



Pre-tenancy service fact sheet getting your tenancy off to a good start

The aim of our pre-tenancy service policy is to get your tenancy off to a good start and to let you know about the services we provide. It is important for us to understand your needs and make sure you understand the obligations of our tenancy contract.

Pre-tenancy contact

Following selection/shortlisting for one of our properties, we will contact you by phone or letter to arrange a visit to your home to review your application, or for our extra care schemes we may invite you to the scheme. This allows us to assess your current housing, support and care needs. During this contact we will check your application meets the requirements of our housing eligibility policy and scheme eligibility criteria. We will also carry out an assessment on whether you can afford to pay the weekly rent. You will need to meet the following conditions before proceeding with any offer of accommodation:

- have an active account that allows direct debits;
- be able to demonstrate that you can afford the rent and manage household costs. We will normally ask to see your last two month's bank account statements;
- complete an income and expenditure sheet to assist with determining your ability to pay the rent;
- can pay the 1st rent payment in advance of the proposed contract date as set out in our home visit letter, this will be a minimum of one month's rent; and
- can provide documents in support of your Right to Rent under the Immigration Act 2014.

We may make a verbal offer subject to any other references that we take up, such as to your current landlord, or support worker, if they have not already been obtained. However, if for any reason we do not feel you meet our allocation policy, or the scheme's eligibility criteria, and we are unable to accept your application we will tell you the reasons why. If you disagree with our decision, you can request an appeal.

The tenancy contract explains your rights and responsibilities

You should read the draft copy of our tenancy contract to make sure you can comply with our tenancy conditions. When you sign your tenancy contract, you agree to make sure that you comply with our terms and conditions. This includes paying your rent in full and on time. If your rent is charged weekly, it is due on or before the Monday of each week. We prefer rent to be paid calendar monthly by direct debit on the 1st of each month.

Getting prepared to move in

During this time we will try and answer any questions you have about the scheme and property that you are being considered for.

We may arrange for you to view the property with the outgoing resident. If they have already left the property, we will arrange a viewing once the repairs to the property are underway or have been completed. If after viewing, you are not sure whether you want to move to the property, we will allow you up to 3 working days to decide before moving to the next applicant.

If you think you may be entitled to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit we will take your current income details and complete a benefit trial calculation. This will give you an indication of the amount you will be entitled to, so that you can check you can afford the rent and other household and support costs. Before signing the tenancy contract with us, you should make a claim for Housing Benefit at your local council office or if you are already in receipt of Universal Credit you should let the DWP know that you have a change in your circumstances.

If you go on to sign a tenancy contract with us and you expect that all your rent will be covered by Housing Benefit we will ask you to bring a receipt confirming that a claim has been made. If you are entitled to receive Housing Benefit we will normally ask you to have this paid directly to you and you pay your rent in full to us.

If you are entitled to Universal Credit this will normally be paid to you and you will need to pay your rent in full to us. In some circumstances the DWP will let you have the housing element of Universal Credit paid direct to your Landlord and we will discuss this with you as part of our pre-tenancy service.

Even if you are entitled to full Housing Benefit or the full amount of the housing element of Universal Credit you may still need to contribute towards your housing costs (ineligible costs). We will let you know if this is the case.

We recommend that you purchase home content insurance to cover your possessions and accidental damage such as broken windows, fire or flood. We have buildings insurance on your home, but this only covers the structure of the property not your personal possessions.

Signing the tenancy contract

Once the repairs are finished we will complete the tenancy paperwork with you electronically. We will also set the direct debit up electronically. We will then meet you at your new home and carry out a full inspection of the property to confirm you are happy that it meets our property standard. If you do not feel it meets the standard we will ask you why. If this cannot be resolved at the time we will make arrangements for a member of our property services team to visit, to listen to your concerns.

We will also ask you to check for any damage or repairs that have gone unnoticed. We will allow you a further 28 days to check for any damage that we missed during our inspection, after which you will be held responsible for any damage or wilful neglect identified at the property. You will be charged for the cost of putting it right.

We will also explain how to report repairs to us and what you need to do if you want to carry out any alterations to your home.

Property Standard

You will be given a copy of our property standard QP27. This provides details of the condition we aim to meet when carrying out repairs to our empty homes. We do not provide carpets, curtains or white goods (except cookers on some schemes) and it is your responsibility to furnish and decorate your new home.

What you need to do before signing the tenancy contract

Ensure you have supplied us with documents required regarding the right to rent Immigration Act 2014.

Pay your first rent payment, as outlined in your offer letter, at least 48 hours prior to signing the tenancy contract. You must make this payment even if you think you will be entitled to housing benefit.

If you are going to pay your rent through Housing Benefit please bring a receipt to confirm you have made an application to the Housing Benefit department. If you are claiming Universal Credit please bring the DWP reference number provided when you applied on-line.

Once you have moved in

We want to make sure your tenancy is running smoothly.

We will come and see you or ring you, once you have settled in. We will check that rent payment arrangements have been finalised and we will also discuss any queries you have about the property or our services.

Please do not report any repairs to us at this visit instead report any repairs by telephoning or emailing repairs@lacehousing.org