

**This document sets out the services that you can expect from us as your landlord, for:**

- ◆ Your tenancy
- ◆ Your home
- ◆ Your neighbourhood and community
- ◆ Your involvement
- ◆ Value for money
- ◆ Equality and diversity

Customers have helped us to design these commitments, because we recognise that our customers are best placed to tell us what is important and what can be improved.

Our commitments reflect the national standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing. All our commitments are measurable against those standards, meaning we can monitor our performance in service delivery and be accountable to our customers.

## We are a Fair Landlord

**As a not-for-profit organisation, the rent that we receive is invested in homes and services for our customers and communities.**

Being a Fair Landlord means that at the heart of our decision making we make fair choices about the services that we offer. In practical terms, we strive to work more effectively so that we can keep doing the work that is important to you.

## Your tenancy

### Preparing the property, advertising and allocation

We will:

- ◆ Make applying for a home easy and straight forward by enabling you to complete an application online or by requesting an application form.
- ◆ Advertise available properties on our website. If you live in Shropshire, we advertise all available properties on our Shropshire Homepoint website. Property Advert Newsletters are available upon request if you do not have access to the internet.
- ◆ Ensure customers can express their interest on a range of properties by placing an online bid, or contacting our Customer Service Team if you do not have access to the internet.
- ◆ Make sure that all our advertisements contain practical and relevant information relating to the property and the area, so potential customers can make an informed choice.
- ◆ Give customers advice about their housing options.
- ◆ Let our properties through lettings policies, that recognise housing need.
- ◆ Carry out a pre-tenancy interview with you to make sure the home is right for you.

### From the start of your tenancy

We will:

- ◆ Give you clear information about your tenancy.
- ◆ Provide clear information on your rent account to make sure you know how much rent you need to pay and when you must pay it. We will offer you a range of payment methods to suit your circumstances.

- ◆ Provide housing support services within our retirement living schemes
- ◆ Support vulnerable people in their own homes, enabling them to live rewarding, fulfilling and independent lives.

### **During your tenancy**

We will:

- ◆ Provide services that support you to maintain your tenancy such as employment and money advice.
- ◆ Provide and actively promote free access to housing exchange schemes for eligible customers and support you through that process.
- ◆ Work in partnership with other agencies to actively prevent homelessness, under occupation and overcrowding.

## **Your neighbourhood and community**

We understand that the quality of your local area is as important as the quality of your home. We will work with residents and the local community to promote and maintain a pleasant neighbourhood which you can enjoy.

### **Managing your neighbourhood**

We will keep your communal areas clean and safe by providing a cleaning and grounds maintenance service that we monitor and review regularly.

- ◆ Cleaning of blocks – depending on where you live and whether you pay a service charge, communal areas in your block will be cleaned every 8 weeks.
- ◆ Gardening services:
  - Grass is cut every 10 working days between March and October. This is a cut and drop service, except for the first cut in March and the last cut in October when we carry out a cut and collect service.
  - Paths are swept after each cut.
  - Hedges are trimmed either side of the bird nesting season. The winter cut is in February and the summer cut is in August.
  - Hardstanding is kept weed and litter free.
  - Weed control takes place on alternate months and residual weed spray is applied twice yearly.
- ◆ Clearance of graffiti, needles or high risk fly tipping will be completed within 1 working day.

### **Working with partners for the benefit of your area**

We will:

- ◆ Work closely with relevant partners (for example the police and local authorities) to promote social, environmental, and economic wellbeing in your local area.
- ◆ Work with those same partners and residents to improve and support local services.

### **Managing anti-social behaviour**

We will:

- ◆ Work in partnership with other public agencies to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour in your neighbourhood.
- ◆ High risk cases involve threats of, or actual violence, criminal damage or hate crime. We will respond to high-risk cases within one working day and develop an action plan with the customer

within two working days of this contact. We will respond to low-risk reports of anti-social behaviour within three working days.

- ◆ Contact all customers involved in these cases to agree an action plan and frequency of contact that is appropriate for you and the situation.
- ◆ Publish an anti-social behaviour Policy.

## Your home

We will ensure that the standard of your home meets the Government's Decent Homes Standards and our Lettable Standard and that it is safe, secure and clean. Repairs will be carried out in line with the urgency and impact on you.

### If something needs repairing in your property

- ◆ We will provide an efficient and good quality repair, by an appropriately skilled tradesperson.
- ◆ Emergency repairs, where there is a risk to life, threat of serious injury or damage to the property, we will attend within four hours to make safe.
- ◆ Routine repairs, that take less than 1 hour to be completed will be carried out within 24 hours, all other routine repairs we will complete within 17 days.
- ◆ Major works, where the work will take more than a day to complete or will cost more than £500, we will complete within 60 days.

We will always aim to get the repair right, first time.

### Gas heating repairs

Where you have no heating or hot water or an uncontrollable water leak, we will attend within six hours and seek to complete your repair at this point. All gas escapes or reports of fumes should be reported in the first instance to the Gas Emergency Service Provider on 0800 111 999. We will attend within six hours of that visit to complete any repairs that may be required.

Should it not be possible to repair your heating during the initial visit, temporary heaters will be offered, and we will complete:

- ◆ Combi boiler repairs within five days.
- ◆ Gas back boiler units, solid fuel and oil fuel appliances, air source or solar thermal system repairs within ten days.
- ◆ Non-urgent repairs, such as a room thermostat or radiator valve within 15 days.

### Meeting all statutory requirements relating to health and safety of your home

We will:

- ◆ Ensure that there is an appropriate programme of testing and remedial works in place.
- ◆ Carry out a programme of preventative works relating to fire and other risks where appropriate.
- ◆ Contact you directly to arrange annual safety inspections and servicing of our appliances in accordance with our legal duties such as your annual gas safety inspection or 5 yearly electrical inspection.
- ◆ Ensure that our customers are able to continue to live independently wherever possible in their own homes through the provision of a coordinated, multi-agency adaptations service, where required and where eligible.

## Involving and empowering our customers

A customer-focused approach is at the heart of everything we do. We pride ourselves on listening to the views of our customers and treating you in a polite, professional and informative manner.

We offer customers a choice of how you can communicate with us.

We will:

- ◆ Aim to make contacting us as easy as possible, by providing a range of methods to contact us:
  - Visiting us in person – we have ample free car parking and accessible buildings, open between Monday and Friday. Our friendly customer services team will book you an appointment to attend our office for a meeting with the relevant team who will assist you with your enquiry.
  - Website and email – our websites are easy to use and offer an email option if you cannot find the information you need. The website is available 24/7 and you can contact us by email. We aim to acknowledge all email enquiries within 2 working days. If we need to forward your enquiry to a specialist team, a full response will be received within 5 working days. (Unless otherwise agreed with the customer.) We provide online electronic forms on our website for ease of use which we aim to acknowledge within 2 working days. A full response will be received in line with the process guidelines.
  - Telephone – we will answer the phone promptly in our customer services centre. Outside of opening hours we have a dedicated out of hours provider, to handle emergency repairs.
  - 75% of all telephone calls will be answered within 30 seconds.
  - 75% of enquiries will be resolved at the first point of contact.
  - You will receive a call back within 2 working days if your query needs passing to another team unless stated otherwise within this document
  - Social media – We provide a Facebook account with personal messaging options. We aim to respond within 4 working hours to all customer enquiries.
  - Letter – we will acknowledge all written correspondence within 2 working days. If we need to forward your enquiry to a specialist team, a full response will be received within 5 working days, unless otherwise agreed with the customer.
- ◆ Work in partnership with customers to monitor how effective these choices are and listen to your suggestions for further improvements.
- ◆ Aim for 90% satisfaction with customer services.

### **Our approach to complaints is clear, simple and accessible**

We will:

- ◆ Actively publicise our approach to complaints and feedback.
- ◆ Aim to resolve complaints quickly, acknowledging complaints within two working days and responding in writing within 10 working days.
- ◆ Ensure we learn from complaints and publish lessons learnt.
- ◆ Welcome compliments on our service, pass them to the staff involved and use them to improve our service.

### **We provide you with accessible, relevant and timely information**

We will:

- ◆ Tell you how you can access our services and what choices you have.
- ◆ Show you how we are performing against these commitments.
- ◆ Keep you up to date with progress of your requests, for example on your repair.
- ◆ Tell you how you can communicate with us.

- ◆ Be clear on our responsibilities as a landlord and your responsibilities as a customer.

### **We support and encourage you to be effectively involved with your community and to help us improve our services**

We will:

- ◆ Work in partnership with involved customers providing the opportunity to scrutinise decisions that directly affect customer homes.
- ◆ Provide training courses and seminars to increase the skills of engaged customers.
- ◆ Offer you a wide range of opportunities to be actively involved in influencing the way your home is managed by:
  - Publicising the options that are available.
  - Providing copies online and produce copies on request.
  - Providing different engagement channels that suit different lifestyles.
- ◆ Provide appropriate support throughout your involvement, including arranging transport, meeting out of pocket expenses and other specific requirements you may have.

### **We ensure that customers are involved in the design and delivery of services**

We will:

- ◆ Listen to views of customers and act upon recommendations identified from constructive feedback about the ways we can improve services.
- ◆ Ensure that your feedback is an integral part of the evaluation, design and implementation of services.
- ◆ Regularly review policies that affect customers and include customer feedback where applicable, as part of the process.

## **Value for money**

We will consult, listen and respond to you and ensure the delivery of our services represents good value for money.

We will:

- ◆ Listen to your feedback on services and use it to improve.
- ◆ Complete service reviews to make sure that the services continue to be efficient.
- ◆ Review the cost of service delivery to make sure you are getting good value for money.

## **Equality and diversity**

We are committed to valuing diversity and providing equal access to services for everyone. We do everything we can to be at the forefront of good practice in equality and diversity issues.

We will:

- ◆ Treat you with fairness and respect.
- ◆ Understand the different needs of our customers.
- ◆ Comply with all requirements under the Equalities Act 2010.
- ◆ For customer services:
  - Provide a hearing loop system in reception.
  - Offer correspondence in larger print when it's needed.

- Provide information in other languages, on request.
- Provide access to information in large print, speech mode, other languages and simplified format through the 'Browsealoud' facility on our websites.

## Reporting our performance

We will tell you how well we have performed against these service commitments once a year, in our customer annual report.

## Reviewing our commitments to customers

As our services are reviewed, we will involve customers in that process. You can help us to shape our commitments, by:

- ◆ Feeding back to us when you have an improvement suggestion.
- ◆ Getting involved through My Voice. For more information about the opportunities available contact the customer voice team on **MyVoice@housingplusgroup.co.uk**.

v2 Nov21