

Saint John of God

Housing Association clg

Hospitality • Compassion • Excellence • Justice • Respect

Your Tenancy Handbook

Welcome to Your New Home

Firstly, we are delighted to welcome you into your new home. We hope you settle in well !

This is the second edition of the Saint John of God Housing Association clg Tenant Handbook.

We understand that moving into a new home can be very exciting but also a stressful time. The aim of the Tenants Handbook is to ease the worrying of moving home and is a useful guide for our new tenants.

The purpose of the handbook is to provide you with important information regarding your home and tenancy.

We hope it will give you answers to any questions you may have about your tenancy and the services we provide.

Please refer to this handbook if you have any queries or problems during your tenancy.

We hope that you will be very happy in your new home.



Bernie Cadden,
Chief Executive Officer
Saint John of God Housing Association clg

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Saint John of God

Our Mission

‘To identify, respond and support the needs of individuals in the manner of Saint John of God’

Our Vision

“A society inspired by Hospitality, where the potential of each individual is reached”

Our Values



HOSPITALITY



COMPASSION



RESPECT



JUSTICE



EXCELLENCE

Our Story

Saint John of God Housing Association dates back to 2006 and has grown considerably to over 400 units of accommodation in 2019, for people with a specific need within the community.

We provide accommodation in counties Dublin, Kerry, Kildare, Louth, Meath & Wicklow, all of our tenants are allocated a home from the Local Authority housing waiting list.

We work closely with Saint John of God Community Services clg and other support providers and stakeholders to ensure that our tenants are supported to the highest of standards and specific to the persons needs.

We also ensure that our accommodation is to the highest of standards to ensure that all our tenants are comfortable in their homes.

We make sure that our tenants voices are heard by being part of a wider community, we are affiliated members and actively take part in the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH), Housing Disability Steering Groups within each of our Local Authority areas, as well as other statutory working groups.

We hope you settle in well and look forward to seeing you in your new home!



Housing Association clg

Our Contact Details

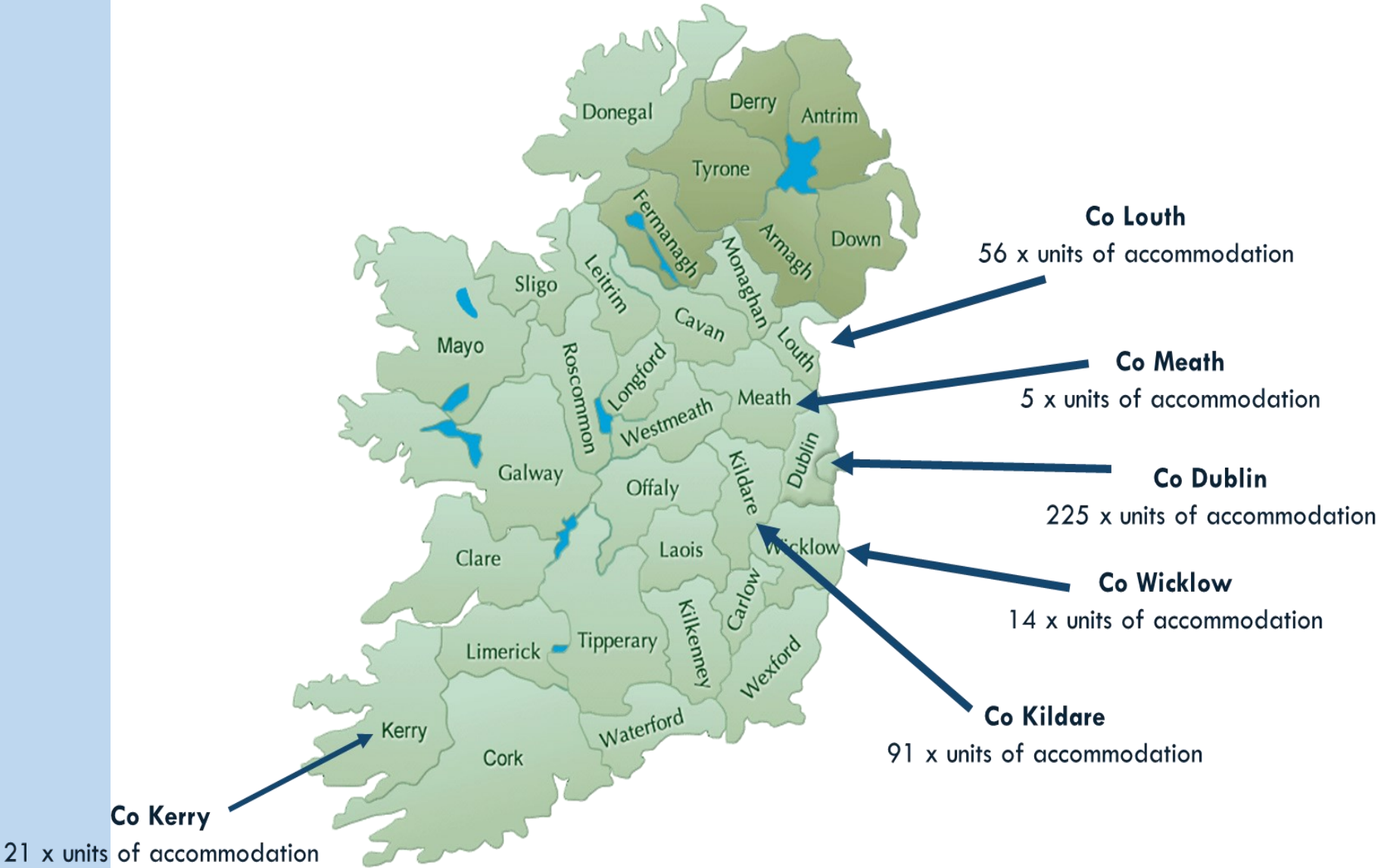
Tel: 01-468 6452

Email: housing@sjog.ie

Address: Saint John of God Housing Association CLG
Tessa House, Block D, Tallaght, Dublin 24

Our Homes

** No's are correct as of end of April 2019*



Your Tenancy



This Handbook forms no part of your Tenancy Agreement and is intended only as a general guide and to give you the information needed in order for you to sustain your tenancy. Your Tenancy Agreement is the legal contract that you have signed with the landlord in order for you to live in your home, both you and the landlord are legally obliged to comply with the conditions specified in the Tenancy Agreement.

Your Rights

- ⇒ To be provided with a home to rent
- ⇒ The quiet & peaceful enjoyment of your home
- ⇒ Essential landlord repair & maintenance of your home
- ⇒ Information & advice on your home & tenancy
- ⇒ To complain if dissatisfied
- ⇒ To be registered as a tenant with the RTB
- ⇒ For your information to be held confidentially



THE FIRST 6 MONTHS OF YOUR TENANCY IS A PROBATION TO MAKE SURE YOU AND OURSELVES ARE HAPPY WITH YOUR NEW HOME!

Our Rights

- ⇒ For you to keep to the terms and conditions of your Tenancy Agreement
- ⇒ For staff & contractors to be treated with courtesy & respect
- ⇒ For you to also keep to your Support Package that you agreed to with your Support Provider, where appropriate.



Your Responsibilities

- ⇒ To keep to the terms and conditions of your Tenancy Agreement:
- ⇒ To be respectful towards the Housing Association's staff
- ⇒ To pay your rent and management fee weekly in advance
- ⇒ To engage with your Support Package, where appropriate
- ⇒ To notify the Housing Association should you wish to leave accordingly
- ⇒ To dispose of any rubbish accordingly
- ⇒ Not to cause any nuisance or anti-social behaviour
- ⇒ To carry repairs that you are liable for
- ⇒ Not to alter the property unless you have permission from the landlord
- ⇒ Not to sub let the property or any part of the property
- ⇒ To use the property as your principal residence

Our Responsibilities

- ⇒ To keep to the terms and conditions of the Tenancy Agreement:
- ⇒ To provide adequate notice of rent or Management Fee increase
- ⇒ To provide adequate notice to end your tenancy
- ⇒ To carry out cyclical repairs to our properties
- ⇒ To have insurance for the building (unless it is the responsibility of a management company)
- ⇒ To maintain communal areas of our apartment complexes (unless it is the responsibility of a management company, ie. where we don't own the whole complex)
- ⇒ To complete repairs which are our responsibility
- ⇒ What you can expect from our staff:
- ⇒ To treat you with respect & dignity
- ⇒ To treat you fairly, honestly and equally
- ⇒ To be helpful & informative
- ⇒ To respond to correspondence accordingly
- ⇒ To respect your privacy & confidentiality
- ⇒ To welcome you into our offices which are clean & accessible



Customer Care

We want excellent Customer Care, therefore if you are not happy with any aspect of our housing service please let us know and we will send out our complaints form for you to complete. The same goes if you would like to send in a suggestion or compliment.

Once we have received the form back, please be aware that:

1. We will acknowledge your suggestion, compliment or complaint
2. We will ask how you would like it to be resolved
3. Inform you of our actions coming out of the suggestion, compliment or complaint

If you are specifically making a complaint:

1. We will resolve your complaint as quickly and fairly as possible
2. Give you the complaint process
3. Give you the opportunity to discuss your complaint with the appropriate person

If you are not happy with the outcome:

1. You have the right to appeal the decision within 20 working days, there are a number of appeal stages within the process (which you will receive a copy of same when you make your complaint).

We will keep you informed every step of the way of the process!

If you are still not happy with the outcome,:

1. *You have the right to go to the Residential Tenancies Board to complain*

Confidentiality & Data Protection

The information we keep on file for you is confidential & will not be passed to any third parties unless you tell us we can or likewise you request the information yourself, there may also be times when we cannot pass some information. There are exceptions however when we can pass on your information:

1. To An Garda Síochána if they are investigating a serious crime.
2. To Health Services or An Garda Síochána if there is a serious risk to someone (eg. Safeguarding).



The above are examples only, we adhere to all legislation that applies to data protection.

Your Rent

Your rent makes up the majority of Saint John of God Housing Association's income and we depend on you to pay your rent in order for us to provide you with all the services you receive. This is why we take failure to pay your rent very seriously!

There are currently 2 types of rent within our homes:

1. **A fixed rent** of €79.00 per week or €88.00 if a couple lives in the property, you can then apply to the Community Welfare Officer/Central Rents Unit for a Rental Supplement to help with your rent which is means tested.
2. **A Differential Rent**, which is a rent which is based on your income and is adjusted accordingly, the calculation which is used to calculate your rent is based on the Local Authority Rent Scheme in your area, a form will have to be completed every year to ensure that you are paying the right amount of rent, should your income go up or down throughout the year, please just let your Housing Officer know and your rent will be recalculated.

The reason why there are 2 x different types of rent is due to the way your home was purchased, which in turn reflects on the type of rent you will pay.

Other Charges

Management Fee's may be an additional charge to your rent, in the majority of cases you will live in an apartment complex if there is a Management Fee.

Further services which you may receive if you pay this fee are:

- ⇒ Sometimes additional staff (eg. Caretaker)
- ⇒ Additional cleaning services (ie. the communal corridor)
- ⇒ Lifts, door entry systems, fire alarms etc...
- ⇒ Bin collection
- ⇒ Security

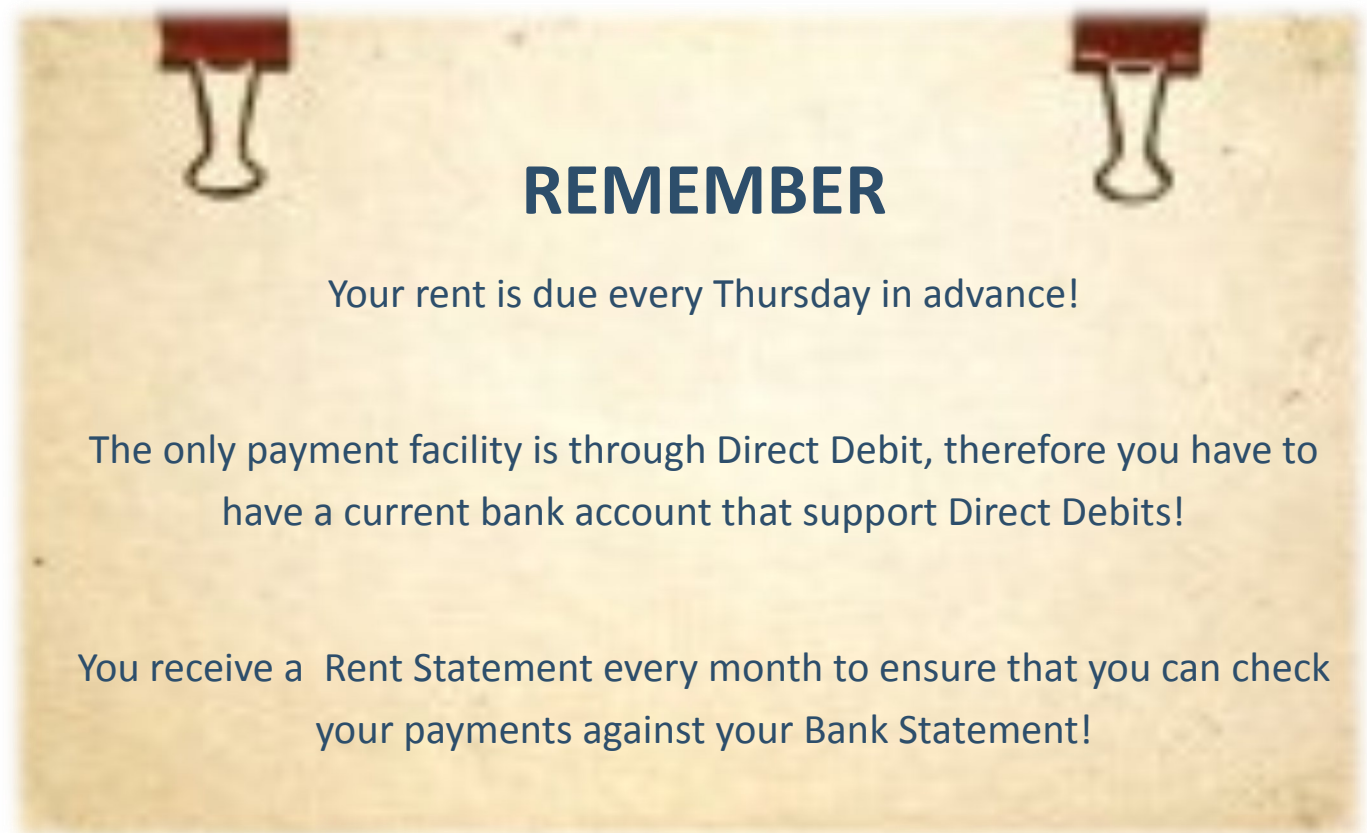
The above are examples only, ask your Housing Officer if you would like to know what is included in your Management Fee.

These charges are reviewed every year to ensure that you are paying the correct amount, you will be notified accordingly if there are any changes to the Management Fee.

The Utility Bills in your new home are your responsibility, should you need support setting up these bills, please contact your support provider.



Your Rent Continued



Failure To Pay Your Rent

Failure to pay your rent is taken very seriously by Saint John of God Housing Association and we will take the necessary steps to ensure your rent is paid.

If you are experiencing financial difficulty, please contact your Housing Officer and let them know, an arrangement can then be put in place to ensure that your rent is not missed.

However, if your Housing Officer is not notified, please see the steps which have to be taken, as below:

- 1) If you miss your rent for the first time, the Housing Officer will write to you informing you and ask that the full amount is cleared with your next payment.
- 2) If you miss your rent a second time, the Housing Officer will again write to you asking that you contact MABs and also to come to a Payment Plan.
- 3) If you miss your rent a third time, the Housing Officer will write and call you to arrange a meeting and you will have to prove you have contacted MABs.
- 4) If you miss your rent a fourth time, the Planning & Development Manager will arrange a meeting to discuss your rent account.
- 5) Should you miss your rent any further, the legal action route will commence and the RTB will be contacted.



YOU CAN LOOSE YOUR HOME IF YOU DO NOT PAY YOUR RENT

Tenant Repairs Responsibilities

The tenant is responsible to maintain the following:

- ⇒ Any item that belongs to the tenant or that the tenant provided to the dwelling;
- ⇒ The tenant shall ensure that dwelling is regularly cleaned;
- ⇒ The tenant shall not cause any damage to the dwelling, its fixtures and fittings and to pay the landlord for the costs of repairing damage the tenant has caused, beyond normal wear and tear;
- ⇒ If there is a garden or outdoor area, the tenant shall cut the grass and maintain the area in a good standard of repair;
- ⇒ The tenant is responsible for the installation of fixtures and fittings, such as dishwashers, washing machines and cookers, where they are not provided by the landlord (eg. Leased property)
- ⇒ The tenant shall replace light bulbs during the tenancy;
- ⇒ The tenant shall report to the landlord any repair issues which arise in the dwelling that are the responsibility of the landlord;
- ⇒ The tenant shall pay the utility charges for electricity, gas and water for services you use in the dwelling & clean the chimney once per year if not blocked off from use.

Inspections & Alterations

We have currently carried out a full Stock Condition Survey of all of our properties, therefore we have a full report on the repair of all of our properties.

In order for us to meet our tenants and to ensure that our properties are being well kept, the Housing Officer will complete an annual house inspection. This will also give you a chance to highlight any repair issues that may arise that are not urgent throughout the year. Sometimes repairs might be highlighted that the tenant may have caused not knowing to themselves, we may complete this repair if deemed necessary, however we might recharge the tenant for this cost.

Should you wish to alter the property in any way (eg. Install an electrical shower, take out a bath etc...), please contact the Housing Officer and an Alteration Form will be sent out for you to complete. Permission will then be either granted/declined depending on the works that you have stipulated on the form. If you have been given permission, the Housing Association will inspect the works at various intervals to ensure that they are carried out to the highest of standards.

Likewise, if we have found out during our annual inspections that works have been carried out without prior consent from the Housing Association, we may ask that you either provide proof that the works were carried out according to building regulations or we may ask that you put the property back to the way it was or to make the works compliant.



Landlord Repairs Responsibilities

The Landlord is responsible to maintain the following:

- ⇒ **External** (where the dwelling is one of a number of dwellings in a multi-unit development, these responsibilities will fall on the owners' management company)
- ⇒ **Structure and exterior of buildings**, roof leaks, external cracks, chimney stacks/pots & cowls, downpipes, gutters, external pipes, paths, driveways, steps, boundary walls & fences, communal areas, open spaces, paths & roads (unless taken in charge by Council), Painting of external houses & Door entry systems
- ⇒ **Provision of services** (where the dwelling is one of a number of dwellings in a multi-unit development, these responsibilities will fall on the owners' management company)
- ⇒ **Means of supplying water, gas and electricity to the dwelling**, Fixed source of space heating, Primary source of heating of water, Communal lighting (unless taken in charge by Council or the dwelling is one of a number of dwellings in a multi-unit development), Unblocking drains and sewers & Waste receptacles
- ⇒ **Plumbing**—Servicing of boilers, Repair of boilers & hot water tanks, Heating/Hot water pumps & timers, Radiators, Electric shower (unit only), Sinks and wash hand basins, Toilet bowl & cistern, Repairs to burst pipes (except where the dwelling is one of a number of dwellings in a multi-unit development),
- ⇒ **Electrical**—Wiring, sockets & switches, Fuse board/circuit breaker, A fire blanket and either a mains-wired smoke alarm or at least two 10-year self-contained battery-operated smoke alarms. Carbon monoxide alarms. If the dwelling is part of a multi-unit building, the landlord will provide emergency lighting in all common areas and an emergency evacuation plan.
- ⇒ **Other**—Internal & external doors and frames, Window frames and glazing, Cleaning chimneys

Reporting Repairs

Your first contact should be your Support Worker as they will be able to let you know exactly who is responsible for the repair.

There is also a maintenance contract in place which is managed through your support provider in order to ensure most of the above repairs are carried out.

If there is major works needed to your property, again your support provider will apply to Saint John of God Housing Association for consideration.



Common Repair Problems & Solutions

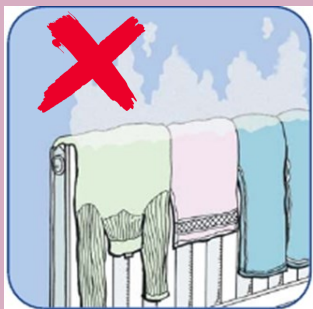
Condensation

Condensation occurs where water is viable as a mist on windows & wall surfaces. It is not obvious on painted or papered walls. Condensation can cause black mould growth which is bad for your home and your health.

There are 4 x main causes for condensation:

1. **Too much moisture being produced in your home**—therefore reduce moisture in your home, do not leave wet clothes on radiators, cover pots & pans when cooking, use the extractor fan in your bathroom and kitchens etc...
2. **Not enough ventilation**—open the window in your bedroom for at least 10 mins every morning, keep the vents in the walls open, avoid putting too many things in your cupboards etc...
3. **Cold Surfaces**—wipe excess condensation off windows and surfaces with a towel every morning, know where the cold points are in the room and clean and wipe down these areas regularly etc...
4. **Temperature of your home**—Vent tumble dryers to the outside air, do not use bottled gas heaters in your home etc...

Please contact your Support Provider for advice on how to clean.



If your heating is not working:

Contact your Support Provider
Check that there is oil in the tank
Check the thermostat to see what temperature it is
Is the timer on?
Check to see if the on/off lever in the right position

If you smell gas call Bord Gáis immediately on **1850 20 50 20**

If there is a flood:

Contact your Support Provider
Turn the water off at the mains immediately and report the repair

If there is a leak:

Contact your Support Worker/Caretaker
If the leak is bad you may want to turn the water off at the mains, know where the stopcock is in your home to minimise the damage
Try to find where the leak is coming from

If your electrics are not working:

Contact your Support Provider
Check the fuse box
Check the trip switches are turned on
Check to see if your neighbours have a power cut, it might be in the area
Turn the mains off if you smell burning or see smoke



REMEMBER

IN BOTH CASES YOU
HAVE TO LEAVE THE
PROPERTY/UNIT IN
GOOD ORDER LIKE
WHEN YOU
RECEIVED IT



Moving In

- ⇒ It is Important to check that all utilities are working - ESB, Water (taps, toilet flushing) heating, bath and sinks, etc.
- ⇒ Take care when moving in; do not damage floor coverings, doors, walls, etc
- ⇒ Ensure that any appliances are fitted by properly qualified persons – washing machine, cooker, etc.
- ⇒ Let your Support Worker/Community Services/Caretaker know if there are any matters that require urgent attention.
- ⇒ You may be eligible for a grant towards furnishing your home, contact your Community Welfare Officer in your area to arrange an appointment as you will also have to apply for the Rental Supplement to help you with your rent.
- ⇒ We will set up the utility bills to your new home with the meter readings given to you on the day of sign up
- ⇒ Inform your family and friends of your new address

Moving Out

If you decide you would like to move out of your home or likewise you need to move to a more suitable home, please see below the steps you have to take:

Step 1—Inform the Housing Officer at least one month before you decide you would like to move out & a Surrender of Tenancy Form will be sent out to you for completion. You will have to pay your rent for the 4 x weeks notice you have given.

Step 2—Your Housing Officer will arrange a property inspection to let you know what they expect from you when you leave the property & to inform you of any repairs that you will have to carry out, you will receive a letter.

Step 3—On the day that you are leaving the Housing Officer will carry out a final inspection to ensure everything is completed as stated in the letter.

Transfers

If you would like to transfer to another property owned by the Housing Association, please contact the Housing Officer, a form will then be sent out for completion, you may have to include evidence why you would like to move.

If you have been approved and there is a unit in your area of preference, you will be offered a tenancy if the Local Authority authorises same.

Under no circumstances will you be offered a transfer if you have rent

arrears on your rent account for a minimum of 6 months or if there has been proven anti-social behaviour on your tenancy file for a minimum of 12 months.

Your Safety



Staying Safe In Your Home

It is very important that you look after the safety and security of your home, some tips are:-

- ⇒ Always lock doors when you go out, even if you are only away for a few minutes
- ⇒ Always close windows when going out
- ⇒ Never leave valuables lying around
- ⇒ Never leave keys in a 'hiding' place
- ⇒ Carefully put out cigarettes and empty ashtrays only when you are sure the contents are safe
- ⇒ Always have a screen/guard in front of your fireplace
- ⇒ Pull curtains at night
- ⇒ Turn off your immersion heater if you are away for a while
- ⇒ Ensure your smoke alarms are checked on a regular basis
- ⇒ Change your locks if your keys are lost or stolen
- ⇒ If you have an alarm fitted, use it!
- ⇒ You should consider the following precautions:-
 - ⇒ Fit a good quality door chain and use it when strangers call
 - ⇒ Ask any strangers for an ID badge where possible
 - ⇒ Don't leave strangers by an open door
 - ⇒ Don't let anyone in until you are satisfied who they are and what they want
 - ⇒ If you let anyone in, stay with them at all times
 - ⇒ Telephone An Garda Síochána if you are suspicious, likewise call the Garda

Staying Safe In Apartments



In the majority of apartment buildings there are door entry systems in place; this is for your safety. In order for this system to be effective, the following should be looked at:-

- ⇒ To make sure that the entrance door is locked behind you
- ⇒ Don't let people into the apartment complex or follow you inside
- ⇒ Never leave the entrance door propped open
- ⇒ Never give access codes or fobs to anyone whom you do not trust
- ⇒ Report any faults to your Support Worker or Management Company
- ⇒ Do not block entrances, landings or stairwells with any items as you may block someone's escape route should there be a fire





IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE:

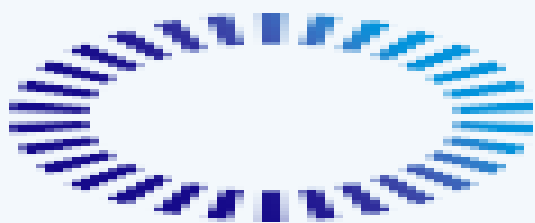
- ☐ Dial 999 or 112
- ☐ Tell the operator what service you require.
- ☐ Speak calmly and clearly giving the address of the fire and your phone number.
- ☐ Only hang up when the operator tells you to.



Never

- ☐ Reenter a burning house for personal items.
- ☐ Borrow batteries from the Smoke Alarm.
- ☐ Have mirrors over fireplaces with real fires.

IF YOU SMELL GAS CALL BORD GAIS ON **1850 20 50 50** THERE IS A 24 HOUR
EMERGENCY GAS SERVICE



**Gas
Networks
Ireland**

Ensure gas appliances haven't been left on

Don't smoke or use naked flame

Don't unplug or switch anything electrical on or off

Open windows and doors to let gas disperse

If your appliances are off but you still smell gas, turn off the gas at the meter

Carbon Monoxide - What if the alarm goes off?

Open doors and windows to ventilate the area
Turn off / stop using any fuel burning appliances
immediately

Get everyone in the property into fresh air

If you are sure you are not suffering any symptoms
related to carbon monoxide
poison-

ing call a qualified service agent to check your appliances
before you re-use them

If you are still concerned, call the Carbon Monoxide
Awareness Line on **1850 79 79 79**





REMEMBER:

Your tenancy is registered with the Residential Tenancies Board and if you are not happy with the service from your landlord (after alerting the Housing Association), you can go to the RTB to resolve any dispute you may have with your landlord.

Just contact the **RTB** on:

Tel: 01-702 8100 or 0818 30 30 37 (Mon—Fri, 9am-5pm)

Web: www.rtb.ie

Email: disputes@rtb.ie

Personal Safety—Nuisance & Anti-Social Behaviour

Nuisance and anti-social behaviour (ASB) are very often misunderstood as the same thing, however close the similarities, there are differences.

The Housing Association acknowledges that anti-social behaviour (ASB) can have an extremely negative effect on the day to day lives of residents.

The Housing Association has a responsibility to protect, as far as possible, the interests of residents in the peaceful enjoyment of their home.

The Housing Association is committed to preventing and addressing ASB on its estates/in homes and will investigate and endeavour to resolve all complaints of ASB made to them.

Some examples of ASB are as follows:-

- ⇒ Violence towards neighbours/house mates
- ⇒ Threats or intimidation of neighbours/house mates
- ⇒ Threats or intimidation of The Housing Association staff or Contractors
- ⇒ Verbal or physical abuse
- ⇒ Noise pollution

Some examples of nuisance behaviour:-

- ⇒ Excessive noise inside or outside your home
- ⇒ Littering or dumping of rubbish
- ⇒ Disorderly behaviour of any guests or visitors, as you are responsible for any guests or visitors on the property
- ⇒ Excessive knocking on other tenants doors

Personal Safety—

Nuisance & Anti-Social Behaviour

What happens if you experience nuisance or anti-social behaviour?

Begin by trying to resolve the issue with your neighbour/house mate yourself as this can sometimes end the negative behaviour. If this does not end the negative behaviour, then report it to your Support Worker immediately and also the local Gardaí. When you are reporting the behaviour make sure you have all the facts; such as:-

Time & date of incident, The location, What exactly happened, Names and addresses of those involved, If reported to the Gardaí, when was it reported and the name of the person who attended the incident.

All reported incidents with enough substantial evidence will be investigated in full by The Housing Association. After the investigation and the complaint is upheld The Housing Association will take action depending on the seriousness of the complaint. Below are the following steps if the complaint involves a tenant of The Housing Association:-

- ⇒ **Verbal Warning** – if the complaint is minor
- ⇒ **External Mediation**—if an Agreement is needed for an ongoing complaint
- ⇒ **First Written Warning** – if the complaint is of a serious matter
- ⇒ **A Good Neighbour Agreement**—if the complaint is between 2 neighbours
- ⇒ **Second Written Warning** – if there is another complaint and is upheld after investigation
- ⇒ **A Good Behaviour Contract**—if the persons behaviour is unacceptable
- ⇒ **Final Written Warning** – if yet another complaint and again is upheld after investigation
- ⇒ **Referral to the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB)** — if all other avenues have been exhausted
- ⇒ **Notice to Quit** – To repossess the dwelling and evict the tenant from the premises, should the RTB recommend same

Everyone has the right to live in a peaceful environment and The Housing Association will not tolerate nuisance or anti-social behaviour.



Your Community

Ways to get Involved

There are numerous ways which you can be involved with your community, whether it is within your own home or likewise within the wider community. The Housing Association encourage tenant participation and welcome any suggestions that any tenants have and need help to develop, just speak to your Housing Officer.

There are various ways which you can get involved in your community:

- ⇒ **Welcoming Group/s**, to welcome new tenants to the scheme or a group home
- ⇒ **Garden Group/s**, to ensure that your garden in your home is being well kept and also to make sure that everyone is doing their bit
- ⇒ **Social Group/s**, to organise social occasions throughout the year
- ⇒ **Neighbour Watch**, to make sure that there is no anti-social behaviour in your area
- ⇒ **Clean Up Group/s**, to organise an estate/group home clean up a couple of times per year

Everyone has something to contribute to their community and if you are thinking of any of the above or likewise are already completing any of the above, please just contact your Housing Officer to see if there is any more

help/grants/training that could be sought!

Feedback/Information

Likewise, we as a Housing Association like to know when

We are hopefully getting things right or likewise if you

Should have a suggestion in your area. Again, just contact your Housing Officer, who will send you out a form for you to complete and send back to ourselves.

We will then endeavour to try to include your suggestion or likewise keep doing whatever was right, to ensure that your experience with The Housing Association is as positive as we can make it!

We may contact you in person to receive further feedback/information and this can be done in various ways:

- Feedback Form
- Phone Surveys
- Tenant Satisfaction Survey
- Tenant Panel
- Working Groups
- Focus Group
- Resident Associations
- Questionnaire/Consultation



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Hospitality • Compassion • Excellence • Justice • Respect