



**OUR
CUSTOMERS**

Warrington Housing Association

Our Customers Strategy



INTRODUCTION

Warrington Housing Association has a proud history of providing a broad range of affordable homes and services across Warrington and we are as passionate now as we have ever been about making Warrington a great place to live, in which the potential of individuals and communities can be realised. We currently own and manage over 1,300 homes for families, older people and people with additional support needs, including leasehold and shared ownership properties.

PURPOSE

In line with our organisational vision, this strategy focuses on how we will work to ensure that we are delivering on our ambition to help make Warrington a great place to live, in which the potential of individuals and communities can be realised. This strategy identifies a clear mechanism for how we will measure the success of what we do and also outlines key considerations in terms of risks and regulatory requirements in respect of our neighbourhoods. Our aim is to provide high quality, responsive, value for money and accessible services, which address the needs and aspirations of the neighbourhoods and communities within which we work.

OUR THEMATIC PILLARS

Our Board recently reaffirmed our commitment to our current vision and objectives alongside reviewing our strategic architecture. We have five Thematic Pillars around which our business will prosper – homes, customers, social value, viability and colleagues. These Pillars will be used throughout our organisation to help us articulate who we are and what we want to achieve. They help us shape our strategies and policies based on the priorities set by our Board. Going forward, they will help us demonstrate the links between the things that we do, the priorities that we set and the outcomes we want to achieve.

OUR CUSTOMERS

Our Customers Strategy is designed to provide the framework for us to deliver on our **ambition to prioritise the needs of people and put the creation of sustainable communities at the heart of our work**. We will continue to work in partnership with Warrington Borough Council, Warrington & Co, Elected Members, The Gateway, other Registered Providers and local organisations and businesses to develop, co-ordinate and deliver services. As a key stakeholder we will continue to invest in homes, services and the wider community. We are currently active members of the

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following key partnerships – Warrington Strategic Housing & Homelessness Partnership, Housing Growth Partnership & Housing Practitioners Group, Central 6 Regeneration and will continue to build our network and partnerships to help us deliver our vision.

We are also active members of the Community Housing Associations North West (CHANW) which represents community-based housing associations operating in the North West of England which aims to utilise our distinctive strengths in working together to support member associations to fulfil their individual goals and objectives, through working together, sharing best practice, intelligence & commissioning services.

The specific aims of this strategy are:

- o Ensure we effectively manage and maintain our homes and estates
- o To provide accessible and tailored services aiming to meet or exceed the expectations of our customers Ensure our customers have a voice and are integral to shaping the services we deliver
- o To further cement our position as a community anchor
- o Continue to support our customers to sustain their tenancy
- o Work with partners and key stakeholders to reduce the impact of homelessness and meet local housing need.
- o To ensure successful integration of our retirement offer, across our Retirement Living, LifeTime and WHiA services
- o Contribute to promoting and fostering resilient, cohesive and inclusive communities

OBLIGATIONS

WHA are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). Registered Providers are required:

- o In consultation with their tenants, to publish a policy for maintaining and improving the neighbourhoods associated with their homes
- o Having taken account of their presence and impact within the areas where they own properties, shall:
 - (a) identify and publish the roles they are able to play within the areas where they have properties

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(b) co-operate with local partnership arrangements and strategic housing functions of local authorities where they are able to assist them in achieving their objectives

In December 2022, our Board and Customer Scrutiny Group (WHASP) committed to delivering on the recommendations of the The Better Social Housing Review which highlighted that social housing landlords should:

- Refocus their core purpose and deliver on it
- Work together to conduct and publish an audit of social housing
- Should partner with tenants, contractors and front-line staff to develop and apply new standards defining what and excellent repairs and maintenance process looks like
- Promote the traditional role of a Housing Officer as a supported and valued role
- Work with all tenants to ensure they have a voice and influence at every level of decision-making
- Should develop a local community presence through community hubs which foster greater multi-agency working
- Should support tenants and front-line staff to review progress in implementing the review recommendations

We have action plans which underpin this Customer Strategy and which align to how we will meet the requirements of the Review.

HOMELESSNESS

We have signed up to the National Housing Federation's (NHF) Commitment to refer anyone at risk of homelessness and agreed a referral pathway with WBC so that we can work with the local authority to try and prevent and reduce homelessness. We continue to work closely with the local authority in identifying suitable development opportunities and homes to reduce the impact of homelessness in the Borough.

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

As a small local community-based housing association we benefit from close relationships with our customers and as an early adopter of the NHF's Together with

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Tenants charter and plan we will continue to work closely with our customers to deliver on our commitments, to ensure customers have voice and we use customer feedback to shape and improve our services. Our dedicated Customer Voice Officer is leading on developing and implementing Neighbourhood Plans through our “Love where You Live” campaign.

Alongside this, we have developed an exciting, targeted Customer Engagement Programme – ‘**Gateway in the Community**’, A programme of Neighbourhood Action Plans, working collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders starting with our existing network in the Gateway and building to improve and develop the communities in which we work. This will encourage engagement of all customers to ensure that they have a voice and influence at every level of decision making across the organisation. This builds on our collaborative working linking with community programmes, partners, and organisations in the Warrington area to help us understand local housing needs.

Gateway in the Community is an opportunity to map our assets. The need to understand our neighbourhoods has never been more important. Using Community Insight, which offers a unique view of the world, using location-specific data to help better focus our resources.

For customers living within less concentrated areas, where there may be a requirement for a lighter touch, we will continue to deliver a Love Where You Live engagement event, tailored to meet the needs of smaller communities.

Our Communities

WHA understands that the environment has a big part to play in how people feel about their area. We are responsible for the management of homes, communal areas and the wider environment to ensure that neighbourhoods are attractive, well maintained, safe and secure places to live and we have agreed service standards with our customers. We have re-designed our work-based patches to develop

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neighbourhood plans in partnership with our communities. This will include how we work in partnership with key stakeholders and agencies within the locality.

MEETING OUR CUSTOMER NEEDS

We want to deliver services which meet the needs of our current and future customers. We will therefore develop a greater understanding of the socio-economic and diversity challenges across the neighbourhoods in which we work through increasing our collection of equality, diversity and inclusion data (ED&I); We will use data mapping tools alongside census and local data to understand who is living in our properties and communities and how we can develop our plans to have the greatest impact on individuals, families and communities.

VALUE ADDED SERVICES

In addition to managing and maintain our homes we provide additional services to contribute to the quality of life of our customers

- o Financial Inclusion – all our Housing Officers will be trained in benefits advice and assisting our customers to maximise their income with a financial inclusion champion allocated within the team
- o Lifetime – our award-winning Lifetime project, which provides a wide range of clubs to help Warrington residents aged 50 and over to stay active, connected and happy in later life
- o Warrington Gateway – A Community Hub, acting as a bridge between the local community, public sector and voluntary organisation providing assistance, advice and guidance to cater for community needs. This will be embedded within our neighbourhood plans.
- o Warrington Home Improvement Agency – We also deliver adaptation and home improvement services across the public and private sector through our own Home Improvement agency.

MEASURING SUCCESS

This strategy has been approved by our Board and will be implemented through WHA’s Business Plan, the Better Social Housing Review action plan and our Neighbourhood Strategy Action Plan. Measures of success include:

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- Customer Satisfaction (TSM)
- Complaints and compliments
- Delivery of our Plans
- Customer feedback
- Feedback from our Scrutiny Panel
- Stakeholder surveys and analysis.

This strategy will be reviewed every 3 years, or sooner if required by statutory, regulatory or best practice.

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