



## ALBYN HOUSING SOCIETY LTD

**TITLE:       ADVICE AND INFORMATION REMIT**

<b>Authorised by Committee of Management</b>	May 2009
<b>Next Review Due By</b>	May 2012
<b>Staff Affected</b>	All teams providing or consulting on services to tenants, applicants or community groups
<b>Lead Officers</b>	Policy: Housing & Communities Director  Operation: Community Involvement Officer



## **Our Housing Advice and Information Remit**

### **What advice and information service we provide**

We aim to provide the best possible customer service at all times. Providing high quality advice and information to customers is important to make sure we can deliver good quality services to you.

### **Where we provide services from**

The services are provided mainly by our Housing and Communities, Property Maintenance and Corporate teams.

They are provided from our main office in Invergordon, and from our local office in Inverness. Services are available from Monday to Friday between 9 am and 5pm, other than on public holidays or occasional training days.

Officers work with customers to identify the issues they need help with. They will discuss options and agree an appropriate course of action. They will provide advice and assistance that take individual needs into account. If necessary, they will refer customers to another organisation that has particular expertise to help.

### **What we provide housing advice and information on**

Across the organisation, our staff provide mostly 'Level 1' advice (that is, providing information and explanation and signposting to specialist advice) in at least fifteen of these areas of housing law. Some staff also provide 'Level 2' advice (that is, more detailed casework) in a smaller number of specific areas of law. We aim to reach accreditation for at least Level 1 advice provision during 2009:

We provide advice and information to tenants, housing applicants, and in some circumstances to people referred to us from another organisation. Our aim is to make sure that these customers understand their housing rights, responsibilities and options. We will do this by providing advice and information about housing issues and providing practical assistance. This includes explaining decisions, writing letters and completing forms.

The topics of housing law that we provide advice and information on are:

- Rent Arrears
- Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit
- Disrepair in Rented Housing
- Housing Options
- Eviction

- Anti Social Behaviour
- Harassment and Illegal Eviction
- Homelessness
- Relationship Breakdown
- Private Sector Renting
- Security of Tenure
- Statutory Tenancy Rights
- Repair and Improvement Grants

### **How we provide housing advice and information**

Case work will be carried out by telephone conversations; face to face at our offices; and where necessary by appointment at your own home. We will also provide written information in emails, letters, leaflets, handbooks and newsletters, and on our website.

### **Making sure we reach the high standards**

We will work towards accreditation for the Scottish Advice and Information Standards.

The standards provide a quality framework for all services that provide housing and housing related advice and information. They include performance indicators and competency requirements for nineteen different areas of housing law at different levels.

The standards will help us to:

- Make sure that we are providing clear and accurate information to our customers
- Identify gaps and to constantly improve the services to our customers
- Help us to be clear about our limitations and to develop our work in partnership with other 'expert' agencies where required