

Your Local Offer for Home Services

Introduction

The Tenant Services Authority (TSA) regulates social housing providers in England. It requires landlords to involve tenants in developing 'local offers' for the delivery of certain services including home services.

This leaflet explains how North Lincolnshire Homes will deliver this service to customers so that you know what to expect from the service. It also sets out the service standards that we must meet, explains how these are monitored and what happens if we don't meet the standards.

Quality of accommodation

As part of our stock transfer promises, we said that we would bring all homes up to the 'North Lincolnshire Standard' by 2012. The 'North Lincolnshire Standard' for homes is higher than the Government's Decent Homes Standard and means that we will:

- Renew heating boilers every 15 years
- Renew heating systems every 30 years
- Rewire homes where the existing wiring is over 30 years old
- Renew windows and doors where the existing ones are over 20 years old
- Provide insulation to improve energy efficiency
- Renew bathrooms every 30 years
- Renew kitchens every 20 years
- Renew roofing if it over 70 years old
- Replace gutters and fascias that are over 20 years old
- Put right any structural defects that affect the soundness and stability of the home
- Make sure homes are free from damp and water penetration
- Provide smoke detectors as part of rewiring work
- Provide modern alarm call systems for the elderly
- Provide adequate lighting in communal areas
- Provide controlled entry systems for communal entrances
- Improve access to communal entrances

We have made excellent progress in delivering these improvement works. We have brought 82% of homes up to the North Lincolnshire Standard since 2007 and are on track to complete our improvement program by 2012. We publish the improvement program in advance on our website and in our Customer Centre so that you can see when work is scheduled in your area.

When we are carrying out improvements in your home we will:

- Give you at least 21 days notice before the work starts
- Provide you with a dedicated Tenant Liaison Officer to support and advise you during the work
- Provide you with a helpline number for assistance outside of working hours

- Provide you with as much choice as possible over the work e.g. choosing tiles, flooring, kitchen units etc
- Complete the work within 28 days
- Correct any defective work within 7 days of it being reported to us
- Ask you for feedback after the work to help improve the service

Repairs and maintenance

We are committed to providing a cost effective repairs service that meets the needs of customers, keeps homes safe and healthy, and gets repairs done 'right first time'.

Customers were involved in reviewing the repairs service in 2009 and this led to many changes being made to improve the service. Customers said that in order to be done 'right first time', a repair had to be done to the tenant's satisfaction and that the operative should complete the repair on the first visit unless parts or follow on work was needed.

You can report repairs by telephone, via the website, by email or in person at our Customer Centre. We offer all customers a morning or afternoon appointment to make sure the repair is carried out at your convenience whilst meeting the target timescale for that type of work.

We service every gas and solid fuel heating appliance once a year to make sure they are safe and working correctly. We will contact you beforehand to arrange an appointment to visit to carry out a service in your home.

If you have an emergency repair that cannot wait until the next working day e.g. a leaking pipe, total loss of electricity or your home is not secure, you can report it to our emergency team by telephoning 0800 0326363. If possible, our out of hours operatives will repair the problem for you but sometimes we have to carry out a temporary repair to make your home safe and secure and complete the repair fully on the next working day.

We work with the Fire and Rescue Service to ensure a high standard of fire safety and we are fitting smoke alarms in some of our properties as part of rewiring work. We also carry out regular safety inspections at multi-storey flats and sheltered housing schemes, and will make sure that any necessary safety work is carried out quickly. The Fire service will carry out a free fire safety check on homes upon request.

Repairs that are your responsibility

You are responsible for some repairs if they are needed in your home including unblocking waste pipes, filling minor plaster cracks and replacing toilet seats. You can find more information about this in your Tenancy Agreement.

Rechargeable repairs

We may charge you for any repairs that are needed as a result of damage or neglect caused by you, a member of your household or a visitor to your home.

Adaptations to your home

We may be able to provide you with adaptations to your home if you have a disability, long term medical condition or have difficulty doing everyday things like bathing or climbing stairs.

In 2009, customers helped us to review our aids and adaptations service. The changes made have resulted in tenants getting adaptations work carried out more quickly and us providing more help to tenants with their applications for adaptations work.

If you need a minor adaptation e.g. grab rails or hand rails, we will refer your request to the Council's adaptation team who will provide the adaptation within 4 weeks. If you need more substantial adaptations e.g. a stair-lift, ramps, shower, we will arrange for an Occupational Therapist to assess your needs. We will then arrange for the work to be carried out within 3 months of receiving approval from the Council to carry out the work.

Working in your home

Our contractors and operatives follow a strict code of conduct. They will:

- Introduce themselves and show proof of their identity
- Be polite and treat you and your home with care and respect
- Work tidily and clear away at the end of the job or at the end of each day
- Work with you to make sure your home and possessions are protected from dust, paint etc during the work
- Keep your home secure
- Make sure that your gas, electricity and water services are reconnected by the end of the working day
- Show you how to use any new equipment they install

Managing empty homes

We aim to repair and let empty homes within 28 days unless major improvement work is needed or there is no demand for the property. Whilst properties are empty, we will make sure that they are kept safe, tidy and secure and we will make sure that every home meets our Quality Lettable Standard before being offered to a prospective tenant.

How residents have been involved in developing the service.

A wide range of residents and stakeholders have been involved in developing our home services including setting the service standards that we work to. Delegates at the tenant conference gave feedback on how well they thought that NLH performed against the TSA's regulatory requirements and suggested ways of improving the service. All tenants were consulted about the scope of improvement work in order to develop the 'North Lincolnshire Standard' for housing and many tenants were involved in reviewing the repair service by filling in surveys, attending focus groups and joining the Repairs Panel.

Service Standards – we will:

- Complete improvement work within 28 days
- Correct any defective improvement work within 7 days of it being reported to us
- complete repairs 'right first time'
- complete emergency repairs within 24 hours
- complete urgent repairs within 7 days
- complete routine repairs within 28 days
- service your gas or solid fuel heating appliance every year
- provide minor adaptations within 4 weeks of your request

- provide major adaptations within 3 months of receiving approval from the Council
- repair and let empty homes within 28 days

How the service standards are monitored, reported on and scrutinised by tenants

We monitor our progress in meeting the service standards by checking records of improvement work, repairs and adaptations and by looking at the results of satisfaction surveys. We also ask our Tenant Inspectors to carry out reality checks and mystery shopping, and we look at complaints and other feedback we receive from customers.

Every 3 months we will publish a newsletter that tells you how we are performing against each service standard. We also provide reports to the Board, the Resident Scrutiny Panel and Community Voice. These reports are published on our website and printed copies are available on request.

The Resident Scrutiny Panel can decide to carry out an investigation into any service area and will provide their findings and recommendations directly to the Board.

What happens if the standards are not met?

If we do not meet our service standards, the Board will make sure that an action plan is implemented to improve performance and will closely oversee progress. If you think that we have not met our service standards in your case, please tell us so that we put things right.

How the service will be reviewed in future

We are due to carry out a full review of our repairs service in 2012 and our improvement work in 2013 and customers will be involved in these reviews. We may make changes to home services earlier if it is necessary due to changes in legislation, because of instruction from the Tenant Services Authority or to implement recommendations made following a Resident Scrutiny investigation.

Jargon buster/key terms

Tenant Services Authority	The organisation that regulates social housing providers in England on behalf of the Government
Local Offer	An explanation of the service that customers can expect to receive
Service Standard	A measurable target that the service must meet

Further Information

You can find further information about this service by contacting us, looking on our website or reading the following leaflets:

- reporting repairs
- planned work to your home
- condensation and mould
- home safety and security
- asbestos
- aids and adaptations

- quality lettable standards

Leaflets are available from our Customer Centre, from our website or by post on request.

Contact information

North Lincolnshire Homes Limited

Meridian House, Normanby Road, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire, DN15 8QZ

Customer Centre

15 – 19 Cole Street, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire, DN15 6QY

Opening hours: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday – 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Wednesday – 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Friday 9.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. and Saturday 9.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Contact Centre

Telephone 01724 279900

Freephone 0800 0326363

Opening hours Monday to Friday - 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.