the customer experience and waste in the viewing process.



## Increasing the use of digital channels and self-service:

Encouraging customers to use digital methods for accessing services.

Action	Outcome
Undertaking a number of targeted focus groups to understand why customers prefer to use the traditional methods of access.	Gather insight into customer preferences and use these to inform strategies and actions to encourage digital access.
Promote the use of digital channels and the benefits using a range of media.	Increase awareness of the different ways in which customers can access our services and increase the use of self service to free up resources for more complex enquiries.
Produce a series of videos to support and encourage customers to access our services on-line.	Support customers who may not feel confident accessing our services digitally or who may not be aware of the different access channels they can choose from. Customers will feel more confident and informed about digital services.
Implement self-service for the end-to-end repair process.	Improve customer access to a key service area at a time that suits their needs, reducing demand on the customer access team.
Improve current access to services using digital channels by either improving the existing portal or replacing with an improved channel.	Enhance the user experience and functionality of digital services to increase take up of self service.

Communicate the safety and reliability of on-line services to encourage adoption

Build trust and confidence in digital services to increase the number of transactions carried out digitally.

Signpost programmes to help customers develop digital skills, co-ordinated from our partners across Doncaster.

Support customers who may not feel confident accessing our services digitally to ensure that all customers have the skills and knowledge to be able to access services online to increase the take up of self-service options.

Explore opportunities to provide online access for those without access to on-line services.

Ensure no customer is digitally excluded and everyone can benefit from digital services and opportunities. This will increase adoption of digital services and provide more opportunities for improved data collection and ultimately analysis.



## Understanding our customers better:

Gathering insights to tailor services to meet the needs of customers.

Action	Outcome
Put in place regular reporting procedures and sharing of analysis and performance data to inform decision making to improve access to services.	Ensure that the decisions we make to improve access to services are based on accurate and up to date information and can be tailored to meet the customers' needs.
Review our translation and interpretation services to ensure they are fit for purpose and re-launch across the organisation.	Reduce any language barriers to accessing our services and ensure all employees are aware of their role and the support available to support all customers who speak a different language to have better access to our services.
Review how and what data we collect about tenants, and our procedures for doing so, to ensure we have the data we need to deliver services in ways which meet their needs	Improve the completeness and accuracy of customer data so that customers can benefit from a more tailored service delivery.
Implement the Data Smart Strategy.	Ensure the organisation is using data effectively to improve services and the customer experience.
Work with tenants to identify areas where they believe there are shortcomings in service access and put in place actions to address these.	Identify opportunities, informed by customer feedback, to improve access to services and identify opportunities to co-create solutions that benefit tenants' specific needs.



# Measuring our success

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## How we will measure our success

### We will measure the success of our Strategy by:

- An increase in the number of customers satisfied that they can easily access our services, measured using transactional and perception surveys.
- Increases in the number of customers registered to access our services digitally - Monitoring the number of customers registered to access services digitally can indicate the effectiveness and adoption of digital channels.
- Increases in the number of transactions carried out digitally.
- Outcomes from mystery shopping exercises - implementing mystery shopping experiences helps gauge the level of service provided at key access points
- Stakeholder feedback - Regularly gathering feedback from stakeholders to understand their satisfaction with the range of channels available and the ease of accessing services.
- Reduction in the number of complaints regarding staff attitudes and behaviours.



# Realising Ambitions

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**How we will know when we have achieved our ambitions**

**When our stakeholders tell us that:**

- They had an excellent experience when accessing our service.
- They can access our services at time that suits their needs.
- They can get through to the right person, right first time.
- The person they speak to understands their individual needs.
- Their entire customer experience exceeded their expectations and was easy and seamless regardless of their personal circumstances.



# Monitoring our progress

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A yearly action plan, showing actions due for completion within the current year and the following year's actions will be reported to the Board or Committee and will detail specific delivery timescales. Heads of Service will take ownership for updating actions where they are taking a lead role.



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