FAIRER HOUSING

City of Westminster

Leaseholder 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. We will regularly seek your feedback on how we are performing against this charter so that you can hold us to account on how well we are delivering our pledges.

If you have any questions please contact us

housing.enquiries@westminster.gov.uk

0800 358 3783

Providing excellent customer service

We will:

- provide excellent customer service and a high-quality service
- listen to you in a respectful way and always start from a place of putting ourselves in your shoes
- provide you with a range of options for how you can contact us, this includes on-line 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 that you can contact us and how you can report issues
- get back to you when we say we will, within a maximum of 10 working days
- ensure that staff are well trained, knowledgeable, and empathetic
- 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 it in it, you agree to be a responsible landlord and leaseholder, and continue to be a good neighbor 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 when things go wrong and do our best to make sure that the same mistakes are not repeated
- ensure our meetings and workshops are accessible, welcoming and inclusive for all of our leaseholders
- 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)
- send you invitations to events for leaseholders

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
- 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 on-line

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 repair service
- work with our partnering contractors to make sure they have the same standards of customer service as Westminster City Council staff
- 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:

- work with you to find a mutually suitable repayment plan if you are experiencing financial hardship
- offer competitive repayment terms
- provide access to debt counseling services
- ensure that legal action is taken only as a last resort

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 our leaseholders the chance to challenge the cost and quality of service
- monitor our management fees and ensure they are reasonable
- work with you if you are experiencing financial difficulties

Get involved

Here are some of the ways you can get involved and make your voice heard:

Find out who your elected representatives are and when they meet to make decisions

westminster.moderngov.co.uk

Sign up to receive our email newsletters

www.westminster.gov.uk/newsletters

Read and respond to consultations or proposals

www.westminster.gov.uk/consultations

Join our Resident Research Panel to review and feedback on our policies and projects

www.westminster.gov.uk/resident-research-panel

Join our Youth Council

www.westminster.gov.uk/about-council/youth-council

Join your local amenity society to contribute to planning decisions in your area

www.westminsteramenitysocietiesforum.org

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

www.westminster.gov.uk/housing/your-community/your-voice-counts

We regularly measure the performance of our Delivery Plan and you can see the latest results on our website

www.westminster.gov.uk/fairer-westminster

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

housing.enquires@westminster.gov.uk

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