

SLH Service Standards – October 2017

The following service standards have been agreed by SLH Board following consultation with the tenant scrutiny group in 2017 and staff. The consultation focused on the need to monitor against a small number of standards which are measurable.

The document ensures that SLH complies with the Regulatory Standards set by the 'Regulator for Social Housing' which states that landlords should agree and monitor 'local offers'. This document also supersedes SLH's previous standards prescribed in the 'Offer Document' which expired in March 2017. The standards will be monitored by the Tenants' Committee and a summary of performance will be included within the annual tenant report.

Governance & Viability Standard

1. SLH Board will assess their compliance with the Governance and Financial Viability Standard annually and will certify their compliance with the annual accounts.
2. SLH will recruit the majority of Board directors based upon their skills but will provide support for any prospective tenant who wishes to become a board director and who meets the 'bronze' level requirements within the board competency framework.
3. The SLH Board will agree a policy for tenant involvement every 3 years, including methods of involving tenants in the governance and scrutiny of the organisation's housing management service

Value for Money Standard

1. Key Performance Indicators covering a range of quality and unit cost data will be monitored by the Tenants' Committee and published quarterly on the SLH website.
2. SLH will develop an action plan for managing the effects of welfare reform on the business and with tenants.

Rent Standard

1. SLH will provide a clear information to demonstrate the breakdown of charges for tenants, sheltered housing tenants and for leaseholders.
2. SLH will consult tenants before issuing any new service charges.

Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard

1. SLH will agree an annual tenant engagement plan with the Tenants' Committee which will include; resources available, training, involvement in policy development, service standards, performance monitoring and details for upcoming tenant scrutiny and complaints panel.
2. SLH will consult tenants on any proposed changes of ownership including any actual or potential advantages and disadvantages (including costs) to tenants over the short, medium and long term.
3. SLH will provide tenants with an online portal to include; rent payment facility, repairs ordering & appointments, rent statements etc.
4. SLH will record customer contacts on a Customer Relationship Management system including a target time of 2 working days to ring tenants back.
5. SLH aim to answer 99% of calls and resolve around 80% of enquiries first time.
6. SLH will acknowledge written/online communication within 48 hours and will provide a full response within 5 working days (where this is not possible, this will be explained in advance).

7. SLH will commission an external company to undertake a survey to gain tenant's view across the range of services every 3 years.
8. SLH will consult a tenant group to develop choices for improvement products such as kitchens, bathrooms, tiling, doors, flooring & decoration.
9. SLH will include tenants in the selection of major works contracts.
10. SLH will communicate a programme of external painting.

Home Standard

1. SLH will produce an annual investment programme to ensure that the stock complies with the decent homes standard. Should there be any period of non-compliance, SLH will explain this to tenants and report on progress in annual tenant reports.
2. SLH will develop an Asset Management Strategy which balances planned and responsive repairs, and value for money.
3. SLH will meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in SLH homes (reporting performance including; gas servicing, fire safety and electrical safety etc.).
4. SLH will consult tenants and publish a repairs digital handbook every 3 years.
5. SLH will provide an appointment for repairs that require tenant access.
6. SLH will offer the following target times for repairs;
 - a. Emergency repairs within 4 hours, complete within 2 working days
 - b. Urgent repairs within 7 working days
 - c. Routine repairs within 21 working days
 - d. Other repairs within 60 working days
7. SLH will notify tenants of planned improvement works (e.g. kitchens, bathrooms, roofing etc) within a minimum of 28 days before works are scheduled to start.
8. SLH will publish a lettings standard for repairing empty properties including issuing new tenants with appointments for outstanding minor repairs.
9. SLH will either provide permission or deny permission for requests for tenants to carry out their own alterations within 15 working days (where requests require the involvement of other agencies then this may be longer e.g. planning approval).
10. SLH will complete disabled minor adaptations within 30 working days (e.g. grab rail) and major disabled adaptations within 60 working days (e.g. level access shower).
11. SLH will provide energy efficiency products to help reduce utility bills and reduce carbon footprint including for example; boilers, insulation, double glazing etc.

Tenancy Standard

1. SLH will advertise the majority of vacant properties on the Cumbria Choice (Choice Based Lettings system).
2. Where SLH uses probationary tenancies, these shall be for a maximum of 12 months, or a maximum of 18 months where reasons for extending the probationary period have been given and where the tenant has the opportunity to request a review.
3. SLH shall grant tenants who have been moved into alternative accommodation during any redevelopment or other works a tenancy with no less security of tenure on their return to settled accommodation.
4. SLH will respond to applications for mutual exchanges within 7 working days.
5. SLH will provide tenants with a tenancy agreement at the start of the tenancy.

6. SLH will respond to requests for a 'succession' (where a family member wishes to succeed to the tenancy of the deceased tenant) or 'assignment' (where a tenant wishes to assign their tenancy to another person in the family) within 30 days.
7. SLH will advertise and let garages via the SLH website.

Neighbourhood & Community Standard

1. SLH will investigate reports of anti-social behaviour within 10 working days.
2. SLH will help victims and witnesses anti-social behaviour by signposting them to support services.
3. SLH will involve tenants in monitoring the grounds maintenance contract.
4. SLH will try to deal with vandalism, graffiti and fly tipping on SLH land within 10 working days of notification.
5. SLH will work with others to help provide activities for younger tenants and support local community groups.
6. SLH will provide fencing if there is a defined need e.g. wear and tear of existing, safeguarding concerns and dogs.

Independent Living

1. SLH will provide Independent Living Officers to support older and vulnerable tenants living in Sheltered Schemes and other tenures.
2. SLH will complete monthly health and safety inspections in sheltered housing schemes.

Home Ownership

1. SLH will respond to initial Right to Buy applications within 5 working days.
2. SLH will provide annual service charge letters to leaseholders.
3. SLH will work with partners including the district council and developers to identify opportunities for building new homes.