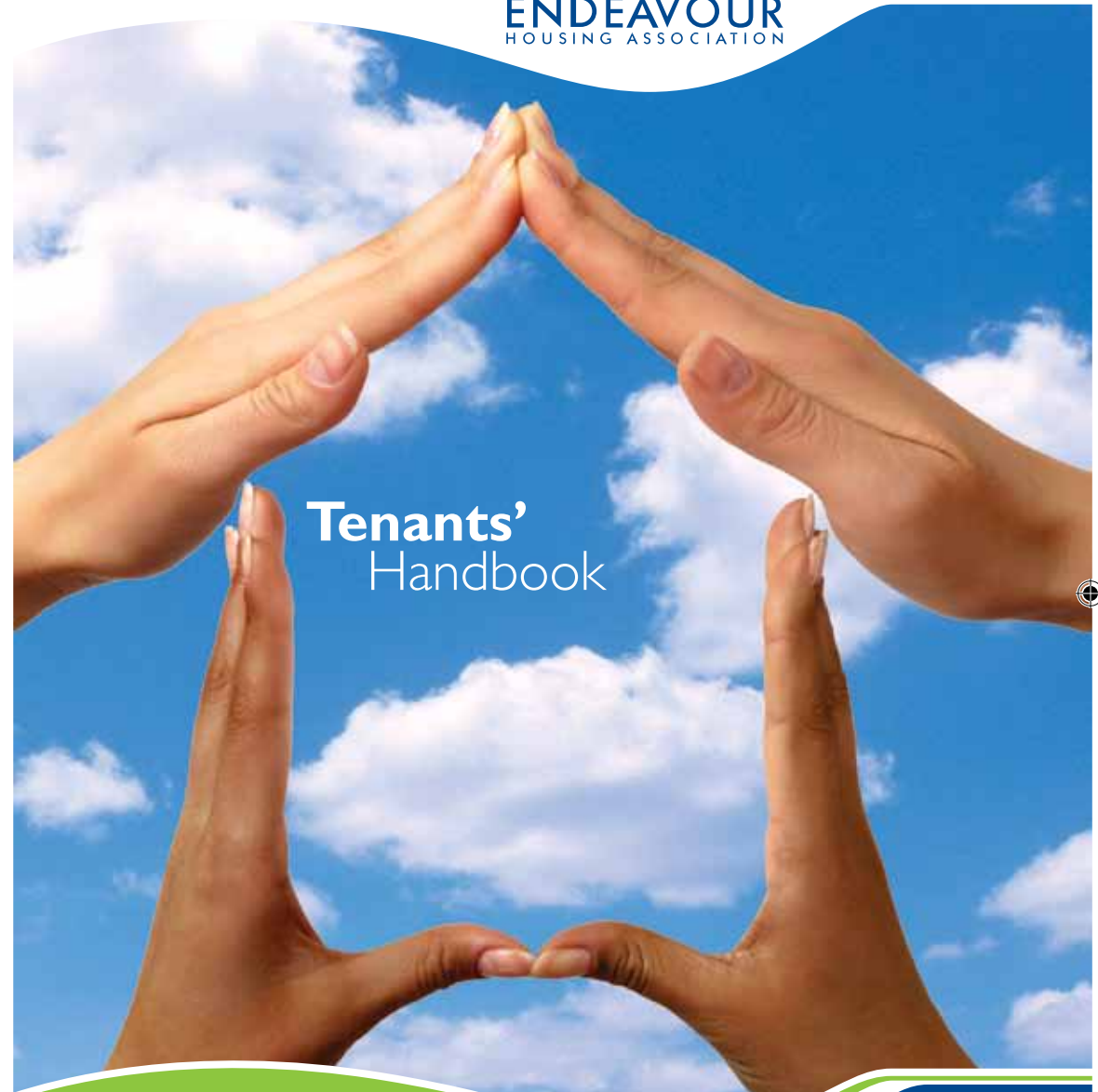




ENDEAVOUR
HOUSING ASSOCIATION



Tenants' Handbook

More than a landlord

Building Communities - Valuing People - Delivering Excellence

• Collaboration • Flexibility • Integrity • Professionalism • Ambition

Thank you for choosing Endeavour as your landlord. We hope you will be very happy in your new home.

These pages provide useful information and advice to help you make the most of your new tenancy. They aim to help you settle into your new home and answer many questions that you may have throughout your tenancy with us. As well as outlining your conditions, these pages contain information on your rights and responsibilities as a tenant and our rights and responsibilities as a landlord.

Please read these pages as they are your guide to the housing service.

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Section I

About Us

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- 2 Our Vision and Values
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Section 1

About Us

1. Who are we?

Endeavour Housing Association was set up by Cleveland Council of Churches in 1974. We are an independent non profit making organisation with charitable aims. We own over 2,000 properties and work across 12 local authority areas. We recognise the importance of partnership working with not only other agencies but with our residents.

We are run by a voluntary Board of Management. Board members are unpaid people who are elected by the Association and are committed to the communities we serve.

2. Our Vision and Values

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Vision

More than a Landlord.....

Building Communities - Valuing People – Delivering Excellence

What We Value

Collaboration

We work hard at being a good partner, employer and landlord by involving and empowering people and working with one other. We listen, learn and reflect. We place people and communities at the centre of all we do and we welcome and encourage challenge.

Flexibility

We provide local, personal and responsive services and individual services where needed. We encourage people to think creatively and imaginatively.

Integrity

We never promise what we cannot deliver and we work in an open and transparent way. We are committed to providing an equality of opportunity, we treat everyone with respect and we value people's differences. We own up when things do not go right and work hard at finding solutions.

Professionalism

We aim to deliver excellence in all we do. We are committed to working ethically and do all we can to help with environmental issues. We deliver value for money and ensure staff are highly trained and developed.

Ambition

Known as an organisation that "punches above its weight", we are courageous, enthusiastic and innovative. We are committed to growth and delivering bespoke solutions even when it's not the easy option. We are involved in challenging work that benefits communities.

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Section I

About Us

3. How to contact us

If you need to contact us about any aspect of your home or tenancy, or our services, you can do one of the following:

Phone

Ring 0800 980 9050 (free from a landline) or (01642) 796200.

If you have an emergency outside of office hours ring (01642) 726050.

Call into our main office

Endeavour House
St Marks Court
Thornaby
Stockton on Tees
TS17 6QN

Write to us

At the above address

Via email

Send us an email to info@endeavourha.co.uk

Visiting you at your home

We can arrange an appointment to visit you at your home to discuss your enquiry.

Section 2

Your Tenancy

In this section

- 1 Your tenancy
- 2 What are my rights?
- 3 What are my main responsibilities?
- 4 What happens if I ignore my responsibilities?
- 5 Anti Social Behaviour
- 6 Harassment and Hate Crime
- 7 What is Endeavour responsible for?
- 8 How many people can be on a tenancy agreement?
- 9 What happens if my relationship breaks down?
- 10 Will you change my rent?
- 11 Am I responsible for Council Tax?
- 12 Ending my tenancy



Section 2

Your Tenancy

1. Your Tenancy

When you move into an Endeavour property, you are required to sign a tenancy agreement between you (as tenant) and us (as landlord) setting out the things that we both agree to do. It is a legally binding contract and states what legal rights and responsibilities we both have.

If your tenancy commenced after 12th January 1989 you will be an Assured tenant. This type of tenancy agreement was introduced by the Housing Act (1988). As an assured tenant you have security of tenure and cannot lose your home unless the Association obtains a Possession Order from the County Court. The Association can only apply for a possession order if one of the grounds specified in the Housing Act (1988) applies.

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2. What are my rights?

As an assured tenant, you have the following rights:

- Right to repair
- Right to succession
- Right to exchange
- Right to be consulted on changes to your tenancy agreement
- Right to acquire (in certain circumstances)
- Right to terminate
- Right to make improvements

The above are subject to certain conditions- please refer to your tenancy agreement

3. What are my main responsibilities?

- **Rent** - Your rent is due in advance each week.
- **Use of Premises** – You must only use the property for residential purposes and as the tenants only or principle home.
- **Responsibility for others** – You are responsible for any persons living in or visiting the property and they must not cause a nuisance or annoyance to other neighbours and the public at large i.e. abusive behaviour or playing loud music.
- **Repairs** – You must report to the Association any repair or defect for which the Association is responsible for as soon as you become aware something may be wrong.
- **Access to property** – You must allow our employees, contractors and people acting on our instructions access to the property.
- **Alterations** – You must obtain written permission from the Association prior to carrying out any alterations on your property. Typically, future maintenance of any alterations will be your responsibility.
- **Pets** – You must keep under control any animals kept at the property. Written permission must be obtained from the Association before keeping any animals where there are communal areas i.e. flats.
- **External** – It is your responsibility to keep any yard or garden in a clean and tidy condition.
- **Internal Decoration** – The interior of the property must be kept in a good and clean condition and you are responsible for the decoration of all internal parts of the property.

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Section 2

Your Tenancy

4. What happens if I ignore my responsibilities?

If you do not comply with the terms of your tenancy agreement, we will contact you to discuss this further. We will give you every opportunity to support you and help you resolve the issues however, if there is no improvement, we may undertake legal action to repossess your home.

The Association can only end the tenancy by obtaining a court order for possession of the Premises on one of the grounds listed in Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1988.

5. Anti Social Behaviour

Anti social behaviour is behaviour by one person or group of people that unreasonably interferes with the quality of life of someone else.

We know that most tenants are thoughtful and do not want to cause a nuisance to those living nearby. As the tenant, you are responsible for the behaviour of everyone living or visiting your home.

Examples of Anti social Behaviour include:

- Noise such as television, music systems, loud parties, shouting, etc
- Dumping rubbish
- Dogs barking at unreasonable hours
- Doing DIY at unreasonable hours
- Sounding car horns, slamming car doors particularly at unreasonable hours
- Graffiti
- Aggressive and threatening language and behaviour

We hope that you will be able to sort out any problems with your neighbours by talking to each other. If this does not resolve the issue, we work with a number of agencies that will be able to assist. For more information on reporting Anti social Behaviour, contact your housing officer.

6. Harassment and Hate Crime

We will not tolerate harassment or hate crime. We are committed to tackling any incidents of harassment or hate crime with other agencies in a swift and decisive manner.

Harassment is an offence committed against a person or property to intimidate people.

Examples can include:

- Name calling
- Threats to peoples homes or property
- Abusive letters or graffiti
- Arson or attempted arson
- Physical attacks

Hate Crime is a specific type of harassment committed against a person or property because of their:

- Ethnic background • Nationality
- Religion • Sex • Sexuality • Disability

If we have evidence that a tenant is responsible for any incidents of harassment or hate crime, we will take action that may result in them losing their home.

Section 2

Your Tenancy

7. What is Endeavour responsible for?

We are responsible for the structure and exterior of the property including:

- drains, gutters and external pipes
- the roof
- outside walls, outside doors, windowsills, window catches, sash cords and window frames including necessary external painting and decorating
- chimneys, chimney stacks and flues but not including sweeping
- pathways, steps or other means of access
- plasterwork
- garage and stores
- boundary walls and fences

We will repair and keep in working order the following amenities where provided:

- installation for the supply of water, gas, electricity and for sanitation and rubbish disposal
- installation for space heating and water heating
- lift service and other communal amenities

We are also responsible for:

- Right to Consultation - We will consult with you before making any changes in matters of housing management or maintenance which are likely to have a substantial effect on the tenant.

- Right to Information – We will give you information on the way we manage our properties.
- Insuring your home, (you are responsible for the contents of the property).
- Giving you at least four weeks notice of any changes in rent or related charges.

8. How many people can be on a tenancy agreement?

Tenancies are usually in one or two names. For further information, contact your housing officer.

9. What happens if my relationship breaks down?

If you have a joint tenancy and one of you wishes to move out, you must contact your housing officer. In most cases we can arrange for the tenancy to continue in one name however, there are exceptions to this. If you are not the tenant, you need to contact your local council who will be able to provide you with advice and assistance in finding a new home.

10. Will you change my rent?

The Association may from time to time increase or decrease rent or any related charges however, you will be advised at least one calendar month in advance.

11. Am I responsible for Council Tax?

You are responsible for Council Tax and it is your responsibility to notify the Council of any changes that may affect your Council Tax or any benefit received for Council Tax.

Section 2

Your Tenancy

12. Ending the tenancy

You can end your tenancy by giving four weeks written notice. For further information, contact your housing officer.

We can end your tenancy if we obtain a court order giving us possession.

Section 3

Moving In

In this section

- 1 When can I move in?
- 2 Quality of accommodation
- 3 Energy Performance Certificate
- 4 Decoration
- 5 Insurance
- 6 Moving in checklist
- 7 How do I claim housing benefit?
- 8 Electricity and Gas
- 9 Can I make improvements to my home?
- 10 Can I fit a satellite dish or Cable TV?
- 11 Follow up visit

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Section 3

Moving In

1. When can I move in?

Your housing officer will contact you and agree a date for your new tenancy to start. Your tenancy will always start on a Monday and you will be responsible for paying the rent from the date your tenancy starts.

3. Quality of accommodation

When one of our properties becomes empty, we will inspect it to find out if there are any necessary repairs before it is let to someone else. Sometimes we may need to do minor repairs after you have moved in and if this is the case, we will give you information as to when the work will be carried out.

There may be some programmed work such as a new kitchen or bathroom that is due. Your housing officer will be able to provide further details.

You are responsible for certain things such as:

- plumbing and drains for any extra appliances
- altering doors to suit your floor coverings
- altering kitchen units/doors to fit your appliances

If you find other repairs are required, you should report these to us. See your repair handbook or contact your housing officer for further information.

3. Energy Performance Certificate

We must give you a copy of the energy performance certificate for the property that you are moving into. This certificate shows how energy efficient the property is and gives information on the cost of running a property and how to save money.

4. Decoration

The decoration of the property is your responsibility. If however, the property needs decorating because the existing decoration is damaged or dirty, we will arrange for you to receive a decoration allowance as a contribution towards any costs incurred. For further information, contact your housing officer.

5. Insurance

You should make sure that you have contents insurance to cover your furniture and other belongings. We insure the structure and our fittings but are not responsible for your belongings. In cases of broken glazing, fires, floods, burst water tank/pipes that damage your belongings, we are not responsible.

6. Moving in check list

Don't forget to contact the following where necessary:

- TV licensing • Banks/Building Societies • Schools
- Council Tax • Housing/Council Tax Benefit Department
- Benefits Agency • Electric and gas suppliers
- Doctors • Dentists
- DVLA
- Credit Card Companies
- Your employer
- Water company

Section 3

Moving In

7. How do I claim Housing Benefit?

If you are on a low income or in receipt of benefits, you will be able to claim for housing benefit. You will need to contact your local councils Housing Benefit Section to make a claim.

8. Electricity and Gas

It is your responsibility to contact your electricity and gas supplier.

It is unlikely that the property you are moving into will have gas or electric. Once you have been connected, we will arrange for the relevant safety checks to be carried out. This must be done before you move in.

24 Gas and electric meters are the property of the company that supplies your gas and electric. If you have any queries regarding your meter, you will need to contact your supplier direct.

9. Can I make improvements to my home?

If you want to make any improvements or alterations to the property, you will need to obtain written permission from the Association. Future maintenance of any improvements or alterations will typically be your responsibility.

10. Can I fit a satellite dish or Cable TV?

You will need written permission from the Association to fit a satellite dish or Cable TV.

11. Follow up visit

Your housing officer will arrange to come and see you within six weeks of you moving into your new home. If you need any help or information before then, contact your housing officer.

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Section 4

Paying Your Rent

In this section

- 1 How do I pay my rent?
- 2 How do I claim housing benefit?
- 3 When is rent due?
- 4 Rent Statements
- 5 How much is my rent?
- 6 How do we set your rent?
- 7 Service Charges
- 8 What happens if I cannot pay my rent?
- 9 What are the consequences of rent arrears?

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Section 4

Paying Your Rent

1. How do I pay my rent?

- You can pay your rent at any post office or shop that displays the Paypoint sign. A Paypoint card will be sent out to you after you have signed your tenancy agreement
- By direct debit
- By standing order
- Online via our website www.endeavourha.co.uk
- Debit card in person at our Head Office or over the phone with your paypoint card
- Cheque. You can pay by cheque at our Head Office
- Cash. You can pay cash at our Head Office

For further information on paying your rent, contact your housing officer.

2. How do I claim Housing Benefit?

If you are on a low income or in receipt of Housing Benefit, you may be entitled to housing benefit. You will need to contact your local councils Housing Benefit section. Your housing officer will be able to assist you with this. It is important that you complete and return the forms as soon as possible. You will need to provide proof of identify, income and your National Insurance number.

3. When is rent due?

Your rent is due each week. This means that you must have paid your rent by Friday (or the last working day if there is a bank holiday at the end of the week).

If you want to pay at longer intervals i.e. monthly, you should make sure that you make payments in advance.

4. Rent Statements

We will send you a rent statement twice a year that shows:

- how much rent we have charged you
- what you have paid
- your housing benefit entitlement
- the balance on your account

5. How much is my rent?

You will be issued with a breakdown of rent and services charges (see over page) when you sign for your tenancy agreement.

6. How do we set your rent?

We set our rents in line with government policy which requires all housing association and local authorities to set their rents in this way. We review the rents each year and we will tell you about any change in the rent for your home. We will give you at least one month's notice of any changes.

Section 4

Paying Your Rent

7. Service Charges

If you have a tenancy where we provide extra services such as cleaning, provision of laundry facilities, gardening, etc your rent will include a service charge. We review service charges each year and they are based on the costs for the past 12 months. We will tell you about any changes and will give you at least one month's notice of any changes.

8. What happens if I cannot pay my rent?

If you are unable to pay your rent, you must contact your housing officer immediately. Your housing officer is able to provide advice and assistance to ensure that you are claiming all the benefits that you are entitled to and also to make an affordable and realistic payment plan to repay any arrears.

The money we receive from rent pays for services, improvements and repairs. If rent is not paid, it affects our ability to provide services. We will take action against tenants who do not pay their rent or make an agreement with us.

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9. What are the consequences of rent arrears?

If you do not have a clear rent account, it is unlikely that you will be able to transfer or exchange to another home.

You may have a County Court Judgement issued against you. This will affect your credit rating, which could mean that you are refused credit, mortgage or other rented accommodation in the future.

If we do have to take court action, you will be responsible for any costs incurred.

If you lose your home as a result of rent arrears, you may be seen as having made yourself intentionally homeless and the council would not have a duty to find you alternative accommodation.

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Section 5

Repairs and Improvements

In this section

- 1 How can I report a repair?
- 2 What information do you need when I report a repair?
- 3 What happens if I live in a flat/neighbouring property that leaks into the property below/next door?
- 4 What to do in an emergency
- 5 Repair response times
- 6 Appointments
- 7 What happens if we do not complete the repair?
- 8 Repair Contractors
- 9 Our repair responsibilities
- 10 Your repair responsibilities
- 11 Can I carry out improvements?
- 12 Adaptations
- 13 Dampness and condensation
- 14 Gas servicing
- 15 Asbestos



Section 5

Repairs and Improvements

1. How can I report a repair?

You can report a repair by:

- Telephone on (01642) 796200 or freephone 0800 980 9050
- In person at our offices
- In writing
- Via your warden in sheltered schemes
- Online via our website www.endeavourha.co.uk

2. What information do you need when I report a repair?

If you need to report a repair, you should tell us:

- Your name and address
- A contact telephone number
- The best time to gain access to your property i.e. morning or afternoon
- As much information about the repair/fault as possible. For further information on the diagnosis, refer to your repair handbook.

3. What happens if I live in a flat/neighbouring property that leaks into the property below/next door?

In the event of a bad leak causing damage to another property, we will make every attempt to contact you. If we are unable to contact you, your housing officer will meet a contractor at the property and we will gain access to your property to carry out the repair.

4. What to do in an emergency?

We provide emergency cover outside office hours, over weekends and bank holidays. If you need urgent assistance, call (01642) 726050 which will take you to a 24 hour emergency call centre. You can also report out of office hours emergency repairs on oohrepairs@endeavourha.co.uk. This is checked regularly and is available for people who have difficulties using the telephone.

Section 5

Repairs and Improvements

5. Repair response times

Some repairs are more urgent than others. We give each repair a priority however, in exceptional circumstances i.e. a vulnerable tenant which may be particularly inconvenienced; we may give a repair a higher priority than usual.

Emergency Repairs

These are repairs that affect your health and safety. We will make them safe or, where possible, complete the repair within 24 hours or sooner depending on the nature of the repair. Examples of emergency repairs are:

- Losing all electrical power
- Blocked main drain
- Blocked toilet if only one available
- Burst pipes
- Dangerous structures
- Gas leaks
- Complete heating failure where no back up available in Winter

If there is an emergency at night or at the weekend, we will only send a contractor if the problem is so serious that it cannot wait until the next working day. This is because sending out contractors at this time is most expensive. If we send a contractor to a fault that is not an emergency, we may charge you any additional cost incurred.

Urgent Repairs

We will carry out urgent repairs within 3 working days. This type of repair may impact on your health and safety or the comfort of your home.

Examples of urgent repairs are:

- Loss of hot water or heating supply that has no back up
- Toilet not flushing
- Water leaks that cannot be contained
- Leaking roof

Routine Repairs

These are non urgent repairs that we will complete within 20 working days. These are generally jobs that can be left without causing serious inconvenience to you or risk further damage to your home.

Examples of routine repairs are:

- Indoor joinery repairs, general woodwork, etc
- Small plumbing jobs i.e. dripping tap
- Gates and fencing
- Repairs to fittings such as worktops or cupboards

Section 5

Repairs and Improvements

6. Appointments

We will offer appointments on most repairs. Emergency repairs get priority attendance. We can make appointments in the morning or afternoon from Monday to Friday. In some circumstances weekend appointments are available but these may be reserved for tenants with particular needs who would face hardship as a result of trying to keep a weekday appointment.

If we are not able to keep the appointment we will phone you if we have a contact telephone number.

If you cannot keep the appointment, please let us know in good time. If we attend an appointment that you have made but not cancelled, you may be charged for the cost.

38 If you are not at home when the contractor calls, they will leave a card. It is then your responsibility to arrange another appointment or we will cancel the repair.

7. What happens if we do not complete the repair?

If we need to do another repair to finish the job or need additional parts, the contractor will let you know before they leave. This is often the case with Emergency repairs where the priority is to make safe or secure.

8. Repair Contractors

If we need to do another repair to finish the job or need additional parts, the contractor will let you know before they leave. This is often the case with Emergency repairs where the priority is to make safe or secure.

We are committed to customer care and expect our contractors to share the same commitment. Each contractor will carry identification and you should always ask to see this.

All our contractors must follow a code of conduct and we expect our contractors to:

- Be polite and courteous
- Behave in a professional manner
- Agree to a suitable appointment
- Aim to complete the job first time if parts are readily available
- Respond positively to tenants complaints
- Be respectful of you and your home
- Not to smoke in or around your home
- Comply with confidentiality guidelines
- Complete the job to a high standard
- Comply with safe working practices

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Section 5

Repairs and Improvements

9. Our repair responsibilities

There are certain types of repairs that we are responsible for including the following:

- Maintaining the structure of your home, including drains and external pipes
- The roof
- Repair and maintain installations for the supply of gas, electricity, water and sanitation. This includes basins, sinks, baths and toilets. Installations for heating rooms and water.
- Any repairs in communal/shared areas
- Paths, steps or other means of access
- Integral garage and stores
- Boundary walls and fences
- Plasterwork

For further information on what we are responsible for, see your repair handbook or contact your housing officer.

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10. Your repair responsibilities

You are responsible for keeping your home in a good and clean condition and for insuring the contents of your home. You are also responsible for:

- Decoration of your home
- Maintaining the garden or yard
- Any repairs caused by neglect, deliberate damage to the property or forced entry if you get locked out
- Floor coverings
- Glazing (irrespective of how this may have been damaged)
- Taking reasonable precautions to prevent damage to the property by fire, frost, burst water pipes or blocked drains
- Clearing any blockages in sinks or basins that you have caused
- Fitting of any appliances supplied or alterations carried out by yourself including TV aerials, washing machines, tumble dryers, dishwashers, cookers and adapting any doors to fit appliances or carpets
- Light bulbs
- Replacing keys and locks if you lose the key or lock yourself out
- Toilet seats
- Clothes posts
- Chimney sweeps

For further information on what you are responsible for, see your repair handbook or contact your housing officer.

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Section 5

Repairs and Improvements

11. Can I carry out improvements?

You may carry out improvements or alterations to your home. You must however, get written permission before you start any work. You should provide details of plans and drawings where appropriate and full details of what you want to do. We need to make sure that the work you carry out will not damage your home or affect your neighbours.

If we do not give you permission for a particular improvement or alteration, we will write to you giving details. You will be breaching your tenancy agreement if you continue with work if you have not got permission. You will also be responsible for the cost of putting the property back to its original condition.

12. Adaptations

If you have problems moving around or coping in your home, we can help by adapting your home to better suit your needs. We can provide handrails, special taps, over bath showers, level access showers, etc. We will work closely with social services as they that may also be able to provide grant funding for any adaptations.

An occupational therapist will need to call and see you so they can recommend the most appropriate alterations.

In some cases it may be better for you to move to more suitable accommodation, and if so, we will visit you and discuss this with you.

13. Dampness and condensation

Condensation happens when there is too much moisture in the air. There is always moisture in the air but extra can be caused by:

- cooking or boiling water
- baths and showers
- drying clothes indoors

Warm moist air condenses and forms water when it cools, for example, when it touches a cool surface. In your home these are outside walls, mirrors, windows, wall tiles and even clothes. If this condensation cannot dry out, it will cause mould to form on walls, in cupboards, on windowsills and mildew to form on clothes.

For further information on how to avoid condensation, see your repairs handbook or contact your housing officer, but by keeping your home warm and well insulated you will minimise the effects of condensation.

Section 5

Repairs and Improvements

14. Gas Servicing

We will service your gas heating appliances every year. It is part of your tenancy agreement that you allow us access to do this work. If you do not allow us access for this work to be carried out, we will take legal action to get access. You will also be responsible for any costs for taking this action.

We will check that they are working safely and properly. By checking and servicing your heating appliances we can make sure that they are working efficiently. This will reduce your bills and help reduce the damage to the environment.

If you smell gas or fumes phone TRANSCO the gas emergency number on 0800 111 999.

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15. Asbestos

Many people worry about asbestos but, we have a rigorous policy which manages any asbestos containing materials in our homes.

What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that has been used in a range of building materials to make them more rigid and fire resistant. Asbestos is found in many products around the home such as behind gas fires or used in oven door seals, ironing boards and oven gloves.

You may also find asbestos in the following areas:

- Garage and shed roofs
- Linings for walls, ceilings and doors

- Central heating flues
- Eaves (part of the roof that meets or overhangs the walls of a building)
- Gutters and rainwater pipes

Artex and Textured Coatings

The use of textured coatings was high throughout the 1970's and 1980's so it's likely your home has a textured coating containing asbestos. Asbestos is safe if not damaged, and coated with a sealant such as paint. Do not sand, drill, break off or attempt any work on textured coatings unless you have had written permission to do so, as this could release fibres into the air. If the artex is damaged, contact us and we will arrange to repair it.

What are we doing about Asbestos?

We have arranged for surveys to be carried out in those properties where Asbestos materials might have been used. If we find Asbestos in your home we will let you know. We do not remove Asbestos because, if undisturbed and in good condition, it is not a danger. If a repair or improvement work involves disturbing Asbestos, we will make sure that we use contractors who are licensed to deal with Asbestos.

What should I do if I think there is Asbestos in my home?

- Do not try to remove it or tamper with it
- Do not sand, drill or saw the material
- Contact us for advice

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Section 6

Your Neighbourhood

In this section

- 1 Gardens and yards
- 2 Rubbish and Recycling
- 3 Abandoned vehicles
- 4 Dogs
- 5 Rats, mice and other pests
- 6 Estate Inspections

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Section 6

Your Neighbourhood

1. Gardens and yards

You are responsible for the upkeep of your garden or yard. Gardens and yards should be kept free from rubbish. Untidy and overgrown gardens can spoil the appearance of an estate. We will regularly inspect our estates and contact tenants who don't maintain their gardens. If you fail to take action, we may do the work and charge you for it.

If you live in sheltered accommodation, we will maintain any open plan gardens or areas.

2. Rubbish and Recycling

The local council is responsible for the collection of household rubbish and recycling. Different councils have different arrangements. For further information for your area, contact your local council.

3. Abandoned vehicles

The local council is responsible for removing any abandoned vehicles from the highway or nearby areas. For further information, contact your local council.

4. Dogs

You are responsible for keeping your dogs under control and not allowing them to roam. Action will be taken against any tenants who fail to keep their dog under control. Many local councils have dog warden services that can remove stray dogs. For further information, contact your local council.

5. Rats, mice and other pests

If you have a problem with rats, mice or other pests in your home or the nearby area, contact your local council Environmental Health Department for advice and assistance.

A charge is usually made by the local council for treating pests and vermin.

6. Estate Inspections

We will regularly inspect our estates to make sure that the properties and areas are kept to a standard that has been agreed by our tenants and partners.

We publicise dates and times of estate inspections in advance in our newsletter. If you would like to attend an estate inspection, contact your housing officer for more information.

Section 7

Resident Involvement

In this section

- 1 Making a Difference
- 2 Ways of being involved
- 3 Tenants Newsletter
- 4 Surveys
- 5 Tenants Advisory Panel
- 6 Focus Groups
- 7 Tenant and Resident Associations
- 8 Estate Inspections
- 9 Mystery Shopping
- 10 4U Group
- 11 Older Persons Group
- 12 Tenants' Conference

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Section 7

Resident Involvement

1. Making a Difference

We want as many people as possible to get involved in improving our services to ensure that we meet the needs of our tenants and the communities that they live in.

Our aims are:

- To ensure that everyone that uses our services is able to make a real difference to policies, service standards and the way in which we work.
- To ensure that our opportunities for involvement represent the diversity of the communities that we work in.
- To ensure that anyone, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion and sexual orientation can become involved at a level that suits them.

By getting involved you can:

- make your area a better place to live
- have a say in decision making that affects your housing service
- give us a better understanding of your needs
- give us your views about our services
- help us to provide a better quality of service
- develop your own skills and knowledge

We will pay reasonable expenses, such as travelling and childcare.

2. Ways of being involved

There are a number of ways that you can be involved.

You can be involved in:

- Decision making
- Influencing decisions
- Receiving information

The following pages will provide you with information about some of the methods of involvement.

Further information about Resident Involvement can be found in the following publications:

- Resident Involvement – your guide to getting involved
- Resident Involvement Strategy

Alternatively, speak to your Housing Officer, or the Resident Involvement Officer

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3. Tenants Newsletter

We publish with our editorial panel our newsletter “Endeavour” twice a year.

This will give you information on:

- How we are performing
- Details about our services
- Details of new properties
- Details of events such as gardening competitions, conferences, etc
- Feedback on surveys

We are always interested in ideas for future articles and like to know your views on the newsletter.

Our newsletter editorial panel consists of tenants who meet prior to the newsletter being published. This group looks at the content of the newsletter and makes suggestions regarding the content and layout.

4. Surveys/Questionnaires

We regularly carry out surveys by post and phone to find out your views on our services so we can get an idea where we are performing well and where we need to improve.

5. Tenants Advisory Panel (TAP)

We are committed to having residents involved in every aspect of its business. The Tenants Advisory Panel is open for all tenants and has a real influence in developing and shaping the future of the organisation.

6. Focus Groups and Thematic Groups

Focus Groups are where staff and tenants get together on an informal basis to discuss specific issues – this is usually a one-off meeting.

Thematic Groups meet to discuss issues that affect a particular service area. Currently there are thematic groups in the following service areas:

- Repairs and maintenance
- Housing management
- Development

7. Tenant and Resident Associations (TARAs)

Tenants associations are where a group of tenants on an estate, in a village or scheme get together to have a collective voice to tackle local issues.

8. Estate Inspections

You can join us on a walk around your estate and help us identify issues facing the residents. The dates of inspections will be published in advance in our newsletter and on our website.

9. Mystery Shopping

Our mystery shoppers visit or phone our offices to see if we are delivering the service that we have set.

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10. 4U Group

The 4U Group meets monthly to champion the needs to people with disabilities. The group is regularly attended by guest speakers, who provide members of the group with up to date information on various topics.

11. Older Persons Group

The Older Persons Group is open to all tenants over the age of 60. This group enables our older tenants to express their views on things that are important to them.

12. Tenants' Conference

56 The Tenants' Conference is held bi-annually and is organised by members of the Tenants Advisory Panel.

The conference is advertised in the tenants' newsletter and via tenant and resident groups – all tenants are invited to attend the conference.

If you would like to be more involved in any of our services, please contact your Housing Officer, or speak to the Resident Involvement Officer.

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Moving On

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- 2 Mutual Exchanges
- 3 Ending your tenancy



Section 8

Moving On

1. Transfer

You can apply for a move to another one of our properties. We will give priority to tenants who need to move due to:

- Property being unsuitable (too small or too big)
- Medical reasons
- Receive or provide support
- Other special circumstances

For more information on transferring to another property, contact your housing officer.

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2. Mutual Exchanges

A mutual exchange is where you find another tenant to swap homes with. The tenant could be an Endeavour tenant, a council tenant or another housing associations tenant.

If you find someone to swap with, you need to contact your housing officer who will arrange to visit you. You must have written permission and that of any other landlord before you move.

We will not be able to give you permission if the person you want to exchange with does not meet the criteria of our lettings policy.

We may refuse permission if:

- The property you or your exchange partner is either too large or too small
- You have a Notice of Seeking Possession or a Possession Order served on you

- You have outstanding rent arrears or tenant responsibility repairs
- The property you wish to exchange with has been specially adapted for people with disabilities and you do not have need for these adaptations

For further information on mutual exchanges, contact your housing officer.

3. Ending your tenancy

If you need to end your tenancy, you must do the following:

- Contact us to get a form to end your tenancy
- Give us four weeks notice, to end on a Sunday
- Provide us with a new address and contact telephone number
- Provide us with any alarm codes for the property
- Inform your gas and electric suppliers that you are moving and give them your meter readings
- Inform the council tax department and the Housing Benefit section
- Arrange for all of your mail to be redirected
- Pay any outstanding rechargeable repairs or rent
- Complete any repairs, improvements or decoration you have started

You must leave the property and garden/yard in a good, clean and tidy condition, having removed all of your belongings. If we have to remove anything, clean your property, award decoration allowances, tidy your yard/garden or carry out any repairs that were your responsibility, we will charge you.

Keys must be returned by noon on the Monday following the day that your

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tenancy ends (or the next working day if there is a bank holiday at the beginning of the week) and your rent must be paid up to this date. If you do not return the keys, we will continue to charge you rent until you do so or until we change the locks. You will be charged for this.

For further information on ending your tenancy, contact your housing officer.

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Section 9

Complaints

I. Complaints

We aim to provide a high-quality service that meets your needs and expectations. We do however know that at times we do not get things right first time.

We want to learn from complaints made to us. If you are not happy with our service, we want to hear about it so we can change the way we do things and improve our services in the future.

We will try and resolve your complaint immediately however if we can not do this, we will contact you within two working days of receiving your complaint to let you know who is dealing with it and if needed, to get more information. We will try and investigate your complaint within 10 working days. If we are unable to do this within 10 working days, we will write to you and let you know.

A complaint can be made in the following ways:

- In person
- In writing
- By telephone
- By email complaints@endeavourha.co.uk
- Via our website www.endeavourha.co.uk
- Through another person ie support worker, solicitor

If we find that we have failed to provide a high level of service we will:

- Write to you giving you an explanation
- Apologise

- If appropriate, pay you compensation in accordance with our compensation policy
- If appropriate, review our policies and systems so we can get things right in the future

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