



Contents

How to use the interactive Customer Service Commitment

Click on the page numbers below to go directly to each section of the Customer Service Commitment.

Once you have finished a section, click on the Home icon to return to the menu.

The **bpha** Customer Service Commitment

Request for Housing

Applying for Low Cost Home Ownership

Applying for and being offered a rental home

Starting your Tenancy

Tenancy Rights & Responsibilities

Rents and service charges

Your Housing Services

Maintaining your Tenancy

Repairs

Planned & Cyclical Maintenance

Neighbourhood Issues & Disputes

Health & Safety

Ending your Tenancy

Giving your Notice

Condition of your Property

Have your say/Contact us

The **bpha** Customer Service Commitment

bpha commit to:

bpha will deliver a high quality standard of service to you, by:

- Having an open and easy to understand manner.
- Working effectively with others, sharing information and communicating in open and easy to understand manner.
- Taking responsibility for our actions, delivering in a responsive, reliable and professional manner
- Treating you fairly, being courteous, and being honest with you
- Doing what we say we will and keeping you updated if this changes
- Listening to you
- Getting things right the first time

In return I commit to:

Ensuring a good relationship with **bpha**, I will:

- Be open, honest and courteous and let you know if my circumstances change
- Pay my rent and service charges on time
- Keep my property clean, tidy and well maintained and report issues promptly
- Keep appointments and allow you access to carry out repairs and safety checks
- Be a good neighbour and report any issues that arise in my neighbourhood

bpha welcomes any feedback and comments about the services we provide.

If you feel that we haven't met any of the commitments, or even better if you feel that we have exceeded them – we'd really love to hear from you!

We're listening...

We have developed and reviewed this Customer Service Commitment based on our consultations with **you**, our customers.



Request for Housing

Applying for Low Cost Home Ownership

bpha commit to:

- To acknowledge your interest by contacting you to discuss your eligibility for the specific property
- To carry out an affordability assessment and credit check
- To send out any property offers to you in writing with a clear timescale for acceptance

In return I commit to:

- To register my details online at www.bphaoptions.org.uk
- To perform property searches on the 'options to buy' website, and click on the 'Register Interest' button next to the property/properties I am interested in
- To return all requested documentation within agreed timescales
- To have my eligibility for the scheme confirmed by completing an application form on the Help to Buy website, ensuring that all information is honest and accurate

Useful Links

- Register & Apply** www.bphaoptions.org.uk/register.asp
Search for a Home www.bphaoptions.org.uk/search.asp
Eligibility Criteria www.bphaoptions.org.uk/eligible.asp
Help to Buy Agent www.helptobuyese.org.uk/



Did you know..?

The **bpha** 'options to buy' team offers a range of low cost home ownership options including Shared Ownership and Intermediate Rent.

Need help? You can call the 'options to buy' team directly on 0845 456 6757.



Request for Housing

Applying for and being offered a Rental home*

bpha commit to:

- To assess your application within 14 days of receipt (providing all of the necessary information has been provided)
- To contact you within three days of bidding closing/nomination being received
- To undertake a viewing with you at the property you have been offered within two working days
- To assess your financial circumstances and provide support where appropriate
- To understand your requirements and be open and honest about our ability to meet them

In return I commit to:

- To provide all the required information to enable my application to be properly assessed
- To notify **bpha** of any changes in my circumstances and to keep my contact details up to date
- To request support in managing my finances if required
- To view any property offered within two working days
- To give a decision about accepting the tenancy within 24 working hours
- To pay at least one week's rent when accepting a property

Useful Links

Join the Bedford Borough Housing Register
www.bpha.org.uk/renting-a-home/looking-to-rent

Other Local Authority areas:

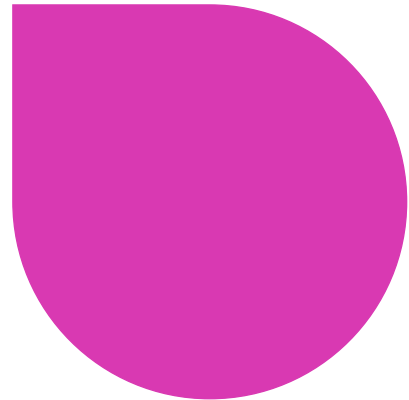
Cambridge www.home-link.org.uk
Peterborough www.peterborough-homes.com



Did you know..?

You can apply for housing through your Local Authority.

If you need help finding your Local Authority please [click here](#).



* in the Bedford area only

Starting your Tenancy

Tenancy Rights & Responsibilities

bpha commit to:

- To enable you to view a property before accepting a tenancy
- To provide you with a comprehensive Tenancy Agreement
- To answer your questions about your Tenancy Agreement
- To give you essential information about your property

In return I commit to:

- To read and understand my Tenancy Agreement before signing it
- To view and inspect my property before signing my Tenancy Agreement
- To be familiar with the area around my home before signing my Tenancy Agreement

Useful Links

About your Tenancy

www.bpha.org.uk/renting-a-home/already-renting/about-your-tenancy

Your Local Area

www.uklocalarea.com

Having your Say

www.bpha.org.uk/renting-a-home/already-renting/having-your-say



Did you know..?

You will have a dedicated Housing Officer, in addition to bpha's Customer Service Centre, to help you with any tenancy related matters.

We offer a wide range of ways to contact us in addition including;

email info@bpha.org.uk and Web Chat www.bpha.org.uk/online-chat

You can also sign up to MyAccount, our Self Service portal where you can make rent payments and report repairs.



Starting your Tenancy

Rents & Service Charges

bpha commit to:

- To offer a range of ways to pay that are convenient to you, and take into account your personal circumstances
- To provide details as to what your service charge(s) pays for where applicable To give you one calendar months notice if we change your rent or service charges
- To provide access to our free Money Advice Service, which includes benefit and debt advice
- To tell you if you fall into arrears with your rent, and if we are going to take legal action to recover the debt

In return I commit to:

- To pay my rent in advance as explained in my Tenancy Agreement
- To talk to **bpha** about difficulties with paying my rent
- To take personal responsibility for any benefit claims I need to pay my rent
- To respond promptly to any contact from **bpha** in relation to my rent account
- To accept advice and support when offered to help me pay my rent

Useful Links

Paying your Rent

www.bpha.org.uk/renting-a-home/already-renting/paying-your-rent

Money Advice

www.bpha.org.uk/money-advice

Grounds Maintenance Service

www.bpha.org.uk/repairs-and-maintenance/grounds-maintenance



Did you know..?

Your rent and service charge pays for most of the services you receive – for example, repairs to your home



Starting your Tenancy

Your Housing Services

bpha commit to:

- To assign you a dedicated Housing Officer, who will help you to understand your Tenancy Agreement and your property
- To treat you with respect and courtesy
- To provide opportunities for you to engage with us where appropriate

In return I commit to:

- To give feedback on **bpha** services and let them know about issues that are important to me
- To treat bpha employees with respect and courtesy
- To keep appointments and allow access when necessary
- To keep to the terms of my Tenancy Agreement

Useful Links

Community Development Officers

www.bpha.org.uk/meet-your-community-development-officers

Events in your area

www.bpha.org.uk/events

Viewpoint

<https://www.bpha.org.uk/viewpoint>



Did you know..?

Our Customer Contact Centre are able to deal with most enquiries and should be your first point of contact on **0330 100 0272**



Maintaining your Tenancy

Repairs

bpha commit to:

- To repair the structure and exterior of individual properties
- To keep in good repair and working order installations for heating, water heating and sanitation and for the supply of water, gas and electricity
- To keep any common parts (e.g. in blocks of flats) in reasonable repair and fit for use by tenants and visitors to the property
- To keep the exterior of properties and any common parts in a reasonable state of decoration

In return I commit to:

- To keep the interior of my home clean and in good decorative order
- To rectify any damage I, or my visitors, cause to my property
- To seek and receive permission from **bpha** for any improvements or alterations I wish to make to my property
- To report any disrepair or defect for which **bpha** is responsible promptly to avoid any additional damage caused by delay
- To provide **bpha** with access to your property so we can carry out inspections for condition/disrepair
- To report any disrepair or defects to communal parts/areas associated with your block of flats for which **bpha** are responsible

Useful Links

Residents Handbook

www.bpha.org.uk/renting-a-home/already-renting

Section 6 of the handbook contains useful information about **bpha**'s repairs responsibilities.

Reporting Repairs

www.bpha.org.uk/repairs-and-maintenance/reporting-repairs



Did you know..?

If your home has window restrictors (fitted to limit how far a window will open), they must never be released other than to clean your windows. Immediately afterwards they must be put back into the correct safety position. You should never release the restrictors and open windows to their full extent just to let more air into your home.



Maintaining your Tenancy

Planned & Cyclical Maintenance

bpha commit to:

- To ensure that 100% of our housing stock meets the Decent Homes Standard
- To set and monitor standards that are shared by all **bpha** contractors
- To ensure contractors reflect **bpha**'s values including respecting you and your home
- To update you on a regular basis regarding any cyclical or planned works
- To consult with you about any available options there may be for your planned works

In return I commit to:

- To make sure **bpha** contractors and surveyors can get into my property to carry out works required, or undertake surveys/inspections
- To keep planned works appointments and let **bpha** know as early as possible if you have to cancel
- To ensure that children and pets are supervised at all times by a responsible adult during works
- To be courteous and polite to **bpha** contractors
- To allow access for a gas service on an annual basis, domestic electrical on a 5 year basis

Useful Links

Guide to Gas Safety checks
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg238.pdf

General information on Health and Safety
www.hse.gov.uk/index.htm

Homes England
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/homes-england>



Did you know..?

bpha, as your landlord, has a legal responsibility when it comes to gas safety. This is why we aim to ensure gas servicing is completed by a Gas Safe registered engineer on an annual basis.



Maintaining your Tenancy

Neighbourhood Issues & Disputes

bpha commit to:

- To work in partnership with other agencies to prevent and deal with anti-social behaviour
- To offer you advice and guidance on dealing with anti-social behaviour, and resolving disputes informally where possible
- To acknowledge reported issues in writing within 10 days, or by phone within 48 hours
- To assign a Housing Officer when appropriate
- To only take legal action to resolve an issue when it is both appropriate and proportionate, and there is evidence to support this
- To consult with you before closing any anti-social behaviour case

In return I commit to:

- To ensure that all persons living in (or visiting) my property behave respectfully and considerately
- To ensure that I have permission to keep any pets and that they do not cause a nuisance
- To take responsibility in resolving issues with neighbours in the first instance
- To be a good neighbour and report any issues that arise in my neighbourhood, which I haven't been able to resolve myself
- To attend any agreed appointments or meetings arranged as part of an action plan to resolve a reported issue

Useful Links

Who can help?

<https://www.bpha.org.uk/support/anti-social-behaviour/>



Did you know..?

bpha are unable to accept or manage anonymous complaints of anti-social behaviour. We may offer mediation services between neighbours involved in disputes.



Maintaining your Tenancy

Health & Safety

bpha commit to:

- To ensure that the servicing of any items within your property are carried out in line with the recommended government standards
- To carry out regular inspections of communal areas
- To service your gas boiler or heating system on an annual basis, and perform domestic electrical tests every 5 years
- To ensure the safety of **bpha** employees while carrying out their work

In return I commit to:

- To ensure that I use my property safely by following the requirements of my Tenancy Agreement and safety advice provided by **bpha**
- To keep communal, shared areas and balconies clear of obstructions and fire hazards
- To seek **bpha's** advice/approval before proceeding with any alteration works, so they can ensure all the relevant certifications and safe working practices are in place
- To report any safety issues or building defects to **bpha** so they can be rectified.



Did you know..?

Every year there are more than 50 fires in **bpha** homes. The main causes are cooking, cigarettes and faulty electrical items.



Useful Links

Health and safety in your home leaflet

www.bpha.org.uk/health-and-safety

Your local fire service

www.fireservice.co.uk

National Grid

www2.nationalgrid.com/uk

Helpline (if you smell gas)

Freephone 0800 111 999



Ending your Tenancy

Giving your Notice

bpha commit to:

- To confirm we have received your notice to leave your property
- To let you know when we will require access to inspect the property
- To let you know the date we expect the keys to be returned by
- To send you an information sheet which confirms the condition we expect you to leave your property in
- To inform you where to hand in/send your keys

In return I commit to:

- To give bpha written notice when I wish to leave my property, giving either four weeks or two months notice dependent on the conditions of my tenancy agreement.
- To allow access to my property during the notice period for inspections and viewings
- To provide a forwarding address



Did you know..?

Shared Ownership is a great alternative to renting and might be an option for you. You can buy an initial share in a home that you can afford, helping you into home ownership in manageable stages. Find out more at www.bphaoptions.org.uk



Useful Links

Ending your Tenancy: The Process

www.bpha.org.uk/renting-a-home/already-renting/moving-on

The House Exchange Scheme

www.bedfordshire.houseexchange.org.uk

Ending your Tenancy

Condition of your Property

bpha commit to:

- To inspect your property and inform you what you need to do prior to handing in your keys
- To accompany anyone wishing to undertake a viewing of your property before you move out
- To ensure you receive charges within 14 days of you moving out
- To send you an itemised bill explaining what you have been charged for



Did you know..?

Rent is still charged until **bpha** receive the keys to your property. Keys must be returned to us on or before the date your notice expires. If you have not returned the keys on expiry of the notice period, you will be charged use and occupation charges until you hand them in.

In return I commit to:

- To remove all my belongings from my property and clear any rubbish from my garden
- To ensure my rent account is up to date
- To leave my property clean and in good decorative order
- To take my meter readings and inform all my utility companies that I am leaving the property
- To pay any charges related to the property including utilities and Council Tax
- To pay outstanding repair charges which have been incurred due to the condition my property was left in



Useful Links

Check your rent account

www.bpha.org.uk/myaccount

Ending Your Tenancy

www.bpha.org.uk/renting-a-home/already-renting/moving-on

Have your say

We hope you won't need to make a complaint – but if you do, we want to hear from you. We're always sorry if customers are unhappy with the service they get from us and try our best to sort things out.

Our 'Have your say' booklet includes a guide to making a complaint. It tells you what you can and cannot complain about and explains how the complaints process works.

www.bpha.org.uk/complaints-and-appeals



Contact us



Talk to us:

0330 100 0272. Our Customer Services team aim to deal with your initial enquiry in full, but for those enquiries that we can't deal with fully, another member of staff will contact you by the end of the following working day.



Write to us:

We will send a full written response to enquiries received by letter within five working days of receipt, unless this is a complaint and separate timescales may apply in accordance with our Feedback policy. bpha Limited, Head Office Bedford Heights, Manton Lane, Bedford, MK41 7BJ



Visit us:

bpha Limited, Customer Service Centre
St Paul's Square, Bedford, MK40 1SJ
Mon-Thurs 9am-5pm
Fri 9am-4.30pm



Connect with us:

www.bpha.org.uk
www.facebook.com/bpha.uk
info@bpha.org.uk
www.bpha.org.uk/online-chat