

## Our service standards

### General service delivery

We are always working to give you the best service possible and make living in our homes as pleasant and hassle free as we can. We recognise that from time to time things can go wrong, causing you to contact us or us to get in touch with you to sort things out. To make this easier and more understandable on both sides, we have standards of service that you can rely on us to deliver. They are based on mutual respect and if you feel that any of our people or the organisation as a whole is acting outside them, we want you to let us know.

We will:

- provide an accessible service
- treat all people fairly
- deal with your enquiry promptly – whether it is by telephone, letter, email, a visit to our offices or at home
- treat your enquiries seriously - responding clearly and honestly.
- identify ourselves by name
- be polite, courteous and clear about what can or cannot be done
- listen to your point of view
- wear name badges and have an identity card
- not smoke in your home or our offices
- deal with your enquiry consistently using our agreed policies and procedures.

### Keeping in touch

You can contact us by telephone from 8am to 5pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and from 10am to 5pm on Wednesday.

We will answer your call within 15 seconds of you selecting a number on your keypad and give you the name of the person answering the call. We will try to answer your query immediately. If we can't we will investigate and call you back within 24 hours or on the next working day with a reply. If you leave a message on our answer phone when the office is closed, we will return your call the next working day.

Our reception staff will try to deal with your enquiry there and then. If you feel the need to see a housing officer or a rent account manager, an appointment will be made for a home visit or office appointment. Home visits can be arranged within ten working days. If the matter is urgent such as serious harassment or fire damage we'll arrange a visit within 24 hours. If you need a signer, interpreter or translator, we will arrange this if you let us know before your appointment.

We will give you a full written reply to letters within eight working days. If a full reply will take longer we will write or telephone you within three days. Letters will be written clearly and in plain English. The person writing the letter will sign it, unless this will delay the reply. If you prefer, we will reply on audiotape within eight working days. You can now contact us at [customerservice@affinitysutton.com](mailto:customerservice@affinitysutton.com). If you email us, we will reply within five working days. All our leaflets are available on our website [www.affinitysutton.com](http://www.affinitysutton.com). You can now access a secure area on our website, 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the 'Our Residents' section of the website. Here you can view details of your property, check your rent statement, request a repair or find out the status of any current repairs.

To use this service, email [customerservice@affinitysutton.com](mailto:customerservice@affinitysutton.com) giving your name, address, tenancy number and telephone number. We will then send you registration details, including your login and password.

## Repairs

Our repairs service consists of day to day repairs, gas repairs, service contracts and planned maintenance. For day to day repairs we have two partnering contractors. Osborne deal mostly with the properties in the north of Bromley and Rydon deal mostly with the properties in the south of Bromley. Their numbers are:

Osborne: **0845 051 0152**

Rydon: **01689 874 044**

For gas repairs and gas heating repairs, we have a contractor called Swale Heating. Their telephone number is **0845 6042521**. Service contracts are undertaken by specialist contractors. Examples include controlled door entry systems and lifts. If you are unsure who to contact, please telephone us on **020 8313 3310** and we will be happy to help.

We will:

- carry out repairs to a good standard
- be sensitive to the fact that we are working in your home. Our code of conduct for contractors is set out in our repairs handbook
- provide a 24 hour service, 365 days to deal with emergency repairs

## Service Standards

- offer an appointment for work inside your home. This appointment will depend on the job priority and when it is convenient for you. You can report a repair by phoning direct to our repairs and maintenance partnering contractors. You can also send an email, letter or visit our offices
- confirm the order has been raised by agreeing an appointment or sending a receipt
- ask you how satisfied you were with the standard of the repair.

We carry out planned maintenance to your home every six years. We'll advise you when, and give you some idea of the likely work. We will liaise with leaseholders separately. You should repair any damage caused to your home by yourself or your family. If we have to carry out these repairs, we will charge you.

As a tenant, if you want to move you can apply for a transfer if you are living in an Affinity Sutton home. But if you owe us money we'll only agree to a transfer once the debt has been cleared. We'll be clear about your realistic chances of moving. If you want to move to a new home, you can help yourself by being as flexible as possible, over choice of area and type of property. We'll visit before making an offer to ensure you have kept your home in good repair.

We'll advise you of any repairs that you are responsible for and must carry out before we agree to transfer you. We can give you details of mutual exchanges and other schemes to swap home. These are also available from our web site.

### **Empty homes**

We aim to let our empty homes within four weeks. Properties will be prepared to our standard including safety checks to all services, before being offered to a new tenant. Some minor repairs may be carried out after you have moved in, but this will be explained when you view the property.

If you move into a flat or maisonette our caretaker will call within two weeks and introduce him/herself. Details will be sent to homes in areas not covered by a caretaking service. When you move into a new home, we will give you the certificate for the last annual gas service.

### **Starting your tenancy**

We will explain the conditions of the residency to you before you sign your tenants agreement. We will also give you a copy of our residents' handbook and repairs handbook.

### **Paying your rent**

You can pay your rent by direct debit, standing order, at post offices using your swipe card, at local council cash offices or by sending a cheque to our offices. You can also pay:

- at any PayPoint
- housing benefit direct
- online through our website
- by calling the AllPay 24 hour call centre.

For further details read our leaflet, Paying your rent, or call us. We will provide you with a rent statement every three months. We will tell you about any money you owe by letter, telephone or personal visit. If you are having difficulty paying the rent, you need to tell us straight away. We will advise on benefits or direct you to someone who can help you. It is up to you to renew your application for housing benefit and make enquiries if there is any delay with your claim.

## **Nuisance and harassment**

We have an antisocial behaviour team who deal with cases of nuisance and harassment reported by our residents and leaseholders. We will take all reports of nuisance and harassment seriously. We rely on your co-operation in investigating the nuisance/harassment. We will not get involved in minor neighbour disputes or cases where other remedies are available. We will investigate reports of racial or sexual harassment or domestic violence within 24 hours if it is on our property. We may need to refer serious cases to other agencies for mediation or other action.

## **Estate services**

We will meet or exceed the Environmental Protection Act standards for the grassed and communal areas on our flatted estates. These standards are set out in a leaflet, Our Caretaking Service, which is available on our web site and from our offices. It also gives details of the standards our grounds maintenance contractor must deliver. We'll clean off graffiti. If it's offensive we'll remove it within 24 hours of it being reported to us.

### Retirement and supported housing

Our retirement housing officer will:

- meet you when you view the property
- explain the scheme facilities and alarm system at your interview after moving in collect details of your next of kin and other information to support you in your home
- make regular checks on your health and well being
- respond to emergencies during working hours
- provide a 24 hour service through a call and alarm system.

### **Leaseholders**

We will provide you with:

- a leasehold pack when you purchase your new home
- an estimated service charge in April of each year
- an actual service charge account in October for the previous financial year together with a list of the communal repairs carried out
- a scheme to spread the costs of major works over £2,000
- direct debit payment arrangements
- an account balance on request
- a statutory consultation for major works
- an insurance certificate annually
- a quarterly communal repairs statement
- an annual breakdown of communal repair costs
- events specifically for leaseholders
- a leasehold newsletter three times a year together with Home News
- the offer of a pre-right to buy interview before purchase is completed
- an annual statement of account.

Please remember that it is very important that you pay your service charges. If you don't it is likely that this could lead to a money judgement served against you at the county court and ultimately you could lose your home. Please talk to us if you have any concerns over your service charges.

## **Resident consultation and listening to our customers**

We are committed to involving and listening to our customers on the service we deliver. Our leaflet on resident consultation is available from our web site and our offices. We will carry out regular surveys with new and existing residents to ask about our service delivery and customer care.

### **Complaints**

If we have made a mistake we will:

- put it right as quickly as we can and say we are sorry
- provide compensation in accordance with our published leaflet
- have a clear formal complaints procedure – details are available on our web site and from our offices
- learn from it and make changes where we can.

## **Equality and diversity**

We will work to promote equality and eliminate institutional racism. We will treat all our residents fairly and expect others to do the same. These standards represent the level of service we aim to provide but are not legally binding. The level of service relies on co-operation between our partners, our customers and ourselves.

If you can think of any ways to improve them, please write and tell us.

We are committed to achieving equality of opportunity in every area of our work. We will work towards eliminating institutional practices that disadvantage minority groups, women and disabled people.

For a translation please call:

Ücretsiz tercüme için, telefon edin: (Turkish)

Para obter uma tradução, ligue para: (Portuguese)

如果需要将其翻译，请致电: (Mandarin)

अनुवाद के लिए कृपया फ़ोन करें: (Hindi)

ਤਰਜਮੇ ਲਈ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ: (Punjabi)

Ako vam treba prevod, molimo vas nazovite: (Croatian)

ترجمہ کیلئے براہ کرم فون کریں: (Urdu)

Herhangi bir tercümeye ihtiyacınız var mı? (Turkish)

Turjumaad ma u baahan tahay? (Somali)

ਕੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ? (Punjabi)

એક ભાષાંતરની જરૂર છે ? (Gujarati)

Please telephone us if you require a copy of this publication in large print or on CD.