



Service Offers

Our Promises to you



An independent and accountable tenant-focused organisation working within the community for the community.

South Lakes Housing - Service Offers

Social housing tenants in England benefit from a common set of standards of service that apply to all social landlords. At South Lakes Housing (SLH) we agreed with Tenants Committee how we would comply with these regulations. This involved:

- Inviting tenants, leaseholders and the TSA to a Tenant Conference in June 2010 to ask what you would like to see change
- Using the feedback tenants have provided during the Housing Options Study consultation which was carried out in Summer 2010
- Appointing an Independent Tenant Advisor in July 2010 to lead on plans to develop tenant scrutiny in spending decisions
- Consulting on a new set of service offers, which were approved by the Tenants' Committee in September 2010
- Asking your landlord, South Lakeland District Council, to scrutinise the Service Offers which were published as part of our 'Annual Report to Tenants'.

These 'service offers' are the promises that we make to you about the standards of service that you can expect to receive from SLH, and have been developed as a direct result of the feedback tenants have given us.



Peter Thomas
Chief Executive
January 2011

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All these standards are also available on our website, visit:

www.southlakeshousing.co.uk

Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

SLH Service Offer 1

‘Your Home... Your views’

Customer service, choice and complaints

- Tenants will be treated with the highest level of respect.
- Tenants will be given a contact name and information to help them navigate through the complaints procedure.
- Staff will be trained every year on how to deliver the best customer care and to keep you informed of the progress of your requests for service.
- You can make a complaint in any format about any of these standards which are not met. These will be acknowledged within 2 days and you will be provided with a full explanation within 10 days.
- We will respond to phone calls and texts within 3 days and to written communication within 5 days.

Involvement and empowerment

- Tenants will be consulted on the standard of service that they can expect and arrangements for reviewing service offers at an annual conference.
- Performance against the standards will be reviewed quarterly by tenants and performance reported in the Annual Report.
- Tenants will appoint an Independent Tenant Advisor to review the involvement and empowerment standard every two years.
- We will develop an annual training and development programme to you feel confident about taking part at the level you want.
- We will publish opportunities to get involved and the difference that has been made in our tenant newsletters.
- Tenants who take part in estate walkabouts will be provided with a summary of the actions taken within 4 weeks of the walkabout.

Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants

- We will publish how we are meeting our equality and diversity obligations through an external review of our performance.
- We will provide interpretation and language services and make every reasonable effort to help vulnerable people.
- Staff will be trained every year in the seven equality strands and with tenants with additional support needs.

Repairs and Maintenance

SLH Service Offer 2

'Your Home...Your Repairs'

- We will complete 85% of repairs on the first visit.
- We will offer a range of appointments which best suit you.
- Emergency repairs will be made safe within 48 hours.
- We will confirm the repair and appointment details in either writing or a text message.
- We will let you know by a text message when we are attending to undertake a repair.

Decent Homes

- All properties will be maintained to at least the Government's Decent Homes Standard.

Annual Maintenance Programmes

- We will agree the maintenance programme (including painting standards) with tenants at the start of every year.
- We will give you an appointment for us to carry out an annual service and safety inspections on all SLH gas appliances.
- Tenants will be offered a choice of different fittings such as kitchens and bathrooms.

Vulnerable tenants

- We will make sure that disabled and frail elderly people receive a faster repairs service.

- We will complete installation of major aids and adaptations within 25 days of receipt of the order.
- We will complete minor aids and adaptations within 28 days of you informing us.

Tenancy Standard

SLH Service Offer 3

'Your Home...Your Rights'

- We will write to all applicants on the housing waiting list every year to ensure the information we hold is up to date.
- Applications for rehousing will be administered within 30 days and applicants will be provided with written confirmation.
- We will contact vulnerable people on the housing waiting list to make sure they are bidding for properties under the Choice Based Lettings scheme.
- Tenants wanting a mutual exchange will have their application dealt with within 30 days.
- We will provide housing advice surgeries in rural areas.
- All new tenants will be given a copy of the 'lettable standard' so they know what to expect when they move into a council home.

Leaseholders

- We will issue leaseholders with an estimated invoice for ground rent and leasehold service charges in April each year and issue a final statement of account in March of the following year and advise of any additional charges or refund due.

- We will provide more details about the cost of maintenance and how your service charge has been calculated.
- We will provide instalment facilities to allow payment of service charge invoices over 10 months.
- We will provide you with details of programmes of planned works and improvements to your estate and arrange for contractors to contact you to discuss carrying out works to your home at a reasonable cost.
- We will arrange for our gas contractor to provide gas servicing to you at a competitive price.
- We will hold regular Leaseholder Service Improvement Group meetings to bring leaseholders together to agree priorities for improvement.
- We will offer a responsive repairs service to leaseholders for all repairs. This will include a 24-hour, 365 day emergency call out service for emergency repairs.

Rents

- We will give you at least 4 weeks written notice before we make any change to your rent or service charge.
- We will provide you with a wide range of payment methods (Direct Debit, Swipe Cards, Internet Payments, Cash or cheque, Touch Tone Telephone Payments or Debit Card).
- We will provide you with a rent statement every 3 months.
- We will provide an annual breakdown of service charges.
- We will notify new Direct Debit accounts of their payments within 10 working days of receipt of their mandate and give 10 days notice of any changes to the amount to be collected.

- We will provide a new or replacement payment card within 3 working days of request.

Sheltered Housing

- We will contact each tenant every day.
- We will visit every tenant at least once a week.
- We will answer alarm calls within one minute and immediately call out the appropriate service and/(Mobile) or Scheme Manager to assist.
- We will respond in person to call outs for assistance on average within 15 minutes.
- We will carry out monthly health and safety inspections of all sheltered housing schemes involving tenants.
- We will carry out an inspection of the grounds twice a year involving tenants.

Right to Buy

- We will acknowledge receipt of your application within 20 working days and send a house/freehold offer letter within 12 weeks of receipt of an application.
- We will explain the implications of becoming a leaseholder to you in an induction Interview as soon as is practicable after your application is received.
- We will send a flat/lease-hold offer within 16 weeks of receipt of an application.
- We will instruct the Councils' Legal Section within 10 working days of receipt of tenant's instruction to proceed with the sale.

Neighbourhood & Community Standard

SLH Service Offer 4

'Your Home...Your Neighbourhood'

- We will talk to Residents' Associations to see if there is a requirement to establish 'neighbourhood standards' for different parts of the district.
- We will make an annual public commitment to work in partnership with other agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour.
- We will remove offensive graffiti within 1 working day and all other graffiti within 5 working days.
- If you experience anti-social behaviour we will respond to serious incidents involving threats or actual violence within 1 day and lesser problems within a maximum of 10 days.
- We will carry out inspections of our larger estates (25 properties or more) fortnightly to ensure they are clean, tidy and well-kept.
- We will visit all new tenants 6 weeks after their tenancy commenced.
- We will visit all introductory tenants after 9 months and confirm in writing when the tenancy becomes secure.
- We will inform tenants about which repairs will be carried out in communal areas.
- Community grants will be administered by the Grant Applications Panel and the outcomes will be published in the newsletter and on the SLH website.

- We will provide you with a decision for your request to carry out alterations to your home within 30 working days.
- We will visit all our tenants at least once every two years.

Value for Money

SLH Service Offer 5

- Tenants will be involved in scrutinising value for money within Service Improvement Groups.
- Tenants will be involved in monitoring the performance of contractors.
- Tenants and leaseholders will be able to track spending on all purchase orders over £500, which will be made available on our website and updated every 3 months.
- We will involve tenants in spending decisions, procurement processes and where to reinvest savings.
- We will include a dedicated VFM section in copies of SLH News.
- We will compare our performance and costs with other housing organisations.

Further information

If you require further information or would like to discuss any of the Standards listed in this booklet, please contact one of our offices - details at the bottom of this page.

You can get a copy of this document in different formats such as large print, Braille, audio, or in a different language by calling **0845 057 0080**.

Pode obter uma cópia deste documento em vários formatos, como por exemplo em Braille, áudio, ou numa outra língua. Para tal ligue para o 0845 057 0080.

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Registered in England and Wales, company registered number 04876696.

ISOQAR certificate number 1570

GASF8 01/11