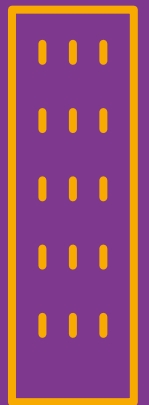




# RENT & DEBT COLLECTION

## FOR CURRENT & FORMER TENANTS

### Service Standards



# OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU...

Birmingham City Council is responsible for collecting rent and any arrears from our current council tenants, along with any outstanding rent and any other housing money that is due from our former council tenants.

We can offer you advice based on your personal circumstances, especially if you find it difficult to pay or need help to reduce your arrears.

We will, however, take legal action against any tenant who consistently fails to pay their rent debt or any other housing debts. If you are a former tenant, we may refer outstanding rent and other housing debts to a Debt Collection Agency.

### **About these service standards**

This document tells you what you can expect from us, specifically relating to the collection of rent and debt collection for current and former tenants.

These service standards have been developed in consultation with tenants. We will monitor our performance against these service standards and share the results. We will review the service standards annually.

# RENT SERVICE SERVICE

## Current Tenants

### We will:

- Write to tell you if your rent account has fallen into debt and ask you to either make a payment or contact us to make an arrangement to clear the debt.
- Offer you a variety of payment methods.
- Provide help and advice regarding your rent account, including referring you to a debt advice service if you need further help with your finances or have multiple debts, and signposting you to independent legal advice should you require this.
- Charge you for any costs incurred if we enter into legal proceedings against you to recover any arrears owed and/or seek possession of your property.

## Former Tenants

### We will:

- Write to tell you the total amount of debt remaining on your former rent account and ask you to either make a payment or contact us to make arrangements to clear the outstanding debt.
- Provide you with a statement detailing the payments you have made and the balance on your account if you request this.
- Refer you to a Debt Collection Agency who will recover any outstanding amounts on behalf of the council if you do not respond to us.

### To monitor our service, we will:

- Have regular meetings with our Customer Services team to ensure that calls to the Rent Service are being answered in a timely manner and enquiries are dealt with effectively and in line with our Customer Charter.
- Speak to tenants to find out how they feel about the service.
- Carry out full investigations into any queries or complaints raised by tenants relating to our service and provide a full and comprehensive response within 10 working days (or advise you if we need longer in order to provide a response).
- Take appropriate engagement and enforcement action against current and former tenants who do not engage with us or make arrangements to clear their outstanding debts.

### We ask you to....

- Pay your rent on time as outlined in the Conditions of Tenancy given to you when you moved into your council home.
- Respond to any contact from us about your outstanding housing debt to the council.
- Keep to any repayment plan agreed with us to reduce any current or former tenancy arrears owed to the council.
- Contact the Rent Service immediately for help and advice if you are falling behind with your rent payments or are having difficulty keeping to any payment arrangements made with us for current and/or former tenancy arrears. Acting quickly shows a commitment to paying your rent and may prevent us needing to pursue legal action or referring your former tenancy debt to a debt collection agency.
- Report repairs to the BCC contact centre.
- Contact us if you are not happy with the service provided.

# CAN YOU WORK WITH US TO MAKE THE SERVICE BETTER?

- We are always looking for tenants to get involved and help us improve our service. If you would like to offer any comments or suggestions, please contact us.

### How to contact us

- Call us on our Customer Services telephone number **0121 675 2006**.
- Email us at **rent@birmingham.gov.uk**
- Visit our web pages at **www.birmingham.gov.uk/rent** where you will find more information about the service we provide and the actions we take. You will also be able to access a variety of tools and forms to help you manage your rent account, such as registering for a BRUM account which will provide you with access to your rent statements.



