

Housing Services Tenants Handbook

Version 1.0

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the heart of Leicestershire

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Blaby District Council's housing service. We would like to thank you for choosing to be a council tenant and hope that you are happy with your new home and the service we provide.

This handbook is produced for every Blaby District tenant. It is a guide to the services we provide. The handbook explains what you can expect from us as well as your responsibilities as tenants.

Please keep this handbook in a safe place because it is your guide to the housing service. It includes information on most of the services we provide and how you can access them. Where possible, we have included useful phone numbers in case you need further information and advice.

You can get a copy of this guide in large print, on audio tape or braille by contacting your Area Housing Office. If you need a translation of this booklet, please contact your local housing office.

CUSTOMER CARE STATEMENT

We are committed to customer care and our aim is to deliver a service that is professional, efficient and polite. The Handbook describes what is available to you as our customer and how we go about delivering the service.

We value contributions and suggestions from all tenants so we can aim to improve the service we provide. If you have any comments or suggestions, please write to your Housing Officer at your Area Housing Office or to the council's Tenant Participation Officer at the council's Narborough office and let us know.

BLABY COUNCIL - OUR VISION

Leading the communities of the District of Blaby towards an improving quality of life.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Council wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunities in the provision of its services and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, disability, marital status, caring responsibilities, trade union membership, age or sexual orientation. The Council believe that it is in the authorities best interests, and those of all who work in it, to ensure that the human resources, talents and skills available throughout the community are considered in the provision of its services and in all employment opportunities as they arise.

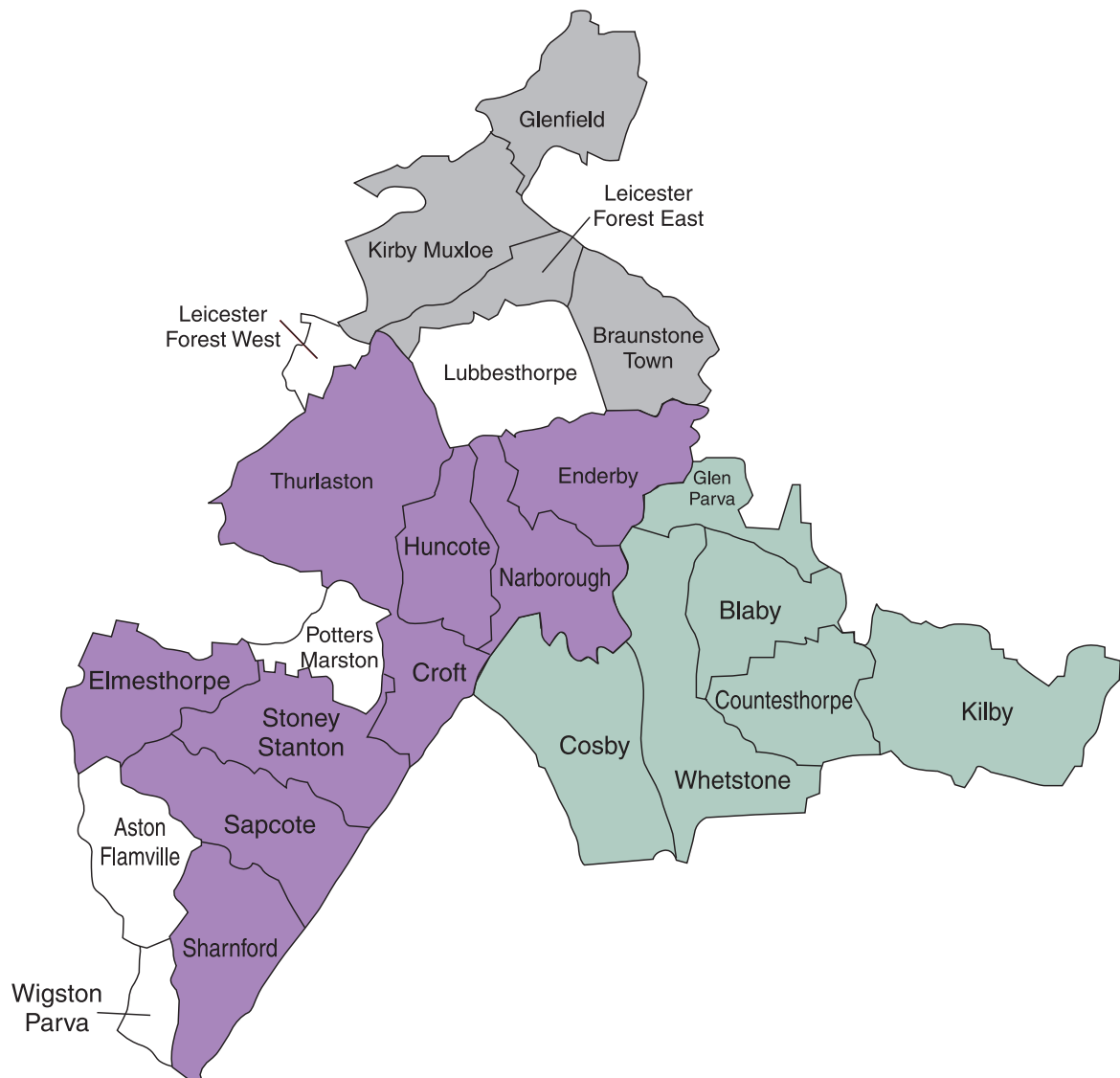
OFFICE ADDRESSES AND INFORMATION

For any problems/queries you might have or if you have a problem that needs immediate attention, your first point of contact will be your Housing Officer/Housing Assistant based at your Area Office at:

<p>Northern Area Housing Team is based at:</p> <p>Braunstone Civic Centre Kingsway Braunstone Town Leicester LE3 2PP</p> <p>They cover the following areas: Braunstone Town Glenfield Kirby Muxloe</p> <p>Telephone: 0116 2727625 / 6</p> <p>Email: northern.housing@ blaby.gov.uk</p>	<p>Central Area Housing Team is based at:</p> <p>Council Offices Desford Road Narborough Leicester LE19 2EP</p> <p>They cover the following areas: Croft Elmesthorpe Enderby Huncote Littlethorpe Narborough Sapcote Sharnford Stoney Stanton Thurlaston</p> <p>Telephone: 0116 2727622 / 3</p> <p>Email: central.housing@ blaby.gov.uk</p>	<p>Eastern Area Housing Team is based at:</p> <p>Joint Service Shop 10 Forge Corner Blaby Leicester LE8 4FZ</p> <p>They cover the following areas: Blaby Cosby Countesthorpe Glen Parva Kilby Whetstone</p> <p>Telephone: 01162727628 / 9</p> <p>Email eastern.housing@ blaby.gov.uk</p>
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The council does not own any properties in the following areas:

Wigston Parva
Potters Marsden
Lubbesthorpe
Aston Flamville.



Opening hours for all of the offices are:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday
Wednesday
Friday

8.45 a.m. to 5.15 p.m.
8.45 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.
8.45 a.m. to 4.45 p.m.

Please note the cash office opening hours vary, please see Section 3

To avoid any delay it is advisable to phone or call in to make an appointment to see the appropriate Officer.

Listed below are details of the key people in the Area Housing Offices, who you may need to make contact with at some stage during your council tenancy.

Area Housing Manager

The Area Manager is responsible for overseeing the day to day running of the Area Housing Office.

Housing Officer

A Housing Officer has been appointed for your area. He or she will be your point of contact on matters concerning the management of your home and neighbourhood generally. To find out who your Housing Officer is please contact the appropriate Housing Team - as indicated previously.

Housing Assistant

Housing Assistants also work in each of the housing teams and are there to support the housing team. The Housing Assistant is likely to be your first point of contact, in particular when you report a repair.

Housing Inspectors

The housing inspectors are responsible to the Works Unit Manager and are based within the Housing Works Unit. As part of their duties they provide technical advice on more complex repairs to the Area Offices. Routine inspections are normally undertaken within a week..

SECTION TWO

STARTING YOUR NEW TENANCY

Signing for the tenancy

By signing for the tenancy, you are agreeing to the Council's tenancy conditions. New tenancies always start on a Monday.

At the sign-up interview, we will:

- explain the legal documents you must sign
- give you the keys to your new home
- explain about how to pay your rent and other charges
- explain how to report any repairs which need doing
- give you decoration allowance, if appropriate
- give you information about the home contents insurance scheme
- investigate the possibility of housing benefit
- take payment of 1 weeks rent, taking into account the requirements of supporting people

New Tenancy Visits

During the sign-up interview, the officer will arrange an appointment to come to visit you at home after you have moved into the property.

This visit is to make sure you are happy with your home and to answer any questions you may have.

A SUMMARY OF YOUR TENANCY AGREEMENT

Your Tenancy Agreement is a legally binding contract between you, The Tenant, and Blaby District Council, your Landlord.

You will be asked to sign two copies, one for you to keep and one for the Council's records.

When you sign this Agreement, you have agreed to keep to the conditions we ask of anyone who wishes to live in any of our properties.

There are two types of tenancy issued by the Council:

1. **Introductory Tenancies**

Blaby District Council has decided to use Introductory Tenancies. These Introductory Tenancies act as probationary tenancies for a period of one year from their commencement, the idea being that the Council will have additional powers to deal more quickly with, for example, rent arrears by the tenant or antisocial conduct by the tenant, a member of the family or visitors to the property.

Generally an introductory tenancy will last one year from its commencement after which, if the tenancy has been satisfactorily conducted, the tenancy will become a secure tenancy without the need for further paperwork.

The Council is able to bring an introductory tenancy to an end at any time in the twelve month period, if an introductory tenant breaks any of the conditions of tenancy. Examples of this would include failure to pay rent and antisocial behaviour by the tenant, a member of the family or visitors to the property.

For more information on Introductory Tenancies, ask your Housing Officer for a Leaflet *Introductory Tenancies - Guidance Notes* .

2. **Secure Tenancies**

A secure tenancy is for people who will normally have been a council tenant for over a year. Secure tenants enjoy more rights than introductory tenants and these are outlined in your Tenancy Agreement and Conditions of tenancy.

Your Tenancy Agreement will tell you if you have a Secure or Introductory Tenancy,

Similar conditions for a Secure or Introductory Tenancy apply and by signing the Agreement, you have agreed to the following:

- to pay your rent, in advance, every week
- to report all repairs and keep your home in good, decorative order
- to ensure your home is not sublet
- to ensure your home is not used for business purposes
- not be abusive to Council staff or agents
- not to cause any wilful damage to your home or any other Council property
- not to cause nuisance or harassment

Further conditions are included in your Tenancy Agreement..

Blaby District Council have agreed to:

keep your property and its surroundings in good repair
 assist you should you suffer from nuisance and harassment.

All tenants of the Council have either Secure or Introductory Tenancies. This means that you cannot normally be made to leave your home, unless you have broken the Tenancy Agreement and the council have obtained a court order for possession.

If you have broken the Agreement e.g. by not paying rent or causing a nuisance, your Housing Officer will contact you, to bring this matter to your attention and to give you the opportunity to resolve the matter. Your Housing Officer will be prepared to give you assistance where appropriate to sort out any problems you may have.

If the Agreement is broken and these problems cannot be resolved, the Council may have to apply to the County Court for a Possession Order. If the County Court is satisfied that you have broken your Tenancy Agreement a possession order will normally be granted. Should you be evicted, the council may not be obliged to rehouse you.

If you feel you have difficulties understanding your Tenancy Agreement, please do not hesitate to contact your Housing Officer who will be happy to help you.

SECTION THREE

RENTS, SERVICE CHARGES AND BENEFITS

HOW YOUR RENT AND SERVICE CHARGE ARE SET

RENT

Following the introduction of new regulations by central Government, the calculation of rent is prescribed for all Local Authority housing.

Rent is calculated in accordance with the formula contained in the new regulations and reflects the open market value for residential use of each property. The formula applies on weighting to this value to adjust the calculated rent to take account of the number of bedrooms in the property and the relative prosperity of the area by comparison to national averages (measured by reference to property values and average County earnings). Rents are based on January 1999 property values and are uplifted each year by an inflation factor set by central Government.

Rents shall fully reflect this new basis by April, 2012. Where the calculated rent differs from that being charged, a transitional arrangement is invoked to smooth the increases or decreases over the period to April, 2012, subject to prescribed maximum annual limits.

AMENITY CHARGES

A charge is made at some sites to cover the cost of specific services provided. Examples of such services are:

- Garden maintenance
- Site lighting
- Cleaning of communal areas

The number and type of services may vary at each site but details will be given at the start of the tenancy and any subsequent changes will be discussed at the tenant meetings.

Once a service budget has been set for the site this is then divided equally amongst the properties to give a weekly or monthly charge.

SERVICE CHARGES

Service charges relate to our Warden and Lifeline Service which from 1st April, 2003 falls under the Supporting People umbrella. From that date charges shall be levied (where due) by the Social Services Department of Leicestershire County Council,

whereas the Service continues to be provided by Blaby District Council. The Supporting People Team at the Social Services Department will issue an invoice every four weeks. This can be paid by the following methods:

Swipe card (details will be given to individuals when an application is made for a service charged by the Supporting People Team.

Direct Debit

At a bank or post office

By sending a cheque

Do not send cash through the post.

CHANGES IN RENT AND AMENITY CHARGES

Our rent income provides the means to manage our housing stock and keep it in good repair. As costs increase rents shall also need to increase (see How Your Rent and Charges are Set above).

Normally a rent increase occurs once a year and you will be given written notice of a change in rent at least 28 days in advance of any rent increase. If you are claiming Housing Benefit our Benefits Section should inform you of your benefit entitlement and any changes in the benefit payments.

HOW TO PAY YOUR RENT

As stated in your Tenancy Agreement, rent is due weekly in advance. If rent is to be paid on any other basis you must agree this in writing with the Council’s Financial Services Division beforehand.

Methods of payment are as follows:

- a) You can pay your rent at your local Area Office, the opening hours are as follows:

Braunstone Civic Centre, Braunstone Town 9.30 a.m - 1.30 p.m. (Mon - Fri)

Joint Service Shop, Blaby 9.30 a.m - 1.30 p.m. (Mon - Fri)

Council Offices, Narborough Mon to Thurs 9.15 a.m. - 4.30 p.m. Friday 9.15 a.m. - 4.15 p.m.

- b) **Standing Order**

Your payment can be made monthly in advance from your bank account via a standing order. To arrange a standing order please contact our Financial Services Division on 0116 272 7674.

c) **By Post**

Payments can be made by cheque or postal order via the post. Please enclose either your post office payment card or your rent card. Remember to write your name, address and account number on the reverse of the cheque or postal order. Please do not send cash through the post.

d) **Rent Collectors**

A rent collector can call and collect the rent once a week on a set day of the week. If you wish a collector to call please contact the Financial Services Division on 0116 272 7655.

e) **Electronic Payment Card**

You can also make payments over the phone by using your **Debit Card**. To do this please call our offices on 0116 272 7722 (24 hour payment line) quoting the details shown.

- Name, Address and Telephone Number
- Card Type *
- Cardholder's Name
- Cardholder Account Number
- Valid from Date and Expiry Date
- Issue Number (if applicable)
- Amount to be paid
- Rent Account Number

* Please note that certain cards may not be accepted.

CLAIMING HOUSING AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT

If you are on a low or fixed income you may be entitled to help towards your rent payments.

If you think you may qualify and want to receive a claim form, call one of these numbers: (0116 2727510)

Or call in at your Area Housing Office (see Section 1 for addresses) or at the Housing Benefits Section at the Council Offices, Narborough.

If you are in doubt, apply - it won't cost you anything but could save you money.

Staff in the Housing Benefits Section at the Council Offices, Narborough will be pleased to give you advice and will help you complete the form if required. If you need to discuss a Housing Benefit problem, the Housing Benefits Section holds regular surgeries in local joint service shops (Area Housing Office) at the following times:

Blaby Joint Service Shop: every Thursday 10.00 a.m. until 12.00 p.m.

Braunstone Civic Centre Area Housing Office: every Tuesday from 10.00 a.m. until 12.00 p.m.

You are advised to make an appointment for the above surgeries .

You should notify the Housing Benefits Section in the Council Offices, Narborough straight away, of any change in your circumstances as they may affect your Housing Benefit entitlement.

How are these benefits calculated?

This will depend on:

Your income

Your savings

Your needs allowance (the amount the Government says you need)

The amount of rent you pay

Who else lives in your home

If you have any difficulty, a visiting officer can call and help you fill in your form.

Is any income disregarded?

When calculating Housing Benefit we ignore Mobility Allowance, War Pensions, Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance. If you work, we count wages **AFTER TAX**, National Insurance and half of any payments to a personal pension .

What about my savings?

Currently if you or your partner have savings, the first £3,000 is disregarded (the first £6,000 is if you are over 60 years of age) and a sliding scale applied up to £16,000. However, these figures are for guidance and may change.

Other people in the household?

A deduction may be made from your benefit for any non-dependants who live in your home (this does not include your partner). However, if you receive Attendance Allowance, the higher or middle rate awards of Disability Living Allowance, we can disregard them from your claim.

RENT ARREARS

RENT ARREARS RECOVERY POLICY

If you have any difficulty in paying your rent you should contact the rents section in the Financial Services Division immediately. **Tel: 0116 2727674**

The problem will be dealt with sympathetically and the Council will be able to offer advice about claiming Housing Benefit.

The Council needs to collect the rent due in order to pay for the maintenance and management of its properties. Therefore, if arrears accrue on your rent account the following steps will usually be taken:

- a) You will be contacted either in person or in writing to advise you of the arrears. You will be asked to bring your account up to date or to contact the Rent Recovery Officer to discuss repayment by instalments.
- b) If satisfactory arrangements are made no further action will be taken but if there is no response, another letter will be sent and/or a visit will be made.
- c) Should rent arrears persist and you remain in breach of your tenancy, and you are a secure tenant, a Notice of Seeking Possession may be served. You will be told why such action is being taken and where to seek independent advice. This is the first step in the legal recovery process and could ultimately lead to the repossession of your home. It is therefore essential that you contact the Council at this point to discuss the matter.
- d) If you fail to respond to the Notice of Seeking Possession within 28 days, the Council will apply to the County Court for a Possession Hearing. If an arrangement is made to reduce the arrears at an acceptable rate, a suspended Order of Possession may be sought. Any legal costs incurred will be recharged to you.

- e) Failure to comply with the terms of the Order may result in the Council obtaining a Warrant for Eviction by the Court Bailiff.
- f) If court costs are awarded against you, you will still have to pay these and all your rent arrears, even if you are evicted from the property or if you give up the property voluntarily.
- g) If you are an Introductory Tenant, the Council can start legal action against you by serving a Notice of Termination of Introductory Tenancy. If you wish, you can ask for a review of your case, but you must ask for this review within 14 days of the notice being served.

The review panel is made up of elected Councillors, and the panel can make one of three decisions:

- i) to overturn the decision to start legal action;
- ii) to suspend the decision to start possession proceedings, for as long as you keep to an agreed arrangement to pay off the arrears. If you then break the arrangement, the case would be referred to the County Court for a possession hearing.
- iii) to uphold the decision to start legal action and allow the case to be referred immediately to the County Court for a possession hearing .

At the County Court possession hearing, the judge will have no option except to award possession of your home to the Council, and the Council would be allowed to evict you.

Once the case has been referred to Court, even if the one year probation period ends, your Introductory Tenancy can not become a secure tenancy unless the Council withdraws the legal action or the legal action ends in such a way that you are not evicted,

for example: even though a Possession Order is made by the Court, you pay off all the money owing before the date of the eviction.

What form of Notice should be served on introductory tenants?

A notice served on an introductory tenant (a Notice of Termination of Introductory Tenancy) must contain the following information:

The reasons for the authority's decision for an order of possession.
 Information about the reason for seeking to the end of the tenancy.
 Information on the right to review of the local authority's decision, with details of time scales.

The date after which an application will be made to the court.

That the introductory tenant should seek immediate advice from independent agencies such as the C.A.B., a housing aid centre, law centre, or solicitor if they require such assistance, giving addresses and telephone numbers.

FORMER TENANTS ARREARS

Should there be rent arrears outstanding on the termination of your tenancy (either with or without an eviction) steps will be taken to recover the debt. Reasonable offers to reduce the balance by instalments will always be considered.

If you leave your tenancy owing rent you may be excluded from re-applying for council housing.

RENTING A GARAGE OR CARAVAN PLOT

The council has garages, garage plots and caravan plots which are available to rent. Current council tenants have a priority when we allocate these plots or garages. The rent is due weekly and payment can be made using the methods described earlier in this section.

We do not offer a rent collection service to tenants who do not have a council property.

Garages or plots rented should be used for storage of a vehicle only. Garages can not be rented for business use.

Maps are available at each of the area offices showing the exact location of sites.

SECTION FOUR

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

The Housing Department recognises that the Repairs and Maintenance Service is one of the most important services we provide. It is therefore crucial to us that you know what to expect from the Repairs Service. This section explains to you our standards of service. It will set out how we will respond to you when you request a repair, how long a repair will take, what repairs you and we are responsible for and what we will do to ensure a high quality repairs service. We will also tell you what to do if you are not happy with the repairs service.

We aim to carry out repairs within the time scale detailed in Section 4 and will ensure that the service is carried out to a high standard and in a cost-effective way.

Reporting your Repairs

The following information will hopefully assist you when reporting repairs.

HOW DO I REPORT REPAIRS?

- Simply telephone or e-mail your local Area Housing Office on the phone number/e-mail address in Section 1 of this handbook.
- Visit your local Area Housing Office or speak to your Warden if you live in sheltered housing.
- Write a letter to the Area Housing Office.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Dependent upon the nature of the repair, an inspector may call to assess the repair. When the repair has been issued to the Contractor, you will be sent a 'Tenants Satisfaction Questionnaire' this is an acknowledgement of the repair reported. This form will give you the following information.

- Date repair reported
- Your name/address/telephone number
- Area Office dealing with the repair
- A description of the repair reported
- The repair priority i.e. whether the repair is urgent or lower priority (see below for more detail)
- The name of the Contractor who will carry out the work
- Access arrangements you may have given
- Target completion date

Included is a label for you to return the Questionnaire when the work has been completed. The information we receive helps us to monitor the quality of our contractors so that we can ensure you receive a quality responsive repairs service. Please take a few minutes to complete and return the Questionnaire.

Alternatively you can hand the Questionnaire to your Local Housing Office.

NORMAL WORKING HOURS FOR THE REPAIRS SERVICE ARE

8.45 - 5.15 MONDAY - THURSDAY

8.45 - 4.45 FRIDAY

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

If you suspect a gas leak -

Turn off the gas supply

Ring **TRANSCO - 0800 111 999**

All other emergency repairs out of office hours should be reported to the following number:

0870 2385057

Please use this number for genuine emergencies only

Emergency repairs are ones that are required to avoid serious health and safety risk or prevent serious structural damage to your home.

Typical examples of emergency repairs are:

- Total loss of power
- Water affecting electrics
- Burst pipes(s)
- Blocked WC where this is only one WC in the property

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE REPAIR MUST BE AN EMERGENCY OTHERWISE YOU MAY BE CHARGED FOR THE CALL OUT

EXAMPLES OF REPAIRS, CATEGORIES AND RESPONSE TIMES

The Council has seven categories of repairs covering Emergency, Urgent, Routine and Non-Urgent repairs as follows:

P1 - EMERGENCY REPAIRS - TARGET TIME TO BE RESPONDED TO WITHIN 24 HOURS

For example:

No electricity, gas leak, burst pipe(s) blocked drains where there is only 1 toilet in the property, work relating to security of the property, renew ball valve and tap washers where the tenant is unable to turn the tap off.

- P2 - URGENT REPAIRS - TARGET TIME TO BE RESPONDED TO WITHIN 7 WORKING DAYS
For example:
Light switch not working, faulty socket, leaking overflow on cistern, leaks to waste pipes, renew faulty taps and valves, renew cracked wc pan,
- P3 - ROUTINE REPAIRS - TARGET TIME TO BE RESPONDED TO WITHIN 28 WORKING DAYS
For example:
Replacement architraves/skirting, leaking gutter joints where it is likely to cause a slipping hazard.
- P4 - NON-URGENT REPAIRS - TARGET TIME TO BE RESPONDED TO WITHIN 13 WEEKS
For example:
Loose/blocked guttering, fencing repairs, slabbing, tarmac and other groundwork.
- P5 - EMERGENCY CALL OUT, OUTSIDE NORMAL WORKING HOURS - TARGET TIME TO BE RESPONDED TO WITHIN 2 HOURS
For example:
Major failure of electricity during evenings or weekends, failure of water supply or major leak in a roof, major leak to water system which cannot be controlled, boarding-up of windows or doors.
- P6 - EMERGENCY CALL OUT WITHIN NORMAL WORKING HOURS - TARGET TIME TO BE RESPONDED TO WITHIN 2 HOURS
For example:
As for P5 but during normal working hours.
- P7 - PRIORITY REPAIRS - TARGET TIME TO BE RESPONDED TO WITHIN 3 DAYS
For example:
Partial loss of water supply.

In addition to day-to-day repairs the council undertakes cyclical and major capital works.

CYCLICAL

This is work undertaken at regular intervals. The main areas of work are:

External Painting - each property owned by Blaby District Council is externally painted approximately every 5 years.

Internal Painting - one room redecorated approximately every 6 years **(this applies to tenants who are over 60 years of age who do not have relatives to assist with redecoration)**

Gas Servicing and Maintenance - All properties have a Landlord's Gas Safety Check undertaken by the Council. Gas central heating systems which are the responsibility of the council have an annual service and any maintenance is undertaken by a contractor appointed by the council.

MAJOR WORK

Each year the council undertakes a variety of major works to its properties, e.g. window replacement, rewires, roofing works, installation of central heating, refurbishment, insulation, kitchen and bathroom improvements. These programmes of work are undertaken to ensure that the properties are safe, secure, warm, and are a satisfactory standard in which to live.

Many of the programmes are ongoing as only a certain number are able to be undertaken each year

ACCESS

As part of the conditions of tenancy, we have access to your home if we need to carry out repairs or need to carry out an inspection.

Tenants must allow Officers of the Council and any other person authorised by the Council, such as Contractors, access to your home between the hours of 7.30am and 5.00pm and at other times in an emergency, for the purpose of inspecting the state of repair or carrying out repairs either to the premises or adjoining premises. Advance notice will be given whenever practicable.

If you have any doubt about the identity of a Council Officer or Workman ask to see their identity card. If in doubt telephone the Council Offices for advice.

In cases of an emergency, where you are not at home, the council may gain access to the property. Upon completion of the works or inspection, your home will be properly secured and repaired if necessary. An emergency in these circumstances is when the property or a person's safety is deemed to be at risk.

If you need to go out for any reason and if an appointment for a repair visit has been made by us, it is essential that we are contacted by telephone to re-arrange the appointment.

COMPLAINING ABOUT A REPAIR

You should report this to your Area Housing Office.

An investigation will take place and you will be informed of the outcome.

It will help us to investigate your complaint if you can provide details of:

- repair order number
- details of your complaint

RIGHT TO REPAIR

The Government has introduced a scheme that gives Council tenants certain rights in relation to repairs.

Under the scheme, certain repairs have to be completed by the Council within a specified time limit. If the repair is not completed in time, tenants have a right to ask the Council to appoint another Contractor to do the work. If the second Contractor fails to complete the repair in time, tenants may be entitled to compensation.

If you wish to find out more about this scheme please contact your Area Housing Office.

USEFUL TIPS

1. Avoid turning off taps too tight. If difficult to turn off then report this as a repair.
2. Under no circumstances should nappies be flushed down the toilet.
3. NEVER put fat, oil or any other substance (apart from domestic cleaning products) down the sink, bath, WC or wash hand basin. This will eventually block the waste pipe, drain or soil stack. **YOU MAY BE RECHARGED FOR CLEARING BLOCKED WASTE PIPES OR DRAINS IF THE BLOCKAGE HAS OCCURRED AS A RESULT OF YOUR NEGLIGENCE.**

REPAIR RESPONSIBILITIES

The following tables detail various key repairs and identifies whether you or we are responsible for them.

KITCHENS - WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

Repair	Us	You	Comments
Kitchen Units	✓		Unless fitted by you
Cooker		✓	Unless supplied by us
Cooker Socket	✓		Unless fitted by you
Sink bowl and drainer	✓		Unless fitted by you
Tiled Splash Back	✓		Unless fitted by you
Floor Tiles	✓		Unless fitted by you

PLUMBING - WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

Repair	Us	You	Comments
Blocked Sink, Wash Basin or Bath			Costs may be recharged to the tenant if it is found that the blockage has been caused by negligence.
Domestic Cold Water Supply	✓		Unless fitted by you
Down pipes (rain and soil)	✓		Unless fitted by you
Drains	✓		Unless fitted by you
Gutters	✓		Unless fitted by you
Hot Water Supply	✓		Unless fitted by you
Sink Plugs and Chains		✓	
Washing Machine Fittings		✓	

STRUCTURE - WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

Repair	Us	You	Comments
Ceilings	✓		Unless fitted by you
Damp Proof Course	✓		Unless fitted by you
Floors (timber and solid)	✓		Not floor coverings e.g. carpets, tiles, wood flooring, vinyl fitted by you
Exterior Woodwork	✓		Unless fitted by you
Skirting Boards	✓		Unless fitted by you
Stairs	✓		Unless fitted by you
Walls	✓		Unless fitted by you
Steps to entrances	✓		Unless fitted by you
Roof brickwork and pointing including internal walls	✓		
Plaster work to walls and ceilings	✓		

BATHROOM - WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

Repair	Us	You	Comments
Bath	✓		Unless fitted by you
Shower	✓		Unless fitted by you
Toilet Seat	✓		Unless fitted by you
Toilet Pan	✓		Unless fitted by you
Wash Basin	✓		Unless fitted by you
Taps	✓		Unless fitted by you
Tiles	✓		Unless fitted by you
Plugs and Chains		✓	

HEATING - WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

Repair	Us	You	Comments
Chimney and Flue	✓		Unless fitted by you
Chimney Sweeping		✓	
Electric Storage Heaters	✓		Unless fitted by you
Fireplace	✓		Unless fitted by you
Gas Central Heating	✓		Unless fitted by you
Solid Fuel Central Heating	✓		Unless fitted by you
Gas Fires	✓		Unless fitted by you
Electric Fires	✓		Unless fitted by you

DOORS - WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

Repair	Us	You	Comments
Door Bell		✓	Unless this has been fitted by the Council as an Adaptation
Door Chain	✓		Unless fitted by you
Door Furniture	✓		Unless fitted by you
All Locks	✓		Unless as a result of losing keys
Keys		✓	
External and Internal Frames, thresholds, skirting and architraves	✓		Unless fitted by you

WINDOWS - WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

Repair	Us	You	Comments
Glass - which is cracked, shattered or broken		✓	Unless damage caused by vandalism remember to report the incident to the Police and obtain a crime reference number. We will check with the Police that the crime reference number provided is valid before any work is carried out
Windows, window frames, sills, etc	✓		Unless fitted by you

OTHER - WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

Repair	Us	You	Comments
Clothes line posts	✓		Unless fitted by you
Post and wires marking boundaries	✓		
Fencing		✓	Other than that which provides a boundary fence adjacent to a public footpath and which has been erected by the Council
Footpaths, block paving, flags and other means of access	✓		Unless you laid them
Gates		✓	Unless Communal
Interior Decoration		✓	
Exterior Decoration	✓		
Garages	✓		Unless erected by you
Light bulbs and fluorescent tubes		✓	
Communal lighting i.e. within a block of flats	✓		
Aerials		✓	Unless communal

If you require further assistance or guidance regarding repairs, please contact the housing staff within the relevant Area Office.

RECHARGEABLE REPAIRS

When we do a repair that is your responsibility, or if damage was caused by you or a member of your household or visitors to your property, we will charge you for the cost of the repair. You will also have to pay an administration charge. This also applies to repairs to your home when you leave.

DECORATIONS

The property must be kept in good decorative order. Your Housing Officer will inform you whether an allowance of decorating materials is available (usually at the time of signing up). This is a one off allowance given to assist with decoration.

The Council may decorate one room approximately every 6 years for elderly tenants who do not have relatives to assist with redecoration.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Gardens

If you have a garden, it is your responsibility as a condition of tenancy to keep it tidy.

You are also responsible for the pruning and maintenance of trees and shrubs in your garden.

Gardens which are uncultivated and untidy spoil the look of the neighbourhood and appearance of the area and can be a nuisance to your neighbours. They may even be a health hazard.

Insects and Pests

If you think you have got rats or mice, telephone the Environmental Health Department at the Council Offices, Narborough, **Tel: 0116 2727555** who will be able to assist or advise you. Rats will always be treated as an emergency.

If you have problems such as ants or wasp nest, the Environmental Health Department at the Council Offices will provide you with appropriate advice or assistance. You should be aware that there may be a charge for dealing with insect infestations.

If you find cockroaches in your home you must inform the Environmental Health Department at the Council Offices, Narborough.

Asbestos

Asbestos was often used in the construction of houses before 1980. Most council houses were built before 1980 and they may contain materials which have small amounts of asbestos in them.

Asbestos that is not broken and not likely to be disturbed can be left in place without any risk to your health. Any risk from asbestos happens when it is disturbed, broken, drilled, cut or sanded. If you suspect there is asbestos within your property, request an inspection via your Area Housing Office.

SERVICES TO YOUR HOME

ELECTRICITY

Prior to you moving in, all the wiring, sockets, installations etc., were tested and repairs carried out if necessary.

We ensure that the electricians are safe and the work carried out by an approved and registered electrical contractor. Electrical contractors used by the Council are registered with the National Inspection Council of Electrical Contracting (NICEIC) or the Electrical Contractors Council (ECA).

You should arrange for the meters to be read .

After you have arranged for the electricity supply to be 'switched on' via the electricity board, it is worthwhile familiarising yourself with the following:

1. Location of fuse box/consumer unit
2. Ensuring that they are clearly labelled
i.e. which fuse or miniature circuit breaker covers sockets, lights etc.
3. Identifying mains switch

If you have difficulty in finding or locating any of the above please contact your Area Housing Office.

USEFUL SAFETY RULES

- a) Do not let ANYONE tamper with the electricity supply. Only authorised personnel such as the Electricity Board are allowed, or a Council approved contractor.
- b) If it is possible, avoid purchasing 'second hand' electrical appliances. These items may be faulty and could cause the consumer unit to 'trip' (or switch off).

If in doubt about anything electrical, please contact your Area Housing Office.

GAS

After you have arranged for the gas supply to be 'turned on' by your supplier, it is worth while familiarising yourself with the following:

- a) Location of gas tap
- b) Instructions on using the boiler
- c) Thermostat where fitted
- d) Telephone number and name of your gas supplier

If you have difficulty in finding or locating any of the above contact your Area Housing Office.

Annually a safety check is done by a contractor and a copy of the certificate will be given to you. This is done as specified in the Gas Safety Regulations 1994 (as amended). The contractor will contact the tenant to arrange access to undertake this safety check.

Gas central heating is provided in some Council dwellings for your comfort. It is our responsibility to ensure that Council gas appliances are safe and regularly serviced. All work is carried out by a Council approved contractor who is registered with the Confederation of Registered Gas Installers (CORGI).

Any fault which occurs on your gas central heating, including water leaks to radiators, hot water cylinders and electrics to programmer or clock at any time should be telephoned direct to the Contractor William Freer Ltd **Tel: 0116 2689660**. This applies only if the system has been installed by the council or it has been installed by the tenant and agreement has been given for inclusion in the maintenance contract.

They also operate a 24 hour, 365 day call out service for emergency work only. You should advise the company that you are a tenant of this Council and are included under the Scheme and that the heating system requires attention.

FAULTS OCCURRING ON THE GAS CENTRAL HEATING MUST BE REPORTED TO THE CONTRACTOR AND NOT THROUGH THE COUNCIL OFFICES.

The following are the tenants responsibility:

- Relighting all pilot lights
- To bleed all air out of radiators
- Resetting time clocks
- To provide batteries for gas fire ignition

- Adjusting room thermostats
- Air brick - at no time must this be covered or the holes blocked up
- Hit and miss air vents must not be fitted. If found on a subsequent inspection, the tenant will be required to remove this type of air vent and fit a new air vent to comply with gas regulations. If the tenant fails to do this the council will undertake the work and recharge the costs to the tenant.

Painting Gas Fires and Appliances

A health and safety hazard is created if the casing on gas fires, boilers or other appliances have been painted by the tenant. If a council contractor finds an appliance that has been painted, it will be disconnected immediately, and the tenant may be charged the cost of replacing it and re-connection. It is also important to note that in most cases the whole appliance needs to be replaced, as parts are often not available.

Installation of Ceiling Fans

Installing a ceiling fan in a room with a gas fire is also potentially dangerous. A ceiling fan disrupts the circulation of air in the room and can draw the fumes from gas fires into the room. This can cause a build-up of carbon monoxide, which poses a health risk for those in the property. If a property with a gas fire is found with a ceiling fan, contractors will have no option but to cut off the supply until the fan is removed. Tenants may be re-charged for the cost of reconnecting.

USEFUL SAFETY RULES

1. If you suspect a gas leak - **TURN OFF THE GAS SUPPLY IMMEDIATELY AT THE METER CONTROL VALVE OR EMERGENCY CONTROL VALVE.**
2. Turn off any naked flames.
3. Do not smoke
4. Ring the TRANSCO emergency number **Tel: 0800 111 999**
5. Open all windows
6. Do not switch on or off any electrical appliances. **WHY?** because a spark can cause an explosion therefore endangering your life and others.

Whilst it is essential to carry out the above, there are other precautions to be considered.

1. Once a gas leak is suspected **DO NOT USE MATCHES OR NAKED FLAMES AND PUT OUT ALL CIGARETTES**

2. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REPAIR THE GAS LEAK YOURSELF, CALL OUT TRANSCO IMMEDIATELY

If there are any problems encountered then do not hesitate to seek advice from the Council's Area Housing Office or TRANSCO.

WATER

Water is supplied to your home from the Water Company. It is important that you contact them once your tenancy has commenced. Furthermore, you need to find out whether the property is fitted with a water meter. **Tel: Water Billing Dept 0800 328 1155**

After you have arranged for the supply to be registered in your name, it is worthwhile familiarising yourself with the following:

1. Location of stopcock(s)
2. Name and telephone number of the Water Company

KNOW YOUR SYSTEM

1. FIND YOUR STOP TAPS

Mains Water: Where the pipe enters the building e.g. under the sink, in the hall, bathroom or garage.

Stored Water: Under the storage cistern/tank e.g. in the airing cupboard or in the roof space.

2. DO THE STOP TAPS WORK

Make sure that they can be turned on and off easily..

FROST

Drain down outside toilets in frosty conditions, turn off drain down or supply some form of heating

If the worst happens and the pipes become frozen or a pipe bursts.

1. Shut off any water heating appliance whether fuelled by gas, oil, solid fuel or electricity.
2. Examine the water system for fractures in pipes and fittings and also for any pipes pulled away from fittings.
3. If no damage is visible, open all taps and thaw out the pipework with an electric fan heater or hair dryer. Cloths soaked in hot water can also be applied to the pipes.

Water authorities are only able to offer limited help, normally by turning off the cold water supply to prevent further leakage.

A little time spent on prevention may save a lot of time and trouble later.

GOING AWAY?

Generally it is quite safe to leave the central heating thermostat set to normal whilst you are away over Christmas or a similar short break. As a general guide if your heating system works without attention whilst you are out at work or away from the house normally it should function correctly whilst you are away for a few days.

Please note the following advice does not apply to tenants living in flats

If you are not keeping your property warm during a period of absence, drain down the plumbing and heating system as follows:

Turn off main cold water stop valve
Open all taps
Flush all toilet cisterns
Drain pipework through the drain valves which should be at the low points of your water system.

If draining down heating systems the electrical supply to the programmer or boiler must be switched off.

Remember

Insulation only delays the effect of frost, it is not the complete answer. Regular heating of your home is the most effective protection during long periods of very cold weather.

ALTERATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

As a tenant you have the right to make improvements, alterations and additions to your home, subject to written permission from the Council

Typical examples of requests are shown below

- Can I fit a shower in my bathroom?
- Can I erect a satellite dish?
- I would like an extension to my house
- Can I remove an internal wall to make more room?
- May I fit a gas cooker?
- And many more

What should I do first?

Write to the Area Housing Office to ask for permission

What happens next?

An Officer will visit you to inspect the premises then confirm to you in writing of his/her decision. If permission is granted then you also need to inform the Officer when the work is completed so that a post inspection can be carried out.

Depending on the nature of the alternation or improvement, you may also need to apply for Planning Permission and/or Building Regulation consent. For further advice you should contact the Planning Division and/or Building Control Division at the Council Offices, Narborough.

What if I am refused permission?

The Officer will give you his/her reason(s) why the request is refused in writing.

What if I am not satisfied?

You can request a review of the decision.

It is very important that you **DO NOT MAKE ANY PURCHASES OR COMMITMENTS** prior to obtaining written permission from the Council. If in doubt, write in or contact your Area Housing Office.

DISABLED ADAPTATIONS

Aids and Adaptations

If you are having difficulty around the home and you feel you would benefit from any adaptations, first contact the Occupational Therapist of the Social Services Department, Bassett Street, South Wigston, Leicester, **Tel: 0116 278711** who will assess your needs. On their recommendation we may be able to carry out the necessary adaptation.

SECTION FIVE

TRANSFERS/EXCHANGES/H.O.M.E.S/ASSISTED MOVES

YOUR OPTIONS FOR MOVING

There are four types of scheme available to tenants.

1. Homeswap and H.O.M.E.S Scheme

These are two schemes run by an organisation called H.O.M.E.S. (Housing Organisation Mobility and Exchange Services) which can assist you in finding a new home in another part of the country.

2. Mutual Exchanges

At a more local level, the Council runs a mutual exchange scheme. It is up to you to find someone suitable to exchange with. They can be tenants of another Council or another landlord such as a Housing Association. Further details of Council or Housing Association tenants who wish to take part in this scheme are displayed at each area office.

Once you have found someone willing to carry out a mutual exchange, **you must get the written agreement of the Council before making any arrangements to move.**

The Council will usually agree to an exchange, however this is not always the case, provisional agreement may be given in some cases. These could include:-

- Current or former tenant rent arrears
- Outstanding repair account
- Non compliance with your tenancy agreement which includes:-
 - keeping your home in a good state of repair and decoration
 - looking after your garden
- Under-occupying or over-crowding Council property

Should the exchange be refused you will be informed in writing of the reasons why. If you exchange without permission you will be required to return to your former property or may lose your home.

3. Transfers

If you wish to move from your current home you may apply for a transfer. A transfer is a move from one Council property to another in the Blaby District area.

We will consider a transfer request provided you meet the Council's criteria for a transfer. Further details are available from your Area Housing Office.

You will need to complete a transfer application form which will then be assessed by the Council on the basis of your housing need. This assessment is carried out by reviewing your circumstances for factors such as over-crowding or medical/health problems.

More details and information on applying for a mutual exchange or a transfer can be obtained from your Area Housing Office.

4. **Assisted Moves**

If you are a tenant of Blaby District Council, and are:-

- a) living in a property which is too large for your needs,
- b) of pensionable age,
- c) would like to the Council to pay your moving costs and service connections, then the assisted move scheme could be an option for you.

If you are of pensionable age and are tenant of Blaby District Council and you occupy one of the following:-

- a 3 bedroom house
- a 2 bedroom house
- a 2 bedroom flat without warden support

You may qualify for help with the cost of moving. Many elderly tenants will have lived in the Council homes for several years, and wish to move to a bungalow or flat but are worried about the expense and making the necessary arrangements.

This scheme is intended to remove the burden of the costs, and provide trained staff to help you with all the arrangements.

The scheme is designed to cater for your individual needs and, as far as possible, your own preferences.

SECTION SIX

LIVING IN YOUR HOME - NUISANCE, HARASSMENT AND NEIGHBOUR DISPUTES

This section is intended to give advice on a variety of issues which may affect you whilst you are living in your home. If you require any further information regarding any of these matters, please do not hesitate to ask your Housing Officer or Housing Assistant.

NUISANCE

Everybody has the right to live peacefully in their own home and we expect our tenants to show consideration for others. It is, therefore, a condition of your tenancy that you do not cause a nuisance or create a disturbance. Some examples of nuisance are outlined below.

NOISE

Noise is the most common form of nuisance. Please keep the volume of stereos, radios and televisions down, particularly at night or early in the morning. If you are regularly disturbed by noise from your neighbour, try to talk to them first as they may not be aware that they are disturbing you. You should also keep a diary sheet which is available from your Housing Officer. If the problem cannot be resolved you may complain to the Environmental Health Department.

PETS

Your tenancy agreement includes conditions on keeping pets. In particular, dog owners have a duty to ensure that their dog is properly controlled and does not cause a nuisance or foul communal areas. Dangerous dogs should be reported to the Police. The Council's Dog Warden Service should be contacted in the case of stray dogs or dog fouling.

You must keep your pets under control and must not allow them to cause nuisance or annoyance to your neighbours or others in the locality. **You must have the Council's written consent before you keep a pet.**

Check with your Area Housing Officer for more details.

RUBBISH

All tenants have a duty to co-operate with other tenants in keeping communal areas clean, tidy and free from obstruction. If the Council is forced to clean or clear rubbish it will seek to identify any tenants responsible and recharge them for the costs incurred.

It is also a breach of your tenancy agreement to allow rubbish to accumulate outside your property.

HARASSMENT

Blaby Council defines harassment as the deliberate interference with the peace of any person on the ground of race, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, ill health or age.

Blaby Council will not tolerate the harassment of any tenants or staff.

We have therefore, developed a policy to provide support to victims and to take appropriate action against perpetrators.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

Violence or threats of violence

Abusive or insulting words or behaviour

Damage or threats of damage to another person's property or home

Writing threatening, abusive or insulting graffiti

Doing anything likely to interfere with the peace or comfort of any other person

Inciting or allowing any other person to do any of the above things

If you are being harassed, please contact the Police and your Housing Officer.

NEIGHBOUR DISPUTES

It is always best for neighbours to try to sort out disputes between themselves. If this does not solve the problem you should contact your Housing Officer who will investigate the problem impartially.

If a tenant is in dispute with a neighbour and the tenants behaviour is contrary to the tenancy agreement the Council may decide to serve notice on the tenant which could ultimately lead to a tenant losing their home.

It should be remembered, however, that the Council will not be able to resolve all disputes and it may be necessary for you to contact a solicitor, Citizens Advice Bureau, or the Police.

In appropriate cases the Council may apply for an anti-social behaviour order. An anti-social behaviour order is an order from the Courts, which aims to restrict the behaviour of an anti-social individual. It may also restrict the localities where an individual is permitted to visit.

INSURANCE

The Council has an insurance policy which covers the structure and fixtures of your home against damage caused by fire, storms or other such hazards. Your furniture and other personal possessions are not covered by the Council's Insurance Policy.

It is, of course, for you to decide whether or not to insure your belongings, but we strongly recommend that you do. Burglaries, fires, leaks or floods can happen to anyone and the cost of replacing your possessions would be very expensive compared to the cost of insurance cover. Adequate household contents insurance would give you peace of mind in the event of any of the above happening to you. The Council has arranged that insurance cover can be available to any of its tenants who qualify. The premiums are collected with your rent, though they do not qualify for Housing Benefit. If you require more information or would like a proposal form, please ask your Area Housing Office. You are, of course, free to make your own arrangements for insurance.

You are also reminded that if you or a member of your household or visitor causes damage to items in your home belonging to the Council, you are responsible for the cost of replacement. As this could prove quite costly, you might want to consider choosing an insurance policy or extending your cover to include accidental damage to your own and the Council's fixtures and fittings. **You are responsible for the safety and conduct of any visitor to your home.**

COMPLAINTS

The Council aims to provide you with the highest standard of housing service and we welcome any comments you may wish to make about how the service to you may be improved.

If you are not happy with the service you receive, you should contact us and we will explore ways to improve the service area you are unhappy about. If you are not satisfied with our response or the way we have dealt with an issue or problem you should consider following the Council's Complaints Procedure, details available from your Area Housing Office.

TAKING IN A LODGER

If you have enough room in your house you may want to take in a lodger. A lodger is a person who lives with you as part of your family and pays you something towards their keep. You should advise the Council that you wish to take in a lodger.

If you receive housing benefit you must advise the Council Benefits Team that you have a lodger as this may affect the amount of Housing Benefit you receive and the amount of rent you will need to pay to the Council. If you receive Income Support you must also advise the Benefits Agency.

However you must not sub-let the whole of your home.

MOVING OUT

If you are moving out of your property, there are a number of things you must do if you want your move to go as smoothly as possible and avoid the possibility of recharge costs.

1. All Council tenancies must start and end on a Monday. **If you want to end your tenancy, you must give the Council at least four weeks notice in writing ending on a Monday.** If you move out before your notice period expires, you must ensure that your rent is paid up until the end of the tenancy.
2. Any broken fixtures and fittings for which you are responsible must be repaired or replaced before you move out if you wish to avoid being recharged for them after you have left.
3. Make sure that you remove all your furniture and personal belongings and leave the property in a clean condition ready for the next tenant to move in.

You will be recharged if you leave any furniture (including carpets), personal belongings or other items in the property. You will also be recharged for the cost of any rubbish removal or cleaning if the property is left in a poor condition. Should you wish to leave any floor coverings which you consider to be in good condition, please contact the Area Housing Office in the first instance.

4. Do not forget to have your gas, electricity or water meters read before you leave and if necessary, the supplies switched off otherwise, you may end up paying for gas or electricity used by the next tenant.
5. You are also reminded to notify all other relevant bodies or organisations such as the Benefits Agency, Bank, Building Society, Telephone Company, etc., of your move and your new address. We cannot guarantee that any mail delivered after you have left will be forwarded on. You might want to consider paying for the Post Office to re-direct you mail for a short period of time.

If you are in receipt of Council Tax or Housing Benefit, you are also required to notify the Council's Benefits Team of your change of circumstances so that they can finish paying benefit at your old address up until the end of your tenancy and start paying it as your new address if applicable.

6. All the keys to your home must be returned either before the final day of your tenancy or **no later than 9.15 a.m. on the final Monday of your tenancy.** If you retain the keys, you may be charged rent until they are returned and for the cost of having a new lock fitted.

Keys should be handed in to a member of staff or arrangements made with your Housing Officer beforehand for their safe return. Keys may be returned by post to the Area Housing Office but should be clearly labelled. If you decide to post keys to us you are advised to send them by Registered Post.

7. Please remember to provide details of your new address so that we may contact you if there are any problems.

In complying with the above, you will be helping both yourself and the Council to make your move a successful one.

SECTION SEVEN

TENANT PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

The Council is keen to promote wide Tenant Participation (TP) and Consultation in the way it delivers services to tenants, the Council has appointed a specialist Tenant Participation Officer to develop more consultation with Tenants.

Tenant Participation can operate in several ways, at the most basic level TP involves exchanging information and ideas enabling tenants to have more say in the way the service is provided. As TP develops and Tenants gain confidence Tenant organisations can assume a more formal role and can share in decision-making.

Some advantages of TP are

- It can improve tenant satisfaction as you will be able to have your say in the service you receive.
- It can give tenants more choice or more power over their homes and the environment in which they live.
- It can help the relationship between Officer and Tenants as everyone will be better informed.
- It can help the community as a whole when people get involved in the running of their homes. A tenant's association will often run social events or projects as well as dealing with housing matters.

Start up grants for potential Tenants groups are available in certain circumstances. If you would like to become involved by joining or forming a group in your area, or would just like further information please contact the Tenant Participation Officer on 0116 2727619.

CONSULTATION

With every repair which is raised at the Area Office a tenant satisfaction questionnaire is sent out. We ask all tenants to fill in and return the questionnaire to find out what you think of our repairs service. These surveys help us to improve our service, so please fill in and return any forms we send you.

NEWSLETTER

We send out a newsletter called 'Homing In' twice a year to all tenants. It contains information about the housing services across the district, and gives details of meetings, useful advice and local events. It will also include news from the tenants associations.

SECTION EIGHT

SHELTERED HOUSING

What is Sheltered Housing?

Sheltered Housing consists of unfurnished dwellings, specially designed with the needs of elderly and disabled people in mind. It is provided to give residents full independence, yet gives underlying security by means of an alarm system and on some schemes a Warden is also employed.

Duties of the Warden

The Warden is employed to ensure the safety and well being of the tenants and is responsible for the general supervision and security of the scheme.

The Warden:

- Is first point of contact within the Council
- Provides background support without interference and to respect your privacy and independence.
- Maintains regular contact with tenants according to their individual wishes.
- Provides the same service to every tenant and cannot therefore undertake the day to day care of any one person nor do shopping, collect pensions or prescriptions etc.
- Recognises signs of need and to co-ordinate with family, social services and other agencies to ensure that care is provided whilst respecting an individual's wishes.
- Will in an emergency, summon relatives, call a doctor or any other professional help which may be required.
- Keeps on file names, addresses and telephone numbers of your nearest relatives or friends and of your doctor so that he/she can act quickly in case of an emergency. It is important that you provide this information and inform the Housing Officer of any changes to these details.
- Is not allowed to administer medicines nor provide medical, nursing or domestic services.
- Able to encourage tenants' social activities and to participate where appropriate.

- Able to give guidance on rent payments and benefit entitlement.
- Is responsible for the safety of tenants. It is essential, therefore for you to advise him/her when you are going to be away from home overnight so that, in the event of a fire or other emergency, he/she knows which flats are unoccupied.
- Is responsible for the security, safety and cleanliness of the scheme.
- Is responsible for the care and maintenance of the buildings and its equipment. Any repairs should be reported to the Housing Officer in the first instance.
- The Council Officer who may participate in case conferences with other agencies to set up care packages through assessment of tenants' needs.

THE ALARM CALL SYSTEM

Installed in each flat and in some cases communal areas is a Warden call system. This is operated 24 hours by the Council. It is intended to be used in emergencies and you should use it to if your are in trouble or difficulty.

It should be stressed that the system is completely private and you cannot be heard by any other residents when speaking to the Warden or Central Control.

COMMUNAL FACILITIES LOUNGE

A communal lounge is provided in some of the Council's schemes. It is available to all the residents for social and recreational activities or simply as a place to meet and talk at any time. The communal lounge may be used by outside organisations and community groups.

Although your Warden may initiate and encourage social gatherings, he/she is not employed to organise such events. These are generally best run by the tenants themselves.

CAR PARKS

Communal car parks are provided for the benefit of all tenants, the Warden and visitors. Tenants are not entitled to a particular parking space. It is, nevertheless, hoped that you will be sympathetic towards disabled people who need to park as close as possible to their home.

GARDENS

The surroundings have been laid out for the use and benefit of all tenants and grounds maintenance service is employed to maintain the gardens. However, the Warden will welcome offers of help from you in helping to keep the gardens in an attractive state.

WILL/BENEFITS/GIFTS

The Wardens Conditions of Employment do not allow them to receive gifts of money, bequests or presents, nor are they allowed to give advice about making a will or act as Executors for the Estate of a tenant. We ask you to respect these conditions when drafting a will, as failure to adhere to this could lead to disciplinary action against the Warden.

AIDS AND ADAPTATION

If you are having difficulty around the home and you feel you would benefit from any adaptations, first ask your Warden to contact the Occupation Therapist of the Social Services, who will assess your needs. On their recommendation (and if funds are available) we may be able to carry out the necessary adaptations.

TELEVISION

Each flat is registered annually for a concessionary television licence, provided that the Warden lives in adjoining accommodation.

PETS

You must obtain written approval from the Council before keeping a pet and where this is granted, your pet must be kept under proper control and not cause a nuisance to your neighbours.

If justifiable complaints are received, you will be asked to find another home for your pet.

Furthermore, when asking for permission to keep a pet, you must inform the Warden of the person nominated to look after it should you become ill or unable to care for it.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A TENANT OF A SHELTERED SCHEME? TENANTS ARE REQUESTED TO

- Consider your neighbours and keep noise levels down.
- Inform the Housing Officer when you are going away or will not be in for the daily call.
- Provide details of next of kin and doctors etc.
- Not to disturb the Warden when he/she is off duty.
- Make use of the pull cord if necessary.

If you would like this publication in an alternative format, please contact:

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