



Tenant Handbook



PHONE
NUMBERS

STARTING YOUR
TENANCY

DURING YOUR
TENANCY

GETTING
INVOLVED

ENDING YOUR
TENANCY



Welcome to your new home

This handbook has been created with the help of tenants, for tenants. It has been designed as a guide to refer to at the start, during and at the end of your tenancy. It contains practical advice like how to pay your rent or how to report a repair, and information about your tenant responsibilities. Please keep this handbook and tenancy pack in a safe place so you can refer to it in the future. Of course, if you have any questions, please contact us.



Our address: 4 Carden Place,
Aberdeen, AB10 1UT

Our phone no: 01224 625822

Our email: info@castlehillha.co.uk

Our website: www.castlehillha.co.uk

Office hours: 9am – 5pm
Monday to Friday (except public holidays)
Wednesday 10:30am - 5pm

Emergencies outwith office hours:
01224 625822
(listen to recorded info)

Your Housing Officer is:

.....
@castlehillha.co.uk
01224

Your Property Services Officer is:

.....
@castlehillha.co.uk
01224

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USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS/ WEB ADDRESSES	ABERDEEN	ABERDEENSHIRE	MORAY
Gas (emergencies)	0800 111 999		
Electricity (emergencies)	0800 300 999		
Scottish Water (emergencies)	08456 018855		
NHS 24	111		
Police Scotland (non-emergencies)	101		
Council Tax & Housing Benefit	03000 200 292	03456 081201	01343 563456
Welfare Rights/Benefits & Money Advice	03000 200 292	03456 08 12 00	0300 1234561
Council Housing Support Charges	03000 200 292	03456 08 12 03	01343 567179
Environmental services e.g. bin collections, removal of bulky items, street lighting	03000 200 292	03456 081207	0300 123 4565
Antisocial Behaviour Team	0800 0510 434	01467 539546	0800 5 877197
Dog Warden	03000 200 292	01467 539546	0300 1234561
Duty Social Work	0800 7315 520	03456 081203	08457 565656
Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline	0800 027 1234		
Victim Support Scotland	0800 160 1985		
Citizens’ Advice Scotland	0800 028 1456		
Care Inspectorate	0345 600 9527		
These Homes NES (North East Scotland)	01224 628101	www.thesehomes.com	
Apply4homes (house exchange)	www.houseexchange.org.uk		
Aberdeen Care & Repair	01224 251133		
The Castlehill Housing Association website is a useful resource for information		www.castlehillha.co.uk	

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NUMBERS

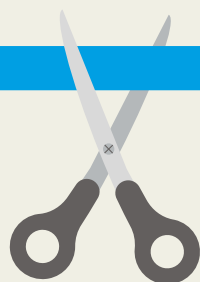
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Starting your Tenancy



When you move in...

- Decide how to pay your rent ☐
- Advise Council Tax and Housing Benefit offices (if applicable) you have moved in ☐
- Take over your electricity supply and tell them your meter reading ☐
- Take over your gas supply (if this applies to your property) and tell them your meter reading ☐
- You might want to set up a landline and/or broadband provider ☐
- Insure your home contents ☐
- Ensure you have a valid TV licence (Sheltered and Very Sheltered tenants refer to your offer letter) ☐
- Contact your council to find out bin and recycling collection days (unless you have communal bins). See useful phone numbers ☐
- Inform anyone who needs your new address e.g. your bank, insurance company, DVLA etc ☐

Your Tenancy

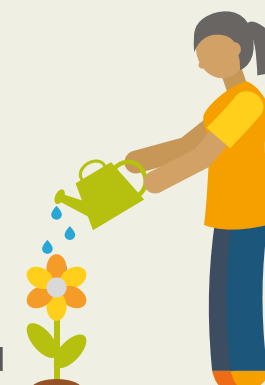
Your Scottish Secure Tenancy starts on



Your tenancy agreement is a legal contract that outlines your rights and responsibilities as a tenant, and ours as your landlord. Please keep it safe.

Your Responsibilities to us

- Pay your rent and any charges on time
- Live in the property as your main home
- Look after the property
- Report repairs to us
- You and your visitors should respect others at all times
- Get permission from us before you make any changes to your tenancy
- Give us 28 days notice if you want to end your tenancy



Our Responsibilities to you

- Provide a windtight, watertight and habitable home
- Keep the property in good repair and proper working order
- Carry out repairs to an agreed timescale
- Consult with you before setting new rental charges or making changes to our services.



Rent

Rent is due on the 1st of each month. You can pay by:

- Direct Debit:** This is the easiest way to pay your rent. We can set your direct debit up over the phone, enabling you to pay your rent hassle-free each month.
- Standing Order:** Choose weekly, fortnightly or monthly payments.
- Allpay:** Pay using an Allpay card at Post Offices and PayPoint outlets.
- Online:** Pay at www.allpayments.net using your Allpay card and debit card.
- Phone:** Call 01224 625822 to make a debit card payment.
- Post:** Send a cheque to our office, making sure that you write your name, address and "Rent" on the back. Please do not send cash through the post.



Housing Benefit: Payments can be made directly to us by agreement.

More detailed information can be found in the "[How to Pay Your Rent](#)" leaflet in your tenancy pack.

The welfare benefits system is changing, with many tenants now in receipt of Universal Credit and not Housing Benefit. You should let your Housing Officer know if you are in receipt of Universal Credit.

Letting Standard

You will have received a copy of this with your offer letter. Your property should be clean, in reasonable decorative order and everything should work properly i.e. heating, electricity, television reception and plumbing installations. An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) will be displayed in your property. Gas and electric checks will be complete. The Letting Standard is Tenants' Panel approved.



Property Services queries

If you have any queries, such as operating your heating system or locating your stopcock, please contact your Property Services Officer for advice.

Keys

We will give you two keys and two door entry fobs (if applicable). Extra keys and fobs are available on request for a standard charge.



You are responsible for lost keys, fobs and paying for lock changes due to lost or stolen keys. It is wise to make sure your contents insurance covers lock changes.



Sheltered and Very Sheltered properties

Sheltered tenants in Aberdeenshire should refer to the Housing Support Service Brochure sent out with your offer letter. Extra copies are available from our main office or scheme staff.

We will help you settle in and advise how everything works such as the emergency call system, door entry system, fire alarms and heating. If you have any questions, please ask.

We will contact you within 28 days of the start of your tenancy to discuss the support and assistance available to you, and to complete your Housing Support Plan. Further details are included in your Housing Support Service brochure or from your service provider.

The Key Project

The Key Project is a housing support service for tenants. We aim to help tenants to keep their tenancy and help tackle any risk that may threaten the tenancy.

Sometimes housing support is offered at the start of a tenancy. It may be the first time a tenant has taken on a tenancy, or perhaps they do not have furniture to move into a property.

Sometimes people experience difficulties during their tenancy, and again the Key Project can help. Difficulties could be problems with housing benefit, money worries, health concerns etc.

If you would like to find out if the Key Project could be helpful for you, please ask your Housing Officer or contact the Key Project on 01224 628105 or keyproject@castlehillha.co.uk

The Key Project is a free and confidential service.

Possible Areas of Housing Support

- Welfare Benefits advice
- Help with form filling
- Education and training
- Accessing community resources
- Energy supply queries
e.g gas, electricity
- Advice and information
- Budgeting help
- Home management
- Housing Benefit / Universal Credit
- Mental health difficulties
- Drugs and alcohol
- Accessing health / care resources
- Help to source furniture
- Support to attend appointments
- Link to other resources / agencies
- Help with phone calls
- Accessing trusts / other funding agencies
- Family / relationships
- Letter writing
- Housing options
- Advocacy
- Employment
- Signposting
- Housing and debt advice
- Home visits

Key Project



During your Tenancy

Rent

You are responsible for paying your rent on time.

If you are struggling to pay your rent, please contact your Housing Officer for advice and assistance. We would like to help you tackle the situation before it becomes serious.

If you break a rent arrear agreement, we can:

- Negotiate a new agreement
- Arrange to take the rent arrear directly from your benefits
- Take court action to recover the rent due. This could result in you being evicted from your home.

Please contact us as soon as you are worried about paying your rent.

We want to help you keep your home.

Changes to Your Tenancy

You need our consent to:

- Create a joint tenancy
- Get a pet
- Sublet all or part of your tenancy
- Assign your tenancy (pass to someone else)

There are conditions that need to be met before we grant permission for these changes.



Creating a Joint Tenancy

You have the right to apply to have a joint tenancy. A joint tenant must be someone who is not already a tenant or owner of another property and who intends to live in the property as their only or principal home. They must have been living at your address for a minimum of 12 months from the date you told us they moved in.

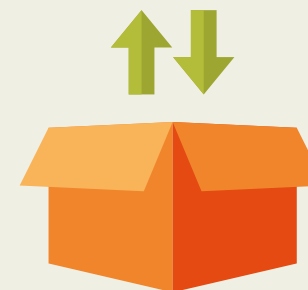


Pets

If you want to keep a pet, you need written permission from us first. There are several schemes where no cats or dogs are allowed. Contact your Housing Officer for advice.

Changes to Your Household

It is very important to tell us if anyone moves in or out of your property when this happens. Failure to do so could affect your tenancy in the future.



Transfers and Exchanges

You may wish to consider applying for new accommodation particularly if you are affected by overcrowding, under-occupation, if you can no longer manage due to medical conditions or need some support. You should firstly speak to your Housing Officer about your options.

Transfers

Castlehill Housing Association allocates all our homes using a choice based lettings system called These Homes NES. Instead of being awarded points and being placed on a waiting list, we advertise our properties and you apply for them – giving you the choice. If you feel that you have a need to be rehoused you can apply for a priority pass which may be awarded depending on your circumstances. Properties are advertised every two weeks on the phoneline 01224 628101 and website: www.thesehomes.com

Mutual Exchange

This is an arrangement where you can “swap” homes with a tenant of Castlehill or another public sector landlord, i.e. Housing Association, Council or Housing Co-op. Permission is granted by each landlord subject to their exchange policy. Our exchanges operate through House Exchange.

House Exchange is a quick and easy website designed to bring people together who are looking to swap their home. The service operates nationwide. The web address is www.houseexchange.org.uk

Succession of Tenancy

There are three levels of qualification to a tenancy if the tenant or joint tenant dies. A successor must have already been occupying the property as their main or principal home prior to the tenant's death. All three levels are described in your tenancy agreement.

If You Are Away From Your Home...



Please let your Housing Officer know if you will be away from your property for more than four weeks.

If you are away from home in the winter, remember that pipes may freeze and burst. If you are going away for a couple of days, you could leave your heating on at a low temperature e.g. 5°C. However, if you are leaving for a

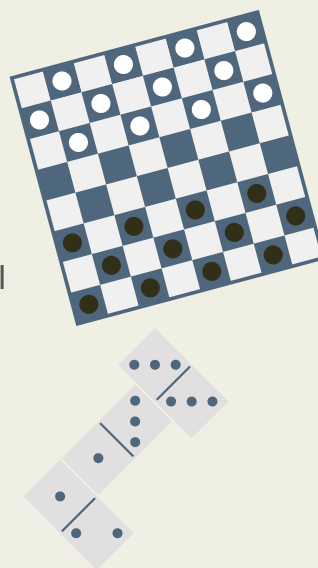
longer time, please consider leaving the heating on at normal levels or draining all storage tanks and pipe work. Your Property Services Officer can give you advice. Please remember that if you do not take precautions and water damage occurs, you may be recharged for the repair costs.

Communal Areas (Sheltered and Very Sheltered Housing)

Many schemes have a communal lounge with kitchen facilities. We encourage you to use this room for social activities.

Guest rooms are available in most schemes and can be used by friends or relatives to stay for short periods of time. There is a small charge for this service. All tenants can book a guest room by calling our main office on 01224 625822.

Communal laundries are for tenant use only. Scheme staff will show you how to use the machines and explain if there is a rota or booking system.



Respect for Others

We would like you to be considerate towards your neighbours and staff, and to refrain from antisocial behaviour. Remember that you are responsible for those living with you, and your visitors too. If a dispute arises between you and a neighbour, we encourage you to try to resolve the



problem by talking to them. People often do not realise they are causing a nuisance and will remedy the situation. If you do not feel able to deal with the problem, or the situation continues, please contact your Housing Officer for further support.

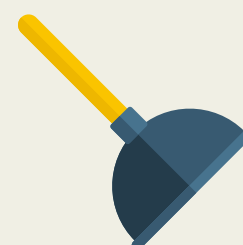
You can find out more in section 3 of your tenancy agreement.

Right to Buy

We are a charitable organisation so all our properties are exempt from the Right to Buy. None of our tenants have the right to buy their home.

Your Maintenance Responsibilities

- Please keep your home in a clean and good decorative condition
- Please keep your garden tidy
- Report damage or required repairs to the maintenance department
- Repair any damage caused by you, your household or visitors. This includes damage to glass, sinks or sanitary ware, choked wastes and damage caused by forced entry due to lost keys
- Report any criminal damage or vandalism to the police
- Have contents insurance including cover for tenant-responsible items
- Please test your smoke alarm(s) regularly
- Please test your carbon monoxide alarms regularly (if fitted)



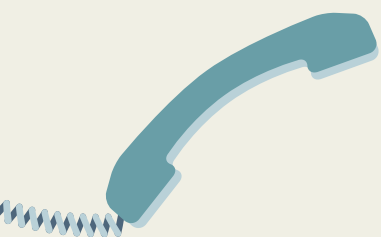
If we have to carry out any repairs that are your responsibility we will charge you the cost of doing so e.g. repairing damage caused by you or your visitors. We call this a 'recharge'.

Right to Repair Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

You have a right to have small urgent repairs carried out within a given timescale. Please refer to the Right to Repair leaflet in your tenancy pack, our website or ask your Property Services Officer.



Reporting Repairs



Call **01224 625822/628104** to report a repair Monday to Friday, 9am -5pm. If you have a non-emergency repair, please wait until the office opens to report it. Sheltered and Very Sheltered tenants should report non-emergency repairs to scheme staff.

For all tenants, if you have an out of hours emergency, call **01224 625822** to find out the number of the emergency contractor.

You can also report non-emergency repairs online at:

www.castlehillha.co.uk/reportrepair.html

For gas heating issues, call the number on the sticker on your boiler, the maintenance department or the out-of-hours number if applicable.

Long Term Maintenance

We have two scheduled maintenance programs, cyclical and planned maintenance.

- Cyclical maintenance covers checking essential equipment each year to ensure they are safe, including:
 - Annual gas servicing
 - Portable fire equipment and fire alarm systems
 - Smoke detectors
 - Water storage systems
 - Lifts
 - Door entry systems

We will also inspect the outside of your home and paint it every seven years if needed.

- Planned maintenance is where we renew or replace components in your home as they come to the end of their useful life. This may include refits of kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems and windows. The amount of work we can do depends on the amount of funds available each year.

Information about planned and cyclical maintenance programmes will be published in our newsletter and on our website.



Adaptations

If you or someone who lives in your home has a disability, we may be able to help by adapting your property. Adaptations range from grab rails and lever taps, to level access showers and ceiling hoists. Each year we receive a limited amount of Government funding to carry out this work, and once this has been spent, we operate a waiting list until the following year's funding is received.

To receive an adaptation, you should first contact Occupational Therapy on the relevant number below, and arrange for a visit. The occupational therapist (OT) will make an assessment, then send a referral to us requesting any adaptations.

It is important to remember that not all adaptations are feasible, or technically possible. In such cases a joint visit with your OT and our Technical Assistant will be arranged to discuss alternative solutions.

Aberdeen City Occupational Therapy Service

01224 570440

Aberdeenshire Council Occupational Therapy Service

03456 081206

Moray Council Occupational Therapy Service

01343 563999

Getting Involved

Tenant participation is an integral part of how we operate at Castlehill. It is key to our aim of providing high quality affordable housing and an efficient, responsive and personal housing management and property service.

How can I get involved with Castlehill?

There are many ways to take part in our decision-making processes. You don't need any specific experience to join. Everyone is welcome.

Castlehill Registered Tenants Organisation



CaRTO is an independent group of Castlehill tenants who meet monthly to discuss and influence housing and housing-related services. CaRTO's focus is on improving services, standards and performance.

CaRTO Home Link

Ask to be added to this online group, where you can join in the discussion with other involved tenants. A great way to be part of CaRTO at a time that suits you, with the option to attend meetings and events if you wish.

Scrutiny Group

This group is for those who have time to spare and are looking for an in-depth way to get involved. You will review a specific area of our housing services and make recommendations for improvement. We provide training and offer practical opportunities for you to assess our services i.e. mystery shopping, site visits, desktop audits, interviews, focus groups or surveys.

Scheme Walkabouts

Scheme walkabouts are a great way to have your say about your neighbourhood. Our staff will be on-site twice a year, making it easy for you to give us feedback about your scheme and identify concerns. Sheltered and very sheltered tenants can raise concerns with their scheme manager.

Your Housing Officer will notify you when these visits take place and we encourage you to join in.

Tenant/Scheme Groups

Why not set up your own tenants group? This is a great way to get to know your neighbours and to raise any issues you may have with your neighbourhood. We are happy to help you get started.



Association Membership

Why not become a lifetime member of Castlehill Housing Association?

Members can attend all general meetings, stand for and vote in the election of the Management Committee. Membership costs £1.00 and forms are available online and at our main office.

North East Tenant, Residents and Landlords Together



North East Tenants Residents and Landlords Together

We are proud to be part of this award-winning group of tenants and staff from social landlords across Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray. NETRALT meets regularly to develop and promote tenant involvement in our area.

We are always delighted to welcome new faces to any of these groups. Please contact our Tenant Participation Officer on 01224 625822.



How we will keep you informed

We want our tenants to know what we are doing, why we are doing it and how we will achieve it. We do this in several ways.



Landlord Performance Report

This report highlights our performance annually and lets you know what action we will take to improve our services. We publish our Landlord Report in October each year and welcome your feedback on how we are doing.

Newsletter

Our twice-yearly newsletter is produced with help from our tenants. We value your input and hope you enjoy it.



Website

You will find updates, news bulletins and information about upcoming tenant events at www.castlehillha.co.uk



Leaflets and other formats

We have a range of leaflets available for your information. We welcome your feedback and any ideas you may have for new or improved leaflets.

Association Membership

Anyone who wants to be more involved and is interested in the work of Castlehill may apply for Association membership. The one-off membership fee is £1.00. Members can vote to elect the Management Committee at the Annual General Meeting and be nominated themselves. A form is available from our office.



We hope you are interested in finding out more how you can help shape Castlehill's future.

To join us, or to find out more, please contact our Tenant Participation Officer on 01224 625822 or info@castlehillha.co.uk

Ending your Tenancy

Giving up your Tenancy



You have to give us at least 28 days notice and ask for a termination pack.

Please complete, sign and return a termination form. The form will be in your termination pack, or you can download one from our website. Sheltered Housing for Older People and Very Sheltered tenants can request a termination form from scheme staff.

Your tenancy will end 28 days from the date we receive your termination form. We will write to you to confirm the exact date. If you are a next of kin or family member who is ending the tenancy due to the death of our tenant, please contact the housing officer to discuss this. Two weeks is given to allow the clearance of a property and the housing officer will be able to provide any advice regarding ending the tenancy.

Ending a Joint Tenancy

You will need to complete a termination form and pass to us. You must also tell everyone who lives with you that you wish to terminate your share of the joint tenancy. Joint tenants need 28 days written notice.

Your Rent

Please ensure that your rent is up to date at the end of your tenancy. If you do not do this, it may affect future housing applications.

If you are in receipt of housing benefit it will stop on the day you leave the property or the day your tenancy ends, whichever is soonest. Your Housing Officer will confirm this to you by letter.

Please note that there may still be housing benefit pending so it can be difficult to give you an accurate balance straightaway but we will endeavour to do this for you as soon as possible.

If you have arrears on your account, please contact your Housing Officer to discuss how you plan to clear the debt. If you do not do this, our Income Management Officer will contact you to discuss your rent arrears and/or recharges and ultimately recover the debt.

Other charges can be added to your account after you have ended your tenancy e.g. if you do not hand in all your keys and we have had to change the locks. There may also be rechargeable repairs which will have been advised by the Property Services Officer after their inspection. We will let you know about any recharges as soon as we can.

End of Tenancy Inspection



We will inspect your house to make sure it can be relet in accordance with our tenant-approved Letting Standard (a copy of this will be in your termination pack). We aim to do this shortly after we receive your termination form.

If after the termination date we find repairs that are your responsibility, the decoration is not acceptable, or we have to remove any property you leave behind, you will have to pay for this.

Remember to take your meter readings! A detailed checklist of things to do when you are leaving is included in your termination pack.

If you do make a complaint and are not happy with the way we have dealt with it or feel that our decision is unfair then you can complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Our Complaints policy will give you information about this.

If you need more information about any aspect of your tenancy, please contact us.

info@castlehillha.co.uk

www.castlehillha.co.uk

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Castlehill Housing Association
4 Carden Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1UT

01224 625822

www.castlehillha.co.uk
info@castlehillha.co.uk

Office opening hours:
9:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday
10.30am to 5.00pm on a Wednesday

Registered Charity Number: SC013584



Tenant
approved



FSC
paper from
responsible
resources



Designed by
social enterprise
Foyer Graphics



available in
other formats