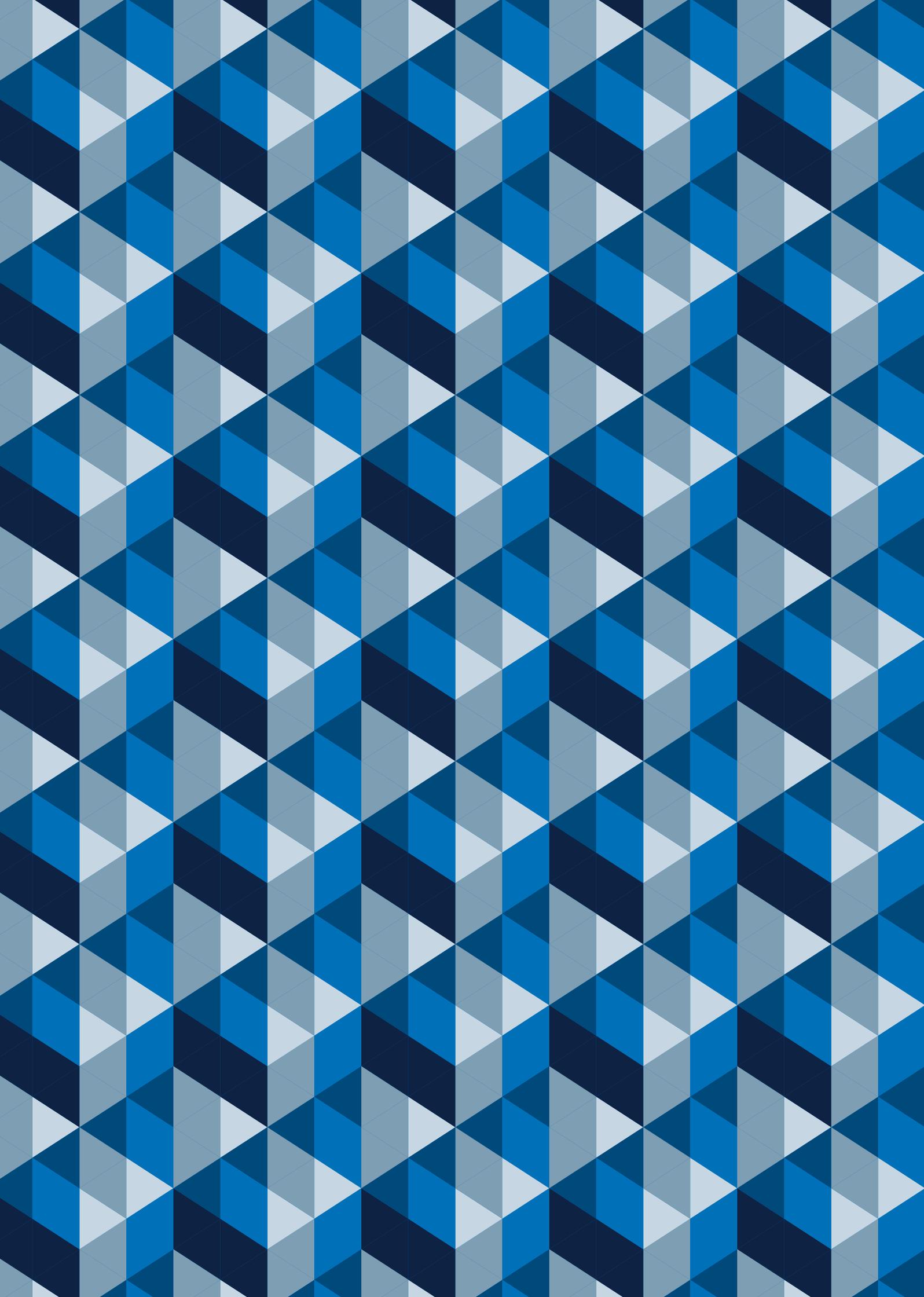


A guide to your home



Because good homes
make everything possible





Contents

4	Welcome to your new home
5	About us
6	Your rights and responsibilities
8	Moving in
10	Health and safety
14	Rent and service charges
16	Repairs and maintenance
20	Our customer service standards
24	Getting involved
26	Good Neighbour Charter
28	Moving out
30	Our areas of operation
32	Personal data
33	Useful contacts
34	Contact us

Welcome to your new home

At Network Homes, we believe good homes make everything possible, so we aim to provide you with good quality homes and a first class customer service.

This handbook contains all the information you need relating to your tenancy, including your rights and responsibilities, what to do when you move in and out, safety information and how to contact us.

Please keep this handbook somewhere safe and accessible as it is a useful tool that you may need to refer to in the future. If you have any other queries that are not answered here, please check our main contact details at the back to see all the ways you can contact us.

Best wishes,



Helen Evans
Chief Executive



About us

We believe that good homes make everything possible.

We own and manage 20,000 homes in 36 local authority areas across London, Hertfordshire and the South East.

We provide a variety of housing options including rented properties, flexicare housing, extra care housing, shared ownership and leasehold properties. We offer homes to rent to meet the needs of all our customers, whether you are looking for short stay accommodation, intermediate rent or supported and sheltered housing. We are also a leading provider of temporary housing and contract housing management services.

SW9 Community Housing is the housing management organisation for the Stockwell Park Estate and surrounding street properties which manages the day-to-day housing services for around 1,500 homes on behalf of Network Homes.

Our First Class Customer Service ethos is based around five key themes:

The right culture

This links directly to our company values – everyone who works at Network Homes must be hungry to achieve our ambition, take responsibility and be accountable for their actions and performance, treat customers and colleagues with respect and courtesy, and work together towards our common goals.

An accessible service

Today, customers expect to be able to access our services in ways that are convenient to them and at a time of their choosing. Our offices must be welcoming, we need to

continue to evolve the service from our Customer Service Centre, and we need to develop our online customer offer to produce a genuinely 24/7 service.

A more personal service

This is about understanding who our customers are and having the flexibility to meet a range of different service needs. We live in a world where people expect more personalised services and in an era where our customer base is becoming more diverse financially and culturally. Our service must be able to respond effectively.

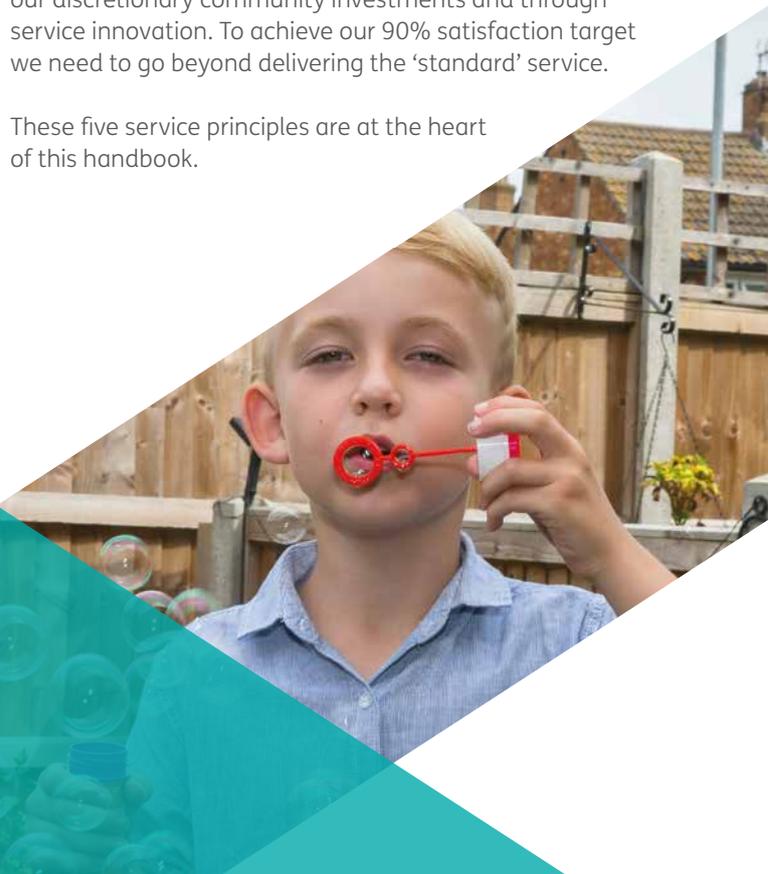
A high quality service

Customers have a right to expect us to resolve their issues quickly and efficiently, in line with our published standards. Our basic repairs and housing management services should be ‘right first time’, supported by properly integrated IT systems, and a value for money culture which delivers great service while keeping costs down.

An added value service

Added value is what turns a good service into a brilliant service. This is about attitude and a willingness to go the extra mile in meeting customer needs. But it is also about the benefit we can add through, for example, our discretionary community investments and through service innovation. To achieve our 90% satisfaction target we need to go beyond delivering the ‘standard’ service.

These five service principles are at the heart of this handbook.



Your rights and responsibilities

Your tenancy agreement is the legal contract between you (the resident) and us (the landlord) and sets out your rights and responsibilities.

You have a number of rights as a resident in your home:

- > rights over when we can end your tenancy
- > rights to information
- > buying your home
- > succession and assignment of a tenancy
- > lodgers and subletting
- > rights should you face losing your home
- > home loss and disturbance payments
- > right to repair.

Please contact us to find out more about your rights and responsibilities or refer to your tenancy agreement.

Anti-social behaviour

We want to ensure our homes and communities are safe and pleasant places for our residents to live. This is why we won't accept any type of anti-social behaviour (ASB) by our residents, members of their household, their visitors or pets.

Anti-social behaviour includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- > harassment – such as hate crimes including homophobic and racial harassment
- > domestic violence – such as abuse of a partner, child or elderly parent
- > noise nuisance – such as loud music, DIY activity, running up and down stairs, particularly late at night and in the communal areas
- > youth nuisance – such as groups of youths causing rowdy/threatening behaviour
- > animal-related problems – such as dogs barking and animals fouling communal areas

- > neighbour disputes – such as arguments about shared amenities and parking
- > environmental abuse – such as dumping rubbish in corridors and fly tipping
- > drugs – such as the use of and supply of illegal drugs
- > vehicle-related nuisance – such as abandoned cars and car repairs.

We take reports of ASB very seriously and will take the necessary steps to protect our residents. We will always try to help and explain what action can be taken including working with other partners such as local authorities, environmental health, community groups and the police to resolve ASB cases.

What should I do if I experience ASB?

Try addressing the issue with the person, if you are comfortable doing so, to see if you can resolve the situation. The other party may not be aware they are causing a problem. Alternatively, report the incident or contact us for confidential advice.

If you are threatened with violence or witness someone doing something illegal, please contact the police immediately.

How do I report ASB?

- > In person at our offices (addresses on the back page)
- > By telephone **0300 373 3000**
- > Visit our website **www.networkhomes.org.uk**
- > Email **customerservices@networkhomes.org.uk**
- > Write to us at: Network Homes, Olympic Office Centre, 8 Fulton Road, Wembley, HA9 0NU

Depending on the severity of the situation, your neighbourhood officer may want to meet with you to discuss the situation further.



Moving in

We aim to provide you with useful, accurate and easy-to-understand information that makes moving into your new home a pleasant experience.

Tell people you've moved

A number of people and/or organisations will need to know if you've moved. The following checklist has examples of some of the things you may need to organise:

- > Electricity/gas supplier
- > The water authority
- > Council services (including any benefits you receive and council tax)
- > Any other benefits or support charges
- > Pension/pension credits
- > Next of kin (if you do not live with them)
- > Doctor
- > Dentist
- > Hospital services
- > Support or care agencies and services
- > Telephone/internet/media supplier
- > TV licensing
- > Your employer
- > Banks/building societies
- > Insurance companies
- > Solicitor
- > Mail order catalogue/companies.

New residents

If you are a new resident, you will receive a welcome pack which explains a bit more about how to get started in your new home.

Car parking

When you move in, we will let you know the parking arrangements for your new home. Many of our homes do not have allocated parking for residents.

Council tax reductions, council tax support and housing benefit

If you are receiving any council tax reductions or housing benefit, please tell your local council's Housing Benefits office that you have moved or are moving, as soon as possible.

If you receive benefits such as Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), you are likely to qualify for help with paying your rent or council tax. If you are employed on a low income, you may also qualify for help with paying your rent or council tax.

Our income team can help you complete any housing benefit application forms – this is usually done when you sign up for a new tenancy with us.

Electrical supply

As soon as you know your moving date, you need to contact your electricity provider to arrange to connect your supply. They will need notice before connecting a supply. You are responsible for all charges.

If any electrical appliance stops working or a light goes out, it may be because a fuse has blown. Replacing blown fuses is your responsibility, unless the electrical system is causing the problem and then it is our responsibility.

Your home may have circuit breakers rather than fuses. Circuit breakers are switches that turn off the electrical supply automatically when the circuit is overloaded. Check your circuit breakers to find the problem, disconnect the appliance that is causing the problem then reset the breaker switch to ON.

Make sure you know how to turn off your electricity supply at the mains. You should always switch off the power of any electrical item at the socket it's plugged into when you are replacing a fuse or repairing fittings. Do not tamper with the electrical item if you are not sure about how safe it is.

At the end of your tenancy you must tell your electricity provider when you are leaving and give them enough notice so that they can arrange to read your meter. This will mean that you only pay for the electricity you have used.

Gas supply

As soon as you know your moving date, contact your local gas provider to disconnect your supply and give them notice to connect your new supply. You are responsible for all charges.

Make sure you know where the main lever is for turning off the gas supply in case there is an emergency. It is usually next to the gas meter. Also ensure that everyone in your household knows where this is.

Find out more about gas safety and how to look after gas appliances on page 10.

Water supply

As soon as you know your moving date, contact the water authority to disconnect your old supply and give them notice to connect your new supply. You are responsible for all charges (unless you live in one of our shared or sheltered schemes where some have utility bills included in the service charge).

Make sure you know where the stopcock is for turning off the main water supply and where the valves for isolating water taps are.

If your supply stops for any reason, turn off all the taps and take the plugs out of the sinks and bath. This will prevent any flooding when the water comes back on.

Telephone company

As soon as you know your moving date, let your phone company know that you are moving and give details of your new address. You may have to change your telephone number. You are responsible for all charges.

Extending your stay or moving to more tailored accommodation

Existing residents

Depending on the type of tenancy agreement you have, you might be eligible to apply for a tenancy agreement extension or change to a different tenancy agreement. Please call us on **0300 373 3000** to discuss your options in more detail or visit our website for more information.

Housing for older people

We provide around 1,500 homes for older people at Network Homes. We have a variety of homes across North London and Hertfordshire, from sheltered housing to state of the art extra care schemes with on site care providers to enable people with care needs to live independently in the community. All our schemes provide self contained accommodation, with the added benefit of communal lounges, kitchens, laundries and gardens.

We have staff on site to help with settling in, managing tenancies and organising activities and events to enable our residents to be as active and busy as they choose. Our ethos is to help people live fulfilling, active lives with choice and control. Our staff carry out wellbeing calls with residents and ensure the buildings are safe and welcoming, including leading on health and safety inspections, and checking all our fire and community alarms are effective.

If you or a relative is interested in considering this kind of housing you are welcome to visit and take a look around. You can apply via the council or in the London Region via various voluntary agencies we work with. Residents in general needs housing are always welcome to join in with our activities and trips organised by staff, including the London Region's dedicated Activities Coordinator.

Health and safety

Your health, safety and wellbeing are important to us and we take our responsibilities to protect you and your family very seriously.

As a resident you must also take all reasonable precautions to prevent risks to yourself and to others.

In this section of the handbook, we cover most of the hazards you are likely to come across and explain precautions you should take.

We strongly recommend that you take out home contents insurance so that your personal possessions are always protected.

Network Homes can help you obtain home contents insurance easily and at a price that is affordable.

My Home Contents Insurance scheme

My Home is a special insurance scheme arranged and managed by Thistle Insurance Services Limited on behalf of the National Housing Federation and is available to all residents.

They provide insurance for all our residents and leaseholders with affordable rates, no excesses, easy and flexible payment options and the choice of including extended accidental damage cover.

Why should I have home contents insurance?

While we insure the building you live in, it is your responsibility to insure your personal possessions.

Many people often hope that nothing will happen to their belongings, sometimes things can go wrong unexpectedly. In these cases, it is important that you have home contents insurance to cover any damage or loss caused by fire, theft, water damage, vandalism or floods to your household goods and contents.

Contents insurance can also cover the replacement of external locks if your keys are lost or stolen, and even the contents of your freezer. For more information:

- > Visit My Home Contents Insurance website – www.thistlemyhome.co.uk
- > Phone: **0345 450 7288**
- > Email: myhome@thistleinsurance.co.uk

Health and safety checks

Our Neighbourhood Management and Asset Management teams regularly check the communal areas of our properties for general health and safety hazards. We also carry out regular Health and Safety Risk Assessment visits. It is important you let us know of any incident, hazardous equipment, substance or structure that you notice, so that we can investigate the matter and ensure the health and safety of everyone in the building.

Any electrical appliances that have been supplied to your property by Network Homes meet with the appropriate Building Regulations and British Standards. Please do not use the gas boiler cupboard, electric panel areas, or water valves cupboard for storage. For your safety, please do not alter or interfere with the boiler, gas, electricity, water or other service applied to your property.

Gas safety

As a landlord we have a legal obligation to ensure our gas appliances and flues are maintained and serviced. We undertake safety inspections to our gas appliances every year to keep them in good working order and safe for your use to protect you, your family and your neighbours. Unsafe systems are dangerous (fire, explosion or carbon monoxide poisoning) and can have potentially fatal consequences. We (or our contractor) will send you a notification in advance of any appointment, advising you of the date we will come to carry out your gas service. If you won't be at home that day and aren't able to arrange for someone else to be there please call us as soon as possible.

All our contractors are Gas Safe registered engineers. If you cannot keep your appointment, please call us as soon as possible to rearrange.

Remember, by law you must allow us access to your home so we can carry out gas safety checks. If we are unable to carry out a safety check, we may have to take legal action which could result in us forcing entry to your home!

Gas safe register

On 1 April 2009, the Gas Safe Register replaced CORGI as the official gas safety body. Always check the identification of every gas engineer that comes to do any work at your property.

The main details to check are: the licence number, the start date, expiry date and the security hologram. Our engineers will carry an identification card with these details on them.

If you are in any doubt, please call us on **0300 373 3000**.

Gas leaks

Cadent Gas Ltd operates Britain's national gas emergency service 24 hours a day. Their emergency telephone number is **0800 111 999**.

National Grid will inform Network Homes if a problem is serious. If you smell gas in the street, report it at once to National Grid. Don't leave it to someone else to report it.

If you smell gas in your home:

- > Put out any cigarettes
- > Contact National Grid immediately on **0800 111 999**
- > Make sure all gas appliances and the burners on your stove are completely turned off
- > Open all doors and windows
- > Do not use matches or naked flames
- > Turn the supply gas off at the meter
- > Do not operate any electrical switches or appliances including door entry systems
- > Keep people away from the affected area.

Carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a highly poisonous gaseous substance produced by the incomplete burning of gas that can be fatal. This can happen when a gas appliance has been incorrectly installed, repaired or maintained, or from general wear and tear. It can also occur if flue pipes, chimneys or vents are blocked. Oil and solid fuels such as coal, wood, and petrol can also produce carbon monoxide.

As a safeguard, we will ensure there is a working carbon monoxide alarm in any home with a gas appliance installed.

Just like a smoke alarm which alerts you to the presence of smoke, a carbon monoxide alarm will alert you to the presence of CO. It is very important that the alarm is not moved, covered, damaged or painted over. Otherwise you

may not be protected. If you have a gas appliance and do not have a CO alarm please contact us on **0300 373 3000** immediately to arrange for one to be fitted.

Fire safety

Most fires in the home start accidentally and the effects can be devastating. It is important that your home, family members and property are kept safe from fire risks and hazards. Some simple precautions can make you a lot safer.

Dos

- > Take care while you're cooking, especially when you're using hot oil
- > Keep matches, lighters and candles away from children
- > Put candles in or on a safe holder and make sure that they won't fall over.

Don'ts

- > Never leave children alone in the kitchen when the hob or oven is on
- > Don't leave a lit cigarette or pipe unattended and always use deep ashtrays so they won't roll out
- > Don't place lit candles near fabrics or paper (including curtains), and always make sure they're blown out properly before leaving the room.

Closed doors will slow down the spread of smoke and fire, help to protect you from breathing in smoke and give you more time to escape. This is especially important if you live in a block of flats.

Fire escape plan

It's really important that you know what to do if there's a fire in your home or building. Make an escape plan and practice it regularly. If you live in a flat or maisonette, your building will have a fire strategy.

If your building has a communal area, a Fire Action Notice will be clearly displayed and will tell you what to do if there's a fire.

For more information about fire safety, or help making your escape plan, please contact us.

In the event of a fire

Make sure you know what to do in an emergency. If you can do so safely, get out of the building immediately (using an emergency escape if there is one) and dial 999. Never use a lift if there is a fire. Always use the stairs.

In blocks of flats or sheltered accommodation it may be safer to stay inside your home and await instructions from the fire service. If you live in a flat there will be fire action notices on display in the communal areas that will provide instructions of the building's fire strategy. You should make sure that everyone in your property is aware of this information.

Remember: If there is a fire in your home, call 999 immediately and don't try to tackle the fire yourself.

Escape routes

Exit routes should be kept clear at all times. If there is a fire or any other emergency, you will need to get out quickly and safely.

Please note: Network Homes does not allow any items to be kept in the communal areas of buildings. We will remove any items we find in these areas immediately.

If you see anyone dumping rubbish in communal areas, please tell us immediately. You don't need to give your name.

Smoke alarms

Make sure there is a working smoke alarm fitted in your home. A smoke alarm will give you those precious few minutes of warning which could help you and your family to get out safely.

We will ensure there is a working smoke detector within all of our properties. It is important to check any smoke alarm in your home on a weekly basis to ensure it is working.

Fire risk assessments

We carry out regular inspections to all communal areas. We need to do this by law, so please help us to keep you safe.

Fire Assessors and Inspectors will always have identification with them and a letter of authorisation if they are working with a third party. You can ask to see this at any time during their visit.

If you have any doubt, please contact us immediately and give us as much information as possible about the person/s visiting you. When you have seen their identification, please let them in.

Electrical safety

Here are some steps you can take to prevent an electrical fire in your home.

Dos

- > Make sure cables from electrical appliances (including extension cables) don't run underneath carpets or rugs
- > If you need to use an extension lead, keep it uncoiled to prevent it from overheating
- > Only use bulbs that have the recommended wattage for your light fittings
- > Keep mains powered appliances away from water and don't use them in bathrooms
- > Switch off your electrical appliances when you're not using them.

Don'ts

- > Don't overload your wall sockets. If you need to use an adaptor use a multi-socket extension lead

You should stop using any appliance that displays any of the following signs immediately:

- > Loose, exposed or fraying cables or wires
- > Scorched or cracked plugs and wall sockets
- > Fuses that blow frequently
- > A burning smell when appliances are switched on.



Lifts

We have installed a lift monitoring system to our lifts and this provides us with the following:

- > The ability to see the status of all of our lifts so we can see when a lift is out of service and when it is returned to service
- > An instant notification when a lift goes into fault mode, so we can contact our lift contractor so that they can attend as soon as possible
- > The location of the lifts that require the most repairs enabling us to address the issue
- > The ability to monitor the service and maintenance of lifts.

Other communal systems

DigiGroup security specialist, carries out annual inspections on automated doors, gates, barriers etc. They also carry out repairs on:

- > Intercom Systems – both the communal panel and in individual homes
- > Door access
- > CCTV
- > Automated gates, doors & barriers
- > Repairs to communal satellite and communal TV aerials.

Rent and service charges

Your rent

Rent levels

When establishing rent levels we refer to Government guidelines.

Changes to your rent

We will:

- > give you at least one month's notice, in writing, of any increase in your rent
- > review the rent each year.

Rent arrears

Your weekly rent is due on a Monday in advance. If you fall into arrears we will:

- > notify you promptly when you fall into arrears
- > deal firmly and fairly with residents in rent arrears
- > provide support where appropriate.

Your service charges

The level of service charge varies significantly from scheme to scheme in line with the type of accommodation and extent of services provided. Therefore each development will have a specific service charge element identified within it.

Your service charge includes:

- > all third party and direct costs
- > a proportion of central management and expenses
- > a contingency of 2.5%.

Service charges cover the cost of services which benefit all residents in the same scheme such as lighting, cleaning and door security as well as:

- > repairs and maintenance to your building and communal areas
- > improvement work to your building
- > ground maintenance for communal areas
- > communal services
- > support costs.

Service charges will normally be divided equally between all units in a scheme except where there is a clear difference in level of service or facility. We will consult you on the level and quality of the services and on service charges in general.

We review service charges once a year and these may increase or decrease based on the costs incurred in the previous year.

Paying your rent and service charges

Direct Debit

Direct Debit is the easiest way for you to pay your rent or service charge. You can choose from different payment dates so that the rent or service charges come out of your account at the most convenient time for you.

If you would like to set up a direct debit, please call us on **0300 373 3000**.

Online

You can pay your rent online 24 hours a day, seven days a week at **www.networkhomes.org.uk** you will need your unique payment reference number.

Using an app

The Allpay app is available free of charge and enables you to pay your rent easily, wherever you are, at the touch of a button. Once you have logged into your account via the app, you can store all your details and create a four digit pin number. Download the app from your app store.

Swipe card

Payments can be made using a swipe card at any Pay Point terminal found in Post Offices, local convenience stores and petrol stations. You can pay in cash or by cheque across the counter, with the swipe card. Swipe cards give you the freedom to pay your rent at any outlet displaying a Pay Point or Post Office sign.

Simply take your swipe card to the counter together with your payment – and that's it, your rent is paid. Please keep receipts as proof of payment and keep them in a safe place.

If you need a rent card, phone the Customer Service Centre on **0300 373 3000**.

Telephone

You can make payments by telephone using your debit or credit card – Switch, Connect, Visa or MasterCard. Electron and American Express cannot be used.

To make a payment by telephone, you can call Allpay 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **0844 557 8321**. You can also call us on **0300 373 3000** between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

You will need to quote your unique payment reference number and you will receive a payment authorisation code after you have paid. We recommend you keep this.

Standing order

You can pay your rent by standing order. You will need the following details:

Barclays, St Albans

A/C Name:

Network Homes Housing Ass Ltd No.2 Account

Sort Code:

20-74-09

A/C No:

53408728

Please use your payment reference number to help us identify your payment.

If you are unable to pay your rent

If you need help paying your rent because you are on a low income or out of work, Housing Benefit and Universal Credit is available to assist you.

You will need to make a claim to your local Housing Benefit Department and provide them with all the information they ask for in order for them to assess whether or not you are entitled to Housing Benefit.

If Housing Benefit is paid to you, it will be paid every four weeks in arrears. You will need to make additional payments to ensure your rent is paid in advance, in accordance with your tenancy agreement.

Paying rent on time is your responsibility and we expect that you will manage your relationship with the Housing Benefit Office and notify us immediately of any changes in your circumstances.

If you claim Universal Credit then any Housing related payments are paid directly to you monthly in arrears. It is your responsibility to make your full rental payment in advance.

If you need advice regarding budget and welfare assistance, please contact our Benefits Advisers on **welfareadvisors@networkhomes.org.uk**

We can also help with employment and job search advice. Please contact our employment adviser on **worksmart@networkhomes.org.uk**



Repairs and maintenance

We are responsible for carrying out certain repairs to your home, as set out in your tenancy agreement and there are some that are your responsibility.

All residents have a responsibility to take good care of their home and not to allow damage to occur through negligence or abuse by themselves, family members or visitors.

Emergency repairs will be attended to within 4 hours. Routine repairs will be attended at a mutually agreed appointment.

Resident damage

If there is sufficient evidence that your property has been defaced due to resident neglect or damage then you will be responsible for making good any damage caused by you, your household or your visitor.

If the damage is excessive, then Network Homes may take legal action against you, which could result in you losing your home.

Who is responsible for the repair?

As a Network Homes resident, you are responsible for putting right accidental or deliberate damage to your home.

You are responsible for:

- > Internal decorations to your home
- > Minor repairs, including small plaster cracks, wall and floor tiles, door handles, locks, hinges, letterboxes, toilet seats, bath panels, basin and bath plugs and chains, mastic sealant to bathroom and kitchen fittings, all shower attachments and tap washers
- > Adding extra security, for example fitting mortice locks
- > Replacing broken windows, except where we were responsible for the breakage or you have a police crime number
- > Glazing repairs to internal doors and cupboards
- > Maintaining gardens, including fencing
- > Clearing blocked sinks, toilets and baths where the blockage is in the property or was caused by your own misuse or lack of care

- > Infestations of insects or mice
- > Replacing light bulbs, fluorescent tubes and starters, electrical plugs, fuses and batteries in smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors
- > Replacing keys and locks when you lose the keys or members of your household are locked out
- > Fitting waste and supply pipes for washing machines and dishwashers and vents for tumble driers (except where we have fitted the items)
- > Repairing any damage that you, a member of your household or a visitor caused
- > Repairing fixtures, fittings and equipment not provided by us.

We are responsible for:

- > Keeping the structure of your home in a good state of repair
- > The roof, walls, windows, entry/exit doors and door frames, floors, ceilings and plasterwork, skirting boards, drains and gutters
- > The installations for the water, gas and electricity supply to your home
- > The maintenance of heating systems
- > The maintenance of walls at the boundary of the property (but not dividing), as well as pathways, steps and other means of access to the property
- > Maintaining and decorating common halls and stairways.

We may at our discretion carry out a repair, which is your responsibility, in order to protect the fabric of the building or because of health and safety concerns – you may be charged. Residents are entitled to £10 compensation if a pre-arranged appointment with a repairs contractor is not attended.

Reporting a repair

You can report a non-emergency repair online anytime by visiting our website, or by contacting our Customer Service Centre between 8am and 6pm from Monday to Friday on **0300 373 3000**.

Pest control in Intermediate Rental Properties and Temporary Accommodation

Cluster rooms

If you have an infestation of vermin or pests in your room within our shared accommodation then Network Homes will carry out the treatment for dealing with this. Network Homes reserves the right to recharge you if it is subsequently confirmed that the infestation is caused by you.

Self-contained accommodation in Intermediate Rental Properties

You will be responsible for arranging the clearance of any vermin or pest infestations within your own self-contained property. Failure to do so, which results in a spread of the infestation to other areas may result in a recharge to you for all costs incurred by us in eradicating this.

Self-contained Temporary Accommodation

Please report the infestation to Network Homes and we will inform the private landlords who are responsible for carrying out the treatment for the infestation. Network Homes reserves the right to recharge you for these works should it be found that you are responsible for bringing the infestation into your home.

Laminate flooring

Laminated or wooden flooring is not permitted in any part of the property without the approval of Network Homes.

Aids and adaptations

Our aim is to help you live safely and independently in your own home for as long as possible.

We may carry out adaptations to help you if your health or mobility needs have changed since you first moved in. An adaptation is an alteration to your home, to make it easier for you, or a member of your household, to carry out personal or domestic tasks.

Depending on the alteration required we may require these to be assessed by an Occupational Health Officer prior to us undertaking any works.

Newly built homes

If you are living in a brand new home built less than a year ago there are some differences to the way we deal with any repairs or defects.

If you have bought your property

If you have bought your property, it will usually be sold with a guarantee from the National House Builders Union or a similar organisation e.g. Premier Guarantee or the LABC. If you are the first person to buy the property, your solicitor should provide the guarantee certificates when the sale goes through. It's essential that you keep it safe, as it is a valuable document.

This guarantee covers faulty material and workmanship related to the structural element of the building, and will be in force normally for 10–12 years.

If you are aware of any problems, please contact us first.

During the first 12 months

The contractor who has built the property has a responsibility to rectify any defects within the first 12 months since the date the building was first completed (not from the date you take occupation of the property).

Should you encounter any issues you think are a defect within the first 12 months, please contact us. Our customer care centre will report the defect.

Response times for defects

Depending on the nature of the defect reported, it will be assigned a specific priority response time. A defect is assigned one of the following priority response timescales:

- > immediate emergency – within four hours
- > emergency – within 24 hours
- > urgent – within seven days
- > not urgent – 28 days or it may be left to the end of the 12 months defect liability period if it is reasonable.

Some of the problems arising within the first 12 months may not always be the builder's responsibility, for example, shrinkage cracks. Only in very rare cases are these considered structural defects.

After 12 months – inspections

At the end of the first 12 months, inspections are carried out by the contractors to identify any final defects. We will give you sufficient notice period (usually two weeks), so that you are able to make arrangements to provide access.



Our customer service standards

We aim to provide the best possible service to our customers in an efficient, effective, polite and professional manner.

If we visit you at home we will:

- > offer a password service so you can be sure who is visiting you
- > ensure that our staff always display their ID badges and provide you with their name and service area
- > respect your personal and cultural values.

If you phone us, send an email or write to us we will:

- > answer 95% of all calls received by our customer service centre. And if you leave a voicemail message we will respond within 24 hours
- > offer a call back service when you phone us
- > respond to customer service enquiries received via email within five working days
- > respond to letters within five working days
- > provide a clear and accessible complaints procedure should you need to make a complaint.

If you visit our offices we will:

- > ensure our receptions are clean, inviting and accessible
- > display our opening hours at all of our receptions and have a range of useful information available for you
- > see you within five minutes of your appointment time
- > aim to see you within 15 minutes for any emergency concerns, if you do not have an appointment
- > offer you a private room if you require it
- > ensure that you leave informed of the outcome of your enquiry or the next steps and when they will happen.

Complaints, suggestions and feedback

Our Customer Service Centre is open from 8am to 6pm. Our offices are open from Monday to Friday between 9am to 5pm.

If you make a complaint, we will:

- > acknowledge your complaint within three working days
- > respond to 90% of stage 1 complaints within 10 working days – if you are dissatisfied with the outcome you can request for your complaint to be reviewed at Stage 2
- > respond to 90% of stage 2 complaints within 15 working days
- > offer you the opportunity to request your complaint be put before a stage 3 complaints review panel if you are dissatisfied with the outcome at stage 2. The panel is made up of a Board member, Executive Director and a resident representative. You will be invited to meet with the panel to discuss your complaint.
- > arrange for a panel to hear the complaint within 30 working days of receiving the request, in 90% of cases. The panel's final decision will be issued within 28 days of the panel hearing.

Feedback

We would love you to tell us if our staff or contractors do a particularly good job. We also understand that sometimes things don't go well and we need to take action to improve our performance. You can tell us about your experiences in a variety of ways:

- > visit our website www.networkhomes.org.uk
- > email customerservices@networkhomes.org.uk
- > in person at our office
- > by telephone **0300 373 3000**
- > write to us at: Network Homes, Olympic Office Centre, 8 Fulton Road, Wembley, HA9 0NU

We want you to be happy with the services you receive from Network Homes. We work regularly with our residents and staff members to develop our service standards and scrutinise performance.

We capture feedback in a number of ways including telephone surveys, automated surveys, text messages and feedback via our website to see how well you think we are doing in different areas of our service. In addition to the surveys we do, we are keen to hear from you at any time with suggestions or ideas about how we can improve our services. It is also useful for us to hear about what we are doing right.



Tenancy and neighbourhood

We will:

- > let all new homes within seven days
- > let all other homes within 28 days
- > provide you with the details of your key contacts at Network Homes
- > have your Neighbourhood Housing Officer visit you within six weeks of you moving to see if you need assistance with anything
- > monitor gardening and cleaning standards for communal areas on our properties, through regular inspections, where a service charge is paid by residents
- > publicise all dates of six-monthly estate inspections to monitor communal areas of our properties
- > advise you when you are in breach of your tenancy agreement (your contract with us) and give you warning where we intend to take any legal action.

For dealing with anti-social behaviour cases, we will:

- > contact you within one working day for all serious cases, such as domestic abuse, harassment, violence and/or threats of violence, and within five working days for all other cases
- > interview complainants within 10 working days
- > produce an action plan within 15 working days
- > review action plans and update you within 15 working days.

Income services

We will:

- > provide various payment options and support all residents who are in debt
- > notify you if you are in arrears of your rent/service charges and give you warning where we intend to take any legal action
- > send you a statement of accounts every three months

- > consult with and notify you about any proposed changes to your annual service charge or rent with at least one month's notice
- > provide all leasehold property owners with final accounts within six months of the end of the financial year.

Resident engagement

We know that giving you the opportunity to get involved is the best way of continually improving our services and helping you participate in your community.

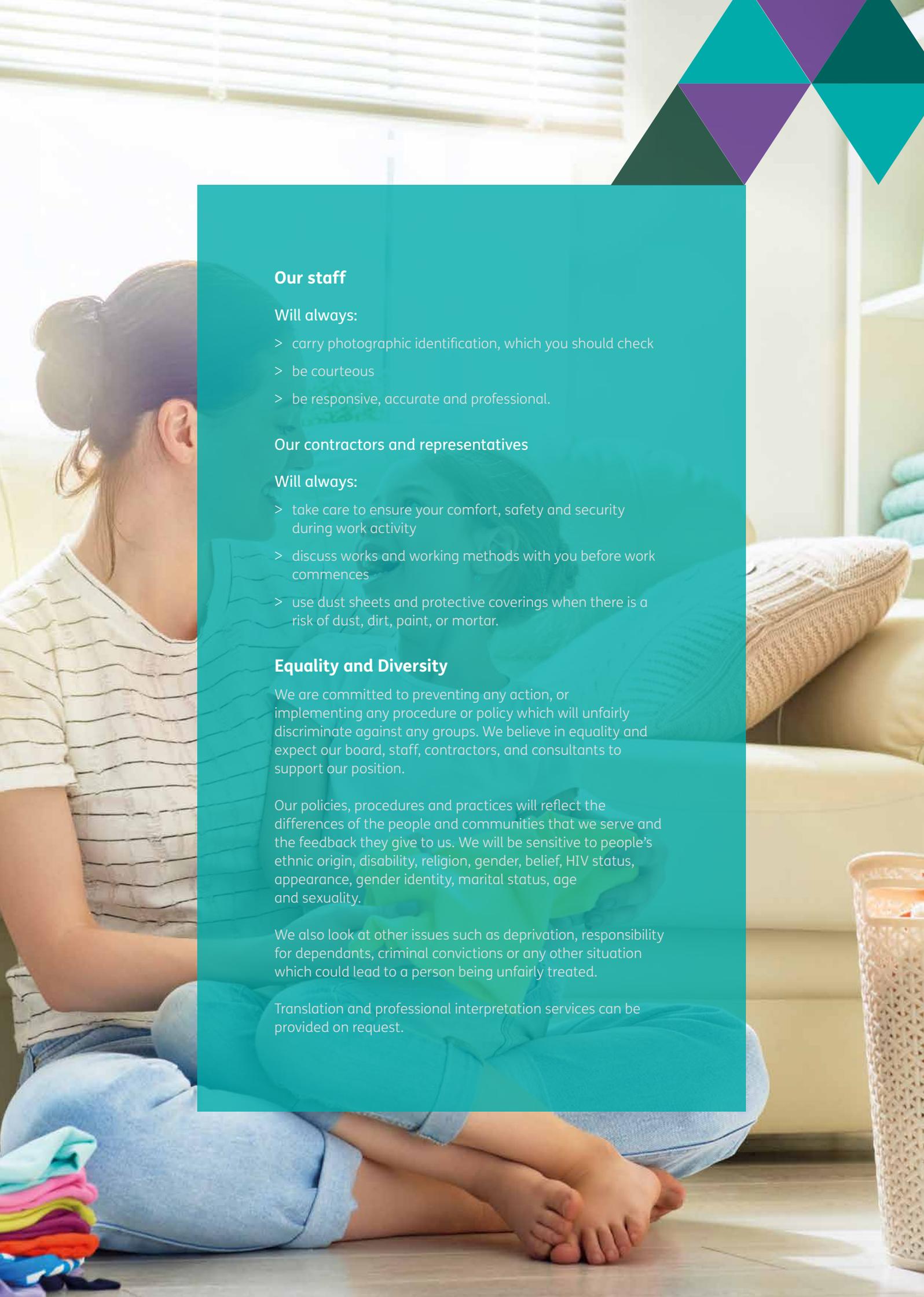
If you want to have your say we will:

- > support and promote a range of resident involvement opportunities to support our governance
- > aim to make sure our involved residents are reflective of our wider customer base
- > report annually on the work our involved residents do and the difference they make to the services we provide
- > monitor resident involvement performance and benchmark our performance against other organisations
- > publish an annual report about our performance
- > help you to integrate within your community with employment and training programmes and residents' associations.

Support for young people (16–26)

We will:

- > help young people to obtain bursaries, scholarships and grants
- > support consistent, joined-up working on youth issues with mainstream and specialist agencies in your neighbourhood.



Our staff

Will always:

- > carry photographic identification, which you should check
- > be courteous
- > be responsive, accurate and professional.

Our contractors and representatives

Will always:

- > take care to ensure your comfort, safety and security during work activity
- > discuss works and working methods with you before work commences
- > use dust sheets and protective coverings when there is a risk of dust, dirt, paint, or mortar.

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to preventing any action, or implementing any procedure or policy which will unfairly discriminate against any groups. We believe in equality and expect our board, staff, contractors, and consultants to support our position.

Our policies, procedures and practices will reflect the differences of the people and communities that we serve and the feedback they give to us. We will be sensitive to people's ethnic origin, disability, religion, gender, belief, HIV status, appearance, gender identity, marital status, age and sexuality.

We also look at other issues such as deprivation, responsibility for dependants, criminal convictions or any other situation which could lead to a person being unfairly treated.

Translation and professional interpretation services can be provided on request.

Getting involved

We think it is important for all residents to have an opportunity to influence decisions which affect the management of their homes.

Resident involvement is important to us. Your feedback is invaluable and it is only by listening and learning from residents that we are able to continually improve the services we provide. Your involvement brings:

- > service performance excellence
- > service satisfaction
- > greater trust between Network Homes and our customers
- > value for money
- > accountability and co-regulation
- > stronger communities.

By getting involved you can effect change, shape services, monitor performance, be involved in the management of your homes and help build stronger communities. There are a number of ways for you to get involved, including:

- > Agency Managed Forum
- > Community Champions
- > Complaints Panel
- > Focus Groups
- > Leaseholder Forum
- > Local Panels
- > Mystery Shopping
- > Online Forum
- > Procurement Evaluations and Interviews
- > Readers' Group
- > Resident Quality Inspectors
- > Residents' Associations
- > Satisfaction Surveys
- > Scrutiny Panel
- > Young Ambassadors.

To find out more about all our resident involvement opportunities, please email the Community Engagement and Investment team at **get-involved@networkhomes.org.uk** or visit the website **www.networkhomes.org.uk**

SW9 Community Housing residents can view the involvement opportunities available to them on our website at **www.sw9.org.uk**

Older persons service

We believe it is important for all residents to have an opportunity to influence decisions which affect the management of their homes. This is also an opportunity to engage with your neighbours and contribute to a warm and friendly community. We engage with residents formally and informally via:

- > scheme meetings throughout the year – the annual timetable for meetings is on the scheme notice board
- > Resident Forum – attended by the elected representative from each scheme. We meet every two months and the venue rotates around the schemes
- > surveys and feedback
- > consultation meetings
- > independent surveys
- > letters and meetings
- > Scheme Improvement Plans.

If you would like to be involved, please speak to your Scheme Manager or Neighbourhood Support Officer to find out how you can participate, or email the Community Engagement and Investment team at **get-involved@networkhomes.org.uk**

Scheme Improvement Plans

We want residents to participate in Service Improvement Plans. Each year we will consult at the scheme meetings to capture the top five priorities for residents in the scheme; this could capture anything from social events, building improvements, or changes to the services we provide. We hope to meet your aspirations, but this will be budget dependent. However, the feedback you give will help us to effectively plan for the future. We will keep you informed of progress and keep the plan updated throughout the year.



Good Neighbour Charter

Network Homes is committed to ensuring that all our residents are treated fairly.

The Good Neighbour Charter is designed to help you fully understand your responsibilities as customers of Network Homes, while ensuring that you are able to enjoy living in your home. We believe that our residents should feel safe, secure, and happy in their homes because good homes make everything possible.

Being a good neighbour is more than meeting the rules set out in your tenancy agreement. A good neighbour will tolerate and understand the different lifestyles of others.

The Good Neighbour Charter

The Good Neighbour Charter sets out your key responsibilities as a resident of Network Homes and also our commitment to you.

We would encourage you to commit to this Charter as an agreement that you, members of your household and visitors to your homes will behave in a manner that will allow a positive experience for all our customers living in their homes.

We believe that all of our residents should be allowed to live in their homes without discrimination due to their gender, disability, race, ethnic origin, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation or any other reason.

We expect that our staff, contractors or anyone working on our behalf be respectful to you and deliver our commitments set out in the Good Neighbour Charter.

What is neighbour nuisance or anti-social behaviour?

Any behaviour by you, members of your household or your visitors that causes alarm and distress to another; or behaviour that interferes with the day to day well-being, physical or mental health, safety and security of another household or individual.

You have a right to:

- > feel safe and secure in your home
- > live in peace and enjoy your home and chosen lifestyle
- > live in a pleasant and safe environment
- > have support and assistance from us if you are a victim of neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

Network Homes' commitment to you

Network Homes is committed to tackling neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour as set out in our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 2016. As part of our commitment to tackle neighbour nuisance and antisocial behaviour and to help our customers create a peaceful and enjoyable community to live in, we support the introduction of this Good Neighbour Charter.

We will ensure that every resident has the opportunity to enjoy a peaceful and safe home.

We agree to continuously review our service with a view to all residents receiving access to all our services regardless of their gender, disability, race, ethnic origin, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation or any other reason.

We will respond quickly and effectively to reports of antisocial behaviour, hate crime and domestic violence and reserve the right to challenge behaviour which does not comply with this agreement or breaches your lease or tenancy agreement.

We will:

- > be accountable in the way in which we deal with neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour and allow you to challenge us if you think we have not provided a good service
- > deal with reports of neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour quickly and effectively and take enforcement action where necessary
- > respond to all complaints of neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour within agreed timescales as set out in our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 2016
- > be respectful to the victims and witnesses of neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour
- > work with partner agencies i.e. police to prevent or reduce the risk of neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour occurring in your neighbourhood
- > offer mediation services at the earliest opportunity to help resolve conflicts between neighbours
- > work together with residents to create local environments that make your community a welcoming and attractive place to live and tackle serious and persistent nuisance
- > consult with you before making improvements within your community which are not an immediate risk to safety
- > organise local community events to encourage relationship building amongst all residents.

Residents' commitment to each other and Network Homes

What you can do to be a good neighbour?

- > be respectful to your neighbours and their property at all times
- > be tolerant and understanding of your neighbours' needs for periods of quiet – appreciating that some people can tolerate noise better than others
- > keep an eye on elderly neighbours and let us know if you have any concerns for their safety or wellbeing
- > allow all your neighbours to enjoy any communal gardens and play areas
- > respect the rights of children and young people to play and meet in a safe and happy environment

- > be responsible for the behaviour of your children and ensure they are considerate of others
- > be accountable for your children by ensuring they play responsibly, respect your neighbours' gardens and property, and ensure they are always supervised by an adult when playing in a communal garden or play area
- > be responsible for your pets, where permission to keep them has already been granted from Network Homes, and not allow them to cause a nuisance to your neighbours or the community
- > ensure that dogs are kept under control in public parts of the community and to clean up after them. Keep them on a lead and do not allow them to bark excessively
- > make sure your cat isn't left out all day as cats can cause damage to peoples gardens
- > do not use foul or abusive language or behave in a manner which can be perceived as intimidating by others
- > keep your garden clean and tidy
- > don't allow rubbish to build up in your garden and use designated bins only – not keeping areas clean and tidy can lead to vermin
- > residents in flats, clusters and on estates with shared communal spaces have additional responsibilities given that they live in close proximity to each other and must ensure that:
 - > children do not play or run around in the communal hallways and lifts
 - > balconies are kept tidy and not used for storing bikes, scooters, or for hanging washing
 - > no personal items i.e. motorbikes, bicycles, clothes, scooters, toys etc. are left in the communal areas, including the garden, play area, the hallways or footpaths
 - > communal gardens, play areas and communal grounds are kept tidy and free from rubbish
 - > bulky items are not left in the way – they can be collected by your local Council by prior arrangement
 - > you are respectful to our staff and each other by not throwing litter, cigarette butts or any items over our balconies or in our communal areas
 - > you do not park in a way that will block access for emergency services, residents drives or, pathways, or park on grass areas, footpaths and dropped kerbs.

Moving out

Ending your tenancy

If you are moving out then you will need to contact us to complete a form to end your tenancy. Your notice period will begin once we receive your completed form. The length of your notice period is specified in your tenancy agreement; please contact us if you would like any further information.

Please ensure that you provide us with a forwarding address, contact details and organise a mail redirection so that we can refund any money owed to you, including any deposit that you may have paid.

You must also return the keys back to the office on or before the end of your notice period.

The property should be left empty, clean and cleared of your belongings. You may incur an additional charge if we need to clear the property. A member of staff will arrange to visit and inspect your accommodation shortly before you leave. We will offer an incentive payment if you meet our criteria when giving notice to end your tenancy.

If you pay your rent through standing order or direct debit you should contact your bank and cancel the arrangement once you have checked that your rent is all paid.

If you pay rent through your payroll at work, we will send you any forms required to terminate payment. These forms will have your date of leaving and forwarding address for your payroll department, who will then be able to stop rent deductions. This will occur upon the receipt of your keys and a final inspection. We will only return the deposit once we have received all due payments from your payroll department and your account is not in arrears.

Bereaved relatives of residents

Please let us know as soon as possible if your relative or friend who is our resident has passed away. We understand that this will be a difficult time and we will do our best to answer any questions you might have. Please contact us for advice on how to end their tenancy. We will need to speak to whoever is responsible for their affairs/estate.

Moving on to a different tenure

We know that your circumstances and needs may change over time and as this happens you may want to consider other types of housing arrangements such as shared ownership, general rented or supported housing.

If you would like to downsize to a property with fewer bedrooms, we can increase your priority and provide you with a financial incentive and help moving. For further details please contact your Neighbourhood Officer.

You may have the right to a mutual exchange – swapping your home with another resident from Network Homes or another registered provider.

Deposit Protection Service

Who is my deposit registered with?

The Deposit Protection Service (DPS) is the Government approved provider of custodial and insured tenancy deposit protection (TDP) schemes. TDPs, as set out in the Housing Act 2004, require that all agents/landlords protect their residents' deposits under a statutory tenancy deposit scheme within 30 days of receiving a deposit.

The DPS custodial scheme will safeguard that deposit throughout the period of the tenancy and repay the funds to the appropriate parties in accordance with their instructions at the end of the tenancy period.

The DPS is the only provider to offer a custodial deposit protection scheme – a scheme which is free to use and open to all agents/landlords. The service is funded entirely from the interest earned from deposits held. Agents/landlords can register and make transactions online, but paper forms are also available. The scheme is supported by a dedicated call centre and an independent Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) service.

When will I get my deposit back?

Before the process to release your deposit can commence, Network Homes needs to have received your keys to your property.

If there are no disputes about the amount to be repaid back to you, we will enter Network's unique "Repayment ID" on the DPS website within 2 working days. You will be required to log onto the DPS website (www.depositprotection.com) to input your unique "Repayment ID" number and your bank details. If you have misplaced your ID number, please request a new one from the DPS. They will refund your deposit 5 working after you have input your details.

If there are disputes about the amount to be repaid back to you, your deposit will not be released until the dispute has been resolved by both parties (you and Network Homes).

Please note that if you do not log onto the DPS website to complete the required information the deposit will remain with the DPS.

What would stop me getting back my full deposit?

If you are in rent arrears, then the outstanding balance on your rent account will be deducted from your deposit.

You will also have deductions made from your deposit if there is any damage in your accommodation.

Finally, if you have not cleaned your accommodation to an acceptable standard then again Network Homes will have no option but to deduct some funds from your deposit.



Where we work

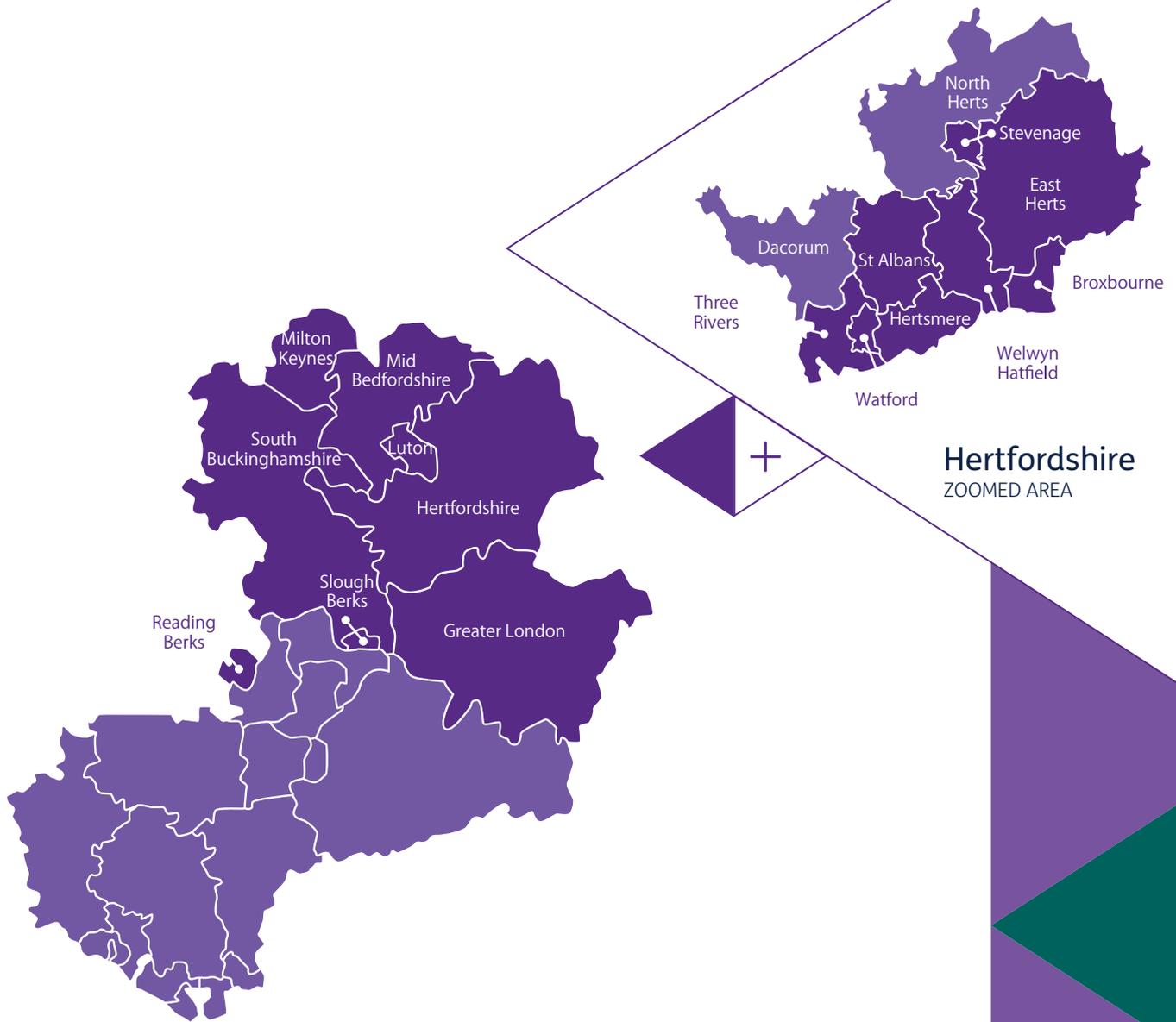
London



Where we operate

- 1 City of London
- 2 City of Westminster
- 3 Kensington & Chelsea
- 4 Hammersmith & Fulham

Outside London



Hertfordshire
ZOOMED AREA

Personal Data

We see many advantages to improving the transparency of our work, the most important of which is fostering a relationship of openness and trust with our residents, partners and other stakeholders. We believe this will lead to improved accountability and efficiency through a better understanding of the way we work.

In some cases we may need to balance being open and transparent with protecting information where it may invade personal privacy, breach confidentiality or damage other interests. In deciding whether to publish information, we will take into consideration whether it is lawful to release that information.

Our staff understand the importance of confidentiality. We recognise we have access to private and often sensitive information and we are extremely mindful of the importance of how we conduct ourselves to ensure information is not shared with other residents.

We have a responsibility to protect the information we hold about you and you have the right to see it and make sure it is correct.

You have the right to see the information we hold about you. If you want to see your files:

- > You can make an appointment to view your file or request copies of any documents we might hold
- > You may make a 'Subject Access Request' for all the personal data we hold. This request must be made in writing. If you would like to request a copy of your personal data that Network holds on you, please complete a Subject Access Request form, ensuring you complete it fully. If you are a joint resident, both or all residents will need to agree to the inspection.

We may withhold confidential or sensitive information that has been supplied by a third party. However, we will tell you if we have done so. You may contact them yourself and ask them to release the information.

Information from our legal advisers will not normally be available for inspection.

We aim to ensure that all the information we hold about you is accurate and relevant. Anything that you can show is incorrect will be corrected and disagreement on other issues will be recorded on file.

If you think our records are inaccurate, you can write to us, asking for them to be amended. We will respond to any request to access or delete your personal data as soon as possible, but certainly within 30 days.

If you think we have unfairly withheld information or unfairly refused to amend our records, you can make a complaint to our Complaints Team using our standard complaints and appeals procedure. Alternatively you can contact The Information Commissioners Office.

For more information on accessing personal data, to see a copy of our privacy statement or to find out more about the legal basis upon which we are processing your data, please see our website www.networkhomes.org.uk/data-protection

If you have any questions about the use of your personal information, please contact Network Homes' Data Protection Officer on dataprotection@networkhomes.org.uk or **0208 782 4323**.

Confidentiality

All interviews, correspondence and personal information will be treated in strictest confidence and in accordance with the relevant legislation.

We will treat information provided by you as confidential and will only release information to outside bodies with your permission.

In exceptional circumstances, information may be given without permission to the Police to assist with the prevention and detection of serious crimes, to Social Services if it is necessary to protect the welfare of vulnerable individuals, or to other appropriately authorised agencies in accordance with legislation.

Our staff are expected to respect your right to privacy of information and only inspect files and discuss resident-related information where it is relevant to do so.

We will make clear to contractors their responsibility to maintain confidentiality and respect your rights to privacy, ensuring that there are appropriate safeguards in place to protect personal information.

Useful contacts

Organisation	Contact
Age UK	0800 169 60 60 www.ageuk.org.uk
Childline	0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk
Citizens Advice	08444 111 444 www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Civil Legal Advice	0845 345 4 345 www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice
Consumer Credit Counselling Service	0800 138 1111 www.cccs.co.uk
Crimestoppers	0800 555111 www.crimestoppers.co.uk
Direct Gov – all public services information	www.direct.gov.uk/en
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)	www.dft.gov.uk/dvla
Environment agency	0800 807 060 www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Freecycle – recycling network	www.freecycle.org/group/uk
Independent housing ombudsman	0300 111 3000 www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Job centre plus	0845 6060 234 www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus
Local police for non emergencies	Call 999 for emergencies or 101
National Debt Line	0808 808 4000 www.nationaldebtline.org
National Domestic Violence helpline	0808 2000 247 www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk
National Grid	0800 111999 www.nationalgrid.com/uk
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)	0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk
Parent Line	0808 800 2222 www.parentlineplus.org.uk
Refuge	0808 2000 247 info@refuge.org.uk
Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)	0870 5555 999 www.rspca.co.uk
Samaritans	08457 90 90 90 www.samaritans.org.uk
Shelter	0808 800 4444 info@shelter.org.uk
Step Change – Debt Charity	0800 138 1111 www.stepchange.org.uk
St.Mungo's	020 3856 6000 info@mungos.org
TV licence	www.tvlicensing.co.uk

Contact Us

Online

www.networkhomes.org.uk

Email

customerservices@networkhomes.org.uk

Phone

0300 373 3000

Facebook and Twitter

@networkhomesuk

In Person

Wembley

8 Fulton Rd, Wembley HA9 0NU

Hertford

36 Ware Rd, Hertford SG13 7HH

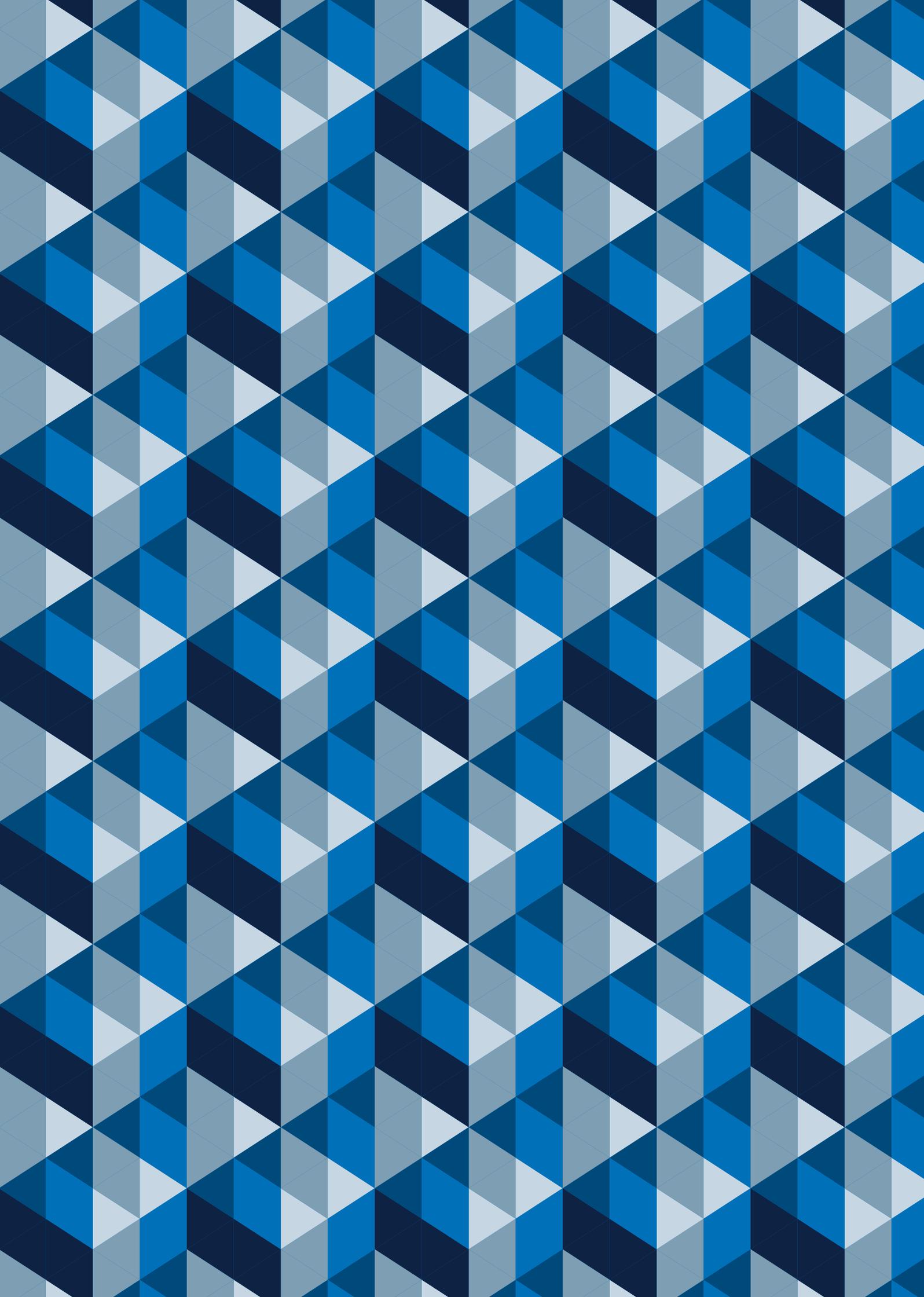
Northwick Park

1 Nightingale Ave, Harrow HA1 3GX

St Albans

72 Lavender Crescent, St Albans AL3 5PJ







Network Homes
Olympic office Centre
8 Fulton Road
Wembley
HA9 0NU



www.networkhomes.org.uk



0300 373 3000

