

Our housing offer to you

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham is committed to improving the range, quality and choice of its homes as well as improving the quality of information and services to our tenants.

As part of this commitment we are introducing for the first time, the Barking and Dagenham Housing Offer. The offer sets out the service delivery standards tenants and leaseholders can expect from the Council

The Housing Offer will also make it clear what we expect from tenants not only in terms of your commitment to paying your rent but also your social responsibilities to your neighbours and the wider community.



Your rights and responsibilities

We hope that the points in this offer go some way to providing you with a clear set of standards. To provide a successful housing service we recognise that there is a need for partnership working between the housing service and our tenants and leaseholders.

While the points in this offer make sure that you as a tenant /leaseholders receive a specific standard of service from the Council, as your landlord we would expect you as a tenant/leaseholder to share this responsibility for making sure that these standards are maintained. We would therefore expect you to among other things:

- Pay your rent and service charges on time and not get into arrears
- Respect the cleanliness of your estate by not dropping litter.
- Make sure that household rubbish is disposed of in an appropriate way by using the facilities provided.
- Not dispose of household bulky items on the estate in a random way but request collection through the correct channels.
- Not cause any fire safety risks by leaving items in the communal areas of the block
- Not cause damage to any fixtures and fittings both inside your home or the communal areas. Carry out repairs and maintenance that is your responsibility.



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Publication reference number: MC7585 February 2015.

Inside Your Home

Improvements*

Over the next three years plans to refurbish our housing stock.

- New Kitchens
- New bathrooms
- Central Heating
- Rewiring

By 2018 we will have invested £120 million in making sure our homes meet the Decent Homes standard which will see over 10,000 homes improved. The focus is on internal works and will provide:

The planned programme will see the following number of homes refurbished each year:

2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2018/19
2,500	2,750	2,750	2,750

Repairs and Maintenance*

We will make sure that where possible repairs to your home are completed in one visit.

We welcome and value the involvement of tenant representatives in reviewing our repairs and maintenance policies and standards and this will be part of the new offer.

We will make sure that 98 per cent of all repair appointments that are made are kept.

We will provide a dedicated repairs contact centre which allows for easy and accessible reporting of repairs.

We have developed a new voids fit to let standard and aim to have a void property relet within 30 days.



Health and Safety

- We will promise that all necessary health and safety checks covering gas, electricity and fire safety are carried out on a regular basis. As your landlord we have a duty under law to have a valid Gas Safety Certificate (CP12) on your home and a gas safety check will be carried out annually. We promise to keep to the current performance target of 100 percent*.
- All blocks of flats will have an up to date fire risk assessment in place. High-rise blocks, sheltered schemes, and flats above shops will receive an annual onsite assessment. All low rise blocks will receive an annual desk top assessment with and not onsite assessment taking place every three years.
- Electricity tests will take place every five years in occupied homes, and all empty properties will have an electricity test before reletting.
- We will maintain an asbestos register and conduct annual surveys of all communal areas.

Energy Efficiency

Gas: As part of our Decent Homes improvement works, we promise that when a gas boiler is replaced this will be with an "A" rated boiler that is 90.5 per cent efficient which should help to reduce energy bills*.

Solar Energy PV: Feasibility studies are underway on three areas in the borough looking at the installation of solar PV in blocks that are suitable for such technology.

Window Replacement: As part of our external improvement programmes all replacement windows will be double glazed to provide improved thermal insulation.

“ We promise to keep to the current performance target of 100%. ”



* Under the terms of the lease, the leaseholder is responsible for any repairs inside their property





Your Block, Estate, or Street

Block Cleaning

We will publish the cleaning schedule for your estate and make sure that the notice board in your block is updated to record when the block has been cleaned. We will make sure that the following cleaning rota is maintained:

- High Rise Blocks - communal area cleaned once a day - Mon-Fri (Sat/Sun a health and safety check is made of bin areas)
- Low Rise Blocks - communal area cleaned once a week
- Sheltered Housing Schemes - communal area cleaned once a week

Recycling

We will provide every estate with fit for purpose and accessible recycling bins.

Grounds maintenance (grass cutting, weed control, shrub pruning, hedge trimming, litter collection)

The housing service will monitor and make sure that grounds maintenance is maintained at a high level. We will work with our tenants and leaseholders to monitor and maintain this.



Job Shop Housing and Outreach Team

Our Job Shop Housing and Outreach Team is a new service specifically set up to help and support Barking and Dagenham residents living in council accommodation with employment and skills advice.

This free service includes professional help with CV's, applications as well as job search. If you are looking for work and would like further information about this useful service please email Dagenham Job Shop on dagenhamjobshop@lbbd.gov.uk or telephone 020 8724 8870.



Notice boards

We have installed notice boards in all our blocks as we recognise they provide an excellent first point of communication between us and our tenants/residents. These will be used and updated regularly to keep you informed of matters of particular interest to you and your neighbours. All notice boards will display the cleaning rota for that block as well as the fire risk assessment.

Environmental improvements

We will work with you to promote resident led improvements on your estate. An annual budget will be designated on a ward basis which can be used for estate environmental improvements. Additional work has also been prioritised in the following areas:

- Fire Safety Improvements
- Roof Replacement
- Rewiring in Communal Areas
- Window Replacement

Estate walkabouts

Estate walkabouts give residents, local councillors and council staff the chance to work together to make a difference to the local area/estate and help make it a better place to live.

An annual programme of walkabouts will take place and will be led by the Corporate Director of Housing. To find out when your estate will be visited and to find out how you can attend go to the council's web site, www.lbbd.gov.uk.

Your Neighbourhood

Tenant involvement

We will continue to work with and support the Tenants' and Residents' Federation to increase the opportunities for residents to become involved.

We will provide £200, annually to each established Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs) or Quarterly Action Groups (QAGs) and make sure that their continued operation by providing support and training.

To further strengthen our relationship with our tenants, in 2015 we are establishing a tenant scrutiny panel.

The panel will provide a thorough and independent review of services and make recommendations for improvements to the service.

We will make sure that relevant housing officers attend TRAs or QAGs meetings.

We will work with tenants and residents to develop a menu of engagement opportunities, for example surveys, mass texting, computer apps.

So that you know how we are performing we will present our performance reports quarterly to the Housing Forums. These reports will show how well we are performing on:

- Housing repairs
- Rent collection
- The turnaround time of empty properties
- Anti Social Behaviour actions

Tackling Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) and crime prevention

We recognise how community safety is important to all residents particularly the most vulnerable groups. We will continue to work with partners and our community to tackle the fear of crime by building resilient communities where people look out for each other while continuing to support and protect those most at risk.

To help us achieve this we will continue to:

- Provide funding for 10 estate police officers, this is match funded by the Metropolitan Police resulting in 20 dedicated officers being available for council estates.
- Carry out tenancy audits to make sure that council properties are being well maintained and are occupied by the tenant/s to which it was allocated and not someone else.

- Facilitate and attend multi-agency partnership meetings which involve looking at high level cases of ASB and hate crime in the borough.
- To offer introductory tenancies for all new tenants and we will make sure that appropriate advice and assistance is given to new and existing tenants so that they may understand their rights.
- To help tenants feel safe in their homes by providing support and assistance and building links with other agencies such as Victims Support.

Health and Wellbeing

Through the tenant participation service we will continue to run and facilitate training sessions such as:

- Feed your family for £5
- Managing household budgets
- Welfare benefits advice

Shared Ownership

We are developing a menu of home ownership options that would assist those that have difficulty in obtaining affordable housing. The Council will be providing 1,000 shared ownership units over a four year period (2015/19).

We are also investigating the potential for delivering key worker housing options.

Estate regeneration and new build council housing

We have an extensive estate regeneration programme which has a focus on demolishing some of our older and unpopular estates and replacing them with high quality housing.

Despite the tough financial times for councils across the country, we are continuing to invest in much needed homes across the borough thanks to a housing investment programme of up to £80m annually - the largest in London.

The building of high quality homes and a sustainable community is at the core of our vision for the borough. With our partners we will help deliver 17,000 new homes in a range of tenure and 10,000 new jobs over the next twenty years.

In the last two years we have delivered 805 homes with another 830 due by the end of April 2016 as well as 35 new bungalows for older residents which in turn have freed up three, four bed parlour type houses for families on the waiting list.

Employment and training opportunities

Since 2013 we have funded 31 apprentices who work in our repairs and maintenance service and we will continue to offer places.

Through our support to TRAs and QAGs we offer a menu of skill based training events.

We fund job brokerage roles to support council tenants back into work.

“ We will continue to work with and support the Tenants' and Residents' Federation ”

