Sovereign Network Group

Housing Charter Commitments

SNG's commitment to residents in East Herts

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

East Herts Council





We want everyone who works at SNG, and you as a customer, to understand the experience we're striving to deliver for you: one which is **Simple, Reliable, Individual and Connected.**

- You'll have visibility of the services we offer and the benefits of those services to you.
- We want you to receive services tailored to your needs, and to know you can rely on us to resolve issues easily. We want to give you more ways to share your feedback, and engage with us seamlessly, without the need to repeat yourself.
- We'll aim to deliver services efficiently and involve you in developing the products and services that matter to you.

Delivering a great customer experience means no customer is left behind.

Contents

Contacting us and getting support	3
Repairs and home maintenance	4
Home safety and quality	7
Adaptations and accessibility	9
Your neighbourhood and community	10
Support for customers experiencing domestic abuse	11
Complaints and putting things right	12

Contacting us and getting support



Our Customer Promise: we are here to help

Most queries we receive are straightforward and can be sorted out quickly. If it's more complicated or you need one-to-one supportw, then a Locality Officer can help you. They will get in touch with you by phone or email and, if it's easier for you, arrange a face-to-face meeting in your home.

You can find information about our neighbourhood services on our website whenever you like.

If you want to contact us about anything, you can either look online, including the 'Getting in touch easily' sections of our website, or call us on **0300 373 3000.**

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Any time, day or night, for emergency repairs

If you're new to SNG and need extra support settling into your home, you may be allocated a dedicated Locality Officer when you sign your tenancy agreement.

Our Contact Centre and Customer Housing Specialist teams are also available to help with any general enquiries and can be reached on **0300 373 3000**.

Communicating clearly and with transparency

We have an ambition to achieve a 90% satisfaction rate among our customers within the next five years.

We are signing up to the Shared Ownership Code, focusing on improving transparency, fairness and providing support for shared owners.

We offer a range of ways to contact SNG and we answer calls to our customer contact centre within an average of 2 mins and 30 seconds.

We ensure ongoing communication on our progress in resolving repairs and we provide updates if delays occur.

We acknowledge complaints within five working days, and we respond within ten working days. If we can't respond within ten working days, we contact our residents to let them know why it will take longer.

Repairs and home maintenance



Getting to the heart of your repairs and works problem

- We'll always listen to you, try to accommodate your individual needs and be kind and understanding of the impact issues may have on your life.
- We will ask questions about your repair and your circumstances so we can send the right person to your home and minimise disruption.
- We will do our very best to fix issues on our first visit, or even remotely where possible. Sometimes we may need more time or a specialist contractor. We'll always make sure you're safe before we leave and until we can return to complete the job.
- We ensure our trades teams and contractors are fully qualified and receive ongoing training. We carry out regular quality checks, collect customer feedback and act on what we learn.
- We will always be clean, tidy and respectful of you and your home.
- Where possible, we'll identify and address any other obvious issues at the same time to reduce the need for additional visits.
- We will support you to get your home back up and running quickly.

Keeping you updated

Whether it's our trades team or one of our contractors managing your repair, planned works, adaptation or safety check, if we have your mobile number they'll contact you with appointment reminders and updates. Please make sure we have your latest contact details.

Carrying out emergency repairs

- We understanding that some repairs need to be dealt with as an emergency. You can find a full list of what counts as an emergency repair on the emergency repairs webpage.
- We prioritise emergency repairs based on urgency and the risks to the people in your home or to the public. Some of this assessment is based on the information you give us.
- We are sensitive to vulnerabilities so please let us know – or remind us – of any circumstances we should be aware of when you call.
- We classify it as an emergency if you are without heating and/or hot water between 14 October and 14 March. If it is unusually cold before or beyond these dates, then we may extend these dates.
- Someone in your household has a vulnerability, we'll treat having no heating or hot water as an emergency all year round. Let us know and we'll be with you as soon as we can.
- We aim to carry out an emergency repair (or temporary fix to make safe) within 24 hours.
- If we're unable to fully repair an issue within 24hrs we'll make things safe for you and send you a report containing a plan of action, explaining the works needed and timescales.
- **To report an emergency repair**: call us on **0300 373 3000 at any time, day or night**. We'll be here to take your call.
- Please remember, we may decide to recharge you if the nature of the actual repair required has been overstated and it is not an emergency



Carrying out routine repairs

- Repairs for tenants that are not classified as emergencies are usually referred to as routine repairs.
- We will aim to complete routine repairs within 20 working days. There may be occasions when this is not possible, but we will keep you fully informed.
- See 'Getting in touch easily' to find out how to let us know about a new routine repair.
- If you are a shared owner/leaseholder, we've created guidance to help you be aware of your repair responsibilities.
- Our video guides will also help you confidently solve some issues and are a convenient way to access support quickly and efficiently.
- We want your repair fixed quickly and, depending on the work, aim to make appointments that fit around your life as much as we can. We'll guide you through your options when you get in touch with us.
- Whether it's our trades team or one of our contractors managing your repair, if we have your mobile number, they'll be in touch to remind you of the date and time of your appointment, along with any further updates. Please make sure we have your latest details so we can contact you easily and let you know how to prepare.
- If the repair is needed as a result of deliberate damage then we may charge you for the work.



Dealing with damp and mould

- We treat all reports of condensation, damp, and mould as either an emergency or a priority repair.
- Under Awaab's Law, we also must address all damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to tenants within fixed timeframes.
- If you tell us about damp and mould in your home, we'll ask you some important questions to assess your situation. If it's an emergency, we will make an appointment within 24 hours – otherwise it will be scheduled as soon as possible but within 10 working days. In either case, we will talk about the next steps (any work needed and timescales) with you.
- We want your home fixed quickly but it may take time to identify the cause of damp and mould.
- Please be aware it can involve multiple visits and a process of elimination. After our initial visit, if additional work is required, we'll send a report containing a plan of action, explaining the works needed and timescales.
- Please call us as soon as possible if you notice persistent damp or mould, and we'll work with you to resolve it.

Carrying out planned works

- We know that key components of your home, such as kitchens, bathrooms, boilers, windows and doors will wear out. We'll replace them on a periodic basis, to make sure you continue to have a good experience in your home.
- We will need to do a survey before we carry out any 'planned works'. (This refers to the fitting of new kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems, boilers, windows, roofs and doors.) If replacements are needed, we'll schedule a design visit to discuss options with you and will also gather all the necessary measurements at the same time.
- We usually assess bathrooms every 30 years and kitchens every 23 years.
- We want any changes to your home to be carried out quickly and with minimal disruption. When you receive the survey letter, you must inform us of any adjustments you may require, before we come to visit your home.
- Whether it's our trades team or one of our contractors managing your repair, if we have your mobile number, they'll be in touch to remind you of the date and time of your appointment, along with any further updates. Please make sure we have your latest details so we can contact you easily and let you know how to prepare.

Home safety and quality



Ensuring a high-quality home and safe community

- We carry out emergency repairs within 24 hours and investigate damp and mould cases within 10 days.
- We are investing in our business to complete 90% of repairs within an average of 8 days and we aim to achieve this by the end of 2026.
- Where there are known issues, we conduct inspections until we are satisfied issues have been resolved.
- In line with regulatory requirements, we will bring all our homes up to EPC C by 2030.
- We understand the condition of our homes and inspect each one every 5 years.
- We invest in our homes every year through our planned works programmes, including replacement windows, doors, roofs, kitchens, and bathrooms
- We work with partners such as the police to deter and resolve anti-social behaviour. We agree an action plan to address concerns, maintain regular contact, and ensure confidentiality.
- We visit our neighbourhoods regularly to make sure they are clean, tidy and that we spot any issues in good time, helping customers to feel safe and comfortable where they live.

Making sure your home is safe and compliant

- We are committed to carrying out required compliance inspections and remedial works to keep you and your home safe.
- Protecting you from fire risk is important to us. We have lots of information on managing fire safety that can be found on our fire safety pages.
- If you are unable to evacuate your home in the event of a fire – due to either a permanent or temporary disability, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can carry out either a 'Person Centred Risk Assessment' (PCRA) or 'Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan' (PEEP) with you.
- We carry out quarterly fire risk assessments on all fire doors in communal areas of blocks over 11m high. For these blocks we're also conducting annual checks on the entrance doors to flats which lead to communal areas.
- We display fire notices in communal areas of blocks of flats and similar sites, so anyone in your building knows exactly what to do if they discover a fire or the building needs to be evacuated.
- It's vital we know about any issues, so we can keep you safe. If you have any concerns about fire doors or self-close door fixings, please speak to us immediately on or **0300 373 3000.**
- We need to make sure your electrics are in good working order and not a danger to you. We believe this is essential for your welfare so we schedule these checks before you move into your home and then every five years.
- As part of our safety commitments, we must complete a landlord gas safety record every 12 months. This is a legal requirement and covers checking gas installation pipework, appliances and flues.
- Please look out for our letters and make a note of the appointment dates and times. Please contact us to rearrange if it's not suitable for you (see "Getting in touch easily'). We're here to help.
- We also carry out safety servicing and inspections on all our lifts and lifting equipment. You can find out more about this maintenance on the Lift and lifting equipment safety webpage.
- Whether it's our trades team or one of our contractors managing your safety check, if we have your mobile number, they'll be in touch to remind you of the date and time of your appointment, along with any further updates. Please make sure we have your latest details so we can contact you easily and let you know how to prepare.
- To keep you safe and to comply with the law, you must let us enter your home for inspections, essential repairs and any safety checks about compliance inspections.
- If you have any concerns about letting us in, or you are unsure about our procedures, please let us know on **0300 373 3000** and we can work this out with you. Your safety and wellbeing is always our top priority. Legal proceedings may be taken if you do not give us access to your home.



Adaptations and accessibility



Installing aids and making adaptations

- If you are disabled, you can request a simple aid from us, providing the cost is less than £500. We will arrange, pay for and complete the work within 20 working days from the day you ask for it. You can find out about this on our Aids and adaptations page.
- For other types of adaptations, you are likely to need either a recommendation from an occupational therapist or a grant from your local council. We'll help you with the technical side of the process, (such as agreeing plans, specifications and getting permissions). We'll also help your local council to complete the work as quickly as possible. You can find out about this on our Aids and adaptations page.
- The 'Getting in touch easily' section explains how to let us know that you need changes to your home.
- Whether it's our trades team or one of our contractors managing your repair, if we have your mobile number, they'll be in touch to remind you of the date and time of your appointment, along with any further updates. Please make sure we have your latest details so we can contact you easily and let you know how to prepare.

Your neighbourhood and community



Keeping communal areas and gardens in a good condition

- We are responsible for the upkeep of communal areas in buildings and communal gardens. If your home has a garden, then the upkeep is your responsibility. If you are unsure or have any queries, please see 'Getting in touch easily', alternatively you can call us on **0300 373 3000** between 8am-6pm Monday to Friday.
- You can report any issues or emergencies about communal areas and communal gardens to us on **0300 373 3000** between 8am-6pm Monday to Friday. If it's an emergency, we'll visit to fix the problem or make it safe within 24 hours. If it's not an emergency, you may prefer to see Getting in touch easily for other ways to contact us that may be more convenient for you.
- It's important we all work together to maintain communal areas and communal gardens to keep everyone safe, well and to ensure you live in a pleasant environment. Please don't leave any rubbish or items (such as bicycles or mobility scooters) in any communal areas as it could be a fire risk or prevent others evacuating safely in an emergency.
- Graffiti and vandalism is a nuisance and, at times, offensive – we understand it can affect customers' wellbeing, happiness and safety. If you notice any on SNG land or property, please report it to us, including images and the location. See our Getting in touch easily page for ways to let us know about the problem. If the graffiti is offensive, we will treat it as an emergency and arrange to remove it. Please call us on **0300 373 3000** between 8am-6pm Monday to Friday.

Safety in the community

We work with customers and partners, including the police and local authorities, to deter and resolve nuisance and anti-social behaviour in neighbourhoods. We want to make it easy for you to know what to do if you're facing anti-social behaviour (ASB) or other difficult behaviour. Some problems count as ASB, others don't, and some are criminal offences. Because of this, it's sometimes difficult to know who to speak to for help so we have created an easy checklist below:

If you or someone else is in danger, please call the police on 999 immediately.

To tell us about any non-life-threatening neighbourhood issues, see the Getting in touch easily page so we can support you in a way that works best for you. Alternatively, you can use this online form to tell us about it at any time, day or night. For more information online about 'safety in your community' issues and who to contact, click on the individual links below or see the summary ASB page:

- Arson and fire setting
- Drug use or dealing
- Assault, violence and threats of violence
- Verbal abuse and harassment
- Social media and cyber bullying

Support for customers experiencing domestic abuse



Safety in your home

Domestic Abuse affects anyone of any age or gender, from any culture or religion, in a heterosexual or same-sex relationship, in a family relationship (or not in a relationship at all), living with or apart from their abuser. The abuse could be physical, psychological, sexual, financial, emotional, digital, coercive or controlling. It could also be in the form of 'honour' based violence (including forced marriage), modern-day slavery or female genital mutilation (FGM).

- If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 999.
- If you cannot speak, call 999 and press 55 when prompted, or make a noise such as tapping or coughing to alert the operator. Find out more about silent calls.
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247 (operated by Refuge).

What we can do to help

- If you tell us that you're affected by domestic abuse, we'll believe you and we'll contact you safely, in a way and time that suits you. See Getting in touch easily to find the best way to talk to us.
- If you want to, we'll help you find a new place to live and give advice so you can make an informed choice for you and your family (if you have one).
- If you have left an abuser, remember there is extra support available to you. Working alongside partner agencies we can provide additional security measures. We can also give you advice on applying for benefits and help you fill out the forms.
- With your consent and safety in mind, we will hold perpetrators of abuse to account where this is appropriate to do so. We will always be clear that domestic abuse is never the fault of the victim/survivor or their children.

Complaints and putting things right



Telling us if something goes wrong

- We want to make it as easy as possible for you to tell us when you feel something's gone wrong. If you're not happy with a service we've provided, you can get in touch and speak to us over social media, by phone, by post or in person. Alternatively, you can make a complaint online.
- You can also contact us if you'd like any of our complaints information in another format or language. This means everyone has access to the same information.
- Our complaints policy makes sure we take your issues seriously and sets out in more detail how we'll work with you to resolve your complaint.
- We'll understand what's happened from your point of view and look for a resolution that works for you. If we can't agree on a resolution, we'll be honest about what we can and can't do and only close a complaint when we've tried everything reasonable to resolve it.
- We will keep you informed of the progress of your complaint, so you know what is going on. We will contact you in the way you prefer to give you relevant updates as we investigate your complaint.
- We will make sure that you do not have to repeat yourself when discussing your complaint with us, as all colleagues will be able to see the history of your complaint.
- We will treat you fairly and with respect when you contact us about your complaint. We genuinely want to help you resolve your issue.

Acting on your feedback for continuous improvement

- We need to know and understand what our customers are experiencing and hear your views on what's working well and what we could do better. Submitting honest feedback helps us find ways to continuously improve our service to you.
- We may ask you to take part in a survey about your repair experience. If you ask us to call you to discuss your feedback, we'll get in touch and help you resolve the issue you've told us about. If you have provided us with a compliment, we will share this with our teams and learn from what we've done well.
- We will always share your feedback with our colleague/s and their manager, so your comments are heard and used to improve how we do things.

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Sovereign Network Group is charitable.
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