



Customer Charter

Leaseholders and Shared Owners

Customer Charter / At a glance

Our commitment to you

Welcome to our first Customer Charter for Leaseholders and Shared Owners, which outlines the service you can expect to receive as one of our customers.

Our Improving Lives 2025 strategy outlines how we intend to do even more for our customers and communities over the next five years and beyond.

This Charter, which has been developed using feedback from our customers, features 13 commitments that we pledge to help us deliver our 2025 strategy.

We'll keep you regularly updated about how we're performing against the Charter, but we also want to hear your feedback on what we're doing right and how we can improve the service we deliver to you.

To find out more about the Group, visit our website at longhurst-group.org.uk, where you'll also find details of how you can give your views and get involved in helping shape the service we deliver to you.

1. Getting in touch with us

Providing excellent customer care is really important to us and is seen as everyone's job at Longhurst Group. Whether you contact us by phone, through our website or social media, in writing or by visiting us in person, we're always here to help.

- ▶ We'll take pride in delivering high-quality services
- ▶ We'll answer your call promptly and in a polite and courteous way
- ▶ If possible, we'll aim to resolve your query on the same day
- ▶ If we need more time, we'll let you know and reply to your enquiry within two working days. If it's going to take a little longer, we'll let you know and keep you informed of progress
- ▶ We'll listen carefully, identify your needs and requirements and clarify these with you
- ▶ We'll be clear about what we can do and when
- ▶ We'll keep the promises we make and keep you up-to-date
- ▶ We'll always be fair and respectful
- ▶ We'll give you the right information at the right time
- ▶ We'll let you know if there's a problem or any change to what we said we'd do
- ▶ We'll respect your privacy and treat your information in a sensitive manner
- ▶ We'll visit you at home if you'd like us to
- ▶ We'll offer extra support, either upon request, or where we feel this is necessary
- ▶ We'll protect your personal data and let you know how we use it.

2. Your voice

It's really important to us that we engage with you and act on your feedback to help us further improve the services we deliver to you.

- ▶ We'll take time to understand your needs and match services to your requirements
- ▶ We'll actively request your views and act on your feedback – whether positive or negative
- ▶ We'll let you know how your feedback has made a difference
- ▶ We'll offer support so that everyone has the opportunity to be engaged
- ▶ All of our decisions will be made after considering your needs and feedback
- ▶ We'll offer lots of different ways to get involved - such as surveys, clean and green inspectors, becoming a mystery shopper, attending a regional conference, joining our customer forum and much more
- ▶ We'll use a range of communication methods to suit your needs
- ▶ We'll continue to encourage diversity in all our engagement work to make sure we gain broader feedback and ensure we consider all viewpoints
- ▶ We'll provide regular updates of how we're performing as your landlord.

3. Consulting with you

Our promises to you (where applicable to you under the terms of your lease)

Where applicable, we'll consult with you on a variety of matters, including:

- ▶ Obligations under Section 20, long term agreements over 12 months and £100 per property, major works exceeding £250 per property
- ▶ Service charges
- ▶ Annual accounts
- ▶ Estate services
- ▶ Scheme manager services.



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4. Dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB)

Providing excellent customer care is really important to us and is seen as everyone's job at Longhurst Group. Whether you contact us by phone, through our website or social media, in writing or by visiting us in person, we're always here to help.

Our promises to you:

- ▶ We'll investigate all ASB reports and keep you fully informed of what's happening
- ▶ We'll take every report seriously and respond to your case within five working days, or within one working day for particularly serious cases
- ▶ We'll regularly review timescales with you and keep you up-to-date as agreed
- ▶ We'll offer a tailored approach to resolving anti-social behaviour so it meets your individual requirements
- ▶ We'll work in partnership with the police, local authorities and other partner agencies
- ▶ We'll provide support to help you to report anti-social behaviour and make reporting accessible and easy
- ▶ We'll treat everyone fairly and sensitively during our investigations and base our response on the evidence available
- ▶ We'll make sure any information provided to us is handled in a sensitive manner
- ▶ We'll use a range of remedies to resolve your case
- ▶ We'll always be open, honest and give you a realistic solution.
- ▶ We'll respect your privacy and treat your information in a sensitive manner
- ▶ We'll visit you at home if you'd like us to

- ▶ We'll offer extra support, either upon request, or where we feel this is necessary
- ▶ We'll protect your personal data and let you know how we use it.

5. Repairs to communal areas

Where it's our responsibility under the terms of your lease to carry out communal repairs, we'll provide you with a quality repair service.

Our partner contractors have agreed to these promises and will carry these out on our behalf.

Our promises to you:

- ▶ We'll make it easy for you to report communal repairs
- ▶ We'll provide an emergency repairs service (24 hours a day, 365 days a year)
- ▶ We'll attend emergency repairs and make safe within four hours and complete repair in 24 hours
- ▶ We'll carry out routine repairs within 21 days
- ▶ We'll aim to complete the repair on the first visit
- ▶ After a repair, our contractors will leave the area clean and tidy and remove any rubbish.
- ▶ When carrying out a repair, contractors will follow appropriate health and safety regulations at all times
- ▶ We'll make sure all services affected by the work are left in full working order.

6. Repairs to your home

Where it's our responsibility under the terms of your lease to carry out repairs to your home, we'll provide you with a quality repair service.

Our partner contractors have agreed to these promises and will carry these out on our behalf.

Our promises to you:

- ▶ We'll report any repairs to newly built homes on your behalf
- ▶ We'll make it easy for you to report your repairs
- ▶ We'll give you a choice of appointments
- ▶ We'll provide an emergency repairs service (24 hours a day, 365 days a year)
- ▶ We'll attend emergency repairs and make safe within four hours and endeavour to complete the repair in 24 hours
- ▶ We'll carry out routine repairs within 21 days
- ▶ We'll attend gas emergency repairs within the following two priorities:
Priority 1: Emergency work to be attended and made safe within 24 hours.
Priority 2: Non-emergency repairs to be completed within 10 calendar days.
- ▶ We'll carry out routine gas heating repairs within 10 days
- ▶ We'll carry out your gas safety checks every year (we must do this by law)
- ▶ We'll keep you up-to-date with any changes to your repair request
- ▶ We'll aim to complete the repair on the first visit to your home
- ▶ Where mobile numbers are provided,

we'll also send you a text to confirm your appointment and a reminder the day before

- ▶ If an appointment needs to be changed for any reason, we'll let you know as soon as possible
- ▶ After a repair, our contractors will leave the area clean and tidy and remove any rubbish
- ▶ When carrying out a repair, contractors will follow appropriate health and safety regulations at all times
- ▶ We'll always respect you and your home
- ▶ We'll make sure all services affected by the work are left in full working order
- ▶ To avoid any delays, we'll also let you know when a repair is your responsibility.



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7. Planned and cyclical works

Where it's our responsibility under the terms of your lease to carry out planned and cyclical works, we'll provide you with a quality service.

Our promises to you:

- ▶ We'll always consult you about any works that we're planning to carry out that fall within our obligations under Section 20, long term agreements over 12 months and £100 per property or major works exceeding £250 per property
- ▶ We'll serve you with the appropriate Section 20 Notice where required under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- ▶ Before any work starts, we'll contact you to let you know who'll be carrying out the work and when
- ▶ We'll always ask you if there are special requirements that we need to consider as part of the works
- ▶ You'll be contacted before the work is due to start to arrange a convenient time.

8. Payments to us

In accordance with the terms of your lease, we're required to provide you with certain financial information.

If you're having problems paying your rent, service charge, or any other payments, then you should tell us straight away so we can work with you to resolve any difficulties.

Our promises to you:

- ▶ We'll offer a variety of ways to make payments easy
- ▶ We'll work with you if you're facing financial difficulties
- ▶ If you fall into arrears, we'll contact you to advise how much you owe and work with you to agree a repayment plan
- ▶ We'll clearly explain your rent and service charges.
- ▶ We'll send your end of year accounts to you and ground rent notice (where applicable)
- ▶ We'll provide advice on the benefits available to you, or refer you to our Money Advice Team for specialist advice – please contact us if you feel you'd benefit from speaking with a member of the team
- ▶ On request, we'll provide you with access to up-to-date rent and service charge statements.



9. If things go wrong

If there's something you're not happy with, please get in touch straight away. Letting us know helps us to put things right and improve our service in the future.

Our promises to you:

- ▶ When we've done something wrong, we'll apologise and sort it as soon as we can
- ▶ We'll make sure our complaints service is simple to use
- ▶ We'll help you if you need assistance in making a complaint
- ▶ After you make a complaint, we'll contact you within two working days to tell you who'll be handling it and keep you fully informed of the progress
- ▶ We'll give you a full response within 10 working days
- ▶ We'll tell you what we'll do to put things right and when we'll do this
- ▶ When you give us feedback, we'll always respond positively and learn from what you've told us
- ▶ At all times, we'll respect confidentiality
- ▶ We'll check that you're happy with the outcome
- ▶ If you're not happy with our response to your complaint, we'll tell you how you can appeal.

10. Communal spaces and services

Making sure communal spaces are safe is one of our top priorities. We'll tell you about the communal services, such as cleaning and grounds maintenance, that we offer in your area and provide specifications that show the standards our contractors will be working to. We'll also tell you what your yearly service charge covers.

Our promises to you:

- ▶ Communal spaces will be regularly cleaned to a good standard
- ▶ Communal grassed areas will be regularly maintained to a good standard
- ▶ We'll give you the opportunity to help monitor our cleaning and grounds maintenance services with us
- ▶ We'll carry out regular scheme inspections to assess any risks within our communal spaces and offer you the opportunity to join us on these visits
- ▶ We'll make sure all our communal spaces have the required fire safety measures in place
- ▶ We'll carry out fire risk assessments in all internal communal areas in line with our fire safety policy
- ▶ We'll carry out the necessary fire alarm, electrical and lift testing in communal spaces
- ▶ We'll continue to be a responsible landlord, making sure we take into account – and minimise – any impact upon the environment.

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11. Selling your home

Retirement leaseholders

Our promises to you:

- ▶ We'll provide you with Guidance Notes and selling information to help you place your property on the market
- ▶ We'll liaise with your appointed Estate Agent to ensure they have the necessary information to market your property, including eligibility requirements, the lease term and ongoing service charge costs
- ▶ Once you've found a buyer, we'll provide them with all relevant information regarding the scheme, which includes our responsibilities as Landlord and important information regarding their own ongoing responsibilities as detailed within the terms of the lease
- ▶ Our dedicated Sales Team and appointed solicitor will work closely with your own solicitor to ensure they have all the necessary information to progress your sale as smoothly as possible.

Please note you'll be required to appoint a solicitor to act on your behalf and you'll be responsible for your own costs and payments upon resale as stipulated within your lease.

Shared Owners

Our promises to you:

- ▶ We'll provide you with Guidance Notes and selling information to help you place your property on the market
- ▶ We'll liaise with your appointed Estate

Agent to ensure they have the necessary information to market your property correctly, including application forms and eligibility requirements, the share available for sale, the lease term and ongoing rent/service charge costs

- ▶ We'll provide your appointed Estate Agent with the information they require to help potential purchasers complete an Application Form
- ▶ Once you've found a buyer, we'll provide them with a copy of our 'Your Lease & Your Rights' booklet, which helps explain our responsibilities as landlord and important information regarding their own ongoing responsibilities as a Shared Owner
- ▶ Our dedicated Sales Team and appointed solicitor will work closely with your own solicitor to ensure they have all the necessary information to progress your sale as smoothly as possible.

Please note you'll be required to appoint a solicitor to act on your behalf and you'll be responsible for your own costs and payments upon resale as detailed within your lease.



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12. Additional support services

Our Improving Lives 2025 strategy outlines the services available to support customers with their economic resilience and health and wellbeing. We'll continue to ask for your views so that we understand your needs and that of the wider communities we serve.

- ▶ Domestic abuse support – We treat domestic abuse sensitively and seriously. We're here to support customers who are experiencing domestic abuse and have dedicated Domestic Abuse Champions who are here to help.
- ▶ Money advice service - This service is open to all customers, providing advice on welfare benefits, income and managing your money, including basic budgeting tips.
- ▶ Property sustainment – Our Tenancy Sustainment Officers can help you if you're experiencing difficulties staying in your home by working with partner agencies to ensure you're getting all the help and support that you need.
- ▶ Care and Support Services – We provide a wide range of services to help people who are at risk of homelessness or who require additional care and support. This includes services for people who are younger or older, homeless, experiencing mental ill health, living with learning disabilities or on the autistic spectrum and anyone experiencing domestic violence or those who are in need of domiciliary community care services. We can also signpost customers to other services that we don't deliver ourselves.
- ▶ Community investment – Our Community Investment Team is key to the delivery of our Improving Lives 2025 strategy. We'll support local charities and community groups to ensure that our communities are places where people are able to thrive and are proud to call home. Our work in this area will see us provide support and guidance with employment and training, as well as opportunities for customers to undertake formal qualifications.



13. Monitoring our performance

We will be honest with you about our performance and what we're doing to improve it.

Our promises to you:

- ▶ We'll ask for your feedback and tell you how we'll use it to improve our services
- ▶ We'll use the mystery shopping feedback you give us to improve our services
- ▶ We'll carry out regular spot checks and quality assurance checks on internal and external processes
- ▶ We'll regularly review and scrutinise key performance information, including our service delivery, financial and customer satisfaction
- ▶ We'll compare our performance against other similar housing organisations to see how we're performing
- ▶ We'll listen back to recorded calls to develop our teams' skills and expertise
- ▶ We'll tell you how we're doing by publishing the results in our annual report, on our website and Our Voice – our customer magazine.

Find out more

To find out more about the Group, visit our website where you'll also find details of how you can give your views and get involved in help shaping the service we deliver to you.

 [longhurst-group.org.uk](https://www.longhurst-group.org.uk)





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