

# Customer Service Standards – Housing Repairs

## Our Corporate Customer Care Standards are:

We aim to deliver the following standards (and any other customer care standards that we are legally obliged to follow) whenever and however you contact us. This includes services that may be provided by us, or by another partner or agency on our behalf. We aim to try to ensure that partners and other agencies also deliver services to a similar high standard. We will measure our performance against these standards and take action if necessary.

### We want to:

- Be polite and treat you with courtesy, fairness, honesty and respect
- Make sure that services are accessible to everyone
- Listen to you carefully and use plain English when we speak or write to you
- Explain our decisions and the reasons for them
- Respect confidentiality

We will do our best to provide services and information in ways that make them accessible for everyone, including the provision of:

- An interpreter face to face or over the phone, including a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter.
- Information in a number of formats on request - for example, audio tape, Braille, large print or an appropriate language – as quickly as possible.
- A text phone (minicom) number.
- Public meetings in accessible venues and the use of an induction loop or other suitable system for deaf and hard of hearing people.
- Our aim is to have contact details provided in all our published documents.

### If you contact us by telephone:

- We will aim to answer your call within 15 seconds and if your call is in a queue we will try to keep you informed by recorded messages while you wait.
- We will greet you courteously and let you know which service you are through to.
- Whenever possible, a member of staff will deal with your telephone enquiry during the normal working hours of the office or service you are calling (these vary - check our website at [uttlesford.gov.uk](http://uttlesford.gov.uk)).
- If a person is not available, we will use voice mail and check these regularly so that we can respond within 24 hours.
- If we have to pass on your call, we will try to make sure it goes to the right person and we will explain your call to them before we pass it on.

- We will take any messages with care and hand them on with out delay.
- We will try to give you a full answer to your telephone enquiry immediately, or respond fully within 3 working days. If we can't answer you fully within that timescale, we will give you the name and telephone number of the person who is dealing with your enquiry and the date by which we hope to give you a full answer. Mostly we expect to give a full answer to enquiries no more than 10 working days after you contact us. Should it take longer than 10 days to resolve your enquiry, we will keep you informed of progress.
- When we telephone you, we will give you our name, tell you we are calling from Uttlesford District Council and explain clearly why we are phoning.

#### **If you contact us by letter, e-mail, text phone (minicom) or fax:**

- Letter or fax - we will try to give you a full answer as soon as possible. This should be no more than 10 working days after you contact us. If you can give us a phone number or e-mail address to respond to, it could help to speed up our reply.  
 .email or text phone - we will try to give you a full answer as soon as possible. This should be no more than 5 working days after you contact us.  
 If we can't answer you fully within those timescales, we will let you know we are dealing with your query and give you the name and telephone number of the person who is doing this.
- There will be some circumstances when we are not able to give you a full answer in 10 working days - for example with some complex enquiries or where we need to make a visit or request information from someone else. If so, we will keep you informed of what we are doing, including the date by which we hope to give you a full answer.
- We will use plain English and printed text in typeface Arial 12 point size or larger in our letters, emails and faxes.

#### **If you visit us:**

- We aim to see you within 5 minutes of your appointment time. It is very helpful if you arrive a few minutes early and let us know if you are delayed or have to cancel.
- If we are delayed, we will explain why, tell you how long you may have to wait and give you the option of coming back on an alternative day and time.
- We will provide a clean, tidy and comfortable waiting area, with information about our services and, where possible, facilities for children.
- Whenever possible, we will provide a place to discuss matters in private, if you wish.

### If we visit you:

- We will normally agree a time with you in advance and if not, we will be happy to return at another time if our visit is not convenient. If necessary, we will let you know as early as possible if we are delayed or have to cancel the visit.
- We will say who we are, where we come from and why we are calling. We will show you our identity card before you invite us in.
- We will give you the opportunity to make a phone call to check our identity before we come in. (Please do not let any one into your home unless you know them or have checked their identity).

## Housing Repairs and Planned works

### Dealing with routine repairs

- The Councils Repairs service is provided by our own workforce and also external partners. The repairs service can be accessed by phone, email, letter, or by personal visit to the Saffron Walden or Dunmow offices.
- We will publish our priority times for completion of repairs ranging from Emergencies (response within 2 hours and completion within 24 hours), urgent jobs (within 3 days), and routine jobs (8 days). When you contact us we will advise you of what category your repair comes under.
- We will offer appointments for all urgent and Routine jobs and where possible arrange these to suit your requirements. If the first appointment slot is not convenient, we will offer an alternative date. A full list of jobs that can be appointed will be provided on request.
- We will discuss and agree with you acceptable procedures to include operatives "Code of Conduct, the "Quality of work" you will be provided, and "Health and Safety guidance."
- We will carry out "quality inspections" on a percentage of completed jobs and we will agree and publish those indicators with you.
- We will work with the Tenant Forum to identify improvements to the service.
- We will provide an Out of Hours emergency service. However, we will not send out engineers to deal with routine repairs that can be appointed during the normal working day.

## Visiting your home

- All members of staff, and contractors will display identification so you can be sure of whom we are at all times.

## Dealing with Major works.

- We will discuss with you all proposed Planned programmes of work at least a year in advance and review the programme with your consent if changes have to be made.
- We will agree with you how your heating appliances are to be serviced to make sure they are inspected on a yearly basis so they comply with the current health & safety legislation.
- We will update the Councils housing Asset Register on an annual basis so that all of the relevant data is current and correct.
- We will review annually the Letting standard of our Empty properties and make sure we incorporate the latest Best practise policies and procedures.
- We will consult with residents regarding choice of colour schemes within our sheltered accommodation, and general needs relet units.
- We will encourage and endorse use of Sustainable materials wherever possible and also report to you for approval Energy Efficiency options that would be beneficial and applicable to your home(subject to funding)
- We will carry out quality inspections on all Planned programmes of work to ensure the service standards meet your expectations, and we will also encourage you to report to us any concerns you may have.
- We will encourage the Tenant Forum to participate in being a part of the decision making process when we let new contracts.

### How you can help us

- Please be patient; there are times when we're very busy and you may have to wait to see someone.
- Please provide the information we ask for: if you delay it will take us longer to deal with your application.
- Please tell us straight away if your circumstances change at all.

### Complaints and compliments about services:

We welcome all comments about our services and use them to improve the way we do things. To help us respond we will follow the Uttlesford District Council corporate Compliments and Complaints scheme - for more information see our leaflet or visit our website at [www.uttlesford.gov.uk](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk).

### In summary, our complaints procedure is: -

- Register complaints made by letter, e-mail, fax, phone or in person.
- Send an acknowledgement by letter or e-mail.
- Respond to all complaints in writing within 10 working days.
- We will make every effort to respond to complaints within 10 working days. However, if this is not possible because we have to carry out a detailed investigation, we will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days. A full response will be sent within a further 10 working days.
- If we need further information before dealing with your complaint, we will write to you within 3 working days. If, when the Council's complaints procedure is completed, you are still not satisfied and wish to pursue the matter further, please tell us and we will send you the appropriate form to enable you to take the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman (Tel 020 7217 4620).

### Your responsibility:

Uttlesford District Council employees work hard to provide its customers with the best possible service. We will not tolerate verbal or physical abuse or damage to our property. These circumstances are very rare but our staff is not expected to stay in situations where they:

- feel threatened either verbally or physically
- fear for their own safety, that of colleagues or members of the public

### Contact Details

Uttlesford District Council  
Building Services Department  
Council Offices  
London Road  
Saffron Walden  
Essex

CB11 4ER

Tel: 01799 510510  
Fax: 01799 510550  
Minicom: 01799 510429  
Email: [housingrepairs@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:housingrepairs@uttlesford.gov.uk)  
Email: [uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.uttlesford.gov.uk](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk)

Our opening hours are:  
Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm  
Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm