

WALTHAM ESTATE RMO SERVICE STANDARDS

It is the duty of the staff and the management board at WERMO to ensure that residents receive a high standard of service in all our dealings with them. Whether you are making an initial enquiry, making a complaint or need help and support with a difficult housing problem - you deserve a courteous, prompt and informed service.

We have produced these service standards so that every resident knows what to expect from the services provided.

We will review all service standards at least once a year and publish the results of our monitoring in the Newsletter and on the WERMO website.

*Vanda Parker
WERMO Chair*

RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

We want more residents to get involve with the management of the estate. You do not need to be a board member, but you can:

- help to monitor the services,
- give your ideas for service development
- give ideas for community and development activities
- help to organise community and development activities

We will:

- provide free training for board members
- operate an expense system so that residents are not out of pocket
- develop ways of involving young people
- provide help, support and advice for residents' activities that aim to increase involvement and participation.
- support older residents
- facilitate community events

To become a shareholder only cost £1 and gives you the right to vote for committee members and / or be nominated as a board member

CUSTOMER CARE

All customers will be treated with respect and their personal information will be confidential

When you write to us:

We will respond to all correspondence, including e-mails within 10 days. If there is likely to be a delay dealing with a written enquiry we will acknowledge receipt within 7 days.

When we visit you:

If you need a visit we will always offer you an appointment. If we are unable to keep the appointment we will give you as much notice as possible.

We will inform you of who is visiting

All visitors will show you identification before entering your home

We will leave a calling card when a home visit is made and you are not at home

We will always be courteous and helpful

When you visit us:

we will wear name badges and be polite, courteous, sensitive and helpful

We will give you the opportunity to speak in a private interview room

If you have an appointment, or if we have asked you to come in to the office, we will always aim to see you within 5 minutes of the appointment time

If you visit the office without an appointment we will aim to see you within 10 minutes.

When you telephone us:

We will answer the phones within 5 rings (approx. 15 second). We will be polite and courteous when speaking to you.

We will listen to your enquiry and aim to provide you with a solution immediately. Where this is not possible we will call you back at an agreed time.

If it is necessary to transfer your call to another member of staff we will tell you and explain why. We will pass on your name and details of your enquiry before putting you through.

We will offer to call you back rather than keep you on hold if an enquiry is likely to take some time to resolve.

We will respond to answer phone messages within one working day

Improving access for residents:

Our reception area is accessible for people with disabilities

We will communicate in ways that meet your needs, e.g. by using large print, Braille or an interpreter. Access to a portable loop system is also available

We will help residents obtain appropriate financial advice when required

We will provide support for vulnerable residents

We will see residents outside of normal working hours if requested

REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

Repairs can be reported by phone from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Repairs will be carried out within the following timescales

- Emergency – with 24 hours
- Urgent within 7 days
- Routing within 28 days

Appointments will be provided for routine repair work between 9am & 4pm Monday to Friday

Repair work will be carried out to a high standard

We will make good any damage when we carry out a repair to your home

We will pay £20 compensation if a contractor fails to keep an appointment and fails to cancel

PAYING RENT

New tenancies

When you get your flat we will:

- Provide you with a breakdown of how much your rent and other charges will be
- Provide you with a Housing Benefit form and give assistance if you need it.
- Provide you with information on what to do if you have difficulty making rent payments
- Advise of where you can get independent advice
- Make arrangements to carry out tenancy visits within 6 weeks of your tenancy

Benefit / debt advice. We will

- help with filling out Housing Benefit claims if you are having difficulty completing forms
- talk to housing benefit office about the progress of your claim
- advice you of where you can obtain independent benefit and budgeting advice

Payment methods

- Offer a range of convenient payment methods such as cash payment, standing orders, giro payment, swipe cards at post offices and online payments (we will be introducing direct debit later in 2006)
- Process any requests for standing orders / direct debit, swipe card or giro slips within 10 working days

If you fall into rent arrears

Provide rent statements on requests

- We will make early contact when you miss a rent payment in writing
- Provide you with names of agencies who can give you independent budgeting and benefit advice
- Advise you in writing of any action we intend to take to recover the debt
- Agree a repayment plan with you.

ESTATE SERVICES

Estate Cleaning

We will

- ensure cleaning schedules are kept up to date and displayed on block notice boards
- ensure communal areas are kept clean and free from rubbish
- graffiti is removed within 24 hours
- bins are kept clean
- bulk refuse is removed 3 times per week
- communal day to day repairs are done promptly
- invite residents to the monthly walkabouts

Ground Maintenance

Through the gardening and maintenance contract, we will:

- ensure that the grassed areas are kept tidy and free from litter
- hedges and shrubs shall be kept neat and weed free
- estate paths are kept

REHOUSING

Rehousing applications

We will register your transfer application and tell you how many points you have been awarded and how they have been calculated within no more than 10 working days

We will provide you with information about your re-housing options

Advise you of appropriate organisations that may be able to help you

If you request a mutual exchange we will acknowledge your application within 7 working days.

LEASEHOLD SERVICES

We will provide you with an up to date balance of your service charge or major work account on request.

We will make your service charges as clear and transparent as possible and offer you a range of ways to pay

We will discuss what options are available with you if you have difficulty paying your service charges, including referring you to experts who can offer you financial advice

We will formally and informally consult leaseholders before we carry out major works and provide breakdown of the work, the timescales and cost involved

ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR & HARRASSMENT

WERMO is determined to eradicate antisocial behaviour, harassment and hate crimes. We will provide support by:

- Promptly investigating all incidents reported, including interviewing witnesses, with your consent
- Arrange interviews at home or any other suitable venue at your request
- Take practical steps to safe guard your safety
- Remove graffiti within 24 hours
- Work with the p0olice to take action against perpetrators
- Providing support and advice and putting you in touch with agencies who can provide additional support and advice
- We will repair any damage and remove graffiti within 24 hours
- Where there is a need for re-housing due to the threat of violence, we will ensure that temporary accommodation is offered

Diversity Service Standards

To show our commitment to diversity and equality, we have developed some service standards that our customers can hold us to. These include the following:

- collecting up-to-date details about at least 95% of our customers relating to the six key equality themes mentioned. We will hold information in the strictest confidence and only use it for improving services
- carrying out yearly checks to see if any tenants are experiencing problems accessing services or are receiving a poor standard of service. This will include surveys of tenants and leaseholders, so that you can let us know how satisfied you are with our services. You will also be able to get involved in developing or managing those services
- Assessing all new policies, schemes and service changes to make sure that they promote equality
- Consulting you about, and then publishing, a diversity and equality action plan. This plan will include our plans for making sure that we meet or do better than the requirements of the various laws on equality

Who is responsible for diversity and equality?

All employees, Board members and other people doing work on behalf of WERMO have a general duty to work together to promote equality and fairness in the way they treat customers and fellow members of staff and through the services provided to the public.

Please contact us if you:

- would like to know more about our diversity and equalities polices or activities
- want to tell us about an equalities issue, or if you would like to work with us in developing equality

Complaints Procedure and Access to Information Service Standard

These are the standards you can expect from WERMO when you complain about our services and when you want to see information we hold about you.

More detailed advice about complaints and access to information is available in the your tenants' handbook or by contacting the Estate Office

Be professional, accessible and open to your views

We will:

- deal with your complaint as quickly as possible
- investigate all complaints fairly
- make it easier for you to register a complaint
- say sorry when things have gone wrong and tell you what we will do to put it right
- learn from all complaints and improve the services we offer, and
- help you to make a complaint.

Seek to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction and keep you informed

We will:

- send you an acknowledgement letter within five days of you making a complaint
- inform you in that letter of the name of the person dealing with your complaint, their phone number, and the target date by which you will get a response, and
- respond to your complaint within 10 days.

If you are not happy with the response you receive:

- you have the opportunity to complain further to United resident Housing (URH), Kennington park Business centre, 1- 3 Brixton Road, SW9 6DE, Tel: 020 7 582 9569 who will review the actions we have taken,
- URH will t will acknowledge your request within five days and review your complaint within 10 days.
- you then have the opportunity to complain further Lambeth Customer Relations, Hambrooke House, Purden Road Brixton Hill, SW2 5RW, who will review again investigate and review your complaint and the actions taken.,