

Assistant Director of Housing & Customer Experience

Role Title	Department	Reports to	Direct Reports
Assistant Director of Housing & Customer Experience	Development and Customer Experience	Director of Development and Customer Experience	1. Housing and Neighbourhood Services Manager 2. Property Services Manager 3. Customer Services Officer

Purpose

To be an inspirational leader and provide strategic direction to the Housing and Customer Services teams with a particular focus on championing service excellence and embedding a customer-focussed and responsive culture across the Association and its subsidiaries. To drive continuous improvement and build customer and neighbourhood capacity. To lead and inspire change and innovation to respond and adapt to customers' current and future needs and priorities.

Lead and develop Ark's customer first approach which delivers high levels of satisfaction and excellent service delivery. This includes developing, coaching, and managing the Housing and Customer Services Teams to deliver a high-quality customer service, and ensuring service standards and performance targets are clearly understood and met. Working with colleagues to encourage a culture of customer service excellence across Ark.

The postholder will have lead responsibility for the operational management of Arks subsidiary companies, Ark Services Limited and Ark Commercial Investment Limited.

The role of Assistant Director of Housing and Customer Experience is a part of Ark's Senior Leadership team and reports directly to the Director of Development and Expertise and will deputise for the Director as required.

Responsibilities

Overall business management, development and strategic direction of our Housing and Customer Services team including housing management, income management, neighbourhood management, reactive repairs service; advice services; housing allocations and tenancy sustainment; tenant and community engagement, front line customer services and the ongoing development and implementation of added value services.

Fact Finding and Analysis

- Oversee all aspects of the customer service activity, productivity, key performance indicators (KPIs) and best practice; drive improvements in customer service performance taking account of customer satisfaction and feedback, and performance data.
- Contribute to the effective leadership of the organisation and maintain its focus on the vision, mission and aims through rigorous planning, analysis and decision-making.
- Contribute to ensuring that Ark has in place a business strategy that is informed through robust internal and external analysis of stakeholder, political, legislative, regulatory and practice developments.
- Responsible for the regular review and analysis of operational risks to the organisation.
- Assessing the wider environment to anticipate future risks that may impact the operational risk register and deliver solutions.

- Working closely with the Director of Development and Customer Experience, develop and review work plans to deliver the objectives and outcomes outlined in the corporate strategy and objectives.
- Developing and maintaining a long-term housing strategy to underpin the organisation's financial viability.
- Liaise with void and repair contractors in the delivery of monthly and annual customer satisfaction surveys, report results, and oversee the delivery of service improvement action plans.
- In partnership with the Assistant Director of Care and Support responsible for the delivery of a communication and engagement strategy with Ark tenants and supported people and ensuring strategic decisions are based upon the outcomes of our customers.
- Lead on developing Ark Group's subsidiary companies to enhance their contribution to Ark's Business Plan.
- To lead on customer insight and engagement to identify and review customers' needs and priorities including capturing customer intelligence, targeted service delivery and designing feedback mechanisms. This includes oversight of engagement processes, customer consultation, complaints handling and mechanisms for customer influence including developing customer scrutiny.
- Implement arrangements to ensure compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards, including the maintenance of an ongoing self-assessment, implementation of improvement actions and implementation of monitoring and oversight arrangements to ensure ongoing compliance.
- To develop and implement a Customer Charter which sets service standards and targets with customers which are focused on improving performance and customer satisfaction and delivering sector best practice outcomes for our customers.
- Lead and manage the development, implementation and monitoring of operational service improvement plans linked to the delivery of the corporate strategy objectives.
- Develop and maintain monitoring and reporting systems to support the collation of customer service data for reporting to the Board, Scottish Housing Regulator and customers.
- Responsible for the delivery of the annual return of the Annual Return of the Charter in accordance with the Scottish Housing Regulators standards.
- To be responsible for the annual rent and service charge review with customers and coordinate the annual budget process for the Ark and its subsidiaries, to meet the budget setting schedule.

Innovation and Initiative

- Contribute to Ark's business plan and corporate strategy, driven by quality improvement and which is responsive to changing internal and external customer requirements.
- Developing robust KPI's for functional areas of responsibility and use of analysis to improve organisational decision-making.
- Developing business operating models to enable efficiency and effectiveness of delivery of Ark's services
- Developing policy positions on issues such as Homelessness and leading the thinking on Ark responses to this issue.
- Ensuring Ark's supported tenants housing requirements are a high priority and meet the Equality Duty.
- To lead on the identification and review of customers' needs and priorities including capturing customer intelligence, targeted service delivery and designing feedback mechanisms. This includes oversight of engagement processes, customer consultation, complaints handling and mechanisms for customer influence including developing customer scrutiny.

- To demonstrate creativity and innovation in delivering cutting-edge service design to support customers, sustain tenancies, improve neighbourhoods and respond to customer's needs.
- Grow the Association by developing and implementing added value services including identifying unmet need or service gaps, designing projects and successfully bidding for external funding to meet these needs and strategic objectives.
- Continuously develop services in line with customer and business needs including digital transformation to deliver a seamless customer experience and efficient business processes;
- Identify, analyse and produce management reports across a range of customer service indicators to measure service delivery and customer satisfaction, and identify and support the delivery of service improvements and service redesign.
- Developing reporting on core housing and neighbourhood areas to enable better decision-making across business.
- Lead on the review current processes and propose enhancements to improve efficiencies and remove duplication of effort.
- Effective problem-solving ensuring problem definition, generation of alternative solutions, evaluation and selection of suitable solution and implementation.
- Challenging and supporting decision-makers, especially on affordability and value for money, by ensuring policy and operational proposals with financial implications are signed off by the housing services department.
- Identify unique opportunities to work in partnership with other Registered Social Landlords, Private Landlords, Developers or external agencies to maximise affordable housing options.
- Leading and directing the Customer Services Team so that they make a full contribution to and meet the needs of the business.
- Determining the resources, expertise and systems for the Customer Services Team that are sufficient to meet business needs and negotiating these within the overall financial framework.
- Reviewing the performance of the Customer Services Team and ensuring that the services provided are in line with the expectations and needs of its stakeholders.
- Identifying and equipping staff, managers and the Leadership Team with the housing competencies and expertise needed to manage the business both currently and in the future.
- Considering external funding opportunities to allow provision of added value services to our customers and project initiatives.

Interpersonal Skills

Internal

- To be a role model for Ark staff and the embodiment of Ark's mission, vision, and values.
- Ensuring a highly functioning organisation through the use of well-developed competencies in building and sustaining effective individual and team relationships with employees, Senior Leadership Team, Executive Team and the volunteer Board of Management.
- Comply with the Chartered Institute of Housing's Code of Conduct for Housing Members, as well as other ethical standards that are applicable to them by virtue of their professional status as a member of a housing institute. The fundamental principles set out in the Code are integrity, respect for other, professional competence and taking responsibility.
- Apply relevant statutory, regulatory and professional standards both personal and organisational.
- Show energetic, determined, positive, robust and resilient leadership with an ability to inspire confidence and respect and exemplify high standards of conduct.
- Provide clear, authoritative and impartial professional advice and objective housing advice and interpretation of complex situations.

- Adopt a flexible leadership style, able to move through visioning to implementation, through collaboration / consultation to challenge as appropriate and able to give and receive constructive feedback.
- Contribute to the SLT and prepare reports/presentations to the team, as required;
- Demonstrate strength of resolve to insist on operational improvements when standards are slipping and to hold people to account (whether they directly report or not) for what they agree to deliver.
- Ability to negotiate in a positive manner and handle problem resolution activities proactively.
- Active listening skills targeted at dealing with business issues and those of the Customer Services Team.

External

- To be a role model for Ark staff and the embodiment of Ark's mission, vision, and values;
- Proactively develop and maintain productive relationships with external peers and stakeholders.
- Ensure Customer Rubixx Relationship Management (CRM) and SharePoint are used consistently and effectively to record all contact with customers.
- Responsibility for managing key stakeholder relationships as they relate to housing matters, including, Scottish Housing Regulator, Local Authorities, SFHA, CloH, Scottish Government; Legal Advisers.
- To lead on new partnership creation and development for the Association to enhance our existing service offering for customers.
- Manage all interactions with Local Authorities from a Housing perspective ensuring strong negotiation, persuasion and influencing skills to reach the best outcome for the business.
- Responsible for ensuring Housing Allocations system is operated in accordance with legal requirements and tenancies are allocated in accordance with all legal requirements.
- Manage 3rd party Housing system support service to ensure the system remains fit for purpose.
- Strategic networking to build and maintain strong and identifiable links with key contacts, demonstrate excellent relationship management skills and influence these external networks.
- Responsible for recruitment of Housing & Customer Services Manager and Neighbourhood and Partnership Manager, including contact with recruitment agencies, selection of candidate, interviewing and appointment of candidates. Where required provide guidance and support to the wider team to recruit their direct reports.

Leading and Developing People

- Ensuring that all staff in Ark are supported and motivated to use their skills and initiative, achieve their potential and seek and develop personal and organisational level improvements.
- Line manage and mentor the departmental team(s) on operational and functional responsibilities.
- Create, communicate and implement a vision for the Housing and Customer Services team and wider Development and Customer Experience Directorate.
- Role model a customer focussed culture within the team.
- Promote effective communication within the team, across the broader organisation and with external stakeholders.
- Apply strong project planning and process management skills.
- Lead on the implementation of the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Human Rights Strategy (housing actions) across the team and for our customers.
- Set and monitor meaningful performance objectives for the Customer Services team.

- Role model effective staff performance management.
- Coach and support staff in both technical and personal development.
- Promote high standards of ethical behaviour, probity, integrity and honesty.
- Ensure, when necessary, that outside expertise is called upon for specialist advice not available within the Directorate.
- Promote discussion on current financial, housing and property issues and their implications.

Resources

- Responsible for income generation and the appropriate allocation of resources to support the aims of Ark's business plan and corporate strategy.
- Lead, in collaboration with the Director of Development and Customer Experience in the establishment of the organisational budget spend to ensure the delivery of in-year and long-term objectives.
- Manage all designated budgets in accordance with the priorities of the business and in line with financial and procurement regulations.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure that:
 - Housing Strategy, financial strategy and overall corporate strategy are strongly linked.
 - Budgets are planned as an integral part of the strategic and operational management of the organisation and are aligned with its structure of managerial responsibilities.
 - Budgets are constructed on the basis of reliable data of past performance and rigorous assessments of future resources and commitments, and that policies and priorities are evaluated in an open, consistent and thorough manner.
- Responsible for overseeing the Customer Services budget and staffing to ensure that the service is appropriately resourced to deliver strategy and plans.
- Responsible for the housing management system and digital transformation of Customer Services.
- Be directly accountable for the Customer Services Team.

Impact on Decisions

- Responsible for the successful implementation of Ark's strategic aims and outcomes.
- Delegated responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of Ark employees, service users, visitors, contractors and other third parties ensuring statutory obligations under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 are followed.
- To ensure compliance with all statutory, legal and regulatory requirements impacting on customer and community services and maintain up to date industry awareness for best practice and continuous improvement in meeting all compliance requirements.
- Act as a key advisor on all Housing and Neighbourhood matters to the Executive Team, Senior Leadership Team, Board of Management and staff.
- Embed proactive analysis, learning and improvement from emerging trends, complex cases and complaints, working with teams to implement practical solutions across policies, procedures systems and processes to address service delivery issues.
- Set targets and delegate tasks to ensure the effective delivery of Strategies and Housing and Asset Management Service Improvement Plan.
- Exercise judgement in balancing the competing demands and resource constraints ensuring Housing activity is based on sound business need and is in line with the organisation's overall strategic direction.
- As the business expert, advise, inform and influence the organisation's decision-making process from Housing and Neighbourhood Services perspective.

- Provide professional guidance and support to the Team and contribute to the identification of their continuing professional development needs.
- Have in place a robust quality assurance framework to ensure our customer service meets performance and service standards, both internally and externally.
- Ensure the provisions of data protection policy and practice and related regulations are adhered to within the service.
- Development of talent, succession planning and career development in the Housing and Customer Services Team.

Person Specification

Qualifications	Essential	Desirable
Educated to degree level in an appropriate discipline or relevant experience	X	
Membership (Full or partial) of a relevant professional body or equivalent, and evidence of Continued Professional Development		X
Management or Leadership Qualification		X
Project Management Practitioner Qualification (APM/Prince 2).		X
Experience		
A demonstrated track record in a senior role in affordable housing, customer experience or commercial property portfolio management.	X	
Experience of working as part of a Senior Team to drive strategy.	X	
Experience of preparing Board papers and attending Board and other Sub Committee meetings.	X	
Developing and implementing organisational policy and practice.	X	
Proven track record in tenancy sustainment, community involvement and wider action activities.		X
Experience of embedding a culture and ethos of customer service excellence.	X	
Proven track record in customer engagement and participation	X	
Understand personal and professional strengths.	X	
Proven track record of leading a team and motivating colleagues to deliver results.	X	
Excellent understanding of the measurements of performance management through KPIs in an organisational and industry setting.	X	
Experience of working in different organisations across the public and private sectors, in particular the third or voluntary sector.		X
Experience of managing projects from inception to completion.		X
Demonstrable leadership experience that inspires and engages both own team and the organisation as a whole.	X	
Experience in managing and developing staff in order to meet the requirements of the role.	X	
Skills, knowledge and expertise continuously developed in a structured and monitored way as part of CPD for a Chartered Member of Housing.	X	
Skills		
The successful candidate should have a solid understanding of the following key areas:	X	

• Regulatory framework in which Ark operates. • Understand public service finance and its regulatory environment. • Legislative framework in Housing function. • Professional body standards. • Strategic management. • Planning management. • Project Management. • Risk management. • Financial management. • Communications and engagement. • Change management theory, tools and techniques.		
Competencies		
As well as the ability to do this role will be assessed in conjunction with the following competence areas: • Conflict within Teams • Customer Service • Problems Solving • Communication • Leadership • Managing Change • Continuous Learning • Professional Boundaries	X	
General		
Full driving license and access to a vehicle	X	