

Tenancy handbook

Everything you need to know to maintain your tenancy



For help and support
0300 123 3511
0800 131 3348

 Sanctuary
Housing

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Guide to your home

Welcome to Sanctuary and your home.

Our residents are very important to us, so we want to make sure we provide you with first-class, cost-effective services.

This handbook gives you information about your home and your local neighbourhood, including contacts that you may find useful.

Please keep this handbook in a safe place, so you can refer to it whenever you need to. From time to time, we may send you extra pages to keep you up-to-date with the latest information.

We asked residents to give us feedback on what is included to make sure we have covered everything and it is easy to follow. However, if there is any information you need which isn't covered in this handbook or in your tenancy agreement, please contact us. We will be happy to help.

Contact us

0300 123 3511 / 0800 131 3348
contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk

This handbook can be translated into other languages, large print and braille, or recorded on to audio CD/tape. Contact your local office or email contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk

এই তথ্য অন্যান্য ভাষায় অনুবাদ করা, বড় হরফের ছাপায় এবং ব্রেইল-এ, অথবা কানে শোনার সিডি বা টেইপ-এ রেকর্ড করা যেতে পারে। বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্য দয়া করে আপনার স্থানীয় অফিসের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

Te informacje mogą zostać przetłumaczone na inne języki, zapewnione w formie dużym drukiem i alfabetem Braille'a lub nagrane na płytę czy też kasetę audio. Prosimy skontaktować się ze swoim lokalnym biurem w celu uzyskania dalszych szczegółów.

આ માહિતીનો તરજૂમો બીજી ભાષાઓમાં, મોટા છાપેલા અક્ષરોમાં અને અંદાલિયિમાં અથવા ઓડિઓ CD અથવા ટેઈપ ઉપર રેકર્ડ થઈ શકે. કૃપા કરી વિગતો માટે તમારી સ્થાનિક કે લોકલ ઓફિસનો સંપર્ક કરો.

یہ معلومات دیگر زبانوں، بڑی چھپائی اور بریل میں ترجمہ کی جاسکتی ہیں یا سی ڈی یا ٹیپ پر ریکارڈ کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ تفصیلات کے لیے برائے کرم اپنے مقامی دفتر سے رابطہ کریں۔

यह जानकारी का अनुवाद और भी भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों और ब्रैल या ऑडियो सी डी या टेप पर रिकॉर्डिंग किया जा सकता है।
विस्तृत जानकारी के लिये कृपया अपने स्थानीय ऑफिस से सम्पर्क कीजिये।

ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਦੂਜੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ, ਵੱਡੀ ਛਪਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰੇਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਸੁਣਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਸੀਡੀ ਜਾਂ ਟੇਪ ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।
ਵੇਰਵੇ ਲਈ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਥਾਨਿਕ ਦਫਤਰ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Moving into your home - things to remember!

We appreciate that it can be stressful moving into a new home. Here's a handy checklist to make your move easier.

- Contact gas, water and electricity suppliers to set up or change your utilities account
- Take meter readings as soon as you move in
- Contact your local council to set up or change your Council Tax payments and to add your household to the electoral roll
- Find out where your stop taps, fuse box and trip switch are located (contact your housing officer if you need help)
- Arrange contents insurance for your personal belongings. Buildings insurance is already set up for your home
- Redirect your mail from your previous address. Please contact your local post office for advice
- Arrange a television licence, if necessary
- Remember to tell your doctor, dentist, bank, employer, school and DVLA your new address
- If you install a phone, please let us know your number.

Who we are and what we do

Sanctuary Housing was first established in 1969. Since then, we've grown into a successful provider of housing and related services.

We currently manage over 90,000 homes throughout England and Scotland. Providing quality homes and services to all our customers is our priority.

Working with communities allows us to provide tailored services in local areas. We also have some national support services which help us provide the best possible service to our residents.

As your landlord, we aim to provide you with an excellent, customer-friendly service. We also want you to be involved in making decisions that affect your home and your community. In this handbook, we've included details about how you can give us feedback on issues that are important to you where you live.

Don't forget



If you would like to know more about the types of housing available, please email

contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk or visit our website
www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk

We offer a range of housing to our customers:

General rented is our main business providing general rented accommodation for people of all ages, who need low-cost accommodation.

Market rental is rented accommodation for residents who are not eligible for our general rented accommodation, but want to rent a property from an experienced and trustworthy landlord.

Shared ownership allows people who cannot afford to buy a home outright to purchase shares in a property. With shared ownership, you buy a share of a property and pay a rent on the remaining share that you do not own. Gradually, you may buy further shares and possibly own your home outright.

Retirement living provides people, usually aged 55 plus, with high-quality accommodation and support services to allow them to live independently in a comfortable and secure environment.

Supported housing supports vulnerable people to gain life and social skills to help them to live independently. We provide accommodation and support services for teenage parents, offenders, homeless people and families, people fleeing domestic violence, and those with mental health issues, learning and physical disabilities, and drug and alcohol related issues.

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Useful information

Useful contacts

For any housing queries

Tel: 0300 123 3511 / 0800 131 3348
 Email: contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk

Lines open
 24 hours a
 day, 365 days
 a year.

For repairs

Tel: 0800 916 1525 / 0300 123 3561
 Text: 07824 609748
 Typetalk: 01482 580576
 Email: contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk
 Online: www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk

Lines open
 24 hours a
 day, 365 days
 a year.

If you print this handbook, you can make a note of other useful contacts below.

Local recycling centre



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Local authority



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Call 0300 number from mobiles and 0800 number from landlines for the lowest possible rate. The exact charges will depend on your provider and tariff.



Health care

Doctor

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Dentist

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Utilities contact details

Gas

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Electric

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Water

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My meters are situated

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My stop tap is situated

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Household contents insurance

Provided by:

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Contact details:

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My reference number is:

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Bin collection day

Other useful contacts

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ORGANISATION	CONTACT
Sanctuary antisocial behaviour out-of-hours helpline	0800 916 1522 or 0300 123 3568
Crimestoppers	0800 555111 www.crimestoppers-uk.org
Local police	Call 999 for emergencies or 101 for non-emergencies
National Debt Line	0808 808 4000 www.nationaldebtline.org
Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	08444 111 444 www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Civil Legal Advice	0345 345 4 345 www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice
Shelter	0808 800 4444 www.shelter.org.uk
Refuge	0808 800 4444 www.refuge.org.uk
National Domestic Violence helpline	0808 2000 247 www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)	0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk
Family Lives	0808 800 2222 www.familylives.org.uk
Samaritans	08457 90 90 90 www.samaritans.org
Age UK	0800 169 65 65 www.ageuk.org.uk
Childline	0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk
Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)	0300 1234 999 www.rspca.org.uk
National Grid	If you suspect a gas or carbon monoxide leak, call 0800 111 999 www.nationalgrid.com/uk
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)	www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-licensing-agency
Gov.UK (all public services information)	www.gov.uk
TV licence	www.tvlicensing.co.uk
Freecycle (recycling network)	my.freecycle.org

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Our services to you

How we are doing

Each year, through our Residents' Annual Report, we update you on how we're meeting our five key standards – we call these Local Service Offers.

Our five Local Service Offers are:

- Home
- Neighbourhood
- Moving Home
- Customer Service
- Value for Money and Governance.

They show you how we're performing and update you on any improvements we have planned over the coming year. Here's more details about the five offers:

Home – this includes what you can expect from us from when you report a repair and making sure your home is safe and to a decent standard.

Neighbourhood – this includes how we will deal with antisocial behaviour.

Moving Home – this includes how we will help you identify options that could meet your needs if you want to move.

Customer Service this includes how you can contact us and the level of service you can expect when you do.

Value for Money this includes making sure we are financially healthy and comply with all relevant regulations, legislation and are accountable to our residents.

You will find our latest standards in the special edition of the 'Residents' Annual Report' online at **www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk** or contact us and we will send you a copy. We also publish a summary of our performance in our quarterly newsletters.

Equality and diversity

We believe that everyone should receive the support they need to achieve their full potential. Working with our residents and our partners, we aim to provide people with tailored services to help them achieve this.

In the communities we serve, we challenge inequality and promote diversity for all our residents. We are also committed to removing discrimination and harassment in our neighbourhoods.

Equality and diversity is an important part of our business. It enables us to develop more efficient and innovative services to respond to individuals' needs.

When we consider the needs of vulnerable people, we pay particular attention to the following groups (protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010):

- Race
- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Religion/belief
- Gender identity
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnerships (if at work, or someone is training for work)

In addition to this, we also look at other issues such as deprivation, responsibility for dependants, criminal convictions or any other matter which may mean a person is treated unfairly.

Confidentiality and data protection

We keep records and personal information about you on our files and computer records. This information is held in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

We may ask you to give us sensitive information about yourself, for example, disability details. If you do so, this means you agree for the information to be used to help us to provide services that meet your needs.

If you do not agree with something on your file, you can ask us to put a note on your file to say so. If you want to change information held on your file, you should request the change in writing and we will confirm what action has been taken.

We do not give out confidential information to anyone who is not part of Sanctuary without your consent. However, in some cases we have a duty to give relevant information to public bodies, such as the police.

What if you're not happy with us?

We are committed to providing first-class services, but there may be times when we don't get it quite right. If this happens we want to know. We deal with all the complaints we receive quickly and effectively, and strive to learn from what you tell us.

Where possible, if a practical solution could resolve the issue, then we will discuss this with you. For more information, please contact us or visit **www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk**

How do I make a comment or complaint?

You can make a comment or complaint in person, by phone, by letter or by sending an email to **contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk**

You can also make a complaint online at **www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk**

If you prefer, you can ask a friend or relative to speak or write to us on your behalf. They must have your signed permission before we give them any details.

When we get things right

We also need to know when we're getting things right. If you are happy with the service you have received, please tell us.

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Paying your rent and service charges

Ways to pay

We use the rent collected from you to pay for the housing services you receive. It is important that everyone pays their rent regularly and on time, so that we can continue to provide high-quality services.

Your rent and any service charges are due weekly in advance, as detailed in your tenancy agreement. You must pay in advance. There are different payment arrangements outlined below. You can pay in one of the following ways:

Direct debit It's easy, convenient and hassle-free. Your payments are spread equally throughout the year on a weekly or monthly basis. You can choose to pay on any date between the 1st and 28th of each month to fit in with your own income payments. If your rent payment changes, we can adjust the direct debit for you.

Standing order If you pay by standing order, your payments are spread equally throughout the year on a monthly basis. You can set up a weekly standing order if your bank or building society allows it. If your rent changes, it is your responsibility to instruct your bank to alter the payments. We cannot adjust your payment for you.

Payments cards (AllPay) Allows you to pay at a range of outlets such as Post Offices and local shops. The cost of collection via this method is higher and there is a delay between income being collected and posted to our account. You can also pay via the AllPay website, the AllPay mobile phone app and direct calls to AllPay.

Cash or cheque payments Allows you to pay by cash or cheque.

Debit and credit cards To expand the choice and flexibility for you, we accept payment by credit and debit card. You can pay by debit and credit card over the phone and in person at our offices.

Online You can pay your rent online at **www.allpayments.net/allpayments**

Make sure you know how much you want to pay and have your debit or credit card and your payment card to hand.

By telephone You can pay over the phone using your debit or credit card. Simply call our card provider **ALLPAY** on **0844 557 8321** and speak to an advisor. This service is available from 9am to 5.30pm, weekdays only. A 24-hour automated service is available after 5.30pm. Make sure you know how much you want to pay and have your debit or credit card and your payment card to hand.

By post To pay by post to our offices, simply send a cheque or postal order. Please make cheques payable to your own landlord (as per your tenancy agreement) and make sure you write your name, address and pay reference number on the back of the cheque. **Please do not send cash in the post or put cash through our letter boxes.**

Talk to us if you need help with ways to pay your rent.

Rent reviews and statements

The rent you pay is reviewed each year and your rent will usually change once every 12 months. Your tenancy agreement will tell you when your rent will change. We will give you a minimum of 28 days notice in writing about any changes.

Service charges

You will be required to pay a service charge if we provide you with services for the upkeep of communal areas, such as gardening, window cleaning, door entry systems and lifts.

The details of the services and charges which apply to your property are listed in your tenancy agreement. Each year, we send you a reminder of your service charges, including details of any charges.

What happens if I'm struggling to pay my rent?

Paying your rent is a priority, which means that it must come first in your list of outgoings. You must contact us if you have any changes in your circumstances that may affect the payment of your rent. The sooner you contact us the better. We can offer you help and advice.

We understand that at times things can be tight but please remember, non-payment of rent can be serious and could result in eviction.

If you fall behind with your payments, we will contact you by phone or by post. We will continue to contact you until your rent is up-to-date or you are making regular payments to clear your arrears.

Advice on managing your money

Please contact us if you need advice about how to manage your money. We have trained officers who can talk to you about any financial difficulties you're facing and can check if you're receiving all the benefits you are entitled to.

We can also refer you to independent organisations to advise you on how and where to get help with your finances, including:

- Ways to make the most of your income
- Savings
- Basic bank accounts
- Contents insurance
- Credit unions.

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Your home and neighbourhood

What are our responsibilities?

As your landlord, we will:

- Help you to live peacefully in your home
- Undertake any necessary repairs to your home within the timescales we promise
- Keep your communal areas tidy and well maintained (if you pay a service charge for this service)
- Allow you to exchange homes with a resident of another housing association or local council, as long as your tenancy agreement allows and you have our written permission
- Provide general information on the housing services we provide
- Give you the right to complain if we have not delivered any aspect of our service
- Give you access to information we have about you
- Consult you on any changes to your service charges.

What are your responsibilities?

As a Sanctuary resident, your responsibilities include:

- Paying your rent and any other charges in advance and on time
- Accepting responsibility for your behaviour and that of anyone living with you, including pets and any invited visitors
- Not to create a nuisance
- Being respectful to our staff and contractors
- Keeping your home and communal areas in good order and reporting any repairs promptly
- Giving us access to your home, when necessary, so that our contractors can undertake any essential repairs, such as your annual gas safety check
- Maintaining your garden and fences (if you have them)
- Giving us written notice (at least 28 days) if you want to give up your home
- Letting us know when we have got it right or wrong.

Please make sure you read your tenancy agreement carefully, so you know exactly what is your responsibility.

Keeping your neighbourhood clean and tidy

Your garden Your tenancy agreement states your responsibilities. These could include looking after your garden, including any trees, shrubs and boundary fencing. This also means pruning shrubs and hedges, so that they are not a danger or nuisance to others.

You are responsible for looking after any trees in your garden, unless you have been advised in writing that it is our responsibility. In some cases, we may ask you to pay for the removal of any trees if they cause damage to the property. If you need advice or are worried about a tree in your garden, please contact us.

Before planting a tree in your garden, let us know the type of tree and where you would like to plant it. We will check that the tree and location are safe.

Communal areas If you use communal areas and you do not pay a service charge, please keep them clean and tidy. Not doing so is a breach of your tenancy agreement.

If you pay a service charge, we will keep these areas clean and tidy on your behalf.

Talk to us if you are unsure who is responsible for a particular area.

Parking When most of our properties were built, fewer people owned cars than they do today. As a result, many properties do not have their own garage or off-road parking. We expect neighbours to show consideration towards one another if parking is in short supply. We have garages available for rent in many areas and if you would like to apply for one, please contact us.

We do not allow residents to use car parking areas to carry out repairs, as this can be a nuisance to other residents. These areas should not be used for storing caravans, boats or trailers – unless you have our permission.

If we believe that a vehicle has been abandoned or is untaxed, we will attempt to contact the owner to tell them to remove it. If we can't contact the owner or the owner is unwilling to remove the vehicle, we will take steps to remove it. Any costs incurred will be recovered from the owner.

In some areas, parking enforcement measures have been introduced. This is to stop unauthorised parking by members of the public. We cannot enforce parking restrictions on the public highway.

Household rubbish To help keep your neighbourhood clean and tidy, please:

- Only place your rubbish in wheelie bins or in black plastic sacks. If you share communal bins, put your rubbish in black plastic sacks and then into the bins provided
- Do not put hot ash in bins because a fire could start
- Clean your bins regularly after emptying to prevent them from smelling
- Do not overfill your bins or leave sacks of rubbish outside your home - this may encourage rats and other pests.

Wherever possible, please make use of your local council's recycling collections. Most councils now operate weekly or fortnightly collections for paper, glass, cans and certain types of plastic.

Bulk rubbish If you need to dispose of any household items that do not fit into your bins, your local council may operate a bulk refuse collection service. To check whether this service is available in your area, contact your local council. Please note that there may be a charge for this service.

If bulk refuse collection is not available in your area and you have items that are too bulky or awkward for normal collection, you should use public refuse sites. These sites also have recycling facilities for glass, cans, textiles, paper and engine oil. To find out where your nearest site is, please contact your local council.

Fly-tipping Fly-tipping is the illegal dumping of waste. It can vary in scale from a bin bag of rubbish to large quantities of waste dumped from trucks. Fly-tipping poses a risk to people and wildlife, damages our environment and spoils our enjoyment of our towns and countryside. It also costs a lot of money to clear up.

If you come across any fly-tipping, please contact us for advice.

In your tenancy agreement, it says what you need to ask us for permission for. This includes:

Make changes to your home You should contact us first if you would like to improve or alter your home.

Take in a lodger You should contact us for permission first if you would like to take in a lodger.

Work from home You should not work from home or start a business from your home without written permission from us. If we can't give you permission, we will tell you why in writing.

Keep a pet If you want to keep a pet in your home, please ask for our permission in writing. If we do give you permission, please make sure that your pet does not cause a disturbance to others.

Please remember that if you plan to put up extra fencing to prevent pets escaping from your garden, please contact us to find out whether you need planning permission. It will be your responsibility to build the fence and to maintain it.

Fit a satellite dish If you would like to put up a satellite dish, please ask for our permission in writing.

There may be other things that you need our permission for. If you're not sure, please check your tenancy agreement.

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Feeling safe in your home

Antisocial behaviour

We want to make sure our homes and communities are pleasant and safe places to live. Therefore, we will not accept any antisocial behaviour (ASB) by our residents, members of their household, their invited visitors or their pets.

ASB covers a wide range of unacceptable activities, including:

- Verbal abuse
- Noise nuisance
- Graffiti
- Fly-tipping
- Dropping litter or dumping rubbish
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour
- Nuisance driving or parking and nuisance vehicles
- Pets fouling in public spaces
- Racial, sexual and other harassment.

We take reports of ASB very seriously and will take the necessary steps to protect our residents. This can mean working in partnership with other agencies to resolve ASB cases, including environmental health, council ASB units, local councillors, community groups and the police.

I am experiencing antisocial behaviour – what should I do?

If you feel comfortable doing so, try talking to the person first to see if you can resolve the situation. They may not even be aware that they are causing a problem.

If you want to report ASB or need confidential advice, please contact us on **0800 131 3348** or **0300 123 3511** Monday to Friday Between 8am and 6pm and on Saturday between 10am and 1pm. You can also report incidents out-of-hours by calling **0800 916 1522** or **0300 123 3568**.

Depending on how severe the situation is, we may ask to meet with you within five working days of reporting the incident. We will always deal with the situation sensitively and explain what action can be taken.

If you are threatened with violence or witness someone doing something illegal, please contact the police immediately.

What can I do to avoid annoying or disturbing my neighbours?

Please be considerate to your neighbours by:

- Keeping noise within a reasonable level at all times and respond in a positive way if neighbours ask you to reduce the noise
- Giving your neighbour notice when you know there is going to be some noise, for example a party or major repair work
- Making sure pets do not cause a nuisance to others by following these guidelines. Do not allow your pet to:
 - Foul your home, garden, public footpaths or shared area – always clear up after your pets
 - Stray outside of your home and garden
 - Bark for long periods
 - Become out of control by becoming aggressive or threatening to other people or animals.

Domestic abuse

We promise to give support and assistance to residents who experience domestic abuse. We will maintain strict confidentiality and provide information about other agencies that can help.

The legal solution can vary according to the circumstances. Residents should not give up their tenancies unless a solicitor, independent advice centre or the police have advised you to do so and you have somewhere else to live.

If you are a victim of domestic abuse, we may be able to help you move away from the problem or provide additional security in your home, for example locks and door defenders. Although we cannot provide temporary accommodation, we can refer residents who need temporary housing to their local council.

Remember, domestic abuse is a crime - don't suffer in silence. If you are suffering from domestic abuse or you suspect that someone else is, please contact us or call the National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0808 2000 247.

There is a list of more domestic abuse help lines and services on page 13.

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Changes to your household

What if the number of people in my household increases?

If you are in a long-term relationship and would like your partner to move in with you, please contact us to let us know. If you would like to add your partner to the tenancy of your property, contact your housing officer to discuss it.

Also, if you have a child, please let us know so that we can add them to your household details.

Can I take in a lodger or sublet part of my home?

A lodger is someone who lives as part of your household and shares the same facilities.

A sub-tenant has the right to the exclusive use of part of your home. You will need to ask our permission before taking in a lodger or subletting part of your home. If we do not give permission, we will explain the reasons in writing.

If you are thinking of subletting or taking in a lodger, please remember:

- If you overcrowd your home you may be breaking the terms of your tenancy agreement
- If your lodger or sub-tenants cause a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours, we may take legal action against you, unless they change their behaviour or you remove them from your home
- If you want to remove a lodger or sub-tenant from your home, you should get advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau or a solicitor. We cannot remove your lodgers or sub-tenants for you
- If you are receiving any welfare benefits, these may be affected. The amount you charge is between you and your lodger or sub-tenant - but you must tell the Housing Benefit department
- We will need to know some details about your lodger/sub-tenant, for example their full name, age and gender.

What if my relationship breaks down?

If you have a joint tenancy and your relationship ends, you will need to speak to us to discuss what this means for your tenancy.

We will normally allow one person to continue the tenancy solely in their name, provided both parties agree and there is no outstanding rent to pay.

When a resident dies

Please let us know as soon as possible if someone close to you who is our resident has died. We understand that this will be a difficult time and we will do our best to deal with any questions you might have.

Please contact us for advice on how to end their tenancy. We will need to speak to whoever is responsible for their affairs/estate.

Can I pass my tenancy to someone else?

You are allowed to do this in specific circumstances, for example:

- Where a court decides the tenancy must be passed to someone else, this may be due to a divorce and/or relating to the care arrangements for any dependent children
- It may be possible for members of your family to take over the tenancy of your home when you die. Please refer to your tenancy agreement or contact us for advice
- If the tenancy is passed on by way of mutual exchange (see the 'Moving home' section for more detail about exchanges).

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Moving home

Can I exchange or swap homes with another resident?

If your tenancy agreement allows it you can apply for an exchange, or swap homes with another Sanctuary resident, or another housing association, or a council resident.

The following conditions apply to any exchange:

- You must have our written permission and that of the other landlord (where appropriate)
- The exchange does not result in overcrowding or substantial under-occupation
- You have no rent arrears
- No action is being taken against you for breaking the terms of your tenancy
- You cannot exchange if specific adaptations have been made to your home and these are not required by the other resident (for example adaptations for someone with a disability).

If you find another resident to exchange with, please contact us for advice about how to apply. We will arrange to visit you in your home to discuss your application and then let you know if the exchange can go ahead. If your application is rejected, we will explain why.

What if I want to move to another area?

You may want to move to another part of the country to be closer to other members of your family or because you have been offered a job. There are a number of ways of finding homes in the other area. You could register with the relevant local authority or Homeswapper may be able to help. HomeSwapper may be able to help.

The HomeSwapper service is free to Sanctuary residents. It allows you to arrange a home swap or mutual exchange with other residents around the country.

You can simply sign up to the service on the HomeSwapper website, giving details about your current property and the type of accommodation you are looking for. HomeSwapper will then search for all possible matches.

By signing up to the service and with our permission, you can swap your home with residents from other housing associations and councils. You will have access to a community of over 3.5 million residents looking for a move.

To apply or for more information, please visit **www.homeswapper.co.uk** or contact us. Please remember that your rent account needs to be up-to-date before moving.

Can I transfer to another Sanctuary property?

You can also apply to transfer to another home, which is more suitable for your needs. You are unlikely to be able to transfer to another property if you have rent arrears or action is being taken against you for breaking the terms of your tenancy.

If you decide to do this, you will need to apply to have your name put on the waiting list. Your application is treated in the same way as when you first applied for housing. We will assess your priority and update you on the situation.

Although not everyone who asks for a transfer is successful, we will always consider your application and do what we can to help.

What happens if my home is under-occupied or overcrowded?

When residents are living in a home that is larger than they need, perhaps because their family has grown up and left home, there are benefit reductions due to under occupancy. We will encourage transfers to smaller accommodation in these circumstances.

Overcrowding is when there is a shortage of bedrooms for a family. This is based on the ages and gender of the people having to share bedrooms. Your tenancy agreement will show the number of people who are allowed to live in the property.

If your home is overcrowded, you can apply for a transfer. Please contact us for details.

How do I end my tenancy?

You can end your tenancy in writing by giving us at least 28 days notice. If you give less than 28 days notice, we will usually charge you rent to cover the notice period. We need this time to arrange for another resident to move in.

You can end your tenancy on any day in agreement with your Housing Officer.

If you leave the property without telling us, you will still be liable for a minimum of four weeks rent. You must not leave anyone living in the property when you end your tenancy, unless we have already agreed to this.

When you tell us you are ending your tenancy, we will:

- Inspect your home and tell you what condition it needs to be left in, and also what we want you to do before you leave. If you do not carry out the work when you leave, we will carry it out and charge you for it. Remember, if you have made any approved improvements to your home, you may be eligible for compensation
- Ask you to show your home to possible new residents (they will always come with a member of staff)
- Tell you exactly how much rent you need to pay
- Advise what you should do with the keys.

What do I need to do when I leave my home?

It is essential that you leave your home clean, empty and in good condition. Please try not to damage the property or decorations when you are moving out, especially when removing screws, pictures and carpets. Also, be careful not to leave bare wires or open gas pipes.

We will charge you for the cost of any work needed if the property is not left in a good condition or to remove items you have left behind.

If you want more information about what we consider a good condition to be, please ask for a copy of our lettings standard.

Remember to:

- Pay any outstanding rent and other charges
- Have your meters read before you leave
- Have the telephone disconnected
- Turn off the water, gas and electricity when you leave
- Let us know your forwarding address and a contact telephone number
- If you want to get your post redirected to your new address, contact your local post office for advice.

What will happen if I end my tenancy while I owe rent or other charges?

The debt will not disappear – you must still pay it. We will ask you to pay what you owe in full before you hand in your keys. If you have any questions, please contact us.

If you do not make arrangements to pay off any money owed at the end of your tenancy, we may refer this to a debt collection agency or take legal action against you. This could affect your future credit rating.

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Buying a home

Shared ownership

Shared ownership was introduced to help people to buy a home. Through shared ownership you buy a share of a property and pay rent on the remaining share that you do not own. Gradually, you may buy further shares and possibly own your home outright.

Shared ownership is flexible and lets you decide if, and when, you want to increase your share of home ownership.

If you want more details on applying for a shared ownership property or have any questions about our home ownership services:

- Call **0800 916 1444** or **0300 123 3516** and ask for the Home Ownership team
- Email **contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk**

Right to Buy and Right to Acquire

You may have the legal right to buy your home through schemes including:

- Preserved Right to Buy
- Right to Acquire

If you would like further details, please

- Call us on **0800 916 1444** or **0300 123 3516**
- Email **contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk**
- Visit our website
www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk
- Visit the Government's website
www.gov.uk

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Support when you need it

We provide a wide range of homes and support services including:

- Housing for Older People
- Home care
- Extra care
- Care homes.

We want to help you maintain your independence for as long as possible and support you in leading an active and fulfilling life.

We aim to do this by:

- Providing good quality homes, specifically designed for older people to offer independence and peace of mind
- Providing a flexible support package
- Providing you with services and facilities that meet your needs, including those from all faiths, religious preferences and ethnic backgrounds
- Encouraging and enabling you to be involved in social and educational activities both within your scheme and community
- Providing you with an accountable, confidential and professional service
- Continually improving our service to you
- Working with your local authority and health service to ensure that housing services meet local needs.

Housing for Older People

Our Housing for Older People schemes aim to provide independent living with 24 hour monitored alarm call equipment for older people. Some schemes have support staff on site, some have visiting support staff and some have no staff other than a housing officer associated with the site.

Housing for Older People staff may be called scheme managers, support coordinators or scheme coordinators. The level of support provided will vary according to local arrangements and is detailed in your support and/or alarm agreement.

On staffed schemes

Your scheme manager will, unless agreed otherwise:

- Welcome you when you move in
- Show you the communal areas and other facilities
- Explain and demonstrate how to use the call alarm system and ensure that your details are up to date, and the response that you will receive if you pull your cord
- Help you call for medical assistance if you fall ill
- Respond to an emergency when on duty and ensure further help is provided if you need it
- Provide details of out-of-hours and emergency procedures for your scheme
- Help you call for medical assistance if you fall ill
- Contact your doctor and family when necessary and with your consent to make the best arrangements for your care
- Make regular contact with you to check that you are well
- Work with you to agree a support plan to ensure your needs are met and you are able to maintain your independence.

Your support plan will be reviewed with you annually and when things change.

Your support plan will identify your individual support needs, which may include:

- Help in organising and arranging social activities
- Providing information and signposting to community based organisations and activities
- Helping you stay in contact with family and friends
- Putting you in touch with social services, health authorities and other organisations that can help you.

What your scheme manager will not do

Although scheme managers work in the best interests of residents and the scheme as a whole, there are a few things they're unable to do:

- Accept gifts from you or your family
- Help you clean the inside of your home - but they will help you find this service if you need it
- Collect pensions or handle financial affairs
- Collect prescriptions, except in an emergency
- Do any cooking or shopping for you
- Administer any form of medication
- Provide personal care- but they will help you find this service if you need it.

In addition:

- They are not usually able to assist when off duty

- Sanctuary is not obliged to provide relief cover for absence or sick leave. Cover is provided by a 24-hour community alarm service.

Community alarm system A community alarm system may be provided to give you peace of mind and help you to live independently.

The system allows you to speak to someone, which may be your scheme manager when on duty, or professional staff at a control centre at all other times.

If you have a hard-wired alarm system, pull cords will be located around the scheme and within your accommodation which can be used to contact assistance in an emergency.

If you have a dispersed alarm this is a system connected to your own telephone line and operated by a pendant worn on your wrist or round your neck. This will work within your property but normally not outside the scheme.

Examples of an emergency, are:

- A medical emergency, such as a fall, an accident or sudden illness
- Intruders or antisocial behaviour in or around the building.



Don't forget

**Press the ORANGE/RED BUTTON
or pull any ORANGE/RED CORD
to alert the scheme manager.**

The system may also be used by the scheme manager to undertake wellbeing checks. This will be discussed as part of your support plan.

When staff are not covering the scheme, on unstaffed schemes or alarm only schemes, the system is switched to a control centre. The control centre is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by trained personnel, who will respond to any emergencies received over the system.

The control centre staff will not personally attend the emergency, but will call for the most appropriate form of help. Such help could be a relative, a doctor or the emergency services.

Please remember you should only use the alarm system in an emergency.

Occasionally false alarms do happen and all of our staff are very understanding when it does.

If you experience any problems with the alarm system, please contact us.

If your emergency contacts or medical information changes, please don't forget to let us know so we can make sure the control centre has the right details.

Some important things to remember:

- Do not tie your pull cords to shorten them. They are meant to reach floor level, so that if you fall you can reach the cord
- Stay calm – help will come as soon as possible
- If you are taken ill or cannot speak, don't worry. As soon as you trigger a call, the control centre will call the emergency services if you cannot respond to them
- If you think your alarm is not working properly, please contact us or your scheme manager as soon as possible.

To ensure the systems remain in working order, checks are undertaken on hardwired systems on staffed schemes every three months. An appointment will be made with you to carry out these checks by the scheme manager. In non-staffed schemes, our alarms are tested annually. Although dispersed alarms self test, an annual visit enables us to check that the control centre have all your details in case of an emergency.

Communal facilities If your scheme has communal facilities, your scheme manager will provide information on how to use them, including details on any social activities or social clubs. Remember that other residents and guests use the facilities too, so please respect them and leave the area clean and tidy. Any repairs or issues about the facilities should be raised with the scheme manager.

Please note the following:

- It is against the law to smoke in communal areas

Parking Where available, car parking is not usually allocated to individual residents.

Residents with valid parking badges can park in the designated disabled parking bays.

Please ask family and other visitors to respect other residents' needs and, if necessary, park elsewhere.

Televisions Some schemes have a master television aerial point, so individual aerials are not usually required. If you suffer poor reception, report it to your scheme manager.

The residents within some staffed schemes may be entitled to a concessionary TV licence. There is a small cost for this, which is collected by the scheme manager.

Security Please co-operate with the scheme manager to make sure the scheme is kept safe and secure at all times. Some helpful tips include:

- Close doors after use
- Ask for identification when the entry system is used
- Make sure visitors to the scheme are legitimate
- Do not allow people you don't know to enter the scheme without checking who they are
- Keep the door to your home locked at all times.

For security reasons, a limit is placed on the number of keys issued to each resident. Therefore, it is not always possible for you to be given additional keys for the use of relatives or friends.

Rent setting and payments The type of tenancy you have determines how your rent is set. However, in most cases there will be four elements to your rental charge:

Rent	This is the cost of renting your property.
Services	These are the associated costs of living in your scheme, including gardening, cleaning and maintenance of the communal areas.
Support	The cost of any support you receive, including some scheme manager costs.
Alarm	The cost of the community alarm system.

Master key Some schemes have a master key, to allow access to flats in an emergency. This will only be used by staff if:

- Invited to enter using key
- It is an emergency
- You give permission.

To ensure we can gain access in an emergency, please do not:

- Fix additional bolts to your door
- Leave the safety chain on all the time. Use the chain only when answering the door.

For more information, please contact us.

Personal information To ensure we are meeting your personal needs, we will retain and update personal information on matters such as health and next of kin. We will keep this information in your support plan. With your agreement, this may be shared with other professionals to ensure services provided are appropriate for you.

All information is held in accordance with the Data Protection Act. It will be stored securely and you can have access to this information if you want it. You can find more details in the 'Confidentiality and data protection' section.

Home care

At Sanctuary Home Care we understand that there is no place like home. Our community services are tailored to people's individual needs – supporting them to remain independent in familiar surroundings.

Our friendly staff, who are all Criminal Records Bureau checked, provide a variety of care and support services to people in their own homes such as cleaning, shopping, cooking, personal care, companionship, specialist dementia care and support following a hospital stay.

Sanctuary Home Care is there to provide personalised support when and where it is needed. Our staff will always treat our clients, their family and home with dignity and respect.

Extra care

Extra care is a very different way to take the next step. Our residents have their own spacious private apartment within an attractive development with shared facilities, such as a restaurant and hairdressers.

If their needs change or increase over time, so too can the level and type of services we provide – enabling them to stay independent in their own homes for longer.

Our residents can remain as active as they like, pursue their own interests and take advantage of new opportunities – all within a framework of a welcoming community and 24-hour care and support that residents can access any time they want to, now or in the future.

Care homes

Sanctuary's care homes offer a wide range of high quality care options across England for older people including residential, nursing, respite, palliative and specialist dementia care.

Our homes run a variety of resident activities every week and many have en-suite bedrooms, landscaped gardens, hairdressing salons, tastefully decorated lounges with cosy fireplaces and dining rooms where home-cooked meals are served daily.

Registered with the Care Quality Commission, we are committed to helping people choose what's right for them and giving them the care and support they need to enable them to live a secure, dignified and fulfilling life.

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Having your say

Giving residents the chance to have their say and get involved is very important to us. It helps us to improve our services and make your community a better place to live in.

By getting involved you can:

- Meet new people from different backgrounds
- Learn a new skill, such as how to chair meetings
- Have your say about your home, your neighbourhood and our services.

By getting involved you can help to:

- Get the services you need and when you want them
- Get value for money from the rent and service charges you pay
- Influence the way we do things at a local and national level
- Check we're doing what we say we're doing
- Hold us to account if we don't deliver the services we promise you.

There are lots of ways you can get involved depending on how much time you have to give. For example, completing a short survey won't take too long, whereas joining a scrutiny panel requires more of your time.

Here you'll find more information on how to get involved:

National Resident Scrutiny Panel

The panel reviews performance and service improvement issues that relate specifically to our services. It is important that the panel has strong skills to help us make important strategic decisions.

Local Resident Scrutiny Panels

The aim of the Local Resident Scrutiny Panels is to support the region to deliver the Local Offers. The Local Offer is the service standard for each area. For more details on your Local Offer, visit our website www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk

Resident Action Groups

These are teams of residents that are actively involved in supporting the work of the Local Resident Scrutiny Panels. They gather evidence of residents' experiences across Sanctuary. They include resident inspectors, tenant auditors, contractor management panel members, interview panel members and mystery shoppers.

Working groups and focus groups

These groups are set up to discuss specific topics, such as policies and procedures or an area of Sanctuary's service that is being reviewed.

Customer feedback

You can give us your feedback in a variety of ways - through annual surveys, customer satisfaction surveys, resident consultations and during events.

After you have had time to settle into your new home, you will receive a 'Settling in survey' to complete. This provides us with feedback on the moving-in process. We will also contact you to carry out a 'settling in visit' to check we have your personal details recorded correctly and also to ask if you have any questions or concerns.

Resident inspections

Resident inspectors work in groups of two or three to carry out interviews and inspections of areas, or buildings. These inspections monitor and report on our services and the results help us to shape and improve services for the future.

Estate walkabouts

Estate walkabouts take place in many of our neighbourhoods. Residents are invited to join staff as they walk around the neighbourhood to monitor how we are doing and discuss ideas for potential improvements to the area.

Newsletters

Our resident newsletter is called 'Voice' and is produced three times per year. The newsletter features local news, advice, competitions and information on how we're performing in your area.

How to get involved

There are many more ways for you to get involved, including:

- Mystery shopping
- Neighbourhood surveys
- Housing design questionnaires
- Estate committees
- Local events, such as clean-up days, scheme activities, and community fun days.

Would you like to become involved in any of these activities?

For more information on how to get involved and make a positive difference, call us on 0800 131 3348 or 0300 123 3511 or visit the resident involvement section on our website

www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk

Or if a member of our staff visits you, let them know you are interested and they will be happy to give you further details.

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Notes

This handbook can be translated into other languages, large print and Braille, or recorded onto an audio CD. Please contact your local office for details.

Sanctuary Housing

Marybone House, 2 Marybone, Liverpool, L3 2BY

0800 131 3348 / 0300 123 3511

contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk



Sanctuary Housing Services Limited is a subsidiary of Sanctuary Housing Association, an exempt charity.

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