

TENANTS HANDBOOK



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ABOUT US

We have been established to provide supported accommodation for people with support needs to be independent in their community, particularly those with a learning disability, enduring mental health needs and autism. Support to our tenants is provided through contracts with care and support providers and we partner with many local authorities, local and national care and support providers, tenants, and their families.

This complimentary approach promotes choice and independent living, whilst protecting the rights and welfare of our tenants at the same time.

OUR VALUES

Our service is underpinned by our 'Core' values:

Independence - we believe that people with disabilities have a right to live independently with support if they need it.

Equal Opportunities - we believe in equal opportunities for all, regardless of race, cultural heritage, sexual orientation or disability.

Choice - we believe that people with disabilities should have choice

Respect - We believe people with disabilities should have respect, dignity and privacy.

Caring from the heart - we believe that care should be genuine and within the heart.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

You have the right to complain if you think something is wrong. We will try to fix the problem as quickly as possible. We take all complaints seriously no matter how small it is. We promise to deal with your complaints as quickly as possible and keep you informed of how your complaint is being dealt with

Step 1 - Talk to someone you can trust and explain to that person what your complaint is about. You could talk to your House Manager, your Key Worker, your Advocate, your Social Worker, or family. If you are still unhappy after talking to someone, you can go to Step 2

Step 2 - If your complaint is about your tenancy, accommodation or quality of service you can speak or write to the Tenant Liaison Officer.

If your complaint is about maintenance issues you can speak or write to the Maintenance Manager. In addition, you can call Head Office and speak to the Office Manager. If you are still unhappy you can go to Stage 3

Step 3 - You can speak or write to the Chief Executive



TYPES OF HOMES

We provide a range of homes throughout the United Kingdom to suit the needs of our tenants, including houses, bungalows and self-contained flats. Most of our homes are supported living schemes and the property is shared with other tenants. Wherever possible, we provide living areas that are self-contained with ensuite bathrooms and cooking areas. This is so you can have a high degree of privacy.



ALLOCATIONS

We only provide homes to people with a learning disability, mental health problems, or an acquired brain injury. Allocations are strictly on the basis that all of our tenants have a support package in place before moving in. Further details regarding our allocations policy can be requested from our Head Office.



YOUR TENANCY AGREEMENT

When you move into your new home you will be asked to sign a Tenancy Agreement. This is a document and you need to understand what it means. A Tenancy Agreement sets out your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. It is a legal contract between you and us. Under normal circumstances, most of our tenants are issued with an Assured Tenancy very important Agreement. However, under certain circumstances we may issue an Assured Short hold tenancy agreement until we are satisfied that the tenant will comply with their tenancy responsibilities. If you would like someone from our team to explain your tenancy agreement, please do not hesitate to contact our Head Office.

YOUR RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Your responsibility as a tenant is written into your tenancy agreement. These are some of the things you are responsible for:

- Paying your rent and utility charges
- Reporting any damage or maintenance problems
- Leaving the property in a lettable condition
- Paying for any damage

These are some of the things you should not do:

- Cause a nuisance
- Harass anyone
- Cause any damage to the property
- Use the property for illegal or immoral purposes

As a tenant you have certain rights, in the law. These are some of your rights as a tenant:

- The right to occupy your home in peaceful enjoyment
- The right to repairs and maintenance in your home
- The right to consultation and information
- The right to make improvements (Approval & responsibilities for costs need to be determined beforehand)
- The right to invite friends to your home and be responsible for their behaviour

For further details please refer to your tenancy agreement.



IMPORTANT!

If you break the terms and conditions of your Tenancy Agreement we may be forced to take legal action. This could possibly lead to you being asked to leave your home.



CHOICES & DECISIONS

We encourage all of their tenants to make choices and decisions regarding their home.

For example:

- Where you live and who you share with
- Decorating your bedroom and communal areas
- Paying bills
- What you eat



WHEN YOU MOVE IN

When you move into your new home your support provider will help you to make a claim for housing benefit and make arrangements to pay your bills. You will be given a key to your front door and to your bedroom. You will be asked to sign a tenancy agreement. Your bedroom should be newly decorated, clean and tidy. Ask your support staff to check the condition of your room before you move in and report any damage to us.



MOVING OUT OF YOUR HOME

If you are moving out of your home you will need to give us 4 weeks notice. Your room should be left in a good condition. Any damage to your room should be paid for before you leave.

WHAT WE PROVIDE

- Repairs and maintenance service
- Safety checks (Gas, Electric, Water etc)
- Fire safety equipment
- Furniture
- Large electrical appliances
- Floor coverings
- Garden Maintenance
- Window cleaning in communal areas



Please Note: It is the our policy to only replace items or equipment that have come to the end of their useful life through wear and tear.

RENT AND UTILITY CHARGES

All our tenants pay rent. The amount of rent you pay depends on the amenities in your home and on its size, type and location.

Your rent may be increased or decreased from time to time. You will be told in writing at least 28 days before any rent change.

It is your responsibility for paying the rent. If you are on benefits you may be able to claim Housing Benefit.

Your Utility Charge pays for things like gas, electricity and water charges. On average most tenants pay around £30.00 a week.

SAFETY & SECURITY

- Always lock doors and windows when leaving the property and leave a light on.
- Never leave keys under the doormat or hanging from a string behind the letterbox.
- Always ask for identity from people before letting them in.
- If you go away, cancel your milk and newspapers and let your neighbours know.
- Arrange for the Crime Prevention Officer to visit your home.
- Check that your smoke alarms and fire alarms work by testing them weekly.
- Keep all doors closed especially fire doors.
- Familiarise yourself with fire safety procedures. Ask your support staff to explain to you what to do if there is a fire.
- Report to our staff anything that might cause injury to someone.

SUPPORT TO MAINTAIN YOUR TENANCY

a. Your Support Provider

We are in partnership with various support providers. The support you receive will be in accordance with your assessed needs. Your support provider will help you to run your home and pay your bills. In addition, you can request that your support provider becomes your Appointee for benefits purposes who will then be able to deal with your welfare benefits for example, Housing Benefit, Income Support, Disability Living Allowance, and so on.

b. Tenancy Liaison and Quality Officer

We employ a Tenant Liaison and Quality Officer who is on hand to support tenants to maintain their tenancies and to ensure that all of our tenants receive a good service. The Tenant Liaison and Quality Officer can support you with any issues regarding your accommodation and tenancy, for example, complaints, arrears, moving on, co-tenants, neighbours, tenant participation, and paying rent.

REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

Supported Living File

If something is broken or needs replacing, we need to know straight away so we can fix or replace it. Each house is provided with a Supported Living File which has the following Request Forms:

- Maintenance Request Form
- Furniture/ Appliances/ Floor Covering Request Form

You or your support provider can fill in the forms and send them to Head Office using the contact details in the Supported Living File.

Emergencies

If you have an emergency between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday you can ring the office and our staff will try to sort out the problem quickly. We aim to attend all emergencies within 2 hours.

If the office is closed and you cannot wait, you can ring one of the contractors listed in the Supported Living File.

How long does it take?

If it is an emergency repair we will try to sort out the problem within 2 hours. Non-emergency repairs will be dealt with according to priority.

Typically:

Priority 1 (Emergency Repairs) within 2 hours Priority 2 (Urgent Repairs) within 24 hours

Priority 3 (Subject to Contract) within 3 days

Priority 4 (Rapid Response Repairs) within 10 days

SPECIAL ADAPTATIONS

Normally, any special adaptations to the property will be agreed with you or your support provider before you move in. We are under no obligation to carry out adaptations to properties unless arrangements are in place regarding costs and practicality of adaptation. If your needs change please contact Head Office where our staff can discuss with you how to meet your needs.

GENERAL INFORMATION

a. Pets

Pets are not to be kept on the premises without the written permission of us.

b. TV Licence

You are responsible for paying for your own TV licence.

c. Satellite TV

Satellite dishes and receivers are not to be installed on the premises without written permission from us.

d. Insurance

We do not have insurance that covers tenants personal property. Therefore, we advise all of our tenants to take out personal insurance to cover their contents against accidental damage, theft, etc.

e. Telephones

Installing telephone lines, extensions, and their associated costs, is the responsibility of tenants.



**WE ARE A
LEADING HOUSING
ASSOCIATION,
DRIVEN BY OUR
SOCIAL PURPOSE**



ZSDHOUSING
CIC HOUSING PROVIDER



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