

Appendix 1 – Service Standards

Service Standards for Harrow Council Homeowners

Harrow Council and the Home Ownership Team are committed to providing a high standard of service to our customers.

The following standards are our promise to you:

We will endeavour to issue service charge demands in a timely manner, both estimates and actuals.

We will ensure that the Home Ownership Team is fully aware of the demands issued and will be able to assist you when taking calls or answering letters.

When we receive a written comment (either by letter, email or fax) from you:

- We will give you a full response, or let you know we are dealing with the matter within 10 working days
- We will tell you who is dealing with the matter and give you a direct telephone number
- We will respond to you in a way which is easy for you to understand in plain English and refrain from using jargon
- We will explain any technical issue with you in a comprehensive manner
- If we cannot answer you within 10 working days we will write to you and let you know the expected date you should hear from us.

When we answer the telephone to you:

- We will answer within 5 rings
- We will greet you in a friendly manner
- We will give our name and section to you

- We will only transfer your call if it is absolutely necessary, if we cannot answer the query we will take your details and call you back
- If a telephone message is left for a member of the Home Ownership Team a team member will return the call within 24 hours.

When you visit the office:

- We will aim to speak to you within 10 minutes of your arrival
- We will always wear our name badges
- We will talk to you in confidence

If you take the time to register an official dispute regarding an element of your service charge we will:

- Immediately register the dispute on our system so that no further reminders for payment will be sent to you whilst we investigate the dispute
- Contact you either by telephone or letter to tell you who will be investigating your complaint
- Ask you if you would like to arrange a visit with the investigating officer to your home
- Fully respond to the dispute within 10 working days, or should we not be able to fully respond then let you know when you can expect a full response
- Should your dispute be upheld and a service charge adjustment is required we will issue a credit note to you within 10 days of the resolution
- Should your dispute not be upheld we will write and inform you how and why we made the decision, and invite you to contact us with any further information which may change our decision
- If you feel our decision is wrong we will assist in finding an independent mediation scheme in your area which specialises in service charge disputes.

In addition to the above the Home Ownership Team will expect the following from Home Owners or their representatives:

- To pay their service charges in a timely manner

- To always be polite and courteous either on the telephone or in person
- To tell us if they are having difficulty managing their service charge repayments
- To be patient if investigations regarding disputes are taking longer than anticipated