Hundred Houses Society Tenancy Handbook

A guide to your tenancy and what you can expect from the Society for residents of Hundred Houses

hhs.org.uk

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Welcome!

About us

Welcome to your Tenancy Handbook. It contains useful information about being a tenant with Hundred Houses. Please keep it in a safe place so you can refer to it as necessary.

Hundred Houses is a small housing association operating throughout Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, the Fenlands and Huntingdon. Most of our homes are for rent, but we also provide some shared ownership homes.

We currently manage around 1,500 homes in total and have funding in place to continue to develop new homes.

We are a long-established organisation, having been set up in the 1930s and are proud of our heritage and good local reputation.

We have a Board of 12 local people who set the direction and main strategy for the Society. They delegate the day-to-day running of the business to the Chief Executive and senior staff.

The Society's mission is to provide affordable, high quality and sustainable housing solutions, wider life choices and opportunities for all our customers and communities.

Our main objectives are:

The information in this Handbook is as accurate as possible at the time of publication and contains summaries of our main policies and procedures. Full details of these are available on request and on our website. From time to time this information may change so you should always contact us to check the latest situation or check our website for updates.

How to get in touch

Customer Service Telephone: 0300 303 5770
(open Monday 9am-4pm & Tues to Fri 9.30am-4.00pm)

Email us: info@hhs.org.uk

Visit our website for useful information: www.hhs.org.uk

Post:
Hundred Houses Society, 51 Scotland Road, Cambridge CB4 1QW

Whilst our office is closed for drop-in enquiries, we are more than happy to arrange a face to face appointment with you, either at your home or in the office.

Appointments

If you need a member of staff to visit you at home we will:

- Try to arrange an appointment that suits you, within 2 weeks of your request
- Keep the appointment, or let you know in advance if we have to delay or postpone it
- Always show you photo identification before entering your home
- Treat you and your home with respect

We expect you to give our employees, and anyone working on our behalf, similar levels of courtesy and respect in your dealings with them.

Data Protection

Our Customer Privacy Notice tells you what personal information we collect about you, our lawful basis for collecting it, how this is collected, used, stored and shared and what rights you have to your personal data. For the latest Customer Privacy Notice please see Data Protection and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) | Hundred Houses or contact us on info@hhs.org.uk or tel 0300 303 5770

Our Data Protection Officer can be contacted on magda.syposz@hhs.org.uk Please use this email to report a any data breach you may have become aware of or if you have a Subject Access Request or any queries on data protection at HHS.

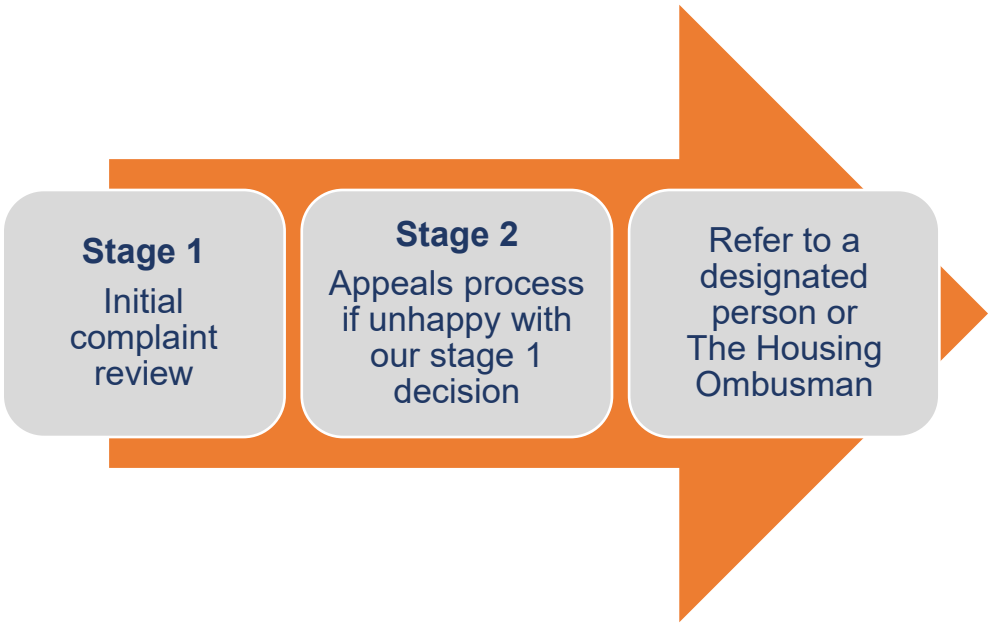
How to provide feedback

We aim to continually improve our service and welcome feedback, whether good or bad, for any aspect of our work. Your comments and complaints help us to improve and provide better services.

Our complaints policy can be found here:
[Feedback and Complaints | Hundred Houses (hhs.org.uk)]

If you can, first talk to a member of staff who will try to sort out your complaint on the spot. If you are unable to do so, you can write to us, email us or use our website to make your complaint. If you speak to a member of staff they will record the details of your complaint, and if necessary, visit you at home to get further information. As well as providing your contact details, include as much information as possible about what happened, where and when it happened and who was involved. Let us also know what we should do to resolve the problem for you.

There are two stages to our internal complaints process:



Getting Involved

There are several opportunities for you to be more involved with and influence the decisions and processes at Hundred Houses.

These include:

Scrutiny Panel

This is aa group of residents who meet quarterly with the Society's employees to review performance and discuss policy and strategy documents.

Building Safety and Maintenance Forum

In June 2024, we held the first forum which looked at how we could improve our repairs service. A group of customers attended and shared useful feedback with us that has helped us determine where we should focus our attention on repairs. The second meeting was held in February 2025 and future Building Safety & Maintenance Forums will be held twice a year.

Customer Focus Group

Focus Groups are one-off meetings to hear your views on a particular topic.
During 2025, we will hold more one-off Focus Groups about specific topics. If you have any suggestions of topics you would like to discuss, please let us know and we can consider these for future meetings

Surveys

We carry out a range of surveys and questionnaires to ask you for your feedback and views on services.

Community days

We arrange these occasionally to help bring local communities together.

For further information visit our website: Residents' Forums and Focus Groups | Hundred Houses or email us: customerengagement@hhs.co.uk

Repairs and Maintenance

Reporting a repair

If you need to report a repair which is the responsibility of Hundred Houses, please call us on:

- **0300 303 5770** – during normal offices hours for any repair
- **0300 303 5770 option 1**– for out of office hours emergency repairs only (see definitions below)

Please be ready with the following information:

- Your name, address and contact telephone number or email
- When someone will be at home to enable the repair to be carried out or an inspection made
- As much information as possible about the problem and what is requiring attention or investigation
- If you have any special circumstances that we should be aware of e.g. if you are elderly or disabled

We recognise that some customers are vulnerable and may require an enhanced repairs service either on a permanent or temporary basis. We will strive to provide this enhanced service and work with external agencies to provide the required support.

Repair Timescales

Emergency: We will attend and make safe within 24 hours. We may have to return at a later date to complete the work. This applies to repairs affecting the safety or basic security of the property or potentially affecting the health of the household or visitors (e.g. gas leaks, uncontrollable water leaks and serious electrical faults)

Urgent: Within 5 working days. Where there is no risk to health or safety, but the repair is a serious nuisance

Routine: Within 20 working days. Standard repairs required to keep the property in reasonable order

Tenant Responsibilities

All glazing (covered by home contents insurance taken out by tenant) unless caused by a structural fault or vandalism, if a crime reference is presented. If customers fail to undertake the glazing repair in a reasonable timescale, or in an emergency, work may be done by HHS and recharged to the customer

Light bulbs and starters (Including fluorescent tubes and sealed units)

Internal decoration including cracks in plaster

The repair or maintenance of any damage and/or alterations carried out by the tenant or inherited from previous tenant (mainly via mutual exchange – no repair works will be carried out within the property until the tenancy is at least 6 months old)
Unblocking sinks/toilets (A call out will be rechargeable, unless there is a bigger issue with the sewers)

Keeping rainwater gullies and guttering clear (except in flats)

Internal doors, kitchen cupboards, including door handles, latches, hinges (except bathroom/WC door locks) fair wear and tear excepted

All keys including lost keys or when keys are locked inside the property (Keys and key fobs recharged at the replacement cost)

Toilet seats, shower rails and curtains, waste plugs, tap washers and chains on sinks and baths

To turn off/on stop cocks every 6 months to ensure they don't seize

Low pressure in boilers (User guides are generally available, particularly in new properties. A call out could result in a recharge)

Boundary fencing/gates – HHS are only responsible for fencing which opens onto private land or a public highway (e.g. onto a footpath, road or alleyway) Where necessary, HHS will replace boundary fencing between properties with post and wire to mark the boundary.

Rear boundary fence - as a rule of thumb, your boundary fence will be on your right as you look down the back garden from your house.

Gardens – including all trees and shrubs in front and rear gardens (unless communal gardens)

TV Aerials/Satellite Dish (unless within a block of flats)

Any repairs to tenants' own appliances including pipe work to washing machines (this could be a possible recharge item if a contractor is called out)

Any damage caused by the tenant

Planned Works

We will consult with you before we start any major works. Examples of major works include window or roof renewal, or replacement of door entry systems to communal areas.

Adaptations

You or a member of your household may find that some adaptations will make your life a lot easier.

Adaptations to your home fall under two categories:

- Minor adaptations- such as grab rails around the home
- Major adaptations- such as lifting equipment or level access showers

HHS has an annual budget for minor adaptations, so if you think you or someone in the household would benefit from a minor adaptation then please get in contact with us.

Major adaptations are generally works that will cost over £1,000 and are more complex. Customers who have a need for a major adaptation should either contact us, or contact social services. Depending on the type of work required, you may need a GP referral and/or an Occupational Therapist assessment and there may be external funding, called a Disabled Facilities Grant, available to you.

Contractor Code of conduct

We expect our contractors to have high standards or courtesy and workmanship when they carry out works on our behalf, and a commitment to equal opportunities.

This includes:

- Respect for you whilst working in / near your home (e.g. not smoking, eating, playing loud music, leaving a mess or causing an unreasonable nuisance to others)
- Providing photo identity and showing this before they enter your home

Our contractors will not carry out works in homes where only children are present, so please make sure that a responsible adult is always at home when the appointment is due.

If you experience any problems with our contractors, please contact us immediately. If the situation is still not resolved, you can use our complaints procedure.

Maintaining your home

You are responsible for maintaining, repairing, cleaning and decorating your property. You are also responsible for maintaining and keeping your garden tidy, including boundary fences, walls, hedges and gates.
Hundred Houses is responsible for the upkeep of communal areas in flats.
You should never store rubbish, flammable or dangerous items in your home or garden

Condensation and Damp

Condensation occurs in most homes at some time. You will usually notice it on windows, and as long as it clears away quickly there is nothing to worry about. Problems start when the surface stays damp and mould grows. Below are several steps you can take to reduce it:

- Try to keep your home warm
- Avoid drying clothes indoors
- Keep your bathroom and kitchen doors closed when in use
- Don’t let kettles or pans boil longer than is necessary, and use lids on pans
- Ventilate your home and keep air vents clear
- Never use paraffin heaters or bottled gas heaters
- Remember to use installed extractor fans
- Don’t overfill cupboards and wardrobes

If mould starts to develop, control it by using a mild bleach solution or purchase a specific ‘mould killer’.

Asbestos Awareness

What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that, when refined creates an ideal building material.

Asbestos has been used in hundreds of different products and can be found in many buildings constructed before 2000 after this point it was no longer used in the UK.

Asbestos fibres are usually bonded into other material such as Cement, Paints, Plastics and Plaster. If left undisturbed these are safe and should not require removal. In fact, the Health and Safety Executive recommend that undisturbed and undamaged asbestos is not removed.

The natural properties of asbestos provide good insulation, sound deadening and importantly fire protection. However, if the material is disturbed to the extent that fibres are released into the atmosphere, they can be breathed in that could result in serious respiratory illness.

Asbestos in homes

Hundred Houses Society has carried out a comprehensive survey programme to locate and assess the possible asbestos containing materials in our properties and where necessary has removed the asbestos thought likely to become a risk.

A summary of the survey findings (the Asbestos Register) is provided in the sign-up pack. This shows the location, extent, and condition of the material.

Soon after moving in, residents are encouraged to check their survey summary to ensure that they are familiar with the location of asbestos, or suspected asbestos materials, to avoid excessive disturbance.

If any materials identified in the survey summary appear to be damaged or are deteriorating, please contact us and we will reassess them.

If a resident is in any doubt or is intending to carry out any home improvements that will disturb the fabric of the building, they should contact the Customer Services Team who will assist them with further information.

Legionella Awareness

What is Legionella?

Legionella is a naturally occurring bacteria that is present in all water systems. If bacteria are breathed in, it can cause a serious type of pneumonia called Legionnaire's disease.
In the natural environment the bacteria grow slowly, and this usually does not present a health risk, however, manmade hot and cold-water systems can provide an environment where the bacteria can grow to a level that can cause health problems.

How do we manage it?

The risk from Legionella can be easily managed by following some simple steps.

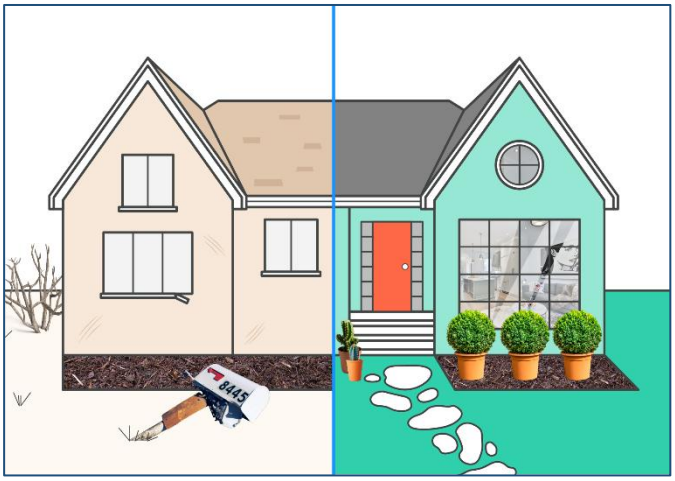
1. Maintaining water temperatures
Legionella bacteria cannot grow in temperatures above 50 degrees Celsius and below 20 degrees Celsius. In practice this means that after 2-3 minutes of your taps running, your cold water should feel cold to touch and hot water should feel hot – but not scalding. Your boiler temperature should be set at 60 degrees and should not be altered.

2. Using taps and outlets regularly
It is important that water should be kept circulating, water that is left stagnant in pipework can create an environment where the bacteria can grow. Ensure that taps are run for at least 5 minutes if the system (or part of a system) has not been used for several days – for example after a holiday. If showers are flushed through, it is important that you try to stay away from the spray during flushing so close the shower curtain or door and leave the room for a few minutes, if possible, to make sure that you do not breath in the water vapour. Only returning after 4-5 minutes of flushing.

3. Cleaning Showerheads
Showerheads should be descaled every three months. This will help remove limescale that can help Legionella bacteria grow. By cleaning Showerheads, you can reduce the material that bacteria can feed on and grow. Cleaning and de-scaling products such as Viakal or Domestos limescale remover are ideal for this.

Improvements, alterations, and additions

You need our written permission if you wish to carry out any improvements, alterations, or additions to your home, for example, structural alterations, extensions, replacing doors and windows, installing new bathrooms or kitchens, and television aerial and satellite dishes. Before you start work please contact us and let us know your plans, and provide as much information as possible, such as drawings and plans, so we can decide whether or not to grant permission. Generally, we will not unreasonably refuse permission.
It is also advisable to talk to any of your neighbours who might be affected by the works, so they are forewarned of any interruptions and disturbances that may occur.



Repair recharges

If you, a member of your household or a visitor or a third party causes damage or neglect to your home, we will charge you the full cost of the repair.

Examples of what we could recharge for include:

- Repair and replacement of fixtures or fittings damaged by you, your family or any visitors, including clearing toilet drains or waste pipes
- Special cleaning needed because you have neglected your home, allowing it to become dirty or attract vermin
- Decoration needed because you have not kept your home in reasonable condition
  Deliberately and repeatedly missing appointments or misusing the out-of-hours service.

Buildings Insurance

All our properties are covered under our buildings insurance policy, and we are happy to supply a copy of this on request.

Please note that you are responsible for arranging insurance cover for your personal possessions under a home contents insurance policy. Contents insurance is designed to help protect your possessions. No matter how careful you are, there is always a risk that your belongings could be broken, damaged or stolen so home contents insurance can help provide peace of mind.

Hundred Houses takes no responsibility for any losses incurred by you on such items.

Home Contents Insurance

We recommend tenants take out Home Contents Insurance to protect your belongings in the event of damage or loss.

To help you decide whether home contents insurance is right for you, Hundred Houses Society have teamed up with Thistle Tenant Risks, and Great Lakes Insurance UK Limited who provide the My Home Contents Insurance Scheme, a Tenants Contents Insurance policy designed for tenants living in social housing.

The My Home Contents Insurance Scheme can offer you insurance for the contents of your home including cover for items such as furniture, carpets, curtains, clothes, bedding, electrical items, jewellery, pictures and ornaments.

Call Thistle Tenant Risks on 0345 450 7228
Alternatively, please visit www.thistlemyhome.co.uk for more information or to request a callback.
At www.thistlemyhome.co.uk you can also use their contents calculator to work out the value of your home contents.

Living in your home

Anti-social behaviour

We believe that everyone has the right to their chosen lifestyle providing this does not breach the terms and conditions of any tenancy or lease, nor affect the quality of life of others. This necessitates a degree of tolerance and respect for other people, something we promote when responding to concerns.

What is Anti-social behaviour	What tends not to be considered Anti-social behaviour
Antisocial behaviour includes criminal and non-criminal behaviour. This could be: • threatening, harassing or unruly behaviour such as drunkenness and loitering in public spaces • drug use – and the mess and disruption that can go with it • vandalism, graffiti, fly-tipping, and littering • disruptive neighbours • noise – for example playing loud music at unreasonable hours • uncontrolled and noisy pets – for example barking every night • environmental health issues such as fly tipping and rubbish dumping • vandalism and graffiti • hate crime incidents motivated by someone's age, disability, faith, sexual orientation, or race • harassment, including verbal and physical abuse and threats. • acts of violence	Not all behaviour that annoys is anti-social. The following are examples of possible reports that tend not to be classed as ant-social and are not intended as a definitive list. • Children playing and babies crying • Neighbours doing DIY (at reasonable times) • One-off parties, BBQs and celebrations • Noise caused by normal household activities. • Disputes over boundary issues • Parking disputes • Reports around ball games • Actions which amount to people being unpleasant (staring at or ignoring people) When a behaviour is deemed not to be ASB, advice will be given to enable self-resolution and the matter will be handled outside of this anti-social behaviour policy.

If you experience Anti-Social Behaviour, please contact your Housing Officer. More information about how we deal with reports of ASB can be found here: Anti social behaviour | Hundred Houses (hhs.org.uk)

Domestic abuse

No one should live in fear of domestic abuse and Hundred Houses will support victims and take action to remove any person who has caused domestic violence. Please contact us in confidence if you have any concerns or are experiencing any problems.

The National Domestic Violence Helpline can also be contacted on **0808 2000 247**

Bonfires

Ask your local council about the rules on bonfires in your garden. If they are permitted, pre-warn your neighbours if you are having one. You can be fined for allowing smoke to drift across a road or for causing a nuisance through the creation of smoke.

Cars and Parking

Please be responsible and considerate when parking cars and other vehicles at home, and make sure your vehicle(s) doesn't block road access or footpaths for others. Wherever possible, park in your driveway or in designated parking bays. Many roads on our estates are unsuitable for large vans and lorries, so please do not cause a nuisance by parking this type of vehicle at home. Your vehicle should also be roadworthy and taxed.

We do not normally allow caravans or campervans to be parked on our land unless you have prior written permission from us, and this does not cause any nuisance to your neighbours. You may repair your vehicle from time to time, but this mustn't cause a nuisance or danger to others or be undertaken on a commercial basis. You must never pour engine oil down drains or onto the road or footpaths.

Communal areas

Communal areas relate to any type of property where there are shared areas. We ask that you show consideration and respect for others who use these areas, and do not obstruct them or create health and safety risks, as they may be used as exit routes in emergency situations. Communal areas mainly relate to:

- Internal areas – eg. corridors, lobbies, stairways, lifts, communal rooms, door entry systems, alarms
- External areas - eg. shared gardens, parking areas, footpaths, drying areas, bin stores, cycle stores, roads

Rubbish and Recycling

If you live in a house, you are responsible for putting your rubbish bins out for collection by your local council. If you live in a flat and share a bin area with other residents, please ensure that you leave the area tidy and dispose of the rubbish in the correct receptacles.

Never leave any rubbish in communal areas as this may cause a nuisance to your neighbours, and the local authority will not collect this. Your local council can provide details of where you can recycle larger items such as electrical goods, textiles, oil and other garden and household waste.

Pets

You will need our written permission to keep any pets in your home, and you may not be granted permission if you live in a flat. You are responsible for ensuring that your pets do not cause any nuisance, annoyance, inconvenience or offence to neighbours, and any damage or fouling in communal areas.

Decorating your home

You are responsible for decorating the inside of your home, and for keeping it in good decorative order. If you live in a new home, we recommend that you don't decorate your home until after the defects period (usually one year) and to allow the property to dry out. If you live in a flat, the Society will decorate the outside of your property and internal communal areas as part of our planned maintenance programme.

Garden Maintenance

You are responsible for keeping your garden tidy by cutting the lawn, and trimming trees, shrubs, bushes and hedges and keeping weeds under control. You are not allowed to cut down any trees in your garden without our written consent. You are also responsible for maintaining your boundary fences.

The Society, or an appropriate management company, will maintain the communal gardens areas. Usually, part of your service charge pays for this service.

TV Aerials and Satellite Dishes

If you live in a house, you are responsible for any costs of fixing TV aerials or satellite dishes, and you may need our permission in advance and must adhere to the regulations regarding them.

TV aerials must not be fixed to chimney stacks. Satellite dishes must not be fixed to the chimney stack or front elevation of a property. In flats, we may provide access to digital TV via communal aerials and will be responsible for maintaining this as part of your service charge. Individual satellite dishes to flats will not be permitted.

Running a business

Your property should only be used for residential purposes. However, in certain circumstances we may permit you to run a business from your home if you can demonstrate that it will not cause a nuisance or annoyance to your neighbours. You will not be allowed to display any business or trade sign on the premises, even if you are granted permission.

If you are considering running a business from home, contact us straight away. You will need to obtain our written consent, and you may also need planning permission from the council

Types of Tenancy

Below are the types of tenancies we offer and the circumstances in which they would be used.

Type of tenancy	Circumstances in which they would be used
Assured tenancy	Assured tenancies, sometimes also referred to as periodic assured non-shorthold or lifetime tenancies, will be granted where: • An existing HHS tenant with an assured tenancy moves to another HHS home • The applicant has an existing assured tenancy with another registered provider (or secure tenancy with a local authority) which they have held from 1 April 2012 or before • The home was purpose built for people aged 55 years or over • The home was purpose built or specially adapted to accommodate customers with physical disabilities
Fixed term tenancies	Fixed-term tenancies have a set duration, unlike assured lifetime tenancies. We are no longer issuing Fixed term Tenancies as we have decided to phase out this tenancy type (from October 2024) because we believe in providing longer term security and stability for tenants. For those tenants who are already on a fixed term tenancy, when the tenancy has 12-months remaining, we will contact you to arrange a meeting. This meeting will explain the review process and gather the necessary information for the review. Between 8 and 12 months before the tenancy ends, a panel, including the Housing Officer and Housing Manager, will review your tenancy. The panel will consider your current circumstances and tenancy conduct, then decide on one of the following actions: • Convert to an Assured Tenancy • **Or** not to offer a further tenancy and assist the tenant in finding suitable alternative accommodation. If a decision is made to offer a tenancy at a more suitable home but no such property is available, an assured shorthold tenancy may be offered at the current home until a suitable property is found. If no further tenancy is offered, we will provide our decision and assist you in finding alternative accommodation by advising on housing options and notifying the local authority of the decision. The outcome of the review will be communicated in writing within 28 days of the review meeting. Tenants have the right to appeal a decision not to offer another tenancy, as detailed in section 8.

Protected assured tenancies	Tenancies granted before the Housing Act 1988, on or before January 15th, 1989, were let under protected assured tenancies (or secure tenancies for local authority providers), offering additional rights like the preserved right to buy and protected fair rents. While this type of tenancy is no longer offered to new tenants, HHS tenants with an existing protected assured tenancy will retain their protected status if they move to another HHS social rented home.
Assured shorthold tenancies	We'll only offer these as a short-term solution to a housing problem, as they provide less security to the tenant, in the following situations: • For accommodation in one of our move-on schemes. • For homes let on an intermediate rent basis. • When it's not appropriate to grant a tenancy for six or more years, such as during an options appraisal (when we are considering the future use of the property or area) or when redevelopment is being considered.
Starter/probationary tenancies	A starter or probationary tenancy is a weekly periodic assured shorthold tenancy, usually for 12 months, during which the tenant does not enjoy the same rights as an assured or fixed-term tenancy which succeeds it. HHS will only use tenancies with an initial starter or probationary period in the following circumstances: • Where it forms part of a local lettings policy that has been agreed with the local authority to address concerns regarding anti-social behaviour or community sustainability or cohesion; or • For homes managed on behalf of another housing provider where it is a requirement within the management agreement. If the conditions of the Starter Tenancy are kept to, a starter tenancy will be converted to an assured at the end of 12 months. In cases where there have been breaches to the agreement, a starter tenancy can be extended by a further six months.
Licences	Licence agreements offer less rights to occupants and can only be used in certain circumstances. HHS will only use licence agreements where: • Required to do so on behalf of another housing provider or partner agency as part of a management agreement, • There is a need to grant to customers under 18 years of age as outlined in section 8 below. • Temporary occupation on a short-term basis

Tenant Rights and Responsibilities

Succession Rights

In some circumstances it may be possible for a partner to take ownership of the tenancy in the death of the main tenant. This will be explained further in your tenancy agreement and will be dependent on when your tenancy began and whether there have been any previous successions or sole to joint applications. Where there is no partner living in the property, the tenancy may be able to be passed on to another family member. There is criteria for this to be accepted, so please contact us if you have any questions.

Amending tenants (adding/removing)

It is important you keep us informed of any changes to the living arrangements within the property. This includes children leaving the home, or additional occupants moving into the occupation. We need to ensure the property is not overcrowded and we can verify who is living at the property if you claim housing related benefits.

If you wish for a partner to become a joint tenant, who will then have equal rights to the tenancy, please contact us and we can advise whether this will be possible.

Subletting and Lodgers

We do not allow any residents to sub-let their home (this is when the tenant moves out and lets the home to someone else). This is because the majority of our homes are let via Homelink which establishes nominations for each property based on their individual needs.

If anyone is found to be subletting their Hundred Houses property, further action will be taken against their tenancy, which could lead to possession proceedings.

If you wish to have a lodger move into your home, you must contact your Housing Officer for permission prior to making any arrangements.

Tenancy Fraud/Misuse

All new tenants must provide us with accurate and honest information in their application form. Should your circumstances significantly change, please speak to your Housing Officer.

If you are not staying at the property for a period of time, you must let us know. We may start abandonment procedures if we think a tenant is not living in their home anymore.

If a tenant has concerns about another tenant, and feels the property is being misused or sublet, contact us as soon as possible so we can investigate.

Mutual Exchanges

If your tenancy agreement gives you the right to a mutual exchange, you can apply to swap your home with another social housing tenant, either with HHS or another landlord. You and the other tenant must obtain written permission from your respective landlords before moving, and you must not exchange homes until permission has been confirmed.

We will consider your application fairly and will only refuse it where there is a valid legal or tenancy-related reason. Please contact us before arranging an exchange so we can explain the process, carry out the necessary checks and confirm any conditions that apply.

Safety in your home

Make sure that you are prepared for emergency situations. You need to know where the gas, electricity and water supplies come into you home and how to turn them off in an emergency.

Gas

Hundred Houses Society is responsible for servicing your gas boiler every year. This will help it to run more efficiently and safely. We also fit a carbon monoxide detector and we recommend you check it regularly alongside your smoke alarm.

If you think you have a gas leak, please call 0800 111 999 immediately.

If you smell gas:

- Do not smoke or light a match
- Do not turn on light switches or electrical equipment
- Open doors and windows to disperse the gas
- Check if the gas appliance has been left on unlit, or if the pilot light has gone out
- Turn off the gas supply at the meter if possible
- Leave the property and alert your neighbour

Electricity

If you experience a power cut, you will need to contact your local Electricity Distribution Company.

You can avoid most accidents if you follow simple rules:

- Do not run wiring under carpets or rugs
- Check flexes regularly for wear and tear
- Make sure plugs are wired correctly and fitted with the correct fuse
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions
- Do not overload power sockets
- Never take electrical appliances into the bathroom
- Switch off and unplug appliances when not in use
- Use a circuit breaker when operating electrical equipment outside
- Have an Electrical Installation Condition Report carried out every 10 years

Water

Check that you know where your stop tap is so that you can turn the water off in an emergency. Check it every six months to make sure you can turn it on and off. Check that your hot water setting is not too hot as this could scald or burn.

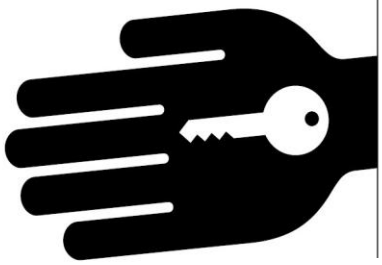
Fire Safety

Plan an escape route

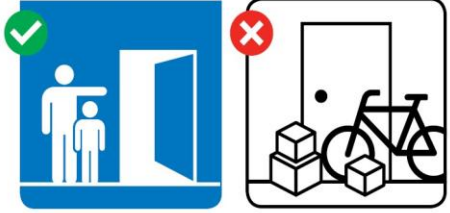
Plan an escape route and make sure everyone knows how to escape. It could save your life.

- Establish where the fire exits and alarms are if you live in a large or high level building.
- Count how many doors you might need to go through to escape. It can be hard to see in smoke and you might become confused about where you are.
- Keep all exits clear, even communal areas.
- Keep fire doors closed. They help to slow down the spread of fire and will give you extra time to get out.

Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them



Top tip



Plan an escape route

FIRE SAFETY
IN SHARED OR RENTED ACCOMMODATION

Landlords' obligations to keep your home safe from fire

- If you live in privately rented accommodation, your landlord has to meet certain safety obligations under the law. This includes making sure all gas and electric appliances are safe and in good working order.
- Your landlord must ensure that the property has at least one smoke alarm on every level of your home used as living accommodation.
- Gas appliances must be checked by a Gas Safe registered gas fitter every year.
- Electrical appliances must carry the British Safety Standard sign.
- Your landlord must also ensure furnishings are fire resistant and meet safety regulations.
- Your landlord must show you safety certificates so you can see when gas and electrical appliances were last checked.
- Your landlord must ensure a carbon monoxide alarm is present in all rooms that contain a solid fuel burning appliance and are used as living accommodation. Landlords must test these and the required smoke alarms on the first day of the tenancy.

If you are worried your landlord isn't doing enough to ensure your safety contact the environmental health officer at your local council for advice.

Make sure you recognise these symbols – they show your appliances and furnishings are safe

Electrical items | Gas fitting and repair | Soft furnishings

Did you know?

- **About 200 people a year die in accidental fires in the home.**
- **Not having a working smoke alarm makes the risk of dying in a fire at least four times greater.**
- **Faulty electrics (appliances, wiring and overloaded sockets) cause around 6,000 fires in the home each year.**
- **Two fires a day are started by candles.**

This leaflet has been put together for people in shared or rented homes who are at greater risk from fire. The advice and tips provided here supplement our main *Fire Safety in the Home* leaflet.

Stay safe with candles and cigarettes

Make sure cigarettes are put out properly after you have finished with them.

- Be extra careful if you have been drinking alcohol or taking medication which may make you drowsy.
- Be careful with candles and tea lights. Avoid placing them on or near materials that could burn or catch fire – like curtains.

Top tip

Put them out. Right out!

Smoke alarms save lives

Landlords must provide smoke alarms but you, the tenant, are personally responsible for making sure they continue to work after the initial test.

- Test your smoke alarms every month. If any of your smoke alarms have a one year battery, make sure it is changed every year. Only take the battery out when you need to replace it.
- Your local fire and rescue service may be able to visit your home and check it for risks. Contact them for further information (not 999).

Top tip

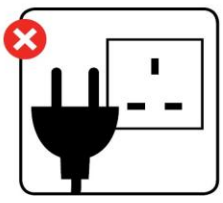
Fit smoke alarms

Never remove batteries

Be extra careful with electrics

Avoid overloading sockets. Keep to one plug per socket.

- Use a proper adaptor when using a non UK electrical appliance. Never put two prong plugs into three prong sockets.
- Don't use heaters for drying clothes and keep them a safe distance away to avoid them catching fire.
- Inform your landlord immediately if you are concerned about the electrics in your property. If you notice burn marks around plugs or cables for example.
- Don't fix faulty electrics yourself. Inform your landlord or call a qualified electrician.



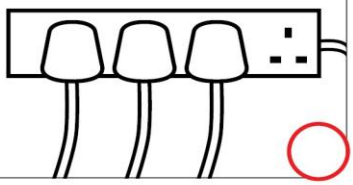
An extension lead or adaptor will have a limit to how many amps it can take, so be careful not to overload them to reduce the risk of fire.

Appliances use different amounts of power – a television may use a 3 amp plug and vacuum cleaner a 5 amp plug for example.

Know the limit!

5 + 5 + 3 = 13

AMP AMP AMP AMP



SMOKE ALARMS

SAVE LIVES

For more information on general fire safety visit **www.facebook.com/firekills**

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Rent and Service Charges

It is a condition of your Tenancy Agreement that you pay your rent regularly, on time and in advance.

Paying your rent

The easiest way to pay your rent is to set up a Direct Debit, this can be set up at any time by calling Hundred Houses Society on 0300 303 5770.

Other ways to pay your rent:

By telephone with your debit card by calling Allpay on 0330 041 6497
Using your Allpay card at any Pay Point location or Post Office

Rent statements

Statements are generally sent out on a minimum of an annual basis, but if you would like information about your account at any other time, please contact us. You can also access information about your account through the Tenant Portal.

Difficulties with paying rent

If you are struggling to pay your rent, **contact us straight away**, as we can advise you what benefits you may be entitled to help you, and work out a mutually acceptable repayment plan with you to reduce the arrears.

Universal Credit

What is Universal Credit?

Universal Credit is a single monthly payment for people in and out of work. It replaces some of the benefits and tax credits you might be getting now.

The 6 benefits that are replaced by Universal Credit are:

Housing Benefit (HB)
Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
Income-based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
Child Tax Credit
Working Tax Credit
Income Support

Universal Credit combines payments into one amount which will be paid into your bank account on the same date each month. 5

Who will be affected?

If you are on one of the benefits listed above and your circumstances change i.e. you move home to another local authority area, you will need to make an application for Universal Credit.
You can also make a claim for Universal Credit if you have not been in receipt of one of these benefits before but you need some help with your housing costs when you move into a new home.
If you are already receiving Universal Credit when you move, you must notify them of the change in your circumstances.
If you are of Pension Credit age you will not be affected at this time.

How do I make a claim?

Your claim must be made on-line at: www.universal-credit.service.gov.uk/sign-in
There is no paper version of the application form. Please ask us if you need help.
Your claim will start from the date your claim is complete. There is no guarantee that your claim can be backdated so you must claim as soon as you have signed your tenancy agreement.

Budgeting Information

As Universal Credit is paid monthly; you may need to make changes to the way you budget. For help with budgeting contact the Cambridge & District Citizens Advice on 01223 222660 or email caba@cambridgecab.org.uk

Council Tax Support

Council Tax Support will not be included in your Universal Credit so you will need to apply for Council Tax support separately.
www.gov.uk/apply-council-tax-reduction

Find out more:

YouTube video: https://youtu.be/E7GUu7Xa7Nw
Universal Credit Website: www.gov.uk/universal-credit

Useful contact details

As well as contacting Hundred Houses Society for advice or referrals to support agencies, you are welcome to contact the agencies below. You are under no obligation to share your engagement with support agencies; however, Hundred Houses Society are available should you wish to disclose this information.

Provider	Contact Details	Support Offered
Age UK	**0300 6669860** **www.ageuk.org.uk**	A variety of services for older people and their carers.
Besom Cambridge	**www.thebesomincambridge.org/**	Can help with furniture, beds and white goods and other items. Please check the postcode area they cover – details on the website
The Angels Foundation	**01480 271771** **angelsfoundation.org.uk**	Assisting survivors of domestic abuse with setting up a new home.
Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	**03444 111 444** **www.citizensadvice.org.uk**	Free, confidential advice online, over the phone, and in person
Respect	**0808 8024040** **www.respect.uk.net**	Help line aimed at anyone concerned about their violence and/or abuse towards a partner/ex partner. DA prevention programmes.
Cambridge & Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership	**01223 313551** **www.caprcp.org.uk**	Specialist emotional and sexual support for survivors of rape and sexual. Women & children.
Victim Support	**0845 3030900** **www.victimsupport.org.uk**	Confidential support to those affected by crime and traumatic incidents, including information, practical help and emotional support to people who have been threatened or abused.
Galop – LGBT	**0800 9995428** **www.galop.org.uk**	Provide Support for LGBT community around hate crime, sexual violence and domestic abuse. Provide assistance with questions on the Justice System and difficulties with the Police system.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline	**0808 2000247** **www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk**	24 Hour Freephone helpline. Support for women, and children living with Domestic Abuse.
Cambridge Women's Aid **Outreach Team**	**01223 460947** **www.cambridgewa.org.uk/contact.php** **01223 361214**	Community Based Support Safe Refuge for 11 Women Heterosexual and same sex relationships Support to children Provide information in different languages.
Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme (CLAS)	**Make contact via your local CAB**	The scheme provides information, advice and discretionary assistance that enables eligible families and individuals to improve their immediate financial position; cope and better support themselves, and use relevant resources to succeed in the long term.
Cambridge Re-Use	**www.cambridgereuse.org.uk**	Furniture project for low income families. Contact your Support worker or Housing Officer to make a referral.

Support for Tenants

In addition to the providers listed above, you can also contact us directly if you feel you need some support. We work in partnership with the agencies listed below and also have our own tenant support fund. Full information can be found on our website: [Get some help | Hundred Houses](#).

Positive Action Fund

Launched to support customers on low incomes or in financial difficulty with essential living costs and everyday things like:

- Furniture, white goods and small household appliances
- Carpets, curtains and blinds
- Help with school or work costs such as travel and clothing
- Emergency gas or electric payments
- Supermarket vouchers

Exclusively in CB4, for 25 years Red Hen has supported families experiencing many different challenges, e.g.:

- you and your child's well-being -
- increase help with behaviour strategies, routines etc
- address reluctance to attend school
- money matters - benefits, debt, etc
- bereavement, relationship breakdown
- confidence and self-esteem, reduce anxiety

CHS can advise and support you in many ways:

- Welfare benefits and tax credits
- Help you to understand the Benefits system
- Check to see what benefits you are entitled to
- Help you to apply for benefits
- Support with filling in benefit forms

Where to find us

Hundred Houses Society,
51 Scotland Road, Cambridge, CB4 1QW

0300 303 5770
info@hhs.org.uk