



# HAPPY CUSTOMER STRATEGY

2023 – 2028



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# Introduction

**Welcome to Hanover's Happy Customer Strategy 2023-28.**

**This five-year strategy sets out our vision for the delivery of great services to our customers. A key focus in achieving this will be our new customer service model which will place customers at the heart of everything we do.**

The Happy Customer Strategy is a key part of our transformational journey and builds on the vision set out in our Corporate Strategy and Business Plan 2022-2027, in which we committed to achieving three strategic goals:

- Happy Customers
- Desirable Homes
- Resilient Organisation

Our ambition for our customers is clear; in addition to ensuring we provide modern, desirable homes within a thriving organisation, we want our customers to be:

- Happy with their homes
- Happy with the services they receive
- Happy with how they engage with us
- Happy with their options for independent living
- Happy with their lives

The Happy Customer Strategy presents a framework for service delivery across the organisation. It has been shaped by priorities set by our customers and takes account of best practice in delivering service excellence, whilst meeting the expectations of modern service delivery.

It is in line with national policy requirements and recognises the external challenges facing us all, including cost of living pressures, climate change, digitisation, evolving health and social care policy and the ongoing impact of the pandemic.

The strategy will be underpinned by our corporate values which inform and guide our behaviour and culture, which are:

- Show Respect
- Be Accountable
- Support Collaboration
- Promote Inclusion

The scope of the Happy Customer Strategy is for any individual paying Hanover directly for accommodation and/or other services. This group includes tenants and owner occupiers. The phrase customer is used to ensure that all the people we deal with are included; however, we will be careful in selecting appropriate terminology when dealing with specific customer groups.

# Our Context

**We are a specialist housing provider with a strong focus on supporting older people to live happily and independently. The average age of our customers is 75, two-thirds are one-person households and a similar proportion identify as having a disability.**

The green graph below clearly illustrates the significance of older people for Hanover.

The average length of a Hanover tenancy is six years, reflecting the average age of our tenants when taking up their tenancy, which is also 75.

One of the aims of this strategy is to attract new customers at an earlier age, so they stay longer and enjoy the benefits of our services for a greater period. An aspect of this will be to work towards a transformation of the image of older people's housing in Scotland.

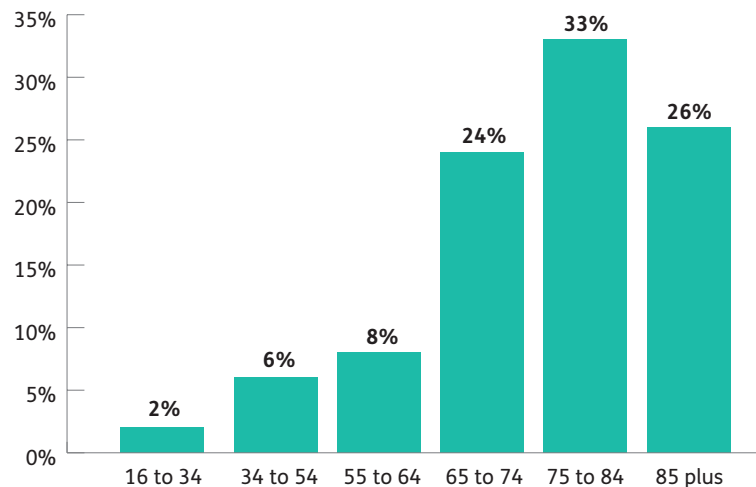
The blue graph below indicates key health related reasons for tenancy terminations during 2022/23.

We aim to support our developments to operate as communities in their own right, but also to connect well to their local communities. Most of our

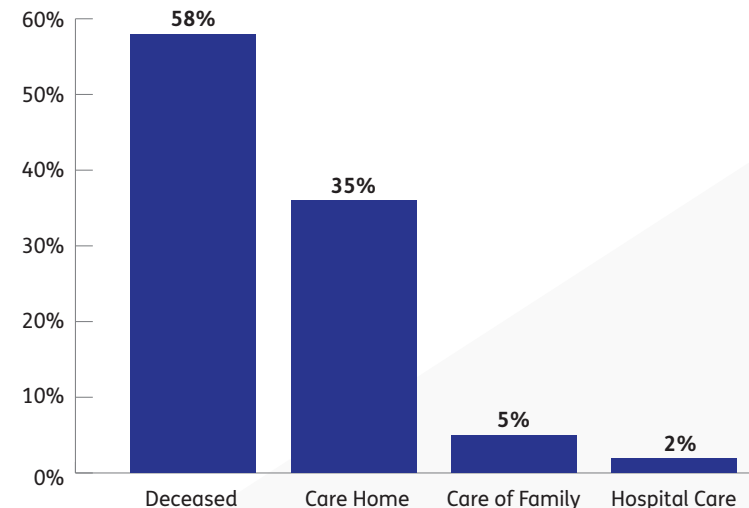
developments have active social clubs and many have a real pride in their communal gardens. Going forward, we want to provide even greater support to ensure each development has a vibrant and active community that reflects the people and the development.

In addition to these issues, we cannot lose sight of the fact that we are geographically spread across many areas of Scotland. This means that most of our communication is undertaken through telephone and letters, as visiting our offices is not viable for many.

Age Range



Health related termination reasons 2022/23



# Our Customers' Priorities

Through consultation with our customers and employees, and examination of our insights and performance data, **5 key customer priorities** have emerged:

- Provide modern, accessible homes in thriving communities
- Reduce loneliness and isolation and promote independent living
- Improve customers' sense of safety and wellbeing with levels of engagement
- Deliver high quality and affordable services
- Provide clarity on the positive benefits of older people's housing for potential customers

Our customers tell us clearly, that having **modern, accessible homes** is their most important priority. The focus on improving and modernising our existing homes is key to delivering this.

Reducing **loneliness and isolation** is an element of our work that has been impacted by the pandemic. We promote engagement in a range of ways across our developments to suit the needs of older people. The feeling of isolation and loneliness was exacerbated during the pandemic and in a post-pandemic environment, impact of this period of time has continued to affect the lives of many of our tenants. For Hanover, we have a real opportunity to support our customers to regain their confidence, stay active and engaged through the services we provide.

**Feeling safe and secure** was another key priority, though it means different things to different people. It generally related to a sense of security within their property, living in what they felt was a safe neighbourhood. However, for many it also related to a personal sense of safety and confidence within their home, for instance, the assurance that someone would notice if something was wrong. This is a key element to both the physical design of our homes and buildings but also the type of service that is provided on site.

The fourth priority relates to delivery of **high-quality services** that are **affordable**. The cost of living challenges affecting our customers have identified that value for money and affordability are key priorities for them. This requires Hanover to take all possible steps to ensure our homes and services are affordable. Delivering value for money and ensuring our services and processes are as efficient as possible becomes an even more critical requirement as we develop our new service models.

The **negative perception** often held about older people's housing needs to be addressed. Generally, people come to us at an advanced age, and we want to promote our services in a way that attracts people as early as possible, so that they can live fulfilling and independent lives but with access to care and support, if the need arises.

# Other Key Priorities

The wide range of data we hold on our customers tells us that in addition to the priorities above, a range of issues are frequently raised and as set out below:

- Providing easy access to information, including on-line information
- Availability of self-service options for services and information availability
- Achieving meaningful engagement where our customers feel heard, with options for face-to-face contact
- Supporting independent living and avoiding the need for social care or residential care, via investment in our homes and care services
- Focusing on the increased use of IT, with appropriate support and encouragement

These priorities have shaped our vision and our approach in writing this strategy and are the key issues that we will address over the five years.

# Key Challenges We Face

When thinking about delivering our vision and goals, we considered the context we are operating in and what impact they would have.



## Demographic Changes and Increasing Demand Around Complex Needs

There is a significant increase in the number of older people in society, with a corresponding increase in customers presenting with more complex needs. The majority of our customers are over 75, many of whom live with a disability. This creates challenges and opportunities as housing organisations seek to meet the needs of these customers and support them to live as independently as possible.



## Uncertainty in National Health and Social Care Policy

Current uncertainty around the future of the National Care Service Proposal while demand for social care services continues to increase does present real challenges, as we plan for the future needs of our customers. The challenges accessing social care impacts on the way we support our customers but also provides us with a huge opportunity to play a vital role in communities to alleviate delayed discharge.



## Negative Perception of Sheltered Housing

A significant proportion of our housing was built over thirty years ago, to the classic sheltered development design. A proportion of commissioners and potential customers have a negative opinion of such housing, which they do not see as meeting aspirations. This leads to delayed moves, which happen closer to a point of crisis, with customers arriving when they are older and more frail. We must address this by working with others in the sector to improve perceptions and increase understanding of the benefits of our housing and services.



## Economic Uncertainty and Cost of Living Pressures

The current increases in cost of living, resulting from the international situation, the ongoing impacts of leaving the European Union and the global pandemic, are placing significant pressures on our customers in meeting daily living costs. The need to deliver value for money has never been greater, as we strive to minimise cost impact on customers whilst delivering service excellence.



## Climate Change

As the climate emergency continues, we are working hard to play our part in achieving net zero by 2045. In developing our Sustainability Plan, we will seek to pass on benefits to our customers, both in supporting them to reduce their carbon footprint and reduce their energy costs.

Despite these challenges, we are well placed as an organisation to continue to deliver our mission in Scotland. We employ great people with the skills, commitment and dedication to deliver our goals. We also have a new focus on digital transformation, with a clear plan setting out how we will modernise and improve how we work, to improve our services to customers.

We will continue to build homes to meet the growing needs of older people in Scotland but also to provide more preventative and proactive services, such as Telecare, to support people living at home.

# Objectives & Goals

## Our Key Principles

**In developing and implementing our Happy Customer Strategy, we are committed to a set of key principles to ensure that we place our customers at the centre of the process and at the centre of our service delivery.**

### Listening to What Customers Want

Our first commitment is to listen carefully to what customers are telling us, about their needs, their priorities, and their experiences of our services. We will also listen to our customers' families and the wider communities within which we operate.

### Co-design, Decision Making & Engagement

A vital part of this journey will be the ongoing involvement of our customers as service options are identified and evolve. By ensuring that our customers' voices remain at the centre of our approach, we will make sure that we remain focused on delivering effective services that users value. It is fundamental to our approach that customers find it easy and worthwhile to engage with us over any aspect of their service experience and that they have a range of possibilities to become as involved as they wish to be in the design, development, and scrutiny of services.

### Built on Customer Insight

Developing effective and up-to-date knowledge and understanding of our customers' needs and

expectations on an ongoing basis is critical, as we take our service improvements forward. Investment in our digital and service delivery systems will allow us to convert our data into customer insight and provide essential planning information for the future, allowing us to more effectively anticipate and react to changing customer needs and priorities.

## Our Customer Service Vision

**Our aim is to create high quality customer services that deliver excellence and affordability. Building on our customer feedback, we have researched best practice in the sector and have developed a vision of what we want our customer service and customer experience to be.**

Our customer service vision will be characterised by easy access to services and information, including self-service options and a customer service approach that ensures we have a fully-trained workforce across all of our services, who will listen and provide a prompt response and resolution to enquiries. The focus for our employees will be on professionalism and administrative excellence.

Customers will have simple contact options and will receive clear communication at all stages of service delivery. We will be transparent, positive and supportive in our attitude. We will aim to resolve enquiries at the first point of contact and will work

hard to put things right, should there be a problem. Our clear goal is to have happy customers who consistently have a positive experience when they engage with us. Our approach will have three clear pillars:

### Easy to Access

We will offer increased choice to our customers in how they contact and communicate with us. In addition to our current phone, email, text, and face-to-face options, we will develop a new and improved online Customer Portal.

### Resolved at First Point of Contact

All enquires will be directed to a central Customer Services Team who will be trained to deal with all service enquiries. Our focus will be resolving requests as quickly as possible and in the majority of cases at first point of contact. All customers will have a specific named contact within the organisation that they can speak to.

### Transparent

Our Customer Portal will show customers their account information and the status of the service requested. Clear communication will be issued to customers at key stages of their service process. We will provide clear service standards so that customers have a clear understanding of what they should expect from the service.

# A Phased Approach

**Our customer service vision is ambitious and delivering the strategy will take investment, time, and careful planning. The next five years will be a journey, which will follow the route map of overlapping phases, as set out in the Corporate Strategy and Business Plan.**

Our delivery plan will be challenging but realistic, and will build on a range of transformational and phased workstreams.

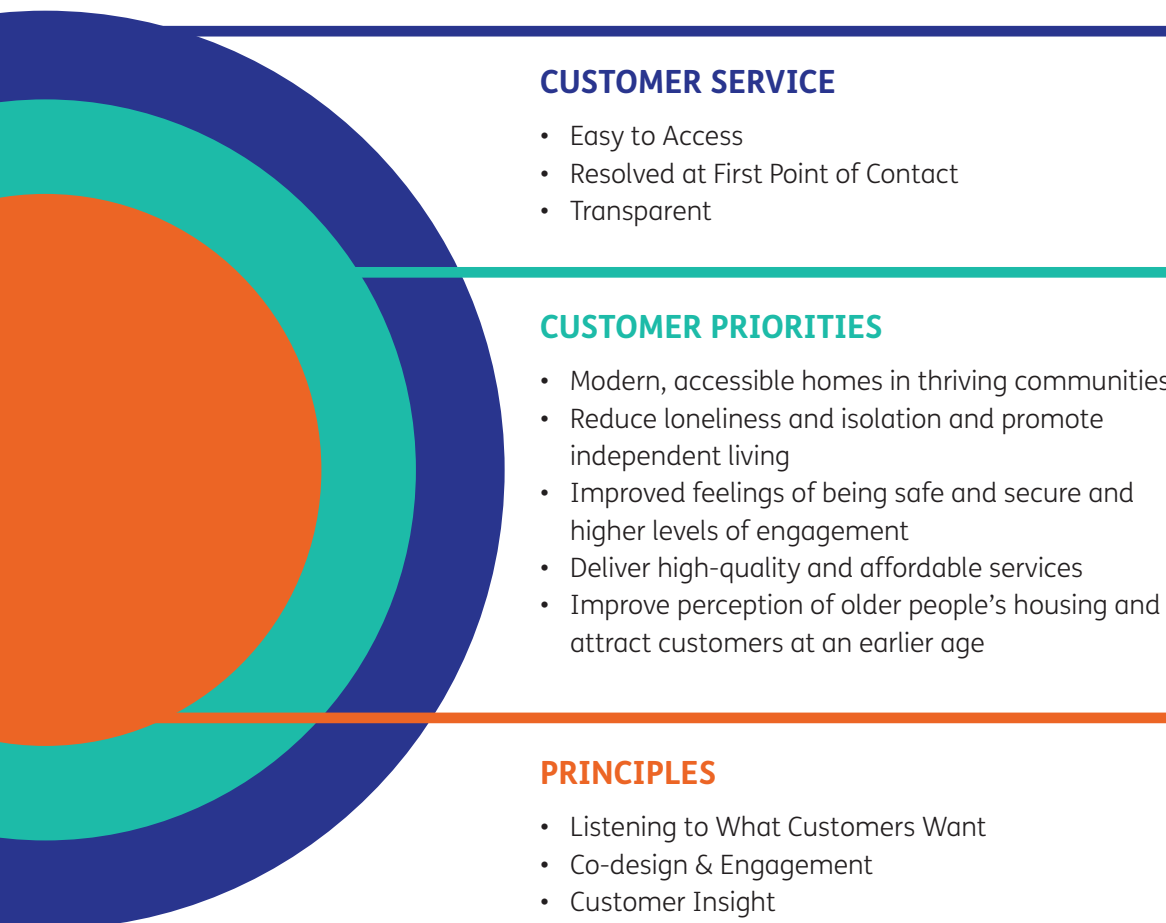
Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
We have spent the last year listening to our customers' views and analysing the wide range of insight we have on customer priorities. This work has helped inform where we have data gaps and how to make best use of market research activities, going forward. We have now completed this phase by producing this strategy.	We are reviewing how we engage with our customers to deliver on our Principles, set out on page 7. This includes publishing a new Customer Engagement Plan and Volunteering Plan to revitalise our approach in this post-pandemic era, balancing innovative use of technology as well as embracing face-to-face opportunities.	We will embed new ways of working to ensure we are cost effective and embrace new technologies. This will free up time to spend with our customers and focus on supporting them to live independently. We will have an emphasis on tackling the perception of older people's housing and get more new tenants in at an earlier stage.	We will introduce new digital self-service tools that allow us to focus even more time on engaging with our customers. We will employ new ways of working to prevent the need for health and social care interventions, including proactive Telecare and Telehealth products that will be readily available for use.



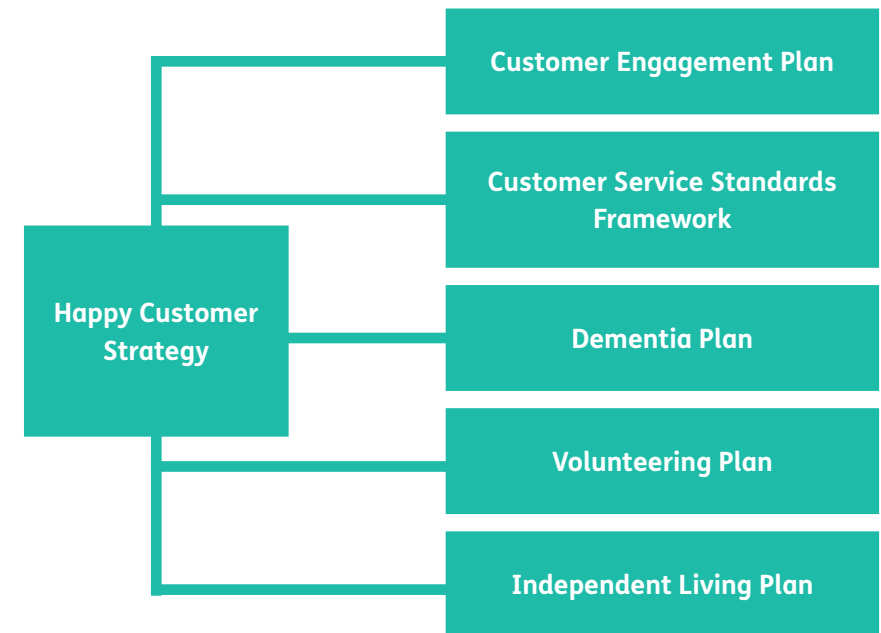
## Aligning Our Transformation

**Delivery of the Happy Customer Strategy requires the co-ordination and delivery of a significant number of complex workstreams. These workstreams combine as an ambitious transformational programme which will be planned and managed through an organisation-wide Action Plan.**

The diagram below shows the relationship with the key elements of this strategy:



Supporting the delivery of this strategy are four strategic plans. Given the breadth of our ambition around Happy Customers we have set out our vision in these documents. They contain clear Action Plans on how we will address key issues, as shown in the diagram below:



To ensure that we manage the transformation programme effectively, we have set up a programme board led by the Director of Customer Services. The members of this group are responsible for ensuring the Action Plan is delivered and that the support plans flow from the strategy and can demonstrate a golden thread between them.

Along with this responsibility, the group will ensure that the interdependencies to our key strategics and strategic plans are identified and managed effectively.

# Resourcing & Risk

## Resourcing

**At present, our customer services model is primarily delivered by a range of teams across different directorates. Most of the workforce sits within Customer Services and provides a variety of face-to-face and telephone services. We have a significant on-site presence in many of our developments to provide a range of services to tenants.**

Our budget provision reflects mainly the workforce costs, and the structure and make up of this has been in place for some time. As we develop and design our new customer service model, we assume that our resource provision structure will change.

We are committed to improving our effectiveness by introducing more modern methods of working, which will free up resources. This will enable us to focus more of our efforts in our face-to-face time with our customers and to promote engagement, reduce isolation and increase satisfaction.

We do not anticipate at this stage that the overall budget provision will need to increase. We have budgeted for major projects that will have a direct impact on this strategy, such as the replacement of the integrated housing management system (which is sitting in the Digital Plan), along with the

testing of potential tenant portals to provide digital services.

We have identified resources to test a shift in Telecare service provision, from reactive alarm receiving to proactive calling that prevents incidents and accidents happening, but also focuses on reducing isolation and improving community engagement.

We are aware that delivery of our objectives will be challenging and we will use external funding sources, such as research grants and funding streams, to test out ideas and learn what works. We will also continue to invest in our Volunteering Service to grow a strong network of people who will support our tenants in key areas to reduce isolation, increase digital skills and increases community engagement.

## Risk

**It is important that the Happy Customer Strategy includes a consideration of key risks and the mitigating actions which can be taken to address them. The following high-level risks have been identified:**

### Customer Engagement

There is a risk that it will be difficult to engage

our customers in the co-production of our service redesign, so we will work hard to make the opportunities fun, engaging and rewarding. This will be a key focus for our Customer Experience Manager and the Customer Engagement Plan.

### Employee Culture

We need to ensure that any risk of resistance from employees to the change caused by legacy cultural attitudes or silo thinking is resolved through comprehensive training and awareness raising, which refocuses our teams on the shared positive outcome of excellent customer service delivery.

### Time and Resources

There is a danger that the demands of day-to-day operations will erode the time available to deliver Happy Customer Strategy initiatives. Comprehensive resource planning and targeted investment will be provided to the multiple project strands we will be following.

### Complex & Interdependent Programme

The strategy involves complex programme management of a wide range of interdependent projects. To mitigate this, we have set up a programme management approach to ensure that we work in a way that effectively manages the projects.

# Governance, Scrutiny & Evaluation

**Our Director of Customer Services has overall responsibility for the Strategy. To ensure we deliver the objectives set out in the document, we will develop a detailed Action Plan. This will be monitored by the Happy Customer Programme Board and progress against targets will be reported quarterly to the Executive Team and six-monthly to the Board.**

The Programme Board will review overall progress on an annual basis, and update and review the priorities and resource requirements to inform the budget setting process in the September each year.

A critical aspect of the implementation of the Happy Customer Strategy will be regular and ongoing engagement with customers, to assess progress and the impact that improvements are having. We will look to customers to scrutinise the work we are doing, and maintain close involvement in the co-production of the initiatives associated with the strategy.

To achieve this, we are exploring the best way to do this with our tenants and what methods of scrutiny and evaluation would work best for them.



#### ONLINE

[www.hanover.scot](http://www.hanover.scot)

[facebook.com/hanoverscotland](https://www.facebook.com/hanoverscotland)

#### PHONE

0800 111 4646

#### EMAIL

[hello@hanover.scot](mailto:hello@hanover.scot)

[@hanoverscotland](https://twitter.com/hanoverscotland)

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