

# Our Core Offer on our services

“Our promises to you”



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# 1. Introduction from Karen Mitchell, Chief Executive



I am pleased to present Southway's Core Offer which lays out the service standards you can expect from us over the next year.

The Tenant Services Authority (TSA), our housing regulator, wants housing providers like Southway to develop local standards and a Local Offer which sets out the standards of service that our customers can expect within their own neighbourhood.

Southway has worked closely with our Residents' Consultative Group, and Local Offer Project Teams, to develop three distinct Local Offers, one for each of our neighbourhood management areas. These are West (including Chorlton Park and West Didsbury), Central (including Withington and Old Moat), and East (including Burnage).

The Local Offers have been tailored to suit each individual neighbourhood based around three key themes. These are: Your Community, Your Home and Repairs, and Your Neighbourhood and Environment.

The Core Offer is the set of standards that every customer can expect. It sets out the promises that we have made to you, our customers, about all of the services we deliver throughout each neighbourhood.

We will try to deliver on all of the promises we have made, and we will report once every three months to our Local Offer Project Teams to show how we are doing. If we fail to meet our promises, the Project Teams have the authority to ask us to explain why, and we will always work to put things right as quickly as possible.

I hope you find your Core Offer interesting, and you find some useful information in it. Please let me know if you have any ideas about how we can make it better in the future, or if you would like any further information.

If you would like to be involved in the Project Teams responsible for holding Southway to account for these promises, call us on 0161 448 4200 or visit our website [www.southwayhousing.co.uk](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk).

**Karen Mitchell, Chief Executive**

## 2. Our Vision and Objectives

**We will work in partnership with others to make South Manchester a place that people are proud of - a safe place where people choose to live, work and play.**

### We will:

- be warm, welcoming and accessible to every customer
- provide excellent services
- provide affordable, high-quality, secure homes
- help to create a cleaner and greener environment

### Our objectives:

- People are confident and proud of the community they live in. They respect one another and are encouraged to realise their potential

- Our staff are trusted to do the right thing - they are enthusiastic, skilled and willing to go the extra mile for customers
- Our customer services are excellent, and meet our customers' needs and expectations. We listen to and respect our customers, dealing with enquiries in a helpful and friendly way
- We care about our local communities. We develop strong partnerships to support them, helping to improve their neighbourhoods
- We are open and accountable to our residents. We consult and involve them before we make plans and decisions, making sure they are involved from the start



## 3. Valuing Customers

**Southway aims to deliver the best possible services to meet our customers' needs. To achieve this we have promised:**

- To provide a range of ways for you to contact us either on the phone, in the office, or online
- You can access the services provided by Southway by phone to our Connect Team, on 0161 448 4200, during office hours. We will answer the phone within six rings
- When you contact us, we will be friendly and polite, give our name and ask how we can help
- We will try to deal with your enquiry immediately
- We will listen to what you have to say, so that we have a full understanding of the situation
- We will provide the help and advice you require whenever possible, and seek it for you if we cannot
- We will treat you with care and sensitivity



**You can access all the services provided by Southway Housing Trust:**

- By phone on 0161 448 4200
- In person at Aspen House, open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday
- In writing, by either letter or email, where we will acknowledge your letter within 2 days and reply in full, usually within 10 days
- By asking us to arrange a visit to your home
- Through our website [www.southwayhousing.co.uk](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk)

If we visit you at home we will come at a time that has been agreed with you, and tell you the reason for our visit. If we have to visit you unexpectedly, we will tell you exactly why we have called.

**When we visit your home we promise:**

- We will visit at the right time, tell you our names and show you identification straight away
- We will treat your home with respect

When you contact us we recognise that personal information is confidential and we will always work in full adherence to the Data Protection Act 1998. If you wish to see the personal information we hold on you, please send us your request in writing. We will tell you what, if any, charges are involved and the steps you need to follow. All requests for personal information (known as a Subject Access Request) will be dealt with in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

## 4. Keeping you Informed

**We believe that it's important that you receive straightforward information about the services we provide and the performance you can expect. Our aim is to make this information clear to understand.**

We will be open and honest in all communications, and we promise to:

- Send out Southway Stories, our tenant newsletter, at least 3 times per year
- Ensure that our website [www.southwayhousing.co.uk](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk) is kept up to date
- Hold an annual Residents' Conference
- Produce an Annual Report of our performance and deliver a copy to every tenant
- Report on progress made against the Local Offer in your area



## 5. Opportunities for you to Get Involved

**There are a number of ways for tenants to get involved in the way Southway is run. We're committed to enabling people who use our services to give their views and get involved in the decisions that affect their homes and neighbourhoods.**

Here are some of the ways you can get involved:

- Become a Board member
- Join the Southway Consultative Group
- Join one of our Service Improvement Groups
- Become a member of our 100 club (fill in 3 questionnaires about our services per year)
- We hold local engagement events where you can just pop in and discuss your concerns with Southway staff
- Join our Mystery Shopping team
- Become a Resident Inspector of repairs and home improvements
- Call in and discuss your concerns with Southway staff at one of our local engagement events
- Attend our annual Residents' Conference
- Join our Young Peoples' Forum and take part in a wide range of activities aimed at young people
- Form a Residents' Group or join one that already exists in your area

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We will always do our best to cater for each individual's special circumstances to enable all of our customers to take part in consultation events. We can offer help with childcare costs, or transport for example.

We also provide support and advice to our Tenant and Resident Groups, these include:

- Grants (fully constituted groups only)
- Practical support
- Help with printing and publicity
- Attendance of Southway staff at meetings (if required)

## 6. Repairs to your Home

**We will provide you with a well maintained home. Wherever possible, we will aim to complete the repairs you have ordered on the first visit to your home and at a time that is convenient for you. If it is not possible to complete the repair on the first visit we will explain why, and keep you informed on the progress.**

You can request a repair:

- By telephone, 8am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday through our Connect Team on 0161 448 4200
- 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday by visiting our office
- 24 hours a day, seven days a week online at [www.southwayhousing.co.uk](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk)

In addition to the above you can report an emergency repair, 24 hours a day, seven days a week on 0161 448 4200. Please only call us out of normal office hours if the problem threatens your health, safety or security.

**We aim to complete repairs within the following timescales:**

- Emergency – within 3 hours
- Urgent – between 1 and 5 working days (depending on what's wrong)
- Routine – 10 working days
- Major – 45 working days

When you request a repair we will:

- Tell you which priority category your repair request falls into
- Offer you an appointment that is convenient to you (except for emergency repairs as we will attend within 3 hours)
- Always show photographic identification when we turn up to do the work
- Follow our Code of Conduct when working in your home

After the repair, you can help us improve our repairs service by telling us how we've done, by replying to the text message that we send you upon completion of your repair. We will record all the feedback we receive about the repairs service and use it to set targets and produce monthly, quarterly, and annual reports on our performance.

### Gas Servicing

By law, we are required to carry out a gas safety check in your home every 12 months. We will also check that your smoke alarms are working properly. Our target is to carry out a gas safety and smoke alarm check in 100% of our properties every year.

## 7. Dealing with Antisocial Behaviour (ASB)

**We believe in preventing and tackling antisocial behaviour by working with the local community and with local partners, like the Police.**

If you experience antisocial behaviour, or wish to make a complaint about it you should report it to us. In dealing with antisocial behaviour we promise:

- To open a case file and give you the name of an officer who will deal with your case
- To keep you informed on a weekly basis on the progress of your case
- To arrange a meeting with you, either in your home or at our office, to agree with you an action plan on the way we will deal with your complaint



We will respond to reports of antisocial behaviour swiftly, in line with our procedures. There are three levels of priority which indicate the timescales in which we will start action.

- High Level ASB - within 24 hours
- Medium Level ASB – within 5 working days
- Low Level ASB – within 7 working days

If you have made a report of antisocial behaviour, we will contact you to ask your opinion about the way we have dealt with the situation. We will record all the feedback we receive and use it to produce monthly, quarterly and Annual Reports on our performance.

## 8. How to Complain

**Southway Housing Trust will do everything possible to get things right first time. In the event that we get it wrong, or you are unhappy with the service provided, we have a clear, three stage complaints process. If you need any help to make a complaint, let us know and we will support you.**

If you make a complaint, we promise:

- To acknowledge your complaint within 2 days of receipt, and let you know who is dealing with it
- To undertake a thorough investigation, and reply to you within 10 working days
- To apologise to you, if we have made a mistake
- To offer you the chance to appeal if you are not satisfied



## 9. Rent and Money Management



**We want to make it as easy and convenient as possible for you to pay your rent, heating and service charge or any other monies owed to Southway, such as rechargeable repairs.**

We will offer a range of ways for you to pay your rent and other charges. These include:

- Online using the Southway website (links to [allpayments.net](http://allpayments.net))
- By direct debit which can be set up over the phone or by post
- By standing order
- By phone
- By post

Or by using your Southway rent card:-

- At the Post Office
- At a Paypoint outlet
- At a Payzone outlet

We promise to explain exactly what rent and service charges you will have to pay when you start your tenancy. If at any time you are not sure about what you should be paying, please contact us and we will be happy to discuss this with you.

If you are having trouble making payments, you must contact us straight away to discuss it.

We promise to:

- Be polite, friendly and helpful
- Never judge you about the money you owe, or why you owe it
- Work with you to agree a repayment plan that you can afford
- Help you claim Housing Benefit if you are entitled to it
- Help you to obtain debt advice by making an appointment with our Debt Advisor
- Check to see if you are entitled to any other benefits, and make you an appointment with a Welfare Benefits Advisor if needed
- Provide basic money advice, including help with opening a bank account

If you do not keep to your agreed repayment plan, we may start legal action against you. This could lead to eviction from your home, or a Court Order for us to recover the money you owe.

## 10. Improvements to your Home

**Carrying out major improvements to your home can cause disruption. We will try to make it as easy as possible for you.**

When we are due to come to your home to carry out the Home Improvement Programme work, we promise:

- To give you at least 12 weeks' notice before the work is due to start, which we will follow up with regular contact until the work actually begins
- To give you a range of choices of windows, doors, kitchen fittings, floor finish decoration and wall tiles, wherever possible
- We will install an upstairs toilet, if there is not one already, where space and plumbing allow
- To correct defects as soon as possible after being notified
- We will either redecorate your improved kitchen and bathroom, or offer you decoration vouchers of £150 for kitchens, £100 for bathrooms, if you choose to do it yourself
- Where we have fitted a sunken rewire we will provide £200 of decoration vouchers
- We will consult with tenants at the Home Improvement Programme Service Improvement Group meeting every six weeks

- We will consult with you when planning any environmental works to your area
- To carry out a Customer Service Questionnaire once the work is complete, and use the results to measure how we are performing
- We will visit a sample of tenants after the work is complete, to check the quality

The Contractors we have employed to carry out the improvement work will contact you to conduct a 'pre entry' survey before any work begins. They will record any special needs you might have, before and during the work. If you need a disabled adaptation, the Contractor will record it in the survey and we will refer it to Manchester Equipment and Adaptations Partnership (MEAP) who will assess the requirements.

If, for medical reasons, there are problems that prevent you living in your home whilst the work is being done, or if you need somewhere to stay during the day (respite), we can discuss possible alternatives.

## 11. Neighbourhood Services Management

**We believe that the quality of the environment surrounding your home is just as important as the home you live in. We're committed to providing a safe, clean and green environment that we can all take pride in.**

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To help us achieve this, we promise to:

- Inspect every neighbourhood at least four times a year
- Work in partnership with key agencies to tackle environmental damage within our neighbourhoods, e.g. littering, fly tipping and graffiti
- Pursue action against anyone who has been identified as being responsible for causing damage to our property
- Pursue action against anyone who has been identified as responsible for dumping rubbish in our neighbourhoods
- Undertake regular “Clean and Green” events
- Ensure that all our grassed areas, trees, hedges and shrubs are regularly maintained
- Provide additional help and support for elderly and disabled tenants to maintain their gardens, subject to certain qualifying criteria

## 12. Monitoring our Performance

We use a number of ways to ensure we meet our service standards, and these are detailed below. We will report our performance against our promises to the Local Offer Project Teams four times a year. You can also find the information in our customer newsletter, Southway Stories and on our website.

We will monitor our performance against our promises using:

- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Direct customer feedback
- Customer inspectors, who accompany Neighbourhood Officers on neighbourhood inspections
- Records that we hold about how much our services are being used
- Budget monitoring



## 13. Contact Us:

We welcome all customer feedback, including your comments on the promises made in this document. You can contact us using the methods listed on the back page. Our reception is open to visitors from 9am - 5pm.

If you would like this information in another language or style please contact us.

**Tel:** 0161 448 4200 **Fax:** 0161 448 4334 **Textphone:** 0161 448 4349

**Email:** connect2southway@southwayhousing.co.uk **Web:** www.southwayhousing.co.uk

**SMS:** 07554 400781 (include your address and no more than 160 characters please)

للحصول على هذه المعلومات بأي لغة أو بالبرايل أو بالحروف الكبيرة أو على شريط الرجاء الإتصال برقم الهاتف الموجود أسفله.

### Arabic

এই তথ্যগুলো অন্যান্য ভাষায়, ব্রেইলে, বড় অক্ষরে অথবা সিডিতে পেতে চাইলে দয়া করে नीचे দেওয়া नम्बरे टेलिफोन করুন।

### Bangla

如欲索取這資料以任何語言或盲人用點字、大字印刷編制的版本或錄音帶、請致電下列號碼。

### Chinese

لطفاً برای دریافت این اطلاعات به زبان های دیگر، به خط بریل (خط ویژه افراد نابینا)، چاپ درشت و یا بر روی نوار یا شماره تلفن زیر تماس بگیرید.

### Farsi

Pour recevoir ces informations dans d'autres langues, en Braille, en gros caractères, ou sur bande sonore, prière d'appeler le numéro de téléphone ci-dessous.

### French

यदि आप यह जानकारी किसी दूसरी भाषा, ब्रैल, बड़े प्रिन्ट या टेप में चाहते हैं तो कृपया नीचे दिये गये नम्बर पर फोन कीजिए।

### Hindi

یو باندست هیندست نام زانیار پانه به هس ز مانیک یان به بریال، پینی گموره یان لهسعر شریب، ناموا نکایه تلمهفون یکه یو نام ز مارهیعی خوار هوه.

### Kurdish

که چیری تاسی دا مالومات په یو بیله ژبه باندی، یا د رندو خلکو د پاره خاص لیک باندی، په غشو نکو کنبی یا په سی - هی کنبی بند تر لاسه کول غواری نوییا مهربانی وکړی او مونږ ته په لاندی ورکړی شوی تلفون شمیره زنگ وکړی

### Pushto

Si aad u hesho macluumaadkaani oo ku qoran luqad kasta, tan indhoolaha, daabacaad balaaran ama cajal ku duuban fadlan telefoonka hoos ku qoran:

### Somali

Bu bilgiyi digər dillerde, Braille olarak , büyük puntoda ya da CD de almak isterseniz lütfen aşağıdaki numarayı arayınız.

### Turkish

یہ معلومات کسی بھی زبان، بریل، بڑے حروف یا ٹیپ پر حاصل کرنے کے لئے براہ کرم ذیل کے نمبر پر فون کیجئے۔

### Urdu

**Southway Housing Trust**

Aspen House, 825 Wilmslow Road, M20 2SN

