

Customer Charter and Service Standards

2010-2014



St. Leger Homes
OF DONCASTER



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Information can be made available in other formats such as Large Print, Braille or Audio Tape on request

stlegerhomes.co.uk

our commitment to you

St. Leger Homes of Doncaster understands good customer care reflects the whole culture of the organisation. Good customer care is based upon not just the knowledge and skills of an individual but also upon the way the organisation as a whole presents a clear, positive and professional message to its customers, partners and other stakeholders recognising that everybody is an existing or potential customer.

The experience our customers have when they contact us influences their perception of us. Whether their experience is good or bad, that opinion lasts until the next time they contact us, or in some cases forever. This means we need to ensure that no matter which member of staff a customer speaks to, we get it right every time.

This goes beyond just being polite or courteous; this should occur as a matter of course. It means listening to customers, providing them with a full and informed response, not passing them around from department to department and in some cases going the extra mile and exceeding their expectations.

Our aim is to ensure that whenever customers phone, visit or contact us in any way, they consistently receive excellent standards of customer care and customer service. We expect every member of staff within St. Leger Homes to meet these standards and we ensure that our staff have, and will continue to receive regular customer care training.

St. Leger Homes is committed to keeping you fully informed about what we do and how we do it. We will work with you, our customers, in the monitoring of our performance against this Charter and service standards.

Our tenants, the main customers of St. Leger Homes, have helped us to create this Charter to ensure it contains the services and the service standards that are important to customers. All of our staff have committed to deliver the standards contained within this Charter and to deliver excellent services to our customers.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Jordan', set against a yellow background.

Susan Jordan
Chief Executive

service commitments

Underpinning our Customer Charter are three key themes:

- Customer Care
- Equality and Diversity
- Involving People

Our service commitments for each of these underpinning themes are set out below:

Customer Care

- Staff and contractors will be helpful, respectful and courteous at all times.
- Staff and contractors will always wear name badges.
- We will respect the privacy and confidentiality of all our customers.
- We will listen to customers and ensure that your views are taken into account when making decisions.
- If we are unable to meet a customer's service request, then we will explain why.
- We aim to get it right first time, every time.
- If we do get things wrong we will learn from our mistakes.
- We aim to go the extra mile and exceed customer expectations.

Equality and Diversity

- We will make diversity part of our culture.
- We will make sure our offices are easy for everyone to get into and move about in.
- We will treat everyone as an individual, with respect and decency, regardless of sexual orientation, race, religion/belief, gender, disability, age or gender identity.
- We will respond to and investigate any complaints of bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation.
- We will provide the information you need in ways that you find easy to understand and in alternative formats.
- Where, based on a needs assessment, a decision is taken to provide a translated document, we

will translate documents within 10 working days depending on the document type and length.

- We will take account of any particular needs you may have and try to accommodate them.
- We will only work with contractors and other agencies that share our commitment to be fair to all.
- We will help to create communities where all people are valued and can live in peaceful enjoyment of their home, free from fear of discrimination.

Involving People

- We will aim to reach and include everyone.
- We will involve people in decisions that matter to them.
- We will seek views early, well before important decisions are made and at all key stages.
- We will empower people to set standards, monitor them and challenge performance.
- We will offer a range of ways to get involved so that people can readily influence the things that matter to them in a way that suits them.
- We will actively promote opportunities for involvement and make sure people understand how to access them.
- We will include tenants at every level of our governance structure including membership of our Board.
- We will encourage, support and help customers to form local groups by giving advice and financial assistance.
- We will publish a bi monthly tenants' newsletter.



services and standards

Accessing our services

When you phone us we will:

- Always aim to deal with your queries quickly and effectively at the first point of contact.
- Ensure that if we are unable to provide answers straight away, we will keep you regularly informed until your queries are satisfactorily resolved.
- Always introduce ourselves in a friendly and polite manner.
- Ensure that if you need specialist help and advice, our teams will refer you to the most appropriate member of staff and your query will be dealt with quickly and effectively.

Service standard	Target	Monitoring
Answer your call within 20 seconds	95%	VIP/DMBC Telephone reports
Ensure that staff identify themselves when answering the telephone	100%	Mystery shopping

When you write to us we will:

- Deal with your letters, emails and website enquiries quickly, effectively and courteously.
- Ensure that any letters and emails we send, and any responses to website enquiries, are clear, easy to understand and provided in a format tailored to your needs.
- Include details of who is dealing with your enquiry and how they can be contacted.

Service standard	Target	Monitoring
Resolve and respond to your written enquiries within 10 working days	95%	Customer Care Online reports

When you want to make a complaint or give us feedback we will:

- Listen to you and take all feedback seriously.
- Aim to resolve all complaints to your satisfaction.
- Learn from what you tell us to improve services.
- Compensate you if we get it wrong in line with our compensation policy.

Service standard	Target	Monitoring
Acknowledge your complaint within three working days	100%	Customer Care Online reports
Resolve your complaint and provide you with a full written response within 10 working days	95%	



We will aim to reach and include everyone

Service standard	Target	Monitoring
Ensure staff and contractors wear name badges and carry ID badges	100%	Reality checking and satisfaction surveys



We will ensure that our offices provide a welcoming and friendly environment and are accessible to all customers

When you visit our offices or we visit you at home we will:

- Attend to you quickly, efficiently and courteously.
- We will ensure that our offices provide a welcoming and friendly environment and are accessible to all customers.
- Ensure that our area offices are open when it is suitable for our customers and we will review opening times regularly through consultation with customers.
- Offer you private interview facilities if required.
- Make appointments at times that are convenient for you and will always respect you and your home.
- Inform you as soon as possible if the appointment cannot be kept and we would ask that you do the same.
- Leave a card if you are not in, asking you to make further contact with us.
- Show you our identification.

Equality and diversity

In addition to the list provided earlier in the document we will also monitor the following standard:

Service standard	Target	Monitoring
Ensure that all information is written in plain language and approved by Talkback (our plain English reading group)	100%	Number of documents listed that have been through Talkback and minutes of Talkback meetings

Involving tenants and residents

In addition to the list provided earlier in the document we will also monitor the following standard:

Service standard	Target	Monitoring
Provide a menu of involvement so that tenants can be involved at whatever level/ service they wish, which will be reviewed and updated annually	Menu of Involvement provided and reviewed annually	Community engagement team provide numbers and updates

services and standards

Applying for a home

When you contact us because you need help finding a new home we will:

- Provide help and support in completing a housing application form and process applications quickly and accurately when we have received all of the necessary information.
- Treat your application as confidential and seek your permission before discussing it with anyone else.
- Where applicable, explain how Choice Based Lettings schemes work and inform you how to access them in the most suitable way according to your needs. We will also explain the allocations policy in a user friendly way.
- Give advice about housing options to existing tenants and support them through the process.
- Write to you to confirm what housing priority you have been awarded based on your circumstances for the St. Leger Homes' waiting list.
- Make available, through all our receptions, information about housing associations.

Service standard	Target	Monitoring
Register housing applications or contact you if your application is incomplete within 10 working days	100%	Choice Based Lettings internal monitoring
If you complete any forms to tell us about a change in your circumstances we will change the details of your application and notify you within five working days	100%	Choice Based Lettings internal monitoring



Service standard	Target	Monitoring
Knowledgeable member of St. Leger Homes will carry out an accompanied viewing with you at the property whilst it is empty	100%	Via internal systems of recorded accompanied viewings
Carry out any repairs needed in the property to the property standard	100%	Reality checking
Make an appointment to visit you within six to eight weeks of the start of your tenancy to carry out a satisfaction survey	100%	Monitoring mechanisms at St. Leger offices

Empty properties and new tenants

When you move in to your home we will:

- Ensure your home meets our property standard (this sets out what standard a new tenant can expect when they move in to a St. Leger home.)
- Provide you with an energy performance certificate and gas servicing certificate.
- When we complete the new tenancy sign up with you we will help you with practical issues e.g. show you how the heating system works.
- Provide you with a tenant's handbook detailing all the information on how to access St. Leger Homes' services.

Tenancy and estate management

When managing your neighbourhood and home we will:

- Have a named estates officer for each estate who will help you with any issues about your tenancy, neighbourhood, area or housing scheme.
- Regularly carry out published estate walkabouts so we can identify issues such as landscaping and cleaning with you.
- We will carry out quarterly inspection of our estates. Where possible with key agencies and a tenant representative.
- We will regularly inspect all garage sites and carry out any required cleansing and grounds maintenance works.
- Visit you after you have moved in to a new home and at least once every three years.
- Work with you to identify local issues and solutions and ensure that these solutions are published in your annual patch plan.

Leaseholder management and services

When managing and servicing our leasehold properties we will:

- Provide all leaseholders with a Leaseholder Handbook.
- Ensure that the estimated service charge invoice is issued to each leaseholder annually in advance along with a summary of your rights and obligations.
- Ensure that the statutory statement of account containing actual service charges is issued within six months of the period end to which it relates.
- Ensure that the invoice for ground rent along with the statutory notice is issued to each leaseholder annually in advance.
- Provide leaseholders with a yearly statement of their service charges alongside an explanation as to how the charges are calculated together with quarterly updates.

Service standard	Target	Monitoring
We will visit Introductory Tenants three times in the first year of the tenancy to ensure that the tenant is comfortable and abiding by the Tenancy Agreement	75%	Internal records per management area and reported against area offices
All communal areas (where applicable) of flats and maisonettes will be inspected quarterly	90%	Estate assistants monitored via internal records



- Hold a Leasehold Forum once a year to discuss issues that are important to leaseholders, providing a month's notice of the event.

Service standard	Target	Monitoring
Consult leaseholders over issues that affect them and monitor levels of satisfaction with leaseholder services	100%	Results of annual leaseholder satisfaction survey
Ensure that leaseholder service charge bills accurately and fairly reflect the amount that leaseholders should pay, and that the regular statement of accounts are issued no later than six months after the financial year end	100%	Annual leaseholder accounts

services and standards

Service standard	Target	Monitoring
Send you a quarterly rent statement showing details of all rent due and payments received	100%	Internal central rent records



Rent and arrears collection

If you want advice about your rent, need help because you are in rent arrears or want benefits advice, we will:

- Regularly monitor all accounts and contact you if there are any issues with payments.
- Offer you a variety of ways to pay your rent including in person, by post, cash, cheque, debit card, standing order, Direct Debit, Internet or Pay.net.
- Provide you with accurate benefit advice and where appropriate arrange specialist debt advice for you.
- Give you details of organisations that can offer you independent, impartial advice about debt.
- Agree a repayment plan with you that you can afford if you are in rent arrears.
- Take legal action against you if you fail to maintain your repayment agreement.
- Inform you of any debts on former tenancies within 28 days of you ending your tenancy.

Dealing with anti-social behaviour, hate crime and domestic violence

We will not tolerate anti-social behaviour or hate crime, such as racism, on or around our homes. We will:

- Investigate every case reported.
- Support complainants, witnesses and perpetrators until the case is resolved.
- Take preventative action to avoid complaints becoming more serious.
- Respond within 24 hours where there are threats of or actual violence, or hate crime.
- Deal with you sensitively if you are suffering from domestic violence.

- Always agree an action plan with you, explaining what we will do and when in each case.
- Take legal action against identified perpetrators.
- We will, as appropriate, take a multi agency approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour.

Service standard	Target	Monitoring
All neighbourhood disputes, tenant breaches or anti-social behaviour reports will be allocated a risk rating and you will be visited within 24 hours to 10 days:	5-10 days: 95%	Internal Saffron system
Low 5-10 days Medium 2-5 days High 24 hours	2-5 days: 95%	
	24 hours: 90%	

Service standard	Target	Monitoring
Monitor appointments made and kept	99%	Internal performance management system
Repairs are completed right first time	90%	Internal performance management system
Random 10% quality check on completed repairs	100%	Internal 'Task' system

We will carry out emergency repairs within 24 hours



Repairs and maintenance

When we carry out repairs to your home we will:

- Offer you an appointment that is convenient for you.
- Tailor the service to meet your individual needs if you are vulnerable.
- Let you know if we need to pre-inspect your repair and agree an appointment with you. If this is the case, we will tell you what needs doing and when it will be done.
- Leave a card if you are not at home when the contractors call, giving you 24 hours to get in touch and re-book your appointment.
- Send an appropriately qualified contractor at the time promised. The contractor will do the repair and leave the job clean and tidy. If they are unable to do all the work needed during the visit, they will explain why and arrange another appointment with you.
- Carry out emergency repairs within 24 hours.
- Carry out urgent repairs within five working days.
- Carry out non urgent repairs within 15 working days depending on the repair.
- If you tell the contractor about another, minor repair whilst they are in your home (eg. fitting a window catch) they may be able to do this for you at the same time.

When we carry out a gas service in your home we will:

- Explain to you why it is important to have an annual gas/solid fuel safety check.
- Ensure we/our contractors carry out the service at a time suitable to you.
- Take legal action against those customers who do not let us in to carry out the required service.

Service standard	Target	Monitoring
Service all gas and solid fuel appliances annually	100%	Internal performance management system

services and standards

Delivering Decent Homes we will:

- Consult with you about the planned improvements to your home and will ensure that the needs of vulnerable customers are met.
- Provide you with an information pack giving full contact details and outline what you can expect when we carry out the work.
- Ask you to give us feedback once the work is finished.

Service standard	Target	Monitoring
Provide details of your local tenant liaison officer	100%	Copies of letters sent by contractors
Provide full details of decency work to be carried out	100%	Copy of scope of work letters sent to tenants
Provide details of when decency work will start and complete works within an agreed timescale	95%	Copies of seven day letter

Keeping you informed about our performance against these standards

We will publish our performance against these service standards annually on our website (www.stlegerhomes.co.uk) and will include them in our newsletter once a year.

Our Service Improvement Groups (Scrutiny Panel) made up of tenants and residents will scrutinise performance quarterly and this information will also be presented to our Executive Management Team and Board members.

How we monitor

Our Charter sets out the methods we use to make sure the standards we have set out are being achieved. There are a number of methods we use to monitor our performance against these standards, these are listed at the side of each standard however in summary they are:

- **Management reports** – reports which we gather regularly to ensure we meet our performance targets and service standards, they are usually produced automatically from many of our internal computer systems.
- **Reality checks** – quarterly checks to ensure the standards are being met in our offices and empty homes by tenant volunteers.
- **Mystery shopping** – carried out by tenant mystery shoppers across all service areas.
- **Satisfaction surveys** – carried out via different methods tailored to service areas.

Feedback from customers is our most important tool to improve services. If you feel we do not meet the standards in this document please let us know by contacting us (see the back cover for contact details).

Contact details

Area offices

- Adwick Town Hall, Windmill Balk Lane
Tel: 01302 734145
Fax: 01302 734142
- Sandbeck House, St James Street,
Doncaster
Tel: 01302 736734
- Conisbrough office, 62 Church Street
Tel: 01302 736528
- Stainforth office, Emerson Avenue
Tel: 01302 734102
- Rossington office, Holmes Carr Centre,
Grange Lane
Tel: 01302 734196
- Thorne office, Bridge Centre, Bridge Street
Tel: 01302 735831
Fax: 01302 735843

Other St. Leger Homes contacts

- Strategic Involvement Team
Tel: 01302 862743
Email: communityengagement@stlegerhomes.co.uk
- Leasehold Advice Team
Tel: 01302 862298
Fax: 01302 862626
Email: leaseholder@stlegerhomes.co.uk
- Doncaster HomeChoice
Tel: 01302 862628
Fax: 01302 862255
Bidline: 0800 027 6235
Email: info@doncasterhomechoice.co.uk
- Repairs Contact Centre
Tel: 0808 126 3123 (Free from landlines)
or 01302 735191
Fax: 01302 862438
Email: tenantrepairs@stlegerhomes.co.uk
- Former Tenant Arrears
Tel: 01302 862857
- Insurance Investigations Officer
Tel: 01302 862744
Fax: 01302 862720



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