

Service Promises and Standards



As a key priority, we aim to provide you with the best possible service at all times. To help us achieve consistently high standards, we have set ourselves a number of Service Promises and Standards.



Our Service Promises explain how we will deliver services to our customers.

Our Service Standards outline the key services we will provide. In many cases there is a timescale for providing these services.

If we fail to provide a service within the timescale, please let us know.

We want to know when we are doing things wrong. We want to know when the service is great. And we want your suggestions for improving everything we do.

So please let us have your complaints, comments and compliments. We use this information to shape and improve the services we provide.

Our promises to you

We will:

- Offer a high quality and efficient service;
- Keep you informed and involved, and help you have your say;
- Provide value for money housing and services.

In all of our dealings with customers we promise to:

- Treat you with respect and offer a courteous and helpful service;

- Make sure our services are easily accessible and understandable;
- Promote equality of treatment for all our customers;
- Identify any special needs to ensure all our customers can use our services;
- Communicate with you in the most appropriate way to meet your needs.

When you visit our offices we will:

- Provide offices that are accessible for disabled people;
- On request, provide an interpretation service for those whose first language is not English;
- Provide a clean, tidy and pleasant reception area for you to wait in;
- Wear identification badges with the member of staff's name and photograph;
- Greet you as soon as you arrive.

When we visit your home we will:

- Always show you identification;
- Call at a reasonable time of day unless we have arranged a specific appointment;
- Make every effort to give you advance warning and tell you the reason if we are unable to keep an appointment;
- Give you the opportunity to see another member of staff if you prefer to do so.

If you have particular needs we will:

- Visit you at home if it's difficult for you to come to the office;
- Provide interpreters or signers if you ask us to.

When we get things wrong we will:

- Aim to put it right as soon as possible;
- Keep you informed at all times;
- Apologise;
- Aim to learn from our mistakes so they don't happen again.

Our information will be:

- In plain language so that it's easy to understand;
- Available in large print and audio format in English and other languages on request.

In return, we ask you to:

- Be polite to our staff and contractors;
- Be patient during busy times;
- Be tolerant of your neighbours;
- Let us know if your circumstances change in any way that may affect your tenancy.

Our Service Standards:**If you telephone us we will aim to:**

- Answer the phone within 10 seconds.

When you write to us we will:

- Acknowledge letters within three working days;
- Reply fully within 10 working days.

When you visit our offices we will:

- Give you a chance to talk to us in a private room;
- Give you the choice of talking to a male or female member of staff;
- Offer you a translator, if appropriate;

- See you within a maximum of 20 minutes if you do not have an appointment.

If you make a complaint we will:

- Acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days;
- Fully investigate your complaint and inform you of the outcome within 10 working days (we will inform you if we are unable to meet this timescale).



Day to day repairs

When you report a repair to us we aim to:

- Respond to all emergency repairs within 4 hours;
- Complete all routine repairs within 21 calendar days;
- Offer you an appointment for routine repairs;
- Leave your home clean and tidy after doing the repair;
- Provide a 24-hour emergency repair service, 365 days a year;
- Allow residents to sign-off repairs when they are happy with the work.



Anti-social behaviour

When responding to reports of anti-social behaviour we will:

- Investigate all reports of anti-social behaviour within 5 working days;
- Respond to racial harassment and violence reports within one working day;
- If possible remove offensive/obscene graffiti within 24 hours.

Lettings

When allocating and letting our properties we will:

- Repair and re-let empty properties in an average of 16 working days;
- Undertake transfer inspections within 14 working days of transfer.

Rent

When setting and accounting for rent we charge we will:

- Maintain rent levels within the Government's target rent policies.

Rent arrears

When recovering unpaid rent we will:

- Contact individual residents as soon as arrears start building-up on their rent account;
- Offer residents in arrears priority access to the debt counselling service available through the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Minor aids and adaptations

- We will complete minor aids and adaptations within 31 calendar days of receiving a brief.

Major aids and adaptations

- We will produce a specification and drawing for aids and adaptations within 28 calendar days of receiving a brief from an Occupational Therapist;
- Once works are approved by the Occupational Therapist we will obtain quotes for works within 21 days.

Sheltered Housing

When providing sheltered housing services we will:

- Develop and review support plans for all residents at least once a year to support independent living.

Supported Housing

When providing supported housing we will:

- Give every new resident a Direct Debit form;
- Give every new resident a residents handbook and a copy of the complaints procedure;
- Ensure every new resident has a housing benefit form completed and submitted if appropriate;
- Carry out health and safety checks on supported housing properties every six months.

New affordable homes

- Complete customer satisfaction surveys with all residents of new properties within 12 months of occupation.

Home Ownership services

Right-to-buy

When processing right-to-buy applications we aim to:

- Arrange to send published information and application forms within 3 working days;
- Keep within the designated timescales of the Right-to-Buy scheme.

Leaseholder/Shared Ownership

- Send you an annual statement of your account each year;

- Advise you of the various payment options available to you for all major works;
- Consult you prior to any major works;
- Provide all lessees with a Leaseholder Handbook within a month of completion of purchase.

Neighbourhoods

We will:

- Carry out monthly inspections of all neighbourhoods;
- Complete all actions arising from inspections within four weeks;
- Investigate any reports of abandoned cars within five working days (removal subject to DVLA checks);
- Investigate all reports of abandonment and non-occupation within five working days;
- Investigate all breaches of tenancy agreements within five working days.

Tenancies

We will:

- Visit all new tenants within six weeks when they move into a new home;
- Ensure that transfer applications are processed within ten working days;
- Make a decision regarding requests for internal (within Housing Solutions) mutual exchanges within 20 working days;
- Make a decision regarding requests for external mutual

exchanges within 42 working days;

- Make a decision on a succession to a tenancy for a spouse within five working days;
- Make a decision on a succession to a tenancy for any other successor within five working days.

Block cleaning

- We will carry out general cleaning of all communal stairwells weekly where service charges are payable and monthly where there is no charge;
- We will clean communal windows four times a year;
- We will deep clean floor surfaces three times a year.

Grounds Maintenance

- We will cut communal grass areas every two weeks between April and September (weather permitting);
- We will trim hedges and shrubs twice per year;
- We will spray areas of weeds twice per year.





Resident involvement

To encourage greater resident participation we will:

- Reserve places on our management boards for residents;
- Send out quarterly newsletters containing information about our work, services and performance;
- Provide an annual budget for the work of Housing Solutions Residents' Association Executive Committee;
- Arrange a quarterly business meeting by Directors for members of Housing Solutions' Residents' Association Executive Committees;
- Run quarterly Service Forums to involve residents in shaping services.