

Getting involved

How YOU can influence our services

County Palatine and Palatine Home Ownership take the views of their customers very seriously—it is for this reason that we offer a wide range of options for you to tell us what you think about our services.

The plans to improve our services that are set out in this leaflet are the direct result of talking and listening to our customers.

If YOU want to influence future reviews of our services here is what you can do: -

Write or contact us by telephone if you have a good idea to improve our services

Complete questionnaires we send you about our services—we will pay for the postage!

Join our Customer Panel—we will contact you by telephone to hear your views on new ideas to improve our services

Join our Best Value Forum to discuss our services in detail—meetings are held regularly at 6pm



County Palatine Ltd, Turner House, 56 King Street, LEIGH, WN7 4LJ
Tel (01942) 608715
www.countypalatine.co.uk info@countypalatine.co.uk



Best Value



July 2002

Making our services better

Letting Homes

Number 4 in a series of leaflets setting out our plans to improve our services

Also available: 1 rent / service charge collection and recovery
2 responsive repairs
3 neighbour nuisance

What is this leaflet?

This leaflet contains County Palatine's Service Statement and improvement timetable for our lettings service. It sets out the type of service we aim to provide our customers and contains a plan for improving the service in the future.

This document is the result of a Best Value Comprehensive Service Review that ended in the summer of 2002.

What is Best Value?

The government requires all organisations that receive money from it to regularly review how they do things and to try to make continuous improvements to their services. They call this requirement "Best Value".

The aim is to provide value for money services that learn from the good ideas and practices of other companies and listen to the demands of the people who receive them—our customers.

This leaflet is available on tape or in other languages on request

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We provide a range of options for

Want to know more?

This leaflet summarises the outcome of a detailed review of our service—for more information contact our Policy & Research Manager ☎ (01942) 608715.

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Service statement

The type of service we aim to provide

Background

Applying for a housing association property can be a complicated and bureaucratic business. We believe that we should try to make the process as quick and simple as possible.

Our services

To achieve this aim we will: -

- Treat all potential tenants equally. Require everyone to make an application for rehousing and ensure that all applications are assessed in the same way.
- Provide clear information on how we prioritise applications.
- Give priority for rehousing to those in greatest need but give everyone the opportunity of gaining a County Palatine property—even people who are in less need.
- Cut out form filling! Accept over-the-phone applications with customers informed of their priority on the waiting list at the time of application.
- Use application forms that are easy to understand and allow customers to indicate clearly why they want to be rehoused.
- Help with form filling at the office or at an applicant's home if they cannot reasonably be expected to visit the office.

Aim

Our aim is to streamline our lettings service so that, whilst ensuring that our legal and regulatory obligations are met, the system is easy to understand and lets customers know the outcome of their application for rehousing as quickly as possible.

- Ask for references and exclude applicants who would make unsuitable tenants.
- Use a Sign Up presentation to ensure that all tenants are given the same standard of information when they are asked to sign their tenancy agreement.
- Use tenancy agreements that are easy to read and well presented.
- Monitor customer satisfaction with this service through a rolling survey.

Our targets

1. All housing associations publish statistics on how quickly homes are let. County Palatine will aim to record results in the upper half of this league table.
2. County Palatine will aim to assess 90% of telephone applications at the time of application.
3. County Palatine will aim to assess applications received by post or at its offices within seven days.

Improvement timetable

Our plans to get better

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
1. Adopt new Priority Streams to increase flexibility and speed of process	_____		
2. Stop holding Waiting List meetings to improve use of staff time	_____		
3. Hold CORE letting records on IT system to reduce risk of error	_____		
4. Update and introduce new tenancy agreements to improve customer service	_____		
5. Stop making routine Home Visits to improve use of staff time	_____		
6. Introduce use of Character References to help make sustainable lettings	_____		
7. Update Sign Up Presentation every October to ensure relevance	_____		
8. Introduce new performance monitoring measures to meet regulatory requirements	_____		
9. When the IT system is reviewed consider introducing a facility to close lists in some areas to avoid building-up waiting lists too much in some areas			_____
10. Introduce rolling satisfaction survey of new tenants to react to customer feedback	_____		
11. Introduce use of telephone applications to improve customer service	_____		