

Draft Service Charter

Date: 4 June 2019

This is Network Homes' Service Charter. It explains what you can expect from us as a tenant or leaseholder.

We are your landlord

Our aim is to provide a reliable housing service to you, which meets our legal and contractual responsibilities, in good time, every time.

Your tenancy agreement or lease, along with other publications like your tenancy or leasehold handbook, explain what these responsibilities are. These documents set out in detail what our obligations are as your landlord, and what your obligations are as a resident.

To make sure we have the resources to provide a reliable housing service, we need to say no to requests asking us to do things outside of our responsibilities. We ask that you appreciate this and recognise that our role is to provide you with a home and a reasonable housing management service.

But this means that if ever we fail to provide you with a quality service and fall below the standards we set out, we will prioritise putting things right as soon as possible.

We will treat each other with respect.

We will listen to you when you get in touch and work with you to resolve any query you may have. And of course, we will never discriminate on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion, or any other aspect of who you are.

Always assume good faith when communicating with our staff, and remember they are people with their own feelings just like you. We won't deal with people who are persistently abusive to our staff.

We will involve you in decisions that affect your life

We want the views and experiences of residents to shape the way we deliver our services, so we provide a range of ways for you to get involved.

One way is through our two Local Panels, one in Hertford and one in London, which monitor our performance and help us improve our service. They report directly to our Board so are able to influence our services at the highest level of our organisation.

We also offer other opportunities to get involved in your community, like helping the Panels with mystery shopping or becoming a community champion. And we frequently survey residents so we can monitor satisfaction with our service and drive improvement.

We will make sure your home is safe

We have a duty to make sure your home is safe. To make our safety compliance as transparent as possible, we publish fire risk assessments for all our blocks.

If you are a tenant we'll carry out gas safety checks every year and electrical safety checks every five years. And we'll carry out regular checks on communal structures like water supplies and lifts for all residents.

To help us do this, we expect you to allow us into your home when we need to carry out checks – it's essential you give us access when we need it.

If you're a leaseholder, you're responsible for most of the safety of your home yourself. If your lease allows you to rent your home to a sub-tenant and you choose to do so, you need to carry out the same safety checks that we do for tenants.

We will look after your neighbourhood

We'll ensure your block or estate is safe, secure, and maintained to an approved standard. We carry out periodic neighbourhood inspections and publish the outcomes, including any actions we take as a result.

If you report anti-social behaviour to us, we'll take you seriously and take action if it's appropriate to do so. But this will only be in cases where the perpetrator has broken the terms of their tenancy agreement. Remember that different people have different lifestyles, and what may seem frustrating or unreasonable to you may just be a neighbour living their life.

But remember we all live in close proximity to our neighbours and so be mindful of how your actions may impact on others.

Civil courts exist to remedy serious disagreements between people, and the police exist to fight crime. As your housing provider we can only safeguard residents and enforce the terms of tenancy agreements and leases.

Our response and the action we take will vary depending on the behaviour you report.

Serious anti-social behaviour	Less serious anti-social behaviour	Not anti-social behaviour
Physical violence	Persistent verbal abuse	Neighbours hosting the occasional noisy party
Threats of physical violence	Loud music playing late at night very often	Children playing or crying
Harassment based on ethnicity, religion or belief, gender identity or reassignment, sexuality, nationality, age, or disability, whether verbal or physical	Fly tipping	Groups of people meeting together
Sexual offences	Misuse of communal areas, including persistent animal fouling	Neighbours infrequently using their washing machine late at night
	Vandalism and graffiti	Infrequent verbal slurs or impolite behaviour
	Drug use	
We will contact the person reporting ASB within 24 hours and start our investigation	We will contact the person reporting ASB within 5 working day and start our investigation	We will not take action but may signpost you to a relevant external agency

We will be reasonable with you and work with you

We're providing you with a service and would be unable to continue to do this if residents didn't pay their rent.

We provide you with clear rent and service charge statements four times a year, and give you at least 28 days notice if your rent, service charge, or ground rent is going to increase.

If you fall into arrears, we'll offer repayment terms that are affordable and fair, and signpost you to support agencies that can help you manage your money or offer advice on claiming welfare benefits. We'll always try to engage with you and agree a repayment plan before taking legal action.

You are responsible for ensuring your housing costs are paid, even if welfare benefits cover some or all of your rent.

We will maintain your home where we have a responsibility to do so

If you are our tenant, keeping your home in good repair is partly our responsibility and partly yours. Structural and permanent parts of your home are our responsibility to fix, unless you've damaged

them, either accidentally or through lack of care. These include the roof, walls, windows, external doors, ceilings, plasterwork, drains, and the installation of gas and electricity.

Other parts of the home are wholly your responsibility to maintain and repair. These include internal decorations, lighting and electricals like fuses, all fixtures and fittings that we didn't provide, and all minor repairs to things like floor tiles, internal door handles, toilet seats, blocked sinks, and broken windows.

If you report a repair that is not our responsibility to fix, we will advise you to have it fixed yourself.

If you are a leaseholder, major works are our responsibility to fix but will be charged on to you via service charges. Everything else is your responsibility.

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