



OUR SERVICE STANDARDS FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

Homes in Somerset

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**Homes in
Somerset**

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Introduction

The Regulator of Social Housing sets out 4 x clear standards which contain specific expectations and the outcomes that Social Housing providers are expected to achieve.

At Homes in Somerset, this provides our framework for our corporate strategy, and our commitment to providing a customer focused service, and our Board, with support from STAC, governs our service delivery and ensures we are meeting the relevant standards.

Our Service Standards have been set as per these guidelines and within the key service delivery areas.

Transparency, influence and accountability

We want to ensure that you, our residents, are central to all that we do, working with us to shape our services and monitor our work.

It is also our promise to you to provide excellent customer service and to act on your feedback.

Customer Services

We are working to ensure:

- you receive services on time
- we treat you fairly and with respect
- we understand your needs and use this information to provide high quality services
- we offer choice wherever possible
- information about our services is accessible to all
- we provide a mix of digital and traditional services to allow our customers to self-serve and access information when needed

You can expect us to:

- answer at least 80% of telephone calls within 2 minutes
- aim to resolve at least 80% of queries at first point of contact
- if the person you want to speak to isn't available, you will be offered a duty officer from the same team to try and assist you with your enquiry



- if you would prefer to speak to a specific officer then a call back can be raised. The officer will aim to make contact within 2 working days and will attempt to contact you on three separate occasions by the most appropriate method
- acknowledge all letters and emails within 2 working days
- provide a full response to letters and emails within 10 working days
- respond to social media messages & enquiries, e.g. Facebook, within 2 working days
- when you visit our reception aim to attend to your enquiry within 10 minutes if you do not have an appointment, or within 5 minutes for pre-booked meetings with an officer but will advise of any delays during busy periods
- ensure that you receive information in a way and format that meets your individual needs
- make appointments and keep them or advise and update you of any unavoidable changes
- acknowledge all complaints within 5 working days and resolve them within the timescales detailed in our Complaints Policy

Customer Feedback

Homes in Somerset wants to ensure that our customers receive a consistent and reliable service.

Customer feedback and complaints are an opportunity for HiS to learn and improve their customer experiences for the future, and to encourage good practice across all service are. We will:

- encourage all feedback, and share any lessons learned from complaints with residents
- use your feedback to improve our services
- deal with compliments and complaints as set out in our Customer Feedback policy
- continue to welcome your views through Tenant Satisfaction Measure surveys (TSM's) and transactional satisfaction questionnaires and resident involvement activities and keep you informed about how we are responding to your feedback and any changes in our services as a result

Resident Involvement

We will provide you with effective ways to shape and assess our services by offering a range of opportunities to become involved including:



- STAC, Service Improvement Panel, Scrutiny Panels, Focus groups, Consultations
STAC will meet 6 times a year and SIP 10 times a year – key priorities to monitor and challenge current performance and develop policies
- Provide you with updates about our performance and how we have acted on your feedback through our newsletters, the Annual Report and through our website
- Support SIP and act on their ideas and suggestions
- Support interested residents to exercise their Right to Buy
- Offering a range of social inclusion events and opportunities helping to improve the quality of life for our residents

Safety and Quality

The Home Standard sets out our work to ensure the quality of your home and our repairs and maintenance service.

Our aim is to manage homes and to make them safe and secure.

We continue to improve your homes so that they:

- meet your needs, are safe, and are energy efficient
- as a minimum, they will achieve the Government's Decent Home Standard
- support with any request for adaptations to your home or assist with a move to alternative accommodation if more viable

All visiting operatives must adhere to our code of practice, which includes wearing the appropriate uniform and PPE, carrying identification, and treating your home with respect.

Repairs Service

We will provide a first-class repair service that is cost effective, delivers repairs 'right first time', offers flexible appointment slots and encourages tenant feedback.

We will aim to complete repairs on the first visit. If we attend a repair and cannot complete the job at that visit, we will arrange a follow up appointment before we leave your home.

Our responsibilities cover the structure and outside of your home and services such as plumbing, electricity and heating systems.

It is your responsibility to ensure any repair requests are reported in a timely manner, and access is allowed to the property for works to be carried out. You can report your repair by:

- using the tenant's online portal on our website
 - emailing your repair to customer.services@homesinsedgemoor.org with information about the repair, including a photograph, and your address and telephone number
 - Via Facebook Messenger
 - Via our Webchat service on our website
 - calling our Customer Services Team – 0800 585 360
 - advising a member of Homes in Sedgemoor staff in person
- Outside of normal working hours emergency repairs will be attended on the day of reporting. All non-emergency repairs will be assessed during the next working day

Safe Homes

Undoubtedly our most basic and important responsibility is to provide safe homes and services for all our residents.

As part of this commitment, we will:

- carry out an annual safety check and service of any gas installation
- complete a full safety inspection of all electrical wiring every 5 years
- work with partners to facilitate adaptations to your home as appropriate
- publish compliance and building safety information on website

Planned Works

The homes we manage are of varying age, style and type, so we must ensure that have accurate stock data to enable investment where needed, and to maintain compliance with all regulatory and legislative requirements.

We aim to:

- ensure that your home complies with the Decent Homes Standard
- survey your home and inspect its condition every 5 years or as required
- publish names of our main contractors on our website and ensure you are familiar with who we are working with

- contact you in advance of any planned major works to your home or communal areas
- ensure the rolling programme of planned works will be available on our website and is available at any time upon request
- before commencing works we will consult with you about any options or choices available and introduce you to your Customer Liaison Officer who will be your main point of contact throughout the works

Tenancy Standard

We want you to feel happy and secure in your home and we will support you to maintain the conditions of your tenancy.

Allocation of Homes

Every week we advertise our available homes on the Homefinder Somerset register. This enables housing applicants the opportunity to bid for homes to rent of their choice across the county.

If you are successful when you make a bid, we will:

- contact you within 5 working days to discuss your application arrange for you to view the property before you sign up for it
- send you a formal offer which includes details of the rent, other charges, the proposed tenancy start date and type of tenancy agreement you will be given
- ensure that you are aware and understand any repairs or works that will be completed at your new home, either before or after you move in

Tenancy Support

We will:

- provide you with information relating to your home and tenancy including details about the building, health and safety, rent and conditions of your tenancy
- provide you with operating manuals as appropriate, and ensure that you know how everything works in your home when you move in
- aim to contact new tenants within 2 months of you moving into your new home to check that you are settling in
- see if you need any support and plan with other agencies where necessary and our partners to help you sustain your tenancy

- give you the opportunity to register free of charge on HomeSwapper a national mutual exchange internet-based service
- offer a self-paying Visiting Service in sheltered housing that includes the provision of a Lifeline alarm and flexible regular weekly, fortnightly or monthly visits depending on level of service bought

Rents

The rent we charge is set within limits defined by the Government. We will help you to prioritise your rent, and provide support as needed, so you can meet our rent first culture.

We will:

- provide you a range of ways to pay your rent: online via our website, by direct debit, standing order, at your local post office, automated card payment via phone
- provide you with a rent statement annually and access to view your rent account online
- explain how we spend your service charges
- work with you to make a sustainable arrangement to pay arrears
- help with referral to other agencies that can help with budgeting and welfare advice
- offer to call you straight back when you telephone our income team, to save your phone bill
- refer / signpost you to partners and support agencies when in financial difficulty

Neighbourhoods and Community Standard

This standard ensures that the areas you share with your neighbours are clean, safe and well maintained. This includes play and recreational areas, car parks, communal areas inside blocks of flats, shared gardens and grassed areas.

We will:

- cut communal grassed areas regularly throughout the growing season
- maintain and trim the edges of communal grassed areas
- prune trees and shrubs in communal areas as required
- keep the car parks managed by us clean and tidy

We want your local area to be free of fly tipping and graffiti so you can enjoy living there.

We will:

- remove offensive graffiti by the next working day
- remove all other graffiti within 5 working days and fly tipping to be removed within 5 working days
- investigate, where appropriate, instances of graffiti and fly-tipping and act against those who do not respect your neighbourhood, the cost of which goes to the estate service charge, unless we know who to charge direct

Safe Neighbourhoods

We want to ensure the health and safety of residents and that your local area is free from hazards.

We complete a rolling programme of health and safety inspections and respond promptly to concerns and issues raised by residents.

We will:

- complete checks twice a year to ensure estates are clean, tidy and free of litter
- where appropriate we will work in partnership with residents and partner agencies to develop targeted action plans to improve your community

Anti-social Behaviour

We want you to live in a safe and secure environment. We will do all we can to prevent and minimise anti-social behaviour, working with partner agencies to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

We try to make it as simple as possible for residents to report anti-social behaviour and we will treat all reports made seriously.

We will:

- treat all reports seriously and confidentially
- respond to complaints of serious nuisance or harassment within 2 working days

- respond to less serious complaints within 10 working days
- provide regular updates to complainants on progress made
- investigate all reports fully before acting

Communal Areas

All communal areas will be kept clean, safe and well-maintained.

There is a cleaning service operating in some blocks of flats with communal areas where there is an identified need for this service. Residents decide what should be covered by the cleaning contract and the details are available to those receiving the service.

We will complete annual fire risk assessments to communal areas in blocks of flats.

STAC and SIP will be our tenant champions for our ground's maintenance and communal cleaning services.

These tenants will regularly provide feedback on the level and quality of service they receive and on any other issues affecting their local area.

During estate walkabouts we want residents and staff to assess the quality of their neighbourhood using set criteria which we have developed.

What we need from you

- treat all staff with politeness and respect
- pay your rent on time and in accordance with your tenancy agreement
- act in a considerate and neighbourly manner and not commit anti-social behaviour
- keep appointments that are made
- report any repairs or maintenance issues with your home
- allow access for repairs and essential compliance works
- complete customer satisfaction surveys to help us improve our services