


Hounslow Homes

Managing quality homes for  Hounslow

Taking care of our customers

Tenants Service Charter



We sent a copy of our first service charter to our customers in September 2002. Now, further to consultation with tenant representatives, and to reflect the progress we have made since then, we would like to update our service charter and customer care standards with you. The charter sets out the standards of service we aim to achieve.

We will monitor these standards and report the results to you in Hounslow Homes News which is what you asked us to do when we carried out a survey on this issue. We will also put our quarterly Management Information Report on display in our reception areas and it can be seen online at www.hounslowhomes.org.uk

Hounslow Homes' Mission statement:

“To deliver excellent housing services and encourage the development of sustainable local communities”

Hounslow Homes' Objectives

In order to put our mission into practice, we have four key strategic objectives.

- To deliver excellent housing services with a commitment to continuous improvement.
- To deliver the ‘decent homes’ programme and secure a long-term investment for council housing.
- To create opportunities for the development of sustainable communities.
- To develop partnerships to take advantage of the Government’s ‘freedoms and flexibilities’.

Our values

- We will at all times endeavour to put our customers first
- We will put customer consultation and feedback at the heart of our operational practice
- We will ensure that all of our services are fairly and equally provided
- We will invest in the development of our organisation and its workforce
- We will become a learning organisation and encourage a culture of entrepreneurship within a social enterprise
- We will establish leadership through effective governance and accountability

Our mission statement, objectives and values confirm Hounslow Homes' commitment to make a positive contribution to our customers by providing high quality housing services and by participating actively in the community and promoting community cohesion.

Hounslow Homes is fully committed to equality of opportunity for all people, with positive regard and fair treatment for all our communities regardless of age, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, race, religious belief, gender, marital status, sexuality, responsibility for dependents, disability, trade union or political activity and any other disadvantaged group.

This leaflet is about the Hounslow Homes tenants' charter. If you require a copy of this in your language, large print or Braille, please contact us on 020 8583 2299 or minicom 020 8583 3122.

આ પત્રિકામાં, તમારા ઘરનાં આંધકામમાં વાપરવામાં આવેલ એડમેસટોસ નામનું પદાર્થ (ન બળે એવું ખનિજ) સંબંધી જણાવે છે. જો તમને ગુજરાતીમાં વધુ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપયા ટ્રાન્સલેશન સર્વિસને આ નંબર પર સંપર્ક સાધો: 020 8583 2294

Gujarati

यह पत्रिका आपके घर में ऐमसैमटोस (एक न जलने वाला खनिज) के बारे में है। यदि आपको हिन्दी में और जानकारी चाहिए तो कृपया ट्रांसलेशन सर्विस को इस नंबर पर फोन करें: 020 8583 2520

Hindi

Warqaddani waxay ku saabsantahay asbestoska gurigaaga gudihiisa , haddii aad rabto macluumaad kale oo luqaddaada ku qoran fadlan ka wac adeegga tarjamadda 020 8583 2299.

Somali

یہ پتہ آپ کے گھر کی تعمیر میں استعمال ہونے والے مٹیریل اسوسٹوس کے متعلق ہے۔ اگر آپ کو اس کے متعلق مزید معلومات کی ضرورت ہے تو براہ کرم ٹرانسلیشن سروس کو اس نمبر 020 8583 2299 پر فون کریں

Urdu

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਘਰ ਦੀ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਈ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਐਮਸੈਮਟਮ (ਇਕ ਨਾ ਜਲਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਖਣਿਜ) ਬਾਰੇ ਹੈ। ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਪੈਸਾਬੰਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ 'ਹਿਪ' ਵਰਗੇ ਟ੍ਰਾਂਸਲੇਸ਼ਨ ਸਰਵਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ: 020 8583 2299

Panjabi

این نشریه در مورد اسپسٹوس در داخل منزل شما می باشد.
اگر به اطلاعات بیشتری به زبان خودتان نیازمندید، لطفاً با خدمات ترجمه با شماره 020 8583 2299 تماس حاصل نمایید.

Farsi



Our Call Centre is open from 8.00am to 8.00pm from Monday to Friday and from 9.00am to 12.00 noon on Saturday.

Ring the Call Centre on freephone 0800 085 65 75, minicom 0800 389 98 21, language helpline 0800 389 9830 or e-mail them at housing.repairs@hounslowhomes.org.uk, if:

- You want to report a repair
- You want to check the progress of a repair you have asked for
- You want to change an appointment

Please remember that as a tenant you are responsible for some repairs, including:

- Sink plugs and chains
- Light bulbs and tubes
- Internal walls, doors and cupboards
- Fencing (unless your property is on a main road and you have children under 5 years old)
- Internal decorations
- Kitchen appliances (e.g. cooker, washing machine etc.)
- Keys and lock changes (normally we will do the work but charge you for this).

If you are a leaseholder you will have additional responsibilities for repairs to your flat or maisonette as set out in your lease.



Emergency calls

If you have an emergency (e.g. no electricity, a burst pipe etc.) and the Call Centre is closed, then please call our out of hours Repair Team on 020 8583 2222.

Housing reception offices

These are open each week day between 9.00am and 5.00pm and (by appointment only) until 5.30pm on Thursdays. You can visit us to talk about your tenancy, anti-social behaviour, your estate, your rent or any other issues concerning you.

Alternatively you could telephone a Customer Information Officer for the area in which you live:

Central Area

020 8583 4382

minicom 020 8583 3959

e-mail info.housingcentral@hounslowhomes.org.uk

East Area

020 8583 4220

minicom 020 8583 4390

e-mail info.housingeast@hounslowhomes.org.uk

West Area

020 583 4383

minicom 020 583 4387

e-mail info.housingwest@hounslowhomes.org.uk

Some of our services can be accessed via our web-site at www.hounslowhomes.org.uk and you may find it more convenient to contact us this way.



We will ensure that information and correspondence about our services is available to you in your language or format of choice and we will effectively advertise the range of communication aids we provide. These include:

- Type talk
- Loop systems
- Signers
- Audiotapes
- Large print
- Braille
- Minicom

Visiting our reception offices



We will ensure our housing offices have clearly displayed opening hours.

We will ensure that all reasonable steps are taken so that our housing offices are physically accessible.

We will endeavour to keep reception areas clean and tidy.

Our staff will wear identity badges which show their name.

Our staff will behave in a professional, polite and courteous manner.

If we ever have to close our offices we will:

- Make sure we tell you when the office will re-open
- Give you information about appropriate emergency services and other available options.
- Let you know if we have to cancel an appointment and arrange another time



We will ensure our ticket queuing systems have clear instructions as to how to use them.

If you do not have an appointment we will operate on a first come first served basis.

We will try, whenever possible, to offer a choice of times and to provide an appropriate interviewer for any needs you tell us about.

We will make sure that requirements for appropriate interpreters/signers are identified and arranged as soon as possible.

If you need to discuss a confidential or personal matter we will make sure that you can do so in a private interview room.

We will make sure you know that you can bring someone to an interview with you if this would be helpful to you.

We will aim to meet with customers promptly for interviews or apologise if we are delayed.

Visiting you



When we need to visit you, we will give you a choice of appointment times.

There are some occasions when we will not offer appointments, normally when we are carrying out assessment work e.g. tenancy /occupancy checks. This is to ensure properties are legally occupied by the bona fide tenant and have not been vandalised or abandoned etc. Tenancy / occupancy checks also enable us to identify and target services to our more vulnerable customers.

We will keep appointments or tell you if we need to cancel and rearrange.

We will confirm any agreed action in writing.

Corresponding with you



We will answer all letters, information requests and emails within 10 working days, or write within that time to explain the delay in giving you a full answer. Our Service Managers will ensure that they take ownership of the issues you raise with them and that an appropriate response is sent to you when they have completed any investigations which prove to be necessary.

We will write in 'Plain English'.

We will make sure that the full name, address, telephone number and other contact details of the writer are clear on any correspondence we send to you.

Our staff will put an 'out of office' message on e-mail addresses which will include their date of return and an alternative name to contact for emergencies.

Telephone answering



We will answer the telephone within 20 seconds.

In exceptional circumstances we may direct calls to an answer-machine or voicemail facility.

We will respond to any messages left on answer-machines or voicemail within one working day of our staff returning to return to work.

When we answer the phone, we will tell you our name and what section we work in. If we need to re-direct your call, we will tell you why and who we are going to send the call to.

Working in your home



Our staff or contractors who work in your home will:

- Not start work to the outside of your home without letting you know
- Arrange appointments with you if they need access to your home
- Apart from emergencies only work between 8.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday, unless otherwise specifically agreed
- Keep safe all the materials and equipment used on site
- Take away building rubbish from gardens and other areas outside of your property
- Keep your home secure at all times
- Try not to damage your garden plants and if this is unavoidable we will tell you beforehand



- Show your ID before entering your property
- Be clean and tidy in appearance
- Not use radios without your permission
- Not smoke in your property
- Use dust sheets and protective covers to protect your possessions
- Be polite and clear as to what they will be doing in your home
- Ensure that at the end of each day you have working gas, water, electrical, heating and cooking services or an alternative
- Respect your cultural priorities or personal circumstances
- Take meal and comfort breaks away from your property

You have the right to refuse to let people into your home if you are not happy about their behaviour (except in an emergency).

■ What we expect from you

We expect our staff to be polite and courteous when they speak to our customers. We believe that our staff are entitled to expect our customers to act in the same way. If any customers are abusive or violent towards our staff, this will be considered unacceptable and we will take any action available to us under the terms of the tenancy agreement.



Hounslow Homes want to encourage residents to be involved in making decisions about their homes and estates and the services they receive.

As you live in one of the properties managed by Hounslow Homes you will know better than anyone what needs to be done to improve the services we provide. We want to hear what you have to say

There may be a Residents Group or Association on your estate that is already trying to do something. If there is no Resident's Group, the Tenant Participation Officer for your area will be pleased to talk to you and help you. You can contact your Tenant Participation Officer at the area office address set out earlier in this leaflet.

Hounslow Homes has an agreement or compact with its tenants and leaseholders which sets out commitments around:

- Information
- Resources
- Training
- Opportunities
- Supporting Residents Associations
- Increasing Diversity

Please ring our Tenant Participation Officers if you would like a copy of the compact.

Our research shows us that many of you prefer to be involved by simply responding to surveys and we will ensure that this remains a key element of our consultation strategy.



The repairs service

We aim to carry out 95% of emergency repairs within 24 hours. We will tell you if your repair is an emergency when you report it.

We will arrange an appointment with you for any (non-emergency) repairs where we need access to your home. We aim to keep at least 95% of these appointments.

We aim to service all gas heating and hot water boilers every year.

We will ask all our customers who have major work done to their home, including the new kitchens and bathrooms installed as part of our 'decent homes' programme, if they are satisfied with the job, we expect 90% of customers to say that they are satisfied.



Estate services

We aim to remove 98% of offensive (e.g. racist) graffiti within 2 working days and 95% of all non-offensive graffiti within 7 working days.

We will publish details of our caretaking and cleaning standards at each location where a service is provided, so you know what will be done and how often. Ring us on 020 8563 6300 if you cannot see one on your block or estate. We expect our cleaning standards inspections to produce a satisfactory result at least 97% of the time.

We will provide a grass cutting and grounds maintenance service. We will ask you for your views about the service every year. We expect 65% of our customers to express satisfaction.

We will remove abandoned and dangerous vehicles from our estates. We will remove 99% of them within 2 days if they are dangerous or 7 days otherwise from the date they were reported to our contractor.



Tenancy management

When you move into one of our homes we will give you an information pack about your property and local area. We will also carry out a resettlement visit within 6 weeks of your moving in - to check you are fine and the property and services we provide are meeting your expectations - for at least 98% of customers.

We will give you advice on welfare and housing benefit whenever you need it, but we do aim to collect all rent that is owed to us. Our target this year is 97.5%. We will take recovery action against any customers who do not pay their rent.



Anti-social behaviour

Occasionally some of our tenants will experience problems to do with noise or neighbour nuisance. In some cases, this can even take the form of racial harassment, other forms of harassment and domestic violence. We are committed to working with our partners e.g. the Police, Mediation Services, to eradicate these problems and to deal with the perpetrators. We have set up a specialist Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) unit. You can contact them on the general enquiries phone line for your area (see page 6).

Our ASB team includes:

- A Professional Witness service to help us bring cases to court
- Legal advisors
- A concierge service on some of our larger estates
- A mobile neighbourhood warden service
- Specialist ASB estate managers

Every year we ask our customers if they are satisfied with the services we provide in this area. We aim to improve the satisfaction ratings year on year.



Supporting people, sheltered housing and Linkline community alarm services

Hounslow Homes works in partnership with Hounslow Council to house and support members of the community who have particular needs.

This includes tenants living in sheltered housing accommodation. Unless sheltered tenants tell us otherwise we aim to visit them 6 times a week.

Any vulnerable person in the borough can subscribe to the Linkline community alarm service. They can ring the service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, if they need help or assistance.

- We will visit all sheltered tenants within one hour in emergencies
- We will contact all users who have not made contact for more than 6 weeks
- We aim to replace all faulty alarms the day they are reported

We ask our sheltered housing and Linkline customers if they are satisfied with the services provided every year. We expect at least 90% to express satisfaction.



Home ownership services

The Home Ownership unit provides services to tenants who want to buy their property. It also provides services to leaseholders and service charge paying freeholders who have already bought properties, either from the Council or on the open market.

We aim to issue 95% of Right to Buy admittance and offer notices within 28 days and issue details of the price, and conditions of purchase within a further 12 weeks (8 weeks if the property is leasehold) of the notice being issued.

We will collect 100% of the service charges owed to us and we will take action to recover these costs under the terms of the lease if we need to do so.

We are committed to improving the services provided to leaseholders and we will issue an information handbook to set out the services they can expect to receive. We have a Leaseholders Forum so that leaseholders can discuss with officers the services provided and the policies underpinning them.

We are committed to improving leaseholder satisfaction. We ask service charge payers what they think of the services we provide annually and we expect satisfaction levels to rise.



Although Hounslow Homes is committed to providing top quality services to our customers this doesn't happen all the time and you may want to let us know when something has gone wrong by making a complaint. We welcome your complaints. If you are not getting the level of service we say we will provide we want you to tell us about it so we can put it right.

You may have a complaint because we haven't provided the quality of service we have said we would provide. Alternatively, you may not agree with our policies or practices. It doesn't matter whether the service is provided by one of our staff or someone working for our contractors or partners, we need to know if something has gone wrong.

If you want to complain you need to contact our Complaints Officers at our Call Centre. You can:

- Write to us at the Call Centre, Ashmead Road, Feltham, Middlesex TW13 5AB
- Phone us on 020 8583 3737.
We also take Minicom/Typetext calls
- Email us at complaints.team@hounslowhomes.org.uk or online at www.hounslowhomes.org.uk
- Fill in one of the complaints forms, available at all our reception areas and give it to a member of staff or post it to the Call Centre. If you need help, a member of staff will fill it in for you.



The Complaints Officers will arrange, in the first instance, for the manager responsible for the service to reply to you. We will confirm receipt of all our complaints and we will write and tell you when you can expect a reply. This will normally be within two weeks of the date you made your complaint to us. If you are not happy with the reply you receive we will arrange for the matter to be independently investigated.

There is more information about Hounslow Homes services in our 'How to Complain' leaflet. Our Complaints Officers can send this to you or you can pick up a copy from our reception areas.



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