
Housing & Property Management

Our specialist housing and facilities service manages everything to do with the NCHA home that you live in.

We aim to provide you with high quality accommodation and an accessible, person centred service.



What is a Housing Officer?

Your housing officer issues you with your occupancy agreement and explains it.

Your housing officer can advise you about your rent, debt, and any problems with your neighbours or visitors to your home.

What is a Facilities Officer?

A facilities officer is the person who looks after the property that you live in. The facilities officer may provide gardening services, furniture or decorating for example.

Moving In

When you move into your home, we will tell you what housing services we will provide.

Home contents insurance

We strongly advise you to take out home contents insurance. This gives you cover for damage or theft of your personal belongings. For example, if you had a fire or flood it would cover replacing your television, stereo and other belongings.

We can advise you how to look for a good insurance policy.

If you are worried about anything to do with your home you can ring your housing officer, who will keep what you tell them confidential.

NCHA'S responsibilities are to:

- Consult you on any proposed changes to the occupancy agreement.
- Keep in working order all pipes, drains, gutters and installations provided by NCHA.
- Send you a rent statement every 3 months.

NCHA has a right to:

- Change your rent or other charges provided we give you 28 days notice.
- Enter into your home to carry out inspections or repairs or safety inspections.

Your main responsibilities are:



Not to leave your home empty

Your home must actually be lived in and be your main home. You can go on holiday but please let us know so we do not think you have left.



Pay the rent on time

- Rent is usually paid weekly in advance. Your occupancy agreement states how much your rent is.
- If you fall behind with the rent NCHA may have to evict you and make you pay any rent you owe. If you are having problems like this, get advice quickly from staff or the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- An annual rent review takes effect usually on the first Monday of every April and we will write to you at least one month in advance to tell you if your rent is changing.
- If you're claiming benefits, you must keep your claim up to date. You need to inform benefit agencies of any changes in your circumstances e.g. if the amount of money you get changes, or the people who live with you change. We can help you to work out if you're eligible for benefits to help with rent.
- Use your All Pay card to make payments, or log into your My NCHA rent account. NCHA may request payments to be made directly to NCHA from your benefit payments.

Pay the bills

Pay the bills for electricity, gas, water and telephone as well as council tax and getting a TV licence. If you don't pay them the services could be cut off and you may have to pay to be reconnected or pay a large fine. Your housing officer will explain which bills you are responsible for when you move in.





Take care of the place

- Look after internal decorations, furniture and equipment provided by NCHA.
- Only use appliances that you think are safe.
- Report repairs or other problems. If you cause any damage or break anything in your, or your neighbour's, home you will be charged for repair or replacement.
- Deal with your rubbish properly.
- Stick to any terms in your occupancy agreement regarding pets, noise, gardening, cars etc.
- Heat the property adequately and making sure it's kept well ventilated.
- Look after communal areas such as lounges, corridors, car parks and gardens.



Being responsible for your household and visitors

You are also responsible for the behaviour of everyone in your household and of anyone staying with or visiting you. You may be warned and possibly even served notice if they cause damage or are anti-social.

Lodgers and guests

You are not permitted, under any circumstances to allow anyone to live with you as a lodger. If you wish to have a guest visit during the day and, depending on your project's House Rules, occasionally be allowed to stay with you over-night, you should agree this with project staff in advance of your guest arriving.



Smoking

Unless the House Rules say that your property is non-smoking, you are allowed to smoke and allow visitors to smoke in your home. However, smoking is not allowed in any parts of the building that are shared with other people. Smoking is not allowed when staff or contractors are in your accommodation.



How your occupancy can be ended

Your occupancy agreement can be ended at any time by you and NCHA agreeing that you will leave. When you move out you must hand in your keys and sign a form saying that you are going, otherwise you might be charged rent after you've gone.

Before you leave, you must remove all your own possessions and any rubbish and leave your room or flat clean. If anything is left behind we will charge you to remove it, as well as for any damage you have caused. We can't store your belongings after your tenancy has ended. If you owe any rent when you leave, we'll agree a payment plan with you. If you don't stick to it, we may involve a debt collection agency.



Protection from eviction

Occupiers who have an assured shorthold or a protected licence occupancy agreement can be evicted with a court order if they don't leave the property after being given notice. The most common reasons for eviction are rent arrears and anti-social behaviour. Occupiers with an excluded licence can be asked to leave at any time.

If a court has ordered you must leave the property, but you haven't left on time, a bailiff may physically remove you from the property.



Notice

NCHA has to give you written notice if we want you to leave. If NCHA is claiming you have done something wrong (such as not paying the rent) you may only get two weeks' notice. In serious circumstances, you may be asked to leave immediately.



Right to be consulted

NCHA will consult with you on matters relating to any changes regarding support, housing management or maintenance if it considers that these changes are likely to affect you.

Maintenance and repairs

Your support team can support you to report a repair to NCHA's Property Services team by calling

 **0800 317 861**

 **0115 844 2931**



The Property Services team will repair:

- Roofs and chimneys
- Walls, floors and ceilings
- Doors, windows, paths, gutters, drains
- Service supply pipes
- Heating and plumbing
- Toilets, water, gas and electrical installations
- External decoration
- Steps and paths
- Garages

Who is responsible for the repair?

We are responsible for repairs to the building caused through usual wear and tear. Repairs caused by negligence by your visitors or yourself are your responsibility, even if it was caused by accident.



You will be told when the repair will happen and you should be at home to allow access. The contractor will show you their identification and will leave the area tidy when they have finished. They might ask you to move furniture so that they can carry out their work.

Anti-social behaviour and harrassment

Tackling harassment and anti-social behaviour

NCHA believes that everyone has the right to live their lives how they wish as long as this does not spoil the quality of life of their neighbours.

We will encourage tolerance and respect for the needs and choices of others, including different lifestyles. We recognise that we must tackle neighbour problems in order to provide a quality service.



Harassment

Harassment is intimidation of others people, their household or their visitors because of race, colour, religion, nationality, sex, sexual orientation or disability.

Harassment can be intimidating and threatening: it can include aggressive behaviour as well as attacks on property or people.



Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour can be in variety of forms. It could be:

- **Graffiti on property without consent**
- **Damage to property**
- **Intimidating groups taking over public spaces**
- **Drug dealing and other criminal behaviour**
- **People dumping rubbish and litter or abandoning cars**
- **The misuse of fireworks**



Noise nuisance

- There will always be some level of noise from any house or flat.
- If your neighbour is making a greater than acceptable amount of noise or causing a nuisance, the first thing you should do is talk to them. They may not be aware of how it is affecting you.



Reporting harassment or anti-social behaviour

If you wish to report a problem, contact your housing officer.

They will immediately investigate the issue and deal with it promptly, in a sensitive and fair manner and decide on the most appropriate course of action.

Our response might include providing support to victims and agreeing an action plan both for what NCHA will do and what the complainant will do.

We may issue a warning to the perpetrator, agree an occupancy sustainment contract, seek an injunction or even serve notice on them if appropriate.



Safe Water: Legionnaire's disease

Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia, which can affect anybody. It is caused by certain types of legionella bacteria, which builds up in stationary or slow moving water.

To keep the water in your home safe, we recommend:

- Ensure the thermostat on your hot water system is set to a minimum of 65C, but be aware that the **risk of scalding** from outlets that are not fitted with a thermostatic mixer valve is **greatly increased**.
- Any **hot or cold tap** that hasn't been used for over 7 days should be flushed through for at least 2 minutes every week or on your return to the property (avoid splashing to minimise the release of water droplets / aerosols).
- Any **shower** that is not used within a seven-day period should be flushed through for at least 2 minutes on a weekly basis or on your return to the property at both maximum and minimum temperatures. Avoid the release of water droplets / aerosols by either securing a plastic bag over the shower head with a corner cut off to allow water to escape or by removing the shower head and placing the shower hose directly over the drain outlet.
- Any toilet that hasn't been used for 7 days should be flushed weekly or on your return to the property (the lid should be closed to avoid contact with any water droplets / aerosol).
- Shower heads should be regularly cleaned and disinfected to ensure no scale or algal build up.



You should be aware that the risk of contracting Legionnaire's disease from a domestic property where the water services are regularly used is very low, however the risk increases if the water services have not been used for an extended period.