



Customer Charter – Homelessness and Housing advice 2024

Service standards for general housing advice and homelessness

- We will provide free, up to date, comprehensive, tailored advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness.
- The service will operate in line with current legislation and we will be mindful of the code of guidance for local authorities when delivering the service to our customers:
 - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/overview-of-the-homelessness-legislation>
 - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities>
- The Home Choices Team can be contacted on 01427 676 676 or by email at home.choices@west-lindsey.gov.uk during normal working hours and on 01427 613960 in emergencies outside of normal office hours (after 5pm, weekends and bank holidays).
- We aim to respond to voicemails on the same working day (or the next working day if the voicemail was left after 3.30pm).
- We aim to respond to emails within 5 working days. Your e-mail will be acknowledged immediately with an auto response which will indicate your e-mail has been received by the team.

Full resolution of reason for contact may not be achieved within the first contact but we will work to resolve any queries or issues as quickly as possible.

When someone is homeless or at risk of homelessness we will:

- Offer you an interview at the earliest possible opportunity, we aim to do this within 3 working days. Should you advise that you have no accommodation available to you or that you are roofless, you will be interviewed the same day wherever possible or we will offer emergency accommodation until we can carry out a full interview.
- Interview you in person at our offices (or at another location in exceptional circumstances) or over the phone or by Microsoft Teams virtual meeting. We cannot carry out interviews via another person or agency on your behalf or by email.
- Allocate a Homelessness Prevention Officer to work with you. We will aim to ensure the same officer will deal with your case from start to finish. We will provide you with the name of the officer supporting you, their direct telephone number and their email address.
- Work with you to produce a Personalised Housing Plan that will be tailored to your individual support and housing needs

- Regularly monitor and update your Personalised Housing Plan with the aim of preventing or relieving your homelessness.
- Arrange temporary accommodation if you are found to be in priority need in line with our statutory duties. We will continue to work with you for at least 56 days to assist you to seek a longer term housing solution. If you are not in priority need, we will still work with you, providing advice to help you secure accommodation where possible
- If you are eligible for the housing register, your Homelessness Prevention Officer may bid for properties on your behalf with a view to making a reasonable offer of accommodation. We cannot always guarantee offers of accommodation in specific geographical areas or of a specific property type.
- Always attempt to contact you on 3 separate occasions before your case is closed.

Your responsibilities when accessing our services:

- In order to assist you in the best way we can, you are required to be open and honest in regards to everything we need to know to prevent you becoming homeless or to assess your homelessness application properly.
- You will be required to provide us with any information we need to be able to meet your needs to access the service – for example if you require translation services.
- We require you to co-operate with the Home Choices Team when we are assessing your housing options. That includes taking any actions agreed with you in your Personal Housing Plan, or other requests made by us associated with your application.
- It is very important that you inform us immediately if your circumstances change including if you change your telephone number or email address so we can stay in contact with you.
- We require you to provide us with all documents we ask you for to enable us to assist you and assess your application/s.
- We require you to keep to the rules of any temporary accommodation that we may arrange for you, these rules may be set out by West Lindsey, or by the by the accommodation provider, and likely both.
- We kindly ask that you speak to us politely and courteously, without being abusive.
- Any unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with appropriately.

West Lindsey customer service standards

In addition, the Home Choices Team work closely within the council's adopted 7-Point Customer Service Standards framework.

- Standard 1: Listen, understand and respond to our customers' needs
- Standard 2: Work with partners to support our customers
- Standard 3: Help customers to help themselves
- Standard 4: Provide services to our customers which they can rely on and trust
- Standard 5: Seek and use feedback opportunities to learn, grow and develop
- Standard 6: Communicate clearly and simply
- Standard 7: Treat customers fairly and respectfully

Review

This customer charter will be reviewed annually and approved in line with the requirement below.

Approved by	Sally Grindrod-Smith Director Planning, Regeneration and Communities
Approval date	25 th March 2024
Next review date	1st April 2025

This document is available in alternative formats on request by contacting customer services by email customer.services@west-lindsey.gov.uk or by phone on 01427 676676