



Assessment Report  
Customer Service Excellence

**Gloucester City Homes**

Incomplete

## Assessment Summary

### Overview

Overall Self-assessment	Satisfactory
Overall outcome	Successful

Gloucester City Homes was created in 2005 to manage social housing on behalf of Gloucester City Council. From the evidence presented for this application and from observations and discussions held during the visit it is clear that from the very beginning customers have been at the heart of everything that the service aims to achieve. Performance has significantly improved since then and the style of management is closely allied to the principles of the Customer Service Excellence Standard. No areas of partial compliance have been identified and ten elements have been commended as 'Compliance Plus' - an exceptional result.

Rolling Programme 1 - 2010 (RP1/10)

The service continues to improve, this year's visit coinciding with the handover of repair services to a new contractor. The involvement of users in the procurement and selection processes involved has been impressive. GCH has fully embraced CSE and taken it to new levels. Your culture, image, service delivery and systems all revolve around customer service and define your role in the community of Gloucester. Your application is again fully compliant with the CSE standard and a total of sixteen areas of 'Compliance Plus' have been identified - a superb achievement.

### 1: Customer Insight

Criterion 1 self-assessment	Strong
Criterion 1 outcome	Successful

You have made identifying and understanding your users an integral part of managing services. This ensures that service provision and development plans closely reflect the needs and aspirations of your tenants and leaseholders. One tenant commented "they treat me like a customer not a number".

RP1/10 This year has seen the introduction of the Youth Engagement Plan and a more structured approach to tenant involvement.

### 2: The Culture of the Organisation

Criterion 2 self-assessment	Strong
Criterion 2 outcome	Successful

You were able to demonstrate that customer focus is built into the culture of the service. Staff take genuine pride in their work and can be seen to take a team approach to providing a high quality service. They are encouraged in this by the Customer Service Champions one of whom summed it up when she told the assessor " I really enjoy working here".

RP1/10 The 'We're listening roadshow' is taking consultation and engagement out to local communities. Communication between staff at all levels is excellent.

### 3: Information and Access

Criterion 3 self-assessment	Strong
Criterion 3 outcome	Successful

Information provision is good, with comprehensive handbooks for tenants and leaseholders. A post-letting visit for all tenants ensures that information is understood. Your website provides clear information about services, standards and contact details, with commendable detail on how the service is managed for those who want it. Most people contact the service by phone and the customer contact centre enjoys high satisfaction levels.

RP1/10 Tenant Times has been expanded and revamped to provide more of what readers have asked for. Access channels now include GCHTV, Facebook and Twitter.

### 4: Delivery

Criterion 4 self-assessment	Strong
Criterion 4 outcome	Successful

You are good at listening to and asking for comments, feedback and complaints about the service. User views are captured in many ways and your system of exception reporting is designed to make sure that problems are resolved and suggestions actioned. All users receive regular copies of Tenants Times that details action taken in a 'You Said - We Did' format. You have set clear standards for all of your main services in consultation with users. You are also aiming for all your homes to comply with the Decent Homes Standard by 2012. Progress on this front was boosted by your good Audit Commission Report in 2007 (two stars) that unlocked access to major capital funding. Dips in performance on maintenance and repair works have been vigorously addressed.

RP1/10 You continue to perform at a high level and can demonstrate that users' views are captured and translated into service improvements.

**5: Timeliness and Quality of Service**

Criterion 5 self-assessment	Insufficient
Criterion 5 outcome	Successful

Your customer service standards are comprehensive and concentrate on the issues that are important to users. It was noted that you always try to identify individuals' needs at the first point of contact and take responsibility for keeping them informed if the service is not completed at the first point of contact. Users were keen to stress the good relationships that they enjoyed with staff and contractors. One group said "they go the extra mile".

RP1/10 Again, your performance is excellent. Users are directly involved with monitoring performance. Those met during the assessment were very satisfied with the quality of service they were experiencing.

**1: Customer Insight**

**1.1: Customer Identification**

**1.1.1: We have an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of our current and potential customer groups based on recent and reliable information.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliance Plus

**Active Evidence**

**3: Community cohesion project** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The community cohesion project enables GCH to identify key targets that enable us to develop a greater understanding of the profile of our communities and the life chances and opportunities of different groups.

**232: Demography - Gloucester City Homes Profile** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

It is important that GCH understand the demography of the communities in which we deliver services. The attached information details the information we have gathered from our own and our partners sources to give a well formed picture of our communities.

**218: Maiden** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH uses MAIDEN information systems to enhance the understanding we have of our customers. This stores collection of social, economic and service data about the communities of Gloucestershire. We also actively participate with other agencies in gathering and understanding changing communities.

**215: Diversity breakdown of actively involved tenants** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We carry out analysis of our actively involved tenants by using the diversity information available to us. This ensures that our actively involved tenants are reflective of our customer base. Where we identify a shortfall in any particular area we ensure this is addressed through RED days.

**2: Diversity Project** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The purpose of the Diversity Project is to ensure that standards on diversity are continually improved. Project plans are written taking into account inspection recommendations, relevant key lines of enquiry, changing legislation, best practice research and from customer feedback.

**155: Gathering diversity information** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This form is used for gathering information from our customers. We currently hold 89% of this data. GCH staff are involved in quarterly diversity blitz days to target the collection of diversity information from customers where no information is held.

**1.1.1.1: We have an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of our current**

You have comprehensive data on the numbers and characteristics of your main customer groups, broadly divided into tenants, leaseholders and sheltered housing tenants.

Rolling Programme 1 2010 (RP1/10)

Your database has been enhanced by the use of the MAIDEN information system.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.1.1.2: and potential customer groups**

Your potential customers generally access your services initially through Gloucester City Council.

Working with the local authority you are aware of the characteristics and needs of these potential service users.

RP1/10

The MAIDEN system allows you to identify vulnerable groups and anticipate future demand for services.

'Compliance Plus'.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.1.1.3: based on recent and reliable information.**

Data on users is constantly updated. The recent BME survey, carried out as part of your improving diversity and equalities project, has enabled you to refine your understanding of users' characteristics.

RP1/10

'Blitz days' have proved to be effective for quickly updating records.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.1.2: We have developed customer insight about our customer groups to better understand their needs and preferences.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliance Plus

**Active Evidence**

**9: Customer surveys - new tenants** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

A key area of our performance management framework is to receive feedback from our customers on the quality of our service delivery. Another way of obtaining valuable feedback is via our two partners VMS Limited and MRUK Limited who carry out a number of annual service specific surveys.

**8: Mystery shoppers report for Neighbourhood Services** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Mystery shoppers help us to test how our service is working at the "sharp end", giving us valuable feedback on how we can improve. We need to understand what customer think about our services, how they are provided and by whom they are provided i.e. staff members role in customer care.

**6: Focus groups** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We hold over 20 focus groups annually to ensure that we focus on providing services customers want and how they want them. Focus groups ensure we are able to listen to customer views and enable customers to take an active role in service delivery.

**5: Customer forum** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Customer Forum looks at all the services that Gloucester City Homes provides. It meets bi-monthly to debate housing service/policy issues and recommend how they should be dealt with. Representatives are voted democratically and are representative of tenants and residents across the city.

**4: Block and street representatives** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We have 59 block and street representatives who represent the views of the residents in their immediate neighbourhood therefore giving a good level of demographic representation and report any issues with regards to grounds maintenance, estate services or cleaning contracts.

**156: Pre-tenancy interview** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Each potential tenant is invited to attend a pre-tenancy interview at GCH prior to viewing a property. We use this process to gather an understanding of their needs and preferences for example aids and adaptations, debt management, and welfare benefit take-up.

**1.1.2.1: We have developed customer insight about our customer groups**

Your evidence here is very strong. A wide range of methods are used to gain insight about differing users' needs. It was apparent throughout the assessment that you live up to your Mission Statement summarised as "Tenants are at the heart of what we do. Customers drive our services."

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.1.2.2: to better understand their needs and preferences.**

Your publication 'Telling Tales' - a selection of stories from the past told by residents of Gloucester City Homes sheltered housing schemes - has enabled staff to gain greater customer insight. It has also been much appreciated by residents and is commended as 'Compliance Plus'.

RP1/10

Discussion with residents confirmed that you continue to be driven by users' needs and have extended opportunities for engagement. 'Compliance plus' is still appropriate.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.1.3: We make particular efforts to identify hard to reach and disadvantaged groups and individuals and have developed our services in response to their specific needs.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

<b>158: Aids and adaptations carried out to meet customers specific needs</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
We use information gathered from occupational therapist on tenants need for medical adaptations and use this to carry out alterations to tenant's homes.		
<b>153: Diversity database section relating to BME tenants</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
This is a sample of data gathered from our diversity database that indicates those tenants with other ethnic origins, This data was used when a survey was carried out and also a customer focus group recently.		
<b>152: Gloucestershire county council small area survey</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
GCH are working with the County Council to survey those people living in those most deprived areas (this is linked to the index of multiple deprivation). GCH are assisting in this process by holding a number of focus groups in Dec 08 that will identify the needs of those most disadvantaged.		
<b>13: Disability focus group 17th September 2008</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
We recently held disability focus groups that enables us to listen to our customer view of service accessibility and to enable our customers to take a active role in service delivery.		
<b>12: BME focus group 17th July 2008</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
We are developing the way in which we work with BME tenants and part of developing this approach and services tailored to meet their needs. To this end we have enabled BME to give their views on the services we currently provide.		
<b>1: BME survey results 2008</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
GCH is committed to delivering fair and equal services tailored to meet the diverse needs of our customers. We have a strong equality and diversity policy statement which is understood throughout the organisation and has been produced in consultation with our customers.		

**1.1.3.1: We make particular efforts to identify hard to reach**

Your database and survey methodologies identify hard to reach groups such as BME, those living in 'deprived areas', those with different types of disabilities and young people.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.1.3.2: and disadvantaged groups and individuals**

Disadvantaged groups such as those with disabilities and young people are also consulted about their needs and preferences.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.1.3.3: and have developed our services in response to their specific needs.**

Your Resident Involvement Strategy embraces hard to reach and disadvantaged groups and individuals. Focus groups are widely used and you can show that they strongly influence service delivery.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.2: Engagement and Consultation**

**1.2.1: We have a strategy for engaging and involving customers using a range of methods appropriate to the needs of identified customer groups.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

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<b>6: Focus groups</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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We hold over 20 focus groups annually to ensure that we focus on providing services customers want and how they want them. Focus groups ensure we are able to listen to customer views and enable customers to take an active role in service delivery.

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<b>20: Marketing and communications strategy</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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The purpose of this strategy is to develop clear and effective communications to promote the identity of Gloucester City Homes, the services it provides and its corporate mission, vision and values together with the 8 strategic aims of the company ensuring that customer needs are met.

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<b>19: Customer forum</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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The Customer Forum looks at all the services that Gloucester City Homes provides. It meets bi-monthly to debate housing service/policy issues and recommend how they should be dealt with. Representatives attend from the various tenant groups across the city.

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<b>17: New tenant participation charter 2010</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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Our Tenant Charter was first launched in December 2006 and currently and in partnership with our tenants was fully reviewed in 2009 to include service standards and creation of the [getinvolved@GCH](mailto:getinvolved@GCH) concept that also involved a new email address for those tenants wishing to become involved.

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<b>16: Resident involvement and community engagement strategy</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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GCH has a resident involvement strategy that provides a key element in Tenant and Leasehold participation of the future. The strategy enables Tenants and Leaseholders to get involved in their communities at a level at which they feel comfortable and is reviewed on an annual basis.

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<b>15: Youth engagement action plan</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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We have a comprehensive youth engagement action plan that enables the us to focus on engagement of young people this includes year 6 primary, 13-17 year, 17-25 and young parents. There has been a number of successes resulting that include the launch of two junior warden schemes.

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**1.2.1.1: We have a strategy for engaging and involving customers**

All your consultation procedures are brought together in the Resident Involvement Strategy.

RP1/10

A new tenant participation charter has been launched this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.2.1.2: using a range of methods**

A wide range of consultation methods are in use and ensure that all users' views are captured and acted upon.

RP1/10

Consultation procedures continue to be reviewed and modified as required.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.2.1.3: appropriate to the needs of identified customer groups.**

You take particular care to involve all customer groups, holding over 20 focus groups annually. These are complemented by a bi-monthly Customer Forum.

RP1/10

Your Youth Engagement Action Plan is producing some excellent outcomes and is commended as 'Compliance Plus'.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.2.2: We have made the consultation of customers integral to continually improving our service and we advise customers of the results and action taken.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliance Plus

**Active Evidence**

**6: Focus groups** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We hold over 20 focus groups annually to ensure that we focus on providing services customers want and how they want them. Focus groups ensure we are able to listen to customer views and enable customers to take an active role in service delivery.

**24: Exception reports following customer feedback** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In order to ensure that we capture and use customer feedback we ensure that every type of feedback is entered on an exception report. This report is used by each service area to ensure that services changes are made as a direct result of customer feedback.

**25: Reaction reports following customer focus groups** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Following each focus group session we ensure that a reaction report is written and fed back to those tenants that attended. The reaction report highlights those areas where suggestions are made to improve service deliver in terms of "you said, we did" this is also published on our website.

**23: Contract monitoring** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Our customers are actively involved in the way in which our contracts are provided. Our tenants are involved at tender evaluation process in order to ensure that we appoint the right partner throughout actual contract monitoring through attendance at contract monitoring meetings.

**159: Delivery plan** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Tenants are involved in setting priorities for the annual review of the delivery plan.

**1.2.2.1: We have made the consultation of customers integral to continually improving our service**

It is very clear that your services are 'customer driven'. The extent of your consultation and the ways in which it influences your service delivery and planning are commended as 'Compliance Plus'. RP1/10 'Compliance Plus' is still appropriate here.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.2.2.2: and we advise customers of the results and action taken.**

You take every opportunity to report results and action to users. The Tenant Times magazine distributed to all tenants and leaseholders quarterly carries a ' You said - we did ' feature. You make good use of the local press to get messages across - the closure of a 'Crack House' was reported in the local paper during the assessment. This had been subject to many complaints from residents and the issue has been satisfactorily resolved after taking concerted action in liaison with the police. RP1/10 Tenant Times has been improved in consultation with readers.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.2.3: We regularly review our strategies and opportunities for consulting and engaging with customers to ensure that the methods used are effective and provide reliable and representative results.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliance Plus

**Active Evidence**

**32: Emerging issues - Review of council housing finance** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

As a result of a review of council housing finance we invited our customer to GCH in order to be involved with this debate a national level. Our director facilitated the group ensure that the materials were set at the right level to enable full understanding and involvement.

**31: Levels of participation** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We currently have 281 actively involved tenants. Ways in which our customer can be involved in service delivery range from focus groups, mystery shoppers, tenants inspectors, tenants and resident group officer level, contract monitoring, customer forum, GCH board, estate walkabout etc etc.

**30: Emerging issues (Floods)** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This evidence relates to a period last year when Gloucestershire was hit by severe flooding as a result of very heavy rainfall. This evidence shows how we contacts those tenants is need and responds to those requests on a individual basis.

**29: Innovation** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH constantly strives to improve the services that are being provided and as such looks for innovative ways in which we deliver services and engage with our customers. An example of this is the ideas list for the resident involvement team.

**27: Benchmarking** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In order to ensure that we are providing services that are achieving value for money we benchmark are services in order to effectively compare ourself with other social housing providers.

**28: Kirkless peer review of service** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

As part of the preparations for final inspection, we sought a peer review of GCH services linked to the follow up to indicative inspection, key lines of enquiry and performance. This has been carried out by Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing a 3\* ALMO in October 2006.

**1.2.3.1: We regularly review our strategies and opportunities for consulting**

Your Customer Focus Strategy is monitored and refined by tenants. Surveys are evaluated as a matter of course.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.2.3.2: and engaging with customers to ensure that the methods used are effective and provide reliable and representative results.**

The extent of your engagement with customers as evidenced above is exceptional. The involvement of tenants as inspectors for checking void properties before re-letting is commended as 'Compliance Plus'.  
 RP1/10 Compliance Plus still appropriate.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.3: Customer Satisfaction**

**1.3.1: We use reliable and accurate methods to measure customer satisfaction on a regular basis.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliance Plus

**Active Evidence**

**8: Mystery shoppers report for Neighbourhood Services** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We gain feedback from customers in various ways, mystery shopping enables us to identify where our service standards and procedures need to be improved as a direct result of our customers testing our services.

**69: Customer comments, compliments and complaints procedure** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The purpose of this policy and procedures and to make it easy for customers to compliment, compliant and comment about our service. This also makes it easy for staff to be commended for their customer care, consider where comments could improve services and put things right that have gone wrong.

**34: Report tenants driving service improvements** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We have introduced a process to monitor customer feedback that is used to capture residents' experience of service delivery, and to determine how that feedback can drive improvements to services. The results are analysed, action plans devised and implemented and changes to services made.

**33: Schedule of surveys and targets** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH is able to use reliable and accurate methods to gather customer feedback on a regular basis by ensuring that a timetable of surveys is in place. This schedule also identifies targets set for customer satisfaction in each of the service areas.

**220: Tenants driving service improvements** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This report identifies some of the innovative ways in which we gather and measure customer satisfaction on a regular basis. A good example of this has been attached "Your Views Count Cards" of which satisfaction is also reported on within the evidence.

**219: Your views count card** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Your views count cards are used to gather feedback from our customers at the earliest opportunity either at service delivery stage or just afterwards. This feedback enables us to gather additional information on customer satisfaction and shape our services as a result of customer feedback

**1.3.1.1: We use reliable and accurate methods to measure customer satisfaction on a regular basis.**

Annual programming of surveys ensures that trends can be identified and measured. The independent professional contractors used for key survey work are required to use reliable and accurate methodology.

RP1/10

The wide distribution of the 'Your views count' cards, the personal follow up of late returns and the extent to which staff are involved in converting suggestions into service improvements combine to make this process worthy of commendation as 'Compliance Plus'.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.3.2: We analyse and publicise satisfaction levels for the full range of customers for all main areas of our service and we have improved services as a result.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**55: Customer complaints focus group minutes November 2008** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The purpose of this focus group was to gather information on our complaints handling process and to obtain ideas from our customers on how the service can be improved. Four recommendations were made of which will be incorporated in a procedure review due to take place in Dec 08.

**36: Survey methodology** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We ensure that all surveys that are carried out have sound methodology. Our methodology is outlined in every survey and report provided.

**34: Report tenants driving service improvements** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Customer satisfaction levels are reported via a monthly performance report that is publicised on GCH website.

**1.3.2.1: We analyse and publicise satisfaction levels for the full range of customers**

Satisfaction levels are checked for all customer groups.  
RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.3.2.2: for all main areas of our service**

All main service areas are checked.  
RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.3.2.3: and we have improved services as a result.**

Reaction reports are produced when any dissatisfaction is identified. Recent comments about repairs and gas maintenance in particular have been noted and action is in hand to improve service delivery in these areas.  
RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.3.3: We include in our measurement of satisfaction specific questions relating to key areas including those on delivery, timeliness, information, access, and the quality of customer service, as well as specific questions which are informed by customer insight.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**9: Customer surveys - new tenants** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

A key area of our performance management framework is to receive feedback from our customers on the quality of our service delivery. Another way of obtaining valuable feedback is via our two partners VMS Limited and MRUK Limited who carry out a number of annual service specific surveys.

**82: Mystery shop neighbourhood services evaluation** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We carry out a number of mystery shops that are aimed to test our service standards through tenants acting as mystery shoppers. Following each mystery shop an evaluation is carried out that details all feedback and actions required a result

**6: Focus groups** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We hold over 20 focus groups annually to ensure that we focus on providing services customers want and how they want them. Focus groups ensure we are able to listen to customer views and enable customers to take an active role in service delivery.

**38: Customer services satisfaction survey** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

On an annual basis we ensure that a survey to test customer services satisfaction is carried out, the results of which are acted upon by the relevant service manager to ensuring continual improvement in the services we deliver.

**37: Customer priorities** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We carry out a survey of our Tenants' priorities and their perceptions of aspects of their environment annually. Tenants' feedback drives service improvement and so the results will be reported back to operational managers who will address these in future service delivery improvement plans.

**25: Reaction reports following customer focus groups** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We carry out a number of focus groups that ask specific question around service delivery. Following each focus group a reaction report is created that details all feedback and actions required a result

**1.3.3.1: We include in our measurement of satisfaction specific questions relating to key areas including those on delivery, timeliness, information, access, and the quality of customer service,**

All these themes are covered in user surveys.  
RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.3.3.2: as well as specific questions which are informed by customer insight.**

The Customer Forum is used to identify other areas where users' views would be useful. The recent research into priorities for service development is a good example. As a result the top 10 priorities for action for GCH have been based on what tenants say. The first priority is carrying out repairs and the second is dealing effectively with anti-social behaviour. All 10 priorities have been summarised and made available to tenants in a credit card sized format.

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.3.4: We set challenging and stretching targets for customer satisfaction and our levels are improving.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**41: Executive Management Team Monthly performance report** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Our targets for services are based on best value performance indicators and challenging targets set internally. Our performance is monitored on a monthly basis and this details our ongoing improvement. This information is also published for our customers to view.

**39: Customer satisfaction targets and trends** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Customer satisfaction including complaint trend evaluation is reported within our performance monitoring framework and quality issues via the exception planing. On an annual basis this information is reported to Board where full analysis and performance targets are set.

**220: Tenants driving service improvements** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The report details how our satisfaction levels are improving through effective use of the new initiative Your Views Count Cards.

**214: Tenants satisfaction survey targets 2009 -2012** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH has set challenging targets for key service areas 2009 -2012 for response repairs, new tenancies, tenancy and estate management, customer services and income management,

**211: Status survey targets for 2009 - 2012** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH sets targets for its customer satisfaction surveys. This is an example of targets for the Status Survey set for 09/10, 10/11 and 11/12. we have made this challenging by increasing the number of surveys to annually rather than bi-annually as the statutory requirement states,

**200: Customer complaint trend analysis** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This is a full and on-going analysis of complaint trends 2010.

**1.3.4.1: We set challenging and stretching targets for customer satisfaction**

You have looked at targets set by three star ALMOs and consulted your tenants before setting your own targets. You are able to show that they are challenging. You have also raised targets for user satisfaction in key service delivery areas.

RP1/10

Targets have been reviewed.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.3.4.2: and our levels are improving.**

Your evidence shows that customer satisfaction levels are consistently improving.

RP1/10

Satisfaction levels are again improving.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.3.5: We have made positive changes to services as a result of analysing customer experience, including improved customer journeys.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**8: Mystery shoppers report for Neighbourhood Services** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Mystery shoppers help us to test how our service is working at the "sharp end", giving us valuable feedback on how we can improve. We need to understand what customer think about our services, how they are provided and by whom they are provided i.e. staff members role in customer care.

**60: Audit commission final report** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH was inspected by the Audit Commission who, in June 2007 assessed Gloucester City Homes as a good two star service that had promising prospects for improvement. Within 18 months, the company had turned around a poorly performing nil star service through improvements in service delivery.

**39: Customer satisfaction targets and trends** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Customer satisfaction including complaint trend evaluation is reported within our performance monitoring framework and quality issues via the exception plan. The exception plan hold all details of customer feedback and actions taken. We also have trend analysis in various service areas from 2006.

**26: Service improvement and development** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We continually improve the services to our customers. We develop our services as a result of customer feedback and also looking at KLOEs, GCH business development plan, best in class, recent audit commission inspections. All services have service improvement plans that have clear targets set.

**25: Reaction reports following customer focus groups** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Following each focus group session we ensure that a reaction report is written and fed back to those tenants that attended. The reaction report highlights those areas where suggestions are made to improve service deliver in terms of "you said, we did".

**24: Exception reports following customer feedback** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In order to ensure that we capulate and use customer feedback we ensure that every type of feedback is entered on an exception report. This report is used by each service area to ensure that services changes are made as a direct result of customer feedback.

**1.3.5.1: We have made positive changes to services as a result of analysing customer experience,**

Reaction reports address any issues raised by focus groups. Analysis of customer experience helped you to move on from an Audit Commission rating of nil stars with poor performance to two stars with promising prospects for improvement.

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**1.3.5.2: including improved customer journeys.**

Through focus groups and especially through mystery shopping you map customers' journeys and take steps to improve them. Two recent examples are the introduction of an expanded ASB Respect Line service outside of normal office hours and the introduction of a cheaper and more comprehensive home contents insurance scheme for tenants.

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2: The Culture of the Organisation**

**2.1: Leadership, Policy and Culture**

**2.1.1: There is corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and leaders in our organisation actively support this and advocate for customers.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliance Plus

**Active Evidence**

**234: Were listening roadshow** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The concept of were listening was developed to enable our executive managers to demonstrate that they are listening to our customer. All GCH staff will be involved in promotion of the three day roadshow and all EM will be attendind the roadshow where customers will also be interviewed.

**230: New response repairs partner Lovell** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Following Morrison contract ceasing GCH secured a short-term repairs partner in place (Enterprise) whilst we carried out a full new repairs partner tender evaluation process. During this process GCH staff and customer were fully involved that resulted in Lovell Respond being awarded the contract.

**228: GCH staff undertaking ICS qualifications** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH is committed to developing customer service professionalism throughout the organisation and works in partnership with the Institute of Customer Services to ensure that staff are supported in their development to achieve either communications, solutions or innovations levels of the qualification.

**19: Customer forum** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The customer forum looks at services that Gloucester City Homes provides. It meets bi-monthly to debate housing service/policy issues and recommend how they should be dealt with. Representatives attend from across all tenants and residents groups and customers in the City.

**17: New tenant participation charter 2010** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Tenant Participation Charter was recently revised based on customer feedback. The strategy supports the many different ways that we engage and consult our tenants.

**124: 8 key strategic aims** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH has recently reviewed the corporate aims and objectives – Aim 1 is now “To be a customer driven provider of excellent services”. This reflects our tenant’s key priorities.

**2.1.1.1: There is corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery**

Your commitment is clearly articulated in your Mission Statement. It was also confirmed in discussion with a wide cross-section of staff and users.

RP1/10

Additional evidence this year shows that your new response repairs partner was selected in consultation with users. You are also working in partnership with the ICS to develop customer service professionalism throughout GCH.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.1.1.2: and leaders in our organisation actively support this and advocate for customers.**

Activities that support customer focus are welcomed and encouraged by senior managers. It was also noted that all staff are enthusiastic about customer focus and are willing to get involved with the many user-focused events that are organised during the year. These range from working with tenants and leaseholders to establish and develop local groups to putting on the Christmas pantomime.

RP1/10 The We're Listening Roadshow is involving senior managers meeting users on estates across Gloucester and is commended as 'Compliance Plus'.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.1.2: We use customer insight to inform policy and strategy and to prioritise service improvement activity.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

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**73: Complaints focus group minutes** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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We have recently carried out a workshop consisting of our customers that complained about the repairs service in the last 6 months. We used feedback gathered from this workshop in order to incorporate the results into a project group set-up to review current policy and procedure.

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**5: Customer forum** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Customer Forum is made up of 30 tenants who represent local community groups. This Forum considers operational issues, performance management and drives service improvement

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**38: Customer services satisfaction survey** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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A key area of our performance management framework is to receive feedback from our customers on the quality of our service delivery. Independent systems are in place to monitor service standards and benchmark delivery with top performing ALMO's.

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**2: Diversity Project** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Diversity information enables GCH to target policies and strategies towards our customer base. For example our knowledge of tenants led to the establishment of a new post to deliver targeted support to vulnerable tenants.

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**16: Resident involvement and community engagement strategy** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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GCH has a Resident Involvement Strategy that provides a key element in Tenant and Leasehold participation in the future. The strategy enables Tenants and Leaseholders to get involved in their communities at a level at which they feel comfortable.

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**125: Action days** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Action days provide a great way for the community to be involved in community events and also gives opportunity for our customers and potential customers to contribute ideas for future estate improvements and action day sites.

**2.1.2.1: We use customer insight to inform policy and strategy**

Your evidence, confirmed in discussion, shows that all your service planning and delivery is systematically informed by customer insight.

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.1.2.2: and to prioritise service improvement activity.**

The top ten priorities for 2008/2009 have been developed in consultation with tenants. They have been published and you have publicly committed yourselves to them.

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.1.3: We have policies and procedures which support the right of all customers to expect excellent levels of service.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

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**69: Customer comments, compliments and complaints procedure** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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This provides customers with the right to complain if they are dissatisfied with the service that they have received, or the opportunity to provide feedback if they wish to do so.

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**18: Customer service standards** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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The Customer Service Standards were developed in consultation with our customers to provide them with the right to an excellent standard of service.

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**128: Sexual orientation policy** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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The Sexual Orientation policy was developed following recognised best practice and has been approved by the board, which includes tenant representatives. It was introduced to ensure fairness of treatment, and an excellent level of service regardless of sexual orientation.

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**127: Equality and diversity policy religious belief** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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The Religious Belief policy was developed following recognised best practice and has been approved by the board, which includes tenant representatives. It was introduced to ensure fairness of treatment, and an excellent level of service regardless of religion.

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**126: Tenants handbook** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Handed out during all on-site lettings, the Tenants handbook provides information on every aspect of every service provided by GCH.

**2.1.3.1: We have policies and procedures which support the right of all customers to expect excellent levels of service.**

All required policies are in place and have been developed in consultation with users. Information on what customers are entitled to are set out in handbooks and on the GCH website.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.1.4: We ensure that all customers and customer groups are treated fairly and this is confirmed by feedback and the measurement of customer experience.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**8: Mystery shoppers report for Neighbourhood Services** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Following each completed mystery shop a full analysis of feedback is carried out and presented within a final report that details recommendations for remedial action.

**73: Complaints focus group minutes** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We invited a number of customers who had complained recently in order to explore the service and their satisfaction with how they were treated. Attendance at this focus group was low however other focus groups held throughout the year has given opportunity to explore the customer experience.

**6: Focus groups** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Focus groups are carried out annually to ensure that we focus on providing services customers want and how they want them. Focus groups ensure we are able to listen to customer views and enable customers to take an active role in service delivery. Attached list of 2010 focus groups planned.

**219: Your views count card** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Your views count cards are used to gather feedback from our customers at the earliest opportunity either at service delivery stage or just afterwards. This feedback enables us to gather additional information on customer satisfaction and shape our services as a result of customer feedback

**130: Mystery shops 2009** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

On an annual basis we ensure that all service areas are mystery shopped in order to ensure that we are delivering standards outlined within our service standards. This details of the number of mystery shop carried out annually are detailed within the attached evidence.

**2.1.4.1: We ensure that all customers and customer groups are treated fairly**

This is checked and confirmed by mystery shopping.  
 RP1/10  
 Mystery shopping has been improved following benchmarking with other services.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.1.4.2: and this is confirmed by feedback and the measurement of customer experience.**

Feedback confirms that users feel they are treated fairly. Tenants and leaseholders met during the assessment also confirmed that they were very satisfied in this respect.  
 Discussion with the Lovells representative revealed the sensitivity with which consultation and planning of major improvements was conducted.  
 RP1/10

The use of Focus Groups has been developed and can demonstrate that all groups are treated fairly.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.1.5: We protect customers’ privacy both in face-to-face discussions and in the transfer and storage of customer information.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**213: Archiving of tenants house files** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH ensures that full house files are stored in a secure location and the process management concerning the transfer of files ensures that tenants files are secure and retrievable at all times. This evidence piece identifies the form completed by the teams as well as indicates the process.

**210: Acceptable use of IT policy for laptop and mobile devices** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The purpose of this policy is to outline acceptable use of laptops and other mobile devices, such as personal digital assistants by GCH staff. As laptops and other devices will be used to access the GCC ICT network this document must be read in conjunction with the ICT

**181: Terms and conditions** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This is the full terms and conditions that all staff sign to ensure that GCH data is protected and that IT privileges are not breached.

**178: New IT user form** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

All staff sign a new user form that is signed by the staff member and line manager. This ensures that each staff member has access to the right systems and that they are aware of their responsibility with regards to downloading software, confidentiality, offensive material, security etc etc.

**168: Use of GCH private interview room** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Customer visiting Gloucester City Homes are able to benefit from two interview room located in reception that are enclosed that enable private conversations with GCH staff members. The use of these interview rooms can also be pre-booked by visitors to GCH on request with a relevant staff member.

**131: Access to information policy** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Allowing customers and staff access to the two key categories of information (personal and general information) is fundamental to the working of Gloucester City Homes. This policy deals with access to information by customers and staff.

**2.1.5.1: We protect customers’ privacy both in face-to-face discussions**

This was confirmed by staff and during observations of the main reception area.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.1.5.2: and in the transfer and storage of customer information.**

Security of storage, transfer and sharing of both personal and general data is subject to an information policy. This is issued to all staff and training is provided where required.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.1.6: We empower and encourage all employees to actively promote and participate in the customer focused culture of our organisation.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

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<b>86: Podsmead Community action day</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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We ensure that all staff are involved with and participate within community action days. The resident involvement team ensure that they invite staff to attend each action day and this year many staff members have been involved with the action days and very positive about their experience of this.

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<b>141: Income management blitz days</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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GCH has a culture of ensuring that services are managed effectively with all staff encouraged to support the service delivery through blitz days. The purpose of blitz days is to focus on a particular area of the business.

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<b>136: Policies and procedures accessible via Intranomic</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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All organisational policies and procedures are held on the internal intranet. Staff are able to access these to ensure consistency in decision making, but are also empowered and supported in making decisions that provide excellent customer service.

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<b>135: Customer services week</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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GCH participates annually in the National Customer Services week in recognition of the importance of customer service in the organisation.

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<b>134: Customer services champions</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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Each team has identified a customer service champion who is actively working to improve customer services as part of a project team. In addition this member of staff is expected to actively encourage their team members to deliver excellence in customer service.

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<b>133: Institute of Customer Service - innovations</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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It is a corporate objective that all front line staff will have achieved one of the ICS awards by Mar 2010. These awards encourage staff to consider ways in which they can drive forward service improvements to our customers.

**2.1.6.1: We empower and encourage all employees to actively promote**

Every section has a Customer Service Champion. They encourage and facilitate customer focus and meet on a regular basis to discuss progress and share best practice.

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.1.6.2: and participate in the customer focused culture of our organisation.**

Staff spoken to during the assessment were very positive about the customer focused culture of the service. One of the tenant representatives stated that staff were prepared "to go the extra mile".

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.2: Staff Professionalism and Attitude**

**2.2.1: We can demonstrate our commitment to developing and delivering customer focused services through our recruitment, training and development policies for staff.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

Compliance to Standard: Compliance Plus

**Active Evidence**

**236: Training and development strategy** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Performance and development reviews are completed on an annual basis and reviewed on a quarterly basis. Training needs identified from the review are collated centrally by human resources and used when identifying appropriate training to take place during the year.

**235: Staff training record form** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Each member of staff as their individual training record form that details qualifications, training received, membership of professional bodies as well as development and involvement opportunities.

**137: Competency framework** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH has recently established a competency framework for all staff and managers monitored through appraisals. A core competency is that of customer focus and this is reinforced through the relevant job specifications.

**134: Customer services champions** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Each team has identified a customer service champion who is actively working to improve customer services as part of a project team. In addition this member of staff is expected to feedback to the team and actively encourage their team members to deliver excellence in customer service.

**133: Institute of Customer Service - innovations** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

It is a corporate objective that 80% all front line staff will have achieved one of the ICS awards by March 2010. These awards encourage staff to consider ways in which they can drive forward service improvements to our customers.

**132: Employee information pack** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The employee information pack contains information in terms of a quick guide to what we do, our mission, vision and values, board structure and Gloucester City Council. This pack also includes information on housekeeping, health and safety, training/development, customer service standards etc.

**2.2.1.1: We can demonstrate our commitment to developing and delivering customer focused services through our recruitment,**

The recruitment process is built around a competency framework that emphasises attitudes to and competencies in customer care and customer focus. Users have an input at the interviewing stage. The outcome is to reinforce and develop the customer focused culture of the service.

This is commended as 'Compliance Plus'.

RP1/10

'Compliance Plus' still appropriate.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.2.1.2: training and development policies for staff.**

All customer-facing staff should have achieved an ICS award by March 2010. Customer Service Champions are able to maintain a high profile for customer focus and this is helped by active involvement with National Customer Services Week.

RP1/10

The training and development strategy and training record keeping have been improved since the last assessment.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.2.2: Our staff are polite and friendly to customers and have an understanding of customer needs.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

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**18: Customer service standards** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Service standards set out what service our customers can expect when accessing our services, this also acts as a guide for GCH to ensure that they are aware of their obligations to our customers. This is reviewed regular through focus groups to ensure that services standards are updated.

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**157: Communications mystery shop** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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We ensure that our customers are involved in testing if our services in terms of ensuring that staff members are polite when answering the phone. Within the mystery shop evaluation one of the strengths reported that "all members of staff were perceived as courteous and polite"

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**137: Competency framework** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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GCH has recently established a competency framework for all staff and managers. A core competency is that of customer focus and this is reinforced through the relevant job specifications.

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**134: Customer services champions** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Each team has identified a customer service champion who is actively working to improve customer services as part of a project team. In addition this member of staff is expected to actively encourage their team members to deliver excellence in customer service.

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**132: Employee information pack** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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The customer service standards are explained to all new staff and existing staff are provided with customer service training annually.

**2.2.2.1: Our staff are polite and friendly to customers**

This is confirmed by mystery shopping and surveys. It was also observed to be the case during the assessment and was strongly corroborated in discussion with tenants and leaseholders. One tenant said "I am treated as a person - not just a number".  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.2.2.2: and have an understanding of customer needs.**

This is confirmed by regular surveys. Residents at a sheltered home visited during the assessment were very complimentary about the sensitive and caring service that they enjoyed.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.2.3: We prioritise customer focus at all levels of our organisation and evaluate individual and team commitment through the performance management system.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**43: Performance management framework** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The performance management framework includes an annual appraisal, quarterly review and bi-monthly work plan. A core element of this framework is for staff to consider how they have contributed to customer service and for performance in this area to be monitored and developed.

**142: Staff appraisal** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Annual appraisals are carried out on an annual basis. Our appraisal ensure that customer focus is maintained throughout and is demonstrated via competencies, this also forms part of the staff performance monitoring system.

**137: Competency framework** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH has recently established a competency framework for all staff and managers. A core competency is that of customer focus and this is reinforced through the relevant job specifications.

**2.2.3.1: We prioritise customer focus at all levels of our organisation**

Customer focus is a priority within the GCH Mission Statement. This is reinforced by management processes and the appointment of Customer Service Champions.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.2.3.2: and evaluate individual and team commitment through the performance management system.**

Annual appraisals of all staff build on quarterly reviews and bi-monthly work plans. Contribution to customer service is a core element of the appraisals. Team performance is also assessed and recognised.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.2.4: We can demonstrate how customer-facing staffs' insight and experience is incorporated into internal processes, policy development and service planning.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliance Plus

**Active Evidence**

**229: Rewards for good ideas** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

At GCH staff are encouraged to contribute ideas that ensure continued improvement to services to the customer through a rewards for good ideas scheme. There have been a number rewards in recognition for going above the line of duty e.g. Obtaining customer service excellence.

**196: Think tank staff sessions** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Staff are encouraged to participate in a Think Tank on a particular topic or area of the business. These session are aimed to ensure that staff have the opportunity to discuss issues and discuss creative ways in which to address them.

**179: Chat with the chief action plan** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

On a bi-monthly basis a selection of staff are nominated by their line managers to attend chat with the chief, staff members can also make a request to attend this session. Chat with the chief enables staff to gives ideas, raise issues etc that are then acted upon e.g. into procedure change.

**144: Resident involvement and community engagement project** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH has a culture of staff involvement through the project management framework. Each project group consists of at least one staff member from each service areas. The purpose of this is to ensure that staffs insight and experience can be used in each service area development.

**134: Customer services champions** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Each team has identified a customer service champion who is actively working to improve customer services as part of a project team. In addition this member of staff is expected to actively encourage their team members to deliver excellence in customer service.

**2.2.4.1: We can demonstrate how customer-facing staffs' insight and experience is incorporated into internal processes, policy development and service planning.**

Staff views are actively sought in a number of ways as evidenced. Those spoken to were confident that their views were captured and that they were able to influence service development. Staff with work experience in other organisations rated GCH very highly in this respect.

RP1/10

The bi-monthly 'Chat with the Chief' was observed during the assessment. It provides a very effective channel of communication and is commended as 'Compliance Plus'.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.2.5: We value the contribution our staff make to delivering customer focused services, and leaders, managers and staff demonstrate these behaviours.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

Compliance to Standard: Compliance Plus

**Active Evidence**

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**167: Minutes of customer services champions meeting** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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These are the minutes of the customer service champion meeting in December 2008.

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**166: Customer service champions** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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We value the contribution that staff make concerning the improvement of service provided to our customers. We enable staff to contribute ideas to this end through individually appointed customer service champions for each team, that role is to gather feedback, contribute ideas, review standard etc

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**140: Customer service awards** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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GCH recognises the role of staff in delivering excellent customer services by annual awards to staff that have excelled in this area.

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**137: Competency framework** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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A core competency is that of customer focus and this is reinforced through the job specifications of all staff and management, at all levels within the organisation.

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**133: Institute of Customer Service - innovations** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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It is a corporate objective that all front line staff will have achieved one of the ICS awards by Mar 2010. These awards encourage staff to consider ways in which they can drive forward service improvements to our customers.

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**123: Gloucester City Homes Strategic Business Plan 2009-15** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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GCH has recently reviewed the corporate aims and objectives – Aim 1 is now “To be a customer driven provider of excellent services”. This reflects our tenant’s key priorities.

**2.2.5.1: We value the contribution our staff make to delivering customer focused services,**

Your customer service awards are very successful in recognising and rewarding (and sometimes embarrassing) staff. This is commended as 'Compliance Plus'.

RP1/10 Staff continue to be valued for their contributions. Compliance Plus still appropriate.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**2.2.5.2: and leaders, managers and staff demonstrate these behaviours.**

It was evidenced and confirmed by observation and discussion that customer focus is demonstrated by staff at all levels in the service.

RP1/10 Again strongly confirmed.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3: Information and Access**

**3.1: Range of Information**

**3.1.1: We make information about the full range of services we provide available to our customers and potential customers, including how and when people can contact us, how our services are run and who is in charge.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliance Plus

**Active Evidence**

**85: Access to information sheet** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This explains how customers can gain access to information that we hold at Gloucester City Homes.

**226: GCHTV** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We have now introduced GCHTV that enables our customers to access a wide range of information and also the ability to report issues such as repairs, This service is available all day and everyday increasing accessibility to information about the range of services and also services.

**225: Twitter** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This is another example of an innovative way in which our customer can access information about GCH. We have recently introduced the use of facebook in order to provide an information way in which we can communicate with our tenants.

**224: Facebook** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We have introduced new innovative ways in which our customer can access information about GCH. We have recently introduced the use of facebook in order to provide an information way in which we can communicate with our tenants.

**20: Marketing and communications strategy** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The marketing and communications strategy promotes a positive, consistent and professional image of GCH to all our stakeholders and keeps all of our stakeholders fully informed about matters relating to GCH, its services, performance and decisions it takes.

**18: Customer service standards** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Service standards detail service standards across all areas of the business clearly communicating the full range of services available to our customers and potential customers. This is also available to customers on our website.

**3.1.1.1: We make information about the full range of services we provide available to our customers and potential customers,**

All service and contact information is made widely available. The website is useful here and is shortly to be improved following consultation with users. Free internet access is available in the main reception area. RP1/10 The introduction of information services through interactive TV and on Facebook is commended as 'Compliance Plus'.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.1.1.2: including how and when people can contact us,**

This is covered by the service standards that are made available as above. RP1/10 No change.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.1.1.3: how our services are run and who is in charge.**

This is provided in detail on the website and in outline in the Annual Report. More information is given on wall displays in the reception area. RP1/10 This information has been improved over the past year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.1.2: Where there is a charge for services, we tell our customers how much they will have to pay.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

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**89: Rent arrears leaflet 1** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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This leaflet identifies to our customers what they can do if they have rent arrears, it identifies how we are able to support them.

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**88: Service charge leaflet** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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This leaflet identifies why services charges are made and what for in a format that is easy to understand.

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**87: Rent charges information** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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This gives information to our customers on how we calculate their rent and charges, together with comprehensive information on how to make payment, benefits advice and support agencies.

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**164: Leaflet for leaseholders explaining services charges** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Another way in which we provide information concerning leaseholder services charges is via our leaflet. This leaflet clearly identifies relevant information to enable customers to understand leasehold charges.

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**163: Leaseholders handbook inclusion on paying service charges** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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We ensure that leaseholders of fully aware of their responsibilities concerning services charges, one example of how we publish this information is in our leaseholders handbook. The leaseholders handbook is issued to all new and existing leaseholders.

**3.1.2.1: Where there is a charge for services, we tell our customers how much they will have to pay.**

Information on all charges is provided as evidenced. A recent revision to rents was communicated directly to every user concerned. You have also used a blitz approach to rent arrears. This offered support and advice to those owing rent but also achieved significant payments and resulted in you maintaining performance. RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.2: Quality of Information**

**3.2.1: We provide our customers with the information they need in ways which meet their needs and preferences, using a variety of appropriate channels.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliance Plus

**Active Evidence**

**237: Stakeholders survey** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

A survey of GCH Stakeholders has been completed to assess perceptions of GCH and the value key stakeholders place on the role and services that it provides. This information from our customers is essential for ensuring that communication methods used are appropriate and understandable.

**234: Were listening roadshow** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We have developed a new way in which we can demonstrate that we are listening to our customers which also acts as another way in which to gather feedback and for customers to access GCH. The were listening concept is new and involve staff on 12-14th (promotion) and EMT on 15th-17th April (roadshow)

**233: New improved tenants times** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We have now developed our tenants times in partnership with our customers to improve the way in which information is presented to them. Our customers have been involved in selection of the design company, the design and on an on-going basis deciding of the content fully.

**226: GCHTV** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We have now introduced GCHTV that enables our tenants to access our services via their own TV. This service provides a range of information to our tenants as well as enabling them to contact us or report a repair for example.

**225: Twitter** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This is another example of an innovative way in which our customer can access information about GCH. We have recently introduced the use of facebook in order to provide an information way in which we can communicate with our tenants.

**224: Facebook** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We have introduced new innovative ways in which our customer can access information about GCH. We have recently introduced the use of facebook in order to provide an information way in which we can communicate with our tenants.

**3.2.1.1: We provide our customers with the information they need in ways which meet their needs and preferences,**

Information is made widely available. All new users receive a handbook containing essential information. Tenant Times is sent to all users quarterly and provides key information in an attractive format. This is commended as 'Compliance Plus'.  
 RP1/10 Tenant Times has been revamped in consultation with readers. Compliance Plus is still appropriate.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.2.1.2: using a variety of appropriate channels.**

Other channels available are the website, advice available through staff on estates or at service points and by phone to the customer call centre. Tenant groups are also empowered to give support and advice or direct queries to the right place.  
 RP1/10 GCHTV, Facebook and Twitter have all been introduced since the last assessment.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.2.2: We take reasonable steps to make sure our customers have received and understood the information we provide.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliance Plus

**Active Evidence**

**94: Tenants times survey** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This is a survey that was carried out to ask customers how they rate tenants times in terms of content, style and quality. This helps to identify that our customers wanted more community news and as a result the September edition included this.

**74: Breakdown of customer contact type** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

On an annual basis information is collated on how customer use our service. We use this information to assist in the planning of our services. Information is collated on number of visits, calls, emails, fax, visitors to reception, Matson one stop plus and number of hits to our website.

**176: Post let visit data input sheet** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We carry out a home visit to all new tenants no more than four weeks after they have been let a property to ensure that they have read and understood the information that was relayed to them at letting stage as well as to ensure that all information that should have been issued has been completed.

**162: Ensuring customers receive and understand information we provide** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

To ensure that customers are able to understand the information we send them we ensure that on each letter we ask our customers to make contact if they would like the information explained or provided in another format.

**161: Number of customers accessing GCH website** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We currently collect information in order to understand how our customers are accessing our services, part of this includes collating information on how many customers use our website.

**101: Options appraisal** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

When GCH took over responsibility for the delivery of housing management services in 2005, customers told us about the type of services they wanted and how they should be delivered. A full appraisal of our options were carried out at this stage to determine how services would be provided in future.

**3.2.2.1: We take reasonable steps to make sure our customers have received**

You do check that users receive and understand the information you provide. Customer call centre staff always ask callers at the end of the call "is there anything else I can help you with?".  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.2.2.2: and understood the information we provide.**

The post -let visit is appreciated by users and is commended as 'Compliance Plus'.  
 RP1/10 Tenants continue to be very satisfied with the information they receive. Compliance Plus is still appropriate.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.2.3: We have improved the range, content and quality of verbal, published and web based information we provide to ensure it is relevant and meets the needs of customers.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**94: Tenants times survey** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Tenants times is a quarterly newsletter sent to all tenants and leaseholders. This was received and reviewed following feedback to ensure that the content and quality meets our customer needs.

**91: Reading panel list and feedback** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This is a list of reading panel members. Our reading panel is sent information to check the content and quality of leaflets, policies etc before publishing.

**212: Monitoring of calls in the customer services call centre** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Customer Services Team Leader as part of her role listens to calls received in the call centre. The purpose of this activity is to listen for the quality of information being given, the professionalism and assist in identification of any training needs within the team

**184: Tenants times editorial panel** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH has an editorial panel that consists of staff, tenants and leaseholders in place to discuss and agree the content of the quarterly Tenants Times. The Tenants Times is sent to all tenants

**183: Monthly new tenancies survey exception report** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This is an example of the exception report following our monthly new tenants survey.

**162: Ensuring customers receive and understand information we provide** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

To ensure customers are able to understand the information we send them we ensure that on each letter we ask our customers to make contact if they would like the information explained or provided in another format.

**3.2.3.1: We have improved the range, content and quality of verbal,**

The quality of verbal information given by the call centre is monitored by the Customer Services Team Leader. The open plan office layout at GCH headquarters helps to ensure consistency and quality of information provision.

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.2.3.2: published**

The quality of information in Tenant Times is checked by an editorial panel. There is also a reading panel to oversee the content and quality of leaflets and other publications.

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.2.3.3: and web based information we provide to ensure it is relevant and meets the needs of customers.**

The website is user-friendly and is currently being updated in consultation with users.

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.2.4: We can demonstrate that information we provide to our customers is accurate and complete, and that when this is not the case we advise customers when they will receive the information they requested.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**91: Reading panel list and feedback** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This is a list of reading panel members. Our reading panel is sent information to check the content and quality of leaflets, policies etc before publishing.

**85: Access to information sheet** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This leaflet explains how customers can get access to information that we hold at Gloucester City Homes.

**18: Customer service standards** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We have a comprehensive set of service standards that ensures everyone in our diverse multi-cultural community, including those with special needs, are not excluded from any aspect of service we provide. These service standards outline the level of service customers can expect when contacting GCH.

**131: Access to information policy** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This policy deals with access to information by customers and staff on themselves and by staff for customers allowing access,

**121: Minutes of publications group** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This is an example of the minutes from a publications group as above.

**120: Agenda for publications group** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The publications group is responsible for setting the content and style of tenants times as well as ensuring that every aspect of the publication is correct and complete.

**3.2.4.1: We can demonstrate that information we provide to our customers is accurate and complete,**

Your evidence confirms that you check the accuracy of all the information you provide to users.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.2.4.2: and that when this is not the case we advise customers when they will receive the information they requested.**

It was observed that your protocols for call handling include logging queries that cannot be immediately answered. You have set a standard of 24 hours for such calls to be returned with full information or an update.

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.3: Access**

**3.3.1: We make our services easily accessible to all customers through provision of a range of alternative channels.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**74: Breakdown of customer contact type** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This evidence outlines how customer access our services through the various channels and the various channels available to access us. As Facebook and Twitter are relatively new this has not been collated within this report however will demonstrate this on visit.

**226: GCHTV** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We have now introduced GCHTV that enables our tenants to access our services via their own TV. This service provides a range of information to our tenants as well as enabling them to contact us or report a repair for example.

**225: Twitter** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This is another example of an innovative way in which our customer can access information about GCH. We have recently introduced the use of facebook in order to provide an information way in which we can communicate with our tenants.

**224: Facebook** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We have introduced new innovative ways in which our customer can access information about GCH. We have recently introduced the use of facebook in order to provide an information way in which we can communicate with our tenants.

**17: New tenant participation charter 2010** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Our Tenant Charter was first launched in December 2006 and currently we are in the process of reviewing a 3rd version. The tenants charter sets out council tenants and other local residents rights to participate in decisions about their communities and the local service they receives.

**15: Youth engagement action plan** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This document outlines an action plan for developing youth involvement in year 6 primary, 13-17 year olds, 17-25 year olds and also young parents.

**3.3.1.1: We make our services easily accessible to all customers through provision of a range of alternative channels.**

Users can access services by phone, e-mail, letter, personal visit , and through the website. RP1/10 Access has been further improved by the use of GCHTV, Facebook and Twitter.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

### 3.3.2: We evaluate how customers interact with the organisation through access channels and we use this information to identify possible service improvements, and offer better choices

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

Compliance to Standard: Compliant

#### Active Evidence

<b>98: Resident involvement breakdown of activities</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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This is an evaluation of how our actively involved tenants access the various involvement mechanisms offered by GCH.

<b>82: Mystery shop neighbourhood services evaluation</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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Mystery shops are undertaken in each service area on an annual basis and are aimed to check service standards are being complied with when accessing our services via the channels available. Areas of weakness are identified in the final report and actions put in place e.g, staff training.

<b>65: Exceptions project</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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The purpose of the exceptions project is to ensure that all feedback received translates into direct service improvements.

<b>25: Reaction reports following customer focus groups</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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This is an example of a reaction report following a customer focus group session. The reaction report details customer feedback and corrective actions as a result.

<b>202: Customer contact via various channels</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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Statistics are gathered on a on-going basis with regards to channel usage. The attached details how many customers access us via telephone calls, visits to southgate house, home visits and visits to Matson One Stop Plus.

<b>193: Tenants choice in planned maintenance</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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Recognising how tenants to be contacted i.e. using diversity database and channel usage information we are able to offer tenants choice in terms of any planned works using the appropriate communication channel.

<b>192: Rent arrears blitz day and direct debit prize draw</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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On a regular basis we evaluate the way in which customers interact with the organisation. An example of this is reviewing our direct debits and putting an incentive in place for those customers who pay their direct debits monthly and those tenants who are in credit on their account.

<b>147: Hits to GCH website</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
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We currently monitor how our customers interact with us through breakdowns of contact by type (See evidence number 74) another access channel that is monitored is the number of hits to GCH website.

**3.3.2.1: We evaluate how customers interact with the organisation through access channels**

Customer contact is monitored and analysed. The telephone is the most popular method.

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.3.2.2: and we use this information to identify possible service improvements,**

Some work is now being done to identify and analyse avoidable calls to the customer call centre. It is anticipated that this may lead to improved information provision through other channels like the website. This, in turn, offers the prospect of improving the quality of service to more 'essential' phone callers.

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.3.2.3: and offer better choices**

You offer the option of paying rent by direct debit. The regular prize draw for tenants in credit with rent accounts is very popular.

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.3.3: We ensure that where customers can visit our premises in person facilities are as clean and comfortable as possible.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

<b>202: Customer contact via various channels</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
Statistics are gathered on a on-going basis with regards to channel usage. The attached details how many customers access us via telephone calls, visits to southgate house, home visits and visits to Matson One Stop Plus.		
<b>105: Risk assessment Southgate House</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
A full risk assessment of GCH Southgate House has been undertaken to ensure that risks are identified and minimised as well as ensuring that the office is accessible i.e. DDA compliancy and also comfortable.		
<b>104: Risk assessment of Matson One Stop Plus</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
A full risk assessment of Matson one stop has been undertaken to ensure that risks are identified and minimised as well as ensuring that the office is accessible i.e. DDA compliancy and also comfortable.		
<b>103: Assessment by deaf association</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
The Deaf association have both risk-assessed the reception for access facilities and have hearing loop available in both reception areas.		
<b>102: Assessment by association for the blind</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
The Blind association have risk-assessed the reception for access facilities.		
<b>101: Options appraisal</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
GCH office is located in the city centre close to all main bus routes. Our customer reception is fully DDA complaint, and offers private interview facilities for customers.		
<b>100: Premises project scope</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
GCH was established in Dec 2005. As part of a fundamental service review to close decentralised housing offices, a premises project was set up, to ensure staff had appropriate office space and also that customers have can enjoy a clean, comfortable and accessible environment when visiting GCH.		

**3.3.3.1: We ensure that where customers can visit our premises in person facilities are as clean and comfortable as possible.**

The facilities at Southgate House are excellent. Your firmly managed clear desk policy helps to create an overall atmosphere that is calm and professional.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.4: Co-operative working with other providers, partners and communities**

**3.4.1: We have made arrangements with other providers and partners to offer and supply co-ordinated services, and these arrangements have demonstrable benefits for our customers**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliance Plus

**Active Evidence**

**238: 6 month report from GL Communities on outcomes achieved** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This report identified the outcomes achieved against objectives set within the GCH and GL Communities service level agreement. This SLA is reviewed on a 6 monthly basis in terms of progress against objectives identified.

**227: Partnership agreement with housing benefit** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This agreement highlights the services both GCH and Housing Benefits, Investigations and welfare rights services will provide to the customers of GCH. It cements, an already strong working relationship, by clearly showing the roles and responsibilities of both parties.

**111: Strategic partnering framework** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This document outlines an agreement at strategic level with our decent homes partners.

**108: GL Communities service level agreement** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This service level agreement highlights the services that GL Communities will provide to the customers of GCH. The benefits this agreement brings are increased engagement with residents, local approach to partnership working between stakeholders and build capacity.

**107: Partnership agreement with Kingsholm TCC** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We have developed a partnership agreement with Kingsholm Tenant Consultative Committee (KTCC) in order to formalise the way in which we work together to provide high quality services that Kingsholm TCC has delegated management responsibility for. GCH currently funds KTCC through this agreement.

**106: Community strategy** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This strategy is about the future of Gloucester to help employers, organisations and communities work together to secure the social, economic and environmental well being of the City. GCH also works as part of the Local Strategic Partnership and Family Intervention Project.

**3.4.1.1: We have made arrangements with other providers and partners to offer and supply co-ordinated services,**

Discussions with partners confirmed that you have good working arrangements on a day to day basis and also at a more strategic level.  
 RP1/10 Confirmed again in discussion.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.4.1.2: and these arrangements have demonstrable benefits for our customers**

The benefits provided to your users are clearly evidenced and are reflected in the tidy and fresh appearance of many areas of your estates.  
 RP1/10 The more structured and increasing use of volunteers is commended as 'Compliance Plus'.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**3.4.2: We have developed co-ordinated working arrangements with our partners that ensure customers have clear lines of accountability for quality of service.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliance Plus

**Active Evidence**

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**112: Improving your home - key information leaflet** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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This leaflet is available for all tenants who are having decent homes works undertaken in their home. This identifies key information such as contact names, numbers, decent homes partners, service standards, how to make a complaint, code of conduct etc.

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**111: Strategic partnering framework** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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The Framework Agreement relates to the Contract Programme and is made between the Client and the Constructor and each of the Other Constructors and (if applicable) Framework Strategic Specialists who have executed a Strategic Joining Agreement.

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**110: Major works tenant compact** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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This demonstrates our partnership working during the Decent Homes programme. This document identifies the mechanisms during the process and outlines partners responsibilities to our customers.

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**109: Partnership agreement community payback** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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This is example of a partnership agreement with Community Payback that has demonstrable outcomes for our customers in terms of a free labour force working on Podsmead estate to improve the environment.

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**108: GL Communities service level agreement** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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This is an example of a partnership agreement that provide demonstrable benefits to our customers. As a result of this partnership Action4Employment provide free assistance to elderly tenants in terms of gardening as well as assistance on community action days.

**3.4.2.1: We have developed co-ordinated working arrangements with our partners that ensure customers have clear lines of accountability for quality of service.**

Staff working for contractors are required to follow your customer service standards. Your arrangements with Lovells in particular are impressive and are reflected in high levels of satisfaction with the Decent Homes Programme. This is commended as 'Compliance Plus'.  
 RP1/10 The arrangements for handover from Morrisons to Lovells merit 'Compliance Plus' here.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

### 3.4.3: We interact within wider communities and we can demonstrate the ways in which we support those communities.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliance Plus

#### Active Evidence

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**203: GCH community funding scheme approved grants** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Gloucester City Homes has allocated £5,000 for sponsorship of suitable local community projects during 2008/9. We can give individual grants up to a maximum of £500 to fund a particular project or activity. Applications from non-profit making organisation for projects in art, sport, health etc.

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**197: GCH support of charities** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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GCH supports a number of charities with staff raising over £1,000 for various good causes both locally and nationally in 2008. We are supporting the introduction of Workplace Giving as one way of staff being able to contribute on a regular basis.

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**194: Number of referrals to agencies** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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In carrying out day-to-day services i.e. rent arrears, tenancy management we carry out a number of referrals for our tenants to agencies within the community in order to provide support where required for areas such as money/debt advice, garden works that contribute to the community as a whole.

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**165: Working within the stronger communities project** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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GCH works within the stronger communities project which aims to create stronger communities in Gloucester through partnership working with the community and community stakeholders and partners. The community and partners each bring different perspectives and are mutually supportive of each other.

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**16: Resident involvement and community engagement strategy** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Our resident involvement strategy sets out how we work with our tenants and residents and how we support the community as a whole.

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**115: Neighbourhood Project funding agreement and targets** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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This document outlines performance targets in each of the five delivery areas as agreed in partnership with our neighbourhood project. Each neighbourhood project is visited monthly to check progress and performance is reported on a quarterly basis.

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#### 3.4.3.1: We interact within wider communities and we can demonstrate the ways in which we support those communities.

This part of your application is very strongly evidenced. Community involvement is a common theme throughout your service. The ways in which it is planned, managed, monitored and developed with such extensive staff and user engagement is commended as 'Compliance Plus'.  
 RP1/10 Compliance Plus remains entirely appropriate here.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4: Delivery**

**4.1: Delivery standards**

**4.1.1: We have challenging standards for our main services, which take account of our responsibility for delivering national and statutory standards and targets.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

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**48: Customer Service Standard** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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We have a comprehensive range of service specific standards so that all of our customers can monitor our performance and delivery against them. They set a clear level of service for our staff to deliver and our customers to receive. Set by the customer, national and statutory standards and targets.

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**44: Quality management report** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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The management report enables us to identify quality improvement issues, identify solutions and track progress and outcomes as a result of feedback.

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**43: Performance management framework** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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A key area of our performance management framework is to receive feedback from our customers on the quality of our service delivery. Independent systems are in place to monitor service standards and benchmark delivery with top performing ALMO's.

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**41: Executive Management Team Monthly performance report** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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GCH has set challenging targets for all services that incorporates both our responsibility for delivering quality services to our customers, whilst achieving national and statutory performance standards and targets such as best value performance indicators.

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**201: ISO inspection report** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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The objective of the assessment was to conduct a certification assessment for ISO 9001:2000 to ensure that all elements of the proposed scope and entire requirements of the management standard are effectively addressed by the organisation's management system. GCH was accredited with this award.

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**182: Investors in people** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Gloucester City Homes (GCH) complies with the requirements of the Investors in People Standard and has been The Gold award for investors in people. GCH is one of only 9 organisations in the South West and 128 across the UK to have achieved Gold Status, putting it in the top 1% of all 40,000 iIP or

**4.1.1.1: We have challenging standards for our main services,**

Challenging standards are set for all your main services. These are detailed in various documents and clearly published on the website.

RP1/10

Your standards continue to be challenging.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.1.1.2: which take account of our responsibility for delivering national and statutory standards and targets.**

Your standards reflect the National Decent Homes standard and are linked to Best Value performance indicators.

RP1/10

No change.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.1.2: We monitor and meet our standards, key departmental and performance targets, and we tell our customers about our performance.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

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**55: Customer complaints focus group minutes November 2008** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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This is an example of one of our 20 annual focus groups that take place. The evidence identifies suggestions from customers on how we can improve our complaints management process. Following the focus group feedback a review of policy and procedures is taking place with our customers.

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**54: Service standards monitoring matrix** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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All service standards are monitored through a matrix that outlines mechanisms that enable us to monitor performance against each service standard.

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**53: Quality systems performance report** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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We have a quality systems performance review that is undertaken annually to ensure that quality system's continue to be suitable and effective. Following customer feedback we ensure that service improvements are made and fed back to our customers via annual focus groups.

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**41: Executive Management Team Monthly performance report** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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On a monthly basis key performance management information is collated in order to review our performance against key performance indicators such as the Best Value Performance Indicators.

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**150: Published performance information on GCH website** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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We publish all our performance information on our website on a monthly basis in order to ensure that our customers can access performance management information. This information is also available on our reception areas as well as advertised in Tenants Times that is circulated to all tenants.

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**119: Performance management in tenants times** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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To ensure that all customers are able to access information concerning our performance, Tenants Times is circulated to all tenants and leaseholders.

**4.1.2.1: We monitor and meet our standards, key departmental and performance targets,**

You have a very thorough approach to performance management. You are always aware of your current performance in all key areas of the service.

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.1.2.2: and we tell our customers about our performance.**

Performance updates are published in every edition of Tenant Times. A summary is included in the Annual Report.

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

#### 4.1.3: We consult and involve customers, citizens, partners and staff on the setting, reviewing and raising of our local standards.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

Compliance to Standard: Compliant

##### Active Evidence

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**9: Customer surveys - new tenants** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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A number of service specific surveys are carried out annually to gather feedback from our customers and identify any service improvement required. Following each survey an exception report is completed that identifies any service improvements required as a result.

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**8: Mystery shoppers report for Neighbourhood Services** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Tenant Mystery shoppers have been fully trained and support GCH to test how our service is working at the "sharp end", giving us invaluable feedback on how we can improve. This approach enables GCH to understand what customers think about our services.

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**6: Focus groups** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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GCH holds over 20 focus groups annually to ensure that we review existing services and identify future requirements to meet tenant needs and aspirations.

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**204: Partnering board minutes** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Partnering board takes place on a monthly basis. The meeting is attended by GCH officers, tenants and also contract partners. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss progress on the contract but also to work together in order to review and improve services provided to tenants.

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**19: Customer forum** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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The Forum commenced in May 2007 and ensures that all avenues of tenant involvement at a local level feeds into it. The Forum plays a key role in terms of the strategic and wider reaching issues of GCH as well as monitoring the success of tenant involvement and the success of the Tenants charter.

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**18: Customer service standards** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Our service standards are currently reviewed via customer focus groups on an annual basis. All feedback obtained from these groups is reported back to the relevant service manager and services changes are considered and implemented as a direct result of this feedback.

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**16: Resident involvement and community engagement strategy** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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GCH has a Resident Involvement Strategy that enables Tenants and Leaseholders to get involved in their communities at a level at which they feel comfortable.

#### 4.1.3.1: We consult and involve customers, citizens, partners and staff on the setting, reviewing and raising of our local standards.

User representatives are consulted at all times when standards are reviewed.

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.2: Achieved Delivery and Outcomes**

**4.2.1: We agree with our customers at the outset what they can expect from the service we provide.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**195: Leaflet on anti-social behaviour** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This leaflet demonstrates how we agree with our tenants from first contact concerning ASB what service they can expect to receive in relation to our service standards.

**186: Letter following point contact for ASB report** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

A letter is sent to the complainants that details and the agreed action plan that also encloses a copy of a leaflet concerning ASB.

**18: Customer service standards** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

As above, this is communicated on our website. The full range of service standards was determined from comments and suggestions made by customers in residents groups, focus groups, working groups, customer surveys, feedback forms, compliments, comments and complaints.

**17: New tenant participation charter 2010** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The tenant participation charter has been fully reviewed with our tenants and now incorporates a series of guarantees to both our active and non-active tenants in terms of the service and support they will received from Gloucester City Homes,

**156: Pre-tenancy interview** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The pre-tenancy appointment is made with every prospective tenant being re-housed from the Waiting List or as a Homeless applicant. The Pre-offer letter contains a paragraph advising that when they are Accepting Subject to View the property, a pre-tenancy appointment will be made at GCH.

**110: Major works tenant compact** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This compact is designed to ensure that tenants can influence and be involved in the decision making process. Thus they can influence how we deliver major refurbishment. As a result they should receive the highest quality services and products with minimal disruption during the process.

**4.2.1.1: We agree with our customers at the outset what they can expect from the service we provide.**

Suitable procedures are in place to ensure that for all service delivery streams users are aware of what they can expect from the outset. This was confirmed in discussion with users during the visit.

RP1/10

Customer service guarantees have been updated as part of the new tenant participation charter.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.2.2: We can demonstrate that we deliver the service we promised to individual customers and that outcomes are positive for the majority of our customers.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

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**7: Investment conference customer feedback** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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GCH carries out a customer conference annually that gives customers the opportunity to contribute ideas for future estate improvements. Following this conference all ideas are appraised and some ideas received at this conference result in actual improvements on estates.

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**6: Focus groups** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Complaints Focus Group November 08, the group agreed that the service standards had been met but the contractors let GCH down. As a result of the focus group positive suggestions for improvement had been made that will be reflected in a review of our procedures with customers.

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**58: Repairs survey January 2008** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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This is an example of the Repairs survey carried out in 2008 that identifies in the whole that outcomes are positive for tenants

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**57: Satisfaction surveys feedback** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Once these surveys are completed for each service area, the Performance Manager with EMT undertakes an analysis of trends to determine failures or under performance, resulting in an action plan to improve service delivery and increase customer satisfaction with that service element.

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**54: Service standards monitoring matrix** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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The service standards monitoring matrix outlines all service standards and the mechanisms that enable us to monitor performance against each service standard. It also tracks our performance against each standard.

**4.2.2.1: We can demonstrate that we deliver the service we promised to individual customers**

You check that the services you provide deliver the quality you specify.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.2.2.2: and that outcomes are positive for the majority of our customers.**

Responses from surveys , focus groups and special events confirm that the majority of users are very happy with the services they receive.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.2.3: We can demonstrate that we benchmark our performance against that of similar or complementary organisations and have used that information to improve our service.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**62: ALMO Unit Cost Benchmarking Project** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH inputs key performance data including unit costs in order to benchmark our performance against others. Another example of this is with ALMO unit costs benchmarking report.

**61: ALMO club housemark Report – August 2008** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH inputs key performance data including unit costs in order to benchmark our performance against others. An example of this relates to Income Management, which identifies that performance is in the top quartile for 2007/2008.

**60: Audit commission final report** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH was inspected by the Audit Commission who, in June 2007 assessed Gloucester City Homes as a good two star service that had promising prospects for improvement. Within 18 months, the company had turned around a poorly performing nil star service through improvements in service delivery.

**59: Analysis of benchmarking costs** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In 2006/07 GCH achieved efficiency savings of £1m to feed into Gloucester City Council's statutory return. This was excellent performance against a forward-looking target for the year of £405,000. In April 2007, GCH submitted a Forward Looking efficiency saving for 2007/08 of £1,024,000.

**28: Kirkless peer review of service** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Prior to audit commission inspection in March 07 Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing undertook an appraisal of our services against the Key Lines of Enquiry (AC defined) and reported findings and improvements required as a result. GCH took this on board and acted on each recommendation.

**4.2.3.1: We can demonstrate that we benchmark our performance against that of similar or complementary organisations**

You have undertaken detailed benchmarking with Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.2.3.2: and have used that information to improve our service.**

The benchmarking exercise was followed by action on identified poorer performing areas. This helped you to achieve your current Audit Commission two star status.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.2.4: We have developed and learned from best practice identified within and outside our organisation, and we publish our examples externally where appropriate.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

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**64: Customer services learning from best practice** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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As above

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**63: Resident involvement team learning from best practice** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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As part of GCH's continuous improvement we ensure that we carry out best practice research on an on-going basis as well as visit other best performing ALMOs and housing associations.

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**60: Audit commission final report** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Following our audit commission inspection this was published on the audit commission website, GCH website, Federation of ALMOs and published in Tenant Times.

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**28: Kirkless peer review of service** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Prior to our audit commission inspection in March 2007 Kirklees carried out an appraisal of our service and reported findings and suggested improvements as a result. This was published internally to staff, Board and Customer Forum and used to improve services.

**4.2.4.1: We have developed and learned from best practice identified within**

You share best practice between estates and there is a healthy dialogue with tenants across the city.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.2.4.2: and outside our organisation,**

The peer review with Kirklees provided some excellent leads for service improvement. You are also active in the Housemark Benchmarking Club.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.2.4.3: and we publish our examples externally where appropriate.**

Good examples have been noted in the local press, Tenant Times and the Audit Commission Report.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.3: Deal effectively with problems**

**4.3.1: We identify any dips in performance against our standards and explain these to customers, together with action we are taking to put things right and prevent further recurrence.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliance Plus

**Active Evidence**

**80: Business continuity plan** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This business continuity plans is in place to ensure that in th event of an emergency that effecive plans are in place to deal with the situation and also to ensure that procedures are in place to ensure that customers are kept informed.

**41: Executive Management Team Monthly performance report** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

On a monthly basis data is collected and reported in key performance areas. Any areas of poor performance are identified and corrective actions put in place. These form an action plan to remedy.

**25: Reaction reports following customer focus groups** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Following each focus group a set of minutes and a reaction report created in order to capture the areas of service that need to be improved and any actions in place to rectify performance issues. The following link identifies all focus groups minutes and react reports publicised on GCH website.

**187: Publicising our performance and rectification required** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We publicise our full performance report on a quarterly basis via our web-site. This report identifies our performance against key targets, dips in performance and also a plan of action in order to rectify any issues within service areas if required.

**119: Performance management in tenants times** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

On a quarterly basis our performance is reported in tenants times to ensure that we communicate how we are performing in key service areas in a way in which is meaningful and that reaches all our customers.

**4.3.1.1: We identify any dips in performance against our standards**

Exception reports are created for all incidences of negative feedback or poor performance.  
 RP1/10 No change.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.3.1.2: and explain these to customers,**

Issues identified in this way are reported back to users in various ways as evidenced above and confirmed in discussion with tenants.  
 RP1/10 Extensive arrangements were made to maintain essential services to users during the periods of heavy snowfall experienced last winter. Compliance Plus is still appropriate.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.3.1.3: together with action we are taking to put things right and prevent further recurrence.**

Action taken is reported back as at 4.3.1.2 above and also in Tenant Times. Your encouragement of comments from users and robust procedures for resolving issues and explaining action taken are commended as 'Compliance Plus'.  
 RP1/10 As before.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.3.2: We have an easy to use complaints procedure, which includes a commitment to deal with problems fully and solve them wherever possible within a reasonable time limit.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

<b>96: Complaints leaflet</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
This leaflet identified the service customers can expect when making a compliment, comment or complaint and also informs them of the process.		
<b>95: Complaints form</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
This is a form that is completed by customers wishing to make a complaint.		
<b>73: Complaints focus group minutes</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
In November 2008 we held a complaints focus group with our customers in order to discuss our service standards as well as customer experiences in order that we can learn from feedback. Details of this focus group recommendations are included within the reaction report attached.		
<b>69: Customer comments, compliments and complaints procedure</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
In order to ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently we have a comprehensive policy and procedure that enables customers to compliment, comment and complain about our services. Our policy and procedure is easy to use and clearly identifies our service standards.		
<b>145: Complaint example with feedback</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
This is an example of a complaint response with a returned survey feedback form. This demonstrates us receiving timely feedback from our customers following a complaint response and a willingness to solve them to our customers' satisfaction.		

**4.3.2.1: We have an easy to use complaints procedure,**

Your complaints process is easy to access and use,...

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.3.2.2: which includes a commitment to deal with problems fully**

...contains a commitment to resolve problems,...

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.3.2.3: and solve them wherever possible within a reasonable time limit.**

...and sets out clear time limits for action.

RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.3.3: We give staff training and guidance to handle complaints and to investigate them objectively, and we can demonstrate that we empower staff to put things right.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**71: Complaints training** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In May 2008 training was delivered to the Asset Management Team where issues were identified with regards to the quality and consistency of complaints management, as a result this has improved this area of the service and continues to be monitored in line with our complaint management procedure.

**70: Internal quality audit of complaints process** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This demonstrates an internal quality audit of the complaints process.

**69: Customer comments, compliments and complaints procedure** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH ensures that where appropriate staff are involved with the collation of information to be able to assist in complaints management. GCH senior management team are responsible ensuring that responses are offer consistency and quality.

**22: Complaints analysis** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The effectiveness of the compliments, comments and complaints system is analysed fully by: Daily monitoring and chasing by our Customer Services Team to ensure responses are within target times

**208: Staff induction to focus system for compliments, complaints and comments** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

All GCH and have a comprehensive induction programme that includes induction into customer services. Whilst spending time in the Customer Call Centre the new staff member is introduced to the customer contact system "focus" in order to give an overview of how compliments, complaints are processed.

**205: Complaints - managers training pack** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This is an example of the training pack issued to managers that gives comprehensive guidance of how to deal with complaints objectively.

**4.3.3.1: We give staff training and guidance to handle complaints**

All staff have received training on complaint handling.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.3.3.2: and to investigate them objectively,**

Your recently introduced managers training pack gives guidance on handling and investigating complaints objectively.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.3.3.3: and we can demonstrate that we empower staff to put things right.**

Staff confirmed in discussion that they are encouraged to put things right where they are able to do so.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.3.4: We learn from any mistakes we make by identifying patterns in formal and informal complaints and comments from customers and use this information to improve services and publicise action taken.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**57: Satisfaction surveys feedback** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Satisfaction surveys enable us to identify strengths and weaknesses in services. Where areas of weakness is identified an exception report is created to address issues.

**41: Executive Management Team Monthly performance report** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Performance is reported on a monthly basis, for any areas of poor performance an action plan is formulated. This information is publicised via our website and in our reception.

**221: Learning from customer complaints 2009** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This report identifies and reports any trends in formal complaint process. As well as identifying and publicising the actions and improvements we also monitor these service improvement and action plans by checking back with our customers.

**219: Your views count card** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Your views count cards have been developed to capture feedback from our tenants at the point of service delivery. Cards have been produced for each service area of which are collated and input by the customer service team in order that remedial action can be taken and performance can be monitored.

**151: Report to GCH board on ombudsman Complaint handling process following administrative error** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This report advises the Board of the actions taken to improve the complaint management process in response to an administrative failure, which led to an enquiry from the Local Government Ombudsman not being dealt with in an effective and timely manner.

**4.3.4.1: We learn from any mistakes we make by identifying patterns in formal**

Complaints are recorded and analysed.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.3.4.2: and informal complaints and comments from customers**

The exceptions project captures informal feedback from all sources.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.3.4.3: and use this information to improve services and publicise action taken.**

Where action is required this is discussed with the customer complaints focus group. Summaries are published in Tenant Times. Reports are also put onto the website and displayed in the main reception area. RP1/10

Your evidence is strengthened by the introduction of new comment cards and an annual summary report of complaints.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.3.5: We regularly review and improve our complaints procedure, taking account of the views of customers, complainants and staff.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

<b>73: Complaints focus group minutes</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
This is the reaction report created following feedback obtained from our customer attending the customer complaints focus group. This identifies remedial actions.		
<b>72: Agenda customer complaints focus group June 2008</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
This is the agenda from the customer complaints focus group that identifies the key theme discussed at the group.		
<b>69: Customer comments, compliments and complaints procedure</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
This procedure has recently been reviewed following an ombudsman complaint and is due to be reviewed in December following feedback from our customer complaints focus group.		
<b>55: Customer complaints focus group minutes November 2008</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
This is a good example of where services provided haven't met expectations and where in partnership with customers have discussed and agreed solutions to address this.		
<b>172: Complaints workshop agenda</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
A complaints workshop has recently taken place in order to review complaints monitoring/trends, qualities analysis and also to carry out a review of procedures and process following results and also customer feedback from the customer focus group held in December 2008		
<b>151: Report to GCH board on ombudsman Complaint handling process following administrative error</b>	Assessor Acceptance:	Yes
This report advises the Board of the actions taken to improve the complaint management process in response to an administrative failure, which led to an enquiry from the Local Government Ombudsman not being dealt with in an effective and timely manner.		

**4.3.5.1: We regularly review and improve our complaints procedure,**

You have recently reviewed and improved your complaints procedure.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.3.5.2: taking account of the views of customers, complainants and staff.**

The review took account of stakeholders' views. The customer complaints focus group should ensure that users' views continue to be expressed.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**4.3.6: We ensure that the outcome of the complaint process for customers (whose complaint is upheld) is satisfactory for them.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

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**69: Customer comments, compliments and complaints procedure** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Part of complaints process is checking customer satisfaction following a complaint response. Following each compliant closure feedback is gathered from our customers.

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**55: Customer complaints focus group minutes November 2008** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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In order to understand more about our complaint handling we invited a selection of those tenants who had made a complaint recently to attend a focus group to discuss their experiences within this process and also to obtain feedback on the service they received.

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**207: Developing a customer panel to review customer complaints** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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GCH in within early stages of developing a customer complaints panel. The first meeting took place on 5th March in order to discuss the concept and initiate planning and implementation of this. The review panel will consist of the customer services team leader and also tenants/leaseholders.

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**145: Complaint example with feedback** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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This is an example of a complaint response as well as feedback returned from our customer with regards to their satisfaction.

**4.3.6.1: We ensure that the outcome of the complaint process for customers (whose complaint is upheld) is satisfactory for them.**

Complainants' views are sought after the resolution of every complaint.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5: Timeliness and Quality of Service**

**5.1: Standards for Timeliness and Quality**

**5.1.1: We set appropriate and measurable standards for the timeliness of response for all forms of customer contact including phone calls, letters, e-communications and personal callers.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**47: Leaflet on Standard** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

A leaflet has been produced which outlines details of timeliness and quality of service which tenants can expect when using any service provided by Gloucester City Homes. This can be downloaded from the company website and also in each tenants handbook.

**46: Standards on website** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Gloucester City Homes website publicises our service standards that outlines details with regard to timeliness and quality that tenants can expect in all service areas.

**219: Your views count card** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Your views count cards are used to gather feedback from our customers on all aspects of our service delivery. Although this has launched recently we have already obtained meaningful feedback and intend to set on-going satisfaction targets for which performance can be monitored against.

**18: Customer service standards** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We have developed service standards from comments and suggestions made by customers to develop a range of service specific standards that details timescales for delivery of services.

**122: Call handling performance** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We have ensured that appropriate targets are set in order to monitor our performance in receiving of calls from our customers. Call handling performance is monitored on a on-going basis with daily, weekly informal monitoring as well as formal performance reporting on a monthly basis.

**5.1.1.1: We set appropriate and measurable standards for the timeliness of response for all forms of customer contact including phone calls, letters, e-communications and personal callers.**

You have set appropriate standards for all forms of customer contact.  
 RP1/10 You are using comment cards to seek user views on your standards.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.1.2: We set comprehensive standards for all aspects of the quality of customer service to be expected in all dealings with our organisation.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**49: Focus on what the customer wants** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Methods have been developed for listening to the views of tenants. Please refer to pages 14 to 21 of the Customer Service Standards.

**48: Customer Service Standard** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We have developed the customer service standards from comments and suggestions made by customers in residents groups, focus groups, customer surveys, feedback forms and compliments, comments and complaints. We have also learnt from best practice gathered from around the country.

**20: Marketing and communications strategy** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The strategy enables GCH to communicate with all tenants in a clear and understandable way which enables consistency and uniformity in the way in which information is provided both internally and externally.

**17: New tenant participation charter 2010** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Tenant Participation Charter was recently revised based on customer feedback. The strategy supports the many different ways that we engage and consult our tenants.

**110: Major works tenant compact** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The major works compact details how GCH will communicate and consult with our customer during major works in their homes.

**5.1.2.1: We set comprehensive standards for all aspects of the quality of customer service to be expected in all dealings with our organisation.**

These are set out in the published Customer Service Standards. They cover all aspects of your services. RP1/10 Your evidence has been extensively refreshed since the last assessment.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.2: Timely Outcomes**

**5.2.1: We advise our customers and potential customers about our promises on timeliness and quality of customer service.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

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**50: Tenancy Agreement** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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The Tenancy Agreement includes information on the level of service the tenant can expect from the landlord (Gloucester City Council). This is handed to tenants when handed the keys for the property.

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**46: Standards on website** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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The generic customer service standards apply to all areas of GCH, and this is communicated on the website.

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**35: Customer focus strategy** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Our strategy links customer involvement throughout GCH and provides a clear path to achieving excellence in our customer services for our tenants. The main focus is that tenants drive, monitor and design our services through joint working and continuous improvement.

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**18: Customer service standards** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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The customer service standards apply to all areas of GCH, and this is communicated on the Service Standard document and in each Service Standard leaflet. We ensure that customer service officers make customers aware of our service standards over the phone e.g. when a customer complains.

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**5.2.1.1: We advise our customers and potential customers about our promises on timeliness and quality of customer service.**

The Customer Service Standards are widely published and easily accessible for users. They include promises on timeliness and explain the quality of service that can be expected.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.2.2: We identify individual customer needs at the first point of contact with us and ensure that an appropriate person who can address the reason for contact deals with the customer.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

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**78: Customer services survey January 2008** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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In order to check that we are meeting customer"s needs we ensure that a customer service survey of our tenants is carried out on an annual basis.

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**77: Pre-tenancy interview procedures** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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Each applicant offered a property managed by Gloucester City Homes is invited to attend a pr-tenancy interview. The purpose of this interview is to ensure that potential tenants are maximising their income. They are aware of the responsibilities and that relevant referrals are made.

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**75: Customer services manual** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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GCH has a Customer Service Manual that includes procedures in dealing with customers covering all service areas.

**5.2.2.1: We identify individual customer needs at the first point of contact with us**

Most contact is by phone to the Customer Call Centre. Customer needs are identified at that point.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.2.2.2: and ensure that an appropriate person who can address the reason for contact deals with the customer.**

Most queries can be resolved by the Call Centre staff. Where this is not the case the query is referred to another officer. If, exceptionally, this is not possible, the query is logged and a response is promised within 24 hours. This was observed to be working well at the time of the visit.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.2.3: We promptly share customer information with colleagues and partners within our organisation whenever appropriate and can demonstrate how this has reduced unnecessary contact for customers.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**79: Visit by two database shared with partners** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Our visit by two list identifies those tenants who pose a risk to our partners, this identifies exactly what the risk is and also if any particular measures should be in place.

**188: Gas servicing spreadsheet** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We share information with our gas servicing partner in order to reduce the number of contacts between GCH and Morrison ensuring that an efficient/effective service is provided. By sharing this information it reduces the need for a number of unnecessary contacts for gas servicing access.

**175: Refferals to agencies** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Tenants who access services are able to be referred to other agencies to receive support such as the CAB, money advice and other support providers. GCH has developed a referral form that is completed at GCH that reduces the need for the tenant to approach agencies and also makes process efficient.

**174: HB memorandum of understanding** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We have a memorandum of understanding with HB that enables us to share information in order to resolve tenancy and housing benefits queries. The benefit of this agreement is that it enables partners to access relevant information reducing the need to contact tenants to resolve minor issues.

**173: New tenancies information shared with partners** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

On a weekly basis a list of new tenancies are sent to our partners such as Morrison and Lovell to advise them of new tenants moving into properties that enables them to ensure that their records are maintained correctly and reduces the need to contact the customer twice or more for record updating.

**5.2.3.1: We promptly share customer information with colleagues and partners within our organisation whenever appropriate**

Your evidence confirms that by sharing information within the service and with selected partners...

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.2.3.2: and can demonstrate how this has reduced unnecessary contact for customers.**

...you are able to provide a more efficient service for your customers.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.2.4: Where service is not completed at the first point of contact we discuss with the customer the next steps and indicate the likely overall time to achieve outcomes.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Weak  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

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**69: Customer comments, compliments and complaints procedure** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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We have a customer comments, compliments and complaints procedure that clearly outlines the next steps the customer can take should they not be satisfied with their first point response.

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**18: Customer service standards** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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These are the general customer service standards we have developed with the help of feedback from our tenants made through such sources as compliments, comments and complaints, focus groups, satisfaction surveys, feedback forms, mystery shopping, residents groups, and project groups

**5.2.4.1: Where service is not completed at the first point of contact we discuss with the customer the next steps**

Phone enquiries are followed up within 24 hours if an immediate response cannot be made.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.2.4.2: and indicate the likely overall time to achieve outcomes.**

Repair, maintenance and improvement works are all explained to users with indications of time scales for completion.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.2.5: We respond to initial enquiries promptly, if there is a delay we advise the customer and take action to rectify the problem.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**80: Business continuity plan** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH has used its Business Continuity Plan to ensure that customers were kept informed during an exceptionally difficult time in July 2007 when Gloucester was hit by major flooding. This plan is regularly reviewed and updated.

**68: Procedure for dealing with out of hours emergency** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This is a procedure put in place to ensure that out of hours emergencies are dealt with quickly and efficiently.

**67: Flood letter** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This letter was sent to our customers to ensure they were kept informed during an exceptionally difficult time in July 2007 when Gloucester was hit by major flooding. This information was also made available on our website.

**66: Flood advice** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This advice sheet was sent to our customers to ensure they were kept informed during an exceptionally difficult time in July 2007 when Gloucester was hit by major flooding. This information was made available at outstations as well as our website.

**30: Emerging issues (Floods)** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This is a copy of a database of tenants that we made or had contact with during the period of flooding in July 2007. We ensured that it held all relevant details to ensure that a high quality responsive service could be provided during this time.

**18: Customer service standards** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We have a comprehensive range of service specific standards so that all of our customers in our diverse multi-cultural community, including those with special needs, are not excluded from any aspect of service.

**5.2.5.1: We respond to initial enquiries promptly,**

Observation and discussion with staff and users confirmed that responses are generally prompt.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.2.5.2: if there is a delay we advise the customer and take action to rectify the problem.**

It was also noted that you keep customers informed when problems do occur. The recent major floods in Gloucester provided good evidence of this.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.3: Achieved Timely Delivery**

**5.3.1: We monitor our performance against standards for timeliness and quality of customer service and we take action if problems are identified.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**65: Exceptions project** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The purpose of the exceptions project is to ensure that all feedback received translates into direct service improvements.

**54: Service standards monitoring matrix** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

All service standards are monitored through a matrix that outlines mechanisms that enable us to monitor performance against each service standard.

**231: Services and Operations Committee** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Services and operations committee is made up of staff, GCH board members and tenants. They lead and monitor the company's performance management framework, the company's financial planning and budgetary control systems and the provision of our Human Resources framework and associated policy.

**221: Learning from customer complaints 2009** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This evidence outlines service improvements and changes implemented as a direct result of customer complaints in 2009.

**122: Call handling performance** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This information is extracted from our Telephony reporting tool. It is the system which has been put in place to monitor the service standard for customer access in terms of calls received. Performance is reported and monitored monthly formally and daily by the team coordinator.

**5.3.1.1: We monitor our performance against standards for timeliness**

Comprehensive monitoring of all timeliness standards is in place.

RP1/10

The Services and Operations Committee now has a major role in monitoring performance...

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.3.1.2: and quality of customer service**

Customer service is checked by surveys and mystery shopping.

RP1/10...and quality of customer service.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.3.1.3: and we take action if problems are identified.**

All feedback is analysed and remedial action taken if required.

RP1/10 This is explained in your report 'Learning from customer complaints'.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.3.2: We are meeting our current standards for timeliness and quality of customer service and we publicise our performance against these standards.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

**81: Mystery shop communications evaluation** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We ensure that our customers receive a quality service through a number of mystery shops carried out on an annual basis. Following each mystery shop a fully evaluation of feedback is carried out and recommendations are made with regards to remedial works required.

**41: Executive Management Team Monthly performance report** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

GCH has set challenging targets for all services that incorporates both our responsibility for delivering quality services to our customers, whilst achieving national and statutory performance standards and targets such as best value performance indicators.

**39: Customer satisfaction targets and trends** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Customer satisfaction including complaint trend evaluation is reported within our performance monitoring framework and quality issues via the exception plan. The exception plan hold all details of customer feedback and actions taken. We also have trend analysis in various service areas from 2006.

**38: Customer services satisfaction survey** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In order to check that we are meeting customer's need we ensure that on an annual basis a customer service survey of our tenants is carried out. This is an example of our most recent Customer services survey in January 2008.

**209: Status survey 2008** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

It is a regulatory requirement that all Community Housing Providers must undertake a STATUS survey on a 2 yearly basis in a prescribed format with all general needs tenants. The objective of the survey is to gain an understanding of the levels of customer satisfaction in key service areas.

**18: Customer service standards** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

These are specific general customer service standards developed through regular feedback from our tenants via such sources as compliments, comments and complaints, focus groups, satisfaction surveys, feedback forms, mystery shopping, residents groups, and project groups

**5.3.2.1: We are meeting our current standards for timeliness**

You are performing well against timeliness standards - 95% of phone calls are answered within five rings.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.3.2.2: and quality of customer service**

You are also recording high levels of satisfaction with the quality of customer service. This was confirmed by the many service users interviewed during the assessment.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.3.2.3: and we publicise our performance against these standards.**

Performance against customer service standards is published quarterly on your website and in the main reception area.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.3.3: Our performance in relation to timeliness and quality of service compares well with that of similar organisations.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong  
 Compliance to Standard: Compliant

**Active Evidence**

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**84: Benchmarking report to board** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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This report summarises the findings of the 2007/08 Benchmarking exercise undertaken through Housemark; and the Performance Indicator Report for the year end 2007-2008., with recommendations arising from the study.

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**83: Performance report to board** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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This report outlines first quarter and half year performance for 2008/2009 and compares this with first quarter and half year performance for 2007/2008 and year end performance for 2007/2008

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**61: ALMO club housemark Report – August 2008** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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GCH inputs key performance data including unit costs in order to benchmark our performance against others. An example of this relates to Income Management, which identifies that performance is in the top quartile for 2007/2008.

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**60: Audit commission final report** Assessor Acceptance: Yes

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In June 2007 the Audit Commission assessed Gloucester City Homes as a good two star service that had promising prospects for improvement inspected GCH. Within 18 months, the company had turned around a poorly performing nil star service through improvements in service delivery.

**5.3.3.1: Our performance in relation to timeliness**

Your performance in relation to timeliness is in the top quartile compared with other ALMOs.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met

**5.3.3.2: and quality of service compares well with that of similar organisations.**

The 2007 Audit Commission Report provides independent confirmation of your good comparative performance and also the significant improvements achieved since 2005.  
 RP1/10 Not reviewed this year.

Evidence Value: Fully Met