



City of Westminster

# Leasehold Charter

Developed in partnership with our residents panel



The Charter is based on the terms of your lease and the service that Westminster City Council is committed to providing as well as the actions leaseholders are asked to make in return.

If you have any questions please contact us

✉ [housing.enquires@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:housing.enquires@westminster.gov.uk)

☎ 0800 358 3783

## Providing excellent customer service

### We will:

- provide excellent customer service and a high-quality service
- endeavour to continually improve the service that we offer our leaseholders
- listen to you in a respectful way and ensure that we are empathetic
- provide you with a range of options for contacting us, including online appointments, home visits, social media, phone and email. Whichever way you contact us, you will receive a prompt and polite reply
- keep promoting the different ways you can contact us and how you can report issues
- let you know our service level agreement when you contact us, and respond within this time
- ensure that staff are well trained, knowledgeable, and empathetic

We will make sure you don't have to chase us for replies. If we are delayed in getting a response or resolving an issue, we will contact you and provide you with a progress report.

### Our ask of you:

- always communicate with officers and stakeholders of Westminster City Council in a respectful and constructive way
- let us know if your contact details change, so that we have up-to-date telephone, email and contact address details
- inform us promptly if you are subletting your property or not living in it, you agree to be a responsible landlord and leaseholder, and continue to be a good neighbour to the other residents in your building.

## Asking for your views on our service

### We will:

- provide regular opportunities to leaseholders to share your views about our service, this will include but is not limited to, an annual leasehold conference, our group of key lessees, attending your Resident Association meetings
- report back to you about how we have used your feedback and the difference it has made "you said - we did"
- investigate if things go wrong and learn from our mistakes to make sure they are not repeated
- ensure our meetings and workshops are accessible, welcoming and inclusive for all of our leaseholders
- send you invitations to events for leaseholders

We will offer regular training opportunities with the leasehold team on topics that matter to our leaseholders, such as lease extensions and collective enfranchisement (buying the freehold).

### Our ask of you:

- getting involved and supporting these leasehold events
- attending training and information sessions
- providing constructive feedback in relation to leasehold matters and events so that we can improve our services.

## Accessible information

### We will:

- make sure our communications are clear, and information is easy to understand
- ensure the information on our website, handbook and booklets is up to date
- clearly explain your bills and service charges and work with our leaseholders to improve the documents and information provided
- make it easy for you to find the information you need, for example how to report a leak
- provide information in the format you want. We won't assume that everyone is online.

### Our ask of you:

- provide feedback on our communication through events, surveys and feedback forms.

## Looking after your building:

Westminster City Council is responsible for repairs in the communal parts of your building or estate, and leaseholders are responsible for repairs in their property.

### We will:

- carry out communal repairs and provide you with a quality repairs service
- act on any reports of short-letting, unauthorised works, or nuisance in your block
- offer informal engagement opportunities for you to have your say on large scale major works contracts, before the Section 20 consultation process. This could include resident meetings, drop-ins and online surveys
- consult with you before entering into any long-term agreements
- work with our partnering contractors to make sure they have the same standards of customer service as Westminster City Council staff

We will be proactive, rather than waiting for things to go wrong. This includes staff identifying issues, or implementing planned preventative maintenance.

### Our ask of you:

- report any communal repairs to Westminster City Council
- carry out repairs in your property, for example leaks, in a timely manner. This will help to minimise damage to other properties and the structure and fabric of the building.

## Repayment plans

If you are unable to pay your service charges or anticipate struggling to do so, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can support you to minimise any arrears.

Details of our extensive repayment terms are available on our website. We will also send a printed copy with every annual service charge demand. If you require a translation of the documents, we will provide this for you.

### We will:

- offer competitive repayment terms
- provide access to debt counseling services
- ensure that legal action is taken only as a last resort

We will work with you to find a mutually suitable repayment plan if you are experiencing financial hardship.

### Our ask of you:

- contact the leasehold team immediately if your financial circumstances change and you are unable to pay your service charges
- contact the leasehold team if you anticipate going into arrears or you receive a payment reminder notification or letter.

## Providing value for money

### We will:

- offer predictable and programmed costs, providing you with as much notice as possible about upcoming changes
- interrogate what we are charging you for and provide a key lessee scheme for our lessees to examine costs before they are invoiced
- monitor our management fees and ensure they are reasonable
- include details on how to challenge your service charges on your invoices

**We will work with you if you are experiencing financial difficulties.**

## Implementing the Charter

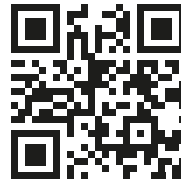
The Charter brings together the standards that we are committed to achieving, and which residents can expect from us.

We are working to improve how we deliver on these, through changes across the housing service, including a new repairs policy, significant changes to our customer services and repairs processes, new teams at our call centre, and additional training for staff.

We will regularly review our performance against the pledges in the Charter and let you know how we are doing, using housing performance data and feedback from residents.

## Get Involved

We want to continue listening to our tenants and leaseholders, to understand what's important to you and how we can improve our services.



Visit our website at:  
[www.westminster.gov.uk/housing/your-community/your-voice-counts](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/housing/your-community/your-voice-counts)



Find out who your elected representatives are and when they meet to make decisions at:  
[westminster.moderngov.co.uk](http://westminster.moderngov.co.uk)



Sign up to receive our email newsletters at:  
[www.westminster.gov.uk/newsletters](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/newsletters)

If you have any other questions, please get in touch:

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