

# Your Housing

Our specialist housing teams manage everything to do with the home that you live in.

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



As well as **Your Support team**, here are the teams you may come across and a bit about what they do:

The **Your Community team** are the people who signed you up to your occupancy agreement. They will work with you and the support team if you have any difficulties maintaining your tenancy while you are with us. They listen to concerns and ideas raised by our customers and respond, to ensure our communities are the best they can be and our services are meeting your need.

The **Your Money Matters team** will help you if you get into arrears by working with you to make sure you get your full benefit entitlement and

agree repayment plans. They will empower you to take control of your finances, with budgeting advice and benefit support.

The **Rent and Services team** will ensure our schemes are well managed, while focusing on reducing our environmental impact and waste.

The **Community Safety team** provide specialist, high quality investigations and support in response to anti-social behaviour reports. They work with customers, your support team and other agencies to stop these behaviours and will take any enforcement action if required.

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## 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 talk to your support team or if you feel unable to do so, talk to your community coordinator. They will keep what you tell them confidential.**

### Our 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 us.
- Send you a rent statement every six months.

### We have 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



### Don't 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 we 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 Pay360 card to make payments, or log into your My NCHA account. We 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 community coordinator 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 us.
- 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 overnight, you should agree this with the support team 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 the support team 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 to leave the property, but you haven't left on time, a bailiff may physically remove you from the property.



## Notice

We have to give you written notice if we want you to leave. If we are claiming you have done something wrong (such as not paying the rent) we will work with you to put this right but if that doesn't work you may only get two weeks' notice. In serious circumstances, you may be asked to leave immediately.



## Right to be consulted

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

## Maintenance and repairs

Your support team can support you to report a repair to the Customer Experience team.

Visit [www.ncha.org.uk/repairs](http://www.ncha.org.uk/repairs) for advice.

### 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 harassment

### Tackling harassment and anti-social behaviour

We believe 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 when someone repeatedly behaves in a way that makes you feel scared, distressed or threatened and this can be a crime.

If someone harasses you because of your race, colour, religion, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, disability or gender identity this is called a hate crime.



#### Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour is behaviour that has or is likely to cause you harassment, alarm and distress:

- 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, talk to your support team who will engage the Community Safety team. If you feel you can't talk to the support team you can contact the Community Safety team directly.

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 we 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: Legionnaires' 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, please:

- Ensure the thermostat on your hot water system is set to a minimum of 65°C, 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 seven days should be flushed through for at least two 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 two 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 seven 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 Legionnaires' 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.