

Service Standards For Homeowners

What you can expect from us



Service Standards

This is one of a series of Places for People information booklets that we hope will be useful to you. There is a complete list inside the back cover.

Getting in touch

You can contact us in a number of ways – by phone, in person, in writing or via email – and we will always try to answer your enquiry positively and in a professional and timely way. We will always

be helpful and courteous. Our staff will be fully trained in all aspects of their work.

Contact by phone

Our Contact Centre is open 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. You can call our homeowners' line on 0800 432 0009. All calls

are free when telephoning from a landline.

If you want to talk to someone about buying or selling a property, your lease, service charges, communal services, major repairs or improvements, please call during office hours (8.30am to 4.30pm) and you will be put through to someone who can help you.

At busy times you may have to wait in an automated queuing system. This does not cost you money (if calling from a landline). Our staff will answer your call as quickly as possible and will give you their name. If you call a local office (during normal office hours), a member of staff will answer your call within 20 seconds and tell you their name.

If you leave a message, we will return your call at the earliest opportunity.

Personal visit to the office

We will ensure that our offices are welcoming, clean, tidy and safe. Up-to-date information will be available and staff will be helpful and friendly. If you have an appointment to see us, we will not keep you waiting longer than necessary. If you have not seen a member of staff within 15 minutes of your appointment time, you can choose to make another appointment or see another member of staff.

If you do not have an appointment, we will ensure you are seen by a member of our staff. They will either deal with your enquiry or take a detailed message for the appropriate officer, who will contact you when they return.

Written contact

If you send a letter or email to us, we will acknowledge it within two working days and reply in full within 10 working days. If we cannot reply within 10 days, we will write and explain why, letting you know when you can expect a reply.

You can contact us by email at enquiries@placesforpeople.co.uk and we will send an acknowledgement within two working days.

Correspondence with you

When we write to you, our letters will be polite and easy to read. They will contain the date and name of the person to contact should you have any questions.

If you ask us, we will try to write to you in your first language or in Braille.

We can also have information put onto audio tape if that would help.

Any specific requirements

If you have any specific requirements, we will try to cater for them. For instance, we can arrange Language Line translations, offer private interview facilities or arrange for someone of the same sex to meet you if that would be helpful.

Buying your home

Before you buy your home from us we will give you clear information about the sales process, your legal and contractual responsibilities, our services and the charges that you will have to pay.

If you are buying your home through the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire, we will always make a decision about your application and send you an offer notice within the legal timescales.

Once you have bought your home we will contact you to answer any questions. We will provide a Welcome Pack that includes a handbook and other information about our services, your rights and responsibilities, and the area where you live.

If you are a shared owner we will provide clear information on buying shares in your home. Guidance notes are available from our Property Sales Team

(see page 9 for contact details) or by calling our homeowners' line 0800 432 0009 (calls are free from a landline).

Equality and diversity

We recognise that our service needs to be sensitive to the needs and requirements of people from different cultures and with different values.

We understand the importance of treating all customers and

cultures with respect and we hope to achieve this at all times.

If this has not been your experience, please let us know so that we can learn from your feedback.

Information

We will provide an up-to-date handbook for homeowners.

We will also send you a newsletter with information about our services and performance.

All our information and correspondence is available in a range of languages and formats, for example in large print, Braille and other languages.

Rent and service charges

You must pay your rent (shared owners only) or service charge or both in advance every month. We will offer you a

range of payment options, including standing order and direct debit, and will send you an accurate quarterly statement, giving details of your account and transactions.

If you have difficulty paying your rent or service charges, we will offer advice and always try to come to an arrangement with you.

We will provide and charge you for services according to the terms of your lease or contract.

We will calculate your service charges accurately and explain every year how we have calculated them.

We will consult you about the standard and cost of our services. We aim to provide high-quality services and make sure that the income we receive covers their cost.

We will send you a statement of actual service charge expenditure for the previous financial year by 30 September every year.

Repairs and maintenance

We aim to give you clear information before you buy your home. When you have moved in we will explain who is responsible for the repairs and maintenance to your home. This information is also set out in your lease.

If we are responsible for repairs and maintenance to common areas or the structure of the building (or both), we will:

- aim to meet the following targets for day-to-day repairs:
 - 92% of emergency repairs completed within 24 hours
 - 95% of urgent repairs completed within seven days
 - 95% of routine repairs completed within 28 days

- consult you regularly about responsive, cyclical and planned maintenance, major repairs and improvements, and take your views into account when planning future programmes
- maintain an asset management plan based on the condition of the property and the costs of future maintenance. We will review the plan at least every three years
- meet our legal obligations to consult you about proposals for major works and improvements, contract terms and the selection of contractors.

Communal services

If we provide services such as landscaping and cleaning we will:

- consult you annually about any major changes to the standard and cost of the services we provide to you locally

- meet our legal obligations to consult you about service contract terms and the selection of contractors
- always try to get the best value for money for homeowners where we are providing services
- monitor the standard of our services regularly, invite your views and use this information to improve our services.

Tell us what you think

You can help us to improve our services in various ways, including:

- attending focus and project groups on specific issues
- returning any questionnaires or surveys that we ask you to complete
- becoming a member of the VOICE focus group and having your say on various issues
- replying to consultation

- letters and questionnaires about our services and maintenance plans
- attending local meetings about service charges and other issues.

Selling your home

If you choose to sell your home you should let us know, even if you own the freehold.

We will provide clear information about the process and the options available. You can get our guidance notes about what to do if you want to sell from our Property Sales Team.

Your lease, if you have one, contains details about the sale process. We will administer the sale of your property in accordance with your lease.

If things go wrong

We want to get things right. If we make a mistake, we will

apologise and try to put the matter right. We publish a complaints policy and the details are set out in your Homeowners' Handbook, which is available from your local office or from our website.

If you do not agree with your service charge or you want to query the cost of the service, we will investigate and try to resolve your concerns.

Your records

We will ensure that we act within the law at all times.

We will respect your rights to confidentiality and the disclosure of information relating to you.

We will inform you before any information is disclosed. We will register with the Information Commissioner and comply with the Data Protection Act.

If you want to see the information we hold about you,

you can do so. Your local office will explain how to go about this, and you can find out more about it in your Homeowners' Handbook.

Please write to us at:

Places for People
18 South Rings Business Park
Craven Drive, Bamber Bridge,
Preston, PR5 6BZ

Booklets available include:

Anti-social behaviour

Tackling it together

Customer service

What you can expect from us

Gas safety

Keeping your home safe

Harassment

How we can help

Homes for rent

How we let our homes

Housing benefit

How to get help to pay your rent

Know your rights

A tenant's guide

Living with a disability

Adapting your home

Managing your money

What to do if you can't pay your bills

Moving home

Things to remember

Paying your rent

How to manage your rent account

Personal records

Your right to information

Repairs to your home

What to do if you need a repair

Suggestions and complaints

How to make a suggestion, complaint or compliment

Swapping homes

How to swap homes with another tenant

Tenancy support service

Helping you to manage your home

Service Standards for

Homeowners

What you can expect from us

Homeowners Handbook

An essential guide to your home

Freephone contact numbers

Our Contact Centre

is open 24 hours
(all calls are free
from a landline)

Places for People Homes

0800 432 0002

Places for People Individual Support

0800 432 0003

You can pick up copies of our booklets from your local office, download them from our website: www.placesforpeople.co.uk or to receive them by post, telephone the Contact Centre on the numbers above.

Minicom

0800 432 0008

Homeowners line

0800 432 0009

If you ring these numbers and English is not your first language, we can use the Language Line Service to communicate with you.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

