

Service standards



Providing a high-quality service for all our residents

Service standards

We aim to give you a high quality, customer-focused service which all residents can use at any time.

To help us achieve this, we have produced service standards which make it clear what you can expect from us, and which can be used to check our performance. We have developed these standards with tenants so they reflect what tenants' want from the housing service.

We check that we are meeting these standards by carrying out regular checks, asking for your

comments through interviews or questionnaires and looking into the complaints we get about our service. We compare our performance against the service standards in our regular newsletter 'EastendHomes News'.

We welcome compliments about our staff and our service, but please let us know if we don't meet the service standards, and we will put things right as soon as we can. We can learn from your comments and improve our service to you.



Tenants and leaseholders

Equal opportunities

We are strongly committed to equal opportunities for everyone.

We believe everyone should be valued and treated fairly and honestly. We want to make sure that no-one is treated differently because of their ethnic background, age, disability, sex, sexuality, religion, family circumstances or class.

- give you a consistent minimum standard of service which we can agree with you; and
- ask for and act on comments from all residents and, where relevant, tell you what we have done in our newsletters (every 3 months) and yearly report.
- let you know about any progress made and, if we cannot give you a full response within 15 working days, we will let you know when you can expect a response.

Whenever we contact you, we will try to:

- deal with you in a clear way and avoid jargon;
- clearly explain the reasons for any decisions;
- give you information in large print, in Braille, on audio tape or on CD if you need it;
- give you information in the language you need; and
- help you if you tell us you have a disability, mental or physical illness or need any other support.

If you write to us or e-mail us, we will try to:

- reply within 5 working days or let you know who will be dealing with your enquiry. We will then provide a full response within another 10 working days; or

If you phone our offices, we will try to:

- answer your call within 5 rings using our standard greeting and give you our name;
- deal with your enquiry straightaway or quickly pass you to someone that can help or take a message; and
- make sure that if we can't help you when you call we will call you back by the end of the next working day.

If you visit one of our housing centres we will try to:

- make sure all our staff are polite and are wearing identification badges;
- greet you within 5 minutes of when you arrive;
- make sure we see you on time if you have made an appointment with us;
- make sure you wait no more than 10 minutes to see someone who can help you if you do not have an appointment;

Tenants and leaseholders

Customer service

Whenever we deal with you, we will try to:

- get things right first time;
- tell you when you will hear from us and make sure we contact you when we say we will;
- be polite, honest and treat you fairly and with respect;
- try to deal with your comments as quickly as possible;
- respect your privacy and give you access to your personal information in line with our legal responsibilities;
- explain your rights and responsibilities;

Service standards

- keep our reception areas clean and tidy and have plenty of information displayed for residents;
- have private interview rooms available to talk about private issues; and
- make sure our offices have wheelchair access.

If we visit you in your home, we will try to:

- arrive on time for an appointment that we have agreed with you;
- let you know at least 1 hour beforehand if we are going to be late for an appointment and offer to re-arrange it if necessary;
- arrange an out-of-office-hours visit with at least 5 working days notice; and
- show you our identification before coming into your home.

If we get things wrong, we will:

- apologise for our mistake, put it right as soon as we can and keep you up-to-date with any progress;
- tell you about your right to complain and give you advice on how to do so; and
- welcome your views and comments about improving our service.

You can help us by:

- being polite, honest and respectful;
- letting us know if you need a translator or interpreter or if you need us to provide written information in large print, on audio tape, on CD or in another format;
- letting us into your home to carry out surveys, inspections, repairs and servicing when we need to;
- letting us know about any circumstances we may need to take into account when we provide services to you, for example if you have a disability;
- letting us know about any changes to your circumstances or especially contact details (phone numbers);
- giving us your comments and compliments about our services;
- making an appointment if you want to see a member of staff at our office or at home; and
- keeping appointments and letting us know in plenty of time if you cannot.

Tenants and leaseholders

Getting involved and giving us feedback

We want you to get involved to help us make good choices and improve our service. To help you get involved, we will try to:

- talk to you about decisions that may affect you;
- provide many ways for you to comment on and influence our services;
- let you know how your comments have influenced our decisions on services;
- give you the chance to get involved when, where and how you want to; and
- refund any money you spent on getting involved (for example, your travel costs).

You can help us by:

- giving us your comments on services (both good and bad);
- getting involved at a level that suits you, from filling in a questionnaire to becoming a board member; and
- letting us know if we have not achieved the service standards we agreed.

Tenants only

Paying your rent

We need to collect all the rent you owe us. If we don't, repairs, maintenance and other services will be affected.

We will try to:

- offer you different ways to pay your rent;
- let you know at least 4 weeks before we increase your rent;
- send you a rent statement every 12 weeks (this should be at the same time you get any housing benefit);
- send you an extra rent statement within 5 working days if you ask for one and every time you have an appointment with a rent officer;
- give you a written statement within 5 working days of when you ask for one and every time you have an appointment with a rent officer;
- give you information on where you can get help and advice on money and debt and ask you how happy you were with the help you got;
- help you fill in housing benefit forms;
- contact you as soon as we can if you fall into arrears (fall behind with your rent).
- give you the chance to agree to a 'repayment plan' to pay us back any rent you owe over a period of time (which we will confirm in writing); and



Paying your rent *(continued)*

- let you know before we take any legal action to get back any rent that you owe.

You can help us by:

- paying your rent and service charges regularly and on time so that you do not fall into arrears and we don't need to take legal action;
- getting in touch with us or getting advice on debt as soon as you can if you are having problems paying your rent or service charges;
- sending us your filled-in housing benefit forms and other information as quickly as you can, and phoning the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Benefits Team on **020 7364 5001** if your circumstances change; and
- making sure you keep to any repayment agreements you have made with us.

- urgent repairs within 7 days; and
- non-urgent repairs within 28 days. (Maintenance that has been planned may vary.)

- carry out gas and electrical safety checks on time;
- deal with asbestos safety issues properly;
- make sure at least 95% of you are happy with our repairs service;
- invite you to take part in discussions about our service to see how we can improve it.



- making sure your home is secure at all times and telling you if they have to leave your doors or windows open.

You can help us by:

- letting us know about any faults or repairs as soon as you can;
- letting us into your home to carry out surveys, checks, repairs and servicing;
- letting us know if you can't keep an appointment;
- making sure you only report emergencies through the out-of-hours emergency repairs telephone number **0800 376 1637**;
- carrying out any repairs that are your responsibility (please contact us if you are not sure);
- telling us if you think that we and our contractors have met our service standards; and
- taking care of your home and not letting visitors cause any damage.

Tenants and leaseholders

Repairing your home

(this normally applies to tenants but in some cases it also applies to leaseholders)

We will try to offer a fast and effective repairs service when there is a problem in your home.

We will try to:

- give a fair and equal service to everyone;
- make it as easy as we can to report repairs by phone, letter or e-mail, on the website (for non-emergency repairs) and at any of our offices.
- keep an appointment system;
- keep 95% of all appointments made by contractors;
- complete 95% of all jobs within our target times. We will carry out:
 - emergency repairs within 24 hours;

Our contractors will help you by:

- treating you politely at all times;
- keeping appointments (if they can't, they will give you 24 hours notice and then arrange a new one);
- carrying out work between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, unless they have agreed otherwise with you;
- wearing identification badges at all times;
- working safely and giving you advice about any safety issues while they carry out the work;
- clearing away all rubbish, debris and dust every day;
- treating your belongings with respect and using dust sheets if needed to protect items from dirt, dust or other damage; and

Tenants and leaseholders

Major improvements to your home

(this normally applies to tenants but in some cases it also applies to leaseholders)

We want to keep your home in good condition and prevent breakdowns by carrying out planned maintenance and improvements.

We will try to:

- give you the chance to get involved in the scheme design before any planning application or offering of any scheme;
- give you a choice of colours for the decorations and some fittings for your home;
- let you know about work that's going to be done, the name of the contractor and how much time it

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will take, at least 6 weeks before work starts;

- give you details of who you can contact if you have any questions;
- give you temporary heating if we can't put your heating back on at the end of the day or if you need it;
- make sure that essential services such as water, electricity and cooking facilities are available at the end of each working day;
- make sure that your home is clean, tidy, safe and free from rubbish and dust at the end of each working day; and
- give you a decision within 20 working days if you ask for permission to carry out your own improvements or alterations to your home.

You can help us by:

- letting us into your home to carry out surveys, checks, repairs, servicing and improvements;
- letting us know if you can't keep an appointment;
- letting us know if your circumstances mean that improvement work may cause problems (for example, a member of your house has a health problem);
- letting us know if there are problems with the improvement work;
- letting us know if we or our contractors have met our service standards; and
- getting our permission before carrying out your own improvements or alterations to your home, and doing work to an acceptable standard.

Tenants and leaseholders

Aids and adaptations for your home

We want you to live independently in your own home for as long as possible. We may need to fit aids in your home (such as a stairlift) or make adaptations to help you do this.

We will try to:

- help you get an assessment by London Borough of Tower Hamlets occupational therapy sections;
- complete minor work within 28 days (for example, where a Disabled Facility Grant is not needed);
- complete nearly all jobs within our target times (planned maintenance times may vary):
 - emergencies 24 hrs;
 - urgent 7 days;
 - non-urgent 28 days
- speed up adaptations when possible;
- apply for the Disabled Facility Grant for you; and
- keep you up to date at all times.

You can help us by:

- providing information to support your request for an adaptation;
- letting us know if an aid or adaptation has not solved your problem;
- keeping appointments; and
- letting us into your home to fit aids and make adaptations, carry out checks and so on.

Tenants only

Letting you a home

If you want to rent a home from us, we will try to do the following.

- Make empty properties available as quickly as we can, hopefully within 24 days.
- Give you the chance to view a home before you decide whether to accept it. You may be on a list of people who want to view the property and we will let you know what your position is on the list when we make the offer.
- Let you know how much the rent and service charges are when we make you an offer.
- Tell you what repairs you can expect to be done by the time you move into your home.
- Make sure your new home is clean, tidy, safe and free from rubbish before you move in.
- Explain your tenancy agreement and your rights and responsibilities before you move in (you will receive a copy to keep).
- Give you a tenancy handbook which tells you where things like meters and stopcocks are in the property;
- Visit you to see how you are settling in within 4 weeks of the start date of the tenancy, which we will tell you about at the time.
- Ask you what you think of the service you received and how happy you are with your new home.
- Tell you about the different ways you can get involved and have your say.

Letting you a home *(continued)*

You can help us by:

- keeping appointments to view the home you are offered;
- letting us know, at the time of the viewing, whether you accept or refuse an offer (except if you are homeless where we give you 24 hours to decide).
- letting us know at your 4-week 'settling in' visit if you have any problems or would like us to explain your rights and responsibilities.

Tenants only

Right to buy

If your tenancy agreement includes the right to buy and you are interested in buying your home, we will try to:

- make sure that our Right to Buy (RTB) team gives you free advice ;
- make sure you can get an RTB application form (RTB1) free of charge from our Home Ownership Service, on our website and at all of our housing centres;
- give you advice on the kind of charges you will need to pay on completion;

We will do this within 12 weeks of when you receive the RTB2 form (or within 8 weeks if you are buying a freehold property);

- give you 12 weeks to appeal against the valuation to the Independent District Valuer, once you have received your offer;
- not cancel your application if you do not respond to the offer, until at least 12 weeks after you receive your offer and after we have given you at least another 4 weeks notice in writing; and
- tell you about any other costs you should consider when buying your home.

Leaseholders only

Leasehold services

We want to provide you with a good housing-management and maintenance service.

We will try to:

- offer you a wide range of ways to pay;
- explain how we work out service charges and give you details of costs;

- offer you a payment plan to pay in instalments;
- tell you every year about your rights and responsibilities;
- have leaseholder surgeries (where you can discuss any relevant matter) for all our customers;
- give you the chance to check our accounts;
- work with you or your solicitor if you want to sell your home; and
- answer your enquiries as quickly as we can.

You can help us by:

- paying your service charges regularly and on time so you do not fall into debt and we don't need to take legal action against you;
- getting in touch with us or getting advice on debt as soon as you can if you are having problems paying your service charges;
- make sure you keep to any repayment agreements;
- letting us know about a change of address; and
- making sure that if you sublet your home, your tenants respect all other residents.

Tenants and leaseholders

Antisocial behaviour, harassment and domestic violence

We will look at antisocial behaviour, harassment and domestic violence from your point of view and we will take all reports seriously. We will not tolerate antisocial behaviour, harassment or domestic violence.

We will try to:

- contact you within 1 working day for urgent cases where there is a threat of violence or actual violence, and 2 working days in all other cases;



- send you an RTB2 form within 4 weeks of receiving your application, if you have the right to buy (or within 8 weeks if you have been a tenant with us for less than two years);
- if you do have the right to buy, we will make you an offer, which sets out the terms, including the price.

- give you estimated costs in March and actual costs by October every year (for the last financial year);
- speak to you before any major work is carried out. The regeneration section will do this;
- tell you what your service charge is used for;

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- give the best advice and support for your circumstances, and tell you what we can and can't do for you;
- give you the chance to find a solution using mediation (where a counsellor will talk to you both to help you sort out the problem), especially when legal action is not an option;
- look at your case fairly, based on the evidence;
- have a named person handle and lead your case;
- agree any actions we take with you beforehand;
- give you regular monthly updates; and
- let you know before we close your case and ask for your comments on how we have dealt with it and the outcome.

You can help us by:

- reporting details of antisocial behaviour, harassment and domestic violence to us as soon as you can;
- not allowing your family or visitors to cause antisocial behaviour including harassment, noise nuisance, upset or disturbance to your neighbours or anyone else in the community;
- respecting other people's right to their lifestyle as long as it doesn't spoil the quality of life for others;
- taking responsibility for small disagreements with your neighbours and trying to sort out such problems in a reasonable way;
- using mediation to help sort out your problems;
- reporting crimes, including threats or acts of violence, to the police straightaway; and
- helping to give evidence, including filling in diary sheets, witness statements and acting as a witness in court if needed, with our support.

Tenants and leaseholders

Estate services

We want to make sure you can live safely in your local environment.

We will try to:

- keep your estate clean, tidy and free from dangers;
- have cleaning schedules, method statements (how tasks are carried out) and standards and targets that you can check our performance against;
- remove offensive graffiti within 24 hours;
- find and get rid of vehicles that have been abandoned within 1 working day;
- report issues in the neighbourhood which are not our responsibility to the relevant organisation within one working day;
- carry out estate inspections at least every 6 weeks (these will be advertised every 3 months in the local newsletter and on estate notice boards before they take place);
- make our estate inspection records, cleaning schedules, method statements and grading performance available for you to see in each housing centre reception area; and
- ask you what you think about neighbourhood improvements and plans.

You can help us by:

- reporting repairs, dangers, graffiti, abandoned vehicles and areas which need cleaning;
- getting rid of your rubbish properly, and arranging for the council to collect furniture and large amounts of rubbish for free by phoning London Borough of Tower Hamlets on **020 7364 5004**;
- keeping your garden and the outside of your home clean, tidy and free from rubbish;

- drying clothes inside your home; and
- giving us your views about your estate and getting involved in our inspections where you can.

Tenants and leaseholders

Complaints

We want to give you an excellent service. We want to put things right when they go wrong and to learn from our mistakes.

We will try to:

- deal with your complaint informally, if at all possible;
- let you know we have received your formal written complaint within 3 working days;
- send you a full written response to your complaint within 15 working days (if there is a delay, we will tell you about it within 10 working days, explain why and give you a date when you will receive a full response);
- send you a full written response to your stage 1 complaint within 15 working days (if there is a delay, we will tell you about it before the 15 working days are over);
- send you a full written response to your stage 2 complaint within 15 working days (if there is a delay, we will tell you about it before the 15 working days are over);
- let you know the date the panel will meet for a stage 3 complaint within 15 working days; and
- send you a feedback form after your complaint has been sorted out to see how well you felt we dealt with it.

How to contact us

EastendHomes head office

Tayside House, 31 Pepper Street, London E14 9RP

E-mail: enquiries@eastendhomes.net

Phone: 020 7517 4700

Fax: 020 7515 0218

Mile End Housing Centre

38 Wager Street, London E3 4JE

E-mail: mileend@eastendhomes.net

Phone: 020 8880 7055

Fax: 020 8880 7810

Island Gardens Neighbourhood Centre

137 Manchester Road, London E14 3DN

E-mail: islandgardens@eastendhomes.net

Phone: 020 7538 2340

Fax: 020 7537 0512

St George's Housing Centre

Shearsmith House, Hindmarsh Close, London E1 8HP

E-mail: stgeorges@eastendhomes.net

Phone: 020 7481 4110

Fax: 020 7481 4082

Holland Housing Centre

35 Commercial Street, London E1 6BD

E-mail: holland@eastendhomes.net

Phone: 020 7456 6700

Fax: 020 7456 6737

Glamis Housing Centre

Ground Floor, Roslin House, Brodlove Lane
London E1W 3EL

E-mail: glamis@eastendhomes.net

Phone: 020 7791 7947

Fax: 020 7791 7983

You can send us a text message to 07961 941584

We produce leaflets on the following topics

- Repairs
- Rent
- Service charges
- Antisocial behaviour
- Customer care
- Estate services
- Resident involvement
- Lettings



Other languages and formats that this leaflet is available in

If you ask, we can provide copies of this document in a range of languages and formats, including:

- **in languages such as Bengali and Somali;**
- **in Braille;**
- **in large print; and**
- **on audio tape.**

To ask for a different format, please contact your local housing centre.

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www.eastendhomes.net