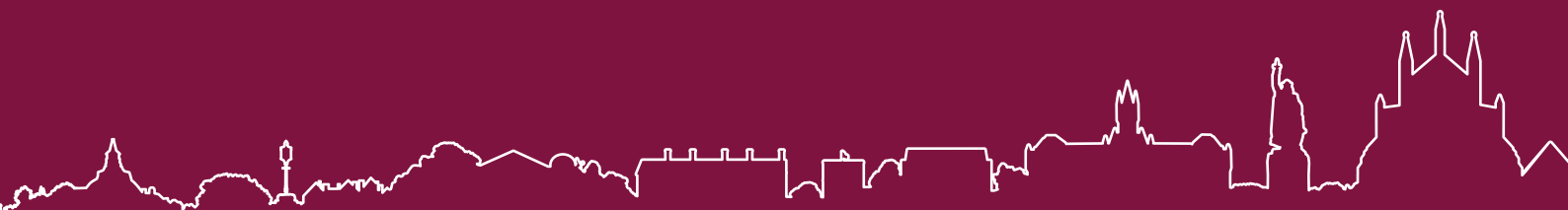




TENANT HANDBOOK

WELCOME TO YOUR HOME



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HOW TO CONTACT HOUSING



TENANT PARTNERSHIP FREEPHONE

 0800 716 987
 tenantinvolvement@winchester.gov.uk


HOUSING TENANCY

 01962 848 197
 housingtenancy@winchester.gov.uk

HOUSING INCOME

 01962 848 205
 housingincome@winchester.gov.uk



NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

 01962 848 400
 nservices@winchester.gov.uk

SHELTERED HOUSING

 01962 855 335
 shelteredhousing@winchester.gov.uk



ALLOCATIONS

 01962 848 356
 housingallocations@winchester.gov.uk

GARAGES

 01962 814 922
 garages@winchester.gov.uk

TENANCY SUSTAINMENT

 848 060 (ext 6102)
 tenancy_sustainment@winchester.gov.uk



Further information about contacting the council is also available on our website.

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/contact-housing



PROPERTY LETTINGS

 01962 814 922
 propertylettings@winchester.gov.uk



HOME OWNERSHIP ENQUIRIES

 01962 848 400 (option 6)
 homeownership@winchester.gov.uk

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

 01962 848 526
 privatesectorhousing@winchester.gov.uk

HOMELESSNESS

 01962 848 163
 homelessness@winchester.gov.uk

HOUSING REPAIRS

 01962 848 400

OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCY HOUSING REPAIRS SERVICE

 01962 865 405

ALL OTHER OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCIES - INVOLVING COUNCIL PROPERTY OR SERVICES

 01962 865 407

 [/winchestertenants](https://www.facebook.com/winchestertenants)

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Winchester City Council is committed to providing excellent customer care to all its customers. Details of our customer service standards can be found on our website.

👉 winchester.gov.uk/housing/contact-housing

👉 [Housing Service Standards Leaflet](#)

If you have any particular needs which affect how you are able to use or be involved in our services or how you would like to

receive information, for example, translation, interpreters, Braille, audio tape, large print, sign language, please contact the Customer Service Centre on 01962 848 400 or by email customerservice@winchester.gov.uk

We will treat any information you give us about your personal circumstances confidentially and sensitively. Please tell us if you have difficulties because we can arrange appropriate support for you.



COMPLAINTS

We operate a proactive and positive approach to complaints, using them as valuable customer feedback and as a means of identifying areas in need of review or improvement. In all cases, we are committed to resolving complaints effectively and within our defined targets.

How to raise a stage one complaint

You may have tried to resolve an issue with an officer or via the standard repairs feedback process unsuccessfully and now you're wanting to make a formal complaint.

To raise a formal complaint: fill in the on-line complaints form at

👉 winchester.gov.uk/complaints

- Contact the Customer Service Centre for a printed copy on 01962 840 222
- Directly to an officer of the council
- Via social media - Facebook and Twitter
- In writing to Winchester City Council, Colebrook Street, Winchester, Hants, SO23 9LJ

COMPLAINTS - continued

As a council, we are members of The Housing Ombudsman – an independent public body that looks impartially at complaints within the social housing sector to ensure correct procedures are followed. You can also contact The Housing Ombudsman directly for assistance on making a complaint, or if you're not happy with the way we are handling your complaint. Visit www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/ for more details and advice


Further details on complaints can be found at

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/complaints

DATA PROTECTION


We keep records about our service users which includes personal and sensitive information. Information about the types of data we hold and why, and your rights to access this can be found on our website.

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/council-housing-tenants/data-protection

 winchester.gov.uk/strategies-and-policies/data-protection-privacy

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The council's Access to Information policy is available on our website.

 winchester.gov.uk/about/foi/freedominformation-act

YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLOR

If you would like to contact your local councillor their details are available on our website.

 <https://democracy.winchester.gov.uk>

PRIVACY NOTICE – WHAT WE DO WITH YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

Under **Data Protection laws**, Winchester City Council is required to let you know how and why the personal information that you have provided is used. It is mainly used to enable us to manage your tenancy which will include for example, carrying out repairs to your home, recording rent payments, and calculating Housing Benefit. We may also contact you to ask for your views on how to improve our services and policies.

Your information may also be used for the following purposes:

Equality monitoring - we aim to treat everyone fairly and equally. Any information you provide will help us to monitor the delivery of services effectively, and make improvements.


Exceptional circumstances - in certain circumstances the law allows us to share some information with third parties, even if you have not given consent. For example, in a life or death situation or in order to safeguard the welfare of vulnerable children or adults.

Prevention and detection of crime, including fraud - we may use information you have provided for the prevention and detection of fraud and in doing so will share your information with others.

Other departments of the council - sometimes information will be shared with other parts of the council. For example information may be given to Electoral Registration Services, council Tax and Benefits.

Partner organisations - Information will be shared with organisations that provide services on behalf of the council - this will include, for example contractors who carry out repairs to your home.

If you want to know more about the rights that you have under Data Protection laws please see our website here:

 winchester.gov.uk/strategies-and-policies/data-protection-privacy



MY WINCHESTER TENANCY ONLINE PORTAL

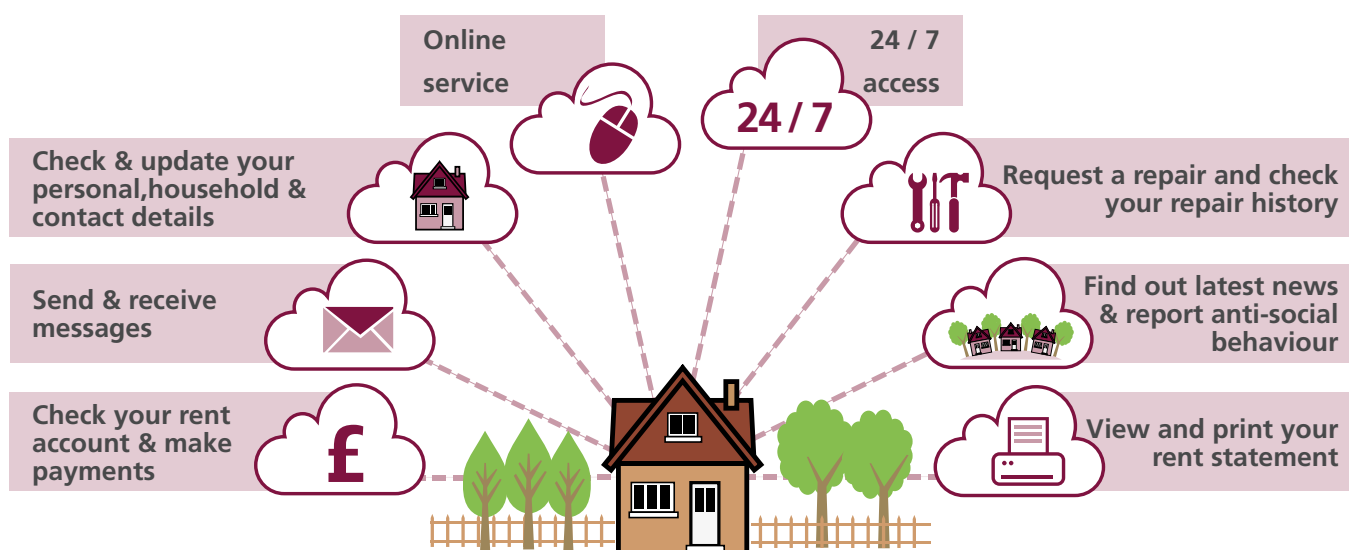
We encourage all tenants to register on the My Winchester Tenancy online portal. The portal is a convenient and simple way for you to contact us and manage your tenancy.

New users will need to register, we will then verify your details and send you a verification code allowing you to access your account.

The benefits of registering include:

- Check your rent account and print your own rent statement
- Pay your rent
- Check and update your personal, household and contact details
- Request a non urgent repair and check your repair history
- Send and receive messages
- Report anti-social behaviour

 winchester.gov.uk/mywinchestertenancy



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YOUR TENANCY

YOUR INTRODUCTORY TENANCY

You will be given an introductory tenancy unless you are an existing secure or assured tenant with a local authority or another social landlord.

An introductory tenancy will usually last for 12 months and you will then automatically become a secure tenant. However, if you have breached the terms of your tenancy during this period we can:

- Serve a Notice on you to extend the introductory period; and/or
- Serve a Notice Requiring Possession on you; and
- Start court proceedings against you

If you continue to breach your tenancy conditions and we take you to court the judge has no discretion and will give us possession of the property. You may not subsequently be eligible for re-housing by us or any other registered social landlord.

An introductory tenant has fewer rights than a secure tenant:

- No right to mutual exchange
- No right to buy (although time as an introductory tenant counts towards the discount)
- No right to take in lodgers
- No right to improve the home
- No right to vote in a stock transfer

You will gain these rights when you become a secure tenant. Full details of your rights under the Tenants' Charter can be found in your Tenancy Conditions.

YOUR SECURE TENANCY

You will be given a secure tenancy if you are an existing tenant of Winchester City Council, another local authority or an assured tenant of another social landlord and you move within our homes.

i **The rights and obligations of secure tenants are laid down in the Housing Act 1985, the Tenants' Charter and your tenancy conditions.**

YOUR TENANCY CONDITIONS

Your tenancy conditions are a legal contract between you, the tenant, and us, your landlord, and set out the rights and responsibilities of both parties. Please refer to your original tenancy conditions issued to you when you signed up for your tenancy and any subsequent revisions that may have been issued to you.

[Introductory Conditions](#)

[Secure Tenancy Conditions](#)



POSSESSION ACTION

We can take action against you if any of the tenancy conditions have been breached. We must serve on you a Notice in statutory form if we intend to take possession proceedings against you for breaching your tenancy conditions. The Notice will be served on you in person, leaving it at your property or last known address, or sending it by first class or registered post.

We must explain the reasons why we are taking this action and you will usually have four weeks to put things right. Your Tenancy Housing Officer will monitor the situation during this period and offer you the appropriate advice.

We will not take any further action against you if the situation is resolved. However, the Notice is valid for a year and we can take action against you at any time over the following twelve months if you do not comply with your tenancy conditions.

The judge will decide whether it is reasonable to give us possession of your home if we take you to court. We will seek to obtain a warrant to evict you if the judge gives us possession of your home and you do not leave by the required date. The judge will decide if our request is reasonable and if so we will instruct a bailiff to evict you.

You have the right to defend your actions in court, either personally or through a representative. We strongly advise you to seek independent legal advice from either a solicitor or the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). The Winchester CAB website address is:

 citizensadvice.org.uk/winchester-district

CAN WE CHANGE THE TENANCY CONDITIONS?

citizens
advice

We can change your tenancy conditions, but we will give you notice of this and consult you on the proposed changes.

You will receive a Preliminary Notice explaining the changes and inviting you to comment by a particular date.

We will consider your comments and will send you a Notice of Variation setting out the changes at least four weeks before the new tenancy conditions come into force.

You may give us notice to end your tenancy if you do not wish to accept the changes.



YOUR RIGHTS AS A TENANT


As a secure council tenant you have a number of important rights. Some of these rights do not apply to introductory tenants. See page 14 for your excluded rights.

HOME OWNERSHIP

Most secure tenants have the right to buy their council home under Part V of the Housing Act 1985.

Your property will be valued at the market price by the council's Estates section and you will have to make your own financial arrangements to buy it. You are entitled to a discount when you buy your home, depending on how long you have been a tenant.

Some homes do not qualify under the right to buy. These include older people's supported housing and accommodation where adaptations for people with disabilities have been made.

 For an information pack and application form please contact our Home Ownership team on 01962 848 400 (option 6).



RIGHT OF SUCCESSION


When a secure tenant dies the tenancy may be passed on. This is called a succession and only one succession is allowed. Therefore, if you have succeeded to the tenancy it can not be passed on to another family member when you die.


You can succeed to a tenancy if you are:

- A spouse or partner
- Another family member (as defined in the Housing Act 1985), who has lived with the tenant for at least twelve months before the tenant's death if your tenancy began prior to April 2013

Where there is more than one person entitled to succeed and qualifying successors can not agree who takes over the tenancy then we will make the final decision.

We will not ask the spouse or partner of a deceased tenant to move. However, we will offer you alternative accommodation if you have succeeded to a tenancy and you are not the spouse or partner of the deceased tenant and the accommodation is too big for your needs. We will obtain a court order if you refuse to move.

 For further advice please contact the Housing Tenancy team.

 [Succession Policy](#)

See [page 18](#) for information on how to end the tenancy when the tenant has died.

RIGHT OF ASSIGNMENT

You may assign or pass on your tenancy to someone else if you:

- Are the sole tenant, you have not succeeded to the tenancy and can assign it to a qualifying successor
- Obtain a property transfer order through the court
- Exchange with another tenant


You have the statutory right to exchange your home with tenants of other local authorities or registered social landlords. You will need approval from the council and the other landlord before exchanging properties.

i **More information on exchanging properties can be found on [page 76](#)**

CAN SOMEONE ELSE JOIN MY TENANCY?

We will not add other people to your tenancy after your tenancy has commenced. Spouses and partners have rights under the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 and the Family Law Act 1996 if you die or your relationship breaks down.

i **For further advice please contact the Housing Tenancy team or seek your own independent legal advice.**

 [Joint to Sole Policy](#)

RIGHT TO TAKE IN LODGERS AND SUB-LET

You can take in lodgers but you should contact the Housing Tenancy team first for permission. You must not allow your property to become overcrowded.

You may be able to sub-let part of your home, but you will need our permission first. If you sub-let your entire home you will lose your security of tenure and we will apply for possession of your home.

You must inform the council Tax section as well as the Housing Benefits section if you receive Housing Benefit or Universal Credit and you take in a lodger or sub-let your home.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HAVING A LODGER AND SUB-LETTING?

A lodger shares the house with you. They will pay you for food and upkeep. A sub-tenant has part of the house solely for their own use and you need their permission to enter the rooms they occupy.

i **For further advice on taking in lodgers or sub-letting please contact the Housing Tenancy team.**

RIGHT TO MANAGE

Tenants have the collective right to transfer the management of an estate or group of homes to a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO). TMO's are formed when certain conditions are met and you vote in favour of the arrangement. This is known as the right to manage.

i For further information please contact the Tenant Involvement team.


RIGHT TO CONSULTATION

We have obligations under the Housing Act 1985 for informing and consulting you on housing management and maintenance functions and on any proposals to improve your estate. We must give you the chance to comment before we make any major policy changes or modernisation programmes. How the consultation is carried out will depend upon the number of tenants directly affected.

i For further information please contact the Tenant Involvement team.

RIGHT TO INFORMATION

We publish an annual housing report which provides information on how we are performing in key service areas for all our tenants.

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/council-housing-tenants/publications

RIGHT TO REPAIR

You can get certain urgent repairs which affect your health, safety or security done quickly at no cost to you. If the repair is covered by the Right to Repair and we do not complete the repairs on time you may ask for an alternative contractor to be appointed. If the alternative contractor also fails to complete on time you may be entitled to compensation. See pages 56 and 57 for details of time-scales for repairs.

RIGHT TO CARRY OUT IMPROVEMENTS

You may, subject to gaining all necessary approvals, carry out improvements to your property. See pages 26 and 27 for advice on how to get permission for improvements.

RIGHT TO COMPENSATION FOR IMPROVEMENTS

You may be able to receive compensation from the council for certain specified improvements you have made to your home when you end your tenancy. This is subject to you having gained all the necessary approvals at the time. See page 77 for details of specified improvements and for details about applying for compensation.



NEW TENANT VISITS

As a new tenant you will be visited by a Tenancy Housing Officer and a Property Surveyor in the first six weeks to check you have settled in to your new home and to discuss any issues you may have. If your property is located in a block of flats you may also receive a visit from a Neighbourhood Services Officer. This is to advise you of the work we do in managing our blocks of flats, including our Health & Safety checks and advice for you about your responsibilities in respect of using the communal areas. Tenants living in Sheltered or Extra Care Accommodation will also receive a visit from a Sheltered Housing Officer see [page 60](#) for further details.

If you are an introductory tenant you will also be visited again by a Tenancy Housing Officer around 9 months into your tenancy. We will check you are complying with your tenancy conditions and decide if you will become a secure tenant at the end of the introductory period.

LIFELINE

Lifeline is an alarm system which enables you to call for help in an emergency. Lifeline operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Any tenant can request a Lifeline be fitted in their home. All sheltered accommodation is fitted with a lifeline system.

The system operates over the telephone network. The unit itself contains two parts. The lifeline unit that plugs into the telephone line and a small alarm button, which should be carried all the time when you are at home. The majority of people wear the button as a pendant, although it is possible to wear it on a wrist strap.



TENANCY SUSTAINMENT

The Tenancy Sustainment Team offer services designed to help you, when you need it.

Our service offers non-judgemental advice and support, and we can put you in touch with agencies to provide practical hands-on support.

We can help with a wide range of matters including:

- Dealing with debt
- Applying for benefits
- Budgeting and money management
- Getting food and other essentials if you are in crisis
- Setting up utility providers and settling into a new home
- Job hunting
- Tackling antisocial behaviour or nuisance neighbours
- Reducing loneliness and isolation
- Accessing services to improve physical and/or mental well-being

Winchester City Council supports our tenants who experience Hoarding Disorder to enable you to keep your home in a reasonable condition. We offer specialist support which is non-judgemental and works alongside you, as the tenant, to help manage your possessions.

We are here to help in any way we can and offer support over the phone, video conference, at your home or wherever you feel comfortable.

Please contact us directly by calling 01962 848 060 (ext 6102), email or speak to a housing officer.

tenancysustainment@winchester.gov.uk



For further advice or to apply for the service please call the Housing Tenancy Sustainment team.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY?

You will be asked to provide the names of up to three contacts. This may be a friend, neighbour or relative who consents to us holding their contact details and who are prepared to provide support to you, possibly at anytime during the day or night.


When the alarm button is pressed the unit automatically dials the Community Alarm Centre. When the alarm call is received at the Community Alarm Centre your details are immediately displayed on a screen, together with names, addresses and telephone numbers of your doctor, relatives or friends.


The system is then used as a loud speaking telephone to speak to you and establish the exact nature of the problem and summon the appropriate help. This can range from getting a friend or relative to visit you or calling a doctor or ambulance immediately.

If a person requests a doctor or ambulance, the alarm centre will call one without delay, in addition to calling a third party.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR LIFELINE?

If you would like to apply or require further information please contact the Sheltered Housing team. They can arrange for the system to be demonstrated in your own home without obligation at no charge.

 **Residents living in general needs properties are able to apply for lifeline. You just need a telephone line in your home.**

 [Turn your Phone into a Lifeline leaflet](#)

 [Lifeline Rental Charges leaflet](#)

DEATH OF A TENANT

You should contact the Housing Tenancy team as soon as possible after the death of a tenant. A Tenancy Housing Officer will advise you on what steps you need to take, depending on the tenancy circumstances. You should also inform the Housing Benefits section if the tenant was receiving Housing Benefit as entitlement ceases on death.

JOINT TENANCY

If the deceased was a joint tenant their spouse or partner may have the right to succeed to the tenancy.

SOLE TENANCY

If the deceased was the only occupier of the property the tenancy will need to be terminated by the representative for the deceased. Four weeks' written notice is required to terminate the tenancy and a copy of the tenant's death certificate must also be provided. See [page 73](#) for further details on how to terminate a tenancy.

If there are other people living at the property at the time of the tenant's death they should contact the Housing Tenancy team for advice on whether they have any succession rights.

See [page 14](#) for information on the right of succession.

 [What to do about a Tenancy when a Friend or Relative Dies leaflet](#)

NUISANCE AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Your tenancy conditions state you have agreed to ensure you, members of your family and other residents or visitors to your property do not cause a nuisance and annoyance to neighbours or other residents of your community.

We aim to encourage everyone to have due consideration for all of their neighbours. We will actively defend people's rights to live in their home free from nuisance and harassment.

We will try to resolve nuisance problems without taking court action if possible. Even when legal action is taken, we will continue to talk to the people involved and try to get them to reach an agreement to change their behaviour or settle a dispute.

We offer these services to help you:

- Effective policies and procedures on nuisance and harassment
- The Tenancy Housing Officers are able to deal with serious nuisance and harassment cases
- Access to an independent mediation service (see [page 21](#) for further details)
- Support for witnesses
- A community-based approach to curbing nuisance

NEIGHBOUR DISPUTES

Disputes with neighbours are often caused by misunderstandings and may be sorted out by talking to each other and reaching a compromise.

If you are experiencing a problem with a neighbour your first step should be to approach them yourself. You could also write to your neighbour if this fails to resolve the problem, explaining how their actions are affecting you and politely ask them to change.

You should contact the Housing Tenancy team if the problem continues and explain how you have tried to resolve it. We will discuss with you how best to manage your complaint and may ask you to complete log sheets. Log sheets can be used as evidence in court so you should make a note of all incidents and relevant information.

 [Complaints Log Sheet](#)

For help and advice about completing log sheets please contact the Housing Tenancy team.

HARASSMENT

Harassment is interpreted as any incident where the victim or any other person perceives the incident to be harassment.

You should call the Police and contact the Housing Tenancy Housing team if you experience harassment or witness an act of harassment. All complaints will be treated in confidence and no action will be taken without your consent.

It is a criminal offence to deliberately harass someone and you will also be breaching your tenancy conditions.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse is any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse, (whether that's physical, psychological, coercive control, sexual, financial or emotional) between intimate partners or family members over the age of 16, regardless of gender or sexuality. Domestic abuse impacts people from all walks of life, no matter their age, income, ethnicity, ability or lifestyle, and it can affect everything from an individual's housing, health or education to their ability to live freely and without fear.

If you, or someone you know, are experiencing domestic abuse, make sure to contact the Tenancy Team, who can provide support and advice. All reports will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in confidence.

You can find more info on our website:

 winchester.gov.uk/domestic-abuse

DRUGS


We take a very strong approach over drug abuse and work closely with the Police and local people to tackle the use and selling of illegal drugs. Involvement with illegal drugs could lead to you losing your home.

You should contact the Police and the Housing Tenancy team if you suspect there are drug abuse problems in your neighbourhood.

If you find discarded syringes please contact the council's Customer Services team who will arrange for them to be collected and disposed of safely. Never handle a discarded syringe as they are dangerous.

VANDALISM AND GRAFFITI

Anyone who vandalises or creates graffiti on our property risks losing their home or their family's home.

 We aim to remove racist or obscene graffiti within 24 hours

You should contact the Housing Tenancy team and the Police if you witness vandalism or graffiti and we will take action against those responsible.


NOISE NUISANCE

Noise can cause problems depending on how loud it is, how long it lasts, how often it occurs, when it happens and whether it is high or low pitched. We all make noise that affects others and much of it can be avoided.

People who live in flats will be affected more because noise and vibration travel through walls, floors and ceilings.

Please be considerate to your neighbours and think about whether the noise you are making could cause a nuisance and how you can reduce the impact. Simple measures such as closing doors and windows can reduce noise levels significantly.

 [Nuisance Policy and Procedure](#)

 Please keep any noise to a minimum between 11pm & 7am.

101 SERVICE

The 101 Service is the Hampshire Constabulary 24 hour non-emergency number to report anti-social behaviour or a crime that doesn't need an urgent response. If you need an immediate police response then you should always dial 999.

Winchester City Council's online reporting system can be used to report incidents including:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Noise and light problems
- Abandoned vehicles
- Dumping/Fly-tipping



WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

Generally we only become involved in neighbour disputes if there is a serious nuisance and a clear breach of tenancy conditions. You should try and resolve disputes with your neighbour and only contact the Housing Tenancy team if this has not worked or you feel threatened. We can only take action if there is evidence of persistent nuisance or harassment.

SAFEGUARDING

We involve the Police if the complaint is about a criminal offence or violence and we also involve Social Workers from Hampshire County Council if children or vulnerable adults are involved.

We will always advise you if we are going to contact another party, but we will not reveal your identity if requested.

ASSESSMENT AND MEDIATION

Mediation is often a very effective way of resolving individual neighbour disputes. Any parties involved in a neighbour dispute will be encouraged to consider mediation where it is appropriate. This involves resolving a problem by both parties talking through the issues and agreeing the next steps with the help of an independent trained mediator. With permission and where appropriate, we will refer to mediation at the earliest opportunity. It is not essential for both parties to meet, but it is encouraged as it helps to achieve a successful outcome.

VICTIM SUPPORT

We work in partnership with Victim Support to provide support to tenants affected by anti-social behaviour.

 [Victim Support Flyer](#)



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YOUR HOME

As a tenant you are responsible for a number of things within your home which includes any outside space or garden area which forms part of your tenancy.

GAS AND ELECTRIC COOKERS

You are responsible for providing your own cooker. You must use a qualified electrician to install an electric cooker and a GAS Safe registered gas engineer to install a gas cooker.

You are also responsible for the maintenance of your cooker.

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

We are responsible for the maintenance of electrical equipment installed by us, provided the defect is due to fair wear and tear. We are not responsible for any damage or replacements caused by faulty installation or repair, or faulty equipment or misuse.

RESTRICTED WORK

Any work on the gas supply system or appliances such as a gas cooker in your home must be carried out by a GAS Safe registered engineer. You must obtain a landlord/homeowner gas safety record and send a copy to us.

Any work on the electrical wiring system in your home must be carried out by a NICEIC approved electrician. You must obtain a relevant completion certificate and send a copy to us.

For further advice about undertaking restricted work please contact Property Services.

FLOOR COVERINGS

The use of metal or wooden battens and adhesive to secure carpets or other types of floor covering is discouraged as the floor tiles are often damaged when the carpet is lifted. You are advised that any damage caused to tiles when floor coverings are lifted is your responsibility and you will be recharged for the cost of replacing any tiles. If you are considering laying hard wood or laminate flooring in a flat you are required to seek permission beforehand. Permission will not be granted in flats above ground floor level.

CONTENTS INSURANCE

You are responsible for your furniture, carpets, internal decoration and personal possessions. We strongly advise you to obtain insurance for all risks including fire, flood, frost damage and other hazards.

You are responsible for your belongings and any damage to the property until the date your tenancy legally ends, even if you have already vacated the property.

If you live in a block of flats you are responsible for any potential damage caused within your flat and to neighbouring properties. For example, if you had a leak from a washing machine and the water ran through into the property below you are responsible for all repairs.

There are many policies available in the insurance market. We are unable to recommend any specific insurer or insurance scheme. Insurance is not expensive when you compare it to the cost of replacing your household contents.

CLAIMS AGAINST THE COUNCIL

We will submit any claims you make against us to our insurers who will assess your claim and make a final decision. You will need to put your claim in writing to us with full details about the incident, damage and costs involved. We are unable to comment on any claim still being investigated.

STORAGE OF ITEMS

You must not use or access the loft space and it must be kept clear at all times so we are able to inspect and maintain it when necessary and also to allow adequate insulation to be laid.

You are not permitted to store your personal possessions in non-habitable spaces such as the loft space or outhouse. The loft space should be kept clear so we are able to inspect and maintain it when necessary and also to allow adequate insulation to be laid.

Items in outhouses are stored there at your own risk and the council accepts no responsibility for damage to them following a maintenance issue. We do not guarantee that outhouses are entirely weather-tight as they are not a habitable space.

GARDENS

You are responsible for maintaining your garden if one has been allocated to you with your property. Please note not all of our properties have their own separate garden areas. Many have access to shared communal gardens and how these are maintained and used is explained on [page 31](#).

***i* Please contact the Neighbourhood Services Team if you are unsure whether you have an individual or shared garden.**

If your property has its own separate garden you will be responsible for maintaining everything growing on and within the boundary of your property and includes the boundary hedges, flower beds, trees, shrubs

and lawns, whether or not you planted them. It also includes any hard landscaping, fences, sheds and other permanent features that you have installed.

You should carefully choose plants, trees and hedges and properly manage them so they do not encroach into your neighbours' gardens or public footpaths. Please talk to your neighbours before trimming any hedges or trees on the boundary as it may affect their security and privacy. We would discourage you from removing any trees and hedges, unless they are dead or diseased.

If you are concerned that a tree may be diseased, dangerous or overgrown or if it is interfering with your property please contact the Neighbourhood Services so we can arrange for it be inspected. The council will arrange for any urgent work to be carried out.

RUBBISH IN GARDENS

Rubbish must not be dumped or stored in your garden. It is an eyesore for your neighbours and may also attract vermin which is a health risk. See [page 32 and 33](#) for advice on how to clear bulky items of rubbish.

You will be breaching your tenancy conditions if you do not keep your garden to a reasonable standard. A Tenancy Housing Officer will talk to you about improving the situation but if you fail to carry out the required work we will serve Notice of Seeking (or Requiring) Possession on you. This is the first stage of legal action which could result in you losing your home.




HELP TO MANAGE YOUR GARDEN

You are responsible for managing your garden, including all trees, shrubs and hedges. For advice on how to manage trees, see [page 32](#).

You may be able to get help with basic gardening through a local charity.

You can apply to move house if your garden is becoming a burden. We may be able to offer you a house or flat with a smaller garden or no garden at all. You may qualify for a financial contribution under an incentive scheme if you move from a family home to a property with fewer bedrooms.

 **For further advice about moving house and the incentive scheme see the [Moving House](#) section.**

FENCING

We are responsible for marking the boundaries around your property. We do not have an obligation to provide fencing on the boundaries.

You may be able to replace or put up a new fence, but you must first check who owns the boundary and you need our permission before going ahead with the work.

Fences must be erected on the actual boundary and you must ensure that they do not exceed permitted heights:

- 2m (6ft 6in) at the rear of the property; and
- 1m (3ft 3in) at the front of the property


You are responsible for the cost of supplying and fitting the new fence and for maintaining it. See [page 26](#) for advice on how to get permission.

 [Fencing - Who's Responsibility leaflet](#)

ENCROACHMENT

The actual boundary of your property should be marked by post and wire fencing and you are not permitted to encroach on to the land beyond this.

In some circumstances it may be possible for you to use a piece of land next to your property. You will need to tell us why you want to use the land. If we agree to your request we will issue you with a lease to use the land and you will be charged an annual fee. We have the right to terminate this at any time.

 **Please contact the Housing Tenancy team for more information.**

NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT

For advice on the following matters please follow the link to [Your Neighbourhood](#):

- Neighbourhood management functions – managing blocks of flats, cleaning, grounds maintenance
- Rubbish disposal
- Parking and vehicles on estates
- Bonfires
- Pest control
- Estate Improvements

REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM US

You are required to seek permission from the Housing Tenancy team in the following circumstances. Failure to do so may affect your tenancy.

HOME IMPROVEMENTS AND ALTERATIONS


You must apply in writing if you would like to alter or improve your property or garden in any way. Proper plans will need to be drawn up by a builder or architect if the work involves altering the structure of the building.

Some alterations and improvements may need planning permission and building regulations approval. You must not start work before you have been granted all the relevant permissions.




Examples of alterations or improvements include:

- Alterations to the structure such as removing an internal wall or removing a fireplace
- Improvements such as replacing the kitchen units and bathroom suite, installing a shower or erecting a conservatory
- Installing laminate flooring
- Erecting a shed or garage
- Erecting an aviary
- Erecting or replacing fencing
- Installing a hard standing and dropped kerb
- Erecting a satellite dish or television aerial
- Removal of trees – some trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders

 winchester.gov.uk/alterations-permissions

At the end of your tenancy you must remove any structures or improvements where we have not granted you permission for them to remain. If you do not do this we may charge you for the cost of removing them. See [page 53](#) for further examples of structural works that require our permission.

 winchester.gov.uk/alterations-permissions

PETS

We will consider requests for you to keep dogs, cats and small caged and tanked pets and will make a decision based on:

- Type of property - if you live in a flat with a shared entrance and garden it may be unsuitable for a dog
- Size of the property and garden
- Number of pets and nature and size of pets

If we give you permission you will be responsible for ensuring your pet does not cause a nuisance. We can withdraw permission for you to keep a pet if it causes a nuisance or annoyance to your neighbours and you will be expected to find a new home for your pet immediately.

 [Keeping Pets in your council Home leaflet](#)

RUNNING A BUSINESS

You may request permission to run a business from your home. We will need full details about the nature of the business and the hours you will work. We will consider your request carefully and assess the likely impact on your neighbours.

You may need planning permission to run a business from your council property. Advice and application forms are available from the Planning pages of our website.


 winchester.gov.uk/planning

TELEVISION AERIALS

If you live in a block of flats with a communal aerial system you will be able to receive a digital television service. You will pay a small weekly charge for this service.

You will need to provide your own TV aerial if you live in a house, maisonette or bungalow and some flats.

You must request permission from the Housing Tenancy team if you would like to erect an outside aerial or satellite dish, otherwise you may be asked to remove it. You may also need planning permission for a satellite dish.

 winchester.gov.uk/planning

You will also have to pay for a television licence. Please refer to [page 64](#) for advice on TV licenses in sheltered housing schemes.

AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

The council can install adaptations for elderly or tenants with a disability so people can continue to live as independently as possible. These adaptations should be both 'necessary' and 'reasonably practical' in terms of your needs and the suitability of the property.

We operate a 'fast track' referral system for residents who are able to identify their own needs. You avoid waiting to be assessed by an Occupational Therapist and can have simple adaptations to prevent slips, trips and falls, including:

- Grab rails in various locations throughout a property
- Additional internal banister rails
- Additional external handrails
- Lever taps
- Key Safe
- Banister Rails
- Newell Rails
- Internal Door Thresholds
- Reposition Door Handle
- Kitchen cupboard handles



- Door and wall protectors
- Altering sockets and light switches
- Door Intercoms
- Paint nosing's on steps and stairs
- Provision of external lighting
- Provision of lighting in principle rooms
- Flashing/ loud doorbells
- Smoke Alarm Alerts


Your doctor, care worker or anyone concerned with your welfare can refer you through the 'fast track' scheme. For more information contact the Customer Service Centre.

Requests for complex adaptations and equipment must be referred through OT Direct and you will be assessed by an Occupational Therapist. Contact OT Direct on 0300 555 1378 for more information.

More expensive work will be subject to a financial means test and you may be asked to make a contribution.

Once the work is approved, we will appoint a suitably qualified contractor. The time-scale for completing the work depends on the complexity, the cost and the availability of contractors.

 **Further details can be found in our leaflet, 'Help for Disabled Council Tenants'.**

 [Help for Disabled Council Tenants with Adaptations and other Works leaflet](#)

Please refer to [page 29](#) and [66](#) for advice on mobility scooters.

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YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT

The Neighbourhood Services team is responsible for the day to day management of communal areas in our blocks of flats, maintaining a safe and clean environment in buildings and surrounding grounds by undertaking regular checks and observations. The duties we undertake include:

- Undertaking regular Health & Safety inspections in and around blocks of flats to ensure the communal areas are safe, reporting repairs and making sure defects are put right promptly
- Speaking to residents who leave items in communal areas and working to achieve clear communal areas, both inside and outside blocks of flats
- Checking bin areas to make sure residents are disposing of their rubbish properly
- Making sure that cars are being parked considerately and are not on grass verges or blocking access routes for emergency vehicles
- Reporting environmental problems such as fly tipping, vandalism and abandoned cars
- Monitoring the standard of cleaning and grounds maintenance, raising any performance issues with our appointed contractors
- Looking for ways to improve our estates

Details of all the communal areas we visit and how often we are there are available on our website.

 winchester.gov.uk/estate-services

Please contact the Neighbourhood Services team if there are any problems in your neighbourhood that we can help with.

The Neighbourhood Services Officers also undertake inspections of our Housing open spaces and garage sites on our estates. If we find any problems or issues we will investigate them and take the appropriate action.

CLEANING

We are responsible for monitoring cleaning of the communal areas in all blocks of flats throughout the district including general needs flats, sheltered schemes and temporary accommodation. This cleaning is carried out by the council's appointed contractor on a scheduled basis. Your block will also receive a more intensive clean every 3 months, which also includes glazing to communal areas. The details and summary of what work you can expect are noted on the sheets in the notice board in your block. At sheltered housing sites the cleaning also includes the common room, landings, lift and communal kitchen and toilets. You pay a charge for this service through your rent.

MANAGING COMMUNAL AREAS

Communal areas of flats should always be kept clear of any rubbish and personal belongings to ensure staff and contractors are able to work in these areas unhindered. Corridors and landings are also important escape routes so should be kept clear in case of emergency.

Items such as bicycles, pushchairs, wheelchairs, mobility scooters, electrical appliances, rubbish bags, furniture, pictures and children's toys should all be stored inside your flat to comply with your responsibilities under the Tenancy Agreement.

MOBILITY SCOOTERS

Mobility scooters must not be stored or charged in communal areas of blocks of flats. If you live in a flat and are considering obtaining a mobility scooter please contact the Housing Tenancy team beforehand to apply for permission and discuss what options may be available for storing and charging your mobility scooter.

FIRE SAFETY

Minimising the risk of fire within your home and, if you live in a flat, in a communal area is everyone's responsibility. Neighbourhood Services Officers regularly inspect communal areas of blocks of flats to identify and deal with anything that may present a fire risk. The council carries out regular Fire Risk Assessments in blocks of flats to assess whether communal areas meet the requirements of Fire Safety law. Tenants and leaseholders also have responsibilities to take steps to ensure the risk of fire is minimised, but you also need to know what to do in the event of a fire.

More information on what to do in the event of a fire is available on the WCC Housing Fire Safety Web page as well as information for disabled tenants. Link below:

 [Fire Safety](#)

There are some measures you can take within your home to stay safe:

- If the door to your home is a fire rated door, you must not tamper with it in anyway. That includes removing the self-closing device. If you do and a fire incident occurs that causes injury to residents you may be held responsible.
- You should have at least one smoke detector in your home. We recommend you test the smoke detector/s at least once a week and if necessary report any issues to the council. If the smoke detector is battery operated, a new battery will be fitted as part of the standard annual servicing checks.

In the kitchen:

- Don't leave cooking unattended
- Make sure you switch off the oven or hob when you have finished cooking
- Spark devices are safer than matches or lighters to light gas cookers
- Keep electrical leads, tea towels and cloths away from the oven and hob
- Take care when wearing loose clothing; it can easily catch fire

If using candles in your home:

- Place them on heat-resistant surfaces; tea-lights can melt plastic such as TVs and baths
- Place them away from materials that could catch fire such as curtains, clothing, furniture and hair
- Keep out of reach of pets and children
- Never leave candles or tea-lights unattended; always extinguish them when leaving the room or going to bed

In general:

- Do not remove internal walls within your home or carry out any other structural work. Any alterations must be agreed in advance by the Housing Property Services Team
- Make sure all equipment and appliances are in good working order. Make sure second hand electrical appliances are tested for electrical safety before you use them
- Do not overload electric sockets
- Electrical extension leads should be kept to a minimum. Ensure you do not overload the extension lead by exceeding the stated maximum current
- Unplug electrical equipment that is not being used
- Always guard open or radiant fires
- Do not use Liquid Propane Gas or paraffin heaters in flats or maisonettes. These can easily be knocked over and start a fire
- Do not store gas cylinders or paraffin inside your house or bungalow
- Never throw water on an electrical appliance or burning oil for example a chip pan fire
- Avoid storing flammable material that could be a fire risk
- Don't allow rubbish to accumulate anywhere in or around your home including communal areas and gardens
- Keep communal landings, corridors and stairwells clear of items at all times so your exit route is not obstructed in the event of an emergency
- Ensure doorways and corridors within your home are kept clear so your escape route is not obstructed

- Don't prop open fire doors; when closed these will prevent the spread of fire
- Close doors at night within your home. If a fire breaks out this will help to prevent it spreading

i **Further advice on fire safety within the home and details of National Fire Safety guidance for home can be found at:**

 gov.uk/firekills

Winchester City Council recommend that you visit Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue (HIWFRS) website for fire safety advice.

This site also guides you on how to prepare what to do if there was a fire in your home. HIWFRS offer Safe and Well visits to your home to households that qualify. Safe and

Plan your escape route out of your home now. Don't wait until an emergency arises.

How to raise concerns

If you have a concern about fire safety in your block please contact Neighbourhood Services Team
01962 848 400

Well is a Home Fire Safety visit that's tailored to an individual's needs, relating to their health and lifestyle choices. Check the site to see if you are entitled to visit.

 hantsfire.gov.uk/safety/home-safe-home/

Plus You can report Fire safety concerns through

 [My Council Services](#)

You don't need an account you can report concerns using the guest option at the bottom left.

The online tool can be used by a tenant, leaseholder, sublet tenant of a council leaseholder, tenant of a private landlord to report concerns they may have about the council's approach to fire safety management.

Fire safety concerns are when existing fire

safety measures/features are working/present as expected but there are concerns regarding the standard applied, specification, materials used or lack of provision, approach taken.

Faults and repairs to existing systems should be reported through the usual repairs channel.

LIQUID PETROLEUM GAS (LPG) AND PARAFFIN HEATERS

You must not use or store LPG and paraffin heaters in flats or maisonettes. They should be stored in a shed or outhouse away from the building. Gas leaks from the canisters can pose a serious fire risk and cause damage to you and your neighbours, as well as to the property.

BARBECUES AND PATIO HEATERS

You must take care when using barbecues and patio heaters for your own safety. Do not place them near your property, any outbuildings, fences or plants and shrubs, to prevent a fire from starting or spreading. If you live in a flat with a balcony a barbecue and patio heater is prohibited.

COMMUNAL GARDENS

Many of our flats have gardens which are shared for all residents to enjoy. The council's appointed contractor will maintain the grounds on a scheduled basis. Whilst we encourage you to enjoy your garden, please ensure that any items, such as garden furniture and children's play equipment, are removed from the garden area at the end of the day and not left out. You are also not permitted to build any structures, such as decking or patio areas, or erect large items of play equipment including trampolines, swings, hot tubs and swimming pools/paddling pools, in the shared garden. This is so we can ensure the gardens are safe for all residents. We welcome your suggestions for improving your gardens. Please contact the Neighbourhood Services team if you have any ideas for improving the shared gardens or if you are unsure whether your flat has a shared or individual garden area.

SECURITY

If you have a door entry system on your block of flats please ensure the door is always closed securely and not propped open so as not to compromise security for everyone living in the block.

REPAIRS

Any defects to communal areas, for example, faults to the communal door, lights, door entry system, should be reported to the council as soon as possible. See [page 55](#) for details on how you can report a repair.

SMOKING

It is an offence to smoke in council buildings and communal areas of flats as well as other public places. You may smoke in your own house or flat.



GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

The council has an appointed contractor for maintaining the grounds on our housing estates and the gardens at all our blocks of flats. The contractor regularly mows the grass, cuts back hedges and maintains shrubs and flower beds. Paths, drying areas and garages are also sprayed regularly to control weeds and moss.

During the autumn months fallen leaves are also collected from sheltered housing schemes and garage areas. Paths at sheltered housing schemes are also gritted during icy weather.

TREES

You are responsible for managing the trees growing in your garden. If you notice a tree, either in your garden or on open space, which is diseased, dangerous or overgrown please report it to the Neighbourhood Services team who will arrange for the tree to be inspected and for necessary work to be carried out. If any work needs to be carried out for Health & Safety reasons for example, if there is a

broken limb or the tree is interfering with the property structure, we will arrange for this at no cost to you. However you may be charged for all or some of the cost if any necessary work is as a result of your actions.

Trees are an important feature and will only be cut down or trimmed if necessary, for example, if a tree is diseased or causing damage to structures or paths. A healthy tree will not be cut down or trimmed if branches are overhanging or blocking sunlight.

Some trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders because they are in a Conservation Area. It may be a criminal offence to lop or cut down trees without consent.

i For further advice on how to manage trees in your garden please contact the Neighbourhood Services team.

RUBBISH DISPOSAL

If you live in a block of flats with communal (shared) bins you should place your rubbish bags inside the large collection bins. Do not leave them near the bins or on communal landings and walkways or in the gardens. Only rubbish placed in the bins will be collected. Rubbish bags left beside bins or outside can attract dogs, cats, rats and other pests which in turn create a health risk.

We operate a scheduled bin collection service for household waste and recyclables including garden waste and glass. Please ensure you use these correctly and recycle your waste where you can. There are stickers on the bins to advise you what can and can not be recycled.

 winchester.gov.uk/waste-recycling

If you have an individual wheeled bin you should place it at the edge of your boundary nearest the street by 7.00am on your collection day to ensure it can be emptied. The wheeled bin should not be left out except on the day of collection and should never block footpaths or roads.

RUBBISH DISPOSAL - continued

Please do not leave large bulky items anywhere in your block of flats (including the bin area) or your garden or the wider estate. See [page 33](#) for advice on how to dispose of bulky waste items.

i **Help is available if you are disabled or elderly and have difficulty in putting your bins out for collection. Please contact the council's Contracts Management team on 01962 840 222 for further information.**

The link below takes you to the councils Waste & Recycling pages which provide information on:


- Household refuse, recycling and garden waste collections including details of your collection day
- Household Waste Recycling Centres - where you can dispose of unwanted household items including bulky items
- Local recycling banks across the district including glass & textiles
- Collection of bulky waste items
- Clinical waste disposal
- How to report a missed bin collection
- How to report fly-tipping

 winchester.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/

BONFIRES

Bonfires can cause a nuisance and we have the power under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to take action against those responsible for causing a nuisance.

Smoke from bonfires can be very irritating and can cause distress to those exposed to it. Please follow the link below to advice regarding bonfires which includes the relevant legislation and guidelines for having a bonfire.

 [winchester.gov.uk/environment/other-
nuisance/bonfires/](http://winchester.gov.uk/environment/other-nuisance/bonfires/)

PEST CONTROL

The council offers a pest control service to treat pests such as rats and wasps, although in some instances



you may be charged for treatment. You can also contact us for advice on identifying and treating other household pests including fleas, flies, carpet beetles, larder beetles and cockroaches.

If you find a wasp nest or any other infestation in your property or in a communal area please contact the Neighbourhood Services team, who can arrange for a Pest Control Officer to assess the situation and give advice regarding treatment.

PARKING

Car parking on some of our housing estates may be limited so please park considerately. You must only park your car on the public highway, in a designated parking area or a garage. Communal parking areas are generally not designated for specific properties. Please do not park on grass verges, open spaces, garage forecourts and do not block access routes for emergency vehicles.

You may be able to construct a hard standing within the boundary of your property, but you must get our permission first. You must also get permission from Hampshire County Council for a dropped kerb and access across a pavement, where necessary.

i **See [page 26](#) for advice about requesting permission.**

COMMERCIAL VEHICLES AND LORRIES

Tenants are not permitted to park commercial or trade vehicles of 3.5 tonnes and above on our housing estates or the property without our written permission.

CARAVANS, BOATS AND TRAILERS

You will need our permission to keep a caravan, boat or trailer at the property or on the estate. We prefer these to be parked behind the building line either at the side or behind your property.

You will be breaching your tenancy conditions if your vehicles regularly cause an obstruction or create other parking difficulties.

DISABLED PARKING BAYS

You may request a disabled parking bay marked on the road or parking area near your home if you are disabled and have mobility difficulties. Disabled parking bays are not allocated to an individual. They may be used by other people with a disability or mobility difficulty.

***i* Please contact the Neighbourhood Services team if you wish to make a request for a disabled parking bay. We will assess your request to determine if it is feasible or suggest an alternative position for it. We will not take down trees to facilitate this.**



ABANDONED AND UNTAXED VEHICLES

Abandoned vehicles are an eyesore and can present a very real risk of harm. You are not allowed to keep illegal, untaxed or un-roadworthy vehicles at your property or on the estate unless you have permission from us to do so.

We will make investigations to determine who the registered keeper is and will make contact to discuss arrangements for the vehicles to be removed. If we make arrangements to remove and dispose of any abandoned vehicles we will charge the registered keeper for any costs incurred.

You are required by law to either tax or obtain a Statutory Off-Road Notification (SORN) from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) for a vehicle temporarily 'off the road' and untaxed. It is against the law to keep an untaxed vehicle or one with a SORN on the public highway. You will need to get permission from us to keep a vehicle with a SORN notice on housing land. Please contact the Neighbourhood Services team before applying for your SORN. For further advice regarding SORN you can contact your local Post Office or the DVLA via their website.

 [dvla.gov.uk](https://www.dvla.gov.uk)

***i* You should report abandoned vehicles to the council using the Your Winchester online app. We will not disclose the source of the complaint when investigating the matter.**

 [Your Winchester online app](#)

VEHICLE REPAIRS

You may carry out minor repairs to your own car in car parks on our estates such as changing a tyre or replacing the battery providing this does not cause a nuisance to your neighbours. Tenants are not permitted to run a car repair business from our estates.

GARAGES

The council has garages available to rent. Details of the location of our garages and the prices for renting are available on the council's website.

If you wish to rent a garage please complete an application form on the council's website or contact the Empty Property team. Depending on demand you may have to wait until a garage becomes available. We give priority to those who live nearest the garage. However we will allocate garages to people who live further away if we can.

Garages should be used for the storage of a motor vehicle and personal belongings and not for any other purpose. Combustible or harmful materials must not be kept in the garage. For further details about the terms of renting a garage please contact the Empty Property team or view the terms and conditions via the link below.


 winchester.gov.uk/housing/garages-applications/

ESTATE IMPROVEMENTS

The Neighbourhood Services team is also responsible for the Estate Improvement Programme which aims to deliver improvements to blocks of flats and the wider housing estate.

We want you to Love Where You Live and would encourage you to think about how we could improve the area where you live.

Improvements can include creation of improved communal garden space, installation of a door entry system, improved lighting and additional parking. If you have an idea to enhance where you live we can support a group of residents to create improved communal spaces for you.

 **Please contact the Neighbourhood Services team or complete an application/suggestion form on our website:**

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/council-housing-tenants/estate-improvement



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PAYING YOUR RENT

Rent and charges are due each and every week of the year. You must pay your rent and charges weekly or in advance in accordance with your tenancy conditions.

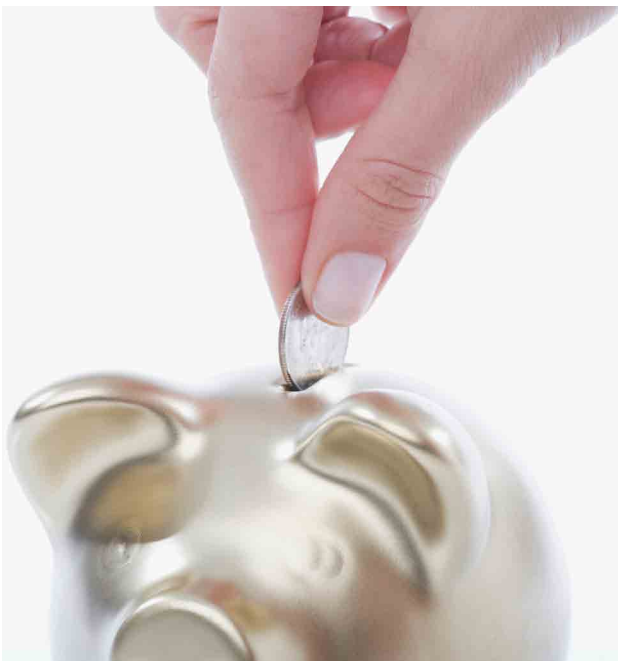
Your rent and charges may include:

- Base rent
- Service charge - for services provided to maintain communal areas of blocks of flats including cleaning, lighting, care-taking, door entry systems, services to tenants living in sheltered housing, including the alarm monitoring service
- Heating charge (in some properties)
- Water/sewerage charge - for rural properties connected to council-maintained sewerage works

Full details of rent and service charges are available via the link below.

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/council-housing-tenants/paying-your-rent

The rent for each new financial year will be effective from the first Monday in April and we will provide 28 days' written notice of any changes to your rent and service/support charges where applicable.




WAYS TO PAY YOUR RENT

We prefer you to pay your rent by Direct Debit and offer a variety of collection dates for your convenience.

To pay by Direct Debit you will need a bank or building society current account. You can set one up straight away by calling the Housing Income Team on 01962 848 205.

We collect Direct Debit payments monthly, either on the 1st, 10th or 20th of the month. Rent is always collected in advance. We will write to you before payments start to confirm the arrangements. We will give you ten days' written notice when rents or service charges change and will amend your direct debit accordingly.


The Direct Debit offers guarantees which gives you protection and ensures you are in control of your money.

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/council-housing-tenants/paying-your-rent

The mandate contains a Direct Debit guarantee which gives you protection and ensures you are in control of your money.

The benefits to you for paying by Direct Debit are:

- No worries about remembering to pay at the right time
- Your bank or building society does all the work and you stay in control
- Saves time
- We re-calculate your payments for rent and charges at the start of each financial year
- You can cancel the arrangement at any time
- An immediate money-back guarantee from the bank or building society if any error is made.

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/council-housing-tenants/paying-your-rent

COUNCIL WEBSITE

You can pay via the e-payments link on our website below. You will need your tenancy reference number and debit card details. We do not accept payment by credit card. Please allow three working days for your payment to reach us.

 winchester.gov.uk/pay

MY WINCHESTER TENANCY

You can make payments through the My Winchester




Tenancy self service portal. My Winchester Tenancy online is available to tenants with an active rent account. To register for My Winchester Tenancy or for more information please see [page 10](#).

 winchester.gov.uk/mywinchestertenancy


AUTOMATED TELEPHONE PAYMENT SYSTEM 01962 848 512

This is an automated 24-hour service and you will be guided through the payment process by helpful prompts. You will need your tenancy reference number and debit card details. We do not accept credit cards.

For alternative ways to pay please:


 winchester.gov.uk/housing/council-housing-tenants/paying-your-rent

Contact the Housing Income team on 01962 848 205 or email: Housing Income@winchester.gov.uk

 Whichever method you chose to pay please remember that it is your responsibility to ensure that the payment reaches us on time.

DEDUCTION FROM BENEFITS

If you are in receipt of a means-tested benefit from the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) and you have rent arrears you may be able to request that deductions are made from your benefits which are paid direct to your rent account. Please contact the Housing Income team for further information.

 You should tell the Housing Income team if you have made a claim for Housing Benefit so we can take this into account should we be considering taking any action against you to recover rent arrears.

CLAIMING BENEFITS

You may qualify for help towards your rent if you receive state benefits or have a low income. Your entitlement will depend on your personal circumstances.

If you are of working age and making a new claim for help to pay your rent you will need to claim Universal Credit. For more information and to make a claim visit:

 www.gov.uk/universal-credit

If you are already claiming Housing Benefit and moving home within the Winchester district you will need to complete a change of circumstances form which is available from the Housing Benefits section or by visiting:

 winchester.gov.uk/benefits

If you need help completing an application form please contact the Housing Benefits section, or the Rent Accounts team.

You will need to provide supporting information with your claim. You can speed up this assessment by providing the information quickly. You should also submit a claim for Universal Credit or Housing Benefit promptly as any delay will result in you losing money.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Universal Credit has replaced the following benefits, now known as legacy benefits:

- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support


If you claim Universal Credit then any housing related payments are paid directly to you monthly in arrears. It is your responsibility to make your full rental payments and to ensure that you pay in advance. You can set up a payment plan to reduce the arrears so that you can move towards paying in advance.

You may find it easier to set up a direct debit to make your rent payments on the day that you receive your Universal Credit payment.

Direct Debits can be collected on the 1st, 10th and 20th of the month. You can also set up a standing order with your bank on any day that you wish or as often as you want. For example you can set up a standing order to make weekly, fortnightly or monthly payments. If you have rent arrears then the Rent Accounts team may apply to Universal Credit to obtain a payment direct from your claim so that your rent is paid first. This can result in 20% of your overall entitlement being sent direct to your rent account to pay your rent arrears. This can be a lot of money so it is best to discuss affordable rent arrears repayment plans with the Rent Accounts team.

For more information about Universal Credit please see:

 www.gov.uk/universal-credit


 If you make a claim for Universal Credit and you anticipate any delays in your payments or you have any concerns contact the Housing Income team.

RENTAL EXCHANGE

Being part of the Rental Exchange gives tenants credit for paying their rent on time.

Winchester City Council share tenants rent charges and payments with Experian, one of the worlds best known credit information providers.

This can help tenants to build their credit report and 'online' proof of identity – increasingly important when applying for goods and services such as a utility supplier, a mobile 'phone provider or when shopping online. For more information about this scheme, including on how to Opt Out, please visit:

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/council-housing-tenants/rentalexchange

YOUR RENT ACCOUNT BALANCE

You can check the balance of your rent account at any time by using the My Winchester Tenancy.

 winchester.gov.uk/mywinchestertenancy

PROBLEMS PAYING YOUR RENT

We understand people can have money problems so if you have difficulty paying your rent you should contact the Housing Income team immediately. Rent arrears can become a serious issue if help is not sought early enough.

We can work out a payment plan with you for an agreed regular amount. If you follow this agreement we will take no further action. We can also advise you of benefits to which you may be entitled.

You can also get independent assistance with debt counselling from the Citizens Advice Winchester District (CA) who have a specialist debt advisor or any other Citizens Advice Bureau (CA). You can contact the CA directly or ask the Rent Accounts team to refer you.

The CA advisor offers a full debt service giving advice on how to manage your debts effectively. They complete a statement of your financial situation including your income and outgoings and use this information to work out what you can afford to pay on a regular basis towards your debts. They may also be able to support you in negotiating with your creditors what you are able to pay.

The CA will also undertake a benefit check with you to ensure that you are receiving all the benefits to which you are entitled.


A CA advisor also attends Winchester and Portsmouth County Courts so if you attend court for a possession hearing an advisor will be able to support you.

 citizensadvice.org.uk/winchester-district

The Housing Income team can offer you basic debt counselling and money advice. However for more complex debt problems, where money is owed to several creditors, they will refer you to the CA or the council's own Tenancy Sustainment Service.

In all cases you should make a realistic agreement to make regular, affordable payments to clear your rent arrears and reduce your debt.

We recognise that there are more difficult times of the year where rent payments are a challenge, for example school summer holidays and Christmas. Not paying rent during these times is unacceptable and paying the rental charge is a priority above birthdays, Christmas and the need to purchase school uniforms. To avoid future problems with rent payments you may wish to over pay each week or month to take a break from paying on a set period. For more information contact the Housing Income team.

 capuk.org/

 <http://winchesterbasicsbank.co.uk>

ACTION FOR RENT ARREARS

We will take action against you for rent arrears in line with our policy which may result in you losing your home if you do not get in touch with us or you fail to pay as agreed.

We will contact you about your rent arrears, but if you fail to pay we will take the following action.

NOTICE SEEKING POSSESSION

We will serve you with a Notice Seeking Possession (or a Notice Requiring Possession if you have an introductory tenancy). This is the beginning of a legal process to repossess your home and to obtain a County Court Judgement to recover the debt.

POSSESSION PROCEEDINGS

We will start court proceedings if you still have arrears on your rent account at the end of the four week Notice period or you are not reducing your arrears by making regular payments. You will be liable for our legal costs.

You will be notified of your court date and we advise you to attend the hearing. We may ask the court to postpone a possession order if you agree to pay a set amount each week to reduce the arrears.

We will apply to the court for a date to take possession of your home if you do not keep to the terms of the court order.

EVICTION PROCEEDINGS

We will apply to the court for a warrant to evict you from your home if you still have arrears on your account after the date fixed by the court. If we obtain a warrant we may consider not evicting you from your home if you pay all outstanding rent arrears and court costs. Any payments made at this stage must be by cash or banker's draft.

We will continue to recover any arrears owed by you if you have been evicted from your home.

INTRODUCTORY TENANTS

Introductory tenants who are taken to court for non-payment of rent will lose their home. The court has no discretion but to give us an immediate order for possession if we have followed our procedures correctly.

HOUSING ADVICE AND HOMELESSNESS

The council and other registered social landlords may not have an obligation to provide you with permanent housing if you are evicted from your home for non-payment of rent, even if you have children. You may be found to be intentionally homeless.

If you are threatened with eviction or have been made homeless you should contact our Housing Options team urgently for advice.



01962 848 163



winchester.gov.uk/housing/rough-sleeper-homelessness/

TRANSFERS AND MUTUAL EXCHANGES

You will be required to clear any outstanding arrears and court costs if you are on the Housing transfer list before you are offered another property. You will also be required to have a clear rent account before moving by mutual exchange.



For more information please see:



winchester.gov.uk/housing/council-housing-tenants/transfers-and-exchanges

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MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS

Winchester City Council has set out to meet and improve upon the Government's Decent Homes standard. Our standard is described in detail in this document and is designed to ensure that you are provided with a Decent Home that is maintained in good condition.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The council undertakes to maintain your home in a safe and reasonably weather-tight condition and, wherever possible, to provide modern facilities over and above those required by the Government's Decent Homes standard. We will:

- Externally inspect your home every 5 years as part of our ongoing stock survey plans
- Ensure your home benefits from a modern kitchen (less than 20 years old)
- Provide you with an efficient and effective heating & hot water system
- Insulate your home to make it more affordable for you to keep warm
- Maintain a safe and secure environment

We will always try to let you know our future plans for your home and make sure you can access this information easily and will always inform you when work is due to start.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Although this handbook sets out service standards, you too have certain obligations. Some repairs are your responsibility and you may be liable to pay for them if we have to complete them on your behalf. We will let you know when this is the case. We have included some of the main ones here.

We will not repair or replace your own structures, fixtures or fittings. The following list gives an idea of some items for which you are responsible:

- Keep the inside of the home clean and in good condition.
- Gardens should be maintained and clear of debris.
- Communal areas should be clean and tidy and free from all personal items.
- Minor repairs should be carried out as should all internal decorations.
- Report repairs quickly to prevent on-going damage.
- Meet the cost of repairs that are listed as being resident's responsibility.
- Provide access for statutory gas and electrical inspections and where applicable chimney sweeping.
- Provide access, in accordance with Tenancy Agreement conditions so that repairs can be undertaken in accordance with priority timescales. the council's contractors will not carry out work where a child under 16 years old is alone at a property.
- Treat the council's property with respect and care, avoiding willful damage and neglect.
- Seek permission to make improvements and maintain those improvements.
- Replace lost keys and/or gain entry if accidentally locked out.
- Replace light bulbs/lamps.
- Repair broken glass to windows and doors if damaged by resident behavior. Residents will need to provide a crime reference number where glass has been broken through criminal activity.
- Clean shower heads and shower curtains.

Continued overleaf

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? - continued

- TV aerials where not on a communal council maintained system.
- Installation and maintenance of own appliances. This includes connection of gas and electric cookers, which must be fitted by an appropriately registered installer. A completion certificate for the work must be forwarded to THE COUNCIL within one week.
- Ventilate and heat the property, cleaning of mould caused by condensation.
- Maintain humidity levels in the home.

AERIALS

If you live in a house, bungalow or flat where there is no communal system you are responsible for the installation and maintenance of aerials and satellite dishes. You will need to ask for permission to have installations carried out, see [page 26](#) for more details.

In some flats and sheltered accommodation there is a communal aerial system and satellite dish, which the council is responsible for maintaining. Should you have any reception faults, you first need to check that your equipment is fully working before you report this to Customer Service Centre. If your neighbours are not experiencing problems, this is a good indication that your appliance needs to be checked over.

If you are unsure whether you have a communal aerial or not please contact the Customer Service Centre who will be able to help you.

ANNUAL GAS SAFETY CHECK AND HEATING APPLIANCE SERVICING

It is essential that we gain access to your home to complete the annual gas service checks and appliance servicing at your home. Failure to do so may result in the council cutting off your gas supply and may put your tenancy at risk.

Please make arrangements for an appropriate adult to be in the property for your appointment. If your allotted appointment is not convenient, please contact the contractor direct to arrange a more suitable time.

The annual service will be carried out in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and will include the following:

- The effectiveness of any flue
- The supply of combustion air
- The operating pressure and/or heat input
- The safe functioning of the appliance
- Smoke alarm check

As part of your Annual Service check, you can expect the engineer to:

- Be in your home for up to 1 hour
- Check your Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Detectors are in good working order and replace battery or unit where necessary
- Label the Heating Appliance and Detectors with a "Passed - Next Service Due" sticker
- Leave you with a completed copy of the Landlord/Homeowner Gas Safety Record (LGSR) or Solid Fuel Safety & Service Record (SFSSR)

You are responsible for ensuring you are not using a heating appliance that you know or suspect to be unsafe.

If your heating system has recently been serviced and you do not have a user manual, or if your last service record is more than twelve months old, please contact the Customer Service Centre.

 **For further information on Appliance Servicing please follow the link:**

 [Annual Service and Maintenance Leaflet](#)

ASBESTOS

Landlords are required to keep an Asbestos Register and let contractors know where asbestos is located. The council is also committed to informing residents where asbestos can be found in their homes and to improving the availability of the relevant information. Should asbestos containing materials be found, we can encapsulate the material, monitor it in-situ, or remove it depending on its condition.

We have an Asbestos Register which records the type and location of any asbestos containing materials. We also employ consultants to carry out surveys at our request, usually on void properties and before any major work is undertaken in your home. If we find any asbestos containing material in poor condition we will arrange to have it removed. We have also produced a resident information leaflet on asbestos. Click on the link below for full details.

 [Asbestos in the Home Leaflet](#)

BATHROOMS

Decent Homes - The standard recommends that your bathroom is replaced every 40 years but only if it is in poor condition and over 40 years old.

The council undertakes to review any issues in your bathroom as they arise. Should any individual sanitary fittings need replacement the work will be ordered and carried out in line with [Responsive Repair](#) Routine Maintenance Priorities.

SHOWERS

Unless there is a current medical need, when an existing shower is found to be faulty it will be decommissioned and pipework capped off. The same will apply when carrying out bathroom replacements. An exception may be made where the installation is satisfactory and the existing or ingoing tenant is prepared to sign to say they adopt the shower and take on all future upkeep at their own expense.

Should you move into a property where there is an existing walk-in shower it will not be removed nor will we provide any alternative bathing arrangements. The property is deemed to be accepted as offered. Permission to make such alterations at your own expense can be requested by contacting the Housing Tenancy team.

[See page 53 for information about Improvements.](#)

BLOCKED GULLIES, SINKS AND WASTES

You should take all reasonable steps to keep all grates, grids, drains and gullies clean and clear (not including gutters that catch water from the roof). You should also take all reasonable steps not to block toilets and sinks. The council will clear blockages if you are unable to do so, but we may recharge you for blockages caused by misuse or neglect.

CENTRAL HEATING

Decent Homes - The standard recommends the boiler is replaced if it is in poor condition and over 15 years old, and 40 years for the radiators and pipework if they are in poor condition.

We will ensure that all boilers more than 15 years old, in poor condition and beyond economic repair will be replaced with a modern equivalent that has an energy efficient A-rating. Radiators and pipework will be replaced if they are old and in poor condition.

If you have a solid fuel heating system, or a secondary appliance or open fire, we will continue to ensure they are serviced each year and are safe to use. However, when repairs are needed, or the installation is condemned, we will remove the appliance and the fire surround and put the chimney beyond use.

If you would like your solid fuel appliance or open fire removed now, please contact the Customer Service Centre.

Old heating will be replaced with a gas fired equivalent or energy efficient high retention electric spare heating, such as 'Quantum'.

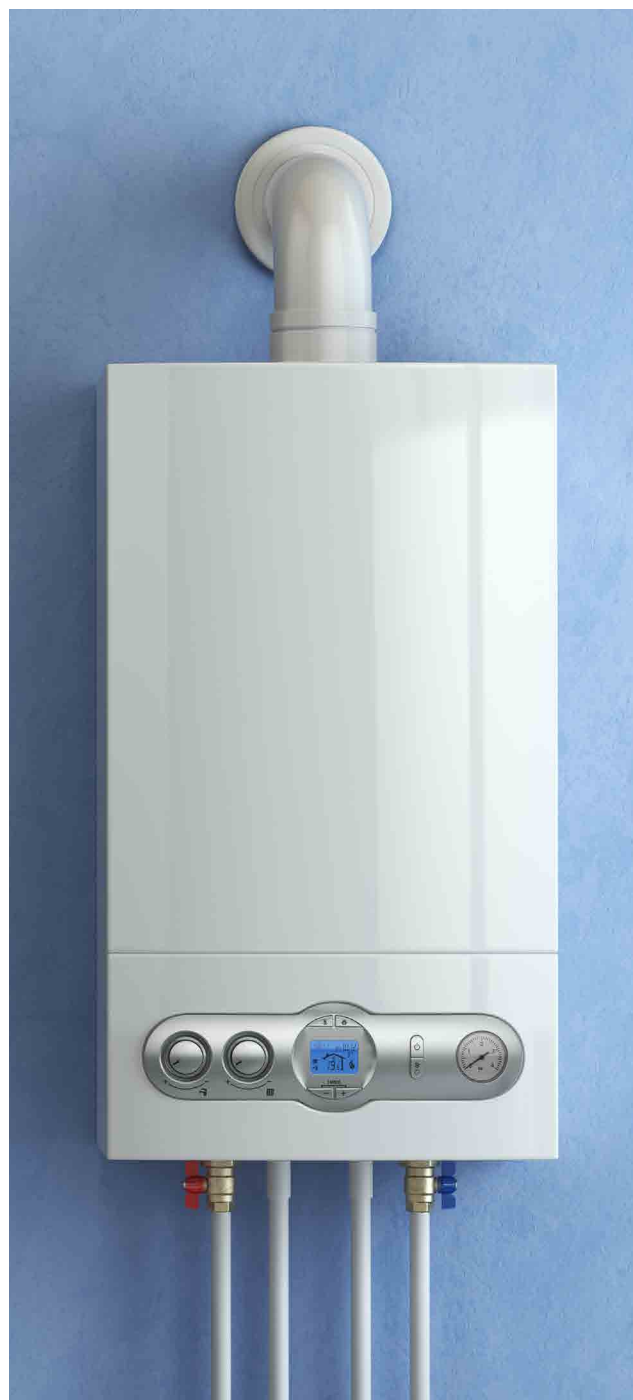
All of our modern systems are equipped with thermostatic controls and programmers that may be adjusted to suit your needs and perform in the most economic manner.

***i* For advice on getting the best out of your heating system and what to do if you are going away in the winter, get in touch with Home Energy Team (HET), see the link below.**

 [Home Energy team](#)

APPLIANCE USER MANUALS

A new User Manual will be issued whenever an appliance is replaced. It provides details of the appliance and how to operate the heating system in your home. It should be kept with the appliance and remain at the property if you transfer or terminate your tenancy. If you do not have a copy of the User Manual for your appliance, we may be able to provide a replacement. Please contact Customer Service Centre for more information.



CHIMNEYS, FIREPLACES AND FLUES

Decent Homes - The standard recommends the chimney is replaced if it is in poor condition and over 50 years old.

Your chimney will be inspected at least once every 5 years as part of the External Property Inspection. If it is found to be in poor condition we may remove it altogether, unless your home is Listed or is in a Conservation Area.

If the chimney is still in use for a solid fuel appliance or open fire we will remove the fire grate and surround and put the chimney beyond use. If the appliance is providing your central heating or hot water, we will install a modern energy efficient gas or electric system, as described on [page 46](#) in the section on 'Central Heating'.

If you have an open fire or solid fuel appliance we will regularly sweep the chimney and service your appliances to ensure they are safe to use. However, if these are condemned at any point, or are in need of repair, we will decommission the installation. If you regularly use a solid fuel appliance or open fire and you suspect the chimney has not been swept, contact the Customer Service Centre.


***i* If you would like your solid fuel appliance or open fire removed now, please contact the Customer Service Centre.**

CONDENSATION, DAMP AND MOULD

It is your responsibility to ventilate and heat the property. It is your responsibility to mop up condensation and clean mould growth caused by condensation.

Decent Homes - If there is an excessive mould problem in your home, it may be flagged up under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System, which forms part of the Decent Homes standard (see [page 52 Health & Safety](#)).

Condensation is a common problem that can occur in any household, often as a result of normal daily activities. There are various steps you can take to reduce this moisture, which are explained in our leaflet.

 [Keep your Home free from Condensation, Damp and Mould Leaflet](#)

We have a video promoted by the Building Research Establishment about Damp and Condensation, which you can view [here](#).

***i* For advice on condensation or energy efficiency, get in touch with Home Energy Team (HET), see the link below.**

 [Home Energy team](#)

Should the condensation, damp or mould be due to any building defect, it will be remedied by us. Extractor fans to your kitchen or bathroom will be fitted and maintained by the council. For further details, please click on the links above.

CUSTOMER CARE AND COMPLAINTS

We would like you to tell us about the service you have received and how it has affected you. Whenever work is completed in your home you will receive a feedback letter. Please take time to complete and return the feedback to us. We value your comments as they help us to improve the service and monitor contractor performance.

As part of the council's on going commitment to providing an excellent repairs service to our tenants we feel it is essential that your feedback (good and bad) about the service that contractors are delivering is reported back to them. Should you find it necessary to make negative comments or complaints about a contractor or the standard of the work, we will pass this on. Contractors are then required to investigate and follow up on these jobs (by personal contact i.e. by phone or visit) to reach a mutually satisfactory resolution.

Once we receive confirmation from the contractor that the issues are remedied, we will write to you seeking further confirmation. Should you in fact disagree, we will investigate further and take steps to ensure that the matter is resolved. At the end of this process, if you should still be unhappy you can make a Formal Complaint. For more information on our complaints policy, please click the link below.

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/complaints

DAMAGE TO PROPERTIES AND RECHARGES

You will be charged to repair any reckless, accidental or wilful damage or neglect to the property or its fixtures and fittings. This includes damage through fire, leaks or excessive cold.

We are not responsible for damage to or loss of your fixtures and fittings, including furniture, carpets, clothing and household

effects. You are advised to take out your own contents insurance policy to cover these risks.

For more information on contents insurance, please see [page 23](#).

COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENT

On occasions when services do not meet our high standards and customers are inconvenienced, you have a right to compensation or reimbursement.

The council will consider a compensation claim when:

- Residents have been severely inconvenienced by the council's actions or inactions.
- Failures in service delivery have caused residents' loss or major inconvenience.
- Failure of the council to follow Housing Management's policies has a detrimental effect on residents.
- Failure by the council to identify the correct issue or carry out repairs in a satisfactory manner, or within agreed timescales, causes the resident inconvenience or loss.
- The council is responsible for the loss of services which it provides to residents' homes.
- The council is responsible for ensuring that tenants have a heating and hot water system in their homes. Tenants can consider claiming compensation if there is an unreasonable delay with restoring defective heating and hot water services.
- There is a loss of amenity (e.g., room) due to damp, leaks, lack of repair or similar.

Tenants will be required to provide evidence of any loss that they incur before a compensation claim can be considered.

 winchester.gov.uk/housing-compensation

DETECTORS - SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE

SMOKE DETECTORS

All of our properties should be fitted with Smoke Detectors and we check these annually as part of your gas boiler or solid fuel service, or as a stand-alone visit if you have electric heating.

If there is no smoke detector fitted in your home contact the Customer Service Centre immediately.

While we will replace batteries at the annual service it is your responsibility to ensure that your smoke detector is fitted with a live battery at all times. Never leave the smoke detector without a live battery and never remove it. This is particularly important in hostels and older peoples supported housing where the detectors may be linked to the main fire alarm system and the Fire Service will be called out.

You should test the smoke detector yourself every week. If it does not work the battery may need replacing. If this does not rectify the problem, contact the Customer Service Centre immediately.

If you report a smoke detector fault this will be treated as urgent and responded to within 24 hours. As part of our ongoing commitment we aim to fit all homes with mains powered smoke detectors with non reusable battery back up. This will be done when the property becomes empty, at a 5 year electrical test or other appropriate opportunity. The units will then be included with 5 year electrical testing cycle.

CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR

A Carbon Monoxide Detector is a safety device used to monitor the levels of harmful carbon monoxide in the air. Carbon monoxide is an odourless, colourless gas produced from burning fossil fuels. If the appliance you are using is not working correctly carbon monoxide may escape into your home. All homes should therefore have a carbon monoxide detector fitted where there is a fossil fuel appliance (gas or solid fuel). If you think you should have one contact the Customer Service Centre.

The carbon monoxide detector will normally be located in the same room as your gas boiler or solid fuel appliance and will be checked annually by the council. Do not attempt to change the battery in your carbon monoxide detector. These are sealed units and the whole unit will be replaced when necessary. The engineer will test and replace your Carbon Monoxide Detector as necessary during appliance servicing.

The carbon monoxide alarm will sound if it detects the possible presence of carbon monoxide in the air. If carbon monoxide is present it could result in serious illness or death from poisoning. You should take the following immediate action:

- Gas appliance - Turn off the appliance, open doors and windows and contact Southern Gas Networks 0800 111 999.
- Solid fuel appliance - Damp down the fire, open doors and windows and contact the Customer Service Centre or out of hours service immediately.

ELECTRICS

Decent Homes - The standard recommends the electrics are replaced if they are in poor condition and over 30 years old.

For your own safety and well-being it is essential that you allow us to access to your home to carry out this vital testing. You are putting yourself and your family at risk if you prevent or delay the testing.

Periodic electrical testing (EICR) will be carried out by a qualified and registered electrician in your home every 5 years to ensure that the circuitry is not defective and that no unauthorised alterations have been made. This testing is in line with UK Standard BS7671. Should any minor defects be identified then these will be rectified during the time that the electrician is conducting the inspection. Should any major defects be identified such as a replacement consumer unit or the property requires re-wiring these will be reported to The Council and works will be incorporated within a planned programme. The works will be completed in a timescale that ensures that there is no risk of harm to you.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

It is your responsibility to select your own electricity supplier and make arrangements for connection and disconnection if you move home. Your supplier is responsible for bringing the supply into the property and for the meter itself. The Home Energy Team (HET), can offer advice on switching supplier:

 [Home Energy team](#)

The council is responsible for the fuseboard or consumer unit and the internal wiring; you are responsible for your own electrical appliances. Make sure you know where and how to turn off the electrical supply in your home. If you are unsure call Customer Service Centre to make arrangements for a member of staff to contact you to confirm the location.

POWER CUTS

Although power cuts are now relatively infrequent and short in duration, you are advised to provide and maintain your own emergency back-up arrangements for heating and lighting. As the council is not responsible for the power supply to your home, if you have any concerns you will need to discuss these with your electricity supplier who may be able to offer advice and support in the event of a power cut.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY/SAP RATING


SAP stands for Standard Assessment Procedure and is the Government's recommended system for calculating the energy efficiency of your home. Properties may be rated from 0, being very inefficient, to 100, being highly efficient. Energy Efficiency Rating bands from A - G are also commonly used, where A is most efficient. If the rating for your home is 'F' or 'G' it may fall below current standards and we would investigate the reasons for this.


A valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is issued at every change of tenancy. We are also able to calculate an approximate score based on what we already know about the dwelling in which you live. By referring to the EPC or calculating this score, we are able to assess whether properties may be in need of work to increase their energy efficiency. If you are invited by us or our appointed contractor to have an assessment carried out at your home you are strongly advised to agree - it may save you money!

Our average score for the housing stock is just above 70 (which equates to a 'C' rating), against a national average of 60. So you can see that our stock is performing above average

The council will ensure that any new elements (e.g. boilers, windows, doors etc.) and loft and cavity insulation meet modern-day standards. Funding these improvements is a high priority and has benefited a great number of tenants.

Solar and Photovoltaic (PV) installations are currently only considered in line with energy requirements for the council's new homes. We will continue to monitor technical advances and changing funding options for solar and PV for the existing housing stock, particularly for the lowest rated properties.

 **For general advice on energy efficiency, or to arrange a visit to your home, please get in touch with Home Energy Team (HET), see the link below.**

 [Home Energy team](#)

EXTERNAL DECORATION

You are not responsible for carrying out your own external decorations, but you may do so at your own expense. You must seek permission from the Housing Tenancy team before starting any work.

We will survey the exterior of your home at least once every five years during the External Property Inspection and carry out repairs and painting as necessary.

EXTERNAL DOORS

Decent Homes - The standard recommends your external door is replaced if it is in poor condition and over 40 years old (30 years for communal entrances to flats).

All external doors will be inspected every 5 years during the External Property Inspection. If found to be in poor condition doors will be replaced with a modern equivalent.

If you wish to replace your own external doors you must first ask the Housing Tenancy team for permission. If you live in a flat or maisonette where your door opens into a communal area it must be a fire rated door in compliance with current Building Regulations.

EXTERNAL PROPERTY INSPECTION

As part of our commitment to you, we will externally inspect your home every 5 years. This will include:

- Roof and Chimneys
- Windows
- Walls
- Doors
- Gutters and Downpipes
- External Decoration

GAS

Southern Gas Networks are responsible for all pipe work leading to the meter. Your gas supplier is responsible for the meter. You are responsible for selecting your own gas supplier. The Home Energy Team (HET) can offer advice on switching supplier. See the link below.

 [Home Energy team](#)

The council is responsible for the internal gas pipes only. You should contact the Customer Service Centre to arrange repairs to our gas pipes or call the out of hours service, who will make sure that the system is safe.

GAS LEAKS

If you smell gas, make sure you immediately:

- Put out cigarettes. Do not use matches or naked flames.
- Do not operate electrical switches, either on or off.
- Open doors and windows to ventilate and clear the gas from the room.
- Check to see if a gas tap has been left on accidentally or if a pilot light has gone out. If not, there is probably a gas leak. Turn off the whole supply at the meter and call

Southern Gas Networks Gas
Emergency Number 0800 111 999
and have your postcode ready. Be especially alert when returning to buildings which have been left empty for some time. If you smell gas in the street, report it at once to Southern Gas Networks. Don't just leave it to someone else.

TURNING OFF YOUR MAIN GAS SUPPLY

For your own safety, make sure you know where the main gas tap is for your home and how to turn it off. The main gas tap is usually near the gas meter. Don't leave it until you have an emergency. If you are unsure call Customer Service Centre to make arrangements for a member of staff to contact you to confirm the location.

GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES

All your gutters and downpipes will be inspected every 5 years during the External Property Inspection and if necessary they will be repaired or replaced. We make arrangements to clean gutters annually on blocks of flats 3 storeys high. If you have a problem with overflowing or blocked gutters at your home you should report it to the Customer Service Centre.

HEALTH AND SAFETY - HOUSING

HEALTH & SAFETY RATING

SYSTEM (HHSRS)

Decent Homes - The standard requires all registered housing providers to carry out an assessment of your home. WCC will be conducting inspections of your home every 5 years to assess the condition of your home and if unauthorised alterations have been undertaken. The inspection will look at the condition of the property using a risk assessment approach called the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The HHSRS does not set out minimum standards. It is concerned with avoiding or, at the very least, minimising potential hazards.



Homes are re-inspected at every change of tenancy, but if you have a particular health or safety concern you should report it to the Customer Service Centre.

IMPROVEMENTS

You may, at your own expense, improve, redecorate and extend the property, subject to gaining all the necessary approvals, such as Planning and Building Control. Restricted, specialist work must be carried out by an approved contractor. We recommend that you employ an appropriately qualified design consultant should you wish to carry out any structural works.

The following list gives examples of items for which you must obtain our permission to undertake:

- Erection of outbuildings, garages and sheds
- Extension to the property
- Removal of internal walls
- Any work to the electricity or gas installations
- Installation of kitchen or bathroom fittings
- Installation of any heating system
- Replacement doors or windows
- Disabled adaptations
- Installations of drive, hard standing or dropped kerb
- Fish ponds
- Patio or decked areas
- Installation of laminate flooring
- Fencing

At the end of the tenancy, you must remove any structures or improvements, where we have not granted permission for them to remain.

***i* You are advised to get advice from the Housing Tenancy team before starting any improvements.**

***i* For certain qualifying improvements you may be entitled to compensation at the end of your tenancy. For further information please refer to [page 26](#).**

The council will not give permission for requests to install or replace solid fuel appliances, or to re-open fireplaces. This is because of the ongoing cost to the council, which has a landlord's responsibility to service and sweep all flues and appliances which are in use, whether installed by tenants or the council. This also helps to reduce the likelihood of carbon monoxide incidents related to open flues.

IDENTIFICATION

All contractors working on behalf of Winchester City Council are required to carry photo ID which should be offered to you whenever they need to gain entry to your home.

If you have any doubt as to the identity of anyone calling at your home - don't let them in - and contact the Customer Service Centre for guidance.

INSULATION

Decent Homes - The current standard calls for a minimum of 50mm of loft insulation and effective cavity wall insulation if you have gas or oil fired central heating. If your home is heated by electric storage heaters or solid fuel heating it should have 200mm of loft insulation in addition to cavity wall insulation.

Where practically possible all of our homes have cavity wall insulation and are being upgraded to include a minimum of 250mm of loft insulation irrespective of the heating system fuel.

It is essential that your loft space is kept clear for inspection and maintenance purposes and to allow for adequate insulation. Lofts are not designated as "habitable space" and therefore the council can not recommend the storage of any items in this space.

INTERNAL DECORATION

You are responsible for the internal decoration of your home and must keep it to our reasonable satisfaction. You may be charged for the cost of redecoration if you fail to do so.

KITCHENS

Decent Homes - The Decent Homes standard requires the kitchen to be replaced every 30 years if it is in poor condition.

Undergoing large scale works such as a

Your kitchen will be replaced every 20 years.

kitchen replacement can be very disruptive for you and it is important that you understand what is involved. For further guidance please click on the link below.

 [Disruptive Works Leaflet](#)

OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCIES - CALL 01962 865 405

The out of hours service operates:

- 5.00pm to 8.30am on Monday to Thursday
- 4.30pm on Friday to 8.30am on Monday
- Bank holidays

The purpose of our out of hours emergency repairs service is to provide an emergency call out service when the Customer Service Centre is closed.

It is expensive to organise tradesmen out of hours, so it is important that you only request a call out for genuine emergencies.

We define a genuine emergency as one of the following

- Total loss of water supply (other than by water supplier)
- Total loss of electricity (other than power cut)

- Serious water leak or flood inside a home that you cannot contain.
- Blocked toilet (where there is only one in a dwelling)
- Broken external doors or windows where there is a threat to security.
- Serious structural damage e.g., loose or falling brickwork, tiles, etc.
- Lift breakdowns
- Making safe collapsed ceilings and floors
- Blocked flue to an open fire or boiler
- Major health and safety repairs to communal parts
- Stair-lifts in communal areas (not within dwellings) and ceiling track hoist breakdowns

The council will endeavour to attend to any of the above within 2 hours to make safe only. If the defect can be fully repaired at this visit it will.

We do not tolerate verbal abuse towards our staff, so if you are abusive to our call out officer we will not treat your call as an emergency.

The emergency call out officers may use their discretion based on the nature of the call or where the tenant is disabled, a pensioner or has a young baby in the house. The emergency system should not be used by tenants to 'short circuit'. The standard repair priorities are listed in the table on pages [56](#) and [57](#).

For further details following the link:




 winchester.gov.uk/housing/council-housing-tenants/repairs-and-improvements

We will charge you for the emergency call out if the contractor informs us that it was not a genuine emergency. You may be depriving another person with a genuine emergency if you abuse the system.

RESPONSIVE REPAIRS

HOW TO REPORT A REPAIR

You can report a repair by:

- 'My Winchester Tenancy' - the Self Service Portal for tenants
 winchester.gov.uk/mywinchestertenancy
- Telephoning the Customer Service Centre on 01962 848 400
- Calling out of hours on 01962 865 405
 (Please note this number is for emergencies only).
- Writing to us at the City Offices
- In person at the City Offices
- Download the mycouncilservices app for iPhone and Android
 mycouncilservices.com
- Online form via the council's website
 winchester.gov.uk/housing/council-housing-tenants/repairs-and-improvements
- E-mail to housing@winchester.gov.uk

WHEN WILL THE WORK BE DONE?

When you report a repair, we will decide how urgent it is and will place it in one of the categories shown on [pages 56 and 57](#). The notes below show the type of work placed in each category and how soon the repair is likely to be carried out.

APPOINTMENTS

You must report any defects to your home as soon as practical. We will arrange for the repairs to be carried out as necessary. You must keep to these arrangements.

The system for contractor appointments is as follows:

- For all repair jobs (except emergencies), wherever possible the Customer Service Centre will arrange for the repair to be carried out on a weekday morning or afternoon. We will confirm the appointment date, time and job number via text message or email. You should advise the Customer Service Centre if this communication channel is not available to you and we will advise via postal correspondence.
- We do not make appointments for Emergency or Urgent attendances. If you report an Emergency or Urgent defect, we expect you to wait at home until the contractor arrives.
- If you are unable to keep a repairs appointment you must call the Customer Service Centre as soon as possible to arrange a new appointment. If the contractor is unable to attend the appointment time and date you will be contacted by the contractor to re-arrange to suit your convenience.
- The job will be cancelled if the contractor calls at the arranged time and date and is refused access or is unable to gain access. The contractor will leave a card at the property to confirm they have tried to gain access. You will have to report the repair again if you still want the work carried out.

The council reserves the right to charge you for any unnecessary maintenance visits.

We are unable to carry out work where a child under 16 years old is alone in the property.

If you choose to leave the contractor alone in your home while your repair is being carried out you do so entirely at your own risk.

EMERGENCY REPAIRS – 2 HOURS

This response priority is reserved for incidents that require an immediate response to either prevent danger to life or extensive damage to the property, if the incident/problem will have a serious and unavoidable adverse effect on someone's medical needs or personal health and/or safety or if there is an infant in the property under 1 year old living in the property. Emergency repairs will be attended to within two hours and made safe. A subsequent visit will be arranged if a full repair cannot be completed.

Emergency repairs are defined as:

- Total loss of water supply (other than by water supplier)
- Total loss of electricity (other than power cut)
- Serious water leak or flood inside a home that you cannot contain.
- Blocked toilet (where there is only one in a dwelling)
- Broken external doors or windows where there is a threat to security.
- Serious structural damage e.g., loose or falling brickwork, tiles, etc.
- Lift breakdowns
- Making safe collapsed ceilings and floors
- Blocked flue to an open fire or boiler
- Major health and safety repairs to communal parts
- Stair-lifts in communal areas (not within dwellings) and ceiling track hoist breakdowns

The council may recharge a resident for an emergency call out if it is determined that it was not a genuine emergency.

OUT OF HOURS

During the periods that are deemed to be Out of Hours, the council will provide an emergency repairs service. The council may recharge a resident for an Out of Hours call out if it is determined that it was not a genuine emergency. Residents should call the repairs telephone number 01962 865405 and this will transfer directly to the Out of Hours service.

5pm – 8.30am each working day

Weekends

Bank holidays

The council may recharge a resident for an Out of Hours call out if it is determined that it was not a genuine emergency.

URGENT REPAIRS - 24 HOURS

These repairs require urgent attention to prevent residents from experiencing significant inconvenience, risks to health and safety or further damage to the council's property.

The following Urgent repairs will be attended to within **24 hours** and made safe. A subsequent visit will be arranged if a full repair cannot be completed.

Urgent repairs are defined as:

- Blocked toilet, soil stacks and sewers
- Restore flush to WC where tenant is unable to flush with a bucket of water.
- Insecure windows and doors
- Unsafe electrical fittings and lights
- Blocked or leaking foul drains.
- Total or partial loss of heating and hot water (between 1 Nov -30 April). Where this cannot be completed because there is a need to obtain parts, an alternative source of heating will be provided.
- Minor health and safety repairs to communal parts
- Providing access where a key is lost or misplaced.

The council may recharge a resident for the following:

- Blocked WC's
- Blocked sinks, WHB's baths and showers
- Broken windows or doors
- Blocked drains
- Gaining access where a door key is misplaced

ROUTINE REPAIRS – 1-30 WORKING DAYS.

The following repairs will be attended to within **3 working days**:

Total or partial loss of heating and hot water (between 1 May -31 Oct).

Door entry systems if security is a significant concern.

Restore flush to a WC where a tenant can flush with a bucket of water.

All other repairs will be carried out within 1 to 30 working days.

SURVEYOR INSPECTIONS

It is sometimes necessary to send out a surveyor to review the issues or faults that you are experiencing before ordering repairs. We will confirm the appointment for the inspection via text message or email. You should advise the Customer Service Centre if this communication channel is not available to you, and we will advise via postal correspondence.

If we arrange a surveyor inspection you can expect the surveyor to:

- Listen to your concerns and observations surrounding the repairs issues you are experiencing
- Make a careful inspection of the defect
- Make a considered and well informed decision on the most appropriate course of action

Following the surveyor's visit, should you not agree with the decision or proposed outcomes, you should contact the Customer Service Centre. Following any subsequent action or decision, should you still be dissatisfied then you will need to make a formal complaint using the Corporate Complaints System.

 winchester.gov.uk/about/contact-us/complaints

ROOF

Decent Homes - The standard recommends the roof covering is replaced if it is in poor condition and over 50 years old (30 years for blocks of flats).

We will ensure your roof is kept in a reasonable state of repair at all times. We will inspect it every five years as part of the External Property Inspection and will replace the roof covering if required. We will carry out the repair or replacement of fascias, soffits, bargeboards, guttering and downpipes at the same time.

WALLS

Decent Homes - The standard recommends that external wall finishes and structures are replaced if they are in poor condition and up to 60 and 80 years old respectively.

The condition of walls will be inspected every 5 years during the External Property Inspection and all necessary repairs ordered.

WATER SUPPLY

You should locate your mains stopcock and any isolation valves so you can turn the water off quickly in an emergency. Don't leave it until you have an emergency. If you are unsure where your isolation points are call the Customer Service Centre to make arrangements for a member of staff to call.

If for any reason your water supply is turned off, please contact the Customer Service Centre - see [page 55](#).

WINDOWS

Decent Homes - The standard recommends the windows are replaced if they are in poor condition and 40 years old (30 years for blocks of flats).

Any window unit in poor condition will be either repaired or replaced. These will be identified during the External Property Inspection which takes place every 5 years. Where the provision of double glazed units is not possible due to Planning restrictions, we will offer the installation of secondary glazing.

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SHELTERED HOUSING

We provide specialist accommodation in a safe and secure environment for older people who are able to live independently. All bungalows and flats within Sheltered Housing schemes are connected to the Community Alarm Centre. This service is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

THE SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICE

We have a team of Sheltered Housing Officers who visit our 12 fully Sheltered Schemes every week. The Sheltered Housing Team can provide the following services;


- A regular meet and greet session for residents to discuss any issues relating to their home or general well-being
- Provide a coffee morning or afternoon tea with cake or biscuits
- Arrange regular activity session for residents which may include quizzes, craft sessions, guest speakers or games chosen by the residents. Day and time of these sessions will be advertised on the scheme notice board
- Undertake a yearly test of the alarm equipment in the property to ensure it is all working correctly and that the resident information is correct
- Undertake well-being visits to those who have been assessed as requiring this assistance

If you feel you would benefit from the well-being service, please contact the Sheltered Housing team.

In addition to these services our Neighbourhood Services Team visit our sheltered schemes to complete health and safety inspections of communal areas. As your landlord we have a duty to make sure the communal areas are safe and maintained to the correct standard. During our visits we will complete the following:

- Check fire alarms and smoke detectors in communal areas (where they are present).
- Dates will be advertised on the scheme notice board
- Make sure that communal areas are clear of rubbish and unauthorised items
- Check that the cleaning is complete
- Inspect communal areas inside and outside

If you have any concerns please contact the Neighbourhood Services team.

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/older-persons-services/sheltered-and-extra-care-housing

A duty desk is staffed Monday to Thursday from 8am to 5pm and until 4.30pm on Fridays for any queries or advice about your home or tenancy. Please call us on 01962 855 335. There is an out of hours service for building emergencies, such as fire alarms, lift or equipment failures.

TENANT INFORMATION

We will need to record some information about you so we can provide you with an efficient and high quality service. We will complete a Tenant Information Form which includes name, address and contact details, details of next of kin/personal contacts, doctor, medical conditions and support services. We will check this information with you every year to make sure it is correct.

Housing staff will also keep a note of any significant contact you have with them, such as calling your doctor or helping you contact another agency. This ensures we have an up to date record of your needs in case of an emergency.

We will only share information about you with your consent to doctors, hospital staff and Adult Services.

In extreme instances our staff will share personal information with a third party, for example if a tenant is at risk of self-harm, abuse or exploitation.

WHO CAN APPLY FOR SHELTERED HOUSING?

You can apply to live in Sheltered Housing if you are 60 years old or over. In some schemes age restrictions do not apply and other vulnerable or disabled applicants may also be eligible.

You should contact the Sheltered Housing team if you would like to be considered for Sheltered Housing or you are in any doubt

about your eligibility. We will advise you how to apply and will give you any additional information you may need.

You should complete a supporting medical information form if you have health problems to ensure we take this into account when assessing your application.

SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEMES	NO. OF UNITS	PROPERTY TYPE
Eastacre, Weeke	34	Flats & Bungalows
Godson House, Winchester	35	Flats
Greens Close/Blanchard Road, Bishops Waltham	37	Flats & Bungalows
Hyde Gate, Winchester	15	Flats
Hyde Lodge, Winchester	38	Flats
King Harold Court, Winchester	33	Flats
Lawn House, Winchester	36	Flats
Makins Court, Alresford	43	Flats & Bungalows
Mildmay Court, Winchester	35	Flats
Normandy Court, Wickham	36	Flats
Richard Moss House, Winchester	49	Flats
White Wings House, Denmead	18	Flats
12 SCHEMES	409	

Full full information about individual Sheltered Schemes

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/older-persons-services/sheltered-and-extra-care-housing

BUNGALOWS/OVER 60S SCHEMES	NO. OF SHELTERED UNITS	PROPERTY TYPE
Chester Court, Winchester	32	Flats
Simonds Court, Abbotts Barton	29	Flats & Bungalows
Spring House Close, Colden Common	36	Flats
Airlie Corner, Stanmore	9	Bungalows
Drummond Close, Stanmore	9	Bungalows
Firmstone Road, Winnall	16	Bungalows
Lisle Court, Stanmore	5	Bungalows
Meadow View, Micheldever	8	Bungalows
Northfields, Twyford	27	Bungalows
Pine Road, Bishops Waltham	25	Bungalows
Springvale, Swanmore	39	Bungalows
Southbrook Cottages, Micheldever	9	Bungalows
Stoney Lane, Weeke	16	Bungalows
Wonston Close, Sutton Scotney	25	Bungalows
14 SCHEMES	285	

EXTRA CARE SCHEMES	NO. OF SHELTERED UNITS	PROPERTY TYPE
Chesil Lodge, Winchester	52	Flats
Danemark Court, Winchester	36	Flats
Matilda Place, Winchester	20	Flats
3 SCHEMES	108	

 **Full full information about individual Sheltered Schemes**

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/older-persons-services/sheltered-and-extra-care-housing

Sheltered Housing Schemes: Schemes can comprise both flats and bungalows, are linked to the alarm centre and receive the full Sheltered Housing service.

Bungalow schemes: A cluster of individual bungalows, specifically built for older people, and linked to the alarm centre.

Over 60s schemes: Accommodation restricted to people who are 60 and over, linked to the alarm centre, but receiving no additional services from the Sheltered Housing Team.

Extra Care Sheltered Housing Schemes: Run in conjunction with Adult Services, these schemes provide tenants with care and extra support according to their assessed needs. The enhanced level of support is designed to help tenants continue to live independently for longer, rather than going into a care home. Cover is provided on site 24 hours a day, every day, and care assistants provide personal care as assessed, including help with bathing, dressing and meal preparation. Community Alarm Service

Every sheltered property has an alarm intercom unit and pull-cords fitted throughout. In addition, some tenants opt to wear a pendant around their neck. These devices allow tenants to contact the Community Alarm Centre in an emergency.



THE BENEFITS OF THE COMMUNITY ALARM SERVICE

The Community Alarm Centre is an emergency response service providing peace of mind. Tenants know that help is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Operators at the Community Alarm Centre know who you are, where you are calling from and if you have any special needs or specific health problems. Our staff will check with you twice a year that the information held by the Alarm Centre is correct.

The Alarm Centre also helps maintain the security and safety of schemes by monitoring smoke and fire alarm systems and also door entry systems.

It is advisable to inform the Community Alarm Centre if you are going to be away from home for an extended period.

HOW TO CALL FOR HELP

The intercom unit and pull cords in your home are linked to the Community Alarm Centre.

You can call for help by pulling an alarm cord or pressing the button on the intercom unit or pendant. The Community Alarm Centre operator will talk to you through the intercom unit to find out what help you need.

WHO WILL COME AND HELP ME?

The Community Alarm Centre operator will assess the situation and act accordingly. This could mean contacting your doctor, the emergency services or an agreed relative or friend.

Every sheltered property is fitted with an external key safe and tenants are strongly advised to keep a key to their property in there to enable the emergency services to gain access should they need to when no-one is able to let them in. Tenants can choose their own unique code for their key safe. A record of this will be held with your personal details and will only be given to the emergency services if absolutely necessary.

WHAT IF I PULL THE CORD BY MISTAKE?

Alarm cords are often pulled or pendants activated by mistake. Community Alarm Centre operators are used to these calls. All you need to do is confirm the call was made in error and they will happily cancel it.

RECORDING AND MONITORING CALLS


All calls received by the Community Alarm Centre are recorded. We use this for staff training and development and for investigating complaints.

COMMUNAL FACILITIES

All of the Sheltered Housing and Extra Care schemes have communal facilities including lounges, gardens and some schemes have laundry facilities and guest rooms. These are available for all sheltered tenants to use.

COMMUNAL LOUNGE

Sheltered Housing schemes have a communal lounge and a small kitchen with tea and coffee making facilities for tenants. Sheltered Housing Officers will encourage tenants to use the lounge as both an informal meeting place and for organised events.

 The communal lounge may also be used by tenants for private functions. You should contact the Sheltered Housing team for more information.

GUEST ROOM FACILITIES

A guest room is available at many schemes for relatives and friends of tenants. Bookings must be made through the Sheltered Housing team and operate on a first-come, first-served basis. We have the right to require the room to be vacated if there is an emergency with another tenant and the room is needed for their family or carers.

There is a charge for using the guest room and staff will advise you of this. The Sheltered Housing team will provide clean bedding, tea and coffee making facilities and ensure the room is clean and tidy. Your relatives or friends are responsible for ensuring the room is treated with care.

TELEVISION LICENCE

TV licences have now changed and those over 75 will be liable for their own licence unless they are on Pension Credit.

Many sheltered schemes no longer have a full concessionary licence so you will be responsible for the full licence fee. Please speak to the Sheltered Housing team if you are unsure about whether you should purchase your own TV licence

PARKING

There are limited parking spaces at our Sheltered Housing schemes. Spaces are filled on a first-come, first-served basis and can not be assigned to particular individuals. We ask our tenants to be considerate to those with mobility problems.

WI-FI

All of our sheltered and extra care schemes have Wi-Fi access across the whole of the schemes in individual flats and communal areas (not bungalows)

 winchester.gov.uk/sheltered-wi-fi


SAFETY AND SECURITY

Sheltered Housing is designed to give tenants more security than in general needs housing. Specialist features include key safes, door entry systems, an alarm call system and fire and smoke alarms.

However you should be aware of how you can contribute to the safety and security of your home:

- Never leave your house unlocked or leave the keys in the door
- Always ask for identification before allowing a caller access into the building or your home
- Tenants who have been issued with a pendant are encouraged to wear it
- Do not tie up or shorten alarm pull cords as this may prevent you making an emergency call for help

More information about health and safety within sheltered housing schemes can be found in the link below.

 [Health and Safety within your Sheltered Housing Scheme](#)

You should tell the Sheltered Housing team or the Community Alarm Centre immediately if you identify a potential hazard at your scheme.

ACCESS

In Sheltered Housing schemes where there is a door entry system the main doors will lock automatically when closed. Door entry systems have been put in place to offer security and peace of mind to tenants. These doors should never be propped open and you are encouraged to check the identity of anyone requiring access. Genuine callers and visitors to the scheme will appreciate the need for vigilance by tenants who are protecting the security and safety of all tenants.

FIRE SAFETY

All Sheltered Housing staff are aware of the council's fire safety procedure and their responsibilities in the event of a fire.

You will be given a copy of the tenants' fire instructions when you move in. Further copies will be issued on an annual basis.

Some schemes operate a 'stay put' policy and this will be highlighted to you on the fire safety procedure for your scheme.

 [Fire Safety](#)

 [Fire Safety for Sheltered Schemes](#)

HEALTH AND SAFETY INSPECTIONS

The Neighbourhood Services team inspect all communal areas every week and carry out a risk assessment of any hazards. We will take appropriate action to ensure the health and safety of tenants, staff and visitors.

KEYS

Because emergency service staff need to be able to gain access in an emergency you should not fit additional locks, chains or other security devices without taking advice from staff.

PROTECTION FROM ABUSE

We are committed to preventing the abuse of vulnerable adults and creating an environment where abuse is less likely to occur. The Sheltered Housing team has been trained to recognise indicators and signs of abuse and are aware of their responsibilities to report suspected and alleged cases.

If you contact us because you suspect that someone is being abused or you are being abused yourself your report will be treated sensitively in accordance with our procedures and will be investigated. We will also ensure that you are given any help and support you may need.

TENANCY ISSUES

The following tenancy issues are particularly relevant to tenants living in Sheltered Housing schemes.

RENTS AND RELATED CHARGES

If you live in sheltered accommodation in addition to your rent you may also have a charge for some or all of the following services:

- Service charges - these cover the cost of communal facilities and related services. These can include water, property maintenance costs, lift maintenance, fire alarm, fuel costs, furniture and equipment, cleaning materials and first aid supplies. This list is not exhaustive and the contributing costs will vary according to which scheme you live in.
- Management charges - these cover the costs of providing the Sheltered Housing service. They include staffing costs and office expenses.
- Alarm charge - this covers the cost of the alarm equipment and monitoring and is chargeable in all our sheltered schemes, older persons bungalow schemes and over 60s schemes.

 **For more information about service charges, please see [page 26](#).**

ELECTRIC BUGGIES AND SCOOTERS

As a Landlord we recognise that some residents may benefit from a mobility scooter to enable them to retain their independence.

Not all our schemes are suitable for the use or storage of mobility scooters. We ask you to contact the Sheltered Housing Team for guidance on the suitability of your accommodation for a mobility scooter prior to obtaining one.

If you are thinking of purchasing or hiring a mobility scooter you should discuss and agree this with a Sheltered Housing Officer. You will need to agree where you can store and charge it, and get the relevant permission before obtaining your mobility scooter.

If residents bring a mobility scooter into their home, communal area or mobility scooter store without prior authorisation they will be asked to remove them.

If you are considering purchasing an electric buggy or scooter please contact the Sheltered Housing team who will advise you how to apply for approval. All requests will be assessed on merit and we will always try to accommodate your requirements. However some requests may have to be turned down because there are no scooter stores available. It is important therefore that you get approval first to avoid any unnecessary expenditure.

AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

As part of your six monthly review with the Sheltered Housing team your need for aids and adaptations to make your life easier will be discussed and any referrals will be made to the appropriate agencies.

***i* You can discuss your need at any time by contacting the Sheltered Housing team. Please see [page 27](#) for further information.**

PETS

If you wish to keep a pet you need to ask permission from the Housing Tenancy team beforehand.

Some properties are not suitable for some pets due to shared communal areas. However all applications will be considered.

Please see [page 26](#) for further information.

WELL-BEING SERVICE

The Sheltered Housing team can assist tenants who may be at risk of losing their tenancies, providing advice, advocacy and liaison with other professionals. This can include:

- Arranging help with welfare benefits and personal finances
- Providing support and intervention in low level neighbour problems
- Advising and assisting with the resettlement of tenants
- Providing guidance to tenants enabling them to maintain their homes to an acceptable standard
- Staff can assist tenants who are socially isolated, suffering a bereavement or have mental health problems

If you are struggling with your tenancy and require advice or support you can contact the Sheltered Housing team for further information on the tenancy sustainment service.



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MAKING YOUR VOICE HEARD AND GETTING INVOLVED



Tenant Partnership Team

At Winchester City Council, we value your input and believe that tenants should have an active role in shaping the services that affect them. Whether it's through attending our Community Hubs, joining the Consumer Standard Groups, or participating in digital surveys, your voice is important. By getting involved, you can directly influence decisions on housing services, safety, community activities, and more. We offer various opportunities to suit your preferences, from informal drop-in sessions to structured meetings. Your ideas and feedback help us improve the quality of services and ensure they meet the needs of all tenants.

YOUR RIGHT TO BE CONSULTED

Under Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985, Winchester City Council is committed to consulting with tenants on any matters that significantly affect them, such as changes to housing management policies. This includes providing timely information and engaging with you through meetings, surveys, and formal consultation processes. Our Tenants and Leaseholders Participation Compact (2020) outlines our commitment to working in partnership with you, ensuring that your views are considered before decisions are made. We are here to listen, and through working with us, you can help shape the future of housing services in your community.

TACT BOARD

The Tenants and Council Together (TACT) Board is a key platform for tenants to collaborate with the council. As a tenant-led group, the TACT Board works to ensure your views are represented at the highest levels of decision-making. By sitting on the board, Tenant members can help influence council policies and housing services, making sure that tenant concerns and aspirations are heard. The TACT Board meets regularly to discuss important issues, review performance, and suggest improvements to the council's housing services.




OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

CONSUMER STANDARD GROUPS

Our Consumer Standard Groups are designed to ensure that tenants have a say in meeting the requirements set by the social housing regulator. These groups are open to all tenants and residents and focus on four key areas:

- Quality and Safety
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability
- Tenancy Services, and Neighbourhoods and Community.

By joining one of these groups, you can directly contribute to how the council manages housing services, ensuring they are of the highest standard and meet your needs. The groups meet regularly and provide an excellent opportunity for you to meet with TACT board members and collaborate on designing the services that affect your home and community. The meeting dates, times, agendas and minutes can be found on our website.

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/tact-tenants-council-together

DIGITAL SURVEYS


We regularly seek feedback through digital surveys to help us understand your experiences and opinions about our services. Surveys are a quick and easy way to make your voice heard, and they help us improve by highlighting areas that need attention. We use digital platforms to make participation as convenient as possible. Your feedback through these surveys informs service changes, allowing us to better meet your expectations and improve tenant satisfaction.



TENANT TRAINING

We believe that informed tenants are empowered tenants. That's why we offer a range of free training sessions to help you develop the skills and knowledge needed to engage effectively with the council. From understanding housing policies to learning how to influence decisions, these training programs are designed to equip you with the tools to be an active and effective participant. Whether you want to learn more about your rights or gain confidence in speaking up, our training can help you make a real difference. If you'd like to find out more about what training is currently available, please email or call us:

 0800 716 987

 tenantpartnership@winchester.gov.uk



SHARE YOUR IDEAS AND COLLABORATE WITH US


At Winchester Council, we believe in the power of collaboration and community. We welcome all tenants to share their ideas for projects that help to promote wellbeing and build a sense of community and pride. Whether it's an initiative to support a specific group, improve local facilities, or organise community events, we want to work with you to bring those ideas to life.

For example, we recently partnered with a resident at one of our sheltered housing schemes to install a defibrillator, providing a potentially life-saving resource for the whole community. Another project saw us teaming up with residents to host a family fun day at the end of the summer holidays, bringing families together for a day of activities and connection.

If you have an idea, however big or small, we'd love to hear from you. Whether it's improving a communal space, starting a gardening project, or holding workshops that build skills or social networks, our team is here to support and guide you through the process. Let's co-create meaningful projects that make a difference to our communities!

Feel free to contact us at tenantpartnership@winchester.gov.uk or speak to us at one of our upcoming Community Hubs.


Keep up to date with all tenant partnership projects we offer:

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/get-involved/what-s-on-housing-events-and-activities

 tenantpartnership@winchester.gov.uk

CONTACT DETAILS

If you'd like to get involved or have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can contact the Tenant Partnership Team at:

 0800 716 987

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/get-involved

 tenantpartnership@winchester.gov.uk

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MOVING HOME

This chapter provides useful information and advice on moving.



GIVING NOTICE

You need to give us four weeks' written notice to end your tenancy. However if you are transferring to a property owned by Winchester City Council you may give two weeks' written notice.

You can give notice on any week day (Monday to Friday). The notice period will only start from the date we receive your notice.

We have a termination form that we prefer you to use, but you may write or email us instead. Termination forms are available from the Empty Property (Council Homes) team, or can be found on the link below.

 [Termination Form](#)

You must pay your rent and other charges during your notice period and your rent account must be clear when the tenancy ends.

We will write to you confirming we have received your notice. We will advise you of the date your tenancy will end and when and where you should return the keys.

If insufficient notice is given then a Notice to Quit may be served on the property in order for us to end the tenancy.

During the notice period we will need to visit and inspect the property. It will be determined by us whether any non-standard items can remain in the property.

You must ensure that we are given vacant possession of the property on the termination date.

MOVING HOME

JOINT TENANTS

Where the tenancy is a joint tenancy one tenant can terminate the tenancy on behalf of both tenants.

GIVING NOTICE WHEN A TENANT HAS DIED

In the event of the tenant's death, the next of kin must give us four weeks' written notice and include the death certificate. See [page 18](#) for more information.

POWER OF ATTORNEY

Where a power of attorney exists, written notice may be given on behalf of the tenant if you send a copy of the relevant documentation.

MOVING HOME CHECKLIST

Please refer to the checklist on the link below when giving notice to end your tenancy.

i Please contact the Property Lettings Team for advice on giving notice.

[Termination Check List](#)

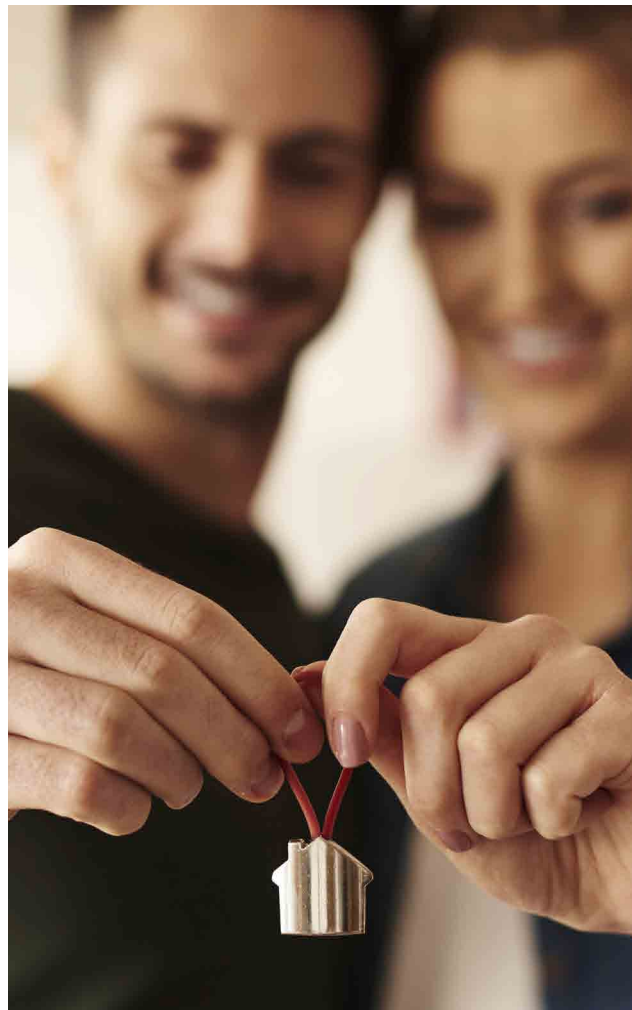
CONDITION OF THE PROPERTY

When you move out you should leave the property and its fixtures and fittings in the same state as they were at the start of the tenancy, fair wear and tear excepted, as stated in your tenancy conditions.

The property should be left clean and tidy and in reasonable decorative order. The garden should also be tidy and clear of rubbish.

You may be charged for clearing furniture, carpets, rubbish and other items left in the property, shed, garage or garden.

If you are on the transfer list you will normally have to carry out any necessary repairs before we offer you alternative accommodation.



You may also be charged for repairs needed due to wilful damage or neglect to the property and to council fixtures and fittings and for removing any alterations and adaptations unless we have previously granted you permission for them to remain. You are also advised that any damage caused to tiles when floor coverings are lifted is your responsibility and you will be recharged for the cost of replacing any tiles.

You should lift and dispose of carpets and underlay as guided by the council. All carpet gripper rods should be left in place and not removed by you.


i Contact the Empty Property team during the notice period if you are in any doubt.

TRANSFERS


You are able to move to another council or housing association property through the transfer register or by mutual exchange.

THE TRANSFER REGISTER

The transfer register is open to all council and housing association tenants who meet the council's eligibility criteria as set out in the council's Allocations Framework. Full details of the Allocations Framework are available from the link below. We assess and prioritise your application according to your housing need as set out in the Allocations Framework.


 hampshirehomechoice.org.uk/content/Policy/AllocationsFramework

To apply for a transfer you will need to complete an online application form which is available at:

 hampshirehomechoice.org.uk/HouseholdRegistrationForm


If you need help completing an application or do not have access to the internet please contact the council's Housing Allocations team who can assist you with this. We aim to process online applications within ten working days. We will decide if you can join the register and will write to you explaining what priority your application has been awarded. You will officially join the transfer register on the date we received your application.

There is a very high demand for our properties so you may have to wait a long time for a transfer. Information about waiting times is available from the Hampshire Home Choice website:

 hampshirehomechoice.org.uk/content/Topics/AverageWaitingTimes

You may wish to consider seeking a mutual exchange with either a council or housing association tenant, to move home more quickly.

Alternatively you may apply directly to the waiting list of another local authority. You will need to contact the relevant council to confirm whether you are eligible to join their waiting list.

 **More information is available via the links below or contact the Housing Allocations team.**


 hampshirehomechoice.org.uk


 [A guide to Hampshire Home Choice](#)



INCENTIVE TO MOVE

If you would like to downsize to a property with fewer bedrooms you will be awarded a high priority on the transfer register and we may be able to offer financial and practical help too. A council tenant who is willing to give up their family home and move into a property with fewer bedrooms may qualify for a one off cash payment under 'Wise Move', the tenants' incentive scheme or services to the value of the cash incentive.

 More information about downsizing is available below or by contacting the Housing Tenancy team.

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/council-housing-tenants/wise-move-help-for-tenants-wishing-to-downsize

MUTUAL EXCHANGES

A mutual exchange is where two (or more) tenants decide to swap homes. Most council and housing association tenants have a right to exchange. Introductory tenants do not have the right to exchange.

 winchester.gov.uk/transfers-exchanges

HOMESWAPPER



The council is signed up to HomeSwapper, a national register of social housing tenants looking to swap homes. The service can be accessed online at:

 HomeSwapper.co.uk

 [Want to move home leaflet](#)

If you would like to move by mutual exchange you will need to register your details on the HomeSwapper website. If you need any help with this process please contact the Housing Customer and Business Support Team.


 01962 848 400

 adminhousing@winchester.gov.uk

APPLYING FOR A MUTUAL EXCHANGE

If you want to apply for an exchange all parties will need to complete an application form which is available below or by contacting the Customer Service Centre or the Housing Tenancy team.

You must not go ahead with the swap until all landlords involved have given written permission and the relevant papers have been signed. Otherwise you will be putting your tenancy at risk.

 winchester.gov.uk/housing/council-housing-tenants/transfers-and-exchanges

MUTUAL EXCHANGE REFUSED

There are, by law, grounds on which we can refuse a mutual exchange. If your application is refused we will write to you notifying you on what grounds your request has been refused. Full details of the grounds for refusal are contained in Schedule 3 of the Housing Act 1985 (grounds for withholding consent to assignment by way of exchange).


 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/68/schedules



YOUR RIGHT TO COMPENSATION FOR IMPROVEMENTS

As a secure tenant you may be entitled to compensation for improvements you have made to your home when your tenancy ends. However you will need to have obtained our permission at the time for the work. See [page 26](#) for more information.

The council will consider all claims in accordance with 'The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Compensation for Improvements) Regulations 1994'.

 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1994/613/contents/made

You will not get compensation if your tenancy comes to an end because of a possession order or you are buying your home through the Right to Buy scheme or you are offered the tenancy of another property which is substantially the same.

The Right to Compensation applies to work which was started on or after 1 April 1994 and only applies to the following specific improvements:

- Bath, shower, wash-hand basin and toilet
- Kitchen sink and work surfaces for preparing food
- Storage cupboards in bathroom or in kitchen
- Central heating, hot water boilers and other types of heating
- Thermostatic radiator valves
- Pipe, water tank or cylinder insulation
- Loft and cavity wall insulation
- Draught-proofing of external doors or windows
- Double-glazing or other window replacement or secondary glazing
- Re-wiring or the provision of power and lighting or other electrical fittings (including smoke detectors)
- Security measures (excluding burglar alarms)

HOW TO MAKE A CLAIM?

You should make a claim for compensation when you give notice that you are ending your tenancy. You have up to 14 days after your tenancy ends to make a claim in writing with the following information:

- Your name and address
- What improvements you have made
- How much each improvement cost
- The date the improvements began and finished

HOW THE COMPENSATION IS CALCULATED

You can get up to £3,000 for any one improvement, but there is no compensation for improvements worth less than £50. If you received financial assistance (a grant) to help make your improvements we will take off the amount your grant was worth from the cost of your improvements.

We calculate your compensation based on the age, condition and quality of the improvement. You will need to give us an invoice to show how much your improvements cost. If you do not have an invoice tell us straight away and give us an estimate of the total cost.

We will also take into account any money you may owe the council and deduct that from the compensation. We will prosecute tenants who make a false or inflated claim.

 **Please contact Property Services for further information.**

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City Council

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