

Income Services: Service Standards

Stevenage Borough Council

2024 - 2026

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Version	1
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Business Unit and Team	Housing and Neighbourhoods
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1. Introduction

Our Housing and Neighbourhoods service standards are the commitments and service targets which tenants and leaseholders can expect from the Income and Services.

The Income Services team is committed to putting great customer service at the forefront of everything that we do and provide a high standard of service at all times. At the heart of this is our commitment to putting the needs of our customers first. Our aim is to meet every standard, and where we can, to surpass it.

The service standards also provide you with information on what the **Housing and Neighbourhoods** Department monitors and reports on performance to ensure that we are meeting these standards.

The levels of service that we offer here are reliant on the co-operation of all parties involved. This includes us, our partners and our customers.

2. Current Service Standards

2.1 Involving you. Looks at how we involve you in shaping our services. We will...

- Deal with your complaints fairly and within the published timescales. We will explain our complaints procedure to you and use your feedback to improve services.
- When you contact us by letter, we will respond within 10 working days of receipt. If your enquiry needs further investigation, we will keep you informed of the progress.
- 3. Give you the opportunity to have your say and shape our services by offering a wide range of resident involvement activities.

2.2 Your tenancy. Looks at letting homes, your rent and tenancy management. We will...

- Provide all tenants with an annual rent statement and statements on request.
- Let you know if your account goes into arrears and offer you guidance and support to bring your payments up to date.
- Confirm receipt of notice to end your tenancy within two working days, additionally within five working days we will arrange to inspect your property and discuss the condition your home needs to be left in.

2.3 Supporting you. Looks at supporting you to live in your home. We will...

- We will assist you with budget planning, debt and benefit advice and support you to access financial services.

2.4 **Provide leaseholders with an estimate** of their service charge annually along with a certificated summary of the previous year's actual service charge which will detail any credit or debit from the estimate amount.

3. Proposed New Service Standards

3.1 Background

The standards are reviewed to make sure they are meeting customer needs and are aligned with the new consumer standards introduced by the Social Housing Regulation Act.

The consumer standards are as follows:

- **Quality** - quality of the home, communal spaces and services to tenants
- **Neighbourhood** - landlords' role, working with other agencies, to contribute to the wellbeing of neighbourhoods in which tenants live.
- **Transparency** - landlords' role in making information accessible to tenants including roles and responsibilities within landlords, so tenants know who is responsible for matters relating to consumer standards.
- **Engagement and accountability** - engagement between landlords and tenants, including how complaints are handled. Landlords' accountability to tenants and treating tenants with fairness and respect.
- **Tenancy** - requirements on landlords in respect of tenancies, including allocations policies and opportunities for tenants to move.
- **Safety** - landlords' safety responsibilities including safety within the home and in communal areas.

3.2 Section 1: Proposed new standards For Tenants

1.) Generally

Our Commitments to you

- We will listen to you.
- We will be polite, fair, and always show you respect.
- The level of service that you receive will be consistent, and in line with our corporate policies and procedures.
- Our service will be transparent, and we shall be honest.

2.) Rent collection.

Team responsible – Income Services Team

Contact information

Tel: 01438 242666

Email: income@stevenage.gov.uk

We will:

- make sure you understand your responsibility to pay your rent on time and offer advice when you sign up for a tenancy.
- give you at least 28 days' notice of any changes to your rent.
- send you rent statements once a year each April and allow you access to your account 24 hours a day; 7 days of the week and check your transaction history by going online to: www.stevenage.gov.uk and clicking onto Your Accounts at the top of the page. If you don't have an online account, why not sign up for one now using the above link? You can also pay your council tax, garage rent, leasehold charges, business rates (NNDR) and invoices directly through our website.
- provide you with a rent statement as and when you request for one.
- contact you within 14 days if you get into rent arrears.
- offer debt advice and refer you to other agencies that can help you.
- visit you to discuss any problems before taking legal action for non-payment of rent.

4. Reviewing and Monitoring

We want to make sure that we keep to our service standards by regularly monitoring them. These are to be reported and published quarterly with an explanation where performance has not met target. We will also report performance against these key indicators to residents via relevant communication platforms.

We will monitor and as required adapt and change our services through:

- Feedback from our customers about how we do things.
- Service specific satisfaction surveys e.g., on rent income management.
- A council resident satisfaction survey to measure tenant and leaseholder satisfaction with the overall housing service that takes place every two years.
- Analysing and learning from complaints and comments
- Providing an annual report which we will develop with resident representatives, that shows our progress against service standards and targets.
- Annually review the performance indicators we report and the targets we set so they remain relevant, challenging but achievable

5. Get Involved

We welcome any comments, that will help us to improve the service that we are offering.

We believe the best way to deliver a quality service is by listening to you and acting on your feedback.

If at any time you would like to comment, compliment, complaints, give us feedback about our commitments, or you feel that we have failed in any of our commitments

then please contact us directly at income@stevenage.gov.uk or follow Stevenage Borough Council's complaints procedure set out on our website at www.stevenage.gov.uk

6. Next Steps/ Implementation Plan

We would like your feedback in the proposed new set of Service Standards that will ensure residents receive the best possible service when they call, email or access Council services in person.

We will keep our performance against these service standards under continuous review and we will change in line with your feedback.

We acknowledge that we won't always be able to provide residents with the outcome or decision that they want, but the Service Standards are about ensuring all residents are treated fairly and with care and compassion.

The action plan below will reflect on-going feedback received from residents and act as ways to know if we are improving:

- Resident satisfaction survey feedback
- Complaints, comments, and compliments

Action Plan October 2024

Actions	Target completion date	Date completed	Update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure performance against each Service standard 	October 24 January 25 April 25		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate information from Residents feedback, complaints, comments and compliments each quarter. 	October 24 January 25 April 25		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement changes from feedback once a year 	From August 2024		

7. Version History

Date	Outlined Amendments	Author