

Housing Needs Team - Service Standards

General

- We will treat you with respect; listen to your needs; be quick to take action, where necessary; and give you as much realistic help and advice as we can
- We will explore the options to resolve any issues and explain clearly what we are able to do to help, even if sometimes this means having to say no to your requests
- We will deal with your enquiry consistently using Oxford City Council's policies and procedures
- We will arrange for same-gender interviews by a member of our staff if it is important to you
- We will keep our customers informed about significant changes to the service; will consult with customers on key issues; and encourage regular comment and feedback on our service
- We will use plain English in all letters, emails, forms, leaflets, and on our website
- We will provide interpreters, or other aids to communication, when appropriate, and translate any information as required
- We will ensure our offices are accessible for all, and arrange home visits for customers unable to get to us
- Customer Services Officers will help you complete any application form required by the Council, if you require any assistance

Telephones

- We will answer phone calls promptly. The person who answers the telephone will give their name and the service they provide
- We aim to answer your query immediately. If this is not possible we will either inform you who to contact; forward your enquiry to the relevant officer; or we will give you a timescale when we aim to reply to you
- We provide a free telephone bidding line for Choice Based Lettings bidding
- We provide an emergency out-of-hours service (24/7) for persons that are homeless, or who have an emergency in temporary accommodation provided by the Council. We provide an answer phone service out-of-hours for non-urgent messages

Letters and Emails

- Our letters and emails will confirm an officer contact name, telephone number and e-mail address.

Website

- We will keep our web pages regularly under review with accurate, up-to-date and relevant information
- We will provide an electronic version of all our new and updated publications on Oxford City Council's website

Complaints

- If we have made a mistake we will seek to put it right as quickly as we can, and say we are sorry
- We have a clear formal complaints procedure with details available from our website and offices

We expect customers to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Keep us informed of any changes in your life that affect your housing need.
- Respond to letters within the timescale requested.

The level of service relies on the co-operation between our partners, our customers and us. If you think of any ways to improve them, please write and tell us.

If you feel this standard has not been met you may follow the Council Complaints procedure set out in the Complaint leaflet available at all our receptions or on our website www.oxford.gov.uk.

Comments, compliments and complaints

If you have a comment, compliment or complaint about our service, we would like to hear from you. We will acknowledge all feedback within 3 working days, and will give you a full reply within 10 working days.

If we cannot deal with your comment, compliment or complaint within 10 working days, we will contact you to let you know when you can expect to get a full reply.

How long will it take?

We know that many of our customers are in urgent need of help and we therefore aim to reply to enquiries within the times given below.

If you....	...we will...	...within...
Leave us a phone message	Call you back	1 working day
Send us a letter or e-mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge your correspondence Send you a full response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 working day 5 working days
Make an enquiry on behalf of one of your constituents, if you are an MP or councillor,	Reply to your enquiry	5 working days
Ask us for a General Housing Register or Transfer application form	Send you the application form	1 working day
Send us or hand in a General Housing Register or Transfer application form	Acknowledge receipt of your application and/or request any outstanding information	5 working days
Have provided a General Housing Register Application along with all required information	Offer you an assessment	14 working days
Ask for an appointment to apply for the Lord Mayor's Deposit Guarantee Scheme	Offer you an appointment	10 working days
Contact us to seek guidance and advice because you are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless	Offer you the next available appointment with one of our Housing Options Officers, depending on your circumstances	N/A
Attend an appointment with one of our Housing Options Officers because you are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless	Give you a Homelessness Prevention leaflet. This leaflet gives you information about what our and your responsibilities are to address your homelessness as set in legislations.	N/A – at appointment
Ask us to review a homeless application decision	Process the review	8 weeks
Move into our temporary accommodation	Give you a copy of our Temporary Accommodation Service Standards document	1 day
Or someone supporting you have made a referral to our Tenancy Sustainment Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to the referral Contact you to arrange an assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 working days 5 working days

If we cannot give you a full service within these times, we will contact you to let you know when you can expect to hear from us.