

Rent Account Service Standards



We are committed to providing an effective, accessible, and accountable rent collection service to assist tenants to be able to pay their rent and service charges.

Under the terms of our Tenancy Agreement tenants are responsible for paying rent and service charges and we offer a range of support from specialist teams to assist those who may find themselves in hardship.

Housing Services will:

- Contact you at the beginning of your tenancy to discuss your rent charges, assist you with welfare benefit advice and ensure you are aware of your rent responsibilities.
- Provide you with access to an online Housing Services account where you can view your rent statement (Darlington Home Online).
- Provide a range of ways to pay rent and service charges: online, Direct Debit, standing order, via rent payment card or by cheque or cash.
- Manage rent accounts securely and tell you about any arrears quickly.
- Use a variety of methods to contact you such as letter, phone, text, email, Whatsapp etc.
- Send you an annual rent and service charge review letter showing a breakdown of costs for the following year.
- Notify you of any increases due with a minimum of four weeks' notice.
- Help you to access benefit advice either from our Tenancy Sustainment team or other agencies and signpost you to debt advice services if needed.

- Respond to any questions or requests for assistance about rent in line with our Corporate Customer Standards.
- Always attempt to work with you to agree sensible and achievable repayment plans, only taking legal or enforcement action or using debt collection agencies action when all other avenues have been exhausted.
- At the end of a tenancy, promptly update you with a full and accurate balance of any monies owed to Housing Services.

How can you be sure we are meeting these standards?

We will:

- Use our in-house management performance systems to ensure we are meeting timescales.
- Report on our performance quarterly on our webpages.
- Report annually on our performance to Council Members.
- Provide annual updates in our Annual Report.
- Involve our Tenants Panel in reviewing and scrutinising our performance.
- Involve our Tenants Panel in writing and reviewing our policies and standards.
- Provide feedback from annual satisfaction surveys to the Regulator of Social Housing through Tenant Satisfaction Measure surveys.

