



**Customer name**

**Address line 1**

**Address line 2**

**Postcode**

6 May 2025

Dear Customer,

**The future of Lambton, Londonderry and Lumley Towers (3Ls)**

**CONSULTATION – Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985**

I am writing to you with important information about your home.

In November 2023, Gentoo started structural investigations in the 3Ls, to understand their structural condition. Twelve months later, in November 2024, we wrote to you to share the results for Londonderry Tower, which were the same for Lambton and Lumley Towers:

**The results told us that:**

- the buildings are safe for day-to-day use
- there are no visual signs of structural failure
- any major impact, such as an explosion, could cause significant structural damage due to the way the buildings were constructed

In addition to the findings of the structural investigations, there is significant planned investment needed in these buildings, which includes work to improve fire safety in the 3Ls.

Your safety is our number one priority, and we have put extra measures in place to keep you safe whilst we explore the future of the 3Ls. We changed the evacuation strategy for your building to a phased evacuation in March 2023 to ensure you would stay safe in the event of a fire, and we have taken steps to reduce the chances of an explosion happening.

**Next steps**

We want to continue to include you in decisions and be open with you about the long term future of the 3Ls.

We have reviewed the options available to us, which are either to:

- demolish the buildings and provide you with a suitable alternative home; or
- carry out significant and disruptive investment, fire safety and strengthening works to the buildings and in your home

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VAT Reg No. 357 3560 82

We know that these options will have significant impact on the lives of the residents of the 3Ls and will be really important to you, as they affect your home. We will do everything we can to support you during this process and we will involve you throughout.

As part of this consultation we need to explain what these options mean to you. We've shared a summary below on each of these options and how we would support you.

### **OPTION 1 - Demolition of the buildings**

If we demolish your building, we would guarantee to provide a Gentoo home for you and all customers in the 3Ls if you wish to continue being a Gentoo customer.

You would receive a statutory home loss payment of £8,100 at the time of moving from your home.

If you do choose to stay with Gentoo, you would also receive up to £1,500 to help you make your new property feel like home. This could be used towards a packing service, buying new appliances, buying and fitting new flooring, or buying and fitting of new blinds and decorating.

To demolish your building, it would cost Gentoo approximately £2.6 million per tower block.

### **OPTION 2 - Strengthening the buildings**

This strengthening works would be disruptive and you would need to leave your home for this work to happen for approximately 12 weeks, along with other customers. The remediation work in the blocks could take up to three years to complete.

This would cost approximately £15 million per building and include work in each flat and the communal areas.

In addition, Gentoo would also need to complete planned investment and fire safety improvements, at an additional cost of £5 million.

### **Your views on the proposal**

Due to the cost of planned investment, fire safety and strengthening works, we would like to get your views on the proposal to demolish the 3Ls.

From today (6 May 2025) we will begin a consultation on the proposal to demolish the 3Ls with all customers. This consultation will be open for six weeks and close on 13 June 2025. This letter forms part of the consultation and is sent in accordance with Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985. A copy of these arrangements is available online at [www.gentoogroup.com/the-3ls-customer-portal/](http://www.gentoogroup.com/the-3ls-customer-portal/) and is also available for inspection at Sunderland City Council, City Hall, Plater Way, Sunderland, SR1 3AA.

## We want your feedback

This is your home, and we want you to be part of this decision. Please give us your feedback by:

- Completing the form online at <https://www.gentoogroup.com/the-3ls-customer-portal/> or by scanning this QR code
- Completing the enclosed form and returning it in the freepost envelope provided
- Attending one of our drop-in sessions. These will take place in Londonderry Tower Café on:
  - Wednesday 7 May 2025, 9.00am – 11.00am
  - Tuesday 13 May 2025, 2.00pm – 4.30pm
  - Wednesday 21 May 2025, 4.30pm – 6.00pm
  - Thursday 29 May 2025, 9.00am – 11.00am
  - Saturday 2 June 2025, 9.00am – 11.00am
  - Thursday 12 June 2025, 4.00pm – 6.00pm
- Arranging a meeting with your Neighbourhood Coordinator by completing this web form <https://www.gentoogroup.com/the-3ls-customer-portal/> or calling David Harrison on 07736 028 747 or Jessica Turton on 07540 967 835



The results of this consultation will help to inform our decision on the future of the 3Ls. We expect to provide you with the outcome from the consultation and our decision in August 2025.

Please share your feedback with us **by 13 June 2025**. We will then consider all customer feedback and write to you with our decision in August 2025.

## We are here to help

We know that this letter may cause you to worry or have questions. We are here to help and support you throughout this process.

We have included a question and answer document with this letter to provide more details on the content of this letter.

We have a dedicated team in place to help with any concerns or questions. You can call them directly on 0191 525 5051.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Marc', followed by a stylized flourish.

**Marc Edwards**

Executive Director of Property

# Questions and answers



We want to make sure you understand why we are consulting with you on the proposal to demolish the 3Ls so you can provide us with your views and concerns as part of the consultation. We have provided answers below to some of the key questions but please contact us to discuss any specific questions you have.

## **Q - Why is demolition of the buildings being considered?**

A – The findings of the structural investigations at the 3Ls told us that significant work is required to strengthen the buildings to withstand a major impact such as an explosion. We have reviewed the costs of carrying out this work as well as the age of the buildings and the expected future investment requirements, to ensure homes continue to be safe and warm.

Demolishing the 3Ls and providing you with another suitable home would allow Gentoo to make sure you are in a home that is suitable for the long term and to continue to spend its money wisely.

## **Q- What would the remediation work mean for me?**

The remediation work to each block could take up to three years to complete and we estimate that customers would need to move out of their homes for around 12 weeks (Although this could be more). There would however, be significant disruption within the blocks for a long time for customers.

## **Q – If Gentoo decide to demolish the 3Ls when would this happen?**

A - We will contact you in August 2025 to confirm the decision, following the consultation taking into account the feedback you have provided. If a decision is made to demolish the buildings we would develop a plan with all customers living in the buildings to find a suitable new home. We would then develop plans and a timeline to demolish the buildings, but this would not happen before every customer has found a suitable new home.

**Q – If Gentoo decide to demolish the buildings, when would I receive the home loss payment?**

A – If you are a Gentoo customer you would be entitled to compensation under the Home Loss Payments Regulations 2023 scheme. This payment is £8,100. Gentoo would also provide additional financial support to all remaining customers of £1,500 to allow you to complete things like decorating or installing carpets to your new home. You would not receive your home loss payment of £8,100 until after your tenancy agreement at the 3Ls is terminated.

If you rent your property from Adhoc Property Management, Mears or Sunderland City Council you would not be entitled to these payments.

**Q- Does the home loss payment affect the benefit payments I receive?**

A - Home loss payments are not considered income, but they may be treated as savings for means-tested benefits. If your savings exceed £6,000 at the end of your assessment period, you would need to notify the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) before the period ends. We would recommend keeping receipts for any purchases and updating the DWP when your savings fall below £6,000. Our Money Matters Team would be available to support you if you have any questions regarding your personal circumstances.

**Q – Would any outstanding rent be deducted from the £8,100 home loss payment?**

A – We would review any rent arrears or other debts on your account prior to making the statutory home loss payment to you. We would discuss your specific circumstances with you.

**Q – How would Gentoo support me to move?**

A – With both options to strengthen or demolish the 3Ls, you will be required to move out of your home either temporarily or permanently. In both cases Gentoo will provide a dedicated team to ensure support is provided to you to meet your individual rehousing needs. The team will support you in finding you your new home and help you to move into it.

If Gentoo decides to demolish the buildings, you will also receive financial compensation as outlined in this letter. This is per household, one statutory home loss payment of £8,100 per flat not per customer.

Any customer who lets their property from Ad Hoc Property Management, Mears Group or Sunderland City Council should contact their landlord for support and guidance.

**Q – How would Gentoo help me find a new home?**

A – Your local Neighbourhood Housing Team would assist you throughout the entire process of finding your new home. This includes understanding your specific housing needs and working with you to secure a suitable home of your choice.

Any resident who lets their property from Ad Hoc Property Management, Mears Group or Sunderland City Council should contact their landlord for support and guidance.

**Q – How would I bid for a new home?**

A – If Gentoo decides to demolish the buildings, your local Neighbourhood Team would conduct an individual Housing Needs Assessment with you. This would cover factors such as the type and size of property you need, as well as your preferred area within the city. You would be given a priority banding of ‘Band One Plus’ for a move, and your local Neighbourhood Team would assist you in finding a suitable home and where needed bid for properties on your behalf. Once a potential property was identified, we would arrange a viewing for you.

**Q – What priority or banding would I receive when bidding for a new home?**

A – In-line with our current Allocations Policy you would be awarded ‘Band One Plus’ this banding is only for customers whose homes are going through a renewal or demolition programme.

**Q – How many property offers would I receive?**

A – After completing your Housing Needs Assessment we would expect to be able to find you a suitable home within three offers. If this approach does not result in finding a new home, we would work with you to identify an appropriate alternative.

**Q – What if more than one customer at the 3Ls bids for the same home?**

A – If two or more customers from the 3Ls bid for the same home, priority would be given to the customer with the earliest tenancy commencement date.

**Q – Can I remain in the area?**

A – As part of the bidding process for a new home, the local Neighbourhood Team would work with you to offer homes in locations that meet your housing needs. Additionally, a number of empty properties across the city have been held to provide individuals with a range of housing options.

**Q – Would Gentoo help me to move my belongings to a new home?**

A – Yes, if you remain with Gentoo we would provide a removal service from your current home to your new home. If you required additional support, your individual requirements would be discussed with your local Neighbourhood Team.

**Q – What if I don’t want to move to another Gentoo home?**

A – You would not have to move to another Gentoo home if you do not wish to. You would still receive the statutory home loss payment of £8,100 per flat.

Any resident who lets their property from Ad Hoc Property Management, Mears Group or Sunderland City Council should contact their landlord for support and guidance.

**Q – Are the building safe to live in whilst Gentoo decide on their future?**

**A** – We shared the findings of the structural assessments for the 3Ls with you in November 2024. We have no reason to believe the 3Ls are structurally unsafe for day-to-day living, and there are no visual signs of structural failure, which means you can continue living in your home.

The assessment showed us that, due to the way in which the 3Ls were constructed, any major impact, such as an explosion, could cause significant structural damage. There is no mains gas supply in the buildings, which significantly reduces the already small chance of an explosion happening and we have introduced extra measures to further reduce the chances of an explosion happening.

**Q – What if I do not want to move?**

**A** – Gentoo has carefully considered all options and unfortunately with both options to either strengthen or demolish the 3Ls, you will be required to move out of your home either temporarily or permanently.

If Gentoo decide to demolish the buildings, we hope you will work with us to find you a new home to avoid having to place you in emergency accommodation.