

The Housing Service has developed an updated set of service standards known as Local Offers. We have done this by working with Tenant Representatives and finding out what tenants wanted from services in a survey and focus groups. This leaflet covers the issues Tenant Representatives wanted to communicate at this stage. In particular they wanted to show you some of the key actions we will take to improve our services this year.

These offers are based on the way Council housing services are funded. The Government is about to change this and we cannot be clear about what we can afford long term. Our home improvements will be reviewed as soon as the long term financial position is clear and we can then tell tenants if we can further improve these offers.

Home

Repairs Service

We offer a comprehensive repairs and maintenance service to all tenants.

Our commitment to you - we will:

- Provide an out-of-hours service for emergency repairs and carryout all emergency repairs within 24 hours.
- Prioritise your repairs correctly and complete all non-urgent repairs in as short a time as possible - we aim to have an average repair time of 8 days.
- Offer appointments for all non-emergency repairs including evenings and weekends.
- Keep you informed if an appointment time changes and monitor where appointments are missed by the contractor.
- Leave a card saying we called if no-one is at home.
- Do our best to get all repairs 'right first time' and leave your home clean and tidy.
- Get your feedback on the work that has been carried out and investigate all reports of poor service within 4 weeks.
- Increase the number of inspections we carry out when the work is finished - these will be targeted to maintain the high quality repairs and service tenants expect. We aim to be inspecting up to 10% of all work by the end of 2011/12.
- Return to put right any defective work, as quickly as possible.
- Ensure that newly let properties are safe and clean.

How we prioritise repairs

The Council gives each repair reported a priority to make sure the most urgent jobs are done first. All emergency repairs are carried out within 24 hours and the most urgent within 6 hours. Tenants are responsible of some of the repairs in their home. For a full list telling you our priorities and the repairs the Council will do please see leaflet 7 of your Tenancy Welcome Guide or the Council website at www.n-kesteven.gov.uk

Out-of-hours emergency service

The out-of-hours emergency service operates during the following times:

- Weekdays: Monday – Thursday 5.00pm – 8.15am
- Weekends: Friday 4.30pm – Mon 8.15am
- Bank Holidays: 24 Hours

To report repairs during normal working hours, or to the out of hours service, please use these numbers:

- **For general building repairs** such as brickwork, joinery, plumbing or electrical works phone Jeakins Weir on 01529 416399.
- **For heating repairs and appliance servicing** phone Aaron Services on 01205591979.

Regular maintenance

- Our contractors will visit your home every year to do regular servicing and testing to keep your home safe.
- We will introduce an annual gutter cleaning and maintenance programme to all known areas where trees and bushes cause gutters to block.
- We paint all exterior paint work, clean UPVC windows and doors and clean gutters every 8 years.

Home Improvement Service

The Council will deliver a programme of home improvements to ensure that tenants' homes are decent, safe and meet the NK Home Standard. In return, we ask that tenants understand we cannot improve every home straight away, and are patient with the Council.

Priority for home improvements

1. Energy efficiency measures chosen by 38% of tenants.
2. Home improvements such as new kitchens and bathrooms chosen by 34% of tenants.
3. Community improvements and general building repairs both got just 14% of the votes each.

NK Home Standard

The council will carry out home improvements based on an expected life span of the various parts of your home. The NK Home Standard will aim to have no components that are older than this and still meeting the Government Decent Homes criteria too. We will also ensure that homes are maintained and refurbished to a standard that keeps the occupants safe and warm, whilst also reducing home running costs.

Aids and adaptations

We will:

- Consider all recommendations for adaptations received from Social Care (Social Services) and, where appropriate, fund them.

Service Developments

The main changes to the repairs and home improvement services requested by tenants are as follows:

You Said....	We will....
Repairs	
<p>Tenants want better customer service from the contractors and on the 'out of hours' service. They want someone with 'common sense' to handle their call and respond appropriately to their requests.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give contractors regular customer service training with a focus on meeting the needs of all tenants. • Ensure their standard of customer service reaches the same level as the Council.
<p>Tenants want more specific appointment times.</p>	<p>Work with contractors to provide more precise appointment times across the day and include requirements for better appointment times in all future contracts.</p>
Home Improvements	
<p>You supported changing the way we do improvement works based on the age of the parts of your home such as kitchens, bathrooms, windows, doors and boilers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the way home improvements are prioritised based on the age of different parts of the home. • Produce a 10 year programme of all home improvement works, agreed with Tenant Representatives and made available to all tenants on our website. • Keep you informed each year if the 10 year programme changes.
<p>You want home improvement times to be faster.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If financial planning allows, we will bring all homes up to the new NK Home Standard within 6 years.

Involvement and Empowerment

Service Developments

Full details on our standards are available on the website or by contacting us. Details at the end of this leaflet.

The main changes to involvement and empowerment services requested by tenants are as follows:

You Said....	We will....
To develop a Complaints and Appeals Panel...	
You don't know how to make a formal complaint and don't feel comfortable making a complaint.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a Tenant Complaints and Appeals Panel to consider Stage 2 complaints.• Publicise this panel in the At Home magazine.• Make it easier and clearer for you to make a complaint if you wish to.• Support tenants to make a formal complaint.
To improve our web-based information and develop a web forum where you can read about services and give your views	
You would like the opportunity to give your views via a web-forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop our website so that it is easier to use• Develop an interactive web forum
Aim for greater coverage of Tenant Representatives across North Kesteven	
You said there are many areas that many areas don't have a Tenant Representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aim to have greater coverage of Tenant Representatives to meet a target of 40%
Tell you who your Tenant Representative and Housing Officer is	
You want to know who is your Tenant Representative and Housing Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will regularly publish who your Tenant Representative and Housing Officer are in the At Home magazine and also on the website.
To develop opportunities for more local contact with tenants....	
You would like more	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold regular Housing

opportunities for face to face contact at a local level	<p>Surgeries for tenants with their Housing Officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop local area meetings. • Hold some evening meetings across the District. • Engage with people that we don't normally hear from in order to make sure the service is right for everybody.
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To set out what surveys you can expect and how we will use them

You said there are too many surveys and we never listen to your concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will review the surveys we send out and aim to send a larger annual survey rather than lots of small ones. • We will publicise the results of surveys in the At Home magazine and on the website.
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Inform you about discussions with Tenant Representatives

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will publish the minutes of Tenant meetings on the website so you can see what is being discussed and decisions being made.
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Neighbourhood and Community

Neighbourhood and Community

The council will work to help keep neighbourhoods well maintained, clean and safe and to help communities get along well together. We also offer services to prevent, investigate and stop anti-social behaviour.

Service Developments

The main changes to the neighbourhood and community services requested by tenants are as follows

You Said....	We will....
You want better standards for grass cutting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Tenant Representatives to develop

	affordable and improved standards for the grass cutting service.
You are unhappy when other tenants' are not maintaining their gardens and they become overgrown and messy.	Work with Tenant Representatives to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the existing garden clearance service for vulnerable tenants. • Develop the service to offer regular garden maintenance to vulnerable tenants.
There are some problems with litter and untidy communal areas and you want better standards for your estates and communal areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce new technology and working arrangements to ensure Housing Officers spend more time on estates and take action where needed.
There are problems with pets and dog fouling on our estate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make referrals to Parish Councils requesting provision of 'dog bins', as appropriate.
Car parking is the biggest problem in many neighbourhoods. Sometimes there are more cars than parking spaces and inconsiderate parking by others causes problems for tenants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the amount of money available under the new self financing arrangements to reflect tenants' feedback about parking problems. • Consider ways to use parking enforcement arrangements to tackle parking issues.
It is important to tenants that people get along well together, making estates nice places to live. Feedback from the local offer survey said that sometimes there is racial or other harassment and hate crime on estates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote the benefits of introducing Good Neighbourhood Agreements to local communities. • Encourage tenants to report incidents of anti-social behaviour harassment and hate crime. • Give tenants more information about how to do this including on our website and in At Home.

Tenants can hold the Council accountable to these Local Offers and more information about this will be in the Annual Report due for publication this summer.

If you would like to read a full version of the local offers it is available on www.n-kesteven.gov.uk or you can contact Tenant

Participation Team for a full copy, feedback on this leaflet, or if you need more information.
Contact 01529 414155 or 01522 699699 or email: tenant_participation@n-kesteven.gov.uk