

# Tenant Handbook 2025



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## Part 1 – Welcome to your home

*Your introduction to living with us – and what you can expect from the services we provide.*

### A message from us

#### Welcome – We're delighted to have you as a resident

We are a small landlord with a strong culture of care. Our aim is to provide well-designed, safe, secure, good quality and energy-efficient places that residents are proud to call home. We also want to deliver excellent services, with a focus on **people, places, and partnerships**. We value every interaction we have with you. You can expect us to:

- Make it quick and easy for you to contact us.
- Listen carefully to what you need.
- Be friendly, professional and knowledgeable.
- Treat you fairly and with respect.
- Go the extra mile – especially if you need additional support.
- Make sure everyone receives fair and equal service.

#### Our role in promoting wellbeing in your community

As your landlord, we do more than provide housing. Our purpose is to help you live well, independently, and safely in a neighbourhood that supports your wellbeing. We focus on:

- **Social wellbeing** by promoting neighbourliness, supporting resident engagement and events, and working in partnership with organisations like Age UK Lincolnshire, and local schools.
- **Environmental wellbeing** by maintaining communal areas to a high standard, carrying out regular safety checks, and supporting residents in keeping shared spaces clean, accessible, and welcoming.
- **Economic wellbeing** by helping residents access support services, including help with housing costs, and by working with local authorities and care partners to promote financial and housing stability.

We work in partnership with health and care services, community groups, and strategic partners to ensure your voice shapes the services you receive.

We hope you feel at home quickly and that this handbook helps you to settle in and understand your rights and services. With warm wishes from all of us.

### The Lace Team

*People. Places. Partnerships.*

## What this Handbook covers

This Handbook explains:

- The service we provide and how to contact us.
- What we expect from you as a tenant.
- How to report repairs or request services.
- What to expect in communal areas and how we manage them.
- Your rights under the tenancy and current housing regulations.

We've written it in a clear, straightforward language and we're always here to help if you need support or clarification. You'll also see references to factsheets and policies available on our website or on request.

## Supporting you and your neighbourhood – People, Places, Partnerships

At the heart of our approach are the three Ps - People, Places, and Partnerships – these guide how we support you and your neighbourhood.

### People

We're here to help you live independently and with confidence. Our team can support you to identify any additional needs, maximise your income, and make sure the right help is in place if needed.

Where appropriate, we may refer you to trusted partners such as Adult Social Care or Age UK Lincolnshire. We always act with kindness, professionalism, and care.

### Places

We take great pride in the safety, cleanliness, and upkeep of your home and shared areas. Through regular inspections, responsive repairs and resident feedback, we aim to keep communal spaces safe, tidy, and welcoming.

### Partnerships

We work closely with local partners who share our aim of helping older people live well and develop new housing. This includes local authorities, Adult Social Care, strategic housing groups, community groups - and sometimes local schools.

These partnerships help us connect you with the right support and build new homes that enable wellbeing and independence.

## About us

We are a not-for-profit housing association with over 60 years of experience in providing homes and services for older people (aged 55 and over).

We began in Lincoln and are now considered the leading provider of specialist housing and support for older people across Lincolnshire. We focus on:

- Delivering well-designed, safe, secure and energy efficient homes.
- Supporting independence, dignity and community.
- Reinvesting any surpluses into existing homes, developing future housing, and improving services.

To learn more about our history and social purpose, please visit our website.

## Need help?

If you need help understanding this handbook, we can provide:

- A printed or large printed version.
- Audio or translated formats.
- A staff member to go through it with you.
- An interpreter or advocate (by arrangement).

Just contact us and let us know what works best – we're here to help.

## Part 2 Our services and responsibilities

### *What we do, what we don't, and who to contact if you're unsure.*

We are responsible for managing your home and the services that support it. This includes things like repairs, rent collection, safety checks, and resident engagement – all delivered with the aim of helping you live independently in a safe and welcoming place.

We aim to deliver all our services in line with our **customer service standard** – being easy to contact, treating you fairly, and going the extra mile whenever you need support.

### **Our Housing and Property Services**

Our Housing and Property and Maintenance teams are responsible for:

- Letting and managing your tenancy.
- Setting and collecting rent.
- Arranging repairs and planned maintenance.
- Managing communal areas, grounds maintenance and estate services.
- Investigating complaints, tenancy breaches and safeguarding concerns.
- Supporting resident involvement and feedback.
- Providing advice on tenancy and property related issues.
- Manage contractors and investment works.
- Overseeing health and safety compliance.
- Monitoring the quality of our repairs, estate and grounds services.
- Ensuring buildings remain safe and well maintained.

If you live in one of our **Housing for Older People Schemes**, your main contact is your **Housing Manager**, who oversees tenancies and day-to-day services across your scheme.

If you live in one of our **Housing with Extra Care Schemes**, you'll be supported by on-site **Support Co-Ordinators**, overseen by the **Extra Care Manager**. They help with day-to-day queries and promote wellbeing on site.

## Supporting your independence

We want every resident to live safely, independently and with dignity – whether you need no support or just a little help now and then.

Although we do not provide personal care ourselves, we will:

- Support you to remain as independent as possible.
- Work with family, carers or other agencies if appropriate.
- Help you apply for aids and adaptations.
- Offer information about local services and support networks.
- Act if we are concerned about someone's health, safety, or wellbeing.

If you, or someone you know, is struggling to manage at home, please speak to us in confidence. We'll help you access the right support.

## What's not included in our service

We do **not** provide:

- Planned personal care or regular welfare checks – unless you live in an extra care scheme, where care is provided by a separate provider appointed by Lincolnshire County Council.
- Shopping, cooking or cleaning – unless using our restaurant service (in extra care schemes).
- Crisis intervention or 24-hour emergency response – unless through a linked emergency alarm system.
- Health, medical or nursing support.

If you need any of the above, we can help refer you to the right agency or service. If you're unsure whether something is included in your tenancy or service, just ask us.

## Further information is available

You can view or request printed copies of:

- Our '**customer service standard**' –service commitments and response times.
- Our '**getting involved – help shape our services factsheet**'.
- Our '**complaints & learning policy**'.
- Our '**inclusive service delivery policy**' – for residents who need extra support.
- Our '**safeguarding factsheet**'.
- Our '**guide to tenants' rights and responsibilities factsheet**'.

You can also find more about our approach to communication and complaints in Part 5 – Listening, Learning and Getting Involved.



## Part 3      Emergencies and safety

### *What to do if something goes wrong – and how to reduce risk in your home.*

Emergencies can happen unexpectedly – like a burst pipe, gas leak, or power failure. This section explains what to do in urgent situations, how to stay safe, and who to contact.

### **Awaab's Law – urgent hazard response**

From 27 October 2025, under **Awaab's Law**, we are legally required to investigate and act within 24 hours if there is an **emergency hazard** in your home. This includes:

- Severe damp and mould.
- Loss of essential services (water, heating, electricity).
- Safety hazards that pose a risk to your health or wellbeing.

If you experience any of these, call our **24-hour emergency repair line** immediately:

**01522 514444 Option 2 Repairs.**

We will:

- Confirm when we'll attend.
- Carry out urgent repairs or safety measures.
- Arrange temporary accommodation if necessary.

### **Gas leaks or the smell of gas**

If you smell gas or suspect a leak:

1. Open the windows and doors to ventilate the area.
2. Turn off your gas supply at the meter, if safe to do so.
3. **Do not** use light switches, plug sockets or doorbells.
4. **Do not** use mobile phones indoors – go outside first.
5. **Do not** smoke, light candles or use naked flames.
6. Leave the building and call:
  - **National Gas Emergency Service** on **0800 111 999** (24 hours)
  - **Or dial 999 in an emergency.**
7. Once you are safe, contact us so we can arrange any necessary checks or repairs.
8. If you are feeling unwell (dizzy, light-headed, or sick), call **111** and mention possible gas or carbon monoxide exposure.

**Reminder:** If your home has gas heating or appliances, we must legally install a **carbon monoxide detector**. Please check yours regularly or contact us if unsure.

## Water leaks

If water is leaking in your home:

- Turn off the water supply at the **main stop tap** (we show you this at the property handover).
- Use a container or towel to catch water if safe to do so.
- Avoid contact with electrical fittings if water is near lights, sockets, or appliances.
- Call us on **01522 514444 (Option 2)** to speak to our Property and Maintenance team.

If the leak is from a neighbouring flat, please try to notify your neighbour or contact us – we may need access to their home to prevent further damage.

Please contact your contents insurer for damage to your personal possessions.

## Power cuts and electrical issues

If you lose power:

- Check if your neighbours are affected.
- If not, check your fuse box for a tripped switch.
- Unplug appliances and reset the trip switch.
- If the issue continues, contact us.

For wider power outages:

- Call **UK Power Networks on 105**
- Notify our Property Maintenance team on **01522 514444 Option 2**.

If lifts, communal lighting, or fire alarms are affected, this will be treated as an emergency.

## Loss of heating or hot water

If your heating or hot water fails:

- Contact us straight away.
- We prioritise urgent repairs, especially in colder weather.
- Temporary heaters may be offered if we can't fix the issue quickly.
- Let us know if health or disability makes cold temperatures a higher risk.

## Severe weather, storms and snow

During extreme weather:

- We prioritise urgent storm damage (e.g. roof issues, flooding, fallen branches).
- Water ingress and structural risks will be assessed promptly.
- We may check in with vulnerable residents if safe during extended disruption.

If high winds are forecast:

- Avoid walking near trees or roof edges.
- Let us know about fallen branches or hazards.

## Gritting and snow clearance

We do not routinely grit paths, as we cannot safely monitor weather conditions at every scheme or guarantee that gritted areas will remain safe.

Where grit bins are available:

- Residents may use them at their own discretion.
- Only use during daylight hours and when confident and physically able.
- Avoid over-exertion –cold weather activity increases the risk of heart strain, particularly for older people.
- In most areas snow and ice typically thaw within hours or days
- It is often safer to stay indoors and wait for conditions to improve.

**You can view our ‘cold weather advice factsheet’ on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Fire safety

We carry out regular fire risk assessments in schemes with communal spaces and ensure all buildings meet safety standards.

Every scheme has a **Fire Action Notice** on display in communal areas and above fire call points. This explains what to do in the event of a fire and whether your building follows a **stay put** or **full evacuation strategy**.

You will have received this information specific to your scheme at your tenancy contract meeting and in your **annual fire risk assessment summary**.

If you are unsure about the fire safety approach in your scheme, contact us.

## Keep escape routes clear

Do not leave items in communal corridors or stairwells, including:

- Mobility scooters, bikes, walking frames.
- Furniture, plant pots, decorative items.
- Shoes, umbrellas, boxes, recycling.

Even small items can block fire exits, create trip hazards or fuel a fire.

Items left in escape routes may be removed immediately and you may be charged.

## Mobility scooters and battery powered mobility aids

Lithium batteries can cause dangerous fires if not stored or charged properly.

To stay safe:

- Never charge scooters or any battery powered mobility aid indoors overnight or while asleep.
- Unplug chargers when batteries are fully charged.
- Charge during the day and away from flammable items.
- Use designated charging areas, where available.
- Provide a copy of your **insurance** and **annual service record**.

If you live in an apartment and wish to store or charge a mobility scooter or similar device inside your home, please contact us first. We'll carry out a **mobility scooter risk assessment**.

**You can view our 'using and storing powered vehicles in our schemes factsheet' and our 'safety in communal areas factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Electrical safety

To reduce fire risk:

- Avoid overloading sockets or extension leads.
- Never run wires under carpets or rugs.
- Turn off appliances when not in use.
- Report damaged sockets to us immediately.

We must carry out a **5-yearly electrical inspection** of your home. Please allow access when booked.

## Kitchen safety

Most fires begin in the kitchen. Please:

- Never leave cooking unattended - set a timer if needed.
- Keep flammable items away from heat sources.
- Clean extractor fans and ovens regularly to avoid grease build-up.

If a pan or toaster catches fire, **never use water**. Turn off the heat if safe to do so and call **999**.

## Night-time checks

Before bed:

- Turn off unnecessary electrical appliances.
- Close internal doors.
- Keep a phone and a torch nearby.
- Check your front door is locked.
- If you use an emergency pendant, make sure it is nearby.

## Personal evacuation plans

If you need help leaving the building in an emergency, please let us know.

We will create a **personal emergency evacuation plan** as part of our **person-centred risk assessment**.

We also:

- Inspect fire alarms and signage regularly.
- Carry out routine fire systems checks.

**You can view our 'safety in communal areas factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Part 4 Moving in

### *Getting settled in your new home, staying safe, and knowing what to expect.*

We know that moving into a new home can be a big step – and sometimes a challenging one. Whether you're feeling uncertain, hopeful, or simply adjusting to change, we're here to help you feel safe, supported and settled.

This section explains what happened in your first few days and weeks with us, and how to get your new home up and running.

### When you receive the keys

At your **property handover meeting**, we'll provide:

- Keys to your home and any communal doors.
- Your tenancy agreement
- This Tenant Handbook – a plain English guide to your rights, responsibilities and our services.
- Your Fire Action Notice and important safety information.
- An explanation of your rent account and how to pay.

We'll also walk you through the property and communal areas of the scheme and answer any questions you may have. If someone is supporting you (such as a family member, friend or carer), they're very welcome to join the meeting.

### What's included in your home

Your new home will be clean, safe and ready to move in. It will meet our agreed **property standard**. Before your tenancy starts, we'll complete a full empty home survey and make sure all safety checks are completed.

You can expect:

- Heating, hot water, and electrical systems to be in good working order.
- Smoke detectors and, where gas is present, a carbon monoxide alarm.
- A clean bathroom with WC, wash hand basin and shower (or bath depending on your home).
- Kitchen cupboards and worktops to be clean.
- Flooring in kitchen and bathroom.
- A hob and oven (provided in some schemes – we'll let you know what applies to your home).
- Walls prepared ready for you to decorate and personalise.

**Decoration is your responsibility.** Your tenancy agreement asks you to return your home to us in good decorative condition at the end of your tenancy.

## What about carpets, curtains or blinds?

We usually ask outgoing tenants to remove these items unless:

- They are in a very good condition, or
- We have agreed this in writing with them.

If you accept any items left by the previous tenant, you take full responsibility for their maintenance or removal later.

## Setting up your new home

As the new tenant, you'll need to:

- Set up gas, electricity and water accounts (unless included in your service charge or we provide the utilities directly to you).
- Contact the local council to register for council tax.
- Arrange home contents insurance.
- Register with a GP or local services if you're new to the area.
- Make any benefit claims you're entitled to (we can help with this).

We'll let you know who your current utility suppliers are and explain if any charges (like heating or water) are already included in your service charge.

## TV Licence

You are responsible for arranging and paying for your TV licence. Please visit [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk).

## Contents insurance - protecting your belongings

We insure the **building**, but not your personal belongings, furniture or decoration.

We strongly recommend that all tenants arrange **home contents insurance**. This can protect you against:

- Fire or flood.
- Theft or vandalism.
- Accidental damage.
- Lost keys or replacement locks.

## Managing the cost of your home

As a tenant, you are responsible for the ongoing costs such as:

- Rent and service charges.
- Utility bills (gas, electricity, water).
- Council tax.
- TV licence.
- Internet or phone.
- Home contents insurance.

We will carry out an affordability check with you before your tenancy begins, including:

- Trial benefit calculations (e.g. housing benefit, universal credit).
- Advice on pension credit or other support.

If you need help with budgeting, bills, or benefits, please contact us – we're here to help, or connect you with expert advice.

## Follow up support after you move in

Around 6 to 8 weeks after your tenancy begins, your Housing and Support team will arrange a follow-up visit. This gives you a chance to:

- Ask questions or raise concerns.
- Check your rent account and communication preferences.
- Report any repairs.
- Raise anything else you're unsure about.

We're always happy to help – and no question is too small.



## Part 5 Listening, learning and getting involved

### ***Working together to deliver excellent service.***

We're here to provide high-quality, specialist housing and support services – and your feedback is essential in helping us improve. Whether you're sharing a compliment, raising a concern, or taking part in decision-making, we want every resident to feel respected, heard and included.

**You can find out more in our 'customer service standards' and our 'getting involved – help shape our services factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

### Compliments

We're always pleased to hear when a member of staff or a contractor has provided great service. Your kind words help us recognise what's working well and boost staff morale.

You can give us a compliment:

- In person.
- By phone, or email.
- Through our website.

Please note: We have a policy on staff receiving gifts. Small gestures are appreciated, but we have strict rules to protect both residents and staff. If you're unsure, please ask us.

**You can view our 'giving of gifts factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

### Complaints – tell us if something's gone wrong

If sometimes hasn't gone as expected or you are dissatisfied with any part of our service, please tell us. We want the chance to put things right and learn from it.

If you're starting to feel frustrated or aggrieved, we encourage you to get in touch as early as possible – so we can resolve the issue before it escalates. But you are always entitled to make a formal complaint at any time.

#### What counts as a complaint?

We follow the definition set by the Housing Ombudsman Service.

***“An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of our service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its staff or contractors, which affects a resident or group of residents.”***

Examples include:

- A service not delivered as expected.
- Delays, lack of updates, or failure to act.
- Behaviour from staff or contractors that feels unreasonable.
- Decisions that feel unfair or unexplained.

You can make a complaint:

- Over the phone.
- By email
- Using our website.
- In writing.
- Through someone else, with your permission.

### What's The difference between a complaint and a service request?

If you're telling us something for the first time – such as a problem with a repair request – we treat it as a service request.

If you're unhappy with how we've handled this request for assistance, then it becomes a complaint.

### How we handle complaints

We use a two-stage complaint process:

#### Stage 1: Formal response

We'll acknowledge your complaint and aim to give you a full written response within **10 working days of acknowledging it**. If we need longer, we'll explain why.

#### Stage 2: Review

If you remain dissatisfied, you can request a review by a senior manager not involved in the original decision. We'll aim to respond within **20 working days** of acknowledging it.

### Housing Ombudsman – independent support and advice

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman at any time for free, independent advice. You don't have to wait until you've completed our process – they can support you throughout.

## Housing Ombudsman contact details:

Website: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Email [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Telephone 0300 111 3000

Post: PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET

## What we are learning from complaints

We publish an annual **Complaint Learning and Improvement Report**, which explains:

- What issues were raised.
- What we did to put things right.
- What we changed or improved as a result.

You can read this report on our website or request a printed copy.

**You can view our ‘complaints and learning factsheet’ on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Satisfaction surveys – helping us improve

We occasionally ask for feedback through short surveys, usually by text – to understand how we’re doing in areas like repairs or complaints.

If you express dissatisfaction, we will follow up with a phone call to understand what happened.

We also take part in the Regulator of Social Housing’s **Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)**. These help us to identify what we are doing well, and where we can improve. We publish results every year in our annual report and on our website.

## Equality, inclusion and respect

We are committed to treating every resident fairly and with respect - regardless of background, beliefs or personal circumstances.

We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation – whether from – residents, visitors, contractors, or staff.

We are committed to:

- Making our services accessible and inclusive.
- Challenging prejudice and unconscious bias.
- Promoting tolerance, kindness and understanding.

**You can view both our ‘race and hate crime factsheet’ and our ‘equality, diversity and inclusion factsheet’ on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## How we look after your personal data

We collect and store personal information to:

- Manage your tenancy and account.
- Provide services and repairs.
- Respond to enquiries and complaints.

We follow the **UK GDPR** and the **Data Protection Act 2018**.

Your information is only shared:

- When it's needed to deliver services.
- When required by law.
- With your consent.
- When there is serious risk to health or safety.

We do not sell or share your data for marketing purposes.

You received a copy of our Privacy Notice when applying for housing and it is available on our website, or on request.

## Your right to access your data

You can request a copy of the personal information we hold about you. This is called a **Subject Access Request (SAR)**. We'll ask you to confirm your identity. We will respond within one month and provide a copy of the information you're entitled to see.

If you'd like to make a request, just contact us and we'll guide you through it.

## Getting involved – shaping services together

We believe residents have a right to influence how services are shaped and delivered. While we don't currently have a formal scrutiny panel, we encourage involvement in a range of ways:

- Attending local scheme meetings.
- Contributing to policy cafes or consultation groups.
- Giving feedback by social media.
- Asking questions or giving feedback at local scheme meetings.
- Asking about our performance (e.g. repairs or complaints).
- Talking to us about the Tenant Satisfaction Measures we publish.
- Reviewing our Complaint Learning and Improvement Report.

We keep the idea of a scrutiny panel under review. If there's interest in restarting a group to look in-depth at performance or decisions, we'd love to hear from you.

**You can view our 'getting involved – help shape our services factsheet' or we can send you a copy.**

## Transparency and performance

We are committed to being open about how we perform and how resident feedback helps us improve. Each year, we publish information about:

- How we are performing against national service standards (Tenant Satisfaction Measures).
- What residents are telling us and how we've responded.
- How income is spent, including service costs and management overheads.
- We use resident feedback to help improve services, shape local priorities, and focus on what matters most. If you'd like to know more or access the latest performance information, just ask our Housing and Support team or visit our website.

## Part 6 Understanding your tenancy and your rights

*This section explains your tenancy agreement, your responsibilities as a tenant, and how we can support you. It also covers key areas such as pets, rent, safeguarding, and what we do if things go wrong.*

### Your tenancy

When you signed your tenancy agreement, you entered into a legal agreement with us. This sets out your rights and responsibilities – and ours as your landlord.

We will:

- Keep your home safe and in good repair.
- Deliver services in line with your tenancy.
- Treat you with fairness and respect.

We expect that you:

- Pay your rent on time.
- Look after your home.
- Respect your neighbours and community.
- Follow the terms of your tenancy.

There are different types of tenancy. If you're unsure which one you have, or what your rights are, please contact us – we'll explain everything in plain terms.

Keep your tenancy agreement somewhere safe - you may need it for benefit claims, proof of address, or legal matters.

**You can view our 'guide to tenants' rights and responsibilities factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

### Rent

Rent is payable weekly in advance. We prefer monthly payments by direct debit – and we'll help you set this up.

Your rent covers:

- The cost of providing your home.
- Repairs and maintenance.
- Management and service delivery.

We are a not-for-profit organisation -any surplus goes back into improving homes and services and building new homes.

### **If you're struggling to pay:**

- Contact us as soon as possible.
- We'll offer advice, support, and signposting to benefits advice or free independent help.
- It's always better to talk to us early, before the problem grows.

**You can view our 'paying your rent: an important responsibility factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## **Assigning your tenancy, lodgers and subletting**

You must not:

- Sublet your home or take in a lodger without written permission.
- Transfer your tenancy to someone else unless your agreement and the law allows it.

Our housing is for older people aged 55 or over. If you want to assign your tenancy, add a household member, or want someone to live with you, please speak to us first. We'll explain what's allowed under your tenancy.

## **Making improvements to your home**

We want you to make your home feel like your own. But if you plan any alterations, you must ask us first. This includes:

- Fitting laminate flooring.
- Fitting wall mounted equipment.
- Making changes to fixtures and fittings.

We'll confirm our permission and any conditions in writing, including whether the changes need to be removed if you move out.

## **Pets**

We know that pets can bring comfort and companionship. However, because of the nature of our housing – especially shared entrances and corridors – we can't always allow pets.

You must get written permission before keeping a pet. This applies whether you're moving in with a pet or planning to get one later.

We consider each request individually, based on:

- The type and layout of your scheme and if outdoor access is available and appropriate.
- The suitability of the pet (including its size and behaviour).
- Whether the environment is safe for both the pet and other residents.
- Evidence of responsible pet ownership, including arrangements if you are unwell or in hospital.

If approved, you must:

- Keep pets under control.
- Clean up after them.
- Prevent nuisance or damage to your home or shared areas.
- Never leave them alone for long periods.

Assistance dogs are always permitted where needed. We'll also consider applications for pets recommended by a medical practitioner for therapeutic reasons.

In upper floor apartments or blocks with no direct outdoor access, we only allow indoor house cats. We do not investigate cat fouling in outside communal areas as cats are naturally free roaming.

**You can view our 'pet ownership factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## **Relationship break-up**

If your relationship ends and you share a tenancy:

- You can agree who will remain in the home - we'll support this if there are no tenancy breaches.
- If there's no agreement, or only one person is named on the tenancy, please contact us.
- You may need legal advice or support from Citizens Advice.

In extra care schemes, decisions will also consider care and support needs and eligibility. We'll always treat your situation with sensitivity and fairness.

## **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding means protecting adults from abuse, neglect or harm. Safeguarding does not mean protecting every adult from every kind of harm or risk to their own personal safety but applies where an adult:

- Has needs for care and support (whether the local authority is meeting any of those needs).
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- As a result of those care and support need is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

We work with Lincolnshire County Council and other organisations to:

- Identify concerns.
- Respond quickly.
- Help keep people safe.



Safeguarding involves people and organisations working together to stop abuse and neglect happening. We follow the principal of “**no decision about me, without me**” – meaning we work with the person affected, listen to their wishes, and support them to make choices on their own terms wherever possible. You don’t need to be receiving care or support to be protected from abuse, neglect, or harm – **if you or someone else is at risk, please contact us.**

**You can view our ‘safeguarding factsheet’ on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is never acceptable. It affects people of all ages, backgrounds, and identities. It can be:

- Physical or sexual abuse.
- Emotional or psychological harm.
- Coercive control or isolation.
- Financial abuse or exploitation.
- Threats, intimidation or harassment.

If you are at risk, or worried about someone else, we will:

- Listen and act in confidence.
- Help create a safety plan.
- Support you to stay safe at home if possible.
- Help you access specialist services.
- Not insist on police evidence to offer support.

We also understand that not all survivors want to leave their home. We will never pressure you to decide – and we’ll support whatever feels safest and right for you.

Helpful contacts:

- [The National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#) run by Refuge, which specialises in supporting women suffering domestic violence, on **0808 2000 247**, 24 hours a day.
- [Safelives.org.uk](#) a UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse, for everyone and for good.
- [Mankind.org.uk](#) specialises in supporting men, on **01823 334244**, Monday – Friday, 10am-4pm.
- [Mensadviceline.org.uk](#) also specialises in supporting men, on **0808 8010327**, Monday – Friday 10am-5pm.
- [Galop.org.uk](#) specialises in support to LGBT + community, on **0800 999 5428** or email [help@galop.org.uk](mailto:help@galop.org.uk) for emotional and practical support.

**You can view our ‘factsheet explaining how we help support victims of domestic abuse’ on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## **Being a good neighbour**

You play a key role in keeping your scheme peaceful, respectful and safe. You must not cause, or allow others to cause:

- Harassment or abuse.
- Violence or intimidation.
- Hate related incidents.
- Excessive or deliberate noise (other than day to day living).
- Vandalism or property damage.
- Drug use or criminal activity.

If you’re affected by antisocial behaviour:

- Tell us – we’ll respond quickly to serious cases.
- We’ll work with you to agree next steps, written in an action plan.
- We may ask you to keep a record of incidents.
- We can involve the police and support agencies if needed.

Criminal behaviour should always be reported to the police using **999 in an emergency**, or **101 for non-emergency** incidents. Keep your incident or crime reference number in case you need it for insurance or follow-up.

**You can view our ‘summary of our antisocial behaviour policy factsheet’, our ‘noise nuisance factsheet’, our ‘race and hate crime factsheet; and our ‘neighbourhood service standard’ on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## **Tenancy fraud**

We take tenancy fraud seriously. This includes:

- Subletting your home without permission.
- Letting someone else live there while you live elsewhere.
- Providing false information on your housing application.
- Attempting to take over a tenancy when not eligible (e.g. after a tenant’s death).
- Accepting money to pass on tenancy keys (key selling).

**You can view our ‘tenancy fraud factsheet’ on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Part 7 Rent collection and setting

### *How your rent is calculated, reviewed and paid.*

Paying rent is a key part of your tenancy – but we know it can also raise questions or concerns, especially when finances are tight. This section explains how rent and service charges are set, what they cover, and how we can support you if your circumstances change.

### What your rent covers

Your rent helps us deliver and manage safe, good-quality homes for older people. It goes towards:

- Maintaining and managing your home.
- Repairs and some types of safety checks.
- Managing your tenancy.
- Investment in buildings, neighbourhoods and future services.
- Developing new homes.

If your scheme has shared areas or services, you may pay a service charge. This could cover things like:

- Cleaning and lighting of communal areas.
- Grounds maintenance.
- Fire alarms, door entry, or other systems.
- Scheme-based staff.
- Some types of safety checks.

Your **tenancy agreement** and **scheme-specific service charge factsheet** explain what you pay and what it covers.

### How your rent is set

We follow national rules set by the Government's Rent Standard, which is overseen by the Regulator of Social Housing. Rent levels depend on the type of tenancy and how your home was funded.

Each year, we:

- Review rent and charges.
- Write to you at least 28 days before any change.
- Clearly explain the new amount and start date.

**You can view our 'rent and service charge factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy. We have produced individual factsheets for our schemes, as service charges vary from scheme to scheme.**

## How to pay your rent

Our preferred method of payment is direct debit – it's safe, automatic, and easy to manage. If you can't pay by direct debit, please contact us – we'll help you find another suitable option. **Rent is payable in advance.**

## Help with rent and benefits

We want to make sure your home remains affordable. Before your tenancy starts, we'll:

- Check affordability with you.
- Offer a trial calculation for housing benefit or universal credit.

If you're already receiving benefits, we can:

- Help you understand your award.
- Liaise with the council or DWP on your behalf if needed.

**Important:** If your income or circumstances change, you must tell housing benefit or the DWP (for universal credit) straight away. If we believe there's been a change, we may also have a public duty to notify them.

If you're unsure what support you're entitled to, we'll help – or refer you to expert advice.

## If you're struggling to pay

We understand that financial difficulties can happen to anyone. If you're falling behind or worried about making payments:

- **Please tell us early** – the sooner we know, the more we can help.
- We'll always treat you with respect and confidentiality.
- We can agree affordable repayment plans.
- We may refer you to free, independent money advice.

Avoiding the issue can make things harder – please talk to us before it becomes a serious problem.

**You can view our 'paying your rent: an important responsibility factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Part 8 Living in your home

### *What's expected of you and how we support a safe and respectful community.*

We want everyone to feel safe, secure, and respected in their home and community. This section outlines your responsibilities as a tenant, how to look after your home, and what support we offer to keep everyone safe and comfortable.

### Looking after your home

As a tenant, you're responsible for keeping your home clean, tidy and in good decorative order. This includes:

- Taking out rubbish and recycling regularly (check what's provided at your scheme).
- Reporting any repairs promptly before damage worsens.
- Avoiding unauthorised alterations.
- Making sure you, your visitors, or pets do not damage your home or shared areas.

**Fire safety:** Shared spaces like corridors and stairwells must be kept clear of personal items, furniture, or decorations. These can block escape routes, create a trip hazard in any emergency evacuation and pose a fire hazard.

If damage is caused by you, your family, visitors, or pets, you may be recharged for repairs.

### Safety in your home

#### Electrical safety

- Never overload sockets or extension leads.
- Don't run wires under rugs or carpets.
- Switch off appliances before bed or when leaving home.
- Report flickering lights, buzzing sockets, or exposed wires.
- Use qualified electricians for any electrical work.

**You can view our 'electrical safety factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

#### Fire safety

- Keep fire doors closed – don't wedge them open – we may have installed magnetic keepers that deactivate when the fire alarm sounds.
- Never tamper with smoke detectors, sprinklers or fire doors.
- Always keep exits, hallways and stairwells clear.
- Do not store items in communal areas – they can become fuel in a fire.
- Close internal doors at night to slow the spread of fire.

- Avoid storing bottled gas or flammable liquids at home.
- Tell us if you use medical oxygen at home, so we can inform the fire and rescue service.

## Smoking

- Smoking and vaping are banned in all communal areas – it's illegal and a tenancy breach.
- If you smoke indoors, ventilate your space and avoid letting smoke drift into shared areas or neighbours. If it affects your neighbours, we may ask you to stop and use the designated smoking area.
- You'll be charged for damage or staining caused by smoke to decoration, flooring, window frames, radiators, or other fixtures.

Please do not smoke in your home for at least two hours before staff or contractor visits.

## Mobility scooters and powered equipment

- Mobility scooters, e-bikes and powered chairs must only be stored and charged in approved areas.
- Never store or charge them in corridors, communal lounges, hallways, stairwells or near exit doors.
- Contact us before purchasing one – we'll carry out a safety assessment with you.

**Fire safety:** Scooters, if involved in fire, release large amounts of highly toxic smoke and gases that can very quickly prevent you and others from safely using emergency escape routes.

This also applies to **e-bikes and e-scooters**, which must not be stored or charged in communal areas due to the high fire risk from lithium-ion batteries. If you're unsure where to store or charge your e-bike safely, speak to us first.

## Personal security and safety

- Always ask for identification before letting people in.
- Call us to verify staff or contractors if you have concerns.
- Lock shared doors after use and don't allow access to strangers.
- After time away, flush your toilet and run water to all taps and shower for two minutes.
- Turn off the water supply when away for several days (if safe to do so).
- Don't let visiting children play in shared areas.

## Regular checks you can do

- Test your smoke alarms monthly.
- Press your lifeline pendant monthly (if applicable).
- Report leaks or signs of damp straight away.
- During winter, keep your heating on low to avoid frozen pipes.

## Living well together

We want all schemes to feel welcoming and respectful. Please:

- Avoid loud music and shouting, especially at night.
- Let your neighbours know if you're having work done.
- Clean up after pets and keep them under control.
- Avoid feeding birds or leaving food outside (this can attract vermin).
- Respect shared spaces and gardens.

If problems arise, try to speak with your neighbour, or contact us – we'll help resolve the issue fairly.

Normal household activity is not anti-social behaviour – walking, closing doors, or running appliances at reasonable hours is part of everyday living.

**You can view our 'summary of our antisocial behaviour policy factsheet', our 'noise nuisance factsheet', our 'race and hate crime factsheet'; and our 'neighbourhood service standard' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Celebrating everyday contributions

We work hard to provide high-quality homes and well-managed communal areas – and many of our schemes offer lovely, shared spaces to enjoy.

But what really brings a scheme to life is the **residents who go the extra mile** – whether it's planting flowers, watering pots, painting benches, or organising coffee mornings or social events.

These thoughtful contributions go beyond expectations and help create schemes that feel welcoming, cared for and full of community spirit.

These voluntary contributions help create a sense of belonging and pride. They reflect the heart of our People, Places, Partnerships approach – and while they're never expected, they are always appreciated and add value to where you live.

## Adaptations for independent living

If you need changes to your home to help you stay independent, we're here to support you. This may include:

- Grab rails.
- Ramps.
- Widened doorways.
- Level-access showers.

Small adaptations may be funded through our budget. Larger ones will require a Disabled Facilities Grant. We'll work with you and other professionals and help you apply if needed.

**You can view our 'aids and adaptations factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Using mobility scooters in your home

If you use or plan to buy a mobility scooter or powered wheelchair, you must ask us for permission first. This is because:

- Scooters and powered chairs must not be stored in communal areas such as communal corridors or stairwells.
- Charging them incorrectly can pose a serious fire risk.
- Some schemes do not have the space or layout to support scooter use safely.

We'll ask you to complete an application and a staff member will visit to assess storage and safety. Applicants are considered on a first come, first served basis.

Please note: Communal charging in purpose-built mobility scooter stores is limited to 8am to 8pm to comply with fire safety requirements.

**You can view our 'using and storing powered vehicles in our scheme factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**



## Part 9 Repairs and maintenance

### *How to report repairs, what we're responsible for, and what you can expect from us.*

We want your home to remain safe, warm, and well maintained. Our Property and Maintenance team work hard to deliver a responsive, resident-focused service – whether it's a day-to-day repair, safety inspection, or longer-term investment.

This section explains:

- What repairs we're responsible for.
- What repairs are your responsibility.
- How to report issues and what happens next.

### **Our responsibilities**

As your landlord, we are legally responsible for:

- The structure and outside of your home, including drains, gutters, and roof.
- Water, gas, and electricity supply and related fittings.
- Bathrooms and kitchens installed by us.
- Heating and hot water systems.
- Shared areas in and around your building.
- Meeting all legal safety standards.

We follow national laws and standards, including:

- The Decent Homes Standard.
- The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018.
- The Equality Act 2010 (we'll make reasonable adjustments if needed).
- The Regulator of Social Housing's Safety and Quality Standard.
- Awaab's Law – new legal duties in October 2025.

We are currently preparing for Awaab's Law. This requires us to act within 24 hours where emergency hazards are reported – such as severe damp, mould, or a lack of essential services.

**You can view our 'emergency repair factsheet' and our 'damp and mould factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Your responsibilities

As a tenant, you are responsible for:

- Looking after your home and reporting repairs promptly.
- Carrying out small day-to-day tasks (like changing light bulbs, plugs, fuses, keys, toilet seats).
- Giving us access when needed.
- Not making alterations without permission.

If damage is caused by you, a family member or visitor, you may be charged for the repair.

**Unsure about a repair?** Ask us to check– we're happy to advise.

**You can view 'our repair service to your home factsheet' and our 'emergency repairs factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Extra help with repairs

If you are finding it difficult to carry out repairs due to your health, age, or personal circumstances, please speak to us. Under our **inclusive service delivery policy**, we may offer additional support or signpost you to the right help.

## Access to your home

You must allow us (or our contractors) access to:

- Carry out a repair.
- Complete inspections or safety checks (e.g. gas, electric, legionella).
- Ensure legal compliance and protect your safety.

We'll always give at least 24 hours' notice (except in an emergency). If access is refused, we may seek legal entry and recover any associated costs.

## Reporting a repair

- Call us on **01522 514444, Option 2**  
(9am -1pm Monday to Friday).  
24-hour emergency line (same number)
- Visit our website and complete the online repair form.
- Email us at **[repairs@lacehousing.org](mailto:repairs@lacehousing.org)** for non-emergency repairs.
- Speak to a member of staff at your scheme (if applicable).

Please include:

- A clear description of the problem.
- Where it is (e.g. bathroom tap or block entrance light).
- If it is an emergency and if your health is adversely affected by the issue.
- When someone will be home to let us in.

This helps us respond faster and send the right person with the right tools. If you're not sure if something counts as an emergency, contact us – we'd rather be told than miss a safety risk.

### Getting updates

Once we've received your repair request, we'll confirm which type of repair it is and explain when it should be carried out by. If you haven't heard anything or your appointment was missed, please call us so we can follow up straight away.

### Our repair response times

We respond to repairs based on how urgent they are:

Type	Timeframe	Examples
Emergency	Within 24 hours	No heating, electricity, water, or gas. A major leak. Severe damp or mould affecting your health. Front door won't lock. Gas leaks or carbon monoxide alarm sounding. Fire or smoke alarm failure. Blocked toilet.
Urgent	Within 5 working days	Significant mould. Toilet not flushing. Partial loss of heating.
Routine	Within 20 working days	Loose taps. Faulty extraction fans. Dripping tap.

Note: working days are Monday to Friday, not including bank holidays.

For emergency repairs, we will make the situation safe and/or secure and then return to complete any remaining work within our routine timescales. Some urgent or routine repairs may be treated as emergencies if you are particularly vulnerable or at health risk.

**You can view ‘our repair service to your home factsheet’ and our ‘emergency repairs factsheet’ on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Delays and communication

If a repair is delayed, we’ll contact you, explain the reason, and give you a new timeframe.

If the problem worsens, or your circumstances change, please let us know so we can review and reprioritise where we can.

If a repair affects multiple homes, we will notify the wider scheme.

After the repair is completed, we will send you a short text message survey to check how it went. If you tell us you’re not satisfied, we’ll follow this up and try to put things right.

## Planned maintenance and improvements

We don’t just focus on day-to-day repairs – we also carry out regular stock condition surveys to plan longer-term maintenance and improvement work to keep your home safe, warm and well-maintained.

This long-term investment planning helps us meet national standards like the **Decent Homes Standard**, spotting potential issues early (such as damp and mould), and use your feedback to shape improvements.

Each year, we include details of the planned works we expect to carry out – such as kitchen replacements, rewiring, or decorating communal areas - in our financial budget. If you’d like to know what’s planned for your scheme, please contact our Property and Maintenance Team and we’ll be happy to help.

**You can view our ‘how we look after your home – major repairs, investment, and long-term planning factsheet’ on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Compliance and access

### Gas service

If your home has gas, we are required by law to carry out a safety check each year. We will contact you to arrange an appointment. Please make sure someone is available to let the engineer in. This is to keep everyone in or connected to the building safe.

**You can view our ‘gas safety factsheet’ on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Electrical inspections

We test the electrical systems in your home at least every 5 years and inspect communal electrical systems and portable appliances regularly. These checks can take a few hours and may require temporary disconnection of power. If repairs are needed, we will arrange follow-up visits.

**You can view our 'electrical safety factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Water hygiene (safe water)

We carry out regular Legionella risk assessments of our schemes to ensure the water systems remain safe.

To reduce the risk of bacteria, our team:

- Carries out weekly flushing of water outlets in communal areas.
- Performs monthly temperature checks of communal outlets to monitor hot and cold-water systems.
- Keep detailed records in line with health and safety regulations.

You can help by:

- Running all taps and showers for two minutes after being away.
- Keeping shower heads and taps clean and free from limescale.
- Letting us know if you notice discolored or unusual smelling water.
- Letting us know if you are concerned about the temperature of your water.

**You can view our 'water hygiene factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Asbestos

Only Almond House contains some low-risk asbestos containing materials. These are safe unless disturbed and are regularly inspected. We will always use licensed contractors for any related work and keep residents fully informed.

**You can view our 'asbestos – almond house factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Condensation, damp and mould

Damp and mould can damage your home and, in some cases, affect your health. We treat all reports of damp and mould seriously and we won't need you to prove the cause. If you contact us about damp and mould:

- We'll respond promptly and assess whether it's caused by condensation, a leak, or a building defect.
- We'll take appropriate action to fix the issue and explain what work will be done and when.
- We'll check back with you to make sure the issue has been resolved and does not return.

We'll also:

- Record the issue on your property file.
- Set up a damp and mould case for monitoring and reporting to our Audit and Compliance Sub-committee.
- Offer further support if you or someone in your household is more at risk from damp related health issues.

**You can view our 'damp and mould factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Access

If we cannot access your home for an important safety check – such as gas servicing or electrical testing – we will follow up promptly and may take legal action if needed to meet our legal obligations. Missed appointments are monitored by our team and must be rearranged as soon as possible.

## Charging you for repairs or replacements

We may charge you for:

- Repairs caused by accidental or deliberate damage.
- Work needed due to unauthorised alterations or poor DIY.
- End-of-tenancy repairs to return your home to our **property standard**.
- Replacement of lost keys or fobs.
- Missed appointments (if you didn't let us know in advance).

We'll always explain why we are applying a charge and give you the right to appeal.

## Personal items in shared areas

To reduce the risk of fire and make sure communal areas stay safe and accessible, please don't leave personal belongings in shared parts of the scheme, including corridors and stairwells.

If we find items in these areas:

- We'll remove them for safety reasons and let you know that we have done so
- We'll store them for 14 days.
- A removal and disposal charge may apply.

## Contractors and how they work

Our contractors are expected to:

- Be polite and respectful.
- Show identification.
- Explain what they're doing.
- Leave your home tidy.
- Let you know if they need to return.

If you're ever unhappy with the contractor's behaviour or the work carried out, please contact us – we'll investigate and follow up.

**You can view our 'contractor code of conduct' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Part 10 Use and safety in shared areas and communal spaces

### *Keeping shared spaces clean, safe, and welcoming for everyone.*

We want every resident to feel proud of their surroundings. That includes the communal areas you share with your neighbours – such as:

- Corridors, entrance halls, lounges, and stairwells.
- Shared gardens, bin stores, and parking areas.
- Paths, paving and green spaces around your scheme.

We're responsible for keeping these spaces in good condition – but we also ask that everyone treats them with care and respect.

### **Cleaning of communal areas**

We arrange regular cleaning of communal areas such as:

- Internal hallways and stairwells.
- Shared lounges.
- Entrance doors, lifts and handrails.
- Communal laundry rooms (if applicable).

The level and frequency of cleaning may vary between schemes, depending on the size, layout and use of the scheme and the amount of service charge collected for each scheme.

We monitor cleaning standards regularly– but please let us know if anything is missed.

To help our cleaning contractor do their job, please avoid leaving personal items in shared areas.

### **Gardening of communal areas**

We're responsible for maintaining the communal gardens and landscaped areas around your scheme. This includes:

- Cutting grass.
- Pruning shrubs and hedges.
- Removing or treating weeds and moss on paths and other paved areas as required.
- Removing litter during visits.
- Keeping path safe during autumn and winter.

We'll do our best to keep these spaces tidy and attractive throughout the year. You can help by:

- Not placing personal items, ornaments, or decorations in communal gardens.
- Avoiding bird feeders, which can attract vermin.
- Asking us what's included at your specific scheme.



**You can view our ‘neighbourhood service standard’ on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## **Parking**

Our schemes offer shared, **unallocated parking** on a first-come, first-served basis. To help keep parking areas safe and accessible:

- Only park roadworthy, taxed, and insured vehicles.
- Don't store or repair vehicles in scheme car parks or communal areas.
- Avoid blocking fire routes, paths or access points.
- Caravans, boats and trailers are not allowed unless agreed in writing.
- Park respectfully within the spaces provided.

If you have a blue badge, please let us know – we'll do our best to support your needs.

## **Bulk waste**

- Please arrange collection through your local council.
- Leave large items outside and clearly labelled with details of who the item belongs to and when it is due to be collected.
- Don't block paths, doorways, or fire routes.

## **Graffiti**

- Offensive or obscene graffiti will be removed within 24 hours.
- All other graffiti is removed within 7 days.

## **Quarterly inspections**

We carry out quarterly health and safety inspections at every scheme. These visits help us check:

- Safety hazards and fire risks.
- Cleanliness.
- Damage or repairs.
- That CCTV systems are working correctly.

We record actions and follow them up until resolved. If you see a problem in between inspections, just let us know.

## Fire safety and shared spaces

To keep everyone safe, communal areas must be kept completely clear of:

- Shoes, furniture, ornaments outside of front doors.
- Bikes, scooters or walking aids.
- Boxes, rubbish or recycling.
- Plant pots or decorations.

Even small items can block escape routes, create trip hazards or add to the 'fire load' in the event of a fire. We may remove any items found – and charge for disposal where necessary.

## Taking part in your community

Resident involvement meetings take place throughout the year. These meetings:

- Keep everyone informed about the scheme and local services.
- Provide a space to raise questions, ideas or concerns.
- Give you a voice to influence local decisions and standards.

All residents are encouraged to attend and take part. Your views help shape how we deliver and improve services.

You can also get involved in wider **policy consultation** and **service improvement reviews**.

**To find out more, see our 'getting involved – help shape our services factsheet' – available on our website or by request.**

## Part 11 Moving to another home

### *Transfers and applying to move.*

We understand that your housing needs may change over time – for example, if your health changes, you want to be closer to family, or a different type of property would better support your wellbeing.

While we aim to help wherever possible, demand for our homes is high and only a limited number become available each year.

### Transferring within Lace

You can request a transfer to another property in certain situations, including:

- A change in your health or mobility.
- A need for more accessible or adapted accommodation.
- A serious issue affecting your safety or wellbeing.
- A request to move to a different scheme or area we manage.
- To benefit from the extra care housing environment.

If you're considering a move, please contact our Housing and Support team. We'll:

- Talk through your circumstances.
- Explain how transfer decisions are made.
- Let you know what information we need (e.g. medical evidence).
- Check if your rent account is up to date and your home meets our **property standard**.

All transfer requests are reviewed fairly and in line with our housing eligibility policies. If you're on our waiting list and a home becomes available, we'll:

- Contact you to check if you're still interested.
- Carry out a pre-tenancy assessment to make sure you still meet eligibility criteria and can afford to pay the rent and charges.
- Arrange a viewing of the property.
- Give you **three working days** to accept or decline.
- Confirm a tenancy start date, once the home is vacant and ready to let.

## Applying to join the local authority housing register

You may also apply to join your local council's housing register, which may give you access to a wider range of social housing.

We recommend applying directly to your council and explaining your situation in full.

If you need help, we may be able to support your application by:

- Providing tenancy history.
- Issuing a letter of support (where appropriate).
- Helping you gather any necessary information.

Please note that:

- Applying does not guarantee a move.
- You are responsible for all moving costs.

## Support and advice

If you're thinking about moving, but you're not sure whether it's the right step or if a transfer is possible, please speak to us. We'll offer kind, honest, and practical advice about:

- What housing options may be available.
- Whether you're eligible for a move.
- What paperwork, tenancy conditions or rent account criteria may apply.
- Whether alternative support (e.g. adaptations or wellbeing support) could help you stay in your current home more comfortably.

We're here to help you make informed decisions – even if a move isn't possible straight away.

**You can view our 'how we allocate our housing factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Part 12 Ending your tenancy

### *What to do if you – or your family – need to bring your tenancy to an end.*

There may come a time when you – or someone acting on your behalf – needs to end your tenancy. Whatever the reason, we'll do our best to make the process as clear and supportive as possible.

### Giving notice

To end your tenancy, you must give us at least four weeks' notice in writing by completing our **end of tenancy form**. You'll also need to provide a **forwarding address**, so we can contact you and issue final correspondence.

Once we receive your form, we will:

- Confirm your tenancy end date.
- Let you know how and when to return your keys.
- Arrange a property inspection.
- Explain what you need to do before moving out.

Tenancies normally end on a **Sunday**. All keys must be returned by **10am the following Monday** to avoid further rent charges.

If formal notice is not given, **rent will continue to be charged**, and you will remain legally responsible for the tenancy – including rent, property condition, and its security.

### Before you move out - your responsibilities

Before you leave your home, you must:

- Remove **all personal belongings**, furniture, carpets and curtains (unless otherwise agreed).
- Clean the property thoroughly – including flooring, kitchen and bathroom.
- Leave the decoration in good condition.
- Make sure all windows and doors are secure.
- Return all keys, and fobs.

Your home should be returned in line with our **property standard**, ready for the next resident. If repairs, clearance, or cleaning are needed, you will be charged for the cost.

If you accept any items from a previous tenant (like carpets or blinds), they become your responsibility to remove unless agreed otherwise in writing.

## Rent and final account

Before your tenancy ends:

- Make sure your rent account is up to date.
- Pay any outstanding charges or charges for repairs or damage.
- Contact us if you need help understanding your balance.

We'll support you and your family – and we'll always approach tenancy endings with care and respect.

## Utilities and services

Before you move, don't forget to:

- Notify your energy and water providers.
- Take final meter readings.
- Contact your local council (for council tax and benefits).
- Cancel any phone, broadband, or alarm monitoring services.
- Update or cancel your TV licence.

You may also wish to use Royal Mail's redirection service, so you don't miss any post.

## Succession of tenancy

If a tenant passes away, another person may be eligible to take over the tenancy. This is called **succession**.

Succession is governed by law and the terms of the tenancy. We will:

- Review who was living at the property.
- Assess whether they meet the succession criteria (e.g. spouse, civil partner, or a close family member).
- Handle all conversations with care and sensitivity.
- Confirm the outcome in writing.

If succession is granted, we'll clearly explain your rights, options and next steps.

## When we may end your tenancy

In rare cases, we may need to end a tenancy. This could happen if:

- The property is no longer your main home.
- There are serious breaches of tenancy.
- Your care or support no longer comply with our housing eligibility policies.
- Legal succession is not confirmed following a tenant's death.

If this happens, we will:

- Explain concerns in writing.
- Try to resolve the issue first, by using our clear 3-stage warning process.
- Only take legal action if considered necessary.
- Follow the correct legal procedure, respecting your rights at every step.

**You can view our 'ending your tenancy factsheet' and our 'former tenant debt factsheet' on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## Part 13 Governance and Regulation

*How we're run, who holds us to account, and how residents influence what we do.*

### Who we are

We are a **not-for-profit housing association** with over 60 years of experience in providing homes and services for older people.

Our work is overseen by a **voluntary Board of Directors**, who are responsible for setting our strategy, monitoring performance, and ensuring strong leadership. Board members bring a wide range of professional experience and community knowledge and share a deep commitment to supporting older people.

Day-to-day leadership is provided by a small **executive team**, working alongside managers in housing, support, property and finance.

Our **Chief Executive** plays a key role in building partnerships between **housing, health, and care**. This helps ensure that older people's housing needs are recognised within wider support systems, especially in areas such as preventing isolation, improving wellbeing and supporting independence.

We have formally adopted:

- **The National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020.**
- **The NHF Code of Conduct 2022.**

These codes guide us to make decisions, govern responsibly and remain open and accountable.

### Executive responsibility

Our Director of Operations is the senior lead for:

- Health and safety compliance and assessing risks related to health and safety, specifically to tenants.
- The Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards.
- The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
- Data Protection (as our Data Protection Officer).

This ensures a clear line of accountability for **resident safety, regulatory compliance, and continuous improvement**.



## Who regulates us

We are regulated by the:

- The **Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)** – who sets and monitors the Consumer and Economic Standards covering areas such as the quality and safety of homes, tenant engagement and financial viability.
- The **Housing Ombudsman** – who investigate complaints and promote fair effective complaint handling.

We are required to:

- Regularly **self-assess** against the Consumer and Economic Standards.
- Publish an annual **Complaint Handling Performance and Learning report**.
- Monitor and report on **Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)** – published on our website and in our annual report to residents.

From October 2025, we will also begin publishing:

- Key performance indicators such as average repair time, arrears, and safety compliance.
- A summary of emergency hazards addressed under Awaab's Law, reported to our Audit and Compliance Sub-committee and included in future annual reports to residents.

You can find more information on both regulators at:

[www.gov.uk/rsh](http://www.gov.uk/rsh)

[www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

## Resident involvement and influence

Our approach to governance is shaped by **People, Places and Partnerships**.

We believe residents, staff, and local services all play a role in shaping safe, welcoming communities.

Our **Chief Executive's partnership work** helps us:

- Respond to emerging needs.
- Connect residents with wider support.
- Ensure older people's voices are heard in local planning and decision-making.

We actively encourage residents to have a say by:

- Attending scheme level meetings and feedback sessions.
- Taking part in surveys, working groups, or service reviews.
- Giving feedback or making a complaint at any time.

While we previously ran a formal scrutiny group we now focus on more flexible, local involvement. This allows residents to engage in ways that feel relevant and manageable.

## Who can get involved

We welcome feedback from:

- Residents.
- Family members or carers.
- People with different lived experiences, communication needs or diverse backgrounds.

If you would like to be more involved, please contact our Housing and Support team – we'd love to hear from you.

## Major repairs and investment in our homes

As part of our duties under the RSH Safety and Quality Standard, we carry out:

- Regular stock condition surveys.
- Long-term investment planning for major repairs and improvements.

This ensures homes remain safe, in good repair, and suitable for older people's evolving needs. These plans are regularly reviewed by senior staff to ensure they provide:

- Good value for money.
- Effective risk reduction.
- Improvements shaped by resident feedback.

**You can view our ‘how we look after your home – major repairs, investment, and long-term planning factsheet’ on our website, or we can send you a copy.**

## **Assurance and continuous improvement**

We regularly review our performance in:

- Repairs and property safety checks.
- Resident satisfaction and the Tenant Satisfaction Measures.
- Complaint handling and learning.
- Financial performance and value for money.
- Governance and audit.

This is reviewed through:

- Internal reporting.
- Resident feedback and scheme meetings.
- Oversight by our Board and Audit and Compliance Sub-committee.

## Part 14: Frequently asked questions & glossary of common terms

We know that sometimes housing terms or tenancy processes can be confusing – especially if this is your first time living in specialist housing. This section brings together frequently asked questions and explains common terms you may come across in your tenancy, correspondence, or conversation with us.

### Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

#### General tenancy conditions

##### **Q. Can I leave my home unoccupied for a while?**

Yes – but please let us know if your home will be empty for an extended period (such as a hospital stay or to visit family). You're still responsible for rent, service charges, and securing the property.

##### **Q. Do I need to arrange my own insurance?**

Yes – you must arrange home contents insurance to cover your belongings, flooring, and decorations. We only insure the building, not your personal items.

##### **Q. Can I have a pet?**

Possibly – but you must get our written permission first. We consider each request individually. Assistance dogs are always allowed.

##### **Q. Can someone else speak to you on my behalf?**

Yes – with permission. A family member, carer or advocate can contact us, and we may ask you to confirm your consent in writing.

##### **Q. Can I make changes or improvements to my home?**

Yes, but you must ask for our permission first. This includes things like fitting laminate flooring or mounting items on walls.

##### **Q. Can I sublet or take in a lodger?**

No – subletting is not allowed unless we give written permission. Letting someone else live there without consent may be tenancy fraud.

##### **Q. What is tenancy fraud?**

This includes giving false information, subletting without permission, or trying to take over a tenancy unlawfully. We take it seriously.

### **Q. Can I have a mobility scooter?**

If you use or plan to get a mobility scooter, you must apply for permission first. Our preferred option is for you to store and charge scooters in a purpose-built mobility scooter store, where available. These are designed to contain a fire for up to one hour and meet the highest safety standards. Charging is only permitted between 8am and 8pm, in line with the National Fire Chiefs Council guidance. We recognise, however, that some residents rely on their scooters to reach their home. In these cases, we may allow storage inside your apartment – but only after we complete a Mobility Scooter Risk Assessment to ensure it can be done safely.

## **Rent, charges and financial help**

### **Q. How is my rent set?**

We follow the national Rent Standard rules. Your rent is reviewed each year, and we'll give you written notice at least 28 days in advance of any changes.

### **Q. What should I do if I'm struggling to pay rent?**

Tell us straight away – we'll help you explore options and support. Don't wait until the problem becomes serious.

### **Q. What is a service charge?**

A regular charge that covers the cost of shared or communal services – such as cleaning, grounds maintenance, or alarm systems. Your tenancy agreement will explain what applies to you.

## **Repairs, maintenance and safety**

### **Q. Who is responsible for repairs?**

We look after the structure and essential services; you are responsible for small day-to-day repairs. We explain what falls under each in this handbook and supporting factsheet.

### **Q. How do I report damp or mould?**

Email us at [repairs@lacehousing.org](mailto:repairs@lacehousing.org) or call us on **01522 514444 (Option 2)**. We'll take it seriously, assess the cause, and explain how and when it will be resolved.

### **Q. What happens if I can't give access for a repair or safety check?**

Please tell us as soon as possible. If we can't access your home for things like gas or electrical checks, we may need to take legal steps to meet our safety duties.

## Moving, succession and tenancy changes

### **Q. How do I apply to move?**

Contact our Housing and Support team to ask about a transfer or local housing register. We'll explain what's available and whether you're eligible.

### **Q. What is succession?**

Succession is when a tenancy passes to a spouse, partner or family member after the tenant's death – depending on the tenancy type and legal rules.

### **Q. What is assignment?**

Assignment means legally transferring your tenancy to another person. This is only permitted in limited situations and must be approved by us.

## **Community and getting involved**

### **Q: Can residents get involved in helping improve their scheme?**

Yes - and many already do. Residents take great pride in their community, arranging social events, improving gardens, or supporting neighbours. These voluntary contributions make a huge difference to the life of the scheme – bringing people together and helping communal space thrive. If you'd like to get involved, speak to your Housing Manager or Extra Care Manager.

## Glossary of common terms

**Assignment:** When a tenancy is legally transferred to another person. This is only permitted in limited situations and must be approved by us.

**Asbestos:** A building material used in the past but now banned. We only have asbestos-containing materials at one scheme – Almond House – where it is safely managed and poses no risk if left undisturbed. Residents of Almond House are given clear information about where asbestos may be present and how to avoid disturbing it and a separate factsheet ‘Asbestos at Almond House’ is available on our website or on request.

**Awaab’s Law:** A new legal duty (effective 27 October 2025) requiring social landlords to investigate and act on certain health hazards (like damp and mould) within strict timeframes.

**Decant:** A temporary move to another property if your home needs major work. We will fully support you if this is ever needed.

**Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG):** Funding available through the council to support major adaptations that help you remain independent at home.

**Equality Act 2010:** A UK law that protects people from discrimination and requires organisations like us to make reasonable adjustments for disabled tenants.

**Mobility Scooter Risk Assessment:** A review we carry out to ensure scooters are stored and charged safely, in line with fire regulations.

**Nomination Rights:** A formal agreement between a housing association and the local council. It means that when a property becomes available, the landlord must ask the local council to nominate applicants from their housing register before offering the home more widely.

**PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan):** A plan for residents who may need help leaving their home in an emergency. It forms part of our person-centred risk assessment – a tool we use to support your independence while safeguarding against fire or other health and safety risks.

**Property Standard:** The minimum condition we expect our homes to meet at the start and end of every tenancy – safe, clean, and ready to move into.

**Recharge:** A cost we ask tenants to pay for repairs not covered by us – e.g. damage, lost keys, or cleaning after moving out.

**Rent Standard:** National rules set by the government, overseen by the Regulator of Social Housing about how social landlords calculate and review rent.

**Safeguarding:** Protecting vulnerable people from abuse or neglect. We work with the local authority and other partners to respond quickly and appropriately. We follow the principal of “no decision about me, without me” – meaning we work with the person affected, listen to their wishes, and support them to make choices on their own terms wherever possible.

**Section 11 (Landlord and Tenant Act 1985):** The law that sets out our responsibility for repairs to your home.

**Service Charge:** A regular payment that covers the cost of shared or communal services – like cleaning, grounds maintenance, or alarm systems.

**Inclusive Service Delivery Policy:** Our approach to providing extra support to tenants who need help with things like reporting repairs or understanding responsibilities.

**TSMs (Tenant Satisfaction Measures):** National standards introduced in 2023 to measure how well landlords listen, respond and maintain homes. Results are published each year.



## Part 15: Contact us

### *How to reach us, and the help we can offer.*

We want it to be easy for you to get in touch – whether you have a question, need support, or wish to give feedback.

You can contact us in the way that works best for you:

### **Ways to contact us**

#### **By phone:**

General Enquiries – 01522 514444

9am – 1pm, Monday to Friday.

For emergency repairs outside these office hours.

Call 01522 514444 followed by Option 2.

#### **By e-mail:**

General housing enquiries - [housing@lacehousing.org](mailto:housing@lacehousing.org)

(Non-urgent) Repairs and maintenance reports – [repairs@lacehousing.org](mailto:repairs@lacehousing.org)

#### **Via our website:**

<http://www.lacehousing.org>

### **Housing with Extra Care**

Each scheme has its own local contact number.

- Olsen Court – 01522 522458
- Brick Kiln Place – 01476 516358
- Diamond Place – 01673 353122
- Worth Court – 01778 423138

Opening hours: 9am to 3.30pm Monday to Friday (Excluding bank holidays)

*Please check with your scheme directly for any local variations.*

## **What you can expect from us**

When you contact us, we aim to:

- Answer phone calls and emails promptly.
- Be friendly, respectful, and professional.
- Keep you informed if we need to investigate something.
- Pass your enquiry to the right team member if needed.

If you would like a relative, carer, or advocate to speak to us on your behalf please let us know.

We may ask you to confirm this in writing, so we can speak to them confidently and securely.

## **Accessible communication**

We are committed to making communication work for everyone. We can provide information in:

- Large print.
- Easy read.
- Another language.

Just tell us what works best for you – we'll do our best to meet your needs.

## **Communicating with us and meeting diverse needs.**

We want all residents to feel respected, heard, and supported. We recognise that residents have different communication needs and personal circumstances, and we are committed to providing accessible services.

We can provide information and documents in a range of formats, including large print, easy-read, or translated versions. If you need extra help to understand something or access services, you're welcome to involve a family member, friend or advocate to speak on your behalf.

If you have a particular communication preference or need additional support to manage your lease or understand your rights and responsibilities, please let us know – we'll do our best to meet your needs.