



## **Service Standards**

At Toynbee we are committed to working in partnership with residents in order to provide quality homes and services as well as investment in our local communities. Service standards represent our commitment to the level of service we aim to achieve. They are minimum standards, and we will try to do even better.

We will monitor how well we meet these standards, and will tell you about our performance in our regular newsletters.

We have listened to the residents represented on the Customer Services Sub Group (CSSG) who have stated their expectations of the services we should provide. Based on this, we have developed Service Standards, which have been approved by the CSSG.

### **This is how we plan to keep you informed**

- We will publish a residents' newsletter quarterly
- We will publish a residents' annual report with information on our performance.
- We will produce all of our documents in plain English
- If you come into one of our offices or telephone us, we will arrange translation on request. We will also translate any important letters we send you if we know you cannot read English
- We will consult with you about major repairs and cyclical redecoration work
- We will consult residents about major changes to services
- We will give you information and advice about housing and tell you about any other agencies that can help you
- We will help vulnerable residents by offering support and contact with relevant local agencies
- We will ensure that Toynbee's Board of Management has resident representation and hears the result of consultation with residents
- We will support residents' groups to run meetings and communicate with each other
- We will hold formal residents consultative panels, both in London and Berkshire, where residents will make decisions about service delivery and our procedures.

### **Communicating with you**

- We will aim to answer the phone within 6 rings and return messages within 1 working day
- We will give our names when speaking to you
- We will aim to acknowledge all letters and emails within 2 working days and respond fully within 10 working days. When we cannot give you an answer, we will explain when we will be able to do so and give reasons for the delay
- We will use an automatic out of office message when we are not at our desk for one day or more, with the date of return and an alternative name to contact for emergencies. We will answer messages left by e-mail within 1 working day of our return to work
- At your request, we will book you an appointment with our staff on routine matters within 10 working days, or arrange to visit you in your home, at a suitable time
- When you visit us without an appointment, we will see you within 15 minutes of your arrival or tell you if it is going to take longer

- We will carry identification when visiting your home
- We will be friendly, polite and helpful
- We will avoid jargon and explain technical terms
- We will treat everybody fairly and to the same high standard, regardless of race, gender, age, religion or sexuality
- We will pay compensation when our officers fail to keep an appointment without prior notice, or arrive more than one hour late.

### **Carrying out repairs and maintenance**

- We will carry out emergency repairs within 24 hours, urgent repairs within 7 days and day to day repairs within 28 days, whether in your home or in communal areas
- We will provide a 365 days-a-year 'out of hours' telephone emergency service
- We will give you written details of the work to be done and the name and contact details of the contractor who will carry out the work
- Our Maintenance Staff and Contractors will always carry identification when they visit your home
- We will carry out a satisfaction survey after each repair has been completed so that you can give us your feedback
- We will inspect the quality of the finished work in 10% of the homes that have had repairs or maintenance work done
- We will carry out an annual gas safety check
- We aim to redecorate the outside of your property every 5 years
- We will pay compensation:
  - When a resident has been unable to use a room in their property because we have failed to carry out work
  - When we fail to complete an urgent repair on time, and where your health and/or safety has been affected.

### **Looking after the area where you live**

- We will inspect each estate at least every 3 months, and many estates more regularly, to ensure that they are kept clean and tidy. Whenever possible, we will tell you in advance the date and time of the inspections, so that you can meet the housing officer
- We will publicise the specifications of the services that cleaning contractors must satisfy
- We will take action to remove abandoned vehicles.

### **Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour**

- We will investigate all incidents reported to us sensitively and fairly
- After the ASB incident is reported, the complainant will be contacted within 24 hours where the ASB is severe and within 5 days for all other cases.
- We can arrange a home visit if the complainant is comfortable with this
- After the complainant is interviewed and if s/he gives permission, we aim to interview the alleged perpetrator(s) within 10 days
- We will deal firmly with those who breach their tenancy conditions
- We will remove offensive graffiti within 2 working days of it being reported to us
- We will offer mediation services where it is appropriate
- We will review each ASB process every 28 days until the case is closed
- We will address ASB in liaison with residents' associations and other agencies, such as the police, local authorities and community groups
- We will consider doing security works where appropriate or necessary to make the complainant safe and secure.

## **Charging your rent and services**

- We will keep rent levels affordable within Government guidance and keep the service charges as low as possible
- We will explain clearly what rent and service charges cover
- We will provide easy facilities for making payments, such as online payment
- We will provide monthly statements of your rent account
- We will help you complete Housing Benefits claims
- We will take legal action against residents who regularly fail to pay their rent

## **Managing allocations and transfers**

- We will advise you of the range of options for moving.
- We will acknowledge your application for a transfer within 7 working days
- We will explain how your eligibility has been worked out and give you information which will assist you in making a judgement about how long it may take before an offer of accommodation can be made
- We will send you information about your position on our waiting list at least once per year
- We will ensure that empty homes have a high standard of repair and cleanliness before a new tenant moves in
- We will aim to ensure that empty properties are reoccupied within 28 days
- We will give you an information pack when you sign your tenancy for a new home.

The information pack will include:

- Tenant/leaseholder handbook
  - Details of how to report repairs, how to report ASB and how to make a complaint
  - The cleaning specification for your block/estate, if relevant
  - Details of any local resident group
- We will visit you in your new home within 6 weeks of your moving in to make sure you have settled in and assist if you need a service from us
  - We will publish details of our property lettings
  - We will take action to evict unlawful occupiers.

## **Listening to your complaints**

- If you are not satisfied with any of our services, you can make a complaint by telephone, letter, email or in person
- After we receive a complaint, we will send an acknowledgement letter within 1 working day and the responsible line manager will give a full response within 10 working days
- We will allow you personal representation or to have another person act on your behalf
- If you are not satisfied with the response, you may put your complaint in writing and the Assistant Director or Regional Housing Manager will give you a response within 10 days
- If you are not satisfied with that response, you may go to an Appeal Panel. The Panel will include an independent resident and a Board Member. The hearing will be arranged within 28 calendar days
- If you have been through this complaint process and are still dissatisfied, you may make a complaint to the Independent Housing Ombudsman
- We will monitor complaints every month, and we will learn from our mistakes and use complaints to improve our service delivery
- Where we fail to provide a service according to our service standards or procedures we will consider payment of appropriate compensation according to our Compensation Policy.

**In order to offer you the best possible service, we would like you to:**

- Provide us with the information we need to assist you
- Inform us quickly when a repair is needed
- Keep your home in a good decorative order and keep your garden communal parts (if any) well maintained and tidy
- Pay your rent regularly and on time, or inform us immediately of any difficulty in making payments
- Give reasonable access to your home for repairs and for the annual gas safety check
- Behave in a responsible way towards neighbours, and ensure your visitors behave the same way
- Contact your neighbours if they are causing you some disturbance before you report the incident to us
- Be polite to our staff
- Let us know if you are happy with our service so that we can monitor our performance and pass on any compliments to the relevant staff.