


 Tenant Involvement & Empowerment

Home

Tenancy

Neighbourhood & Community

Value for Money

Customer Care Service Standard

We will treat all tenants and leaseholders politely, fairly and professionally because we value and respect you. Our customer care standard sets out what you can expect when we have contact with you.

When you telephone us we will:

- Be helpful and courteous and aim to resolve your query at first contact.
- Answer your call within 25 seconds with a greeting including the name of the Team you have called and the name of the person answering your call, if appropriate.
- Tell you either the name and contact details of the person you are being re-directed to or the name and contact details of the team you are being re-directed to, if your query can't be handled by the person who answered the call.
- Offer to take a message if the appropriate person is not available and pass the message on to that person.
- Only use voicemail as a last resort.
- Answer all messages within 1 working day. If the member of staff you want to speak to is not available, we will let you know.
- Provide you with the opportunity to speak to us in the language of your choice, by using our translation facility.
- Make available a Minicom system to assist your call should you have a hearing impairment.

When you contact us by letter or e-mail we will:

- Reply to you fully within 10 working days. If we cannot respond fully in that time we will tell you who is dealing with your enquiry and when you can expect a full response.
- Reply to you in a way that is easy to understand, in your preferred language and format.
- Keep a record of how you would like us to respond to you, either in person, by telephone or in writing.

When you contact us by text we will:

- Fully respond to your enquiry within 10 working days.

When we visit you in your home we will:

- Make and keep an appointment with you, giving you the name, job title and contact details of the person who will visit you.
- Let you know if the person who is due to visit you can't make the appointment and offer you another date.

- Carry proof of identity and be respectful to you and to your home.
- Leave a calling card should you not be at home, giving details of why we visited you and who you should contact to re-arrange the appointment.

When you visit one of our offices we will:

- Ensure that the reception area is welcoming and that you have a comfortable environment to wait in, with seating and appropriate facilities.
- If you have an appointment, we aim not to keep you any longer than a maximum of five minutes before being seen.
- If you arrive without an appointment and you can't be seen immediately we will advise you of this and offer you an appointment at a later date with a named Officer.
- Try and resolve complaints there and then.
- Make sure the office is accessible.
- Offer you the opportunity to discuss your issue in a private interview room.
- Provide induction loops, arrange sign language facilities, interpreters or translation facilities if you require them. These may not be immediately available, so we may have to make an appointment for you at a later date.
- Ensure that your issue is dealt with fairly and efficiently by a trained member of staff.

If you wish to compliment, comment or complain about us we will:

- Let you know how to do this and value your contact.
- Reply to you fully within 10 working days. If we cannot respond fully in that time we will tell you who is dealing with your enquiry and when you can expect a full response.
- Ensure that compliments are shared with the relevant Officers and teams.

If we have not delivered a service to the agreed standard we will:

- Put the matter right within the timescale laid down in the relevant Service Standard.
- Investigate your complaint promptly.
- Send you a written apology where we're at fault.
- Learn from our mistakes and offer to involve you in, or advise you of the changes we intend to make as a result of your complaint.
- Provide you with information about making a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman if you are not happy with how we have handled your complaint.
- Give a summary of all complaints to the Tenant Services Resident Scrutiny Panel for information and comment.

To keep you informed about how well we're doing we will publish the following performance measure each year:

- % of complaints replied to within 10 working days.
- Average resident satisfaction out of 10 for how we handled the complaint.
- Number of complaints received.
- Number of compliments received.
- Details of changes we've introduced as a result of feedback.


 Tenant Involvement & Empowerment

Home

Tenancy

Neighbourhood & Community

Value for Money

Equality and Diversity Service Standard

Recognising and respecting the diverse needs of our tenants and leaseholders we will provide services to meet these needs

To achieve this, we will:

- **Monitor the diversity of tenants and leaseholders by:**
 - Keeping a record of the diverse make up of our tenants and leaseholders to help us to target and tailor our services to meet their needs.
- **Ensure our services are accessible to all tenants and leaseholders by:**
 - Making sure our Officers are accessible to you at a range of locations throughout the District and that our Offices are accessible.
 - Using language that is easily understood in your preferred choice of language in our letters and leaflets and providing written information in Braille, on CD or in large print as required.
- **Ensure our services treat all tenants and leaseholders fairly by:**
 - Making sure that we don't discriminate against anybody **in line with the protected characteristics contained within the equalities act 2010.**
 - Making sure our staff are aware of equality and diversity issues and work towards creating a workforce representative of the local population.
 - Monitoring our services, policies and procedures to see whether we are treating all tenants and leaseholders fairly, and adjust them if we find that they aren't.



Rent and other Income Collection Service Standard

We will provide an effective rent and service charge collection that maximises income. We will support tenants and leaseholders who have difficulty paying their rent and service charges

To achieve this, we will:

- **Provide you with information about your rent and service charges, by:**
 - Explaining how much rent and other service charges you have to pay. If you claim benefits, we will tell you how much rent you are likely to have to pay each week.
 - Writing all our rents and arrears letters in plain language (English or other languages). These letters will be approved by the Communications and Equalities Service Development Group before they are used.
 - Giving you four weeks' notice in writing of any change to your rent (other than Housing Benefit changes).
 - Giving you secure on-line access to your rent account.
 - Responding quickly to your notification of any change in circumstances you have (such as a bereavement) and advise you how this affects the amount of rent you will have to pay.
- **Provide you with ways of paying your rent and service charges which are convenient to you, by:**
 - Offering you the opportunity to pay your rent in one of the following ways:
 - Direct Debit
 - Standing Order
 - Post Office
 - by debit or credit card
 - via our website
 - by telephone
 - Offering advice to tenants to pay rent in ways that reduce our processing costs (for example by Direct Debit or via our website).
 - Where we have collected too much rent or service charge income from you, repaying you within 10 working days by your preferred method.

- **Taking a firm but fair approach to recovering rent and service charge arrears and other debts which are outstanding, by:**
 - Intervening at an early stage to prevent rent or service charge arrears from building up.
 - Helping you to claim housing benefit and council tax benefit and provide you with information about other benefits you may be entitled to.
 - Directing you to specialist agencies who provide benefits advice.
 - Directing you to money advice services that are provided by other agencies.
 - Striving to collect as much money owed to us as we possibly can and telling you how we performed.

To keep you informed about how well we're doing we will publish the following performance measures each year:

- % of rental income collected.
- Number of tenants who were evicted for Rent Arrears.
- Number of tenants supported with additional Welfare benefits advice and financial inclusion support.



Anti-Social Behaviour Service Standard

We take an uncompromising stance towards anti-social behaviour. By this we mean behaviour which might disturb or intimidate you or spoil your quality of life. It is anything which interferes with the peaceful enjoyment of your home and surrounding area. We will encourage people to report incidents they experience or witness, so working together with other agencies we can tackle problems experienced by individuals, families and communities.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Support you when you report an incident to us by:**
 - Taking your complaint seriously and thoroughly investigating it.
 - Treating all information you give us in confidence and in accordance with legal requirements.
 - Providing you with written confirmation of your report and give you a unique case reference number.
 - Giving you the name and contact details of the member of staff who will deal with your case.
- **Support you when we investigate your complaint, by:**
 - Responding within 24 hours of your complaint if it involves actual or threats of violence.
 - Interviewing you within 5 working days of your complaint, if your complaint doesn't involve violence or the threat of violence.
 - Putting your and your family's safety first. We will offer to meet you in an accessible, private and safe environment.
 - Giving you advice and guidance so you can make your own decisions.
 - Working with you to agree an action plan and monitor this on at least a monthly basis or more frequently in more serious cases.
 - Providing you with appropriate support, working with our partners and other agencies, including the Police.
 - Considering the full range of criminal and civil legal actions that may be taken against the individual(s) or group causing the problem.
 - Arranging for the installation of noise monitoring equipment in the case of complaints of noise nuisance.

- Providing observation sheets with guidance on recording the details of incidents. We will regularly review this information and agree on what action can be taken.
 - Arranging for any abusive obscene or threatening graffiti to be removed within 1 working day.
 - Offering you security improvements if your personal safety is at serious risk
 - Rehousing you if it is not possible for you to remain or return to your home
 - Identifying with you any other support needs you may have and discuss how these might be addressed.
 - Offering to transport and escort you to and from any court hearings if you are required to attend to give evidence.
 - Providing you with support while you are at Court by making sure you feel comfortable and protected, if you are either a victim or a witness.
 - Referring you to Victim Support, should you require it.
- **Treat you fairly if a complaint is made against you by:**
 - Speaking with you within 10 working days of the complaint being made*.
 - Informing you of the allegations being made against you and listening to your response*.
 - Giving you the opportunity, if appropriate, to rectify your behaviour and get support*.
 - Letting you know how we believe you have breached your tenancy or leasehold agreement.
 - Discussing with you options such as an Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, mediation or other options, before taking formal legal action*.
 - Providing you with written notice of any legal action we intend to take against you and the reasons for that action*.

****Except where there is violence or the threat of violence involved, when we will consider taking immediate legal action without notice. In this event you will have the opportunity to state your case in court.***

To keep you informed about how well we're doing we will publish the following performance measure each year:

- % of all higher level cases of anti-social behaviour resolved.
- Average satisfaction out of 10 with the way ASB complaints were dealt with.
- % of tenants who made a complaint about anti-social behaviour who are satisfied with our response to addressing the problem.



Estate Management Service Standard

We will deliver an estate management service to help our tenants and leaseholders live in homes and places they are proud of

To achieve this, we will:

- **Undertake a schedule of estate inspections, which will:**
 - Include all of the areas where we own homes at least once every three months (monthly on larger estates) to make sure standards agreed with tenants, residents and other partners are being met.
 - Include garage sites with estate inspections.
 - Give all tenants and residents advance notice of inspections by publishing their dates in advance and inviting local people to attend.
 - Provide feedback on the issues raised and actions taken following estate inspections.
 - Inspect communal areas within blocks of flats at least once a month to ensure that they are safe and clean.
- **Consult you about environmental improvements or regeneration projects on your estate:**
 - Survey garage users about their use of the site they lease from time to time.
 - Where the garages no longer serve a useful purpose, consult with the local community on a more beneficial use for the site.
- **Carry out work on our estates to ensure that they are safe and in a good condition, this includes:**
 - Removing any dangerous or substantial accumulations of litter on our land within 6 hours of identifying the problem or receiving a complaint. We will remove all other litter within 5 working days of identifying the problem or receiving a complaint.
 - Working with other Council Departments, Gloucestershire County Council and other partners to:
 - Investigate and resolve issues relating to abandoned vehicles within 28 days which may, in some cases, result in removal.
 - Maintain communal grassed areas, footpaths, roads, street lighting, sewers and drains.
 - Completing repairs to the communal areas of flats within 10 working days. Where the repair is an emergency repair we will complete this within 1 day

- Keeping the communal areas of blocks of flats clean and tidy.
 - Removing any obscene or offensive graffiti within 1 working day and all other graffiti within 5 working days.
 - Carrying out repairs to communal aerials and CCTV cameras within 2 working days.
 - Making sure gardens in empty council owned properties are kept tidy.
 - Quickly deal with any pest infestations within communal areas.
 - Trimming or removing trees that are hazardous within 28 days of being notified, unless the trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order in which case an application to the Council's planning department must be made prior to works commencing.
 - Carrying out appropriate repairs to garages and their sites.
- **Ensure that tenants and residents do their bit to maintain the quality of the environment by:**
 - Investigating any breaches of Tenancy Agreements, making sure that tenants:
 - Maintain their gardens and hedges, keeping them tidy and free from rubbish.
 - Dispose of household, garden and recycling waste properly.
 - Park vehicles in proper parking spaces or on driveways with a dropped kerb crossing.
 - Do not allow dogs to roam the neighbourhood or foul in public places.
 - Making sure that the occupiers of former council homes maintain their gardens, where covenants allow.
 - Making sure that tenants and leaseholders keep communal areas in blocks free from rubbish.

To keep you informed about how well we're doing we will publish the following performance measure each year:

- % of priority 1 and 2 inspections carried out with a tenant or representative.
- 10/10 satisfaction of new tenants with the service received.
- We will survey our residents once a year to find out the % of residents who are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live.



Repairs and Maintenance Service Standard

We will ensure that all our homes are of a good standard. We will provide a responsive repairs service that achieves high standards of quality, safety and tenant satisfaction and a planned maintenance service that helps ensure that our homes remain in good condition

To achieve this, we will:

- **Provide a responsive repair service that:**
 - Allows you to report emergency repairs to us 24 hours a day, every day.
 - Attends and makes safe all emergency repairs within 24 hours of them being reported. We will complete any follow up work within 3 working days.
 - Completes urgent repairs within 5 working days from the date you report them. We will offer you an appointment, confirm the appointment and the work to be carried out by letter, sent to you within 1 working day of the receipt of your request. To remind you of your appointment we will send you a text or phone you the day before.
 - Completes routine repairs within 20 working days from the date you report them. We will offer you an appointment, confirm the appointment and the work to be carried out by letter, sent to you within 1 working day of the receipt of your request. To remind you of your appointment we will send you a text or phone you the day before.
 - Lets you know, by phoning you, if our contractor is unable to make the appointment we've arranged with you.
 - Gives you a clear written description of the work our contractor will undertake
 - Completes all repairs during the first visit. Where this is not possible the contractor will arrange another appointment to complete any follow up work.
 - Leaves your home in a clean and tidy condition after carrying out repairs.
 - Completes all repairs to communal areas within 10 working days.
 - Returns within 2 working days if you're not completely satisfied with the quality of your repair.
 - Recharges repairs to tenants when they are the tenants' responsibility.
 - Ensures an insurance assessor is appointed, if accidental damage over £500 is caused to your property while repairs are being carried out. If the damage is less than £500 we will liaise with the contractor to ensure that you are compensated.
 - Consults with all affected leaseholders before we start repairs to communal areas, unless the work is minor or an emergency repair.
 - Gives you a copy of a repairs handbook which explains our repair priorities and target timescales.

- **Provide a planned maintenance service that:**
 - Services your gas or oil heating appliance each year.
 - Tests the mains electrical supply to your home and the electric system within your home every 10 years.
 - Publishes details of our planned maintenance and improvement programme each year.
 - Advises you in writing 6 weeks before work is scheduled to be undertaken to your home.
 - Provides you with a choice of fittings and finishes when we replace kitchens and front and back external doors.

- **Our contractors will:**
 - Wear a recognisable uniform, carry an identity card which they will show you.
 - Treat your home and possessions with respect.
 - Treat you in a courteous and respectful manner.
 - Let you know when they have completed the work and are leaving your home.
 - Leave a calling card if you're not in when they call, giving you our contact details.

- **Ask you what you think of our services at least once a year and use what you tell us to help improve those services.**

To keep you informed about how well we're doing we will publish the following performance measures each year:

- % of tenants satisfied with our responsive repairs service.
- % of tenants satisfied with our planned maintenance service.
- % of responsive repairs completed within timescale.
- % of repairs completed at the first visit.
- % of gas central heating appliances serviced during the year.