



LINKHOUSING

Tenants' Service Charter



ستنتج جمعية لينك هذه الوثيقة عند الطلب بلغة بريلا للعميان وعلى شريط سمعي وبخط كبير
وبلغات الجاليات. للمزيد من المعلومات الرجاء الاتصال مع جمعية لينك على رقم الهاتف
08451 400 100 وذكر الإشارة رقم 05707

কেউ অনুরোধ করলে 'লিংক' এই ডকুমেন্টটি ব্রেইলে, অডিও টেপে, বড় ছাপার হরফে এবং বিভিন্ন
কমিউনিটির ভাষায় পাওয়া যাবে। আরো জানার জন্য 'লিংক' এর সাথে 08451 400 100 নম্বরে
যোগাযোগ করবেন এবং রেফারেন্স নম্বর 05707 উল্লেখ করবেন।

在要求下，Link 集團可將這資訊以盲文、錄音帶、大字印刷、以及
各社區語言出版。欲得知進一步詳情，請聯絡 Link 集團及說明檔案
編號 05707，電話：08451 400 100。

درخواست کرنے پر لنک Link ان معلومات کو بریل (اندھوں کا رسم الخط)، سننے والی ٹیپ، بڑے حروف کی طباعت اور کیوبٹنی میں یولی جانے
والی زبانوں میں پیش کرے گی۔ مزید معلومات کیلئے لنک سے 08451 400 100 پر رابطہ قائم کریں اور ریفرنس نمبر 05707 کا حوالہ دیں۔

लिंक (Link) आवासन संगठन ईस जानकारी को अंधलीपी, ओडियो, बड़े अक्षरोमे
तथा समुदायी भाषाओमे निवेदन करने पर आपके लिए बनवा सकते हैं। ज्यादा
जानकारी के लिए संपर्क करें 08451 400 100 और रेफरेन्स नंबर दे 05707

W przypadku, ze tutejsza informacja bedzie potrzeba w innej wersji n.p.
duzy druk, kaseta audio, lub w innym jezyku, prosze sie sontaktowac z
nami pod numerem 08451 400 100.

**Link will produce this information on request in Braille, Audio Tape, Large Print and
Community Languages. To find out more, contact Link on 08451 400 100.**

Tenants' Service Charter

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Link is always keen to improve the way it serves its tenants. We talked to many of you about what standards you expect from us and used what you told us to develop this Tenants' Service Charter.



When you use our services you have the right to be treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. Customer Service is at the heart of everything we do and we want to do it well, all the time. This charter sets out minimum service standards against which we can be measured.

By giving us valuable feedback we can report back to you on how you feel we are measuring up ... complaints and compliments all welcome! We hope that this Tenants' Service Charter meets your expectations. Thanks to all of the tenants who contributed to its development.

Maureen Middleton
Director of Housing

1. First impressions

In all your contact with Link we will:

- Treat everyone who uses our services fairly and equally
- Be honest and courteous at all times
- Respect your right to confidentiality
- Ensure, by listening to you, that your needs are identified and understood
- Wherever possible, see things from your point of view
- Keep any personal information secure and in accordance with data protection legislation
- Always identify ourselves by name or by name badge
- Make sure what we do and how we do it takes into account the needs of people with disabilities and those whose first language is not English

2. Helping you on the phone

Our Customer Service Centre (CSC) is open on Monday from 8am to 5pm, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9am to 5pm and on Thursday from 9am to 6pm. When you telephone our CSC you will hear the following message, which allows your call to be directed to the most appropriate department:

Thank you for calling Link Housing, we have changed the options please listen carefully and choose one of the following to speak to a member of staff.	
If you are a tenant with a gas heating or boiler repair including a leaky radiator	Press 1
If you have any other type of repair	Press 2
If you are interested in renting one of our properties	Press 3
If you have a query regarding your rent account	Press 4
For factoring or shared ownership queries	Press 5
For any other issues	Press 6



If you are unsure about who you need to speak to or want a member of staff to direct your call, choose option 6.

When we answer the phone we will:

- Answer within 20 seconds
- Identify and introduce ourselves
- Only transfer your call if this is necessary – we will tell you who you are being transferred to and tell the person taking the call who you are and the nature of your call
- If the person you wish to speak to is unavailable, your call will be returned within one working day

If you call the CSC outside our opening hours, you will hear a message giving an alternative contact number for emergencies or you can leave us a message.

3. Getting the writing “right”

When you write to us, your letter will be electronically scanned and date stamped and sent to the addressee or to the most appropriate person/department. This is to ensure we have a record of when your correspondence was received. We will then:



- Respond within seven working days or, for more complex issues, we will acknowledge receipt within seven days and advise you of the progress of your enquiry
- Reply in plain English, in a standard format and avoid using technical terms and jargon
- Reply in your preferred language if that is not English and you have told us your preference
- Ensure all letters have the name, address and job title of the person sending the letter and telephone number of the Customer Service Centre
- If you send a fax, we will respond to you as outlined above

4. Contacting us by email

If you wish to correspond by email you should send your message to csc@linkhaltd.co.uk. You will receive an automated acknowledgement. The email will then be filed in your online record and sent to the addressee or to the most appropriate person/department. As with letters, this is to ensure that we have a record of when your correspondence was received. We will:



- Respond by email or letter within five working days of receiving your first email OR
- For more complex items/issues, acknowledge receipt within five working days, advising you of the progress of your enquiry

Note: we ask that you send all emails to csc@linkhaltd.co.uk. If you email an individual member of staff directly, we are not able to monitor the response and ensure you receive a reply within the correct timescales.

5. Visiting you at home

Our Housing Officers spend the majority of their time out-and-about in your local area, bringing our services to you. Most of the time they will make an appointment to visit you at a mutually convenient time. They may also pop in to see you from time to time without an appointment, to find out how you are doing, to make sure you are happy with our services or to ask for your views and ideas on a new policy or procedure we are developing.

When we visit you at home we will:



- Arrive within 10 minutes of a pre-arranged appointment, or telephone to advise of any delay
- Leave a calling card when contact has not been possible
- Tell you in advance if we need to cancel an appointment
- Identify and introduce ourselves and show you our ID card
- Treat your home with respect
- Request that you do not smoke during our visit (this is in line with legislation banning smoking in the workplace)
- Be sensitive if we are discussing awkward issues such as rent arrears or neighbour disputes
- Confirm in writing any agreed actions from the meeting within five working days

6. Visiting us in the office

While we are most likely to visit you at home, there may be occasions when we give you an appointment to visit us in the Customer Service Centre or at one of our regional offices or surgeries. You may also request an appointment to speak to a member of staff in one of our offices.



- If you have a pre-arranged appointment with a member of staff, they will meet you within five minutes of the agreed time
- If you do not have a pre-arranged appointment, we will tell you how long you may have to wait to see the person you want to see, so you can decide whether to stay or make an alternative appointment
- If the person you want to see is not in the office and there is no alternative member of staff who can help, you will be given an appointment to return to the office or a date/time when we can visit you at home
- We will discuss confidential matters with you in a private area
- We will provide a comfortable environment (with disabled access wherever possible)
- We wear identification badges and provide you with details of our name and position

7. Repairs and maintenance

One of the most important services we provide is the repairs and maintenance service. We want to ensure that we carry out any repairs for which we are responsible quickly and efficiently. How quickly we carry out a repair depends on what kind of repair it is. Definitions and examples are given in the Tenants' Handbook. Generally speaking, however, there are three categories which have different response times:

- **Emergency** (we will attend within three hours)
- **Urgent** (we will attend within two working days)
- **Routine** (we will attend within two working days)

We have a fourth category for repairs covering issues that do not cause discomfort, inconvenience or nuisance. These can take up to 20 working days. When you phone us we will tell you what category the repair falls into and when you can expect it to be carried out. We will:

- Take repairs requests by telephone, in person, by letter or email or through the online form on our website (www.linkhousing.org.uk)
- Take note of as many details as possible in order to diagnose the problem and arrange for the correct work to be carried out
- Offer you a unique reference number when you report a repair to enable you to make follow up enquiries easily
- If appropriate, arrange for an inspection of the repair once it has been completed
- Arrange repairs appointments between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday
- Contact you in advance to re-arrange the appointment if we are not able to attend on the original date agreed with you
- Aim to complete the repair within one visit
- Ensure all contractors wear a uniform and carry an identification card
- Aim to meet your expectations about the quality of work by carrying out regular random telephone satisfaction surveys
- Carry out inspections of 10% of completed repairs to measure value for money

8. Major repairs and improvements to your home

We are committed to maintaining your home to a high standard by replacing items such as kitchens, bathrooms, windows and central heating when this is needed. We will also ensure that the outside of your property is kept in good condition by replacing roofs and external doors and painting communal/external areas when required. We have published a five-year planned maintenance programme which is reviewed annually. Copies are sent to all tenants. When we plan to carry out maintenance work in your home or communal areas, we will:

- Write to you to give at least eight weeks' notice of what we want to do and tell you when we intend to carry out the work
- Confirm this at least 10 days before the project is due to start
- Give you the opportunity to make choices where possible, such as about the style of a new kitchen or the colour of paintwork
- Give you a contact phone number to report any problems with any work that is being carried out
- Take care of your property and possessions and protect them to the best of our ability from damage, dust and paint
- Reconnect and test all services such as water, gas and electricity as soon as possible at the end of the working day
- Supervise the work to make sure it is going well and is being carried out both to our and your satisfaction
- Ask your opinion when the work is complete to ensure you are happy with it

9. Money matters

We plough most of the income we receive from rents into providing a high quality management and maintenance service, improving existing properties and building new homes. In addition to a basic rent, some tenants also pay a charge for services they receive such as the maintenance of common garden areas and communal stair or window cleaning.

When tenants do not pay their rent it means we have less money to provide these services, so we work to ensure that all tenants pay their rent in full and on time. In order to ensure we manage our rents effectively we will:

- Set targets each year to reduce the number of tenants who have missed payments
- Offer a wide range of ways to pay rent, including by Direct Debit, through Allpay and online via our website
- Give you 28 days' notice of any increase to your rent or service charges
- Offer you help and advice if you have difficulty paying your rent
- Make early contact with you and maintain contact should you fall into arrears
- Give you advice on claiming Housing Benefit
- Set up realistic repayment schedules to enable you to pay any arrears
- Offer you the service of Link's Advice Team for money and welfare rights advice
- Take legal action against you if you do not make sufficient regular payments and you have not contacted us
- As a last resort, consider eviction when all other attempts to resolve the situation have failed

10. Managing our estates

Making sure our estates are maintained to a high standard is very important to us. It determines how they are perceived and valued, both by our tenants and by the wider community. In order to create and maintain a safe and secure environment for all those living on our estates we will:



- Ensure we are visible on estates – for example, our staff wear jackets displaying the Link logo
- Carry out regular inspections to gardens and common areas, including footpaths, and take appropriate remedial action where required
- Where possible, ask tenants to accompany us on our inspections
- Record our findings and check to ensure that any work carried out is up to our standard
- Remind tenants whose gardens are untidy of their agreement to maintain their gardens
- Remove offensive graffiti within 24 hours
- Where it is provided, maintain a high quality cleaning and grounds maintenance service
- Liaise with the police and local authority environmental health and cleansing departments, where appropriate

11. Renting a property from us

Our income is also affected by the length of time it takes us to let our properties and the amount we need to spend on vacated properties to bring them up to a standard suitable for re-let. In order to ensure that our houses are let as quickly and as fairly as possible we will:



- Set yearly targets identifying how long it should take us to let a house – these targets will be published and we will let you know how we are performing
- Inspect all empty properties within three days of receiving the keys from the previous tenant
- Ensure all properties meet our minimum “re-let” standard before the new tenants move in
- Ensure that new applications for housing are processed within three working days
- Publish quarterly on our website details of how many people applied for each property, how long they had to wait to be housed and whether a priority pass was used

12. Equal opportunities

Equality and diversity underpin all our activities and services. When delivering our services, we never discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, marital status, family circumstances, political or sexual orientation, medical condition or disability.

To ensure we achieve this we will:

- Monitor the ethnic background of tenants and those who apply to us for housing
- Monitor the sexual orientation of our tenants
- Monitor the disabilities of our tenants
- Use plain English in our leaflets and publications and provide them in other languages if necessary
- Provide information on audio tape or in large print if you request it
- Provide the services of interpreters and signers for the hard of hearing and provide hearing loops in all our offices

13. Complaints

Our commitment is to provide high quality services. Occasionally, however, things can go wrong. If this happens, we want you to tell us about it. Complaints are an important source of information on how we are performing so we encourage you to let us know if our service has fallen short of your expectations.

When you complain about the level of service you have received or about a mistake you think we have made, we will try to sort out your complaint on the spot. There are times, however, when you may want to complain formally and we aim to make this process as easy, open and straightforward as possible. We will:

- Treat every complaint seriously and impartially
- Formally log your complaint and send you an acknowledgement within three working days
- Reply to your complaint within 10 working days of the acknowledgement and, if this is not possible, keep you informed of the progress of your complaint
- Let you know about any improvements we have made to our services as a result of your complaint
- Publish the number of formal complaints in the tenants' newsletter – "Housing News" – and report where we have made a change/improvement to our service as a result of a complaint



14. Reporting back

In order to ensure that we are delivering on our promises, we need to measure our performance. Our “report card” will be published in our tenants newsletter and will include the following information:

- The number of phone calls received and successfully answered within 20 seconds
- The number of repairs carried out within our set timescales
- The level of satisfaction with our repairs service
- The level of rent arrears
- The average time it takes us to relet a property

Everyone has the right to be treated with respect, dignity and courtesy – whether tenant or staff. All the calls to our Customer Service Centre are recorded, so we can ensure this is the case.



Link Housing Association Limited is a company registered in Scotland. Company registration number SC216300.
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