

Welcome to Hackney's Customer Charter for Homeowners

We are pleased to introduce Hackney's first Customer Charter, specifically for homeowners living in our blocks or on our estates, outlining the service they can expect from us.

The Homeownership Services Team is committed to delivering the best possible support to freeholders, leaseholders and shared owners, with its Service Improvement Plan 2024-2027, which sets out how it will deliver improvements over the next three years and beyond.

This Charter has been shaped by feedback from homeowners and builds on the commitments set out in the Service Improvement Plan 2024-2027. It sets out our commitments to you and what we expect from you in return.

Communication & Transparency

Our commitment to you:

- We will provide high-quality customer service, which means listening to you and treating you with respect and empathy.
- We will always seek to continually improve the services that we offer to you, making use of new methods and listening to your feedback.
- We will offer various ways for you to contact us including online self service tools, appointments, home visits, phone, and email.
- Clearly outlining the process and time frame for resolving any issues and questions you raise with us. If there is a delay in resolving an issue we will inform you as quickly as possible.
- Ensuring our staff are well-trained, knowledgeable, and empathetic.
- Our communications will be clear and easy to understand.
- We will keep the information on our website <https://hackney.gov.uk/menu#homeownership-services> including, handbooks and booklets up-to-date.
- Your bills and service charges will be clearly explained.
- Information, including for example, guidance on reporting a leak, is easily accessible.
- Information will be provided/offered in the format and language you prefer, recognising that not everyone speaks English and is online.

What we ask of you:

- Treat our staff and anyone working with you on our behalf with respect.

- Keep us updated of any changes in your circumstances or contact details to ensure we have your latest phone, email, and postal address using: <https://hackney.gov.uk/leaseholders-and-freeholders> or via the contact methods detailed above.
- Notify us promptly if you are subletting your property or if you are not residing in it.
- Continue being a responsible landlord and good neighbour if subletting by making sure your property meets all the required safety standards. Please use the following link to register a subletting request (this should be done every time your tenant changes)
<https://hackney.gov.uk/renting-out-your-leasehold> .
- Provide honest and timely feedback on our service and communications through events, surveys, and feedback forms.
- Ensure you inform us of any communication preferences so that we can tailor communications appropriately.

Understanding Your Lease

Our commitment to you:

- We will carry out any necessary repairs and improvements to communal areas.
- Provide building's insurance for your home (where stated in your lease/transfer document).
- Issuing all invoices - including service charges and ground rent in a timely manner and clearly informing you if there are any delays.
- Engage with you on any changes to legislation impacting your lease.
- Enforce the terms and conditions of all leases and take appropriate action against any breaches.

What we ask of you:

- Pay your service charges and ground rent in advance.
- Ensure your home is kept in a good condition.
- Get written consent from the Council before making alterations as detailed in your lease or transfer document.
- Liaise with us in a timely way around the sale of your property.
- Do not cause a nuisance to anybody in neighbouring homes or the estate.

Planned and Cyclical Works

Where we are responsible under your lease, Hackney Council will provide a quality service for planned and regular works. These are usually around the maintenance, refurbishment or replacement of key parts of the building, for example: internal decorations, window replacements, or roof maintenance.

Our commitments to you:

- Consult with you on planned works when required under Section 20 of the Landlord & Tenant Act 1985.
- Serve appropriate Section 20 Notices.
- Inform you of who will carry out the work and when.
- Consider any special requirements that you may have.
- Arrange a convenient time before starting work.

What we ask of you:

- Provide timely and honest feedback as part of informal and formal consultations or engagement.
- Inform us of any potential maintenance/major works needed to your block or estate that we have not highlighted to you.

Providing Value for Money

Our commitment to you:

- Offer predicted and programmed costs, providing you with as much notice as possible about upcoming changes.
- Listen to feedback around service charges to ensure value for money.
- Evaluate what we are charging and provide a clear contact for any service charge related enquiries.
- Monitor our management fees and ensure they are reasonable.
- Provide information on how to challenge your service charges.

What we ask of you:

- Provide feedback where you do not think value for money is being provided.
- Work with the Council on ways you think we could improve value for money on your estate.

Arrears

If you anticipate difficulty paying your service charges, major works invoices or any other charges, please contact us as soon as possible so we can support you.

Our commitments to you:

- We will work with you to find a suitable repayment plan on competitive repayment terms.
- Provide information on debt counselling and support services.
- Only take legal action as a last resort.

What we ask of you:

- Contact the Council immediately if you are facing financial difficulties so that we can discuss any support we can offer.
- Contact us if you anticipate that you may struggle with payments, so that we can work with you to find a solution.

If Things Go Wrong

If something goes wrong, let us know immediately so we can address it and improve our service.

Our commitments to you:

- We will apologise and seek to rectify the issue as quickly as possible.
- Make it easy to understand how you can make a formal complaint if needed (by using this link <https://hackneyportal.icasework.com/resource?id=44812&db=hackney>)
- Acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days.
- Provide a full response within 10 working days Explaining what actions we will take to resolve the issue.
- Respect your confidentiality at all times.
- Provide information on how to appeal if you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint.
- Ensure we share all learnings from any complaints with other parts of the housing service in order to continually improve the whole service.

What we ask of you:

- Clearly set out the issues that you are experiencing.
- Inform the Council of your desired outcomes.
- Help us continually improve by completing any questionnaires sent after the issue has been resolved.

Implementing the Charter

We are continuously working to improve the service we provide and ensure that we meet these standards. To ensure we are meeting the aims and commitments set out in this Charter we will use the feedback from residents. If you would like to get involved, you can do so through the following link: <https://hackney.gov.uk/housing-get-involved> .

We will regularly review our performance against these commitments and keep you informed using housing performance information and your feedback.