

Ethnic Minority Groups

You must be aware that some cultures have special requirements e.g. in some cultures it is not the practice for women to be in an “unchaperoned” situation with men who are not members of their immediate family. You should therefore be sensitive to this and where possible make alternative arrangements that respect this point of view.

Data Protection

You must ensure that information provided about customers and their property is not disclosed to any third parties.

Other Problems which may occur whilst in the home

Additional Jobs

Customers often ask for additional work to be carried out whilst you are in the home. You should only do the work that is closely related to the original problem. If this work is a significant variation to the original job you must tell the customer that it is necessary to obtain authority to proceed. You will seek authority from your Supervisor/Manager and make arrangements with the customer to complete the work. By telephoning your Supervisor/Manager it may be possible to get verbal approval quite quickly. If you feel that the work asked for is not related to the original problem you should encourage the customer to report the problem themselves using the repairs helpline number. If the customer has language difficulties, is vulnerable etc it is acceptable to volunteer to pass on a report on behalf of the customer, but you must then ensure that this is done. If the work is of an urgent nature you should contact your Supervisor/Manager to report the situation and complete the repair if you are able to do so. If another trade is required to complete the repair then make safe before leaving the premises and arrange with the customer and your Supervisor/Manager that the correct trade will attend at a mutually convenient time to complete the repair.

Parts

If parts are required for the job and these are not readily available, then the customer should be advised that this is the case, and given some indication of the likely time scale when the job will be completed. It may be necessary to make new arrangements then or at a later date.

Rubbish

All materials and rubbish should be removed regularly, preferably daily, and no rubbish should be left on site after completion of the work.

Leaving the Customers Home

Completed Work

When the job is completed, please make sure that the customer is completely satisfied. This includes making sure that all the work area is left clean and tidy and a satisfaction card, complete with the job number, description of work or address, is left with the customer to complete and return.

You must take every care in carrying out the work specified. If minor damage to surrounding areas is unavoidable this must be made good, to match existing, providing it is associated with the repair carried out.

Uncompleted Work

Should it not be possible to complete the work you are required to ensure that the property is safe and proper arrangements made for the work to be completed. The customer's home should always be left habitable overnight and at weekends. This means that the essential services are safe and usable and every effort is made so the outstanding work causes minimum of inconvenience to the customer.

Customer Feedback

A large proportion of customers are asked for feedback on their repairs, including how satisfied they are with the quality of work, and the tidiness of the contractor. Complaints are always followed up.

If a customer wishes to make a complaint encourage them to put the complaint in writing addressed to Customer Liaison Advisor at Wessex Property Services. If they do not wish to put their complaint in writing ensure that you take brief details and pass these to the Customer Liaison Advisor who will follow through with the customer.

PLEASE REMEMBER

When working at a customer's home you are representing Wessex Property Services and First Wessex Housing Group and we wish to provide our customers with service of the highest quality. By supporting and using this code you will make sure that we all deliver a repairs service to be proud of.

All persons working in customers' homes must abide by this code of conduct.

First Wessex Housing Group members should note that this Code of Conduct must be used in conjunction with the Group's Code of Conduct in the Employee Handbook which all Group employees are contracted to work to. The Employee Handbook can be found electronically on AIMS or in hard copy at The Griffiths Centre, Eastleigh and Gordon House, Aldershot.

Wessex Property Services
The Griffiths Centre
Unit 30-32 Parham Drive
Eastleigh, Hampshire SO50 4NU
Tel: 0800 214 806
Fax: 023 8061 2842
Email: info@wessexproperty.co.uk
www.wessexproperty.co.uk



Wessex Property
SERVICES
Part of First Wessex Housing Group

Code of Conduct when working in Customers' Homes



Wessex Property Services is strongly committed to providing all of its customers with service of the highest quality. To enable us to achieve this objective, it is important to ensure that anyone working in customers' homes is aware of the standards of conduct we wish to uphold.

This code has been prepared to assist you in your dealings with customers. You are expected to support and carry out these objectives.

You must be aware that the First Wessex Housing Group works with a diverse community. This includes working with:

- People who are blind or partially sighted
- People who are deaf or hearing impaired
- People with mobility difficulties
- People whose first language (spoken or written) is not English
- People from differing cultures, religions and beliefs
- People who are gay men, lesbians, bisexual, heterosexual or transsexual
- People who have or who have had mental health issues or needs

In dealing with these customers your conduct must be sensitive to their specific needs.

Your help and co-operation in achieving the aims of this Code of Conduct is always greatly appreciated. Should you have any queries, please contact your Service Manager.

Access

Times

Visits should be made at reasonable times except in emergencies. This would normally exclude visits before 8.30 am or after 6.00 pm, or on Saturdays or Sundays. Unless by prior appointment.

Access Instructions

Calls should comply with the access instructions given on the order.

Permission for Access

Work must not be carried out inside a customer's home unless the customer or their representative is present. Unless the customer gives instructions to the contrary permission should always be sought before you start work on the property at any time. This includes external works.

Identification

It is essential that you carry identification cards and always show them to the customer before you gain access to the home. You should introduce yourself by name and organisation and say clearly why you have called.

Dress

You are asked to remember that when you carry out work, you are in effect Wessex Property Services' representatives and should, therefore, wear the uniform provided, at all times.

Notice of Work

If work is of a major nature (say where it will be necessary to move a lot of furniture to carry out the work), it is essential to give customers adequate notice before starting the work. In the case of a major job, this would not be less than 24 hours notice. These arrangements may be made verbally, or in writing, by the Supervisor/Manager.

Broken Arrangements

Having made arrangements, please keep them. Many complaints are generated by broken arrangements. It can be particularly annoying if someone has had to take special time off work. If a broken arrangement is unavoidable please make sure that early contact is made to:

- a) Apologise to the customer
- b) Explain the reason for failing to undertake the work
- c) Make a new arrangement

Customers' Belongings

Protection of furniture etc.

Customers' furniture and carpets should be completely covered by dustsheets when this is appropriate. You are expected to move light items of furniture etc. but if breakable or valuable items are present, it may be advisable to request the customer to move them to a safer place.

Gardens

Damage to plants, trees, paths, etc should be avoided as far as possible. If some damage is inevitable, this should be discussed and agreed with the customer and your Supervisor/Manager prior to the works commencing. Any equipment or material should not be left in a dangerous or inconvenient position on the property and agreement should be reached with the customer on the placing of such items. Any ladders are to be removed overnight.

Tools

During the course of the work you are expected to use your own tools and equipment. If power is required, then a generator should be used or an agreement reached with the customer for the use of electricity with suitable reimbursement.

Use of Telephone

Use of a customer's telephone is to be avoided unless permission is given and it is in connection with the repair to their property. All calls should be paid for and the customer suitably reimbursed. As you all have a mobile phone, occasions to use a customer's telephone should be very rare.

Gifts

You should tactfully refuse any personal gift which is offered unless it is a small gift of low value given by a customer as a thank you. All such gifts must be declared and recorded in the register of gifts and hospitality held at Wessex Property Services' offices.

Behaviour

Occasionally you may forget that customers are paying for the work to be done.

It is therefore essential to conduct yourself in a manner which avoids the following:

- a) Rudeness
- b) Excessive noise, including the use of radios etc
- c) Over familiarity
- d) Argument
- e) Expressing an opinion about other repair issues
- f) Parking vehicles in the wrong place, e.g. on grassed or paved area
- g) Smoking in the home
- h) Expressing an opinion about other customers, their property, or lifestyle
- i) Any reference to the funding of repairs

Home Standards

For a variety of reasons, people's home standards vary. It is, however, essential that the quality of work carried out remains high, regardless of how you perceive the home standards. If you feel unable to work in a property because of its condition, you must discuss this with your Supervisor/Manager and obtain permission to leave. The reason for leaving must be explained to the customer with a report being passed to your Supervisor/Manager who will in turn pass the information on to the appropriate person for follow up action.

Safety

You must work in a manner which is safe for customers, yourselves, and other members of staff, at all times. Doors and windows should not be left open unnecessarily and only when the customer has been advised.