

## How to contact us

Visit our website and register with **MySovereign** to view the balance of your account, pay your rent, report or track a repair and much more!  
[www.sovereign.org.uk](http://www.sovereign.org.uk)



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\*Calls cost the same or less than calls to 01 and 02 prefixed numbers from a BT landline. Other networks and calls from mobiles may vary.

If you need this document in another format (such as large print or a different language), or would like help reading it, please let us know.



## Our service standards For leaseholders and shared owners



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## When you need us

- We will acknowledge all enquiries or requests for service within 1 working day, and resolve them within 10 working days or by agreement with you.
- We want to make it easy to use our services and we will offer you a range of ways to do this.
- We will always give you the option of speaking to a person.
- We will provide you with a named Leasehold Services Officer to deal with any queries and will tell you if there are any changes to the staff who manage your property.
- We will have a 'can do, will do' attitude.
- We will be polite, friendly and respectful and we expect you to be the same.
- We will be clear about what we can do, and honest about what we can't.
- We will listen and learn from your experience of using our services.
- We will actively seek your thoughts and suggestions on how we can improve.

### How will you know if we've achieved our standard?

You will find it easy to use our service and will be happy with the outcome of your enquiry.

## Finding and moving into your new home

- We will give you clear information to help you decide where you want to live.
- If we can't consider you for a home, we will tell you why.
- You will have an opportunity to view your new home before you move in.
- You will be advised when your keys are available for collection.
- We will explain your rights and responsibilities as a resident, and provide you with a handbook.
- When you move in, we will tell you where things are and how they work.

### How will you know if we've achieved our standard?

You will be satisfied with your home.

## Faults with your newly-built home

### Defects

As a result of their construction, new homes sometimes develop faults known as defects. If the property is under 12 months old, the builder may need to return to carry out the repair.

- We will arrange for the builder to fix a defect within an agreed timescale, depending on the work required.
- We will make sure that the builder contacts you to make an appointment.
- We will check with you that the work has been completed to the agreed standard.
- We expect you to let us into your home to inspect and/or carry out repairs and will give you reasonable notice of this.

### How will you know if we've achieved our standard?

You will be satisfied with how any defects have been resolved in your home.

## When something needs repairing

As a leaseholder you are responsible for any repairs within your home. We are responsible for repairs within the communal areas such as the stairwells and shared gardens.

- When you contact us we will clarify whose responsibility the repair is.
- We will complete repairs first time wherever possible to minimise inconvenience and save on cost.
- We will leave the communal area clean and tidy.
- We will check a sample of repairs with you to make sure the repairs were completed to your satisfaction.

### How will you know if we've achieved our standard?

You will be satisfied with the repairs service you have received.

## What's the cost?

### Setting rent and service charges

- Before you sign for your home, we will make available clear details of rent and any service charges you will need to pay as part of your lease or as a shared owner.
- We will provide you with a rent statement each year or if you ask for one.
- When the service charges are reviewed we will write to you to explain how the cost has been worked out and tell you about any proposed changes. If appropriate we will hold a meeting to discuss this.
- We will provide you with a summary of your reserve/sinking fund if applicable. (This fund is built up through the service charge and covers the replacement of key communal facilities such as the roof or door entry systems.)

#### How will you know if we've achieved our standard?

You will understand what you have to pay and what it is for.

## Collecting rent and service charges

- We expect you to pay your rent and service charge in full and in advance.
- We will offer you a wide range of methods for payment.
- We will contact you if you miss a payment.
- We will help and advise you about any benefits you may be entitled to.
- If you have difficulty making payments we will advise you on your options including Reverse Staircasing, Buy Back, and signpost you to advice agencies.
- We will agree a payment plan if you owe us rent or other debts.
- If all else fails, we will take legal action if you break your agreed payment plan, and charge you the cost of doing this. This may include forfeiture and loss of your home.
- We will always pursue any debt, even after you have moved out.

#### How will you know if we've achieved our standard?

You will be satisfied with the advice you received if you fell behind with your rent.

## Communities you want to live in

- We will keep the grounds we own around your home clean and well maintained.
- We will publicise our communal cleaning and grounds maintenance specification of works
- We expect you to keep your garden tidy and not dump rubbish.
- We will work with you to understand and respond to concerns and priorities in your community.
- We will encourage and support you to get involved in managing and improving your community.
- We will keep you informed of our activities in your community.
- We will work in partnership with you and other agencies to keep the neighbourhood well maintained and safe.

### How will you know if we've achieved our standard?

You will feel happy with the area around your home and with the area as a place to live.

## Anti-social behaviour

### Tackling it together

- We recognise the harm that anti-social behaviour can cause and will work in partnership with other agencies, such as the police, to prevent and tackle it.
- We expect you to keep to the terms of your tenancy and not act in an anti-social way.
- We want you to report anti-social behaviour to us when it happens and we will provide a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, reporting service.
- We will assess all reports of anti-social behaviour to check the level of risk or harm to the individual and give you the name of the person dealing with your case.
- We will contact you within 5 working days of any report or within 1 day if it is assessed as urgent.
- We will treat reports of anti-social behaviour confidentially and witnesses can stay anonymous
- We will agree an action plan with you, advising what we can do and what you can do to resolve things.
- We will keep you informed of any progress but also expect you to keep in contact with us until it is resolved.
- Where we have successfully taken action and resolved a case of anti-social behaviour, we may publicise the results.

### How will you know if we've achieved our standard?

You will be satisfied with how your anti-social behaviour report was managed.

## Getting involved and influencing services

- We will encourage and support you to get involved and to influence how we deliver services and make improvements.
- You will have the opportunity to set local priorities and standards through our Regional Panels.
- We will have a Residents' Council that scrutinises how we deliver services and achieve value for money.
- We will make sure that you are consulted on key changes to our services.
- We will tell you what we have done in response to your feedback and how we have changed our services as a result and what we have not been able to change and why.
- We will invite interested leaseholders to join the Home Ownership Panel.

### How will you know if we've achieved our standard?

You will be satisfied that we take your views into account.

## Your rights and obligations

- We will expect you to keep to the terms of your lease agreement and we will take action if you do not.
- We will respond to all enquiries regarding your lease.
- If you wish to make any structural or major changes to your property you will need our approval first.

### How will you know if we've achieved our standard?

You will be satisfied with us as a landlord.

## Providing modern homes - planned works

- We will publish our programme of planned works for all our homes.
- We will let you know of any planned works and improvements which may affect you at least 6 months in advance.
- We will give you a choice of fixtures and fittings where we can.
- We will explain what possible disruption you can expect and we will try to keep this to a minimum.
- When we fit something new, we will explain how to use it.
- We will check that the work has been completed to the agreed standard.
- We will follow the Section 20 consultation guidelines for major works. For example, if one leaseholder would be expected to pay more than £250 towards the work we will give you the required notice (up to 3 months) of any planned works.
- We will set up a meeting with you when major works are planned on your block.
- We will explain our intentions and discuss the process with you.
- We will offer flexible payment options for major works where there are insufficient funds in the reserve/sinking fund.

### How will you know if we've achieved our standard?

You will be satisfied with the quality of your home and the latest planned works or improvement we made to it.

## When things go wrong

- We will make it easy for you to contact us when things go wrong.
- We will tell you who is dealing with your complaint and explain the process.
- We will investigate your complaint quickly and thoroughly.
- We will keep you informed and let you know the outcome of the investigation.
- We will learn from the complaint and improve our services as a result of the outcomes.

### How will you know if we've achieved our standard?

You will be satisfied with how your complaint was dealt with.

## Before you go

- We will respond within 10 working days to sales requests.
- We will provide up to date information about your account.
- We will provide you with clear instructions about the sales process.

### How will you know if we've achieved our standard?

You will find it easy to use our services and will be happy with the outcome.

## A fair service for everyone

Communities are made up of people who are different. We will work to eliminate discrimination and we will treat everyone fairly, regardless of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital status (including civil partnerships), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.

- We will deliver our services fairly and honestly.
- We will ask you about yourself and your household, to understand your needs, tailor our services and help us comply with equality law.
- If your situation changes, we will talk to you about what other services would be of help to you.
- We will act responsibly with the information we hold, and comply with data protection law.

### How will you know if we've achieved our standard?

You will find it easy to use our services and will be happy with the outcome.

