

Tenants' Charter

INTRODUCTION

Caerphilly County Borough Council is committed to providing the highest quality and most cost effective service possible. This will be achieved by:-

- publishing standards for the services we provide.
- reviewing services with a view to enhancing standards and efficiency.
- developing customer care policies to meet changing needs.

The council has a legal obligation to provide its tenants with information about their services and this Charter forms part of a package of information that we are now giving to tenants.

This Tenants' Charter tells you what you can expect from our staff when you receive services from us. It is our public promise to you of the standards we intend to meet.

OUR STAFF

You can expect our staff to:-

- be polite and attentive.
- be sensitive to your needs and honest about how they can help.
- be well informed and trained in their duties.
- carry official identity cards displaying their names and photographs.
- carry out their work fairly and without discrimination for any reasons.

OUR OFFICES

You can expect our offices to have:-

- a clean, warm and friendly environment.
- a place where you can discuss your business in private whenever possible.
- general information about the work of the Council.

We will aim to:-

- provide an appointment for you to see a named member of staff on request.
- give you an estimate of how long you may need to wait to see a member of staff.
- treat information about you confidentially and in accordance with legal requirements.
- provide you with names, locations and telephone numbers of staff who are responsible for local housing issues where requested.
- provide you with advice, information and support in filling in forms.
- arrange home visits where appropriate.
- leave calling cards if you are out telling you how to get in touch with us.

A list of our local Housing Offices is included in this handbook.

CONTACTING US BY TELEPHONE

We will aim to:-

- answer your call in 8 rings (20 seconds). We will provide direct lines (where possible) for you to bypass the switchboard and go through directly to the person concerned.
- answer your call by a member of staff stating their name and their section.
- put your call through to an attended phone in the case of staff absence.
- call you back within a mutually agreed time limit, where a reply cannot be given at once - even if we are only able to give you a progress report.

CONTACTING US BY LETTER

We will aim to:-

- acknowledge all letters received from tenants within 5 working days and provide a full reply within 20 working days.
- write our reply in plain language.
- provide our response in the language and format of the original correspondence.

INFORMATION ABOUT OUR SERVICES

We will aim to:-

- Produce a half-yearly newsletter for all tenants.
- Produce an annual report to tenants which provides information on the performance of the Housing Services during the previous year, including:-
 - the rents we charge for different sizes of homes
 - how quickly repairs have been carried out
 - how successful we have been in collecting the rent that was due
 - the number of empty properties at a given time
 - how quickly homes have been let

Your right to information is a legal right - we will tell you about:-

- the terms of your tenancy.
- our legal obligations to do certain repairs.
- our procedures for allocating housing and for making transfers and exchanges.
- your right to take in lodgers or sub-let.
- your right of succession.
- your right to assignment.
- your right to exchange.
- your right to buy your own home.
- your right to repair.
- your right to carry out improvements to your home.
- your right to transfer to a new landlord.
- your right to be consulted.

Detailed information about the above rights can be obtained from your local Housing Office. However, general information on some of these rights is included in this booklet or in your tenancy agreement.

TENANCY MANAGEMENT

Caerphilly Homes recognises that, to provide a quality housing service, it must be effective in tackling the problems created by anti-social behaviour.

To this end:-

- every report of anti-social behaviour will be quickly and formally acknowledged.
- every report of anti-social behaviour will be investigated either by the Area/Neighbourhood Housing staff or the Tenancy Enforcement Section.
- investigations will start at the earliest possible time after receipt of the complaint and be conducted with all reasonable speed.
- investigators will adopt a positive attitude to all complaints.
- responses will, as necessary and as appropriate, move from advice, conciliation and support for tenants' own action to legal action by Caerphilly county borough council on behalf of victims of anti-social behaviour.
- action against perpetrators will include, as necessary and appropriate, proceedings for injunctions and powers of arrest, possession and eviction.

Caerphilly County Borough Council will demonstrate by its actions that it will not tolerate anti-social behaviour.

Caerphilly County Borough Council will make this absolutely clear to its tenants and to any person who is seeking a tenancy.

We will:-

- tell you how we tackle environmental nuisances such as graffiti, noisy parties and rubbish.
- consult with you and other tenants on options for improving your estate.

REPAIRS

Where possible Caerphilly Homes Housing Repair Operations Department will be used to repair and maintain the structure, exterior and certain fittings of your property. This includes, but is not limited to:-

- roof, walls and floors.
- external doors and windows.
- gutters, downpipes, wastepipes and drains.
- installations for the supply of water, (within the curtilage of the property)
- electrical wiring.
- sinks, basins, baths, showers and WC pans.
- paths, steps and certain fencing.
- installations for space heating and heating water.

The Council will not be responsible for maintenance or repair of any structure or fitting which you have installed or altered, unless it previously agreed to do so in writing. The Council will have the right to recharge you for repairs, renewals or replacements of items damaged by you, your family or your visitors. Where Caerphilly Homes Housing Repair Operations Department are unable to undertake the work to your home only approved contractors will be commissioned. All work on your home will be undertaken in compliance with our Charter for Trust.

We aim to:-

- complete emergency repairs that are reported within working hours on the day they are reported.
- complete or make safe emergency repairs that are reported out of hours within 2 hours of being reported. (Emergency repairs are works necessary to make safe buildings and installations and to avoid risk of injury).
- offer appointments to complete small urgent repairs within 25 days from when you report them.
- offer appointments to complete medium size routine repairs within 50 days from when you report them.
- offer appointments to complete large planned repair works within 66 days from when you reported them.

We shall advise you:-

- how to deal with emergencies when our office is closed.
- what repairs you will be expected to pay for and how you will be charged for these.
- on how to report your repair.

We also aim to:-

- plan for the maintenance work that will be necessary to your home in the long-term.
- have a clear timetable for bringing all our homes, as far as possible, up to the required standard.
- set a clear standard for the homes we let.
- set clear standards for repairs.
- set clear standards for how maintenance workers are expected to behave.
- arrange to ask our tenants regularly how satisfied they are with our maintenance service.
- consult you about major programmes of work or improvement.
- compensate you and other tenants directly for any legitimate damage caused to your possessions by contractors.
- guarantee a response to a written request from you for permission to carry out work to your home.
- offer you and other tenants as many realistic choices as possible.

IMPROVEMENTS**You can expect:-**

- contractors employed by us to be courteous and considerate towards you and other tenants.
- the Council to explain your rights to you if you and other tenants are being moved temporarily so that repairs can be carried out.
- the Council to pay you compensation for any legitimate loss and expenses associated with your transfer to alternative housing.

ADAPTATIONS

Caerphilly County Borough Council provides adaptations to the homes of those residents whose eligibility for this service has been determined following an assessment of need.

Further information can be obtained from your local Housing Office or you can contact the Adaptations Team within Private Sector Housing on 01443 811389.

The service aims to:-

- Provide you with accurate information about your application for these services, including details about any delays, reasons for the delays and the likely length of time involved.
- Advise you of the status of your application at any time during the process.
- Deal effectively and promptly with your enquiries.
- Liaise on your behalf with all professionals involved in the provision of this service.
- Ensure that any complaints which you have about the service are dealt with effectively through the complaints mechanism to ensure appropriate intervention and help if things go wrong.

DEALING WITH EMPTY PROPERTIES**We will aim to:-**

- re-let properties which need work as quickly as possible.
- ensure that vacant properties do not become a nuisance or eyesore while they are empty.

RIGHT TO BUY**Abolition of the Right to Buy**

The Right to Buy and Right to Acquire ended for all Council and Housing Association tenants on 26 January 2019.

Further information

The Welsh Government has published a document explaining the effect of the 'Abolition of the Right to Buy Act and Associated Rights (Wales) Act 2018' legislation, which is available on their website. If you require any further information please contact our Legal and Governance department on 01443 864221.