

Gold Service

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1.0 Introduction

This policy sets out the details of the Association's innovative Gold Service scheme, including the aims of the scheme and membership criteria.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

Glen Oaks Housing has chosen to introduce a Gold Service scheme to reward its loyal customers. We believe that our customers have the right to peace and quiet and a decent home and environment in which to live. In the past, we have spent too much of our time and resources on a minority of customers who do not keep to the obligations of their tenancy.

Gold Service is designed to encourage customers to keep to the terms of their tenancy agreement by offering a series of recognition and reward incentives. It is designed to:

- Support the principle of reward and recognition.
- Increase customer satisfaction and provide the opportunity for customer involvement in our commitment to delivering strong partnerships.
- Develop our tenant/landlord relationship, continue and improve the services we deliver to our customers.
- Increase job satisfaction for staff.
- Reduce the amount of time and money spent on chasing overdue rent, and other debts owed to Glen Oaks Housing Association, including court costs, factoring arrears and the cost of rechargeable repairs.
- Reduce the time taken to re-let our empty homes and reduce the amount of money spent returning the property to our lettable standard.
- Target the organisation's resources to tenants and communities who comply with their responsibilities.

It aims to do this by:

- Encouraging customers not to breach their tenancy conditions by offering rewards and incentives.
- Allow our staff to focus on Customer Service.

- Staff promoting the benefits of joining Gold Service in day to day dealings with our residents to maximise membership opportunities to achieve our membership targets.

3.0 Equality & Diversity Statement

- 3.1 The Association is intent on ensuring people or communities do not face discrimination or social exclusion due to any of the following protected characteristics: age; disability; sex; marriage & civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; pregnancy & maternity.
- 3.2 This policy complies with the Association's equality & diversity policy.
- 3.3 The Association will regularly review this policy for equal opportunities implications and take the necessary action to address any inequalities that result from the implementation of the policy.

4.0 Legal and Regulatory Framework

The Association's Gold Service Policy is an enhanced service offered to its customers and does not detract in any way from the Association's legal obligations to its customers.

The Association will ensure that all aspects of its Gold Service Policy comply with current legislation and guidance from the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The Association has altered its staff contracts of employment to take account of relevant legislation, good practice and regulatory guidance in relation to benefits in line with the Gold Service scheme.

5.0 Definition of Gold Service

Gold Service is the Association's innovative approach to service delivery and customer relationships.

6.0 Gold Service Criteria - Eligibility Criteria

Residents need to have been a Glen Oaks tenant/owner for at least 8 weeks and have paid their rent/factoring charge on time. Prospective members also need to complete a Gold Service application form.

Residents are still eligible to join Gold Service if they are receiving Housing Benefit, although we understand that this may take longer to process. Housing Benefit recipients still need to complete the 8 weeks qualifying period.

Tenants with rent arrears of 8 weeks or more will be ineligible for Gold Service membership. Gold Service membership will only commence once the applicant has made an arrangement to pay their arrears and kept to that agreement for 8 weeks. Residents with a factoring charge bill which has been outstanding for 8 weeks will have their membership suspended until such times as their account is cleared.

Prospective applicants will also be denied membership in the following instances:

- If prospective applicants fail to pay any outstanding rechargeable repairs.
- If prospective applicants are given formal 'Notice of Proceedings' informing them that they, a member of their family, or a visitor to their home, have breached the conditions of their tenancy.

7.0 Registration

The Gold Service scheme will be marketed in a variety of ways, including:

- Glen Oaks' Website
- Tenant Handbook
- Gala Days / Fun Days / Open Days
- Tenancy Sign-up
- Any Contact With Residents
- Newsletter
- Mailshots to Non-Members
- Office Reception
- Residents Conference

8.0 Gold Categories - Potential, Gold, Suspended

The Association will have 4 categories of resident in relation to the Gold Service scheme:

- Gold - Current members.
- Potential - Residents who are eligible to join Gold Service but who have not yet done so.
- Suspended - Gold Service members who have been suspended from membership as they do not currently meet the membership criteria. Should this occur, the member will be informed in writing of the reason for their suspension and the steps they can take to remedy this.
- Non-members - Residents who do not wish to join Gold Service.

9.0 Tenant Rewards

9.1 We reserve the right to change the rewards on offer and/or the contractors supplying them at any time.

9.2 Bonusbonds

Bonus Bond vouchers to the value of £1 per week of membership will be awarded to each tenant who is a member of the Gold Service scheme. These Bonusbonds will be paid to members twice per annum, in June and December each year, or as close to these dates as is practical. The Bonusbonds can be redeemed for goods in a variety of different retailers - a list of retailers accepting the Bonusbonds is available from any of the Association's offices and our website at www.glenoaks.org.uk

9.3 Faster Repairs Service

Tenants who are members of the Gold Service scheme will receive a faster repairs service in comparison with the Association's standard service. The target times for repairs will be as follows:

- *Emergency Repairs* - the Association aims to complete Emergency Repairs for all tenants, whether Gold Service Members or not, within 4 hours.
- *Urgent Repairs* - the Association aims to complete Urgent Repairs for Gold Service members within 1 working day in comparison to our Standard time of 3 working days.
- *Routine Repairs* - the Association aims to complete Routine Repairs for Gold Service members within 5 working days in comparison to our Standard time of 10 working days.
- In addition, Gold Service members will be entitled to repairs being carried out outwith normal office hours i.e. between 8am - 9am and 5pm - 7pm, Monday to Friday and between 9am and 12 noon on a Saturday.

9.4 Golden Goodbye Scheme

9.4.1 Gold Service members will be awarded £75 at the end of their tenancy if they meet the following criteria:

- (i) They must have ended their tenancy in a manner that meets all the conditions of their tenancy agreement.
- (ii) Their house has been left in good condition and all furniture and fittings removed as agreed. Where applicable, the balcony and/or garden must be neat and tidy.
- (iii) The member must allow prospective tenants to view their property prior to the end of their tenancy (within reason and dependent on tenant circumstances). Times for viewings will be agreed.
- (iv) The member must have no outstanding debt of any type with the Association. If they do, the £75 will be deducted and any remaining balance paid.
- (v) The member must leave a forwarding address to allow the Association to send on their Golden Goodbye payment.

9.4.2 What is good condition?

The condition of the member's house will be assessed by a Technical Officer at the end of their tenancy to ensure that it complies with the Association's lettable standard.

This Officer's decision will be final, but below are some general points that the house must meet before the member will be eligible for the £75 goodbye payment:

(i) Alterations

The property must not have been altered without the consent of the Association.

These alterations will include any unauthorised alterations to kitchens and bathrooms as well as any changes and additions to the original gas and electricity installations in the home.

(ii) Keys

In order to receive the Golden Goodbye payment members must return a full set of keys for all doors and windows in their home.

Close entry keys and fobs	x 2
All main access door locks fitted by the Association (front and rear)	x 1
All main access door locks fitted by tenant (front and rear)	x 1
Veranda door locks	x 1
Window locks	x 1
Any other locks within the property fitted by tenant	x 1

(iii) Decoration

To receive the £75 rewards payment the internal decoration of the property must be to an acceptable standard.

'Acceptable' is hard to judge with decoration as all tenants have different tastes. However the following areas will be inspected by Technical Officers:

<i>Wall Condition</i>	No holes or dents caused by tenants.
<i>External Doors</i>	Secure with no major patches caused by forced access.
<i>Internal Doors</i>	All doors match as provided by the Association and all have no holes, dents or scratches.
<i>Wallpaper</i>	No major holes or rips. All paper stuck to walls. All paper in rooms matching. No graffiti or other over-painting. No polystyrene tiles. No excessive soiling.
<i>Paint Finishes - wood work and walls</i>	No murals. No excessive soiling.
<i>Floors</i>	All floor finishes removed by tenant, any to be left by agreement with the Association (including laminate flooring).
<i>Kitchen Units</i>	All units in good repair. All worktops in good repair. All units and surfaces cleaned.
<i>Bathroom</i>	All sanitary ware in good repair. No cracks or chips. All sanitary ware washed down.
<i>Furniture and Fittings</i>	All furniture and fittings to be removed by the tenant unless agreement is reached with the Association.

(iv) Gas and Electricity Meters

To receive the end of tenancy reward, tenants who have a pre-payment meter must leave their gas and electricity meters debt free.

9.5 Newsletter

The Association has a high quality Newsletter for the benefit of its Tenants and Residents. Each edition will contain at least 1 Gold Service page for Gold Service members. From time to time competitions, retail offers and promotions deemed useful by the Association will be offered to members in the Newsletter. The Newsletter is currently quarterly - this may change in future.

We will not be responsible or liable for any product or service provided by a third party supplier, the provision of which shall be subject to that supplier's terms and conditions.

9.6 Competitions

Competitions are only available to Gold Service members and if membership is suspended then the resident will be disqualified from the competition and would result in the random selection of another winner.

This includes entry to any of our Glen Oaks competitions but excludes prize draws specifically designed for customers returning questionnaires or feedback forms.

Glen Oaks will hold Gold Service competitions, open only to participating members. The competitions need to be run to comply with Gaming Acts and ensure that they are relevant to all potential members. They could be cash prizes or event tickets, etc.

Competition terms and conditions:

- Closing date for competitions is as stated.
- No cash alternatives.
- No correspondence will be entered into.
- No responsibility can be accepted for entries lost or damaged in the post.
- Proof of posting is not proof of receipt.
- The judges' decision is final.
- One entry per household.
- Details of the winners will be available after the closing date by writing to us.
- Winners will be drawn at random after the closing date.
- Competitions are not available to Glen Oaks Housing Association employees, their families and associates.
- Unless otherwise stated, competitions are only open to current Gold Service members.
- Prizes are not transferable.

We make every effort to verify all the information we publish, but products and prices do change. We cannot accept any responsibility for any errors or omissions or for any losses that may arise as a result.

9.7 Education Grants

The Association will have an annual budget for Education Grants - £1,500 for small education grants, with no set amount, rather decisions on amount based on merit of each application to budget limit, again for Gold Service members or members of their households. A judging panel will meet twice per annum to decide on the allocation of grants. This panel will comprise of the Association's Office Bearers, the Association's Corporate Management Team and Corporate Services Manager. Application forms for each grant are available from the Association's office and also from our website at www.glenoaks.org.uk

9.8 Gold Community Fund

The Association will set aside funds for a Gold Community Fund with an annual budget of £1,000. Gold Service members may apply for grants from the Fund for community groups in our areas. Gold Service members may apply for grants for local community groups regardless of whether they themselves are involved in the group, as long as Glen Oaks residents will benefit from the work of the group.

A judging panel will meet twice per annum to decide on the allocation of grants. This panel will comprise of the Association's Office Bearers, the Association's Corporate Management Team and Corporate Services Manager. Application forms are available from the Association's office and also from our website at www.glenoaks.org.uk

9.9 Direct Debit payments for rent

Gold Service members who take out a new Direct Debit payment for the payment of rent will be granted £10 worth of Bonusbonds. This payment of Bonusbonds will be made 6 months after the Direct Debit is set up, subject to all rent payments having been made during the 6 month period.

10.0 Sharing Owners

Sharing owners will be entitled to all Gold Service rewards with the exception of Repairs Service benefits and the Golden Goodbye Scheme.

11.0 Owner Occupier/ New Supply Shared Equity Rewards

Owner occupiers and residents living in New Supply Shared Equity homes will be entitled to all Gold Service rewards with the exception of Bonusbonds, Repairs Service benefits, and the Golden Goodbye scheme.

12.0 Staff Rewards

The Association will reward its staff, as an incentive to ensure that staff deliver the best possible Customer Service. Such rewards will vary from time to time and may be added or removed by the Association at any time and may be linked to specific initiatives, i.e. recruitment of new Gold Service members. At the present time, the rewards for staff which apply are:

- To encourage good attendance, the Association will grant staff who have perfect attendance in the previous financial year a day off on or near to their birthday.
- The Association buys staff a small gift (value approximately £5) on their birthday. The gift will be either a bottle of wine, a birthday cake or flowers.
- The staff team will given a budget of £1,000 to organise recreational classes and/or activities. Such classes or activities will be carried out in staff's own time unless they are taking place as part of staff training.
- The staff team will have a budget of £120 per annum to purchase DVDs for a staff DVD library. Staff would have the option of agreeing to contribute more of their own cash to boost the number of DVDs in the library.

13.0 Penalties/Suspension

Gold Service membership may be suspended for the following reasons:

- If members fail to pay their rent/factoring charges and/or any arrears, including rechargeable repairs (residents with 8 weeks of rent or more in arrears will be suspended).

- If you are given formal 'notice' informing that you, a member of your family, or a visitor to your home, have breached the conditions of your tenancy.

If you have been suspended from Gold Service, there is no need to re-apply to join Gold Service, as your membership will automatically be reinstated once you meet the membership criteria.

14.0 Partnership working

The Association recognises the importance of keeping abreast of best practice and will continue to monitor information on Reward Schemes offered by other similar landlords. This will allow the Association to continue to develop its Gold Service Policy to offer the best possible Reward Scheme to its customers.

15.0 Resources

The Association will allocate sufficient staff time to ensure that all of the requirements of this Gold Service Policy are fulfilled.

The Association will also set aside funds within its annual budget for Gold Service.

16.0 Information Sharing/Confidentiality

The Association will not divulge any personal details of its Gold Service members to any third party outwith the Association. All personal details of Gold Service members will be stored securely by the Association either electronically or manually.

17.0 Review and Performance Monitoring

The Association will organise a Focus Group meeting of Gold Service members once per annum to seek feedback from members on the scheme. Members will be chosen at random and asked to attend these meetings, with those attending being given £10 in Bonusbonds as a token thank you from the Association for their time.

The Association's Management Committee will be given regular reports monitoring the Association's performance in relation to its Gold Service Policy. The monitoring reports will include details of:

- Number of Members.
- Number of Membership Applications.
- Applications received for Educational and Gold Community Fund Grants.
- Number of Golden Goodbye payments, time taken to make properties available for re-let and the impact of the Gold Service Policy on these.
- Rent arrears and the impact made by Gold Service on reducing Rent Arrears.
- Statistics relating to repairs for Gold Service members.

The Association will also produce a written report detailing the Association's Gold Service Policy performance for inclusion in the Association's Annual Report.

18.0 Sustainability

In the development of this policy, the Association aims to create more sustainable tenancies in relation to wider social and economic issues.

19.0 Links with other Policies

This policy has links with the following Association policies:

- Rent Arrears
- Rechargeable Repairs
- Factoring
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Equality & Diversity
- Complaints
- Gas Safety Policy
- Void Policy
- Lettable Standard Policy
- Estate Management Policy

20.0 Complaints/Appeals

Should any customer be dissatisfied with any aspect of the Association's Gold Service Policy, they should initially raise their dissatisfaction with their Housing Services Officer. After this, if a customer remains dissatisfied with the policy they should complain to the Association formally. Details of how to complain are set out in the Association's Complaints Policy, a copy of which is available from the Association's office and also on the Association's website at www.glenoaks.org.uk

21.0 Consultation

This policy has been developed in consultation with tenants, Registered Tenants Organisation, and other service users, and account taken of opinions, views and representations made.

22.0 Staff Training and Development

The Association will ensure that its staff receive adequate training on all aspects of this policy in order that the organisation may deliver the best possible Rewards Scheme to its customers.

23.0 Policy Review

This Gold Service Policy will be reviewed every three years. It may also be reviewed if it appears that the Association requires to alter the policy to meet legal obligations or best practice advice, for example from the Scottish Housing Regulator. The Association will also continuously seek to further enhance the benefits offered to its customers through this policy and may review the policy at any time if alterations to the policy appear to be appropriate.

We reserve the right to change the terms, conditions and membership criteria of the scheme. Notice of any changes will be published in our Newsletter. We reserve the right to stop running the Gold Service scheme at any time and customers will be notified of this by letter.

24.0 Appendices

- Gold Service Application Form
- Education Grant Application Form
- Gold Community Fund Application Form