

CORNWALL
HOUSING

Tenants handbook



A CORNWALL
COUNCIL COMPANY

cornwallhousing.org.uk

Welcome to our Tenancy Handbook, which provides you with some useful information to help you enjoy living in your home and community.

It explains:

- Who we are; our commitment to you and our expectations of you
- How to pay your rent
- How to report a repair
- Frequently asked questions (FAQ)
- Safety in the community
- How to get involved
- How to contact us
- Moving into your home

We will always keep our website up to date with the most current information. This should be your first port of call with any queries www.cornwallhousing.org.uk. We recognise not everyone has access to the internet. We can make information available in a more suitable format on request.

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Who we are

Our commitment to you and our expectations of you

Cornwall Housing Ltd is both a landlord and an agent to Cornwall Council. We will either manage your tenancy on behalf of Cornwall Council or as your direct landlord.

Your tenancy agreement is the legal contract binding you and the landlord with certain rights and responsibilities. Please keep it in a safe place and read through in detail at the earliest opportunity.

Our commitment to you

Your tenancy agreement sets out the full conditions but in brief we will:

- Ensure our services are accessible to all
- Treat you with dignity and respect
- Use language that is easy to understand
- Be open and honest
- Maintain your confidentiality
- Listen to your views
- Meet your needs by offering a range of translation services
- Inform you of any changes in central or local government legislation that will affect either your tenancy, or how we manage your tenancy
- Give you options for how and when you can contact us

When you do, we will aim to:

- Answer the telephone within 20 seconds
- Acknowledge emails and letters within three working days
- Deal with issues fairly and provide you with clear information



When visiting your home we will always try to make an appointment first. If an appointment has not been made we will always offer to return if the visit is inconvenient to you.

When calling at your home we will:

- Carry and display our identification card
- Treat your home with respect

If you would prefer an officer of the same sex to deal with your enquiry and visit you please let us know. Unfortunately we are not able to offer this service for some building trades but one of our female officers can be present with you when this is undertaken if you would like.

Our expectations of you

- Look after your home (and garden if you have one) and return it in a good condition
- Allow us to conduct annual safety inspections and complete any works to keep your home safe and secure
- Treat your neighbours and our staff with courtesy and respect
- Pay your rent
- Complete any repairs you are responsible for or inform us to action repairs we are responsible for
- Ask permission prior to conducting any interior or exterior alterations
- Inform us of any change in your financial or personal circumstances

How to pay your rent

You can pay the rent for your home by:

- Telephone using a debit or credit card on 0300 1234 161
- Rent payment card at any post office in the country
- Rent payment card on the Allpay App on your smart phone or tablet or online at www.allpayments.net
- Cash, cheque, debit or credit card at any of the Council's one stop shops
- At any newsagent or supermarket displaying the Paypoint logo
- Direct debit – the easiest way to pay (please speak to your rent management officer)
- Standing order – your payment can be sent on any day of the week or month

Difficulties in paying?

We understand that many people have difficulty in paying bills sometimes. If bills are left unpaid the situation often gets worse. We want to help you avoid this.

If you experience any difficulty in paying your rent please contact us immediately. We have specialist officers who can provide you with advice and ways to help. You may be entitled to Housing Benefit. Please visit the Council's website for more information www.cornwall.gov.uk/housing or phone us on **0300 1234 161**.

Should you want independent advice, local agencies and the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) amongst others can help. Their advice is confidential, and they can be called on 0344 111 444 (CAB).

What happens if you refuse to pay?

If you do not pay your rent on time you will be in rent arrears. We will take action to recover arrears. Please get in touch with us before this situation is likely to occur, we do not want you to fall into arrears and we are here to help.

But should we have to take action to recover these arrears we will:

- Write to you – telling you how much is owed and ask you to pay or contact your Rent Management Officer to make an agreement
- Call you or visit you – to discuss the arrears and a way forward
- Write to you again - telling you how much is owed and ask you to pay or contact your Rent Management Officer to make an agreement. Failure to contact us or rectify the arrears will result in you being served a 'Notice of Seeking Possession' or 'Notice of Possession Proceedings' on your home (the last step before court action). If it gets to this stage, you may be about to lose your home. But you can still stop further action by contacting us to pay the arrears in full or making an agreement to pay
- Further failure to pay will see us taking you to court and a possession claim being issued. The court will order you to pay your arrears and court costs of a minimum of £394.50
- We may then request an eviction. If evicted you will still be expected to pay your arrears

We will always be there to give you the chance to pay your arrears. Your Rent Management Officer will be able to provide you with the support you need to resolve your issues and sustain your tenancy. If however, you choose not to interact with us, we will evict you and recover the monies owed. Remember it is always best to speak to us first on **0300 1234 161** if you have any difficulties in paying.



How to report a repair

Accidents and breakages happen. Boilers, gas supplies and electrical points all need maintenance and servicing. We are committed to conducting all repairs we are responsible for quickly and wherever possible in one visit. We ask you to pay similar attention with repairs and maintenance you are responsible for.

Our responsibilities

- The structure and exterior of the building (roofs, ceilings, window frames, external doors, gutters, outside pipes)
- Kitchen and Bathroom fixtures (basins, sinks, toilets, baths)
- Cornwall Housing owned heating and water heating equipment
- Cornwall Housing owned electrical wiring, gas and water pipes
- Communal halls*, paving, shared gardens, parking areas and rubbish storage areas
- Communal areas* around your home (stairs, lifts, landings, lighting, entrances)

Your responsibilities

- Interior decoration (painting walls – be aware we may ask you to paint them back to the neutral colour when you leave)
- Minor interior works and repairs i.e light bulbs, fluorescent tubes and fuses
- Maintenance of your garden (if you have one), bushes, hedges and trees
- Regular ventilation of your property – to prevent mould
- Allow us access to conduct servicing of gas, oil, solid fuel, water or heating appliances owned by us

Please note: The rent you pay covers these repairs unless they are due to damage or neglect by you, your family, visitors or pets. If the repair is the result of neglect or deliberate damage we may do the work and charge you for it.

*The service charges (if applicable) must be paid to facilitate these actions.

To report a repair:

t: 0300 1234 161 or

e: info@cornwallhousing.org.uk

Please note:

Emergency repairs should not be reported online.

Emergency calls can be made outside of regular office hours.

An 'emergency' is counted as:

- A serious threat to your health and safety
- Major damage to the structure of the property
- Total prolonged loss of services such as gas, electricity, water that results in a serious impact to immediate health or safety
- You are homeless tonight due to not having suitable accommodation available for your occupation

Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

What happens if?

You want to decorate or make changes to your home

For minor internal decoration such as painting, please do so. We want you to feel comfortable and 'at home'.

However more detailed DIY needs our permission. Why is this? You may want to put a new bathtub in – that is fantastic but we need to check the installation meets our health and safety standards and that the installation is done properly. If it isn't it may damage the home and result in additional unexpected charges to you.

Changing electric sockets may seem to be an easy job but it could affect the safe wiring of your home, placing you in danger.

We want your home to be as comfortable as possible, but it has to be safe. Therefore for any of the following changes you must get in touch with us beforehand and ask permission to do so.

Get in touch if you wish to do any of the following:

- Any addition or alteration to our fixtures or fittings, such as replacing kitchen doors, units or bathroom suites
- Any addition or alteration connected with providing services to your home, such as a new gas fire, extra radiators, new boiler or heating systems
- Erecting a garage, greenhouse, shed or putting in a pond
- Carrying out any structural alteration to a property such as removing a wall
- Building a new car parking space
- Placing a radio, TV aerial or satellite dish
- External painting of the home or placement of new fencing
- Any alterations to the electrical switches or sockets in your home

If you wish to do any of the above, call us for permission and advice on **0300 1234 161**.

You want a pet

You may need permission for a pet in your home. This is for both safety and maintenance purposes. If you choose to get one without permission you may be in breach of your tenancy agreement. Please refer to the Cornwall Housing Pet and Animal Policy which sets out groups of pets or animals that tenants in different types of properties are allowed to keep without permission.

You lose your keys

Get in touch with us. We will open the door, change the lock and provide you with new keys – but we will charge you for this service. If you lose communal keys, we will change all communal locks (for safety) – this may incur a further charge.

You find mould and condensation

To prevent mould (black and green substance) your home needs be heated and ventilated properly.

Top tips are:

- Allow plenty of air circulation regularly in your home. i.e if a dry day, open the windows
- Keep your home warm
- Do not use bottled gas or paraffin heaters inside
- Dry clothes outside (where possible)
- Ensure appliances such as a tumble dryer are externally vented
- Leave a 2inch gap between the wall and any cupboards and wardrobes
- Open vents on windows (if fitted)
- Wipe down a bath or shower after use
- Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed (to prevent moist air flowing through the home)

If you find mould, treat it by washing down the walls and window frames with an anti-fungal solution (i.e Milton anti-fungal). There are also anti-fungal paints that can be used. If you continue to have problems please call the repairs team.

The glass in the windows or doors breaks

If the external glass in your windows or doors is broken, we will board them up or re-glaze to maintain the security of your home.

We will only replace broken glass free of charge where a crime reference number can be provided (a crime reference number is given to you by the police when you report a crime).

For internal glass breakages you may be able to claim off your home insurance.

Any other questions

These and many other questions are answered in more detail on the Cornwall Housing website. Check it out, and if you still have a question, call us on **0300 1234 161**.

Safety in the community

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

We are committed to making estates and properties that we manage and own, safe places to live. We want you to be able to live in your home free from anti-social behaviour (ASB). If there are issues that are causing upset but outside of severe harassment, physical violence, or where the harassment is discriminatory in nature then your housing officer will be able to work with all parties to reach a solution for all. If the anti-social behaviour is high level or persists, a neighbourhood enforcement officer will be assigned.

Further information can be found on our website www.cornwallhousing.org.uk/council-housing/anti-social-behaviour where there are facilities for reporting incidents and detailed guidance. You can also email info@cornwallhousing.org.uk or call **0300 1234 161**. If you are ever concerned for your safety in an emergency situation dial 999.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is about protecting children, young people and vulnerable people from abuse and neglect. This may take many forms including physical, psychological and emotional abuses.

If you have concerns about a child or vulnerable adult or are experiencing abuse or neglect and would like advice you can contact one of our dedicated safeguarding teams. All concerns will be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively and as confidentially as possible.

“ Anyone can suffer abuse. Everyone has the right to be safe, no matter who they are or what their circumstances. ”

Integrated Multi Agency Referral Unit

(Children or Adults Safeguarding):

t: 0300 123 1116

Safeguarding adults

t: 0300 1234 131

t: 01208 251 300 (Out of hours - emergencies only)

e: adultcareandsupport@cornwall.gov.uk

Safeguarding children

t: 0300 1231 116

t: 01208 251 300 (Out of hours - emergencies only)

www.safechildren-cios.co.uk

How to become involved

Your community and Cornwall Housing

If you would like to get involved and have a say in how our services are planned and paid for, we want to hear from you. Call our tenant engagement team on **0300 1234 161** or go to our website to find out more.



How to contact us

Cornwall Housing Ltd

Chy Trevail

Beacon Technology Park

Bodmin

Cornwall PL31 2FR

t: 0300 1234 161

e: info@cornwallhousing.org.uk

www.cornwallhousing.org.uk

Further information

We will always publish the most up-to-date information about tenancies, changes in local and government legislation on our website:

www.cornwallhousing.org.uk

It also has useful links to repairs advice, how to make a suggestion or complaint, where to go for advice and how to get help if needed.

Moving into your home

Please take the time to read the meters on your first day:



Electricity

Location of meter:

Meter no:

Location of fuse box:

Current supplier:

Meter reading/s:



Water

Location of meter:

Meter no:

Location of stopcock:

Meter reading/s:



Gas (if supplied)

Location of meter:

Meter no:

Current supplier:

Meter reading/s:



Recycling

Recycling day:

Bin collection day:

You also need to notify the utility companies that you are the new tenant at this address.

Below are the main contact numbers. They will need your address and postcode.



Electricity

Western Power will be able to tell you which company currently supplies the electricity to the property.

www.westernpower.co.uk

General enquiries: **0800 096 3080**

Emergencies: **0800 678 3105**



Gas

The National Grid will be able to tell you which company supplies gas to the property.

www.nationgrid.com.uk

General enquiries: **0800 688 588**

Emergencies: **0800 111 999**



Water

You will need to contact South West Water to advise them you have moved into your new home.

www.southwestwater.co.uk

General enquiries: **0344 346 1010**

Emergencies: **0344 346 2020**



Television

You will need to contact TV Licensing to advise them that you have moved into your new home.

www.tvlicensing.co.uk

General enquiries: **0300 790 6076**

Other people and companies you may need to tell of your new address

Services

- Council Tax
- Satellite or Cable
- Internet
- Electricity
- Gas
- Water
- Telephone
- Mobile phone
- Post Office (redirection)

Health

- Doctor
- Dentist
- Optician
- Hospital

Others

- Home contents insurance
- DVLA - Vehicle registration
- DVLA - Driving license
- Car insurance
- Department for Work and Pensions
- School / colleges / nursery
- Newspaper
- Milk

Additional notes

Please check the Cornwall Housing website
for updated information for leaseholders
www.cornwallhousing.org.uk

Contact us

For advice and guidance please email us at:
info@cornwallhousing.org.uk

Call us on:
0300 1234 161

**If you would like this information in another
format or language please contact:**

Cornwall Housing Ltd, Chy Trevail,
Beacon Technology Park, Bodmin,
Cornwall PL31 2FR

e: communications@cornwallhousing.org.uk

t: 0300 1234 161

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