



Our offer to you...



...Your Tenancy

Building Successful Communities



Your Local Offer for Tenancy Services

Introduction

This leaflet explains how North Lincolnshire Homes will deliver tenancy services to customers so that you know what to expect. 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.

Finding a new home

We aim to let homes fairly, giving everyone the opportunity to find the right home and giving priority to those in most need of housing. We are members of the Home Choice Lincs choice based lettings scheme along with Shoreline Housing Partnership and Longhurst & Havelok Homes. This scheme enables customers to bid for available homes throughout North and North East Lincolnshire and all the landlords involved follow the same lettings policy. This makes sure that everyone is treated in the same way no matter where they want to live or which landlord they prefer.

You can register for housing through the Home Choice Lincs scheme by filling in a registration form online or in any of the participating landlords' offices. Your form will be assessed and placed into one of four priority bands (categories) depending upon your circumstances and housing need. Existing tenants whose current homes are overcrowded, people who are homeless and people with medical problems get extra priority under the scheme.

Available homes are advertised each week at www.homeschoicelincs.org.uk, on digital tv and in the offices of the participating landlords. You can make a bid to express your interest in available homes and make up to three bids each week. Making a bid means that you put your name forward for the home. Making a bid is free and does not involve money. When all the bids have been received, each home will be matched to the most suitable bidder and they will be offered the home.

When we make an offer of a tenancy, we will arrange to show you the home before you decide whether or not to accept.

We advertise the outcome of all lettings on the website and in the offices of the participating landlords.

Under-occupiers incentive scheme

We may offer incentives to tenants in larger homes to encourage them to move to a smaller home. Please contact us for further information.



Rent and service charges

We set our rents following the Government's rent setting policy which ensures they remain affordable and comparable with other social landlords in the area. Rents are reviewed once a year in April and increases are calculated using the Government's rent setting formula. This means that increases are limited to no more than the rate of inflation plus 0.5% plus no more than £2.17 per week until 2012. After 2012 rents will continue to be set in line with Government policy. Some tenants pay for extra services such as lighting and cleaning of

communal areas, communal heating or a support service. Any service charge costs are set out in your Tenancy Agreement.

We send each tenant a rent statement four times a year so that you can keep track of your rent account and payments to us. Statements can be produced in a variety of formats and languages, please contact us if you have a communication preference.

There are many ways you can pay your rent to us, including:

- Direct Debit.
- Swipe card at any Post Office or Paypoint.
- By credit or debit card over the telephone.
- Over the internet.



Rent arrears

If you have difficulty in paying your rent, please contact us for help and advice as soon as possible. If you fall behind with your rent payments, we will contact you to find out what the problem is and make an agreement with you to repay the arrears. If you ignore the problem or don't stick to an agreement to repay the arrears, we will take action that could ultimately mean the loss of your home.

Housing benefit and other help

You may be able to get help with paying your rent if you are entitled to Housing Benefit. We can provide advice and help you to claim Housing and other benefits. We can also help you get debt counselling and access to bank accounts and affordable credit.

Please contact us for further information.

Your Tenancy Agreement

Your Tenancy Agreement is the legal document that sets out your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. It tells you what you must do, such as paying the rent, looking after your home and not causing a nuisance to other people. It also explains what we must do, such as carrying out repairs that are our responsibility.

Tenant Reward Scheme

Tenants who have an up to date rent account, no other tenancy breaches and who look after their homes can apply to be members of the Tenant Reward Scheme. Every three months we hold a prize draw where members have the chance to win one of 10 prizes of £125.

Assignment and succession

Tenants have the right to pass on their tenancy to a partner or close family member if they die or under some other circumstances. The rules are explained in your Tenancy Agreement and you can contact us for further advice. We will respond to applications to take over or pass on tenancies within 20 days.

Mutual exchange

Assured tenants have the right to apply to exchange their tenancy with another tenant. You can advertise for an exchange in the local press, in shops or online. But you must get our written permission to exchange before you move. We will respond to mutual exchange applications within 28 days.



Tenancy support

We provide specialist support for older people, young tenants who are managing a home for the first time and other people who need help to manage their tenancy. Support can include helping people apply for benefits, set and manage a budget, get help to look after their home and garden and to be able to look after themselves. If you need support that we cannot provide ourselves, we will refer you to another agency that can provide the support you need.

Home insurance

We recommend that tenants take out suitable home contents insurance. We have teamed up with Allianz Insurance plc to offer low cost home insurance to tenants and leaseholders. Please contact us if you would like more information about the insurance scheme.



How residents have been involved in developing the service

A wide range of residents and stakeholders have been involved in developing tenancy services, including setting the service standards that we work to. Delegates at our tenant conference gave feedback on how well they thought that NLH performed against regulatory requirements and suggested ways of improving the service. Focus groups of residents helped to review rent statements and to develop the choice based lettings and tenant incentive schemes. We have also looked at information gathered through satisfaction surveys, complaints and other feedback, and consulted with tenant groups including Community Voice.





Service standards. We will:

- ✓ Advertise available homes through Home Choice Lincs every week.
- ✓ Make sure all empty homes are brought up to our Quality Lettable Standard.
- ✓ Visit new tenants within the first six weeks to make sure everything is going well.
- ✓ Send every tenant a rent statement four times a year.
- ✓ Offer a low cost home contents insurance scheme to tenants and leaseholders.
- ✓ Respond to applications to take over or pass on tenancies within 20 days.
- ✓ Respond to mutual exchange applications 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 our records of lettings, empty homes and tenancy change applications. 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 three months we will tell 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 its 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 can put things right.

How the service will be reviewed in future

We will carry out a comprehensive review of our Tenancy Management and Anti-Social Behaviour services by March 2011. The findings from the review may change the way in which we provide the service. Please contact us if you would like to find out more.

Jargon buster and common terms

Regulator	The organisation which regulates social housing providers in England on behalf of the Government.
Service standard	A measurable target that the service must meet.
Assignment	Where a tenant passes on their tenancy to a partner or close family member.
Succession	Where a tenancy passes on to a partner or close family member when the tenant has died.
Mutual exchange	Where two or more eligible tenants swap tenancies.

Further information

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

- Home Choice Lincs – your guide.
- Paying rent and other charges.
- Claiming Housing Benefit.
- Your Tenancy Agreement explained.
- Starter Tenancies.
- Supporting you in your home.
- Mutual exchange.

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



No English?

For information please call:

08000 193530 (Arabic) للحصول على المزيد من المعلومات اتصل بـ:

তথ্যগুলি বাংলায় জানতে হলে এই নম্বরে ফোন করুন: 08000 193531 (Bengali)

欲知粵語版的信息，請致電: 08000 193532 (Cantonese)

हिन्दी में जानकारी के लिये 08000 193533 पर फोन करें (Hindi)

08000 193537 به کوردی سۆزانی تەلهفۆن بۆ ژماره (Kurdish Sorani)

Para mais informação em português contacte-nos através do telefone 08000 193538 (Portuguese)

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ 08000 193539 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ (Punjabi)

"Warbixinta oo af Soomaali ah wac 08000 193540" (Somali)

08000 193541 اردو میں انفارمیشن کے لیے اس ٹیلیفون نمبر پر رابطہ فرمائیں۔ (Urdu)

Nie mówisz po angielsku? Po informacji zadzwoń pod numer 08000 195587 (Polish)

Не знаете английский? Для информации звоните 08000 195586 (Russian)

**For information in large print, audio or other formats
please call 01724 279900**

North Lincolnshire Homes Limited

Registered Address

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 am to 5.00 pm,
Wednesday – 10.00 am to 5.00 pm, Friday 9.00 am to 4.30 pm and Saturday 9.00 am to 12.30 pm

Contact Centre

Telephone 01724 279900 • Freephone 080 032 63 63

Opening Hours

Monday to Friday - 8am - 6pm

www.nlhomes.org.uk