

Aids and Adaptations/Property Improvements

Our aim is to ensure that our aids and adaptations service helps HHL tenants to remain living independently in their homes, wherever this is possible.

Service Standard	Do we meet the standard?	How?
We will complete works costing up to £1,000, such as installing concrete ramps, within 10 working days of the receiving the referral request	Yes	99% of these works have been completed within 10 working days during 2009/10 to date.
We will complete works costing up to £2,000 such as installing showers over baths, within 20 working days of receiving the referral request	Yes	95% of these works have been completed within 10 working days during 2009/10 to date.
We will ensure that the contractor gives you a start date and a completion date for the work	Yes	93% of customers surveyed indicated that they were given a start date and completion date for their improvement works.
We will ensure that the contractor leaves your home in a clean and tidy condition at the end of each working day	Yes	95% of customers surveyed indicated that their homes were left clean and tidy at the end of each day.
We will aim to complete improvement works within the following timescales:		
Central heating system = maximum of 3 working days	Yes	93% completed on time
Electrical rewire = maximum of 6 working days	Yes	100% completed on time
Bathroom = maximum of 8 working days	Yes	100% completed on time
Kitchen = maximum of 10 working days	Yes	100% completed on time
Kitchen, bathroom & electrical rewire = maximum of 20 working days	Yes	100% completed on time
Re-roofing= maximum of 10 working days	Yes	100% completed on time
External doors = maximum of 1 working day	Yes	96% completed on time

Anti-Social Behaviour

We aim to tackle and reduce all types of anti-social behaviour in the communities and neighbourhoods in which we operate and will take every opportunity to work in partnership with other agencies to achieve this. We aim to achieve a balance between enforcement, prevention and rehabilitation.

Service Standard	Do we meet the standard?	How?
We will provide a service where you can contact us 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to report an incident	Yes	Out of hours reporting of ASB incidents is available 24 hours a day.
We will make contact with you to follow up on your complaint within 3 working days of your initial report	Yes	100% of incidents are responded to within 3 working days.
We will inform you of the available options to resolve your complaint, agree an Action Plan with you and provide you with a copy	Could do better	68% of people surveyed said that they were provided with an agreed action plan.
We will discuss with you any support needs that you may have and provide complainants with information on available support agencies	Could do better	70% of people surveyed said that they were satisfied with the support they received.
We will, when we close a case, confirm this with you and explain the reasons	Could do better	68% of people surveyed said that they received written confirmation of the closure of their case along with the reasons why and the case outcome.
We will remove racist or hate-related graffiti from HHL property within 2 working days of a report to us	Yes	100% of reported incidents of racist or hate-related graffiti were dealt with within 2 working days.

Careline

Herefordshire Careline provides a 24 hour, 365 days a year social alarm monitoring service to elderly, disabled and vulnerable people enabling them to live independently, whilst having the reassurance of knowing that they have immediate contact in an emergency. We are accredited with the Telecare Services Association.

Service Standard	Do we meet the standard?	How?
We will aim to answer 88% of all alarm calls received at the centre within 30 seconds and 96.5% in 60 seconds	Yes	91.1% of calls answered within 30 seconds. 97.3% of calls answered within 60 seconds.
We will answer all alarm calls courteously, sympathetically and efficiently	Yes	100% of customers surveyed said this was true
We will report any alarm system fault within 15 minutes of receipt and ensure any fault on an alarm unit is attended to within 48 hours	Yes	89% of faults reported within 15 minutes of receipt. 91.6% of faulty units attended to within 48 hours (Target = 90% as per Telecare Service Associations 2009 Code of Practice).
We will respond to a dispersed alarm enquiry within three working days either by telephoning you or sending you an information leaflet	Yes	100% of dispersed alarm enquiries responded to within three working days.
We will ensure that when dealing with calls, our operators provide guidance and reassurance to the customer until such time as the circumstances are remedied and/or passed on to an appropriate other party	Yes	99% of customers surveyed were reassured by the careline operator and their actions.

Complaints

Herefordshire Housing is committed to providing the best possible service that we can and encourages feedback from customers, including complaints. We aim to resolve complaints quickly, fairly and effectively.

Service Standard	Do we meet the standard?	How?
We will make it easy and straightforward for you to make a complaint	Yes	86.4% of people surveyed said they found it easy to make a complaint.
We will endeavour to respond to your complaint within the published timescales and keep you informed	Yes	88.6% of complaints were responded to on-time during 2008/09.
We will ensure you have a full explanation to your complaint in the preferred format	-	Methods of feeding back to complainants in preferred format are currently being incorporated into the Orchard system. Measure to follow once this is complete.
We will tell you if changes have been made to services following your complaint	Yes	Currently published in the In Vision newsletter and on HHL website.
We will publish on a quarterly basis the learning from complaints	Yes	Reported to the Wider Management Team on a quarterly basis. Published in newsletter and on the Herefordshire Housing website.

Customer Access

Our customers are at the centre of everything we do. It is essential that we ensure that contacting us is a simple, easy and convenient experience for every customer.

Service Standard	Do we meet the standard?	How?
We will aim to answer your call within 6 rings or 20 seconds when you telephone us	Yes	89.1% of calls are answered within 20 seconds.
We will provide an out-of-hours telephone number so that you can contact us to report any emergency that is our responsibility to deal with	Yes	The out-of-hours Telephone Number is available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - on our website - on office opening times signs at each office - on repairs leaflets - on key ring given out with keys when we let properties
We will respond to any written correspondence within 10 working days of receipt	Could do better	70% of letters responded to within 10 working days. Average response time is 7.6 working days.
We will ensure that when you visit our offices they are clean, well-lit and welcoming	Yes	Independent assessments by Quality Housing Services give an overall rating of 83.3% for our offices
We will display information leaflets about our services in all our office reception areas	Yes	Independent assessments by Quality Housing Services give a rating of 100% for the quality of our public information

Customer Involvement

HHL's vision for involvement is to enable residents to ensure we focus on residents priorities leading to a better place to live for all

Service Standard	Do we meet the standard?	How?
We will provide accessible information and feedback on how involvement has brought about changes for customers	Yes	Information is currently published in the newsletter, website and press releases. 'You said, we did' articles in the newsletters give specific examples. Feedback sessions are also regularly held with involved residents to explain the changes made resulting from their involvement. Additionally, involved residents also receive an annual report detailing changes they have personally brought about.
We will ensure that people have equal opportunity to take part in involvement activities and take active steps to engage with under-represented or vulnerable groups	Yes	An analysis of the diversity of our involved customers was completed in April 2009 and showed that our involved customers represent our customers as a whole.
We will enable involvement by providing properly resourced capacity building and training for residents	Yes	Residents receive training appropriate to the activities they are involved with. Resident feedback on the training received is monitored and satisfaction is currently high.
We will have in place a range of methods of involvement that allow customers to be involved on their terms and offer a full 'Menu of Choices'	Yes	Full listing of involvement activities is included on the website and in the resident handbook along with an indication of the time required of residents and the overall influence on the organisation.
We will monitor the impact of customer involvement activities on a quarterly basis through impact assessments	Yes	Quarterly impact assessments are completed by managers throughout the organisation which are then reported to board.

Equality and Diversity

We recognise that different communities and neighbourhoods different needs and our aim is treat everyone fairly.

Service Standard	Do we meet the standard?	How?
We will ask you about your needs so that we can provide our services in the way that best meets your needs	Yes	88.6% census data returned
We will make sure that our offices are accessible to wheelchair users	Yes	Independent assessments by Quality Housing Services give an overall rating of 86.7% for accessibility to our offices.
We will arrange for an interpreter if your first language is not English or for a sign language interpreter should you need one	Yes	Nine customers were provided with translation or interpretation services during 2008/09.
We will make sure that we have hearing loops in the reception areas of our offices and in all meeting rooms	Yes	Independent assessments by Quality Housing Services give an overall rating of 80% for the availability of Hearing loops at our Offices
We will make our website accessible by giving you the option of being able to read it in large print, in a text only format, or by having web pages read aloud to you	Yes	Our website features clear options for changing text size, is available in a text only format and incorporates BrowseAloud.
We will monitor the services that we provide to make sure that they are fair and publish the results	Yes	Breakdown of service take-up by diverse group completed for 2008/09 activity for repairs, new lettings and complaints received

Gas and Solid Fuel Servicing

HHL recognises that, as a landlord, it has legal responsibilities to ensure that gas pipework, appliances, fittings and flues installed for our residents use are safe. In addition, we aim to ensure that all solid fuel appliances are safe to use and operating as efficiently as possible.

Service Standard	Do we meet the standard?	How?
We will ensure that we are friendly and helpful when you contact us	Yes	99% of people surveyed said that the repairs contact centre is friendly and helpful.
We will send you written confirmation of your booked gas or solid fuel servicing appointment	Yes	100% of people surveyed said that they were given written confirmation of their appointment.
We will provide you with information on the importance of gas and solid servicing through our Safety Campaigns	Yes	Safety campaigns are ongoing throughout the year.
We will ensure that all gas engineers that come to your home are Gas Safe qualified and approved, and that all our solid fuel servicing contractors are HETAS registered	Yes	100% of gas engineers are Gas Safe qualified and 100% of solid fuel contractors are HETAS registered.
We will carry out a quality assurance inspections on a sample of gas services completed to ensure compliance with Gas Safe Codes of Practice	Yes	100% of required quality assurance checks were completed during 2008/09.

Lettings and Tenancy Services

We aim to provide an efficient and cost effective voids management and lettings service, to effectively manage our estate environment and to ensure that our services are genuinely reflective of the needs and aspirations of our customers.

Service Standard	Do we meet the standard?	How?
We will ensure that all our empty properties are advertised through Herefordshire Home Point and that the advertisement contains clear details about the property.	Yes	100% of Herefordshire Housing properties are advertised through Homepoint.
Where special conditions apply, such as our Local Lettings Policy, these will be clearly identified on the advertisement.	Yes	Special conditions are always specified in the Homepoint adverts.
We will aim to let our empty properties within 20 calendar days	Yes	The average re-let time in 2008/09 was 18.1 calendar days.
We will, where appropriate, undertake a home visit prior to making an offer of accommodation to ensure that it is suitable to the needs of the applicant	Yes	88.5% of applicants are visited at home before moving in.
We will provide a 'Lettings Pack' to all new tenants	Yes	97.3% of people said that they had received a Lettings pack and found it useful.
We will respond to a report of an abandoned HHL property within 2 working days	Yes	100% of abandoned properties reported during 2008/09 were responded to within 2 working days.

Responsive Repairs

Herefordshire Housing will ensure that the homes of our tenants are maintained to a good standard. We will make sure that your home is watertight, weatherproof, safe and secure and that your home can be supplied with water, power, heat and light.

Service Standard	Do we meet the standard?	How?
We will ensure that we are friendly and helpful when you contact us	Yes	98% of people surveyed said that the repairs contact centre is friendly and helpful.
We will provide information on the repairs services in our 'Your Repairs Service' leaflet and also publish this information on our website.	Yes	Leaflet available from Herefordshire Housing offices, in the tenant handbook and on our website.
We will tell you what priority category your repair request falls into and the target date for completion	Yes	88% of people surveyed said that they were told the priority category of their repair and given a target date.
We will send you written confirmation of an appointment, unless the repair is to be completed within the next 5 days	Yes	100% of people surveyed said that they were given written confirmation of their appointment where applicable.
We will clean up and remove any rubbish following a repair	Yes	99% of people surveyed said that after their repair was completed rubbish was cleaned up and removed.

Housing Support Services

We aim to provide a Housing Support Service that enables our vulnerable customers to live independently.

Service Standard	Do we meet the standard?	How?
We will provide you with a copy of the Support Services leaflet which contains information on the housing related support services that we provide	Yes	88.3% (Housing Support Survey)
We will contact you within 10 working days of a referral to complete a Needs Assessment and Support Plan with you. This is so that you can tell us about your needs and the level of support you would like to receive	Yes	98.7% (Housing Support Survey)
We will make sure that you are fully involved in the Needs Assessment and Support Planning process	Yes	97.2% (Housing Support Survey)
We will provide you with a copy of your Needs Assessment and Support Plan on its completion	Yes	97.3% (Housing Support Survey)
If you will be receiving housing related support for two or more years, we will complete a review of your Needs Assessment and Support Plan with you every six months, or sooner if your circumstances changes or you request a review	Yes	All Support plans reviewed at least once every 6 months. 1,242 support plan reviews completed between 1st April and 31st December 2009.

Income Services

We aim to collect rent and other charges due promptly from tenants. Where rent arrears do occur, we aim to keep these to a minimum and work with tenants to reduce their arrears through a fair, responsive and firm approach using practical repayment plans.

Service Standard	Do we meet the standard?	How?
We will tell you at tenancy start-up how much rent and other charges you should pay, taking into account an estimate of any Housing Benefit you may be entitled to receive	Yes	Procedures are in place as part of the sign-up process.
We will offer you a range of different methods by which you can pay your rent	Yes	96.7% of customers surveyed were satisfied with payment options
We will confirm agreements of all arrears repayment arrangements in writing within 5 working days	Yes	90% of confirmations were sent on the same day, with 100% being sent within 5 working days.
We will ensure that you are provided with Welfare Benefits help and advice within 5 working days of a request being received.	Yes	All requests responded to within 5 days.
We will always personally serve a Notice of Seeking Possession for non-payment of rent in order to discuss with you how this could affect you	Yes	100% of Notices Seeking Possession are served in person.
We will, if you wish us to, make a direct referral to CAB on your behalf for assistance with a debt management programme for debt problems.	Yes	64 CAB referrals made from April to December 2009.

Leaseholders

We aim to provide high quality, customer-focused management and maintenance services to leaseholders and will make fair and reasonable charges for such services, in accordance with the terms of its leases and as prescribed by legislation.

Service Standard	Do we meet the standard?	How?
We will ensure that leaseholders are as satisfied with the services they received from HHL as all other tenants	No	43.5% of Leaseholders were satisfied with the overall services received from Herefordshire Housing compared to 84.0% of General Needs tenants.
We will always try to make reasonable agreement with you to pay any arrears, taking into account your income and essential expenditure	-	To be monitored from 2010/11
We will send you an actual bill for the previous year by 30th September every year	Yes	99.0% of Leaseholders were sent their bill by 30th September. Four leaseholders were sent their bills after this date.
We will respond to our emergency repairs within 2 hours, and make safe within 24 hours, urgent repairs within 3 working days and routine repairs within 20 working days, where it is our responsibility to do so	Yes	100% of repairs for Leaseholders were completed within the targeted times for April to December 2009.
We will offer to carry out a gas safety check to all leasehold properties and have a charge as part of the annual service charge	Yes	All leaseholders have been offered a gas safety check for the year to date. 26 leaseholder properties have requested a gas safety check.