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Introduction

This Handbook has been produced by Yoker Housing Association Limited to provide useful information for those tenants and owner-occupier residents living within the Association's area of operation and who are provided with services by the Association.

The Handbook is a reference document that you may refer to for guidance on various matters such as:

- The Association and how it operates;
- Rights and responsibilities of tenants and owner-occupiers; and
- The Association's rights and responsibilities as a landlord and factor.

The handbook aims to give general advice only, and does not form part of any legal agreement. Please let us know if you have problems understanding any information contained in the handbook or if you have any suggestions or comments for future updates. We value your feedback on our services to ensure continuous improvement.

This document will be made available in different formats and languages on request.

Information for tenants and owner-occupiers can also be found by visiting the Association's website at www.yokerha.org.uk

The Association

The Association is an independent non-profit making organisation, which was set up in 1979 in order to improve the sub-standard housing conditions of residents in the Yoker area of Glasgow. The Association is a registered Charity with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), Scottish Charity Number SC036604. The Association's main aim is to provide good-quality housing which is affordable to those in the greatest housing need.

The Association is managed by a committee of volunteers, known as the Management Committee, and is mostly formed from members of the local community. In order to ensure that the Association's business is carried out in a fair and accountable manner, the Management Committee has implemented a number of policies and procedures for the management of the Association's affairs. These policies include but are not exclusive to lettings, estate management, anti-social behaviour, harassment and complaints. A copy of any Association policy is available on request at the Association's office. Key policies can also be downloaded from the Association's website by visiting www.yokerha.org.uk.

As a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) the Association is registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The Scottish Housing Regulator is an independent body which monitors the Association to ensure that it is complying with good practice in the conduct of its affairs and that it is allocating and managing its houses to a satisfactory standard.

As well as providing a monitoring role, the Scottish Housing Regulator in its previous form as Communities Scotland provided grants for the Association to buy, improve and build houses. However this development function has now been substantially transferred to Glasgow City Council. Therefore future development funding will be provided to the Association by Glasgow City Council's Department for Neighbourhood and Regeneration Services (NRS).

The Association's Membership

The Association operates an open Membership Policy and anybody may apply to become a member subject to the Association's rules. Membership of the Association costs one pound and members of the Association may stand for election to the Management Committee at the Association's Annual General Meeting.

If you are not already a member but are interested in becoming a member of the Association, you can collect a Membership Application Form from the Association's office. This should be returned with your one pound membership fee to the Secretary at the Association's Registered Office (see page 3).

The Association's Management Committee

The Management Committee membership may be filled by as many as fifteen persons (including co-optees). At least one third of the members of the Management Committee must stand for re-election at each Annual General Meeting. All co-opted members of the Management Committee must stand for re-election after the Annual General Meeting.

The Association's Management Committee (Continued)

The Management Committee usually has one meeting per month at which it monitors the Association's affairs and implements or reviews policies and procedures. These meetings deal with all business activities from housing management, development, finance and corporate governance.

Management Committee meetings generally last no longer than two hours and as such members may not spend more than a few hours of their time per month fulfilling their duties. Attendance at conferences, seminars and training courses is encouraged by the Association. All participation is entirely voluntary and Management Committee members receive no remuneration or other benefits from their membership.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Management Committee then please contact the Association for further advice and information.

The Association's Staff

The Management Committee does not participate directly in the operational management of the Association on a day to day basis. This function is carried out by staff employed by the Management Committee to manage the Association and develop systems and procedures for the implementation of agreed policy.

The Association's Registered Office

The Association's Registered Office and main place of business is:

2310 Dumbarton Road

Yoker

Glasgow

G14 0JS

Telephone: (0141) 950 9050

Fax: (0141) 950 6090

Direct Lines

Development: (0141) 950 9051

Maintenance: (0141) 950 9051

Housing Management: (0141) 950 9052

Finance: (0141) 950 9053

Website: www.yokerha.org.uk

The office is open to the public from 9:00am until 5:00pm Monday to Thursday and 09:00am until 4:00pm Fridays but is closed for lunch on a daily basis between 1:00pm and 2:00pm. However you may leave a message for the relevant department during the lunch hour through the Association's automated answering service. Please speak slowly and clearly, always remembering to leave your name, address and contact telephone number.

In the case of emergencies during periods when the office is closed, please telephone 0141 950 9050 to obtain emergency contractor details.

Complaints

The Association is committed to providing the best possible service to its customers. If any of the services you receive do not meet your expectations or you are unhappy with how any of your enquiries have been dealt with, we want to know.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of the Association's service that you have received you can make a complaint in accordance with the Association's complaints handling procedure.

If, having gone through this process, you are still not happy with the Association, you can ask the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman to consider your complaint. The Ombudsman is independent, and has the power to investigate complaints of maladministration (for example, if the Association has not followed its rules or dealt with a complaint within a reasonable time). If the Ombudsman decides that the complaint is justified he can ask the Association to take steps to put matters right. The Ombudsman may be contacted as follows:

In Person The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS

Post: FREEPOST SPSO
Freephone: 0800 337 7330
Online: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us
Website: www.spsso.org.uk

General

The Association acts as factor / property manager for over two hundred owner-occupier residents. The property management service provided by the Association covers buildings insurance, common repairs, planned maintenance, management and administration. The Association's powers, duties and responsibilities are detailed in your property's Deed of Conditions or Title Deeds (where no Deed of Conditions exists).

In carrying out its property management function, the Association aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To arrange and oversee the management, day to day maintenance, general upkeep and any improvements which are required in respect of the common parts of the building, including planned maintenance;
- To use delegated authority to instruct minor repairs up to a fixed sum without reference to the owners concerned or to obtain the necessary authority from such owners where the costs are likely to exceed the authorised amount;
- To ensure that the Association meets all its obligations in terms of property law and complies with any guidance issued by the Scottish Housing Regulator; and
- To establish an appropriate management fee which takes account of the expenditure incurred in providing the factoring service. This fee will be subject to an annual review by the Management Committee and all owners will be given advance notice of any recommended increase.

The Association invoices owners on a calendar quarterly basis. Where the Association arranges work to be carried out to an owner's individual property, arrangements will be made to recover the outstanding debts as and when necessary.

All charges are made in arrears with the exception of insurance and stair lighting which are charged in advance on an annual basis. Any relevant contractor accounts are available for inspection by property owners for a period of fourteen days from invoice issue date. Where owners require copies of contractor accounts, the Association reserves the right to charge an additional administration charge.

All factoring invoices are payable within twenty-eight days of issue. Where accounts are not settled timeously the Association will implement its arrears recovery procedures. The Association does however offer a fixed monthly payment option by standing order.

Management Fee

The Association reviews its management fee in January each year and the relevant revised charge is invoiced from the following 1st of April. All owners are given at least twenty-eight days written notice of any increased charges. A discount is available to owners who pay their property management invoice with fourteen days of issue and have no further arrears. The current management fee and details of discounts available can be found in the Association's Written Statement of Services.

Service Charges

Each owner is charged a proportion of the actual costs incurred in the provision of any relevant services such as stair cleaning, communal maintenance services and common electricity supplies to the door entry system, common ventilation unit or television aerial amplifier.

Insurance

It is the responsibility of the Association to ensure that all properties factored are adequately insured. Guidance from the Association's insurers is taken with regard to the level of cover required for full re-instatement of properties.

Rates for building insurance are reviewed annually.

Planned Maintenance

In order to maintain the fabric of buildings, the Association undertakes planned maintenance to common areas. This includes work such as gutter cleaning, close painting and stone repairs.

Owners may also request that the Association carry out work to their own property as part of the Association's planned maintenance programme. This might include window replacement, kitchen replacement or annual gas servicing to fires and boilers. Details of the costs of such work will be advised on request and agreement sought prior to work commencing.

In the case of high cost planned maintenance, the Association will provide adequate notice to ensure that owners can arrange funding prior to commencement of work.

Sale of Property

The Association reserves the right to charge an additional administration fee to a seller when their final account is issued by the Association. This charge may be necessary due to the demands made on the Association by solicitors for information in relation to the ownership of the property, outstanding fees / works, apportionment of costs and details of improvements to the property. The under noted documentation, where available, is covered by this cost:

Certificate of Practical Completion
Completion Certificate (Local Authority)
Electrical Completion Certificate
Building Warrant
Planning Permission
Rot Reports & Guarantees

Complaints

The Association is committed to the provision of a high standard of service to all residents. Where any owner is dissatisfied with any aspect of the Association's service, they can make a complaint in accordance with the Association's Complaints Handling Procedure. Where an owner remains dissatisfied they have the right to approach the First-Tier Tribunal for Scotland Housing and Property Chamber (FTT). Contact details for the Housing and Property Chamber are:

Housing and Property Chamber
First-tier Tribunal for Scotland
Glasgow Tribunals Centre
3rd Floor
20 York Street
Glasgow
G2 8GT

Telephone: 0141 302 5900
Email: HPCadmin@scotcourtsribunals.gov.uk
Website: www.housingandpropertychamber.scot

Common Areas and Backcourts

Obligations covering the common areas and backcourts apply equally to owners and tenants. These are outlined in the Housing Management Section. You are, therefore, invited to consider the remainder of this handbook and how the information contained therein applies to you.

Introduction

The Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) was introduced by The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and updated in subsequent Acts (hereinafter referred to as the Act) to provide a single, common tenancy for virtually all tenants. It applies to tenants of local authorities, registered social landlords and tenants of water and sewerage authorities.

The Act also introduced the Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (Short SST) for use in specific instances.

As a tenant of the Association, you will have the rights and obligations of either a SST or Short SST.

Scottish Secure Tenancy - General

Under the terms of the SST and Short SST, a tenant must use the house as his or her only or principal home.

Those who are not tenants but occupy, or intend to occupy, the house as their only or principal home may apply for a joint tenancy. The Association must agree to this unless it has reasonable grounds for not doing so.

Scottish Secure Tenancy – Security of Tenure

A SST can only be ended in one of the following ways:

- By the tenant giving at least twenty-eight days notice of intention to terminate;
- By written agreement between the tenant and the Association;
- By an order giving the Association the right to recover possession following Court action linked to the specific grounds for recovery set out in the Act;
- By the Association as a result of abandonment by the tenant;
- By the death of the tenant where the statutory requirements for succession are not met; or
- By conversion to a Short SST where the tenant or a member of the tenant's household is the subject of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order.

A joint tenant may terminate his or her interest in the tenancy by giving twenty-eight days notice to the Association and each of the other joint tenants.

There are procedures in place for terminating one or more joint tenant's interests in the tenancy if the Association has reasonable grounds for believing that a joint tenant is not occupying the house and does not intend to do so.

Any tenant affected by abandonment action by the Association has a right of appeal to the Sheriff Court.

Scottish Secure Tenancy – Succession

The Act provides a right to two rounds of succession for the SST and for each separate round of succession, there are three levels of priority as follows:

- First priority goes to the tenant's spouse, civil partner, partner (cohabitants of either sex and including same sex cohabitants), or a surviving joint tenant. In the case of the spouse, civil partner or joint tenant the house must have been the person's only or principal home at the time of the tenant's death.

In the case of cohabitants, it is also a requirement that the house must have been the person's only or principal home throughout the twelve months ending in the tenant's death. In order for a cohabitant to have the right to succeed to a tenancy after living in the house for twelve months, the 'qualifying person' or the tenant must have notified the Association that the person is living in the house and the house is that person's only or principal home. The twelve-month qualifying period commences when the Association receives this notice.

- Second priority (if nobody qualifies or chooses to succeed from the first priority group) goes to other members of the tenant's family providing they are aged at least sixteen at the date of death and the house was their only or principal home throughout the twelve months ending in the tenant's death.

In the case of family members, the tenant or the qualifying person must have notified the Association that the person wishing to succeed to the tenancy is living in the house and the house is that person's only or principal home. The twelve-month qualifying period commences when the Association receives this notice.

- Third priority (if nobody in any of the above two categories qualifies or chooses to succeed) goes to carers aged at least sixteen where the house was their only or principal home through the twelve months ending in the tenant's death and where they have given up their only or principal home to care for the tenant or a member of the tenant's household.

In the case of carers, the tenant or the qualifying person must have notified the Association that the person wishing to succeed to the tenancy is living in the house and the house is that person's only or principal home. The twelve-month qualifying period commences when the Association receives this notice.

Special succession rules apply for houses that have been designed or adapted for persons with particular needs.

Scottish Secure Tenancy – Information

As a Scottish Secure Tenant you are entitled to certain information under the Act. The Association is obliged to provide you with:

- A written tenancy agreement;
- Details of any Right to Buy, the obligations you are likely to incur if that right is exercised and any change in your Right to Buy entitlement;
- Information about the Association's complaints procedure;
- Information on a range of specific matters (such as the Association's policy on setting rent) if you request it; and
- At least twenty-eight days notice of any increase in rent or other charges.

Scottish Secure Tenancy – Repairs & Improvements

The Association must ensure that at the beginning of the tenancy (and subsequently), the house is wind and watertight and, in all other respects, reasonably fit for human habitation.

Tenants that have made alterations or improvements to their home after receiving written permission from the Association may be entitled to compensation at the end of their tenancy.

For further details see the Maintenance section of this handbook.

Scottish Secure Tenancy – Assignment, Sub-letting, Joint Tenancies and Exchanges

Scottish Secure Tenants may sub-let (or take in a lodger) with the consent of the Association. Similarly, tenants may exchange their house with a tenant of the Association or a tenant of another registered social landlord or local authority providing both landlords consent.

Scottish Secure Tenants may also assign their house with the consent of the Association if the house has been the assignee's only or principal house for the period provided for in the Act.

Scottish Secure Tenants may also create a joint tenancy with the consent of the Association if the house has been the proposed joint tenant's only or principal house for the period provided for in the Act.

In all of these cases the Association may only refuse consent if there are reasonable grounds for doing so.

Short Scottish Secure Tenancy

The Act sets out the circumstances in which the Association can offer a Short SST which restricts security of tenure and other tenancy rights. Please contact the Association's office for further information if required.

Tenant Participation and Consultation

In addition to the duties to provide information to tenants under the SST, the Act also requires the Association to:

- Prepare a strategy to promote the participation of tenants in making proposals for the management of housing and the provision of related services;
- Ensure that the strategy sets out the arrangements for taking account of views of both registered tenants organisations and tenants generally, giving them advanced warning of matters that are likely to be under consideration, and providing information about the proposals and their effects;
- Assess the resources required and provide a statement about the resources proposed to give effect to the strategy;
- Maintain a register of tenant organisations that meet criteria specified by Scottish Ministers; and
- Notify and give opportunity to make representations to registered tenants organisations and tenants on the likely effect of proposals relating to housing management, repairs and maintenance, standards of service, the tenant participation strategy and any planned disposal.

With the agreement of the Association, tenants can also seek to establish tenant management co-operatives to exercise the management of one or more of the Association's functions (which include management of the houses in its area).

Introduction

The rent charged by the Association helps to provide a quality housing service and must cover:

- The day to day management, maintenance and repair of properties;
- The interest on money borrowed to improve or build new properties; and
- The cost of future major property repairs such as window replacement, stone repairs and re-roofing.

Rent Payments

Your rent is due monthly in **advance**, on or before the 1st of the month. For example, April's rent is due on, and should be paid no later than the 1st of April.

You can, however, pay weekly or fortnightly to suit your budget. You can pay your rent by rent card, direct debit, standing order, BACS transfer, internet banking or by cheque. Direct Debit and Standing Order forms are available from the Association's office. **The Association does not collect rent at the office.**

If you require any further information about payment of your rent charge then please contact a member of the Association's housing staff.

Service Charges

Your service charge is due monthly in **advance**, on or before the 1st of the month. For example, April's service charge is due on, and should be paid no later than, the 1st of April.

Service charges can be a fixed or variable amount and are included with your rent to cover the cost of services provided. Such services may include common cleaning services. Most of the service charges are variable to allow a yearly review in order that the amount can be increased or decreased accordingly.

If you require any further information about payment of your service charge then please contact a member of the Association's housing staff.

Rent Increases

The Association reviews rent levels on an annual basis and considers various matters before deciding upon the level of increase to be applied. Consideration is given to:

- The affordability of rent levels for tenants on low incomes;
- How the Association's rent levels compare with those of other landlords in the area; and
- How rent levels will affect the financial viability of the Association.

Tenants are also consulted prior to this review in order to ensure that their views can be considered prior to any decision being taken.

Rent Increases (Continued)

This process applies to all tenants except those with a registered rent which is set by a Rent Officer from the Rent Registration Service. In assessing the rent to be set, the Rent Officer will consider such things as:

- The size, age and condition of your house;
- The area it is in; and
- Other rents being charged in the area.

No account is taken of the circumstances of the tenant. The registered rent is valid for three years and cannot be increased during that period, except in certain circumstances, such as if your home has been improved.

When a registered rent is due for re-registration, the Association will apply to the Rent Officer who will contact you and give you the opportunity to discuss the increase the Association proposes. You may raise any objection you have at that time.

The Rent Officer will then set the new registered rent. You will be informed of this figure, and you may appeal if you think it is too high. Appeals are considered by the Rent Assessment Committee at which each side will argue their case and a final decision will be made as to the registered rent to be set. If you choose to appeal, you **must** pay the rent set until the Rent Assessment Committee decides on the matter. The registered rent set by the Rent Assessment Committee may be lower, the same, or higher than the rent set by the Rent Officer.

Whether your rent is set by the Association or the Rent Officer, at least twenty-eight days notice will be given by the Association of any rent increase.

Housing Benefit

Housing Benefit is a national scheme which helps people who are either in receipt of certain benefits or on low income to pay their rent. Applications for Housing Benefit are submitted to the local council authority (Glasgow City Council) which is responsible for assessing claims.

Many people do not receive the full amount of housing benefit to which they are entitled. If your entitlement to housing benefit does not meet the full rent charge then please contact a member of the Association's housing staff to discuss payment of rent.

The Association will also explain any letter or forms you receive, in connection with housing matters, and help you fill them in. Simply call into the office during opening hours or, preferably, telephone to arrange an appointment.

Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a national benefit that includes a housing cost element. This housing cost element is paid directly to tenants to cover the rent charge. If you are in receipt of Universal Credit please note that it is your responsibility to ensure that payment of rent is met as per terms of your tenancy. Tenants in Scotland can request that the housing cost element of their Universal Credit be paid directly to their landlord.

In certain circumstances, the Association can ask the Department of Works and Pensions for the housing cost element to be paid directly to the Association.

Rent Arrears

Many people find that, at some time or another, they have financial problems which make it difficult to pay rent. The most important thing at such a time is to get help and advice **as quickly as possible**. A sympathetic approach is taken to help tenants cope with, and overcome rent arrears.

If you know that you will be unable to pay rent when it is due, you should let the Association know so that an alternative arrangement can be made. A member of staff can give advice to ensure that you are in receipt of all the benefits which you may be due.

In the majority of cases, rent arrears can be cleared by making an arrangement with the Association to reduce rent arrears over a period of time.

The Association will not suggest an unreasonable repayment arrangement which you would be unable to keep. Rent arrears can be a ground for repossession, so **do not ignore the problem**. Contact us before matters get out of control.

Money Advice & Dealing with Other Debts

If you are having problems keeping up with payments other than your rent, you must get help as quickly as possible. Don't simply ignore the problem. The sooner you deal with it, the easier it will be to resolve.

You can get help with debts from the following organisations:

- The Association's housing officers;
- Citizens advice bureau;
- Consumer advice centres;
- Money advice centres;
- Welfare rights officers; and
- The Benefits Agency.

All of these organisations offer a confidential and sympathetic service. They will give you practical advice to help you to sort out your problems. Please contact a member of the Housing Association's staff for further details.

Drumchapel Money Advice Service

The Association works in partnership with Drumchapel Money Advice Centre (DMAC) to assist tenants who are experiencing money worries or difficulties with their benefits.

DMAC offers tenants free welfare rights and money advice. The services provided by DMAC include:

- Welfare benefit advice;
- Appeals against benefit decisions;
- Assistance with housing benefit;
- Assistance with working and child tax credits;
- Assistance with rent arrears; and
- Debt counselling.

You can get more information about the services that DMAC provide by contacting them telephone 0141 944 0507.

If you would like the Association to make a referral to DMAC on your behalf please contact a member of housing staff who will be happy to arrange this.

Introduction

Housing Management covers a wide range of functions and includes the following roles:

- Allocating houses;
- Dealing with neighbour disputes, anti-social behaviour and harassment;
- Estate Management; and
- Managing the termination of tenancies.

Allocations

The Association allocates houses on an agreed points system which we feel best reflects the priorities of people's needs for a house.

It would obviously be ideal if everyone could be placed in the house of their choice. However, as housing demand is greater than the supply of houses available, we have to be as fair as we can with limited resources. A copy of the Association's Lettings Policy explaining the allocations process is available from the Association's office or can be viewed on the Association's website.

Mobility Options

Most people need to move at some stage in their lives for various housing and / or social reasons. The Association along with many other public sector landlords recognise some responsibility in the field of mobility.

- Transfers

You may apply for a transfer to another Yoker Housing Association property for any valid reason, e.g. change in family size. Transfer applications will be assessed in accordance with the Association's Lettings Policy.

- Mutual Exchanges

The Association will consider applications for a Mutual Exchange between Yoker Housing Association tenants. A copy of the Association's Mutual Exchange Policy explaining the exchange process is available from the Association's office.

The Association will also consider applications between tenants of the Association and any other Housing Association or Local Authority. However, you will require the written consent of the Association and of any other landlord involved before the exchange can proceed.

Marital Disputes

The Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981 (as amended) gives certain rights to the spouse of a tenant when marriage breakdown occurs. It applies equally to both men and women and means that if the house is in the name of only one spouse, the other spouse retains a right of occupancy.

Where a couple have been living together as husband and wife, but are not married and do not have the tenancy in joint names, there is no automatic right of occupancy. In these circumstances an application must be made to the Sheriff Court. If granted a right of occupancy, the applicant would then have the protection of the Act.

Where someone is threatened with or suffering behaviour which could be harmful to them or their children's mental or physical health they can apply to the Sheriff Court for an interdict. This can result in prohibiting certain behaviour by the person concerned through to excluding them from the house, even if they are the tenant. Power of arrest can be attached to this, which means they can be detained by the police if they break the interdict.

An application can also be made to the Sheriff Court to get the tenancy transferred. However, even if successful, the other spouse will continue to have occupancy rights. An exclusion order would be required to completely remove their right of occupancy.

Further information and assistance can be obtained from the Association.

Adapted and Particular Needs Housing

The Association continues to accommodate the needs of those who are physically disabled.

If you or a member of your household is a wheelchair user, or is disabled for any other reason (e.g. a visually impaired person or a hearing impaired person), you may require a suitable adaptation to your house.

If you think you need a house adapted to your needs, or require additional support by way of, for example, a community alarm or other adaptations, please do not hesitate to contact the Association's office. You should also contact the Social Work Services Occupational Therapist to help you assess your housing requirements.

Neighbour Nuisance

Every resident should be able to enjoy living in their home without nuisance or annoyance from other residents.

Unfortunately minor disputes and clashes of lifestyles do occasionally occur between neighbours. If you experience difficulties with a neighbour you should contact a member of staff within housing who will talk to those involved and attempt to resolve the problem. However if the case is appropriate, the Association may seek assistance from Glasgow City Council's Community Relations Unit Mediation Services.

The most common causes of friction between neighbours are estate management issues and noise. We would ask that consideration towards your neighbours be shown by keeping common areas clean and tidy and by playing music or televisions at a reasonable level.

Anti-Social Behaviour & Harassment

Anti-social behaviour is a breach of the tenancy agreement and can lead to eviction. Owners who indulge in anti-social behaviour may also be taken to Court and prosecuted under relevant legislation.

The Association takes any form of harassment very seriously and complaints of this nature will be dealt with in accordance with the Association's Harassment Policy and Procedures.

To help resolve neighbour disputes and to tackle anti-social behaviour the Association works closely with Glasgow City Council's Community Relations Unit (CRU). CRU are an organisation set up jointly by Police Scotland and Glasgow City Council to prevent crime, tackle antisocial behaviour and promote community safety in the city. As well as tackling anti-social behaviour, CRU also provide support to tenants and owners affected by anti-social behaviour.

If you experience any form of anti-social behaviour you should contact housing staff. Complaints of anti-social behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with the Association's Anti-social Behaviour and Neighbour Nuisance Policy and Procedures. Any information you give the Association will be kept confidential and no action will be taken without your agreement. Incidents relating to criminal behaviour should be reported to Police Scotland.

Further information and copies of the Association's Anti-social Behaviour & Neighbour Nuisance Policy and Harassment Policy can be obtained from the Association.

Stair Cleaning and Backcourts

All residents are legally obliged to ensure that the common stairs, landings and close area are kept clean, tidy and free from obstructions. Backcourt areas (including bin stores) should similarly be kept clean and tidy and any planted or grassed areas should be maintained.

Stair Cleaning and Backcourts (Continued)

Everyone in the building must take their turn cleaning the landing and stairs leading up to their flat. Residents on the ground floor should wash down the close doors and tiles as well as the close itself. If there are no ground floor flats, the cleaning of the close must be shared by all the residents in the building.

Close and backcourt inspections are carried out regularly. Where the level of upkeep is seen to be slipping below standard, the Association will consider this as a breach of tenancy and will take the most appropriate action to improve the standard of the property.

Where the Association feels that residents are not co-operating in maintaining the common areas, we may arrange to have this work carried out and charge accordingly.

Please consider your elderly or disabled neighbours by offering assistance.

Pets

The Association aims for a balanced approach to pets, taking into account the views of all residents as well as environmental health considerations. Generally, the Association will not object to the keeping of one domestic pet if you meet certain conditions. Domestic pet means dog, cat, bird, fish or rodent (such as a hamster or gerbil). If you wish to keep another type of animal or more than one animal, you must get our written permission.

You are responsible for ensuring that your dog is under control at all times. You must clean-up and dispose of any fouling of gardens, pavements and communal areas. You must not allow your dog to cause fear or danger to other animals, neighbours, visitors or members of the public.

Permission to keep a pet may be withdrawn if these conditions are not followed. If the nuisance or danger continues, you will be in breach of your tenancy agreement and action could be taken by the Association. For further details please contact the Association.

Owner-occupiers and tenants should take note that both are equally liable under section 48 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 relating to Dangerous and Annoying Creatures, the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and any other law.

Giving Up Your House

We hope that you will enjoy your Association house. However if at any time you wish to end your tenancy, you together with any joint tenant, must let the Association know in writing at least twenty-eight days in advance. You must also tell us at the same time if you are married, or if you live in the house with another person as husband or wife. If you do, their agreement may also be required.

A member of staff will visit your home to ensure that the house is in a suitable condition for letting to another tenant. The Association may request that alterations to the house (such as the fitting of additional locks, installation of a shower or fitting of shelves) be removed.

Giving Up Your House (Continued)

If you have made improvements to your home, you may be eligible for compensation on termination of your tenancy (please refer to the **Repairs and Maintenance** section of this handbook).

All sets of keys should be handed into the Association's office on or before the date the tenancy ends. You are responsible for ensuring that the property has been cleared and the house is left in a clean and tidy condition. You are liable for rent until the date that your tenancy is brought to an end.

If the property is not returned to the Association in satisfactory condition you may be charged for the following:

- Changing of locks if you fail to return all keys to the Association;
- The cost of arranging a contractor to clear the property;
- The cost of repairs to damage caused by you or a member of your family; and / or
- Rent until the date of completion of any outstanding works / clearout to the property

Selling Your House

If you are an owner-occupier, the normal practice is for your solicitor to officially let us know that you are moving. A courtesy call to the Association giving an early indication of your intention to sell, would be appreciated.

Access to Personal Information

The Association is committed to ensuring the secure and safe management of your personal information. However, you are entitled to request access to the information that the Association holds about you. This is known as a Subject Access Request. Your request must be made in writing and must include:

- Your full name, address and contact telephone number;
- Any information used by us to identify or distinguish you from someone else of the same name (e.g. Tenancy Reference or Waiting List Reference Number); and
- Details of the specific information you require and any relevant dates.

The Association will respond to your request within one calendar month from the day that we receive your request.

Further information and assistance can be obtained from the Association.

Freedom of Information

The Association is considered a public authority in accordance with freedom of information (FOI) legislation. In accordance with FOI legislation the Association has a duty to publish information and has developed a Guide to Information which details the information that we publish. The Guide to Information can be accessed via the Association's website.

In accordance with the FOI legislation, members of the public can submit a request to the Association for information. The Association must respond to requests for information within twenty-working days of receiving the original request. The Association must provide the information requested unless there is a reason in accordance with FOI law.

Further information and assistance can be obtained from the Association.

Introduction

The Association seeks to provide a prompt and efficient repairs service.

Owner-occupiers should note that only common repairs are covered by the Association's property management agreement and all other repairs are your own responsibility.

This section primarily applies to tenants of the Association. However, the Association is happy to oblige by supplying owner-occupiers with the name of contractors / tradespeople whom we know to provide an efficient service.

Some repairs are your responsibility, other repairs and maintenance duties are the Association's. Apart from attending to reported repairs, the Association inspects the properties it manages on a regular basis in order to assess the need for planned maintenance work.

If you wish to check on your or the Association's obligations, please consult your tenancy agreement.

Tenant's Responsibilities

1. Security of the premises.
2. Internal Decoration.
3. Connection of washing machine, cooker, dishwasher and other appliances (fitted by qualified tradesperson) and anything else that belongs to you.
4. Light bulbs, light shades and plugs.
5. Batteries for smoke detectors.
6. Take due care of the Association's fixtures and fittings.
7. Repairs resulting from damage caused by you or anyone you let into your house.
8. Although the Association is not obliged by law to see to the clearing of blocked waste pipes, in most cases the Association will carry out this service. In the case of blocked drains, many have resulted in the past from **grease** being poured down the kitchen sink or because **disposable nappies, wipes, condoms** or **sanitary towels** have been flushed down the toilet. These instances of misuse should be avoided. A charge could be passed on to you if blocked drains or waste pipes result from misuse.
9. Lifting and re-laying of all floor coverings (including carpets, laminate flooring, ceramic tiles and linoleum) and ceiling tiles. Where necessary for access, removing any furniture, fixtures or fittings.
10. **Allow access for the Association to carry out an annual gas safety check and other repairs.**

Tenant's Responsibilities (Continued)

Gas Servicing

The Association has a legal obligation to service your gas boiler on an annual basis.

You will be contacted by letter twenty-eight days in advance of when the service is due and asked to contact Maintenance Services to arrange a suitable appointment.

Failure to allow access for the servicing of boiler will result in the Association forcing entry to your property and recharging you for the costs incurred by us. This is not an action that we take lightly and we would urge you to give us access prior to the due date.

Electrical Safety Inspection

The Association has a legal obligation to carry out an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) at your property every five years.

You will be contacted by letter twenty-eight days in advance of when the work is due and asked to contact Maintenance Services to arrange a suitable appointment.

Failure to allow access for will result in the Association forcing entry to your property and recharging you for the costs incurred by us. This is not an action that we take lightly and we would urge you to give us access prior to the due date.

Mould, Dampness and Condensation

The Association has a duty to carry out repairs relating to water penetration, rising dampness and condensation dampness. We will maintain the house to a standard where you can heat the house to a reasonable temperature at a reasonable cost, so as to avoid condensation dampness and mould. If during the tenancy, the house suffers from condensation or dampness which is partially or wholly caused by a deficiency in, or absence of, any feature of the house (including insulation, provision for heating or ventilation), we will carry out repairs to prevent further issues of mould, dampness or condensation.

If you notice any signs of dampness, mould or condensation, you should report these to the Association as soon as possible.

Air Source Heat Pump / Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery System

If an air source heat pump and Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery System (MVHR) are installed within your property, you should not use nails for fitting floor coverings. Nails may cause significant damage to the pipework that feeds the under-floor heating system.

The Association will service the air sour heat pump and MVHR systems on an annual basis. You will be contacted in advance of when the work is due and asked to make a suitable appointment.

The Association's Responsibilities to their Tenants

1. To keep the building wind and watertight.
2. Repair gutters, down pipes and most drains.
3. Repairs to baths, toilets, sinks, basins, kitchen units and doors arising from normal wear and tear.
4. Repairs to electrical wiring, internal gas pipes and fires, central heating and immersion heating systems.
5. Repair of broken glass to windows and doors. If your windows are broken deliberately, you must notify the police immediately and supply the Association with an incident number.
6. Repairs to door entry systems and T.V. aerials.
7. Repairs to the Association's fixtures and fittings, within reason and fairness, allowing for the availability of resources.
8. To carry out an annual gas safety check.

We shall see that the work is carried out and paid for. Tenants will be recharged for any damage that was caused by them or someone in their home.

Keys

We suggest that you leave a spare set with someone you can trust so that if you lock yourself out or lose your keys you will still be able to enter your flat without having to force the door or damage the locks. **Do not** leave a spare key under the door mat or in a flower pot on the landing – these are places a thief will look to find them. The Association **will not** accept responsibility should anybody gain unauthorised access to your property. If you do lose your keys and the door has to be forced open, any damage caused and repairs needed are entirely your responsibility.

How to Report Repairs

You can report repairs to the Association in the following ways:

- In person at the Association's office (see page 3 for details of opening hours);
- By telephoning the office during normal opening hours on **0141 950 9051**;
- By emailing Maintenance Services at maintenance@yokerha.org.uk; or
- By writing to the Association at its registered office (see page 3 for details).

It is extremely important that you report repairs or damage to the house as soon as reasonably possible and that you allow access to carry out repairs. If you need to report a repair, please give as much detail as possible, including the position of your flat in the building and the most suitable day for access to your house.

If for any reason you cannot be available at an agreed time, or if you have decided to leave your key with a neighbour, please inform the Association's office beforehand, either in person or by telephoning the office. Repair visits are usually arranged for weekdays (8:30am to 1:00pm) or (2:00pm to 4:30pm) (except Friday afternoons (2:00pm to 3:30pm)). If these times are difficult for you, we will try, within reason, to accommodate you.

Please Note: do not report repairs to staff in the street, at local shops or anywhere other than at the Association's office or in your own home.

Emergency, Urgent and Routine Repairs

Day to day repairs are classified into three types:

A repair is regarded as an **emergency** where there is a risk of serious injury or damage to the property or its residents.

A repair is **urgent** if you would otherwise be left without an essential utility such as toilet or hot water. All other repairs are **routine**.

Note – if you need to call out a contractor in an emergency situation, a current list of phone numbers are available on the Association's automated answering service.

Response Times: The Association seeks to respond to these categories of repairs within the following time limits:

Emergency Repairs:	3 Hours
Urgent Repairs:	2 Working Days
Routine Repairs:	8 Working Days

Defects / Repairs to New or Recently Improved Housing

Repairs should be reported in the usual way. These repairs are carried out by the main contractor who undertook the building work / refurbishment, and who remains responsible for any legitimate repair work required in the first year after the work was completed. This is called the Defects Liability Period (DLP). Routine repairs done during this period may take a little longer. This is because the Association has limited control over the main contractor, whose system for dealing with repairs may differ from that of the Association. During this time the Contractor is responsible for defects, but not for wear and tear or damage.

If any problems or defects occur during this period you should contact the Association in order that the Contractor can be informed. You should not approach the Contractor directly – even if they are still on site.

You should not decorate during this period, as it is quite normal for plaster and timber to shrink during this time. Cracks may therefore appear on the walls. Some minor defects may be left until the end of the Defects Liability Period, where they do not cause you any inconvenience. At the end of the twelve month defects liability period the Architect and Clerk of Works will carry out a final inspection and the Contractor will be asked to rectify these defects.

You will be informed, by letter, of the end of Defects Liability Period inspection scheduled for your home.

After the end of the Defects Liability Period, defects and maintenance will be the responsibility of the Housing Association. The Association, as landlord and factor, will respond to problems relating to repairs in tenants properties and repairs in respect of the common elements of the building, after the end of the defects period.

By reading this handbook carefully, you may find that you are in a position to rectify items which you may initially think are faults.

Getting the Job Done

Where a repair has been reported, Maintenance Services may call to examine the problem. Usually the job will be done either by one of the Association's employees or one of the Association's approved sub-contractors.

Occasionally a repair may take a little longer than the response times indicated above e.g. when we or a contractor are awaiting the delivery of supplies. If you want to check on the progress of a repair, phone or call at the office with your repair number and a member of staff within Maintenance Services will be able to let you know the reason for any delay.

If you are not satisfied with the way a repair has been carried out, contact the office and ask for the member of staff who was dealing with your problem. If you are still not satisfied and wish to take the matter further you can make a formal complaint in accordance with the Association's Complaints Handling Procedure.

We try to provide an efficient, high standard of service, and rely on you to keep us informed. If you are not satisfied with work carried out by the Association, let us know. Please co-operate in completing the quality satisfaction questionnaire which allows us to monitor the service we provide.

Right to Repair

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 provided for a statutory 'Right to Repair' for all tenants. The Association has introduced procedures for dealing with a situation where we fail to meet our repair response obligations to our tenants, i.e. tenants will be entitled to claim a compensation payment, where the Association fails to attend to a repair within our prescribed response times without valid reason.

Please contact the Association's office should you require any further information.

Alterations and Improvements

You must not alter or move any of the Association's fixtures or fittings without our knowledge. This includes (kitchen units, appliances, pipework or doors). Equally, you must not install or remove any of the Association's fixtures or fittings (kitchen units, worktops, pipework, shower, doors, skirting, light fittings, shed, and aerials).

You need to apply in writing and get written consent from the Association before starting any work. Your freedom to go ahead with any alterations or improvements will not be refused unreasonably (e.g. permission will be denied if it was likely to damage your home or your neighbours' or make it dangerous to live in). There is unlikely to be any objection to you fitting, for example, an electric shower, although there will be certain conditions which you will be required to meet. The Association has to ensure that alterations comply with any relevant regulations or legislation.

Safety is of paramount concern if work on gas or water pipes or electric wiring is proposed. This is likewise in the case of any structural work.

Should authorisation be denied, you can appeal.

Right to Compensation for Improvements

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 provided for a statutory 'Right to Compensation for Improvements' for all tenants. The Association has introduced a scheme which sets out the type of improvements which may be eligible for compensation should you terminate your tenancy. It should be noted that no compensation will be forthcoming if the prior consent of the Association was not sought and given.

Please contact the Association's office for further information.

Decoration

You are responsible for keeping your flat in good decorative order and this should be undertaken as required.

It is the duty of the Association to maintain the decoration in the common areas of the building. This includes the internal close, fences, clothes poles and windows. These will be decorated in accordance with the Association's planned maintenance programme as required.

Laminate Flooring

The use of laminate flooring or fixed floor coverings is not permitted in any properties located above the ground floor unless such floor coverings can alleviate a medical condition suffered by a tenant or a member of the tenant's household. Permission will only be granted where the tenant provides a medical certificate from their GP or medical practitioner. If you are in any doubt as to the nature of a proposed floor covering you should contact the Association for clarification.

Heating and Ventilation

It is important that the property is properly heated and ventilated to prevent condensation. You must not close or block the window vents to ensure that a flow of air is maintained throughout the property. You should not dry clothes over radiators as this causes condensation. You should report faulty kitchen or bathroom extractor fans immediately.

Planned Maintenance

The Association has a planned maintenance programme which is regularly under review.

This involves systematic inspection, servicing and renewal of various items within the building including extractor fans, roofs, gutters and down pipes, painting of common areas and external windows.

Owners will be given the opportunity to participate in conjunction with Association owned properties. Other than for large maintenance works, the cost of this may be included within property management accounts.

Introduction

This section of the Handbook is intended to assist you in familiarising yourself with the main components and features of your home. It gives advice on preventing common problems with your building, along with information on what to do should any occur.

Please read this section carefully and refer to it for help or advice in the future.

Kitchens

Kitchen Units

The units installed in your kitchen are from one of a number of manufacturers approved for use by the Association. Should you require additional or replacement units in the future both owners and tenants should contact the Association in the first instance. The Association holds a record of the name of your style of unit.

Fridge / Freezer Space

The space allocated for the fridge in your kitchen has been designed to take either a low or tall fridge. If you own a tall fridge or fridge / freezer, the worktop over the space can be removed by unscrewing it from below – if you are a tenant of the Association, this section of worktop must be retained for future use by others should you move house. Removing the worktop, however, may require touching up of decor.

There is a switch above the worktop adjacent to this space which is connected to a socket outlet at low level. This allows you to defrost the fridge without having to pull out the plug.

Kitchen Extract Fans

There is a switch with a neon light located on the wall adjacent to the extract fan, which controls the electrics to the fan installed within your kitchen. The fan should be used when you are cooking, or perhaps drying clothes within the kitchen and in particular when there has been steam or excessive moisture created.

Should the fan fail to operate, tenants should contact the Association and owners should contact a suitably qualified tradesperson following the end of the Defects Liability Period – do not attempt to take off the cover yourself.

The cover itself can be wiped clean with a damp cloth - strong solvent cleaners should not be used.

Neoprene filters are located within a groove in the front of the fan (top and bottom) these can be removed if so required and cleaned in warm soapy water and replaced back in the groove - it is recommended that this is done every six months.

Kitchens (Continued)

Washing Machine Connections / Disconnections

A space has been allocated within the kitchen for a front loading automatic washing machine. Facilities are provided to enable you to have your machine plumbed in:

Water Connections - washing machine hot and cold quarter turn valves are provided. If the valves are switched on with the caps removed, without connecting your hoses, water will flow freely, flooding your kitchen and possibly the flat below.

IMPORTANT: When you connect your washing machine waste pipe to the sink trap provided, you must ensure that the hose is looped up and bends back down, at a point higher than the bottom of the sink bowl. Otherwise, wastewater draining from your sink may flow into your washing machine.

The Association highly recommends that you use a registered plumber to connect or disconnect your washing machine as you will be charged for any flood damage caused by a washing machine that has been connected or disconnected incorrectly.

There is a switch above the worktop, which is connected to a socket outlet within the washing machine space, behind where the machine will be located. This enables you to switch the machine off and on without pulling it out to unplug it.

Cooker Connection

In addition to the standard electric outlet for use with electric cookers (which can be used for any electrical circuits on a gas cooker), there is normally a gas connection point for use with gas cookers.

ALL GAS CONNECTIONS MUST BE CARRIED OUT BY A GAS SAFE REGISTERED GAS INSTALLER

In accordance with Gas Safety Regulations, all gas cookers should be securely anchored to the wall, to avoid tilting. Your Gas Safe registered gas installer should ensure compliance with this requirement.

Flooring

Should you propose to lay vinyl or a similar type of flooring in your kitchen (or bathroom), ensure the surface is even and level – vinyl manufacturers normally recommend that you lay sheets of hardboard or plywood to prevent tongue and groove joints in the existing flooring from marking the vinyl. The Association cannot be held responsible if any damage occurs to the floor coverings if the hardboard is not laid.

Bathrooms

W.C. Overflow

The w.c. overflow has been designed to discharge via a pipe through the wall. If the w.c. overflow runs this will be indicated by water running from the overflow pipe (normally located on the rear elevation immediately below your flat). This should be reported to the Association as soon as possible.

Extract Ventilation

In the red sandstone tenements many bathrooms are served by a communal ventilation extract system with two fan units in each attic space. These are connected by duct piping to the circular extract cowl in your bathroom. This must not be covered. In addition, should there be any damage to this unit, please inform the Association immediately: **do not** attempt to repair it yourself as the units contain a special mechanism which operates in the event of a fire.

The ventilation extract fan in the attic runs continuously. However, should any of the fans cease to operate correctly then a red warning light will come on in a unit located in the ceiling on the ground floor of each close. This unit should be monitored and anyone seeing the red warning light should inform the Association immediately.

Doors

Controlled Door Entry (Front Close Door)

Some of the front close door entry systems are magnetic and operated via an electronic key system. Presenting your electronic key fob to the reader panels, located on the door entry panel, will release the door magnets and allow entry into the property. When leaving the building, please use the "Push to Release" button sited internally.

Look after your key fobs, keep them dry, away from excessive heat and direct sunlight. Replacement fobs can be issued by the Association but a charge will be payable.

Visitors

When visitors call they will be required to press the button on the entry panel relating to the flat position they wish to visit. This will cause the phone on your handset in the hall to sound.

Inside your flat, when someone is calling you, lifting your handset will enable you to speak to your visitor. Please note that you cannot speak to anyone at the close until they press your button on the entry panel.

Visitors cannot gain entry to the building until you permit them, other than during "services" time.

Doors (Continued)

Controlled Door Entry (Front Close Door) (Continued)

If you wish to permit access, simply press the door lock release button on your handset until you hear that your visitor has gained access at the close door. If you are not satisfied with the callers reason for wishing access you can choose not to permit access by not pressing the door lock release button. The door entry system is there to give additional security to residents. Please do not release the door entry system for strangers.

If you do not wish to be disturbed by callers, you can turn on the "privacy switch" on the handset. A red indicator light will come on to remind you that you have turned the phone off. Please remember to remove the privacy setting later as you will not be able to hear callers while the "privacy switch" remains activated.

Rear Close Door

This door should be kept locked at all times using the key provided unless residents are using the backcourt.

Flat Entrance Door

Your flat entrance door is fitted with a minimum of one mortice lock - a minimum of two sets of keys are supplied.

The flat door is fitted with a spy-hole for you to view callers before allowing access.

For fire precaution the flat entrance door is fitted with a door closer to ensure the door closes automatically. In addition, the letterbox and door frames have a special lining which, in the event of a fire, will expand and close the gap, preventing the spread of smoke and flames.

Doors Off Internal Halls

Some doors off your hall may be fire rated doors and fitted with self-closing devices for fire protection.

Residents may find the self-closers to be inconvenient, but we would **stress** that they are provided for a good reason, to restrict the passage of fire and smoke in the event of a fire. Therefore the closers should not be tampered with.

Fire safety precautions are there for good reason and could save your life. Please do not alter them.

Bathroom Lock

The door is locked from the inside by turning the snib to a horizontal position.

In an emergency, if someone is locked in the bathroom, the door can be opened from the outside by inserting a coin or screwdriver into the slot below the handle and turning it to release the bolt.

Central Heating and Hot Water

Boiler and Programmer

If your flat has been provided with a gas fired boiler, the boiler will provide central heating and hot water controlled by a programmer within which times may be adjusted to suit your individual needs.

Radiator Valves

Each room within the flat has been fitted with a radiator. The radiators can be turned on and off using the valve fitted to the radiator. Turning the valve fitted to the radiator clockwise will close the valve and turn the radiator off. Turning the valve anti-clockwise will turn the radiator on. This will allow you to isolate individual radiators if required.

The temperature is controlled by the wall mounted thermostat located in your hall, normally a setting of 20 degrees is adequate.

In general, the temperature settings given for the central heating are only meant as a guide, and these should be adjusted to suit your own specific needs. Bear in mind however, that at its highest setting the radiator will remain at maximum temperature irrespective of the room temperature and will cost you an unnecessary amount of money if the room does not need the heat.

A drain valve is located within the floor under a lifting board. The Association may need to gain access to this valve in order to drain the radiators and so this should be considered when fitting carpets, etc. Please also consider this for any other floor hatches.

Hot Water

The hot water is heated by the gas boiler (where applicable) or an electric immersion. When the tap is turned on, however, the water may flow cold for a few seconds while the boiler kicks in.

Services

Water

The water within your flat will be supplied from the mains. The cold water at your kitchen sink is directly fed off the mains. The main stop valve for your property is located either below / adjacent to your sink or in the close landing adjacent to your property. The main stop valve can turn off all the water to your flat. In addition, w.c. cisterns have a valve on the water supply pipe below the cistern – this is operated using a screwdriver.

The hot and cold water supplies in your bathroom and the hot supply in your kitchen are fed from the mains.

Services (Continued)

Water (Continued)

It is generally recommended that you use the mains fed water at your kitchen sink for drinking and cooking. This cold tap is served off the mains so it can be safely used for drinking water.

External – below the footpath in front of the building there is a water toby which controls the supply of water to the building.

Immediately inside the close entrance, there are either two or three water tobies serving the left, middle and right hand landing flats respectively. To turn off these tobies in an emergency, a special water key is required. In any case, the Association should be contacted.

Electricity

In addition to the Residual Current Device (RCD) main switch on the consumer unit, each circuit is protected by its own switch. The purpose of each circuit is marked below the switch (e.g. lights, sockets, smoke alarm etc.). These circuit switches are called MINIATURE CIRCUIT BREAKERS (MCB'S) and they are the modern equivalent of re-wirable fuses.

If a fault switches an MCB off this automatically cuts the power to everything on that circuit. In some instances an electrical fault will cause the main switch to go off as well. Depending on what causes the switch to trip, it may be possible to reset it by switching it back on. If it stays on, there is nothing further to worry about – for example, it is possible that even a light bulb can cause a switch to trip due to the sensitivity of MCB's. If it persists in switching off, there is a fault, which requires attention.

Often the fault may be in your own appliance or the wiring of a plug. There are even cases of new appliances causing problems due to inherent wiring faults. Before reporting a fault to the Association, if at all possible, you should try to check your own appliances, considering the following:

- If you have any new electrical appliances, disconnect them then try the circuit again to see if it remains on;
- Try disconnecting various appliances in turn, to see if you can identify any which are causing the switch to trip;
- Check the wiring of your plugs, check the fuse rating and if any have blown; and
- Check if any light bulbs have blown out.

If you cannot find any apparent fault and if you are in any doubt consult the Association or a qualified electrician. For your reassurance, please note that the MCB's will certainly trip if there is any danger whatsoever.

REFER TO THE HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION AT THE END OF THIS HANDBOOK

Smoke Detectors / Heater Detectors

All properties are fitted with smoke and heat detectors in accordance with legislation. All properties have been fitted with the following detectors:

- One smoke alarm to be installed in the room most frequently used for general daytime living purposes (the living room);
- One smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallways and landings;
- One heat alarm to be installed in every kitchen;
- All smoke and heat alarms to be ceiling mounted; and
- All smoke and heat alarms to be interlinked.

If you hear any of your smoke or heat detectors sound but no fire or smoke is present, you should report this to the Association as soon as possible for investigation.

Gas Installation

Your gas meter is either located in the cupboard off the hall or a cupboard in the livingroom. Turning the handle until it is right angled to the pipe can turn off the gas supply.

Gas Service Emergency Cut-off Valve

There is an emergency cut-off valve which supplies the gas to the entire building and is located on the ground floor at high level. In the event that gas is suspected of leaking elsewhere in the building this emergency cut-off valve should be closed. **It can only be re-opened by the Gas Board.**

NOTE: In the event of a gas leak, turn off the supply immediately, do not switch on or off any electrical appliances or switches, do not use a mobile phone, do not use a lighter, strike any matches or cause a naked flame. Open all your windows. Contact the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999 – also report the matter to the Association.

IF YOU HAVE ANY PILOT LIGHTS ALWAYS ENSURE THEY ARE RE-LIT AFTER TURNING THE GAS MAINS BACK ON.

Carbon Monoxide Detector

If you have gas central heating in your home, your property has been fitted with a carbon monoxide detector in the room where the boiler is located. Should this activate, please contact the Association immediately. The Maintenance Section will instruct a gas engineer to inspect your central heating system. Should this inspection trace no fault, an electrician will be instructed to check the carbon monoxide detector unit.

PLEASE NOTE THAT A CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR DOES NOT ACTIVATE WHEN THERE IS A GAS LEAK. THE DETECTOR WILL ACTIVATE IF THERE ARE CARBON MONOXIDE FUMES IN YOUR HOME. SYMPTOMS OF CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING ARE HEADACHES, TIREDNESS AND HEAVY COLD.

Telephone

There is a telephone point located in your flat generally in the hall. To arrange a connection to BT or any other network you should contact the supplier direct.

Television Aerial Point

This socket point has been installed in the living room of your flat. The left hand socket is for normal television channels or FM radio signals and the adjacent socket is for cable television signals, if appropriate.

These outlets are connected to a common aerial system for the building which is maintained by the Housing Association. If you have any problems with the television reception, before reporting it, check with your neighbours first to ensure the fault is with the communal system and not with your own television set.

Do not erect your own aerial onto the building.

Cable / Satellite Television Systems

All properties have been wired to facilitate connection to either cable or satellite services – the blank electrical box adjacent to the TV aerial socket contains the wiring. Your cable service provider is Virgin Media whom you should contact directly if you wish to make use of their service. If you wish to be connected to the satellite television system then please contact the Association for further advice and to arrange the connection. There is a charge for connection to the satellite television system. Please note that Sky+, Sky HD or Sky Q is **NOT** available through the common satellite television system.

Do not erect your own satellite dish onto the building.

Shower

If you have a shower fitted by the Association and it is not operating correctly, please report the fault to the Housing Association.

Windows

Windows Operation

When operating the windows for cleaning, they will be restricted from opening beyond, approximately 100mm (4") by the catch on the side of the window frames. This is a safety device required by the Building Regulations, to prevent people (in particular, small children), inadvertently opening the window too far and falling out.

NOTE: most windows are supplied with lockable handles for additional control and security. These are locked by pressing the button and unlocked by turning the handle. Please take care not to accidentally press the locking button, when turning the handle. However, some upper floor living room windows do not have locks in order that they may be used for escape (1st floor) or fire service access (2nd/3rd floors) in the event of a fire. As this is a requirement of the Building Regulations, do not add locks to these windows.

Every room has a window with a ventilator in the top rail position. These allow ventilation without opening windows. It is recommended that these are kept open and clear of obstructions to allow a constant supply of fresh air to the property and aid in the 'drying out' process in the first year for new build properties.

If you require assistance in getting used to the operation of your windows please contact the Association.

REFER TO HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION AT THE END OF THIS HANDBOOK

Window Cleaning

All windows can be cleaned from inside the flat. Windows should only be cleaned with a non-scratch cleaner to avoid marking or scratching the glass.

Obstacles such as furniture, toys or other items represent a trip hazard and should be kept well away from open windows during cleaning operations.

The Association advises that you use a pole with a brush or cloth at the end for cleaning upper windows which cannot be reached by hand. Please ensure that the lower window is closed and do not use a chair or ladder to reach the upper window for cleaning.

Please ensure that there are no vulnerable persons in the room when the lower windows are open for cleaning. Close and lock the window before answering the telephone, door bell, door entry system or attending any other distraction.

Window Maintenance

When painting in and around the internal parts of the windows, care should be taken to ensure no paint covers weather strips or hardware. Slight lubrication should be carried out on fittings when necessary, with acid free oil.

General Maintenance

Common sense and reasonable attention will keep your home in good repair. The following section describes the ways by which you can keep your home in good order and prevent the possible occurrence of building defects.

Decoration, Paintwork and Artex

In newly developed properties, it is preferred that no decoration be carried out until the end of the Defects Liability Period since the contractor will not make good any decoration work carried out after handover. In particular, it is recommended that residents do not wallpaper rooms for at least twelve months, as surfaces will be subject to shrinkage and could damage the wallpaper.

IF YOU ARE A TENANT OF THE ASSOCIATION, DO NOT APPLY ARTEX TO THE WALLS OR CEILINGS WITHIN THE PROPERTY.

Floor Coverings

Precautions for laying vinyl floor coverings have been referred to on page 30. It is also important however that when laying a carpet, good quality underfelt is used to prevent any damage. The Association cannot be held responsible for damage or premature wear of floor coverings where a good quality underlay has not been fitted.

Due to the presence of water, gas piping, electrical wiring etc. below the flooring, you must ensure that when laying carpets etc normal tacks or nailing strips are used to avoid puncturing pipes or wires.

Remember that there are certain lifting boards in cupboards and / or washing machine spaces, to provide access to pipe work connections and valves. Your floor coverings should be cut around these or laid loose to facilitate access. Where floor doorstops are provided you should either fit floor coverings around these doorstops or ensure that the doorstops are correctly re-fitted following the laying of floor coverings. This helps to prevent damage to walls.

Internal Woodwork

The woodwork in the flat has either been stained or primed, undercoated and finished with white gloss paint. The walls have been given two coats of emulsion.

Alterations and Improvements

If you wish to make any alterations (e.g. installation of shower, a change to kitchen units or replacement of the bathroom), you are required to apply and obtain written permission before carrying out any work.

Owners must advise the Association if they wish to make certain alterations as permission is required for structural alterations. You must also check if you require further permission such as a Building Warrant.

General Maintenance (Continued)

Condensation and Shrinkage / Minor Cracking

New materials used in traditional construction have a high water content which will only dry out gradually during the early period of the property's occupation. As a result of this, shrinkage and consequent minor cracking may occur together with higher levels of condensation than residents may previously have been accustomed to.

Some simple rules and procedures to reduce these effects are as follows:-

- Use heat sparingly at first so that the house warms up gradually;
- Ensure that there is adequate ventilation by ensuring ventilators on the window remain open and clear from obstructions;
- Keep kitchen and bathroom doors shut when cooking or using large quantities of hot water;
- Make full use of extract fans in the kitchen and bathroom in conjunction with windows for ventilation;
- When drying clothes indoors keep a window open to allow air to circulate; and
- Do not overfill cupboards or wardrobes if shelves are fitted, leave space for air to circulate.

Frost Protection

Although all water pipe work in your flat has been thoroughly insulated where it passes under floors and close to external walls, it is advisable that you take certain steps to prevent burst pipes if the house is to be left empty for any length of time during very cold weather. These are as follows:-

- Turn off the main supply stopcock;
- Run all taps until they are dry;
- Empty the w.c. systems by flushing after turning off the water supply stopcock immediately below the cistern; and
- If the central heating system is switched off for a long period, the system should be drained down.

Rainwater Gutters and Gullies

Residents should contact the Association immediately if they suspect rainwater gutters are choked. The most common signs of a blocked gutter are damp patches on the external wall immediately below the eaves during wet weather and vegetation growing in the gutter during spring and summer.

Failure to attend to a choked gutter can result in rainwater leaking into the fabric of the building causing dampness and timber rot.

General Maintenance (Continued)

Water Leaks

If there is a small leak in any of the pipes try to catch the water in a basin or suitable container. In the case of larger leaks (burst pipes etc.), turn off the water at the stopcock and drain the pipes by running the taps.

INFORM THE ASSOCIATION IMMEDIATELY WHENEVER LEAKS OCCUR - NO MATTER HOW SMALL

Bulk Refuse Collection

The Association operates a routine fortnightly bulk uplift service for which a general charge is levied on both the Association and owner-occupiers. Bulk items such as old carpets, furnishings and small electrical goods should be placed neatly in or adjacent to the bin area for collection. White goods such as fridges, freezers, cookers, dishwashers and washing machines should be similarly placed in or adjacent to the bin area. However white goods require a special uplift and you should advise the cleansing department on 0141 287 9700. Uplift is usually arranged within twenty-one working days.

Common Area

Close and Stair Floor Finish

CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPOSITE FLOOR FINISHES

After the new floor finishes have been laid for a period of two weeks, regular cleaning should begin. Regular cleaning should be arranged by residents. This process can be assisted by tackling any stains or spillage caused immediately. In such cases:

- Use clean water at all times;
- **DO NOT** use any products containing bleach or ammonia;
- Use a damp cloth to remove excess water immediately;
- Excess water will cause the floor to turn "greyish" - if this should occur remove with fine steel wool and remove dust with damp cloth; and
- Stubborn stains can be safely removed by using a soapy pad (such as Brillo).

Health and Safety Information

Please pay careful attention to the following information:-

- **Reversible / Double Casement Windows** – to reduce the danger of falling from a window, do not reach up to open the upper window whilst simultaneously having the lower window open beyond the restrictor ‘stay’ position. **DO NOT** clean reversed windows until the safety latch has securely locked the window in position - otherwise you may accidentally lean on the reversed window which could move and cause a fall.
- **All Windows** – represent a potential danger from falling - you are advised to carefully watch young children and pets near windows and make use of the restrictor catches and locks. **Do not** allow young children to play near unlocked windows. Where locks and restrictors catches are provided in windows, these should be engaged at all times other than when opening for cleaning purposes. **Remember** – there is no such thing as a child proof safety catch – locking windows is the most effective method of preventing accidents.
- **Gas Safety Certificate** – the Association will service your boiler and any other gas installation it provides annually. Tenants **must** allow the contractor access in order that the servicing can be carried out.
- **Gas Installations** - only Gas Safe registered plumbers should carry out works connected to gas appliances.
- **Gas Emergency** - if you smell gas contact the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999.
- **Electrical Installations** - **DO NOT** tamper with the electrics other than the simple measures highlighted earlier. Consult a qualified electrician if you are in any doubt whatsoever regarding electrical problems.
- **Electrical Emergency** - SP Energy Networks operate an emergency helpline on 0800 092 9290. SP Energy Networks can also be contacted on 105.
- **Smoke Alarms** - you have a smoke detector installed for your safety. Please ensure it is correctly maintained. Should the alarm activate, but there is no fire, please do not touch it, contact the Association to have your smoke detector inspected by a qualified electrician. Practice and prepare a fire escape plan – your local fire brigade may be able to discuss this with you.
- **In the event of fire** - GET OUT – STAY OUT – GET THE FIRE BRIGADE.
- As part of the works to refurbish the building a document called the “Health and Safety File” was produced. This contains information such as a record of construction drawings, location of services and materials used. This document is available for consultation at the Association and you (or your advisors) are advised to consult it if you are planning any alterations. (Refer again to Alterations and Improvements).

Finally

We trust that this handbook has been of assistance in familiarising you with the main components of your home, but please contact the Association if you have any further questions

