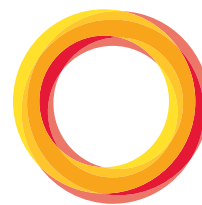




Guarantees

2009 - 2011



Russet
Homes

We are proud to present our new guarantees for 2009 – 2011, and although in today's difficult economic climate they look set to be challenging, we are committed to keeping each and every one.

As usual we are influenced by the Government and the Tenant Services Authority as to how we may deliver these promises.

Chairman of Russet Homes, Andrew Hill says:

“Once again we have achieved each guarantee we pledged for the last two years, putting us well on the road to be the most admired housing association with a reputation of focusing on the things that really matter. However, we now want to do **so much more...**”

with passion and energy to give better life chances to every tenant.

This year we plan to invest even more to improve and maintain our properties to the highest quality and energy efficiency to provide homes where people are proud to live.

We are determined to continue with our ‘can do’ culture and motivation to deliver more affordable homes and, crucially, even better local services.”

So much more... quality

Over the past two years we achieved our target to invest over £9 million in maintenance and improvement programmes, including 800 new kitchens and/or bathrooms. Over the next two years we will continue this level of investment, offering 1000 households new kitchens and/or bathrooms. Over 450 homes now have more energy-efficient condensing boilers. As part of our ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability and to promote affordable warmth by reducing fuel bills a further 600 condensing boilers will be fitted over the next two years and we will continue to offer upgraded home insulation where necessary.

The investment that we have made in the stock means that 99.5% of your homes meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard. By 2010/11, all our homes will have achieved this Standard, where it is possible to do so. We will also have a planned programme for improvements to the communal areas of our blocks of flats, fences and paths.

So much more... development

In 2007 we promised to provide 100 homes in the two years up to 2009 and we have exceeded this by completing over 140 homes both for rent and shared ownership.

We will continue our development programme to provide at least 100 new homes over the next two years, subject to market conditions not worsening. All our new homes will be constructed to the standards required under the Code for Sustainable homes and at least 10% of all building materials will come from sustainable sources.

So much more...

safety

Over 5000 homes now have wired-in smoke alarms and we will continue this programme to include all remaining domestic properties. We promised to invest in the environment around your home and have achieved this through new fencing, additional lighting and targeted improvements, to 'design out' trouble spots.

Over the next two years we will continue to work to make our neighbourhoods and communities better and safer places to live by taking action against anti-social behaviour using our own dedicated Community Compliance Officers and with the support of our Community Safety Partnership partners.

So much more...

resident choice

As promised, we have increased resident involvement through the creation of additional Portfolio Holder posts and tenant working groups as well as increasing our Consumer Panel membership to over 300. Over the next two years we will further increase the number of Portfolio Holders and will explore new ways of involving residents in our decision-making processes.

We will shortly be introducing a Choice Based Lettings Scheme allowing tenants to have more choice over where they live and will investigate ways to increase our tenants' mobility. We will review our Conditions of Tenancy to reflect changes in legislation and produce a new Tenant Handbook.

So much more...

community development

We will extend our services in the key areas of encouraging economic development and protecting the environment, promoting healthier and stronger communities and important work with older people and children and young people. We will offer training to all tenants on life skills such as first aid and health and safety and opportunities to increase prospects for employment for residents.

We will work with our partnering contractors to bring forward apprenticeship schemes and support local employment initiatives. We will be working with local schools to raise awareness of the impact of anti-social behaviour, career opportunities and housing issues and sponsoring breakfast clubs where needed and projects involving the environment and healthy eating.

So much more...

affordability

Since 2003 we have kept our promise to limit rent increases to inflation (as set in the previous September) plus 0.5% and will continue to do so to 2010/11, subject to any regulatory guidelines issued by the Government. This doesn't include increases to bring rents in line with the Government's rent targets which are outside our control, although these are capped at no more than £2.00 per week per year until this 'target rent' is reached. In 2005 we reduced all rents to the Government's target level where tenants were paying more. We did so even if the difference was greater than £2.00.

We will offer financial health checks to all new tenants and have employed a dedicated Welfare Benefits Advisor to offer tenants advice on maximising their income and helping them with any benefits that they may be eligible for. We will continue to fund independent debt advice for tenants through the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Tonbridge Debt Advice Centre.