



settle.

our customer offer

what you can expect from us

Contents

04 - 05
Talking to us

06 – 07
Moving in



08 – 09
Living in your
home

10 – 11
Living in your
neighbourhood

12 – 13
Involving you



14 – 15
When things go
wrong



Welcome

Our purpose at settle is to help you live comfortably in your home.

We do this by delivering brilliant services, investing in neighbourhoods and providing extra support where we can.

Our customer offer sets out the services we provide so that you can be confident about the role we play in your home and neighbourhood.

More information can be found on our website – www.settlegroup.org.uk.

Alongside this offer, in everything we do, we promise to:

- keep your home safe and secure
- deliver services in a way that meets your needs
- listen to you and learn from our mistakes
- keep things simple and ensure services are easy to access
- show we care
- work with you to get things right
- make it straightforward to put things right when they go wrong
- offer extra help where we can
- focus on what is important to you – good, timely repairs and keeping neighbourhoods clean and tidy.

settle.



Talking to us

There are lots of different ways you can talk to us and access our services. No matter how you choose to get in touch, our customer service centre will handle your query.

The team have lots of information to hand and can resolve most things there and then. More technical queries will be passed to one of our other teams for a response.

When you call us we will:

- Take ownership of your problem
- Aim to resolve your query there and then
- Where we can't, let you know the next steps and confirm you are happy with them.

When we visit your home, we will:

- Arrive on time for the appointment or contact you if we are delayed
- Always show our identification when we arrive
- Be polite and respectful of your home
- Let you know what to expect next.

When you contact us by email or in writing, we will:

- Provide you with a response that addresses all of your concerns with timescales of when each point will be resolved
- Provide you with a member of our team to correspond with directly.

You can also access lots of our services through your online account, including:

- Booking or changing a repair appointment
- Checking your rent balance or paying your rent
- Updating your contact details
- Telling us if members of your household have changed.

You can help us by:

- Letting us know if your circumstances, personal information or contact details have changed so we can provide a service which meets your needs.



Moving in

At settle we know that moving house is a big moment in your life. That's why our lettings team will be on hand to answer any questions you may have about your new home.

When you view a home, we will:

- Agree a convenient time with you to carry out the viewing
- Show you around the home and explain what type of heating system it has, where the meters are, and where the stopcock can be found.

When you accept a home, we will:

- Talk you through your Tenancy Agreement before you sign it
- Talk to you about any specific needs you may have and how we can support you in your new home
- Provide information about how to contact us and access your online account, including how to report a repair.

Before you move in, we will:

- Ensure your new home is safe, clean and well-maintained
- Complete all safety checks
- Be clear on any repairs we plan to do.

Once you have moved in, we will:

- Contact you within three weeks to arrange a settling in visit to check you have settled into your new home and answer any questions you may have.

Things to think about

- **Accidents happen from time to time.** We recommend that you take out home contents insurance to protect your belongings. We can support you to access an insurance scheme at a very low cost for settle residents.
- If you plan to make a claim for **Universal Credit** or **Housing Benefit**, make sure you do this as soon as you get your keys to avoid any payment delays.
- We'll let you know who your **utility suppliers** are so that you can contact them to connect your services. You might want to shop around to get the best deals.

Living in your home

Our purpose is to help you live in your home comfortably. We are committed to ensuring that all homes are well-maintained, safe and secure. We do this through the work of our neighbourhood and repairs teams.

Our neighbourhood team will:

- Make sure you are aware of your rights and responsibilities through your tenancy agreement
- Provide timely information about your tenancy, including when we make a change to your rent or service charges
- Offer advice, support and practical help through your dedicated Neighbourhood Officer
- Investigate and act on any issues promptly
- Visit our neighbourhoods on a regular basis – if you see us out and about, feel free to stop and have a chat!

When it comes to paying your rent, we will:

- Provide you with two rent statements a year and an annual rent and service charge statement for the year ahead
- Give you a clear breakdown of how any service charges you pay are spent
- Offer different ways of making payments and help you to set up alternative ways, such as direct payments from Universal Credit
- Provide support with applying for benefits, debt advice and help with ways into employment
- Agree with you any referral for specialist advice, including to our own Citizens Advice officer and internal specialist support team.

settle plus

At settle, we know that at times everyone experiences difficulties in their lives, such as health conditions or illness, significant life events, financial hardship or loneliness. **settle plus** is the additional support we offer tailored to the needs of individual residents who need a bit more help to live comfortably in their homes.

Where we've identified that support is needed, this will be provided by settle colleagues and specialist local partners.

If you request permission for something, we will:

- Consider each request fairly, (this could be permission to keep a pet or make a change within your home), and respond within ten working days
- Consider other changes, (like adding a partner, assigning your tenancy, taking in a lodger, or running a business from your home), and respond to these within 20 working days
- Explain our reasons clearly where we are unable to give you permission for something.

When it comes to repairs and maintenance, we will:

- Offer you a choice of appointment slots when you book a repair
- Enable you to book repairs over the phone or online
- Ensure you can report an emergency repair 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- Keep you informed about your repair appointments via text message
- Explain any follow-on works that we identify are needed after a visit, so that you know what to expect next and by when
- Ensure that contractors working on our behalf reflect settle's values, respecting you and your home
- Keep you updated about when we will replace things such as kitchens and bathrooms
- Contact you in advance of all routine gas and electrical safety checks to arrange an appointment time.

Our target timescales

Emergency repairs – within 24 hours

Routine repairs – within 28 days

Major repairs – within 90 days

You can help us by:

- Paying your rent and service charges either weekly or monthly in advance (depending on the payment method you use)
- Letting us know if you are experiencing any financial difficulties that affect your ability to pay your rent – we'll always do our best to help you
- Reporting repairs promptly, where possible online, and contacting us if you need to change an appointment
- Giving us as much information about repairs as possible to help us diagnose the problem as quickly as we can
- Allowing access to your home to that we can carry out safety checks.

Living in your neighbourhood

We want the neighbourhood you live in to feel safe, clean and well maintained. Your dedicated neighbourhood officer will carry out regular walkabouts within your neighbourhood and we're offering more and more drop-in sessions so that you can meet the team in person.

In our biggest neighbourhoods, we will:

- Work with residents and partners to create Neighbourhood Plans that identify how we can work together to tackle community issues, improve outcomes for local people, and create places where people feel proud to live.

In communal areas, we will:

- Carry out regular inspections of all neighbourhoods to ensure they are safe and clean, identifying and raising repairs to communal areas where needed
- Inspect the quality of work completed by both our team and contractors
- Manage fly-tipping and abandoned cars, working in partnership with other local enforcement agencies
- Respond to and treat pests in communal areas.

If you report anti-social behaviour to us, we will:

- Put you at the centre of our response
- Contact residents reporting serious anti-social behaviour (such as domestic abuse or hate crimes) within one working day, making contact within three working days in all other cases
- Make sure you are clear about the steps we will take, as well as agreeing with you how often we will keep you updated
- Work with local partners to find sustainable solutions to anti-social behaviour in our neighbourhoods.

You can help us by:

- Letting us know as soon as possible if you notice anything that isn't right or if you have any health and safety concerns
- Keeping communal areas free of personal possessions to ensure that no fire escapes or routes are blocked.



Involving you

We believe that the best way to improve our services and neighbourhoods is to make sure we're listening to your feedback, learning from what you tell us, and acting on these lessons.

We will:

- Make it easy for you to tell us what you think
- Act on what we're hearing
- Keep you updated on what we've changed as a result of what we've heard
- Provide a wide range of opportunities for you to give feedback and shape how we do things at settle.

All customers can get involved by:

- Taking part in surveys we send to find out what you think of us and our services
- Speaking to us through the Big Door Knock, where settle colleagues visit residents in person to find out how you think we're doing and how we can do better
- Joining settle voice.

settle voice



settle voice is a community of residents who are actively involved in helping us deliver a brilliant customer experience. Members of the group help us by taking part in a whole range of engagement activities, including quick polls, focus groups and policy reviews on the topics that interest them the most.

settle voice is open to any settle resident and you can get involved as little or as much as you like, online or in person. We're extremely grateful to those who give their time in this way and we're always encouraging new members to join!

voice of the customer panel

Our voice of the customer panel is made up of around ten settle residents. They meet every three months to help shape and improve our services by making sure that we're listening to resident feedback and being guided by what matters most to you.

The panel works closely with board members and settle colleagues, offering that all-important resident perspective and helping us understand the impact that our work has on the people who live in settle homes.



When things go wrong

We are committed to providing brilliant services, but we know that sometimes things go wrong. We want to hear from you when this happens so that we can put things right as quickly as possible.

If you make a complaint, we'll try to resolve it for you straight away. Where a complaint is more complex or needs further investigation, we'll acknowledge it in writing and explain what will happen next.

When you raise a complaint, we will:

- Acknowledge it within five working days
- Provide you with a point of contact in our customer resolution team
- Aim to respond to your complaint in writing within ten working days, (where more time is needed, we will talk to you about this and agree a different timescale with you)
- Be open and transparent, acknowledging when we get things wrong
- Be honest about what we can and can't do to resolve your complaint
- Be fair and put things right as quickly as possible
- Explain our reasons for upholding or not upholding your complaint

- Ensure any follow up actions are completed on time
- Learn from where we have gone wrong, make changes to our service based on these lessons, and share these learnings and improvements with you.

Did you know?

The best way to get your complaint resolved is by talking directly to us. However, you can also contact the independent Housing Ombudsman for help and advice at any time. If you've exhausted our complaints process and remain unhappy with the outcome, they will consider investigating it for you.

Contact the Ombudsman on:

Tel: **0300 111 3000**

Email: **info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk**

You can help us by:

- Telling us as much as possible about your complaint at the beginning and what outcome you are looking for
- Telling us how you would like us to communicate with you
- Being patient with us while we investigate your complaint thoroughly.





Visit
www.settlegroup.org.uk

Email us
customer.service@settlegroup.org.uk

Tweet us
[@settle_foryou](https://twitter.com/settle_foryou)

Call us
0330 343 0016

settle.