

<b>Accountable Officer:</b>	Customer and Communities Director		
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Stakeholder Senate		
<b>Approved by and date:</b>	Directors - 27.03.18		
<b>Date Policy Created:</b>	March 2018	<b>Review Period:</b>	Annually
<b>Policy Review Date:</b>	April 2019		
<b>Scope:</b>	All Employees and Customers		
<b>Version Number:</b>	3		

**This policy applies to the operations of Merlin (Tewkesbury), formerly known as Severn Vale Housing Society, and now trading as Bromford. Any reference in this policy to Severn Vale Housing Society should therefore be read as referring to Merlin (Tewkesbury).**

### General

- Severn Vale Housing ID cards will be carried by all staff and made available for inspection by customers on request.

### Responsive repairs

- We will plan your repair so that it is carried out at a date and time that is mutually agreed with you or a booked appointment.
- We will make safe emergency repairs within 24 hours and non-emergency repairs within a mutually convenient timeslot.
- We will aim to complete your repair on the first visit. If any follow up work is needed, we will agree a convenient date & time with you.
- We will provide homes to the Decent Homes Standard.
- We will involve customers in monitoring the performance of our Repairs service.
- We will notify you in advance of undertaking work if any repair is rechargeable.

### Gas Servicing

- We will carry out an annual gas compliance check for all our solid fuel, gas and oil appliances in tenant's homes.
- All new tenants moving into their property will receive a copy of the Gas Safe certificate.
- We will inspect any gas appliance owned by you but we will not service it. You will be advised of any fault which needs your attention.
- We will carry ID cards when visiting your homes which give details of our gas engineers Gas Safe Registration.

- We will take legal action to gain access where necessary in order to service our appliance for your safety.

### **Planned Maintenance**

- We will contact you to give at least 42 days' notice (6 weeks) before any planned works start on your property.
- Where appropriate, such as with kitchens and bathrooms, we will give you a choice of colours and styles.
- We will clean up and remove all waste material on the completion of the works.
- We will provide you with a home refurbishment package containing 'handy hints' and guidance on product caring for the elements installed.
- We will post inspect at least 10% of the work we complete.

### **Grounds Maintenance**

#### **Only applicable to those who pay for this via their service charge**

- We will cut the grass regularly (weather permitting throughout the growing season); grass cuttings will not be collected but mulched into existing grassed areas.
- We will strim the grass from all buildings and any other obstacles whilst on site.
- We will sweep or blow grass cuttings from footpaths and walkways immediately after cutting.
- We will prune and maintain shrub beds within their season of growth.
- We will weed spray all communal sites as required during the growing season.
- We will litter pick all communal areas regularly.
- We will cut back and maintain any hedges within our communal sites as necessary.
- During the winter months, we will replenish shrub beds and re-barking at communal sites as required.

### **Neighbourhoods**

- We will ensure all maintenance and service contracts are tendered in accordance with legal requirements and are regularly performance reviewed.
- We will work to improve neighbourhoods in partnership with local organisations.
- We will carry out inspections of communal areas in blocks of flats on a regular basis.

### **Tenancy Management**

- We will approve or decline all mutual exchange requests within 42 days (6 weeks) of receipt of your application.
- We will, in the first instance, offer advice and assistance to customers reporting anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance.
- When we receive reports of anti-social behaviour or neighbour nuisance we will explain what action may be taken, if any.
- We will act in a way that is reasonable and proportionate to the anti-social behaviour reported.
- We will work in partnership with other agencies to help resolve anti-social behaviour.

- Where it is appropriate, we will refer vulnerable customers to partner agencies for support.

### **Rent & Service Charges**

- We will make it easy for you to pay your rent/see your outstanding rent balance online through our customer self-service web account.
- We will give you guidance on the different ways you are able to pay your rent and service charges, such as direct debit, standing order, Allpay.
- We will contact you as soon as you fall behind with your rent; payments are due in accordance with your tenancy agreement. Failure to pay may result in you losing your home.
- We will take action when your account falls into arrears to recover the debt.
- If you tell us that your circumstances have changed and you have fallen into arrears, we can arrange a repayment plan that is affordable.
- We will amend your direct debits each year so that you do not have to worry about falling into arrears when your rent changes.
- We will provide you with access to view your rent statement online using the customer self-service web account, advising you how much rent and service charge you need to pay.

### **Complaints**

- We will publicise our complaints process on our website.
- Where an immediate solution can be agreed with the customer, this will be dealt with as a stage 1 resolution.
- Where a complaint requires a detailed investigation, we will aim to complete this within 10 working days.
- If we need more time, we will discuss and agree this with you.
- We will keep you informed of progress at each stage of the investigation.

### **Allocations & Lettings**

- We will make sure that you can afford your home before allocating a tenancy to you.
- We will advertise our vacant properties through Homeseecker Plus (or its equivalent) so you can see what is available.
- If you need support, we will refer you to the relevant support services to help you to sustain your tenancy.
- We will keep you updated about your new home, when it is due to be ready and when you can expect to move in.
- We will give you an opportunity to view your prospective new home before asking you to make a decision whether to accept or not.
- If you decide to move from your Severn Vale Housing property, we will arrange to visit you to advise you of your moving out responsibilities and possible recharges.

### **Access and Customer Care**

- We will have a wide range of channels that you can contact us on; email, online, telephone are just a few examples.
- We will provide details of our emergency repairs service when our offices are closed.
- We will offer a translation service as required.

- We will try and resolve your enquiry at the first point of contact. If we are unable to do so we will contact the most appropriate person to deal with your enquiry.

### Customer Involvement

- We will use our data intelligently to focus our community investment resources where they are most needed.
- We will work with partner agencies to provide community investment initiatives that have clear and well defined outcomes.
- We will use customer feedback, such as complaints data and customer surveys following completed repair works, to influence and improve our services.

### Leasehold Management

- We will follow legal requirements to consult with you for block and communal area improvements.

### Version Control table below:

Version	Date	Author	Change Description	Directors Approval Date	Approved by	Date approved
1	Aug 17	FS	No changes made.	NA	NA	NA
2	Mar 18	SM	Minor wording changes and removal of estate inspection to block inspections only	DS - 20.03.18	Senate Directors	23.04.18 30.04.18
3	13.12.18	SR	Bromford logo and statement added on page 1 following merger.	N/A	N/A	N/A