



**LEASEHOLDERS**

**SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

**WITH A1 HOUSING**

**2010 - 2012**

## **Executive Summary**

This service level agreement sets out the levels and required standards of service that have been agreed by the leaseholders of Bassetlaw District Council and A1 Housing Bassetlaw Ltd.

All service standards for leaseholders will match those received by tenants in every way.

## **CUSTOMER SERVICES**

### **Meetings**

- ❖ A1 Housing will invite leaseholders to all consultation events held with tenants;
- ❖ Leaseholder representatives will be invited to attend the A1 Hundred Club meetings;
- ❖ A Leaseholder Consultation Event will be held annually in January/February to discuss the following years budgets and increase in charges together with any other leasehold issues;
- ❖ Notification of meetings with an agenda and relevant documentation will be provided no later than 10 days prior to a meeting;
- ❖ A summary of all meetings will be sent to all attendees, kept at all the main offices and posted on the A1 Housing web site.
- ❖ Outcomes and changes in policies or procedures will be included in the Leaseholder Corner of the newsletter In Touch.

### **Consultation**

- ❖ No decision or actions will be taken that affect leaseholders without a full consultation taking place with all leaseholders;
- ❖ All leaseholders will be consulted under Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 before the landlord carries out works above or below the prescribed value (set in legislation) or enter into a long-term agreement for the provision of services;
- ❖ A1 Housing will consult with leaseholders on any changes to contractors or services that effect leaseholders.

### **Correspondence**

- ❖ A1 Housing will acknowledge all written correspondence (including fax and e-mail) and reply within the timescales agreed and set in our Service Standards;

- ❖ A1 Housing will endeavour to answer all phone calls within the timescales agreed and set in our Service Standards;
- ❖ A1 Housing will ensure that all information produce is available in other formats including large print, audiotape, Braille and other languages.
- ❖ A1 will provide one point of contact (the Communications, Policy and Performance Officer – 01909 533243) for leaseholder enquiries including BDC issues relating to ground rent and insurance.

## **Complaints**

- ❖ All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with A1 Housing's agreed complaints procedure;
- ❖ Leaseholders also have the right to make representations to the Local Government Ombudsman once the complaint procedure has been exhausted;
- ❖ Leaseholders can make representations to the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal who will consider matters in relation to Service Standards and Service Charges.

## **Communication and Information**

- ❖ Leaseholders will receive the quarterly In Touch newsletter.
- ❖ The A1 Housing website [www.a1housing.co.uk](http://www.a1housing.co.uk) will have an updated leaseholders page.
- ❖ All new and subsequent generation leaseholders will be issued with a Leaseholder Information pack. This will contain: -
  - Leaseholders Guide - A comprehensive booklet full of day-to-day issues and important information.
  - Leaseholders Service Level Agreement - The levels and standards of service agreed jointly by the leaseholders, Bassetlaw District Council and A1 Housing.
  - A Plain English Guide To Your Lease – Legal jargon made easier to understand.
  - Leaseholder Service Charges and Repairs and Maintenance – explanation of what they are what they cover.
  - The latest Leaseholders News Bulletin - A bi-yearly news bulletin dedicated to leaseholders, with useful contact numbers and website address.
  - The latest In Touch newsletter - Delivered to all A1 Housing tenants and Leaseholders, look for the “Leaseholders Corner” article

Second generation and subsequent leaseholders will also be issued with long-term cost of improvements, repairs and maintenance charges.

- ❖ The telephone number of Neighbourhood Housing Management Officers are posted on the A1 Housing website [www.a1housing.co.uk](http://www.a1housing.co.uk)
- ❖ Full details of our standards are contained in the Customer information leaflet Service Standards

## **MAINTENANCE SERVICE**

### **Contractors**

- ❖ A review of our contractors and partners will take place every 2 – 3 years;
- ❖ Contractors will be judged on a mix of price and quality;
- ❖ The Tenant Investment Group will be involved in the evaluation and selection of contractors and partners;
- ❖ Issues of Health & Safety and Equality & Diversity will be addressed and contractors/partners will be checked to ensure compliance with all the relevant legislation.

### **Repairs Ordering**

- ❖ Where works exceed the value contained in legislation a minimum of two quotations will be obtained prior to any work being carried out with agreement of the relevant leaseholders (where works are not covered by existing agreed contracts);
- ❖ All repairs can be ordered through the Repairs Freephone Service 0800 590542 or via the A1 Housing web site. For further information see our web site [www.a1housing.co.uk](http://www.a1housing.co.uk) the Repairs Handbook.
- ❖ The Repairs Call Centre will provide quotes for all repairs by leaseholders when requested.
- ❖ A1 housing staff and individual leaseholders will be responsible for ensuring the performance of contractor's workmanship and response times.

### **Routine Inspection**

- ❖ An inspection will be carried out by an Estate Inspection Team at least once a year to establish external condition of the block of flats and the internal conditions of communal areas;
- ❖ A1 Housing Leaseholders are welcome to take part in their own estate inspection.

### **Building Cleaning**

- ❖ Building Cleaning costs will normally increase in line with RPI annually;
- ❖ A1 Housing staff and leaseholders will monitor the performance of the cleaning and report back any problems.

## **HOUSING MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

### **Anti-Social Behavior**

- ❖ A1 Housing will investigate and take appropriate action against anyone causing anti-social behaviour within leaseholder and council properties;
- ❖ A1 Housing will work with the Police and BDC's Anti-Social Behaviour Team to resolve all issues of nuisance, hate crimes and harassment.

### **Vandalism and Graffiti**

- ❖ Upon receipt of information relating to vandalism or graffiti A1 Housing will action any relevant work and legal proceedings if necessary.

### **Benefit Advice**

- ❖ A1 Housing will provide you with support and guidance if you have difficulty paying service charges etc or you need general benefit advice.

### **Tenant and Resident Groups**

- ❖ All leaseholders are eligible to join their local Tenant and Resident Group and get involved in discussions about your neighbourhood and the wider district;
- ❖ A1 Housing will recognise tenants' association (TRAs) as defined in Section 29 Landlord and Tenant Act 1985;
- ❖ Leaseholders will be eligible to stand as a Tenant Board Member of the A1 Housing Board.

## **Service Charges**

### **How Charges Are Made Up**

- ❖ Service charges will be made up of mainly the following costs
  - Ground Rent
  - Building Insurance
  - Building Cleaning
  - Shared facilities (ie communal lighting)
  - Management Charge (our costs of managing leasehold flats)
- ❖ Repairs, maintenance and improvements will be invoiced separately to service charges.
- ❖ Costs that apply to the whole block are shared equally between all flats in the block.

- ❖ An explanation of how the service charge is made up will be included in the service charge statement.

### **How Leaseholders will get their Bill.**

- ❖ Leaseholders will be notified of any service charge increase by letter prior to dispatch of statements.
- ❖ Following the 1<sup>st</sup> April each year you will be sent an invoice for service charges;
- ❖ Leaseholders will receive a statement each quarter showing any outstanding charges or any new charges due;
- ❖ Leaseholders will be given a named person and telephone number to contact should they have a query about their bill.
- ❖ Leaseholders can pay using the following methods: -
  - Direct Debits
  - Debit card/credit card – this can be done over the telephone or the B.D.C.internet and at specific pay points and Post Officers.
  - Cash or cheque - at specific pay points and Post Officers or through the post by cheque.
  - Bank transfer.

### **Service Charge Loans**

- ❖ A1 Housing in conjunction with Bassetlaw District Council will provide a loan facility to the most vulnerable leaseholders that cannot access loans from other organisations.

### **Review**

- ❖ This Service Level Agreement is subject to a 2 year review process between the two parties and cannot be amended or broken without prior consent of either or both parties.