

# **Lewes District Council**

## **Housing Services**

### **Service Standards**

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# Service Standards 2007

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### **Background to Housing Services Standards**

These standards were developed in consultation with staff and tenants throughout 2003/4 and reviewed in 2006/7. They include standards required by the Government and legislation, and standards that tenants and staff think are important. In order to ensure we deliver our service in line with these standards we have attached targets so we can measure our performance. Both staff and tenants will be involved in monitoring process and the standards will be reviewed regularly.

### **Summery of terms used**

*Type of Standard* – this column shows whether the standard relates to a specific team, the department or the Council. It also shows whether the standard is a Government performance indicator, for example BV164 (Best Value 164).

*Service Standard* – a statement on the level of service we want to achieve

*Performance Manager* – the senior manager who has overall responsibility for ensuring that the service is delivered to the required standard and that performance is monitored.

*Work Co-ordinator* – the officer/s responsible for organising or carrying out the service that the standard relates to.

*Performance Targets or Indicators* – the ways in which we will measure whether we are meeting the required standard

Service Standards – 2007

Type of standard	Service Standard	Performance Manager	Work Co-ordinator	Performance Target or Indicators
<b>GENERAL STANDARDS</b>				
BV164	In line with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy we will provide a service which takes account of diversity and treats all people with equal respect	Head of Housing Services	Housing Operations Manager	<p>Target - Comply with the Commission for Racial Equalities Code of Practice in rented housing, and follow the good practice standards for social landlords on tackling racial harassment</p> <p>Target - Achieve the Equality Standard Framework</p> <p>Monitor – (status survey) We will survey our customers every three years to monitor their satisfaction with the services we provide and opportunities for participation: with results further broken down by (i) black and minority ethnic and (ii) non-black and minority ethnic tenants”</p>
Departmental	We will take action to eliminate racial and non racial harassment	Housing Operations Manager	All Managers	<p>Target - All Housing Services staff to attend equalities training</p> <p>Outcome - Compliance with Office of the Deputy Prime Ministers Code of Practice for Social Landlord's "Tackling Racial Harassment"</p> <p>Monitor - Reduction in complaints</p>

Service Standards 2007

Type of standard	Service Standard	Performance Manager	Work Co-ordinator	Performance Target or Indicators
Departmental	We will regularly consult with tenants on issues that affect their housing and incorporate the results into our service improvement programme	Mike Keeping	All managers	<p>Monitor - Undertake three yearly Tenants Satisfaction survey (Status)</p> <p>Outcome - Increase in performance against areas identified as needing improvement</p> <p>Target -71% of tenants satisfied with the opportunities for participating in management and decision making (BV75)</p> <p>Target - 85% of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided (BV74)</p> <p>Update district compact every eighteen months and redesign every three years</p>
Departmental	We will have a welcoming and helpful family friendly reception at our Fort Road office	Office Manager	Housing Services Receptionist	Target - 90% customer satisfaction – bi-annual customer satisfaction survey
Departmental	We will arrange a convenient date and time for visits, meetings or appointments	Housing Operations Manager  Housing Maintenance Manager	Estates Manager  Supported Housing Manager  Housing Maintenance Manager	Monitor - Annual survey

Service Standards 2007

Type of standard	Service Standard	Performance Manager	Work Co-ordinator	Performance Target or Indicators
Departmental	We will leave a card saying we called if a customer is out.	Housing Operations Manager  Housing Maintenance Manager	Estates Manager  Supported Housing Manager  Housing Maintenance Manager	Monitor - Annual survey
Departmental	Our information will be clear, up to date and accurate, and be available in a range of formats and languages on request	Head of Housing Services	Housing Operations Manager  Estates Manager  Supported Housing Manager  Housing Maintenance Manager	Monitor - Annual survey
Departmental	We will provide a translation or interpreting service on request	Housing Operations Manager	Office Manager	
Departmental	We will provide a private interview room if requested	Housing Operations Manager	Estates Manager  Rents and Supported Housing Manager	Monitor - Annual survey

Service Standards 2007

Type of standard	Service Standard	Performance Manager	Work Co-ordinator	Performance Target or Indicators
Departmental	We will open our office at Fort Road from Monday to Thursday (9am-4.45pm) and on Friday (9am to 4.15pm)	Housing Operations Manager	Office Manager	
Corporate	We will be helpful, polite and professional when dealing with customers	Head of Housing Services	All Managers	Monitor - Annual survey
Corporate	We will wear name badges when dealing with customers and show you an official ID badge without being asked if we visit you at home.			
Departmental	We will send out a newsletter three times a year	Head of Housing Services	All Managers	Target - 80% of respondents satisfied with Housing Link (source – bi-annual tenants satisfaction survey)
Corporate	We will apologise if we are at fault and do our best to put things right. Complaints referred to the Head of Housing will be dealt with in 20 working days			Monitor – Corporate Complaints Procedure
<b>GENERAL – CORRESPONDENCE</b>				
Corporate	We will answer letters, faxes and emails within 7 working days using Plain English and avoiding jargon.  If the response is likely to take longer an acknowledgment will	Head of Housing Services	All Managers	Target - 84% acknowledged within 7 days  Monitor – monthly reports

Service Standards 2007

Type of standard	Service Standard	Performance Manager	Work Co-ordinator	Performance Target or Indicators
	be sent confirming when a reply can be expected			
Corporate	We will include the contact details of any other departments dealing with a customers letter	Head of Housing Services	All Managers	
Corporate	We will response to Freedom of Information requests within 20 working days	Head of Housing Services	All Managers	Monitoring - Annual survey
<b>GENERAL – TELEPHONE CALLS</b>				
Corporate	We will answer the phone within 20 seconds and return phone messages within 1 working day	Head of Housing Services	Office Manager	Target - 90% calls answered
Corporate	We will take a clear, concise message and make sure it is passed onto the appropriate person	Head of Housing Services	All Managers	Monitoring - Annual survey
Departmental	We will make sure a voicemail message service is available when staff are not in the office.	Head of Housing Services	All Managers	Monitoring - Annual survey

Service Standards 2007

Type of standard	Service Standard	Performance Manager	Work Co-ordinator	Performance Target or Indicators
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>				
Team	We will provide efficient and cost effective administrative support	Office Manager Housing Contracts Manager	Admin Assistant Repairs Officer	Target - 97% of sickness returns, mileage & overtime claims to be processed by the Tuesday before the 12 <sup>th</sup> day of each month  Target - Process invoices within corporate (7 days) and departmental (5 days) timescales  Target - Process 97% of expense claims before the 12 <sup>th</sup> day of the month and within two months of the claim
Team	We will provide regular financial reports to managers to facilitate effective budget management .	Office Manager Housing Contracts Manager	Admin Assistant	

Service Standards 2007

Type of standard	Service Standard	Performance Manager	Work Co-ordinator	Performance Target or Indicators
Team	Provide an efficient and informed reception service to customers at our Fort Road office	Office Manager	Office Manager	<p>Target - 90% of customers taking part in annual reception survey are satisfied with the reception service</p> <p>Target - 90% of customers completing the annual reception customer satisfaction survey are satisfied with the service they received</p> <p>Monitoring – Annual reception customer satisfaction survey</p>
Team	Maintain computer systems	Office Manager Housing Contracts Manager	Office Manager	<p>Monitoring - Ensure all standard letters are kept up to date</p> <p>Monitoring - Check monthly reports to ensure data input is up to date</p> <p>Target - 95% of staff to be trained in the Housing Services core computer competencies</p> <p>Target - Provide managers with monthly systems report to analyse performance</p>
Team	We will maintain staff records and provide advice on personnel matters	Office Manager	Admin Assistant	Outcome - Staff information files to be kept up to date

Service Standards 2007

Type of standard	Service Standard	Performance Manager	Work Co-ordinator	Performance Target or Indicators
Team	We will purchase office equipment, furniture, and stationery that provides good value for money, complies with Health and Safety requirements and is in line with our commitment to good environmental management	Office Manager Housing Contracts Manager	Admin Assistant Repairs Officer	Target - 90% of staff satisfied with furniture and stationery provided.  Monitoring – Annual staff survey  Outcome - Annual purchases within budget
Team	We will maintain and provide safe keeping of office equipment and furniture	Office Manager	Admin Officer	Monitoring - Maintain inventory and carry out periodic checks
Team	We will ensure compliance with Health and Safety legislation to maintain and provide a safe and comfortable working environment.	Office Manager	Admin Assistant	Monitoring - Implement fire drill twice annually and test all alarm systems in line with the COSHH annual Health and Safety audit requirements
<b>PROPERTY SERVICES</b>				
BV63	We will carry out improvements to homes to increase the overall energy efficiency of our properties	Head of Housing Services	Housing Maintenance Manager  Housing Contracts Manager	Outcome - Increasing SAP rating
Team	We will provide an emergency out of hours service	Housing Maintenance Manager	Housing Maintenance Manager	Monitoring –Local PI 84

Service Standards 2007

Type of standard	Service Standard	Performance Manager	Work Co-ordinator	Performance Target or Indicators
Team	We will carry out all emergency repairs within 24 hours	Housing Maintenance Manager	Housing Maintenance Manager	Monitoring – Local PI 84 and 98
Team	We will offer appointments for non-emergency repairs	Housing Maintenance Manager	Housing Maintenance Manager	Monitoring – automatically generated by Saffron
Team	Notify you in writing when repair work is to be carried out	Housing Maintenance Manager	Housing Maintenance Manager	Monitoring – automatically generated by Saffron
Team	We will give you a feedback form to comment on the work that has been carried out and investigate all reports of poor service within 4 weeks	Housing Maintenance Manager	Housing Maintenance Manager	Target – investigate all reports on service within 4 weeks Monitoring – Corporate Complaints Procedure
BV184	We will meet the Governments Decent Homes Standard by 2010	Housing Contracts Manager	Housing Maintenance Manager	Target - . All homes to meet standards by 2010 Monitoring – Quarterly reports
Local PI 84	We will aim to complete all repairs within locally agreed target times	Housing Maintenance Manager	Senior Maintenance Surveyor	Target – 98 % repairs requested by tenants completed within local target times Monitoring – Quarterly reports

Service Standards 2007

Type of standard	Service Standard	Performance Manager	Work Co-ordinator	Performance Target or Indicators
Local PI 85	We will provide a quality repairs service and deliver value for money within the Council's budget	Housing Maintenance Manager	Housing Maintenance Manager	Target - 98% repairs noted as good or satisfactory during the year by tenants  Monitor - repairs satisfaction form returns, three yearly Tenants Satisfaction Survey (Status)
Team	We will undertake periodic stock condition surveys to inform our work programmes and carry out planned and service maintenance on a regular basis to maintain your home	Head of Housing Services	Housing Contracts Manager	Monitor – BV184 meet the Governments Decent Homes Standard by 2010
Team	We will provide advice on reducing condensation problems	Head of Housing Services	Housing Maintenance Manager	
Team	We will install battery smoke detectors in all homes and replace non working detectors (tenants to provide replacement batteries)	Housing Maintenance Manager	Senior Maintenance Surveyor	Monitor – included in void standard (new tenancy questionnaire feedback)
Team	We will re-let empty properties to an agreed void standard	Housing Maintenance Manager	Senior Maintenance Surveyor	Target - 95% voids to meet standard (new tenancy questionnaire feedback)
Team	We will provide a “room-a-year” paint/redcoration scheme for tenants in receipt of certain welfare benefits and those with special needs.	Housing Maintenance Manager	Senior Maintenance Surveyor	Monitor - monitor uptake and budget

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Type of standard	Service Standard	Performance Manager	Work Co-ordinator	Performance Target or Indicators
<b>ESTATE MANAGEMENT</b>				
Team	We will inspect the Council's housing estates and all Council land under our management, including car parking areas, every 12 weeks and ensure that all areas are in a clean, safe, tidy and working condition	Housing Operations Manager	Estates Manager	Monitor - Inspection checklists completed Monitor - Corporate complaints system
Team	We will arrange for the removal of abandoned and illegally parked cars on Council land within 8 weeks	Housing Operations Manager	Estates Manager	Monitor – Community services report
Team	We will respond to complaints of harassment, neighbour nuisance or anti-social behaviour within 7 days	Housing Operations Manager	Estates Manager	Monitor – monthly Saffron report, Annual report to ASB working group
Team	We will provide all new tenants with a Tenants Handbook explaining their rights and responsibilities	Housing Operations Manager	Estates Manager	Outcome – tenants aware of their rights and responsibilities and who to contact for what Monitor – monitor satisfaction at 6 month post tenancy visit
Team	We will ensure the Council's stock of garages are managed, maintained and let effectively	Housing Operations Manager	Estates Manager	Target - a current waiting list for areas of high demand Target - Inspect sites every 12 weeks
Team	We will provide a caretaking service where more intensive management is required.	Housing Operations Manager	Estates Manager	Monitor - three yearly Tenants Satisfaction Survey (Status)
	We will deal with simple	Housing Operations	Estates Manager	Target - 90% of simple tenancy matters dealt

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Type of standard	Service Standard	Performance Manager	Work Co-ordinator	Performance Target or Indicators
Team	tenancy matters within four weeks	Manager		with in four weeks
Team	We will relet vacant properties as soon as possible to increase the availability of housing and maximise income	Housing Operations Manager	Estates Manager	Target - Let empty properties within an average of 19 days Monitor – Quarterly Saffron report
Team	We will respond to complaints of harrassment, neighbourhood nuisance or anti-social behaviour within 7 days	Housing Operations Manager	Estates Manager	Target - 75% of tenants satisfied Monitor - ASB customer feedback form)
<b>RENT COLLECTION AND RECOVERY</b>				
Bv66	We will monitor the proportion of rent collected	Housing Operations Manager	Rents Manager	Target – BVPI Monitoring – Q reports
Rents Team	We will advise all tenants of payment options and ways of accessing all relevant benefits	Housing Operations Manager	Rents Manager	Target - Rent Officer to attend 50% of new tenancy sign ups  Target - Payment options available on Web page  Target - Payment options leaflet in sign up packs and Tenants handbook  Monitoring – checklist signed at sign up and post tenancy visit
Rents Team	We will take action on rent arrears after 2 weeks	Housing Operations Manager	Rents Manager	Target - Proportion of rent collected  Target - Reduction in evictions

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Type of standard	Service Standard	Performance Manager	Work Co-ordinator	Performance Target or Indicators
Rents Team	We will provide advice and support to tenants having difficulties paying their rent	Housing Operations Manager	Rents Manager	Target - Proportion of rent collected Target - Reduction in evictions Target - 70% of rents staff to have received ongoing training in welfare benefits in any year
<b>TENANT PARTICIPATION</b>				
Team	We will promote and increase tenant involvement in the Housing Service, providing support and encouragement to residents groups as well as individual tenants	Tenant Participation Manager	Tenant Participation Manager	Target - 100% of tenants to be represented by an association or representative scheme Target - 75% of Tenants Federation and Housing Consultative Panel meetings to be attended by a TP worker Target - BV75 Target - BV74 Monitor - Annual tenants review of the Tenant Participation Service Monitor – (status survey) We will survey our customers every three years to monitor their satisfaction with the services we provide and opportunities for participation: with results further broken down by (i) black and minority ethnic and (ii) non-black and minority ethnic tenants”
Team	We will encourage the set up of tenant’s groups	Tenant Participation Manager	Tenant Participation Manager	Target - 100% of tenants to be represented by an association or representative scheme Monitor – Compact Review

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Team	We will hold an annual tenants conference	Tenant Participation Manager	Tenant Participation Manager	
Team	We will provide a minimum of 4 meetings a year for tenants to monitor the housing service	Tenant Participation Manager	Tenant Participation Manager	Monitor – Housing Service Monitoring Group reports
Team	We will review our Tenant Compact every three years	Tenant Participation Manager	Tenant Participation Manager	
Team	We will send out our newsletter, Housing Link and the Tenants Voice newsletter 3 times a year	Tenant Participation Manager	Tenant Participation Manager	
Team	We will provide a tenants resource centre in Lewes and acces to administrative support in other areas	Tenant Participation Manager	Tenant Participation Manager	
Team	We will provide advice to tenants associations who want to set up and manage community projects	Tenant Participation Manager	Tenant Participation Manager	Increase in spin off groups to 40 by 2005 (Community Development Plan)
<b>SUPPORTED HOUSING &amp; LIFELINE</b>				
Team	We will review our Sheltered Housing Compact every 3 years to ensure it deals with issues that are important to Sheltered tenants	TP Manager	Supported Housing Manager	Monitor - Annual review by Sheltered Housing Forum

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Type of standard	Service Standard	Performance Manager	Work Co-ordinator	Performance Target or Indicators
Team	We will provide a minimum of 2 Sheltered Housing Forum's a year to consult with tenants over issues relating to service delivery	Supported Housing Co-ordinator	Supported Housing Manager	Target - Minimum of two meetings a year
Team	We will meet with each scheme every six months to discuss issues that are important to the tenants	Supported Housing Manager	Supported Housing Manager	Target - Minimum of two meeting per year
Team	We will arrange annual meetings for resident's relatives to meet housing staff and discuss the service	Supported Housing Co-ordinator	Supported Housing Manager	Target - Minimum of One meeting per year
Team	We will provide Scheme Managers on all Council sheltered schemes	Supported Housing Manager	Supported Housing Manager	
Team	We will provide a 24 hour call monitoring service when the scheme manager is not available	Supported Housing Co-ordinator	Supported Housing Manager	Target – 24 hr cover Monitoring – six monthly
Team	We will facilitate social activities in sheltered schemes	Supported Housing Co-ordinator	Supported Housing Manager	Outcome - Satisfaction with level and type of activities facilitated
Team	We will provide a range of sheltered accommodation for older people	Housing Operations Manager	Housing Strategy Manager	Target - 70% tenants satisfied with that accommodation provided meets their needs  Monitoring – Tenant satisfaction survey (Status)every 3 years
Team	In partnership with ESCC we will provide advanced care accommodation for the more frail elderly	Supported Housing Officer	Supported Housing Manager	Target - 75% tenants satisfied with service provided  Monitoring – every six months

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Type of standard	Service Standard	Performance Manager	Work Co-ordinator	Performance Target or Indicators
Team	We will provide a Lifeline Alarm Service to vulnerable people and respond to calls within 30 seconds	Lewes Lifeline Manager	Supported Housing Manager	Target – 30 second response time Monitoring – monthly record sheets
<b>TRANSFERS AND EXCHANGES</b>				
Estates Team	We will advise customers on their prospects for moving, taking into account availability of accommodation and special needs	Housing Operations Manager	Estates Manager Supported Housing Manager	
Estates Team	We will maintain a Transfer List for Council tenants and tenants of Housing Associations to which the Council has nomination rights.	Housing Operations Manager	Estates Manager Supported Housing Manager	
Estates Team	We will acknowledge transfer applications within 7 days of receipt and provide a full response within a further 14 days	Housing Operations Manager	Estates Manager Supported housing Manager	Target - Process 95% of applications within three weeks Monitoring – Saffron annual report
Estates Team	We will actively promote the Tenants' Incentive Scheme(TIS) to address under-occupation and free up family accommodation	Housing Operations Manager	Estates Manager	Monitor - take-up of scheme annually Target - Incentive payments to be initiated within ten days of move Target - Regular advert in Housing Link and leaflets in receptions

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Type of standard	Service Standard	Performance Manager	Work Co-ordinator	Performance Target or Indicators
Estates Team	Process all applications for Mutual Exchange within 6 weeks	Estates Manager	Housing Operations Manager  Supported Housing Manager	Target - Process all applications for mutual exchange within 6 weeks  Monitoring – Annual Saffron report
<b>RIGHT TO BUY</b>				
Team	We will provide advice and assistance to Right to Buy purchasers, and manage the Right to Buy process within statutory guidelines	Housing Operations Manager	Office Manager	Target - 95% of RTB2 despatched within 8 weeks