



CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY 2009 - 2012

Directorate: Improvement & Customer Service

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Our Vision: 'More than just a place to live'

Our Aim: To become an excellent organisation that provides quality homes and services and helps to make neighbourhoods in Central Salford popular places to live and work.

Our Organisational Objectives:

- S Services that continuously improve** - and meet the needs of all our customers and achieve value for money
 - P Promoting respect** - and making neighbourhoods safe
 - I Improving Neighbourhoods** - by working in partnership to improve the choice of homes and the environment around our customers' homes
 - R Reducing inequalities** – in Central Salford
 - I Improving homes** - by making them decent
 - T Three stars** - an employer of choice, a leader in our field, delivering excellent services to our customers
-

Our Values:

'As an organisation we will place our customers at the centre of everything we do'

- P Partnership** – Work in partnership with customers, communities & organisations
- R Real Difference** – Embrace new technologies to achieve effective ways of working
- I Integrity** – Be well managed & financially sound
- D Diversity** – Be inclusive – recognise Equality & Diversity
- E Empowerment** – Well trained, empowered & valued staff encouraged to make a difference to customers lives

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Customer Access Strategy 2009 – 2012 is designed to support our vision and values, which places customers at the heart of the culture and business of Salix Homes.
- 1.2 The Salix Way is how we go about our business in central Salford. In developing our vision and values, the Board, our customers and key partners such as the council want our staff and contractors to adopt and champion the following principles of customer care:
- Listen to our customers and respect what they are saying;
 - Take ownership of the individual needs and requests of our customers with actions that seek to ‘get it right first time’;
 - Deal with customers quickly and keep them informed at all times;
 - Negotiate and communicate with others on behalf of our customers;
 - Support each other and be willing to try new things;
 - Learn from each other, our customers and from other organisations;
 - Become a champion for our neighbourhoods, customers and communities.
- 1.3 The strategy also supports the following strategic organisational objectives:
- Objective 1: Services that continuously improve - and meet the needs of all our customers and achieves value for money
 - Objective 4: Reducing inequalities – in Central Salford
 - Objective 6: Three Stars – an employer of choice, a leader in our field, delivering excellent services to our customers
- 1.4 By nurturing and developing a customer focussed culture Salix Homes is committed to delivering excellent customer services. To afford our customers a variety of opportunities and methods to access our services is a fundamental aim of Salix Homes. Customers should expect to access our services at an accessible time, location and in a way that suits their individual needs. Their experience as a customer should be consistent no matter which way they access our services.
- 1.5 Salix Homes strives to deliver an excellent service at all times and recognises the value from learning from customers and welcomes their feedback. Salix Homes regularly updates customers of ways in which their feedback has informed service improvements through our quarterly newsletter feature ‘You said, We did’.

- 1.6 Salix Homes is committed to providing excellent services that are efficient, effective, and accessible. To demonstrate our commitment to delivering excellent customer service Salix Homes aims to achieve the Customer Service Excellence Standard, the government's national standard for excellent customer service during 2009.
- 1.7 This strategy has been developed in collaboration with our customers, staff and partners. It sets out how Salix Homes intends to ensure maximum access to all our services as well as ensuring that we deliver services in ways that meet their aspirations and needs.
- 1.8 Partners of Salix Homes who deliver services to our customers on the front line have contributed to our achievements to date and are committed to work with both Salix Homes and our customers to explore further development opportunities that will improve service delivery and the customer experience.
- 1.9 This is not a stand alone strategy. It seeks to support and compliment the Business Plan and Customer Involvement Strategy together with a range of other strategies including Equalities and Diversity, Value for Money, Marketing and Communication and Better Neighbourhoods.
- 1.10 The final part of the strategy is a three-year action plan that seeks to demonstrate how enhanced customer access and excellent service will be achieved and delivered.

2 Scope of the strategy

2.1 The term 'customer' is generic. It embraces citizens, members of the public, service users, clients and partners. The term 'customer' refers to anyone who requires, requests, receives or can receive a service from Salix Homes whether that service is provided internally or externally, or internally to others who work for or with Salix Homes. All customers have a common expectation. They want us to be proactive in responding to their enquiry and resolving it in a consistent and excellent manner at their first point of contact, no matter how they chose to access the service.

2.2 There are three key strands that have informed this strategy and shaped its direction and content:

- Our business intelligence;
- Customer feedback and information;
- Best practice and learning from high performing organisations.

2.3 The strategy seeks to achieve four strategic objectives:

Objective 1: Provide a wide range of accessible services that achieve value for money

This objective will ensure that customers can access services in a variety of ways and locations, whilst also achieving value for money.

Objective 2: Identify and remove barriers to access

This objective will ensure that customers are aware of the services that are available to them, that we support their preferred method of contacting Salix Homes and of using our services.

Objective 3: Provide a positive, memorable customer experience

This objective will ensure that customers receive a service that is individually tailored to meet their needs and seeks to provide a rewarding customer experience.

Objective 4: Ensure staff and partners are well trained, empowered and want to make a difference

This objective will ensure that each time a customer has contact with Salix Homes, or a partner of Salix Homes, staff are able to provide the standard and quality of customer service and care expected of them.

2.4 Customers deserve an excellent service and through consultation have determined for Salix Homes what this should look like; that services are:

- **Accessible** – services are provided at times and in ways which maximise their usage, that Salix Homes provides choices for customers in accessing them and minimises the need to travel;
- **Consistent** – information is used effectively to ensure the same level of service and same information is available to all;
- **Joined up** -- with partners, the council and other agencies to enable services to be delivered in an holistic manner and minimises the need for a customer to make additional contact or enquiries;
- **Quality** – are of a high quality, reliable, flexible and responsive;
- **Relevant** – knowing who are customers are and tailoring services to meet specific needs;
- **Value for Money** – services are cost effective, reliable and efficient whilst still maintaining a high level of customer care.

What does our vision look like?

2.5 What does our vision look like for customers? The following scenarios illustrate the standard of customer service this strategy aims to achieve:

a. Mr Jones works during the day and would like to request some information about household insurance. Mr Jones contacts the free phone number that connects him to the out of hours contact centre. The advisor is able to provide the relevant information using the centrally stored scripts as guidance and posts him an application form. Mr Jones is also given the opportunity of applying online through the website or through the digital channels on his TV.

b. Steve, a Customer Involvement Officer, is able to communicate with Mrs Smith, a profoundly deaf customer, by using British Sign Language to advise her of an event for customers who have hearing impairments. Steve had met Mrs Smith at a previous event and was aware of the barriers she encountered to becoming involved. Working in partnership with the Sensory Service Team, Steve had arranged for a Text phone to be installed at Mrs Smith's property. This will enable Mrs Smith to make direct contact with Salix Homes via the text phone installed in all our customer reception areas.

c. Mr Strzala calls the free phone number and the new computer system has recognised the caller and identified that Mr Strzala speaks little English, and that his preferred language is Polish. Immediately, the Customer Service Advisor activates the telephone conferencing facility on her phone to contact a translator to enable Mr Strzala to communicate with Salix Homes effectively and clearly.

How the strategy was developed

- 2.6 The strategy has been developed through extensive consultation with customers, partners and staff.
- 2.7 A focus group was established to consult with the Salix Homes Senate, our Service Specific Panels and Customer Inspectors.
- 2.8 During 2008, consultation with customers confirmed their preference for the provision of specific, not generic services. Customers told us that they wanted to deal with highly trained and specialist officers who able to respond to a customer enquiry in a detailed, knowledgeable and effective manner.
- 2.9 In response to this consultation Salix Homes developed the Better Neighbourhoods Strategy and introduced an extensive change management programme that led to the establishment of a number of specialist teams and services. These teams and services reflect customer priorities and include:
- Customer Service team;
 - Cleaner Greener Neighbourhoods team;
 - Safer Neighbourhoods team;
 - Empty Properties team;
 - Supporting Neighbourhoods team;
 - Income Management team;
 - Investment and Maintenance team;
 - Better Neighbourhoods team.

The organisational structure established during 2008 has enabled more focussed and effective service delivery and an improving customer experience.

- 2.10 Consultation also revealed the need to review the location of customer access points and opening times. Salix Homes provides services in two outlying estates; Beechfarm in Swinton and Rainsough Brow in Prestwich, as well as the council owned homes located in the central Salford area.
- 2.11 Consequently during the autumn of 2008, the Customer Services team embarked on a series of consultation exercises to gain the opinions of customers on how they access our services, the location of customer access points and opening hours.
- 2.12 In response to this consultation, Salix Homes launched a new service with extended opening hours as a pilot at the beginning of 2009. This pilot service has informed the development of the strategy.

2.13 Consultation has continued to take place with customers throughout 2009 and has included:

- Stand point electronic questionnaires to measure the level of customer satisfaction;
- 'Getting to know you' campaign – door knocking and telephone contact exercises to capture customer feedback;
- Customer Service Pilot surveys;
- Regular feedback from our Customer Access and Involvement Service Specific Panel;
- Feedback from the Salix Homes Senate.

2.14 In addition to customer feedback, the strategy has been informed by our understanding of best practice and learning from other high performing organisations, as well as our own business intelligence, particularly our growing knowledge and understanding of our customers.

2.15 This strategy is a living document and consultation and reviews of service will continue to take place to ensure that we are meeting customer expectations and needs now and in the future.

3 The Strategic Context

3.1 National

- 3.1.1 The Government's White Paper '*Communities in control: real people, real power*' confirms the importance of the customer in developing and improving services, their quality and effectiveness. Salix Homes has developed a Customer Involvement Strategy that seeks to ensure our customers are empowered to influence service delivery to help ensure services meet their exacting requirements and expectations.
- 3.1.2 The Oxford Institute survey shows an increase of 40% in internet usage from 2005 – 2007 of e-Government on-line services, such as the payment of bills etc. However in central Salford local surveys have indicated that less than 5 % of the population access Salix Homes services via the internet or e-mail. To encourage greater use of internet service access Salix Homes will be working with our customers to develop their ICT knowledge and skills. We will do this by working in partnership with local colleges, Skills for Life, and Connexions to offer appropriate training and support. In addition Salix Homes has launched an extensive learning and development programme for all customers that includes the provision of computer equipment available for their use at Diamond House. All of our customer access points have facilities for customers to access our on-line services.
- 3.1.3 With the digital switch over happening in central Salford in November 2009 Salix Homes has begun to explore opportunities for customers to take advantage of new digital technology and access services from the comfort of their own home. This is a feature of our Marketing and Communication Strategy.
- 3.1.4 The Cabinet Office has established a national standard for excellent customer services. Customer Service Excellence accreditation has been developed to offer public services a practical tool for driving customer - focused change within organisations. The Customer Service Excellence standard tests in great depth key priorities for customers such as service delivery, timeliness, staff attitude, information and professionalism. Emphasis is also placed on developing customer insight, understanding customer experience and robust measurement of customer satisfaction. Salix Homes intends to secure formal accreditation through independent validation of achievement during 2009.
- 3.1.5 The Audit Commissions 'Access and Customer Care' KLoE confirms the overarching questions Housing Inspectors will ask in determining the effectiveness and efficiency of an organisations approach to the delivery of services. In particular the KLoE confirms the need for clear customer focus throughout the organisation, ease of access to services, the need for quality information, good customer feedback and effective consultation. Salix Homes is undertaking a significant programme of

improvement during 2009/10 with plans to sustain and maintain continuous improvement through to the mid and long terms. A key objective of our Improvement Programme is compliance with all Audit Commission KLoE's including 'Access and Customer Care'.

3.2 Local

3.2.1 Salix Homes works in partnership to support and compliment the seven themes of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), Partners in Salford, which also reflect the aspirations expressed by local people in their community action plans. These themes are:

- A healthy city
- A safe city
- A learning and creative city
- A city where young children and young people are valued
- An inclusive city
- An economically prosperous city
- A city that is good to live in

The priorities and actions support the mission statement of the LSP to ***'To create the best possible quality of life for the people of Salford'***.

3.2.2 Underpinning the work of the LSP is the Local Area Agreement (LAA). A key objective of the LAA is to create desirable neighbourhoods with accessible services that are in turn safe and well maintained. The LAA will drive forward the responsibilities of the council, supported by Salix Homes, in responding to the economic downturn by encouraging and supporting sustainable community development and neighbourhood management, and in linking key interventions and actions encompassing the environment, housing, transport and the local economy.

3.2.3 Our partners provide a number of critical front line customer services. Eight out of ten customers have some contact with our Salix Direct Contact Centre during the course of a year. Jackson Lloyd provides day to day, urgent and emergency repairs services. Apollo Heating provides essential gas related services. The council, through Housing Connections provide services to our customers in sheltered housing properties, support vulnerable customers to maintain their tenancy and assist Salix Homes to support customers who are experiencing nuisance. In addition to our partners delivering front line services Salix Homes has developed strong working partnerships with other agencies such as the Police, Youth Offending Service, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and various council Directorates to support and work with our customers to identify and tackle local issues by developing joined up and multi agency solutions.

Salix Homes leads a Co-located multi agency pilot team based within our Head Office that involves:

- Weekly sessions with key partners to determine immediate priorities and activities, and progress toward delivering a 100 day action plan
- An intensive approach to service delivery, with commitment from key partners to significant resourcing in supporting the delivery of an agreed Action Plan
- Involvement of a community based 'steering group' to ensure activities and actions are consistent with community priorities and aspirations
- Regular monitoring of impact on the neighbourhood profile
- In addition to leading one Co-located team covering Ordsall and Langworthy, Salix Homes is a key partner in a second team covering the Broughton area.

These teams are excellent examples of partnership working for the benefit of our customers.

3.2.4 In partnership with Jackson Lloyd, Salix Homes launched the 'opti-time' initiative in May 2009. This will bring significant benefits to customers, particularly the arrangement of an appointment at a time of their choosing. Customers will be reminded of their previously arranged appointment, advised if the tradesman is delayed and will 'sign off' jobs if completed to their satisfaction. Other improvements to customer service agreed with Jackson Lloyd include:

- A commitment to an effective Customer Charter including direct contact with customers where appropriate;
- Repairs diagnostic handbook being developed with customers;
- Repairs surgeries;
- Provision of free training to customers on basic DIY.

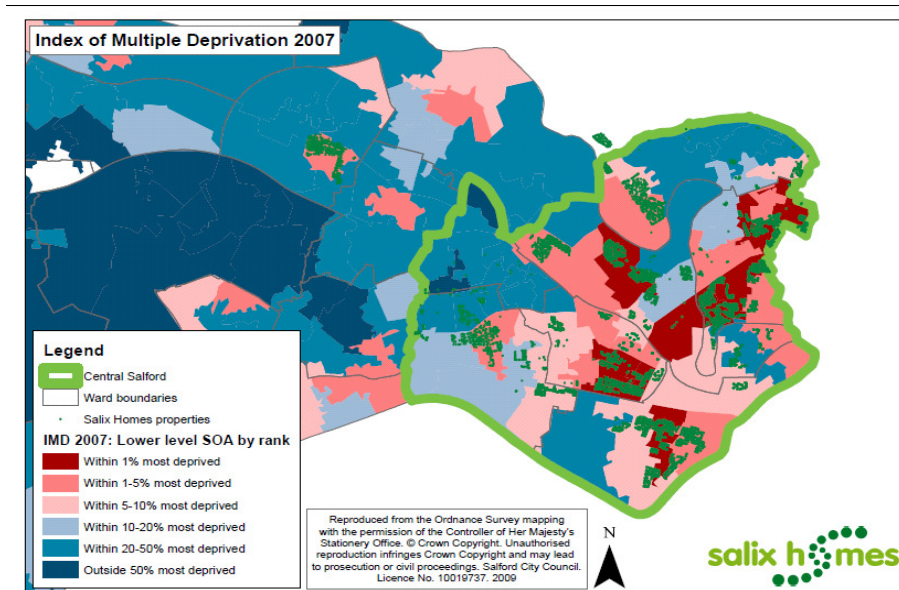
3.2.5 Apollo Heating opened their doors to our customers to share with them how they have developed their services and how they are working with young people to provide apprenticeships and how they pride themselves with employing local labour. Other improvements to customer service include:

- Direct contact with Apollo to arrange gas servicing;
- Every customer notified of agreed appointment;
- Customers have a choice on ways to change an appointment;
- 24 hour free telephone facility;
- E-mail and web based options.

- 3.2.6 HT Forrest is a key partner in delivering Decent Homes and have actively worked in partnership with customers to make sure that extensive improvements to their homes are achieved with minimum disruption and to an excellent standard. Improvements to customer service developed with HT Forrest include:
- Dedicated Customer Liaison Officers;
 - Support in producing a Decent Homes DVD;
 - Direct line telephone access;
 - Customers 'sign off' work if completed to their satisfaction.
- 3.2.7 Salix Homes has developed a comprehensive strategic framework to guide the short, medium and long-term development of the company. In particular the ICT Strategy approved by the Board in 2007, provides a major commitment to the implementation of a new integrated housing management system. Already procured, this new system will provide over the next 2 years significant opportunities for redefining our Customer Relationship Management (CRM), including options to directly develop not just a technological but a comprehensive customer centric approach to service delivery and development. CRM will further enable the development of our policies and processes, front line customer service, employee training and development, improved business intelligence and information management.
- 3.2.8 This strategy must also complement the aspirations of the council in achieving a 'One Council' approach to customer service. What this means in practice is that as we develop a distinct Salix Homes CRM, appropriate linkages with the council's own evolving CRM systems and processes need to be considered and provided for to ensure an effective and rewarding experience for the customer whether they are directly accessing complimentary council or Salix Homes services.
- 3.2.9 Other strategies that have influenced the development and production of the Customer Access Strategy include:
- Business Plan
 - Value for Money Strategy
 - Equality and Diversity Strategy
 - Customer Involvement Strategy
 - Workforce Development Strategy
 - Better Neighbourhoods Strategy
 - Marketing and Communications Strategy
 - Partners in Salford, Sustainable Communities Strategy

4 Business intelligence and current access arrangements

- 4.1 The 2008 Status Survey undertaken on behalf of Salix Homes by KWest Research is a key source of business intelligence. The accuracy of the data when using 3,684 replies to measure the views of our customers is excellent at $\pm 1.3\%$. The majority of respondents were White British (72%), whilst 18% were White-Irish. Smaller proportions were from other ethnic backgrounds.
- 4.2 The survey informed Salix Homes that 81% of our customers are satisfied with the services they received. This means that 19% of our customers are dissatisfied. Further analysis of the customers who are dissatisfied indicates we are not getting it right first time and they have to contact us again to report the same problem, primarily in relation to repairs services. This is a service failure. In order to rectify this situation Salix Homes has developed a number of process and CRM responses in partnership with Salix Direct, Jackson Lloyd and Apollo Heating.
- 4.3 In the 12 months prior to the survey being conducted 85% of our customers had contacted Salix Homes. Almost three quarters of customers (73%) say it was easy to get hold of the right person when contacting Salix Homes and 86% found the staff helpful with 79.6% confirming that staff could deal with their problems directly.
- 4.4 It is important to stress that the Status Survey confirmed that the preferred method of contacting Salix Homes is by telephone, with 78% of our customers stating that this was their first preference. 19% preferred to write with only 3% visiting a local office.
- 4.5 The KWEST survey indicates that BME customers and young people are less likely to be satisfied with the service they receive. Salix Homes is using this intelligence to actively identify and address the issues or needs of these communities.
- 4.6 Salford is the fifteenth most deprived local authority area in England, but also ranks seventh when local concentration of deprivation is used to differentiate between areas. This suggests inequalities and polarisation in the city, as well as areas within the city where significant levels of multiple deprivations affect the whole population. Figure 1 confirms the extent of deprivation in central Salford.



To ensure the needs and aspirations of each local community is met Salix Homes has adopted seven neighbourhood management areas. Within these management areas, 'blueprinting' areas have been identified. Salix Homes has provided a commitment to customers living in these areas to work in partnership to address local needs, which may include providing local bespoke services, projects and actions to improve the quality of life for our customers.

Knowing our customers

- 4.7 Salix Homes manages over 10,000 homes in Central Salford on behalf of Salford City Council. In addition, Salix Homes provides a regeneration service to residents living within Central Salford and works in partnership with Manchester and Salford Pathfinder, New Deal for Communities, the Central Salford Urban Regeneration Company and the Local Strategic Partnership. In addition Salix Homes offers a service to 310 leaseholders.
- 4.8 Salix Homes knows its customers and following the launch of our 'Getting to Know You' campaign Salix Homes currently holds 100% information on gender and age, 70% on disability, 76.6% on ethnicity, 45.2% on faith/religion and 44.8% on sexuality. In addition to this campaign Salix Homes has continued to work with partners to establish detailed customer information and profiling.

Customer Feedback

- 4.9 Salix Homes monitors customer contact and feedback using different methods; telephone and written surveys, comments, compliments and complaints, informal feedback and customer focused events and activities.
- 4.10 Our 'Customer Feedback' leaflet offers the customer information on how we intend to use it to improve our services. The leaflet is available 'on line' at our customer contact points and can be sent to customers by Salix Direct. We also offer the customer opportunity to request an appeal if they are not satisfied with the response. Complaints are acknowledged within 3 days with the name of the responding officer and confirmation that a full response will be sent within ten working days. A dedicated officer in each service area manages the feedback as appropriate. The Improvement and Communications team manages a database to track feedback progress and performance information is shared with the Board and the council as part of our performance management framework.
- 4.11 Salix Homes analyses and reviews customer feedback to ensure we are capturing as much information as possible from customer contact, and to ensure that this information is used to improve services. Our 'You're Saying, We're Doing' approach demonstrates that we are actively listening to customer feedback and making changes as a result. We publish resulting service improvements in our customer newsletter, 'Limelight' and on our website:

<http://www.salixhomes.org/gettinginvolved/youresaying-weredoing.htm>

Customer access arrangements

- 4.12 Currently Salix Homes has four static customer access points. These are located at:
- Head Office, Diamond House, Weaste;
 - The Salford Homesearch Shop, Salford Shopping City, Pendleton;
 - Blackfriars Housing Office, St Simons Street, Greengate;
 - Ordsall Community Centre, Robert Hall Street, Ordsall.

All customer contact access point opening hours are confirmed on the Salix Homes website along with location maps, and are advertised in local amenities and confirmed in our published communication with customers through contact with Salix Direct. Customers in the Beech Farm neighbourhood area are able to access our services at the Civic Centre, Swinton and through surgeries held at the local TARA office. The Better Neighbourhoods team also offers appointments at the Langworthy Conerstone services facility.

4.13 Salix Homes also offers interviews in a customer's home, including same sex interviews, interviews with an advocate or family friend, or with an interpreter. Salix Homes offers six ways in which customers can pay their rent, including a 24 hour online facility, and we offer a comprehensive advice service for customers who have difficulty managing their finances. Details of this service is widely publicised in customer welcome packs, 'online' and bespoke published information. In addition Salix Homes has appointed a Welfare and Debt Advisor to maximise the income of tenants and therefore maximise income collection. The Welfare and Debt Advisor has provided an opportunity for Salix Homes to work more effectively with partnership agencies who act as advocates on behalf of our customers. Salford [Homesearch](#) offers a choice based lettings service on behalf of Salford City Council.

'Salix to You' Trailer

4.14 Our innovative 'Salix Homes To You' mobile customer contact point trailer has enabled the development of a rolling programme of delivering services to our customers in their neighbourhoods.

Website contact

4.15 A central contact e-mail address enquiries@salixhomes.org is published on the website along with the postal addresses. The website can be viewed in several large font sizes and offers a route to translation services focused on the seven main languages associated within the central Salford community, with four languages being accessible on-line immediately. The website conforms to recognised web standards and accessibility guidelines and contains a full suite of downloadable, electronic copies of our current leaflets. Browse aloud software is available to download in order to speech-enable the website. All Salix Homes posters are in plain English and offer translation services. Posters regarding language line are prominently displayed in all offices and staff are trained in how to access and use the service.

Salix Direct

4.16 Salix Homes offers a free phone number for the overwhelming majority of customers who prefer to contact Salix Homes by telephone. Salix Direct, our telephone customer access point, is currently provided on our behalf by Salford City Council. A Service Level Agreement confirms the required standards of customer care and performance, as well as costs. In addition a landline telephone number is also offered as many customers use mobile phones and they may experience a charge from their service provider when contacting our 0800 free phone number.

Out of Hours

- 4.17 A key aspect of our emergency out of hours access arrangements. Currently provided by Salford City Council, this service is being market tested during 2009 to confirm Value for Money. Customer feedback and mystery shopping exercises over past 12 months have confirmed the need to provide a better quality out of hours service, delivering effective advice to customers particularly in relation to emergency repairs and anti social behaviour.

Hand held technology

- 4.18 Salix Homes is currently piloting mobile devices in different services and intend to commence a programme of expanding its use by staff during 2009/10. Hand held technology will facilitate and support mobile working and enhance the service to customers at the first point of contact.

Service Standards

- 4.19 Customers have been fully involved in the development of a comprehensive set of Service Standards across all of our key service areas. These service standards have been approved and 'signed off' by customers and have been incorporated into our Customer Handbook since October 2008. Our Customer Inspectors regularly review our performance as well as internal performance monitoring. Our service specific panels review and monitor performance against these standards. The performance against the service standards are publicised in contact centres and Limelight. A number of these standards relate to customer access and care.

Disability Discrimination Act Compliance

- 4.20 Two Ticks' Disability Discrimination Act accreditation was achieved in January 2008. An 'Access Audit' carried out by the Greater Manchester Disabled Peoples Access Group during February 2008 resulted in a number of improvement to our fixed customer access points, such as our Head Office. All our principal contact access points are accessible by customers with a disability, however the adoption of this strategy will require that any 'new' customer access points are assessed.
- 4.21 A customer care pack is available for use at each contact point and for home visits with a range of implements that afford customers the opportunity to complete forms more easily.
- 4.22 Portable mini-com loop systems are available for each interview room and meeting room and a text phone is available at Diamond House for customers who have a hearing impairment. Salix Homes has members of staff who are available to offer support to customers who may wish to communicate by sign language.

- 4.23 Salix Homes has training and development programme branded as the Salix Academy which has a training module available for officers to improve their awareness in relation to customers who have a hearing impairment and is accredited by the British Sign Language (BSL) Level One.

5 Best practice

5.1 Knowing your customers and their needs and aspirations is critical to the success of any organisation and allows you to forward plan. In both public and private sector offering customers multiple avenues to access services at convenient times is paramount to customer satisfaction. Regardless of how customers access the service their experience of requesting a service from Salix Homes should be informative and easy to use and wherever possible tailored to their needs.

5.2 Learning from other organisations has been a key feature in developing this strategy. There is considerable best practice amongst ALMO's and RSL's, and staff and customers have undertaken a number of visits to other organisations to research and observe what they are doing to improve customer access and the customer experience. Examples of these visits include:

- Helena Homes – impact of 'opti-time';
- Golden Gates, a 3* ALMO – impact of modern CRM systems;
- Gateshead Housing Company, a 3* ALMO – impact of handheld technology;
- Northwards, a 3* ALMO – impact of self serve options for customers, and Communications Handbook for staff;
- Solihull Community Housing, a 3* ALMO – impact of extending web access to customers in apartment blocks.

5.3 The procurement of a new integrated housing management system has provided Salix Homes with a unique opportunity to identify and implement modern, fit for purpose ICT and telephony over the next 2 years. Staff and customers have been involved in visiting other organisations to observe and use recently installed systems and processes, and have developed a good understanding of what will work for Salix Homes and its customers.

5.4 In addition to excellent CRM, the new ICT system will enable significant organisational and customer service development over the next 2 years such as:

- Further reduction in avoidable contact;
- Self serve and on-line service options for customers;
- Workflow and workforce planning;
- Mobile and home working.

6 Strategic Objective 1: Provide a wide range of accessible services that achieve value for money.

This objective will ensure that customers can access services in a variety of ways and locations, whilst also achieving value for money.

Telephone customer access

- 6.1 8 out of 10 customers have told us that they prefer to contact us by telephone. This is confirmed in both the Status Survey 2008, and in customer feedback captured during 2009 as part of the learning from our Customer Service pilot. It is essential therefore that we continue to invest in and improve our telephone customer access services.
- 6.2 Since 2007 Salix Homes has undertaken a number of improvements to telephone services including:
- Introduced a single free phone number 0800 218 2000
 - Branded the call centre Salix Direct
 - Introduced a land line for mobile phone users
 - Introduced generic Customer Service representatives
 - 2 hour call back when calls cannot be resolved at first point of contact
- 6.3 Customers have told us that they want to see continued improvements to telephone access services. The Salix Homes Customer Senate completed a detailed scrutiny of the Salix Direct service in May 2009. Whilst customers are generally happy with the Salix Direct service they have identified a series of recommendations for improvement, which are captured in the three-year action plan and include:
- Retain the current performance target to answer 80% of calls in 30 seconds as customers felt that the quality of the call was more important than the speed answered;
 - Enhance the customer journey for those customers who require support to managing their rent account or are experiencing hate crime or potential violence and reduce avoidable contact;
 - Involve customers in the monitoring and review of the Salix Direct Service Level Agreement with the council;
 - Market test the service at an appropriate time in the future

6.4 Customers have consistently told us that they want Salix Homes and its partners to 'get it right first time'. Bespoke training has been provided for Customer Service representatives within Salix Direct including:

- 'The Salix Way';
- Repairs diagnostics;
- How Salix Homes works;
- Recognising anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse.

In addition to formal training we have introduced a range of activities to enhance the service provided by Salix Direct to our customers:

- Job shadowing programme including property inspections;
- Participation in Neighbourhood Days activities;
- Monthly briefing session at the contact centre;
- Attendance at Salix Homes monthly briefing;
- Established a Partnership Working Group.

6.5 Similar training for Customer Service representatives within Jackson Lloyd, HT Forrest and Apollo Heating is also planned for 2009.

6.6 Given the importance to customers of telephone access services a network of free telephone access points will be introduced and developed during 2009/10. This will ensure that a free telephone service will be made available to all our customers in a variety of accessible locations in neighbourhoods such as:

- Libraries and community centres;
- TARA offices, sheltered housing schemes;
- Shops.

6.7 A new Out of Hours telephone emergency service provider is being procured during 2009. This will ensure the provision of a Value for Money service, and one that begins to address the negative feedback we have had from customers and mystery shoppers during 2007/8 regarding the standard of customer care and quality of advice given to customers accessing the current service.

Direct customer access

- 6.8 Just over 1 in 10 of our customers have told us that they prefer to contact us directly, at a local contact point. This is confirmed in both the Status Survey 2008, and in customer feedback captured during 2009 as part of the learning from our Customer Service pilot.
- 6.9 Direct customer access can be provided in two ways:
- At a static location, or;
 - Through the provision of mobile options such as home visits, mobile working, taking services into a neighbourhood and self service.
- 6.10 Currently Salix Homes provides static direct customer access at a number of locations: Diamond House, Weaste; Salford Shopping City, Pendleton; St Simon Street, Greengate; Neighbourhood Office, Ordsall. Surgeries are also provided at the Cornerstone, Langworthy and Rainsough Brow, Prestwich. It is important to note that Salix Homes is required to vacate the St Simon Street building.
- 6.11 The Board has previously confirmed its preference to develop 2 principal static direct customer access points at Salford Shopping City and Diamond House.
- 6.12 Salix Homes has undertaken a Customer Service pilot since the beginning of 2009. This pilot has tested different opening hours, as well as new locations for direct customer access. Opening on a Thursday evening and Saturday morning has been tested at Salford Shopping City and St Simon Street. New locations have been tested at Beech Farm, Swinton and Rainsough Brow, Prestwich. The pilot was advertised to all customers in a number of ways:
- An individual letter to all households;
 - Notices in all contact points;
 - On the website;
 - Promoted by Salix Direct;
 - Notices on all high rise blocks;
 - Advert and articles in Limelight and local press.
- 6.13 During the pilot period extensive intelligence has been gathered to capture the times customers visit, why they visit, the number of visitors and enquiries.
- 6.14 The results of the Customer Service pilot are attached at **Appendix 1**

6.15 Headlines from the pilot are:

- Increasing numbers of customers are using the direct access points at Salford Shopping City and Diamond House, currently an average of 6 and 4 customers per hour respectively. This compares with an average of 45 customers per hour contacting Salix Direct;
- There are low levels of customer contact at Ordsall, currently an average of 2 customers per hour;
- Despite being popular facilities locally, there has been low levels of usage of the surgeries at Beech Farm and Rainsough Brow, and no usage of the Cornerstone facility;
- Late opening on Thursday has not attracted any significant customer usage, Saturday opening is attracting improving customer usage at Salford Shopping City;
- Most customers use direct contact to report a repair or to make a rent enquiry.

6.16 In addition to the pilot a Customer Access survey has been undertaken with customers. The accuracy of data when using 665 replies to measure customer views on accessibility of services is reliable at $\pm 3.68\%$. Customers were asked a series of questions and told us that:

- 86 % of them preferred to contact us by telephone (compared to 78% STATUS survey);
- 13% of those customers contacted said they preferred to visit a local contact point (compared to 3% in the STATUS survey);
- 38.5% said that they felt the pilot opening hours provided an improved service with 25% saying service had remained the same;
- 67% of customers said they would prefer to access services from Salix Homes in their local area;
- 78% of customers said they would use local surgeries;
- When asked where the surgeries should be held, 34% of those surveyed preferred community rooms.

6.17 Salix Homes has developed mobile working options, with the piloting of mobile working devices by staff in different services over the past 12 months. Mobile working supports the ability of staff to work away from an office, and to offer effective support and assistance to our customers at a location more convenient for them, such as their own home. This is an important aspect of providing direct customer access to services, and will enhance the service to customers at the first point of contact.

- 6.18 Mobile working has also enabled Salix Homes to support other organisations in the provision of multi agency services when and where appropriate, and has enabled staff to support local elected members at their surgeries.
- 6.19 The 'Salix to You' initiative, launched in 2008, has seen the development of a range of activities that have taken services directly to neighbourhoods including:
- The Salix to You mobile trailer facility;
 - A programme of Neighbourhood Audits involving customers;
 - Monthly Neighbourhood Days involving all staff;
 - A programme of apartment block inspections involving customers;
 - A programme of Tenancy Health Checks;
 - The WIN initiative.
- 6.20 Self-serve is another important means of accessing services. 'e2u' on-line services provides accessible services 24 hours a day. Customers can already request a repair, view their rent statement, make a payment and report anti-social behaviour. In addition they can offer feedback through the 'Just Click' facility. With the introduction of the new integrated housing management system we will explore how to extend this range of services.
- 6.21 The online facility was launched in November 2008 and to date 350 customers have used the facility. A six month campaign to raise awareness of the facility and encourage 5 % of our customers to use on line facilities is taking place between June and December 2009. During this period an exercise to identify barriers for customers accessing the service will be undertaken.
- 6.22 Central Salford will be 'switched on' to digital in November 2009 and opportunities to provide services through digital channels are being explored. Whilst Salix Homes welcomes and promotes the use of on-line facilities it is recognised that not everyone has access to the internet or the skills to make use of the service. Consequently a learning and development programme has been launched encouraging people to access relevant training. Customers can access facilities at Diamond House to practice their skills and put their learning to use. Salix Homes currently provides limited internet access in our direct customer access points, but this will be developed for customers wishing to access on-line services such as Salford Homesearch, the choice based lettings service.
- 6.23 Following consideration of all available information and in consultation with customers, Salix Homes will continue to deliver enhanced accessible services by using a variety of methods. There are however 3 options for Board to consider in meeting this particular strategic objective, of **providing a wide range of accessible services that achieve value for money.**

6.24 These options are as follows:

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Retain direct customer access points at Shopping City and Diamond House	Retain direct customer access points at Shopping City and Diamond House	Retain direct customer access points at Shopping City and Diamond House
Retain direct customer access points at Ordsall, Beech Farm, Rainsough Brow and the Vibe	Provide a direct customer access point at the Vibe	
Invest in Shopping City facility	Invest in Shopping City facility	Invest in Shopping City facility
Provide evening access to Diamond House, Tuesdays, Thursdays	Provide evening access to Diamond House, Tuesdays, Thursdays	Provide evening access to Diamond House, Tuesdays, Thursdays
Provide Saturday morning access at Shopping City	Provide Saturday morning access at Shopping City	Provide Saturday morning access at Shopping City
		Invest in locally located free phone facilities
		Invest in expanding mobile working across all teams

6.25 A detailed cost analysis of all the options is attached at **Appendix 2**

6.26 In considering the options above it is important to note:

- 6.26.1 The need to provide a range of options for access to services;
- 6.26.2 The need to ensure Value for Money;
- 6.26.3 That telephone access is overwhelmingly the preferred choice of customers;
- 6.26.4 That although local based direct access points are popular, customers tend not to use them;
- 6.26.5 St Simon Street will shortly no longer be available for use;
- 6.26.6 Options 1 and 2 requires a strong focus on resourcing direct customer access points;
- 6.26.7 Option 3, whilst enabling investment in other means of customer access, would still achieve significant efficiencies.

Key Priorities 2009/10:

- ✓ *Launch revised opening hours at direct customer access points*
- ✓ *Manage the refurbishment of the Salford Shopping City facility*
- ✓ *Deliver a programme of activities using the 'Salix To You' trailer*
- ✓ *Deliver the Senate Action Plan in relation to improving the service delivered by Salix Direct*
- ✓ *Invest in expanding mobile working across all teams*
- ✓ *Invest in a programme of locally located free phone telephone facilities*
- ✓ *Implement customer ICT training programme*
- ✓ *Improve on-line usage*

Key Priorities 2010/11:

- ✓ *Market test Salix Direct*
- ✓ *Instigate appropriate actions following the results of market testing*

7 Objective 2: Identify and remove barriers to access

This objective will ensure that customers are aware of the services that are available to them, that we support their preferred method of contacting Salix Homes and of using our services.

7.1 Salix Homes over the last two years has been analysing profiling information to identify and remove barriers to access. Some of the success we have already had include:

- Introduced the Salix Direct free phone number;
- Introduced the 'e2u' web based on-line facility;
- Introduced a mini-com system at Diamond House;
- Produced a Customer Handbook;
- Two Ticks Disability Discrimination Act accreditation;
- Completed an 'Access Audit' of all customer access points;
- Working in partnership to deliver multi agency services;
- Used Salix Direct to enable customers to access other services such as flu jabs and smoke detectors;
- Provided translation services on our website;
- The availability of information in larger print;
- Commenced a comprehensive programme of Equality Impact Assessments for services, policies and processes;
- Produced an Equality and Diversity Customer Care toolkit.

7.2 Although a free telephone number has been introduced together with a land line for mobile phone users Salix Homes will be exploring the opportunity to provide a 0300 telephone number that offers a more cost effective service to our customers who use mobile phones.

7.3 'e2u' was introduced in 2008 to allow customers the opportunity to report repairs on-line, view their rent account, make a payment and report anti-social behaviour.

7.4 Salix Homes has addressed barriers to access for customers who have a hearing impairment by introducing a mini com telephone number. In addition officers from Salix Homes can access recognised qualifications in sign language in order to facilitate easier access to services for deaf customers. A forum for deaf customers will be established in August 2009, providing an opportunity for customers to share their experiences with Salix Homes and influence any necessary changes to service delivery. The group will be supported by an officer who is a qualified interpreter for the deaf. The forum will also provide an opportunity for other staff to develop their signing skills.

- 7.5 Salix Homes has produced a customer handbook together with a CD that offers customers detailed information on how and where to access our services.
- 7.6 A Welfare and Debt Advice Service is available to all customers. Any customer who is experiencing financial difficulties is offered an appointment to discuss their situation with the focus on maximising income and prioritising debt. An affordability assessment for new customers is undertaken prior to sign up to ensure from the outset of a tenancy that the customer can afford to maintain a tenancy in order to support them from experiencing financial difficulties at a later stage.
- 7.7 An accessible direct debit facility has been introduced for customers providing an opportunity to pay their rent by direct debit on a date of their choice. Previously customers had only been able to pay by direct debit on the 15th day of each month.
- 7.8 Two Ticks' Disability Discrimination Act accreditation was achieved in January 2008 and recognises the commitment of Salix Homes to removing any barriers to accessing services.
- 7.9 An 'Access Audit' carried out by the Greater Manchester Disabled Peoples Access Group during 2008 resulted in a number of improvement to our head office facilities, and our principal contact points are all accessible by customers with a disability, however the adoption of this strategy will require that any 'new' customer access points are assessed.
- 7.10 Salix Homes works with partners to provide services to our customers at points where they access other services for e.g. we have introduced surgeries at local Sure Start Centres, in the New Deal area and at outlying estates.
- 7.11 Salix Homes, through its Salix Direct telephone access service, enables our customers to access targeted additional services free of charge such as flu jab campaign; smoke alarms and welfare advice.
- 7.12 Salix Homes offers a translation service to customers accessing services at contact access points, through Salix Direct and on the website. A register of officers who can offer translations services is held and when appropriate utilised.
- 7.13 Customers have an option to receive the Salix Homes quarterly newsletter Limelight electronically or in larger print.

7.14 At the beginning of 2009 Salix Homes commenced a major programme of Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) for all its services, key policies and procedures. EIA's have helped to identify barriers to access and actions have been identified as appropriate. Completed EIA's will have involved local people from a diverse range of backgrounds in identifying negative impacts and EIA actions are incorporated into Service Action Plans to address any identified issues, and progress in completing actions is monitored through STEM. A number of outcomes have already been achieved as a consequence of EIA's including:

- Offering same sex interviews for all services;
- Introducing Dictaphones to use to record ASB diaries for people with literacy issues or who are blind or visually impaired;
- Providing access to portable hearing induction loops for gas servicing engineers;
- Reviewing the design of the website to improve accessibility;
- Creating the facility to record faith and sexual orientation on the Saffron database;
- Introduced repairs appointment times outside of the 'school run'

7.15 All staff will receive an Equality and Diversity Customer Care toolkit from September 2009. This is an easy step guide for staff to enhance the service provided to vulnerable and hard to reach customers, identify potential barriers and ways in which these barriers can be removed.

Customer Profiling

7.16 Salix Homes has an ambitious target to achieve 85% customer profiling across all 6 diversity strands by the end of 2009. By having such an in depth understanding of our customers a number of improved customer service and access outcomes have been achieved including:

- Limelight distributed to customers in their preferred format;
- DDA works to housing schemes prioritised on basis of scheme profiles;
- Profiling information being used to support customer access to gas servicing;
- Analysis of customers in arrears by profile to target 'take up' campaigns;
- Profiling used to prioritise tenancy audit programme.

Key Priorities 2009/10:

- ✓ Introduce additional internet terminals in direct customer access points;
- ✓ Complete EIA programme and implement actions to remove barriers to access;
- ✓ Effectively use business intelligence, particularly customer profiling and customer feedback, to remove barriers to access;
- ✓ Produce a Single Equality Statement;
- ✓ Complete staff training on use of the Equality and Diversity Customer Care toolkit;
- ✓ Explore the opportunity to introduce a 0300 telephone number;
- ✓ Review the website to improve its accessibility and usage;
- ✓ Identify opportunities to enhance customer access through digital 'switch over'.

8 Objective 3: Provide a positive, memorable customer experience

This objective will ensure that customers receive a service that is individually tailored to meet their needs and seeks to provide a rewarding customer experience.

- 8.1 Salix Homes wants to provide a positive and memorable experience for our customers when they access services. This can only be achieved if the organisation is professional, courteous and aims to provide the customer with a resolution at the first point of contact.
- 8.2 To improve the customer experience Salix Homes on a monthly basis reviews feedback from customer to enable the organisation to learn from their experiences. The feedback provides information on compliments, comments and complaints. The following are examples of where customers have had a positive memorable experience:

A customer from the Blackfriars area said 'Praised work done by Mary Rolfe, Margaret Graham and Salix Direct in relation to the caretaking and cleaning service.'

A customer from Lower Broughton said 'Thank you to Jackie Crook for her work to install bollards'. These bollards would reduce nuisance created by local use of these roads to prevent 'rat runs'.

A customer from Holm Court sent a letter complimenting the partnership work of Salix Homes, Jackson Lloyd and Diamond Service for improving their community facilities by installing an accessible WC and library.

- 8.3 The learning from customer feedback information, 'You saying We're doing' is published in Limelight on a quarterly basis and on the website.

You're saying	We're doing
Some customers hadn't had a housing needs analysis for the Pendleton Private Finance Initiative project.	Staff called the customers and arranged face-to-face appointments to discuss their needs and issues.
Customers wanted more information about a proposed scheme for their neighbourhood.	Staff arranged a local drop-in session. Customers are now well informed and have contact names and numbers for staff if they want more information.
Customers in one block would like to recycle more and have a recycling station.	The team had a meeting with residents to talk about recycling and other waste management issues.
Customers wanted a different style of letter about anti-social behaviour.	We made the letter more personal and more suited to the people we were sending it to.

8.4 Not all customer feedback is positive however. There are still too many instances of inconsistent customer care, avoidable contact and breakages in CRM. In order to address these issues in number of actions will be undertaken during 2009/10 including:

- Commencement of the 'Your Customer, Your Responsibility' initiative with staff from September 2009;
- Conclusion of an Avoidable Contact Performance Clinic to identify ways to reduce avoidable contact;
- Scoping of CRM system to be introduced during 2010 as part of the installation of a new integrated housing management ICT system.

Customer Relationship Management

8.5 The Board has previously confirmed its wish to improve and provide new CRM systems and processes as part of the introduction of a new integrated housing management ICT system. It has also stated its preference for Salix Homes to directly manage such systems.

8.6 This approach to CRM must also complement the aspirations of the council in achieving a 'One Council' approach to customer service. What this means in practice is that as we develop a distinct Salix Homes CRM, appropriate linkages with the council's own evolving CRM systems and processes need to be considered and provided for to ensure an effective and rewarding experience for the customer whether they are directly accessing complimentary council or Salix Homes services.

Key Priorities 2009/10:

- ✓ Improve our service to customers by knowing who they are and getting it right first time;
- ✓ Reducing avoidable contact;
- ✓ Introduce the 'Your Customer, Your Responsibility' initiative;
- ✓ Scope CRM as part of the implementation of the new comprehensive ICT system.

Key Priorities for 2010/11:

- ✓ Implement new CRM systems and processes, and ensure customers receive a service that is tailored to meet their needs;
- ✓ Embed the use of the new integrated housing management system.

9 Objective 4: Ensure staff and partners are well trained, empowered and want to make a difference

This objective will ensure that each time a customer has contact with Salix Homes, or a partner of Salix Homes, staff are able to provide the standard and quality of customer service and care expected of them.

- 9.1 Having staff and partners that are well trained, empowered and wanting to make a difference is fundamental to providing an excellent service.
- 9.2 All staff and partners attend "The Salix Way" training that has been devised using the experience of customers and is delivered jointly with customers. The emphasis of the training is to share customer experiences and allow staff and partners to see the service through the eyes of customers. Customer experience is the most valuable tool we have to test if we are getting it right and improving service delivery. Salix Homes in partnership with Salford City College has developed a 'Salix Way' National Vocational Qualification (NVQ Level 2) and front line staff have to obtain this qualification. The NVQ has also been made available for customers to support their skills and help them get back into employment. To date two customers have attended the training and one has now gained full time employment.
- 9.3 A monthly briefing session is held for staff which promotes and informs staff of development across organisation. These sessions not only provide an opportunity for updating staff but seek their input to all activities across the business. Staff are encouraged to offer their opinion and support colleagues to ensure that cohesive and complimentary services are delivered to customers.
- 9.4 The behaviour and performance of staff is regularly monitored through monthly one to ones and an appraisal system including a 360 degree assessment by the line manager peers and partners where appropriate. All staff have a personal development programme and have undertaken a learning style assessment to determine their preferred style of learning. Where training needs are identified the appropriate method of training can then be sourced.
- 9.5 Staff and partners will begin to use an Equality and Diversity Customer Care toolkit that will enable them to have information available to answer any queries regarding any service that Salix Homes or partners provide. The pack contains supportive information to ensure that staff offer the best service possible when dealing with a customer. The pack focuses on how to support customers who may experience barriers through language, hearing and visual impairments, movement, culture and religion.

9.6 The Salix Academy has been developed to ensure that staff are well trained and empowered. The training modules are focussed around the competencies of the organisation. There are four core competencies for staff which are:

- Customer First
- Communication
- Equality and Diversity
- Improving Performance

In addition to these core competencies we have four management competencies which are as follows:

- Leadership
- Thinking and Decision Making
- Working in Partnership
- Planning and Organising

Training modules have been developed and delivered by managers and staff who have an expertise in their field. The modules are delivered in a style that imparts knowledge and they are interactive to encourage learning. There are compulsory modules which are the four core competencies and domestic abuse training. These are mandatory for all staff and partners who deliver front line services. All training is evaluated over a six month period to ensure that the training has been relevant and that the member of staff has actually made use of the training while undertaking their duties.

9.7 We are working in partnership with the University of Salford to develop and deliver a modular based training programme which we are hopeful will lead to an accredited qualification. The first module “Train to Sustain” has been delivered in November 2008 to many staff within the Services in Neighbourhoods Directorate. This module was delivered by members of our Management Team with support and assistance from Julia Lucas who is a lecturer in Housing at the University of Salford. In February 2009 the second module which is “Creating Sustainable Communities” commenced.

9.8 Salix Homes rewards the efforts of staff not only through the appraisal system but by acknowledging the achievements of individuals each month through the employer of the month award and annually at a Salix Stars event

‘Your Customer, Your Responsibility’

9.9 Customer feedback confirms that our required standard of customer care is not consistently applied throughout the organisation. This is further evidenced by mystery shopping and various observations from managers and staff. Achieving excellent customer care is business critical and essential to maximising access to and the effectiveness of Salix Homes services. 'Your Customer, Your Responsibility' will be launched in September 2009 and will consist of a number of actions to ensure a consistent level of customer care across the organisation including:

- A review of the Salix Way by a combined group of customers and staff under the overall direction of the Customer Access and Involvement SSP;
- A revised Telephone Answering Protocol, Guide to Using Voicemail and Forwarding to Mobile Phones to be introduced;
- Establishment of an Avoidable Contact Performance Clinic;
- Improved performance management of customer care including the introduction of Face to Face and Telephone Quality Audits for all staff, and monitoring of calls within Salix Homes as well as Salix Direct.

Key Priorities 2009/10:

- ✓ Implement the 'Your Customer, Your Responsibility' initiative;
- ✓ Review the Salix Way.

Key Priorities 2010/11

- ✓ Explore the feasibility of 'first point of contact officers';
- ✓ Implement findings from the feasibility study.

10 Reviewing and monitoring arrangements

10.1 This strategy and action plan will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure that it delivers against the strategic objectives outlined and continues to support our organisational objective of:

Services that continuously improve - and meet the needs of all our customers and achieves value for money

Reducing inequalities – in Central Salford

Three Stars – an employer of choice, a leader in our field, delivering excellent services to our customers

10.2 The identified strategic actions will be captured as ‘smart’ actions in our action planning process at the Directorate Action Plan (DAP) level.

10.3 These will then be broken down into smaller actions acting as milestones in Service Action Plans (SAPs) and Individual Action Plans (IAPs) for teams and individuals to undertake.

10.4 Progress against the strategic Action Plan will be reported to the Learning and Diversity Committee on a 6 monthly basis.

11 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Customer Service Pilot (January 2009 to June 2009) - findings and analysis

Table 1 shows the extent of customer contact during late night opening on a Thursday, and Saturday morning, at Salford Shopping City and St. Simon Street

Contact Point		Month							
Shopping City	Day	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	Total	Avg. per hour
	Thursday	17	9	10	14	18	8	76	1.01
	Saturday	31	47	52	49	75	59	313	3.91
Total		48	56	62	63	93	67	389	
St Simon Street	Thursday	6	11	14	6	5	2	44	0.59
	Saturday	8	18	20	14	17	13	90	1.13
Total		14	29	34	20	22	15	134	
Overall Total		62	85	96	83	115	82	523	

The above table shows:

- a) Three times as many customers used Shopping City as opposed to St. Simons Street.
- b) Low levels of direct customer contact during Thursday evenings.
- c) Increasing customer contact during Saturday mornings at Shopping City.

Table 2 shows the extent of customer contact during surgeries at Rainsough Brow and Beech Farm on Tuesday and Friday afternoons.

Contact Point		Month							
Rainsough	Day	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	Total	Avg. per hour
	Tuesday	5	7	5	4	3	2	26	0.14
	Friday	5	6	2	5	6	4	28	0.15
Total		10	13	7	9	9	6	54	
Beech Farm	Tuesday	3	6	5	5	6	9	34	0.19
	Friday	4	5	8	7	5	4	33	0.18
Total		7	11	13	12	11	13	67	
Overall Total		17	24	20	21	20	19	121	

The above table shows:

- a) That there has been a decrease in the number of customers using the Rainsough Brow surgery.
- b) Low levels overall of direct customer contact during the pilot period.

Table 3 shows the extent of customer contact at the Ordsall office

Contact Point		Month							Avg. per hour
		Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	Total	
Ordsall	Daily								
	Morning	166	147	160	146	149	110	878	
	Afternoon	92	96	82	73	81	43	467	
Total		258	243	242	219	230	153	1345	1.86

The above table shows:

- a) A decrease in the number of customers using the Ordsall customer access point.
- b) Low levels of direct customer contact during the pilot period

Table 4 shows the extent of daily customer contact at Diamond House, Shopping City and St. Simon Street

Contact Point		Month							Avg. per hour
		Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	Total	
Diamond House	Daily								
	Mon-Fri	542	693	597	638	611	681		
Total		542	693	597	638	611	681	3762	3.76
Shopping City	Daily								
	Mon-Fri	882	807	982	716	736	837		
Total		882	807	982	716	736	837	4960	6.20
St.Simon Street	Daily								
	Mon-Fri	982	814	856	680	678	795		
Total		982	814	856	680	678	795	4805	6.01

The above table shows:

- a) A steady increase in customer contact at Diamond House.
- b) Shopping City is our most popular direct customer access point

Table 5 shows the extent of customer contact with Salix Direct

Contact Point		Month							Avg. per hour
		Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	Total	
Salix Direct	Daily								
		9230	8771	9292	7452	7405	7733		
Total		9230	8771	9292	7452	7405	7733	49883	45.39

The above table shows:

- a) telephone access is by far the most popular form of customer contact.

Table 6 shows the average cost of each customer contact

Contact Point	No. of Hrs per week	Annual Cost	Avg. Cost per hour	No. of Enquiries	Avg. cost per enq.
Shopping City					
Mon - Fri	32	56,131	35	6.20	5.66
Thurs Evening	3	3,554	24	1.01	23.38
Sat Morning	4	4,739	24	3.91	6.06
St Simon Street					
Mon - Fri	32	54,914	34	6.01	5.71
Thurs Evening	3	3,440	23	0.59	39.09
Sat Morning	4	4,587	23	1.13	20.39
Ordsall	32	22,134	14	1.68	8.23
Beechfarm	6.5	3,701	11	0.41	27.70
Rainsough Brow	6.5	7,201	22	0.33	66.88
Diamond House	40	52,774	26	3.76	7.01
Salix Direct	44	353,607	161	45.39	3.54

The above table shows:

- a) Salix Direct is the most cost effective form of customer access
- b) Shopping City is the most cost effective direct customer access point

Appendix 2 – Option Cost Appraisal

Proposed Costs	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
	£	£	£
Current Delivery Cost (Staffing)	250,455	250,455	250,455
Staff Costs (Increase/Decrease)	76,889	(14,620)	(58,651)
Accommodation Cost	32,540	21,626	(7,414)
Investment in Equipment/Technology			10,000
Investment in Home Working			20,000
Total cost movement (Increase/(Decrease))	109,429	7,006	(36,065)
Implementation Costs	75,000	78,575	78,200
Five Year Projection	622,145	113,605	(102,124)

12 Customer Access Strategy Action Plan

CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN:									Period covered (from / to):
									July 2009 to March 2012
Action	Organisational Objective	Start Date	Completion Date	Lead Officer	Benefits to Customers	Measures/ PI's that apply to this action	AC Reference	Project Reference	Milestone Progress Reports To:
Strategic Objective 1: Provide a wide range of accessible services that achieve value for money.									
1. Launch the revised opening hours at principal customer contact points	S	29/07/09	31/08/09	Ava Phillipps	Accessible services at times to suit their needs	Monitor Footfall Cost per Transaction	N/A	CC1	Learning and Diversity Committee Customer Access and Involvement Project Board Customer Access and Involvement Panel
2. Manage the refurbishment of Hankinson Way and the rebranding of the contact points	S	03/08/09	31/10/09	Sam Tindale	Accessible services at times to suit their needs	Delivering the refurbishment on time	N/A	CC2	Learning and Diversity Committee Customer Access and Involvement Project Board Customer Access and Involvement Panel
3. Invest and deliver mobile working across the business	S	01/09/09	31/12/09	Ava Phillipps/ Paul Earl	Provide increased access to service for customers by having the technology to support their needs	Increased customer satisfaction with the services Salix homes provides	N/A	N/A	Learning and Diversity Committee Customer Access and Involvement Project Board Customer Access and Involvement Panel

Customer Access Strategy 2009 - 2012



Action	Organisational Objective	Start Date	Completion Date	Lead Officer	Benefits to Customers	Measures/ PI's that apply to this action	AC Reference	Project Reference	Milestone Progress Reports To:
4. Invest in a programme of locally located free phone telephone facilities	S	01/06/09	31/08/09	Sam Tindale/Ava Phillips	Delivery of accessible services locally at convenient location and time	Increased customer satisfaction with the services Salix homes provides	N/A	N/A	Learning and Diversity Committee Customer Access and Involvement Project Board Customer Access and Involvement Panel
5. Deliver a programme of activities by using the 'Salix Homes To You'	S	01/08/09	30/09/09	Ava Phillips	Improve customer service by taking the service to our customers in their locality	Number of activities Number of customer using the service	N/A	N/A	Customer Access and Involvement Panel
6. Publicise and promote surgeries and other events	S	30/09/09	31/012/09	James Allan	Raise awareness of services offered to customers in their local areas	N/A	N/A	N/A	Communications Panel
7. Deliver the Senate Action Plan in relation to improving the service delivered by Salix Direct	S	01/07/09	30/09/09	Sam Tindale	Improve customer service by taking the service to our customers in their locality	N/A	N/A	N/A	Senate Learning and Diversity Committee
8. Market Test Salix Direct	S	01/03/10	30/06/10	Margaret Graham	Ensure Customers are receiving value for money from the service	Cost, Quality of service to be compared against the market	11	CC3	Learning and Diversity Committee

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Action	Organisational Objective	Start Date	Completion Date	Lead Officer	Benefits to Customers	Measures/ PI's that apply to this action	AC Reference	Project Reference	Milestone Progress Reports To:
9. Instigate appropriate action following the results of Market testing	S	01/07/10	30/06/11	Margaret Graham	Improve customer service	Cost, Quality of service to be compared against the market	11	CC3	Learning and Diversity Committee
10. Implement Customer ICT Training	S	01/10/09	31/03/09	Ava Phillipps	Enhance the skills of our customers and give greater access to services on-line	Increased customer satisfaction with the services Salix Homes provides	N/A	N/A	Learning and Diversity Committee Customer Access and Involvement SSP
11. Increase on-line usage on services	S	01/10/09	31/03/09	James Allan	Customers have greater access to services on-line	Increased customer satisfaction with the services Salix Homes provides	N/A	N/A	Learning and Diversity Committee Customer Access and Involvement SSP

Action	Organisational Objective	Start Date	Completion Date	Lead Officer	Benefits to Customers	Measures/ PI's that apply to this action	AC Reference	Project Reference	Milestone Progress Reports To:
Strategic Objective 2: Identify and remove barriers to access									
1. Effectively use business intelligence to enhance service delivery and remove barriers to access	R	03/08/09	31/03/12	Margaret Graham	Remove barriers to access	Increase Customer Satisfaction in relation to BME customers Status Survey	8	N/A	Learning and Diversity Committee
2. Introduce additional internet terminals in the contact points	R	03/08/09	31/10/09	Chris Henry	Remove barriers to access	Increase customer satisfaction	8	N/A	Learning and Diversity Committee
3. Undertake an assessment of all supplementary contact points to assess their compliance with DDA legislation	R	03/08/09	30/09/09	Ava Phillipps	Remove barriers to access	Accessibility of contact points		N/A	Learning and Diversity Committee Customer Access and Involvement Panel
4. Develop a single equality statement	R	03/08/09	31/11/09	Sarah Henderson	Remove barriers to access	To be agreed	14	N/A	Learning and Diversity Committee
5. Explore the opportunity to implement a 0300 telephone number	R	03/08/09	30/09/09	Sam Tindale	Improves telephone access for customers using mobile phones	Cost		N/A	Learning and Diversity Committee Audit and Finance Committee Customer Access and Involvement Panel
6. Explore opportunities to enhance customer access to services through digital switch over	T	01/09/09	01/10/10	James Allan/Margaret Graham	Customers have new ways to access services	Action Plan in place	N/A	N/A	Learning and Diversity Committee Customer Access and Involvement Panel

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Action	Organisational Objective	Start Date	Completion Date	Lead Officer	Benefits to Customers	Measures/ PI's that apply to this action	AC Reference	Project Reference	Milestone Progress Reports To:
7. Review website to reflect service changes	S	10/08/09	12/10/09	James Allan	Improve access to information, assistance and updates	N/A	53 and 55	N/A	Learning and Diversity Committee Customer Access and Involvement Panel
8. Complete EIA programme and implement actions to remove barriers to access	R	01/08/09	31/03/10	Sam Tindale	Reduce barriers to access for customers	N/A	N/A	N/A	Learning and Diversity Committee Customer Access and Involvement Panel
9. Complete staff training on the use of the equality and Diversity Customer Care toolkit	S	01/09/09	30/09/09	Ava Phillipps	Customers receive a better service by increasing the number of enquiries resolved at first point of contact	N/A	N/A	N/A	Customer Access and Involvement Panel

Action	Organisational Objective	Start Date	Completion Date	Lead Officer	Benefits to Customers	Measures/ PI's that apply to this action	AC Reference	Project Reference	Milestone Progress Reports To:
Strategic Objective 3. Provide a positive memorable customer experience									
1.Improve our service to customers by knowing who they are and getting it right first time	S	03/08/09	31/03/12	Sam Tindale	Improve customer satisfaction and reduce avoidable contact	Increase in customer satisfaction 80% of contacts resolved at first point of contact	8	N/A	Learning and Diversity Committee
2.Review the Service Standards	S	01/09/09	31/10/09	Margaret Graham	Customers influence the standard of they receive	To be agreed with customers		CC4	Learning and Diversity Committee All Service Specific Panels
3.Embed the use of the new integrated housing management system	S	03/08/09	31/08/11	Paul Earl	Improve customer satisfaction and service delivery	Number of modules delivered Increase in customer satisfaction		N/A	Learning and Diversity Committee
4. Develop the use of a CRM system to ensure customers receive a service that is tailored to meet their needs	T	01/10/10	31/03/12	Paul Earl	Customers receive a tailor made service	Increase in customer satisfaction		CC5	Learning and Diversity Committee Customer access and Involvement Panel
5. Introduce the 'Your Customer, Your Responsibility' initiative	S	01/09/09	30/09/09	Ava Phillipps	Improve customer satisfaction and service delivery	Reduction in the number of referrals from Salix Direct	N/A	N/A	Customer access and Involvement Panel

Action	Organisational Objective	Start Date	Completion Date	Lead Officer	Benefits to Customers	Measures/ PI's that apply to this action	AC Reference	Project Reference	Milestone Progress Reports To:
Strategic Objective 4: Ensure staff and partners are well trained, empowered and want to make a difference									
1. Develop and deliver a training programme to ensure front line officers get it right first time – 'Your Customer, Your Responsibility'	S	03/08/09	31/12/09	Sam Tindale	Improve customer satisfaction, Resolve enquiries at first point of contact and reduce avoidable contact	Increase in customer satisfaction to meet target of 80% contacts resolved at first point of contact	8	CC6	Learning and Diversity Committee
2. Review the Salix Way	S	01/09/09	30/09/09	Sarah Henderson	Improve customer satisfaction	Increase in customer satisfaction to meet target of 80% contacts resolved at first point of contact	N/A	N/A	Performance Committee Learning and Diversity
3. Explore the feasibility of 'first point of contact officers'	S	03/08/09	31/10/09	Margaret Graham	Improve service delivery and accessibility	Cost, quality of service		CC7	Learning and Diversity Committee All Service Specific Panels
4. Implement finds from the project which analyses the feasibility of first point of contact officers	S	01/11/10	31/03/10	Margaret Graham	Improve service delivery and accessibility	Cost, quality of service		CC7	Learning and Diversity Committee All Service Specific Panels



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