

Home Owners Update



Autumn 2006

About this Update

You will be used to receiving a copy of Housing News or Talking Tenants (depending on where you live) but we are aware that the information is not always relevant to our home owners. That is why we have prepared this shorter update on issues specific to you.

We hope you find it is useful to you and welcome your feedback on it. In future issues, we are planning to provide information on repairs and maintenance plans and estate inspections. If you have any comments on the newsletter or topics you would like included in future editions, please contact us at:

homeownership@pavilionhg.co.uk

homeownership@atlantichousing.co.uk



Canterbury Walk kitchen



Home Owners survey

A survey questionnaire and reply paid envelope are included in this newsletter.

We want to contact you in the way that best suits you, and also provide a better service to you by having your up to date details. You can help us do this by returning your completed form by Friday 10th November 2006.

The information you give us in this survey will remain confidential and only be used

by us in connection with you and your home. We will not pass it to any commercial companies, but use the information solely in connection with the management of services provided by us.

All completed forms returned by 10 November will be entered into a prize draw for a £50 high street voucher.

Home owners' handbook

We are updating our handbook and will send you a new one towards the end of 2006. It will contain information on a wide range of relevant topics, such as explaining leases, service charges and major works. If there are specific details which you would like included in the handbook, please let us know.

Please contact Lynda Hance on lhance@pavilionhg.co.uk or on 01252 368742.



In this issue: The standard of service you can expect from us | Have your say | Home owners' handbook

Setting the standard

We are committed to delivering the best services we can. To help us achieve this we are preparing service standards particularly for our home ownership service.

Consulting with you

We will consult with you over the particular services we provide to home owners and the standards you would like us to work to. The details below are an indication of the type of standards we are proposing.

We want to consult with you to find out what you think of these proposed standards and if you would like to see any changes. To be part of that consultation, you need to fill in and return the enclosed survey questionnaire.



Proposed standards

1 After you have bought your home we will:

- Give all new leaseholders, shared owners and freehold service charge payers a Homeowners' Handbook
- Provide full contact details and any relevant news for home owners in our regular newsletters
- Send you a statement of your account every year
- Send you an estimated service charge bill each year, for the following year
- Send you the legal notices for any major repairs showing the estimated cost of the work and consult you on it
- Provide specialist information and advice on:
 - service charge enquiries or disagreements
 - requests to alter or improve your home
 - enquiries about your lease
 - buying your freehold

2 Selling your shared ownership home or buying more shares in it

- If you decide to sell your shared ownership home, we will send you an information sheet within 5 days of your enquiry, telling you how you can go about this and how long each step will take
- If you want to buy more shares in your home, we will send you an information sheet within 5 days of your enquiry, telling you how you can go about this and how long each step will take

3 Communal repairs - proposed standards

We will carry out repairs to the structure of our blocks of flats and any communal areas, according to what the lease says.

We will aim to complete these repairs within the target times below:

Repair description	Proposed target completion time
Unsafe structure	24 hours
Burst pipe in communal area/loft	24 hours
Storm damage to structure	24 hours
Total loss of electricity supply to block, not due to electricity provider	24 hours
Gas leak to communal boiler	24 hours
Blocked main drains serving block	24 hours
Lift out of order	24 hours
Total failure of communal lighting	24 hours
Removal of obscene or racist graffiti in communal area	24 hours
Total loss of communal heating and/or hot water	7 calendar days
Roof leak	7 calendar days

Repair description	Proposed target completion time
Door entry system out of order	7 calendar days
Damage to stair treads or hand rails/banisters in communal areas	7 calendar days
Blocked gutters or down pipes	28 calendar days
Rising damp	28 calendar days
Removal of non-offensive graffiti in communal area	28 calendar days
Faulty communal TV aerial	28 calendar days
Repairs to communal doors, windows and floors	28 calendar days
Repairs to external boundary walls, fences and paths	28 calendar days
Repairs to structural walls, brickwork, render, slates or tiles	28 calendar days



Key worker Lorna Magboo with Nadine Bates

4 Paying your service charges

We will:

- Give you information on how you can pay your service charge
- Offer you help, and advise you about the options that are available to you if you have difficulty paying

You can pay your service charges in the following ways:

- By standing order – ask us to send you a form
- By swipe card – call us for details
- By phone – you can pay by debit card between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Make a note of the reference number that you will be given. This will be your receipt. (Currently available to Atlantic Housing Association home owners only)
- By direct debit (currently available to Atlantic Housing Association home owners only)
- By cheque. Write your service charge account number and your address on the back of the cheque. Call us if you need more details

5 Consultation

We will:

- Carry out consultation on major works and service contracts, in line with what the law requires
- Give you the opportunity to comment on our services through a range of involvement options and specifically by the way you request, if you return our home owner survey form
- Make places available for home owners in our formal involvement process – on the Tenants' Consultative Group and on the local Boards of our housing associations

6 Complaints

If you're not happy with our service, your complaint can help us to improve. Please call or write to your local team manager, the details are on the right of this page.

7 Feedback

We also want to know when we get it right – this helps us to keep to the standard of service that you want. If you received a better-than-expected service from a team or a staff member, please tell us.

Useful information

New freephone numbers:

From October 1, we are introducing new freephone numbers which will be open from 8.30 – 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am – 4.30pm on Friday.

For Atlantic home owners, the number is **0800 0191 469**

For Pavilion home owners, the number is **0800 0191 470**

Please use this number to report communal repairs during office hours. Please note that calls may not be free if you are calling from a mobile.

Contacting your local team:

We have specialist teams at both Atlantic and Pavilion, who handle enquiries relating to home ownership.

Atlantic Private Initiatives Team 023 8068 4313

Charlotte Yonge House, Tollgate, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh Hants SO53 3YP
homeownership@atlantichousing.co.uk

Pavilion Alternative Tenures Team 01252 368616

Gordon House, Gordon Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 1LD
homeownership@pavilionhg.co.uk

Out-of-hours numbers:

If you need to report emergency* communal repairs out of office hours, please call the following numbers:

Atlantic 023 8087 3655

Pavilion 023 8086 6107

*Emergency repairs are shown in the table opposite as those with proposed 24 hour targets

Telephone calls to First Wessex Housing Group offices may be monitored or recorded for training purposes and in appropriate legal situations

Getting involved

We are keen to have a better understanding of what is important to home owners and how we can improve our services to you.

The questionnaire included in this newsletter will give us information on how you prefer us to contact you and we will make every effort to tailor our consultation to your individual requirements. The law says we must write to you formally on certain matters and we will continue to do this.

We want to encourage you to become more involved in the management of your home. Here are some of the ways you can be involved:

Completing surveys

From time to time, we will send surveys to home owners on different subjects. If you are interested, we will add you to our survey list.

Telephone conferences

Telephone conferences are a way for us to talk to up to eight home owners at a time on a specific issue. To join in, you need to register a land-line daytime telephone number with us. A telephone conference lasts about an hour, we contact home owners in advance to arrange a date and time.

On the day we call everyone and have someone to chair the conference and take notes. All costs are met by us – you just give us an hour of your time to tell us what you think. Adding your name to this list does not commit you to joining in any specific telephone conference.

Attending focus groups

Focus groups are meetings of up to 15 people; they are facilitated to enable discussion on a particular topic. We will pay reasonable travel expenses and usually focus groups are held in the evening. We hope to build a list of home owners who would be interested in attending a focus group in their area. There is no commitment if you put your name down.

Customer First sessions

We hold Customer First meetings every few months to give our residents the chance to discuss and influence our policies. These are large, general meetings on single subjects. We would be pleased to see more home owners coming along.

Mystery shopping

Mystery Shopping is the reviewing, measurement and reporting of customer service standards by people acting as if they were customers. Mystery shoppers may be visitors to our reception areas or callers to our customer service staff. We have a number of First Wessex Housing Group residents who have trained to be mystery shoppers and we would be very pleased to have some home owners measuring our services too.

Home owner forum

We would like to set up a forum that would meet occasionally to bring home owners together from a variety of our developments to discuss general issues.

When we have collected details of home owners who want to be involved, we will begin a programme of consultation on:

- Communal repairs response times
- Service standards update
- Service level agreements
- Service charges
- Our newsletters and handbook

Please let us know how you would like to be more involved, by ticking the appropriate boxes on the questionnaire. We will then contact you with more details.

Improving our Service

Jayne Stanbury is Leasehold and Shared Ownership Administrator, working in First Wessex Housing Group's finance team. It is a new role, which involves coordinating service charge statements and answering queries on them.

Jayne says: "In response to comments from home owners, we are introducing some changes over coming months. Pavilion home owners have told us they don't find their service charge statements for estimated and actual charges very easy to understand, and as of next March, they will see improvements."

"Atlantic home owners currently receive quarterly communal repairs reports detailing what works have been carried out and from April 2007, Pavilion home owners will get these too. From 2007, we will also issue separate ground rent invoices for Pavilion home owners."

She added: "We are currently integrating our computer systems at Atlantic and Pavilion to enable us to improve our service to all our customers. This is why some of these improvements have to wait until next year."

Jayne can be contacted on 023 8068 4433

