

Adur Council

Your new home - A Tenants' handbook

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Welcome and Resident Care

Welcome

This tenant handbook has been put together to give you information and guidance on your tenancy with Adur Homes, the housing service run by Adur District Council. The handbook explains your rights and your responsibilities, as well as the council's responsibilities as your landlord. It also gives details of the housing services the council provides for you. This handbook is only a guide to our services and aims to answer the general queries you may have about your home and tenancy.

Your tenancy agreement sets out in more detail the services you can expect, details around your property and rent and your rights and responsibilities as tenant. On our website you will also find other key documents you may find helpful:

1. Tenancy Policy
2. Recharge Policy
3. Repairs Policy

Over time, our services and policies may change and may not be reflected here, but we will keep you up to date through our website at www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/adur-homes/ and our resident newsletter 'Adur Together'. You can also view and download this handbook on our website.

Please let us know if you or a member of your household has a particular need and would like any part of the book explained, or produced in large print. If you need to have any of our documents translated, please contact us by email at customerfeedback@adur-worthing.gov.uk or by phone on 01273 263030.

We would like to thank the tenant representatives involved in compiling this handbook. They helped make sure it was as useful as possible to you.

Contacting us

You can contact us in a number of ways including through the council's website, by email, telephone, at offices or by letter.

Details of useful telephone numbers are in the useful contacts section at the back of this handbook. Useful email and website addresses have also been included throughout the handbook.

Adur District Council's website address is www.adur-worthing.gov.uk You will find information and contact details for all the council services there, including a section on housing. If you are an internet user you will find the website contains a lot of the information you need and provides a way of contacting services, councillors and

officers about issues that affect you and your neighbourhood. Free internet access is also available at local libraries.

Feedback and making a complaint

We take pride in providing good customer service, however, we know that things can go wrong. Here is some information on how to make a complaint and what you can expect from us. A copy of our full complaints policy is available on our website.

Who do I contact if I wish to raise an issue?

We always try to get things right the first time but appreciate that this does not always happen. As a first step, it is often best to contact the person who dealt with your enquiry by email, letter or phone. They will know most about the matter and it may be possible to sort out the problem straight away. If you are not satisfied with our response, we have a complaints procedure you can follow.

Complaints procedure

Our complaints procedure helps us make sure your complaint is handled efficiently and in a fair way. You can complete an online form at www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/complaints/

You can also make your complaint by telephone or authorise someone to act on your behalf. For more information contact Customer Feedback on 01273 263030 or access the complaints and feedback page on our website.

What action can I expect?

If, following an investigation, we find that we are in the wrong, we will apologise in writing and will do everything we can to put things right. We will also take action to make sure the same problem does not happen again to you or any other tenant. If your complaint is about one of our policies, we may decide to review the policy to see whether changes are needed.

Who else can I approach?

If you have a complaint against Adur District Council and have been through our formal complaints process but are not satisfied, the next step is to contact a 'Designated Person' - this would be an MP or one of your local councillors. A Designated Person can help resolve disputes between tenants and their landlords in whatever way they think is most likely to work. If the Designated Person cannot help they can refer your complaint to the Independent Housing Ombudsman. Further details about the role of the Housing Ombudsman can be found at www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk.

When we get it right

We would also like to know if you are pleased with us. Our staff take pride in their work, so it means a lot to us when someone tells us that we got it right. This helps us to find out which parts of our service work well.

Equalities

We aim to make sure that our services are relevant, responsive and sensitive to the needs of our existing and future customers, and that all sections of the community have equal access to those services. Adur Council has an equalities and inclusion policy to ensure all tenants are treated fairly and have access to our housing services regardless of race, colour, gender, nationality, religion, age, mental illness, disability, sexuality or for any other reason.

Further information can be found on the Equality and Diversity pages on our website:

<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/about-the-councils/corporate-strategies-and-policies/equalities-and-diversity/>

Sustainability

Adur Council has declared a climate emergency and is working to reduce its carbon emissions across all of its services. As part of this priority for the council we will be investing in Adur Homes properties, to reduce their carbon footprint, for example by changing windows, installing energy efficient lighting in communal areas, improving insulation and installing solar panels. This work should reduce the amount of energy to heat and homes and so reduce utility bills. We will work with you should any of these improvements be planned for your home. There are also a number of things you can do:

- SMART displays can help you make savings by showing exactly how much energy you are using in your home - some energy companies supply these so get in touch with your provider to see if you can benefit
- get involved in community based gardening and food schemes
- recycle as much as possible
- reduce your energy use - eg by turning lights off when not in use and switching off appliances rather than leaving them in 'stand by' mode

For independent, expert advice on saving energy in your home, or for funding requests for making energy efficiency improvements, contact your local energy advice centre. Call the Energy Saving Advice Service on 0300 123 1234 or e-mail energy-advice@est.org.uk

For more information on energy saving, visit the Energy Saving Trust website at www.energysavingtrust.org.uk.

Interpreting and translation

We can provide information in a range of formats including large print. We can also translate into different languages or arrange interpreters. Please contact the Adur Homes by email adurhomes@adur-worthing.gov.uk or call our customer services team on 01273 263030 to discuss your individual needs.

Data protection and information.

The information you provide to Adur Council will be treated confidentially at all times. Security safeguards apply to both manual and electronically held data and only relevant staff can access your information. As a data controller, we also have a responsibility to make sure you know why and how your personal information is being used in accordance with relevant data protection law.

We will process your personal information for the following purposes:

- Managing your tenancy agreement
- Repairs and maintenance
- Provision of support and advice to you as a tenant

We will store your personal information such as your tenancy records in our housing management database and in paper files, for the duration of your tenancy. Following the end of your tenancy, the information will be archived for seven years and then destroyed.

Your personal information may be shared with the following teams or organisations for the purpose of prevention and/or detection of a crime/ fraud: The National Crime Agency, Social Housing Tenancy Fraud Project, the Department for Work and Pensions and Adur and Worthing Councils' Corporate Fraud team.

Tenancies and Rights

This section gives a brief description of your main rights and further details can be found in your tenancy agreement and the council's Tenancy Policy on the website.

Your tenancy agreement is an important document forming a legal contract between you and Adur Council. It confirms your tenancy with us and contains details about your rights and responsibilities and those of the council. It is your responsibility to ensure that you abide by the terms of the agreement as, by signing it, you have legally agreed to do so.

The only changes we can make to your tenancy agreement without your consent relate to the level of rents and service charges. For all other alterations, unless they are made as a result of new government legislation, we would consult you and seek your approval.

What we expect of you as a tenant

In summary we expect our tenants to:

- Pay your rent regularly and on time
- Look after your home and give us access to carry out repairs and safety checks
- Be considerate towards your neighbours
- Don't make any changes to your home without our consent
- Tell us about changes to your personal circumstances and contact details

Types of tenancies

Introductory tenancies

The introductory tenancy is for a trial period of one year. During that time, you must show that you are responsible enough to keep your home and can keep to the conditions set out in your tenancy agreement. If you break any of these conditions, we can extend the introductory period or take steps to end your tenancy.

Introductory tenancies can be ended more easily than secure tenancies. We will write to you to confirm the situation. As an introductory tenant you have fewer legal rights than a secure tenant. The differences are:

- you cannot assign your tenancy by mutual exchange
- you do not have the right to buy your home
- you cannot take in lodgers, paying guests, or sublet any part of your home
- you cannot use your home for business purposes
- you cannot make any alterations to your property (other than decorating, laying carpet and minor improvements such as putting up shelves)

Secure tenancies

If you become a secure tenant, you get the full legal rights of a council tenant. This means you keep your home for as long as you choose - as long as you keep to the conditions set out in your tenancy agreement. We can only take your home away from you if you give us good reason to do so, for example if you do not pay your rent, you harass other people, or if there is a legal ground for possession under the Housing Act 1985, the Housing Act 1996 or any other law.

Demoted tenancies

If you or your visitors behave in an anti-social way, we may apply to the court to

remove some of your rights as a secure tenant. You will then have a demoted tenancy. If you continue to break the conditions of your demoted tenancy, we can apply to the courts to evict you.

A demoted tenant loses a number of tenancy rights, including the right to buy, the right to exchange your home, the right to take in lodgers, paying guests and the right to sublet part of your home. A demoted tenancy lasts for one year. If we are satisfied with your behaviour during that time, you will go back to a secure tenancy.

Joint tenancies

As long as there are no previous rent arrears or breaches of the tenancy, we will normally grant joint tenancies to new tenants applying jointly who are:

- married couples and civil partners
- partners who have lived together for 12 months or more and where both partners are over 18 years of age
- partners with a child or children

However, we are not able to accept applications for joint tenancies from existing sole tenants, unless you can establish exceptional circumstances, which will need to be assessed.

If you have a joint tenancy, you are both responsible for the whole tenancy. If there are rent arrears or another condition of the tenancy is broken, either of the tenants can be held responsible. A joint tenancy can be ended if either person serves us a valid termination notice. At the end of the notice period, the entire tenancy comes to an end. A joint tenancy can only be transferred into a sole tenancy with a court order.

Overcrowding

It is your responsibility to make sure your home is not overcrowded. Every home has a maximum number of occupants according to the floor area of the living space (bedrooms and living rooms). The permitted numbers are shown on your tenancy agreement. If the number of people living in your home is more than the permitted number, it is legally overcrowded. Young children are calculated differently from adults and older children for overcrowding purposes. The rules are as follows:

- people aged 10 years or over count as one
- children aged between one and 10 count as half
- babies under one are not counted

Your rights as a tenant

The right to live in your home

You have the right, as a tenant, to live in the property unless there is a legal reason for us to take action against you to recover possession of the property. By law, the council is required to serve a notice warning the tenant of its intention to take legal action. These are legal documents. We may serve you notice, for a number of reasons, some of which are listed below:

- you break any conditions of the tenancy agreement. We will always try to sort out matters before taking legal action but, if you continue to break your tenancy agreement, we may have no option but to take possession of your home
- you abandon your home or live permanently at another address
- you have given false or fraudulent information to get the tenancy
- we need to carry out redevelopment or major repairs to the property, which we cannot do unless you move out
- you are an under-occupying successor
- there is a legal ground for possession under the Housing Act 1985, the Housing Act 1996 or any other law

For more information please see our Tenancy Policy on our website.

The right of succession

Tenants may have the right for their spouse, cohabitee or civil partner to take over their tenancy when they die - this is called succession. Please see 'ending your tenancy' section for further information. A succession can only take place once.

The right of assignment

In certain circumstances you can transfer your tenancy to someone qualified to succeed to your tenancy under the right of succession. If you want to pass your tenancy on, please contact Adur Homes for further advice.

The right to exchange (secure tenants only)

You have the right to mutually exchange your property with another council or housing association tenant (subject to certain conditions). See the 'ending your tenancy' section for further details.

The right to sublet part of your home (secure tenants only)

You have the right to take in a sub-tenant, but there are rules you must follow. You

must not:

- sublet without our written permission
- sublet the whole of your property and move elsewhere
- create a situation of overcrowding

Please note that:

- it may affect any benefit entitlement
- you are responsible for the behaviour of people living with you
- if you decide you want them to leave, you will need to arrange it yourself

If you sublet the whole of the property, you will be in breach of your tenancy agreement and we will take action to end your tenancy by serving you with a Notice of Seeking Possession or a 'Notice to Quit'.

If you suspect a property has been sublet, please report it to the corporate Fraud Team by e-mail fraud@adur-worthing.gov.uk or via the reporting tool on the website: <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/benefits/report-fraud/>

The right to take in lodgers (secure tenants only)

You have the right to take in a lodger or have members of your family living with you, but you must not create a situation of overcrowding. Please note that:

- it may affect any benefit entitlement
- you are responsible for the behaviour of people living with you
- if you decide you want them to leave, you will need to arrange it yourself

You can inform us of any changes to your household, by email adurhomes@adur-worthing.gov.uk or by calling our customer services team on 01273 263030.

The rules for renting out a room in your home are not too complicated. The government's guide to renting a room in your home is a good place to start. You can find that at www.gov.uk/rent-room-in-your-home/the-rent-a-room-scheme.

The right to buy (secure tenants only)

If you are a secure tenant and have been the tenant of a public sector landlord for at least three years, you can apply to buy your home. If you are interested in buying your home, please contact us by email adurhomes@adur-worthing.gov.uk or by calling our customer services team on 01273 263030.

The right to be consulted and changes to your tenancy agreement

We believe that it is important that you are involved in housing management decisions that affect you. We will usually consult with you about changes to our policy or practice that may substantially change the housing service we provide to you, your home and your neighbourhood.

Except for changes to rent or any other charges, the terms of the tenancy agreement can only be changed if we give you written notice that we intend to alter the agreement. We will write to you and tell you about the changes we are proposing to make and give you the opportunity to comment. We will take your views into consideration before agreeing any changes and give you at least four weeks' notice before the change takes place. The tenancy agreement may also be changed where you and we agree in writing.

The right to manage

You have the right to take over the management of your own home. This right can be taken by a group of tenants forming a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) in a particular block or estate. The TMO would take on the responsibility for providing the housing services the council normally supplies, such as collecting the rents and organising repairs and maintenance.

All tenants in the block or estate must be consulted and those proposing to take over the management must go through competency tests. Support from outside agencies is available to help with this process.

The right to repair

The right to repair is a scheme to make sure that small, urgent repairs (up to a value of £250) that might affect your health, safety or security, are done quickly and easily. For example:

- you have no hot water or electricity
- a tap which cannot be turned

The types of repair we need to complete under the right to repair, and the response times you can expect from us are set by law. A helpful summary is available with Citizens Advice:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/repairs-and-housing/repairs-and-housing-conditions/getting-your-landlord-to-do-repairs/renting-from-the-council-or-a-housing-association/using-the-right-to-repair-scheme/>

The right to improve your home (secure tenants only)

You must get permission in writing from us before you start any work. An improvement means an alteration or addition to your home. Please note that you will be recharged for any damage caused to the property or if we have to put right any sub-standard work.

The right to compensation for improvements

This scheme gives tenants moving out of their homes the right to claim compensation for certain authorised improvements they have made to properties. For further details on qualifying improvements, please contact Housing Customer Services.

The right to information

We keep details about you and your family that are relevant for the management of your tenancy. You have the right to see the information we hold about you. If you wish to see this information, please contact the council's Data Protection Officer by emailing data.protection@adur-worthing.gov.uk or writing to Information Governance Team, Adur & Worthing Councils, Worthing Town Hall, Chapel Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 1HA

We can arrange an appointment for you to come to our offices to view the information. You cannot take the information away with you, but we can arrange to take copies of it.

We cannot show you information that includes details of other people.

If you think the information we have is not correct, you can ask us to change or remove it. If we do not accept that the information is wrong, we will attach a note to your file recording your view and our decision not to alter it.

Your responsibilities as tenant

Paying your rent and other charges

Paying your rent is one of your most important responsibilities as a tenant. All of the funds generated by rent from Adur Homes is used to pay for the cost of managing and maintaining your home. You should pay your rent in advance, as set out in your tenancy agreement.

Your rent is a weekly charge for the property you live in and reflects the size and type of property you have. You may also pay additional charges for any extra services you receive. These might include:

- communal heating
- cleaning communal areas, such as in blocks of flats
- grounds maintenance, such as grass cutting areas surrounding blocks of flats

If you live in a block with services such as these, charges are divided proportionately among all properties and the proportion is added to your rent account.

If you live in sheltered housing you may be charged, as appropriate, the following service charges. Sheltered alarm charge covers the cost of your pull cord equipment and the emergency call centre. Housing management charge which covers the costs of housing officer support and buildings management, health and safety checks, cleaning, and management of the communal room, laundry room and guest room where applicable.

How to pay your rent

It is important that you pay your rent on time. Rent is due every Monday but can be paid fortnightly or monthly in advance. You can request a current written breakdown of your charges at any time. There are many ways to pay your rent including direct debit, standing order, online, by phone via our 24 hour payment line 0300 123 6002. Ways to pay can be found on our web page:

<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/payments/adur-homes/>

Direct Debit

This is the easiest way to pay. Once a direct debit is set up you don't have to think about paying your rent again, as we notify you of any changes and arrange to change the payment with your bank. It costs the council less to collect rent this way and any money we save means there is more available to help improve the services you receive. It costs nothing to set up and can be cancelled at any time by contacting your bank or building society.

Standing Order

Paying by standing order is another simple way to pay your rent if you have a bank or building society account. You can set up a standing order through your bank. With a standing order you have to tell your bank or building society to change the amount that is paid if your rent changes.

By telephone

To make any Adur Homes payment call our 24-hour payment line on 0300 123 6002. Please be ready to quote your credit or debit card details and either your rent account number or leaseholder reference number. Please note you cannot make a payment using American Express over the phone.

At the Post Office

You can pay by PayPoint or at a Post Office. You will need to take your Adur Homes payment card with you.

Can my rent change?

We may increase or reduce your rent and other charges. If this is going to happen we will give you at least four weeks' notice in writing after which the changes in your rent will be implemented. This usually takes place in April each year in line with government guidelines.

If your home has had adaptations which have altered the original property, such as adding an extra bedroom, this could mean the property is revalued and the rental value could change immediately following the adaptation.

Rent arrears

What if I am finding it difficult to pay my rent?

Your tenancy agreement states that 'you must pay your rent and other charges on or before the date it is due'. The rent and other charges are due on Monday every week. Contact the Customer Service Team as soon as possible if you have difficulty paying your rent. We are here to help and the earlier you contact us the easier it will be to help you.

What should I do if I have rent arrears?

If you have arrears on your rent account you can take one of the following steps:

- Where possible make a one-off payment to clear your arrears in full.
- Agree a repayment plan to clear your arrears within a reasonable time. If you have agreed a repayment plan and have difficulty making a payment, contact the Customer Service Team immediately.
- Information on help with the cost of living, including paying for utility bills and rent can be found on our website:
<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support/>
- If you are in debt, there are a number of organisations offering free and confidential advice, including:
 - Citizens Advice Bureau <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>
 - National Debtline <https://nationaldebtline.org/>
 - Christians Against Poverty (CAP) <https://www.capuk.org/money-and-debt-advice>

What will happen if I do not clear my rent arrears?

If you don't pay your rent and fail to get in touch with us, we will make every attempt to contact you and help with any difficulties that might be stopping you from making a payment.

However, if you do not work with us and reduce your arrears, we will serve you with a 'Notice of Seeking Possession'. This is the first stage of legal proceedings, which may result in you losing your home. If it does become necessary to refer your case to court, you will normally be responsible for paying all the legal costs and court fees on top of the full amount you owe us. These are currently several hundred pounds.

If you have rent arrears, you will not normally be allowed to carry out a transfer.

What happens about the rent if I am a joint tenant and one of us leaves?

If you have a joint tenancy, each joint tenant is responsible for paying all of the rent, other charges and any outstanding arrears. Even if one joint tenant leaves, both tenants will still be responsible for the full weekly charges for the property and any outstanding arrears until the tenancy is ended. If one tenant is planning to leave the property, please contact the Customer Service Team to discuss the options available to you.

Am I eligible for Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support?

If you receive other welfare benefits or are on a low income and have savings below the amount advised by the Benefits Service, you may be entitled to Housing Benefit (rent rebate). If you are entitled, the amount you receive will depend on your income and household, and may cover all or part of your weekly rent. Housing Benefit does not cover water rates, heating charges or garage, car parking charges, some communal or service charges.

You can claim Housing Benefit if you are responsible for paying the rent. It is important to claim as soon as you think you may be entitled, as it is only payable from the date you make your claim. When you claim, you must respond to any requests for documents within the time stated. If you do not it may delay the date from which any entitlement to housing benefit is paid.

If you do get Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support and your circumstances change (someone moves in with you or your income changes for example), you must tell the Benefits Service straightaway. Please refer to the useful contacts section.

Am I eligible for any help with my support charge? (sheltered housing)

There is a weekly service charge for sheltered housing reflecting the additional support the service provides. This charge is eligible for housing benefit.

Contact Customer Service Team for an application form and further advice.

Repairs, maintenance and improvement

For full information on the council's repairs service - including a list of council and tenant responsibilities - please refer to your tenancy agreement and the Repairs policy, which can be found on our website

For a paper copy, please contact the Customer Service Team.

Your responsibilities

There are a number of repairs which are your responsibility to carry out. If we are called out to do a repair which is your responsibility or find that the damage has been caused deliberately or through neglect, we will charge you for the cost of the repair.

Some minor repairs are deemed to be the tenants responsibility. These include things like taps, washers, internal doors, toilet seats. These are set out in the tenancy agreement and the repairs policy. Examples of tenant's responsibilities include:

- Interior of your home
 - chimney sweeping
 - curtain rails, skirtings, and architraves
 - damage caused by you, anyone living with you, your visitors or pets
 - Internal doors, except fire doors
 - door adjustments required when installing flooring or floor coverings
 - doorbells (if battery powered) and door furniture
 - fuses and plugs on your own appliances
 - general decoration
 - plugs and chains for all baths, sinks, wash hand basins and WCs
 - Unblockng waste pipes, sinks etc caused by poor maintenance or inappropriate disposal of food, nappies, wet wipes and other items.
 - shower heads and hoses and shower curtains
 - Wiping down and cleaning of tiles to prevent mould
 - Turning on and off to test your stopcock at last twice a year to ensure it is still working.
 - smoke alarms (if battery powered)
 - toilet seats (unless resident is in sheltered accommodation)
 - TV aerials and satellite dishes (unless linked to a communal aerial)
 - Minor cracks in walls
 - Any electrical fittings not supplied by us.
 - Cooker installations
 - Any item that has been gifted to you by the Council.
 - Light bulbs, except in the Kitchen or bathroom.
 - External lights or sockets, not fitted by the Council.
 - Fault finding on personal appliances.
 - Cleaning fans and showers

- Exterior of your home
 - blockages to waste pipes, gullies and WCs caused by misuse (including flushing nappies and wipes)
 - damage caused by forced entry by the police (unless nothing was found, and no-one charged)
 - gardens / garden contents
 - Keys / fobs - lost or stolen, including the replacement of locks
 - pests (unless they are interfering with our ability to carry out repairs)
 - wooden sheds or outbuildings including doors and frames.

You are also responsible for the internal decoration and plaster in your home and must decorate as often as is necessary to keep it in good condition. You must obtain our prior written permission to either use or remove textured coatings (including Artex), wall cladding or decorative timber to the internal walls and ceilings in their home. You must not fit locks on any internal doors (except the bathroom or WC) in your home without our prior written permission.

You are responsible for keeping in good repair and proper working order; internal shelves, doors (including wardrobe and cupboard doors), door furniture, locks, handles, picture rails, curtain rails, pelmets, dado rails, skirting boards, seals, grouting, surface fixed draught excluders, any fixtures and fittings installed by the tenant (whether or not they have our prior written permission), hinges, bolts, windows, window security locks, sash cords, window glazing, light bulbs (other than sealed lighting units e.g. in bathrooms) and rotary/washing lines in individual gardens, floor coverings such as carpet or vinyl flooring (save where provided new by the council).

Due to potential noise nuisance, you must keep floors covered with an appropriate covering such as, carpet and underlay and must not lay laminate or wooden flooring without our prior written permission. You must not use adhesive glue to secure floor coverings and will be charged for the removal of the floor covering and any damage to the floor, in the event of inspections or repairs needing to be undertaken. If the council carries out repair/improvement works to a home that requires the removal of any flooring which you have installed, then you are responsible for its removal and re-installation. If you do not remove the flooring before works are carried out, the council will not be responsible for any damage caused to it, or for its re-fitting or replacement.

Tenants are not allowed to decorate or affix anything to the outside of their home including an aerial, satellite dish, burglar alarm, CCTV or video doorbell without our prior written permission. You must not install a gate, fence, and security door/grill without our prior written permission. Tenants are also responsible for keeping in good repair and proper working order all sink and basin plugs and chains, tap washers, bath panels, toilet pull chains/handles and toilet seats, the reprogramming of heating control units, topping-up combination boilers, replacing cylinder hot water jackets, taking precautions to prevent frost damage to pipes and installations, chimney sweeping, servicing battery operated smoke detectors, and annual service of your own gas fired appliances and flues where the council has not accepted responsibility and provide the council with service certificates. Tenants are responsible for clearing blocked sinks, basins, baths, toilets and drains and must not allow them to become blocked as a result of misuse. Unless you live in a flat, you are responsible for keeping clear all gulleys, gutters and drain entrances.

Adur Homes Responsibilities

Adur Homes is responsible for keeping in good repair the structures fixtures and service installation at the premises, examples are provided below. We are not responsible when damage has been caused through misuse.

- Systems providing heating, gas, electricity and water in your home including:
 - heating systems, water heaters fitted by the Council
 - electrical circuits, sockets and switches
 - internal pipes, baths, sinks, basins, toilets, taps and deck mixer showers (installed by us)
 - other appliances we put in and own (such as communal television aerials and door entry systems)
 - annual servicing of Council gas appliances

- Exterior of your home:
 - external paint work
 - chimneys, chimney stacks and flues but not including sweeping
 - drains, gutters and outside pipes
 - roofs, external walls and floors
 - windows
 - paths and steps
 - fences, walls and gates erected and owned by the Council
 - external doors and door frames

- Interior of your home:

Adur Homes is responsible for the following interior repairs due only to natural wear and tear.

- walls
 - floors and ceilings
 - plaster work
 - door fittings – locks, handles, hinges and letter boxes
 - windows and window frames
 - kitchen units and bathrooms
-
- Communal area and facilities:
 - lifts and entry phone systems
 - fire detection and emergency lighting system
 - shared entrances, halls, stairs and passages
 - painting the inside and outside of shared areas

- parking areas and any other shared area

Contacting us regarding a repair

You can request a repair to your Adur Homes property or garage using our online repairs portal. You are also able to choose a convenient time for us to carry out the repair: <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/adur-homes/request-a-repair/> or you can call 01273 263030

Emergency Repairs

If your repair is an emergency, we will treat it as a priority and attend as soon as an operative becomes available to make it safe. We may need to return at a later point to make a permanent repair, especially if parts are needed. Emergency repairs are those that immediately affect the health, safety or security of you or your property. Examples include:

- A blocked or totally unusable toilet (where there is only one toilet in your home)
- A broken external door or window which makes your home unsafe or insecure
- A burst pipe inside your home or water supply failure (only if not containable)
- Electricity supply failure, if not caused by the electricity supply company
- Complete failure of the heating system (in winter, or where vulnerable people are involved)

Standard repairs

How quickly we can attend will depend on levels of demand at the time, however, we aim to carry out standard repairs within 28 days.

Repairs to communal and external areas

We aim to complete communal areas and external repairs within 28 days (sooner if it is a health and safety hazard).

What we expect of you

- You must ensure that an appropriate adult (aged 18 or over) is present to let us in.
- Please make sure the area likely to be affected by the work is clean and clear of obstructions and that children and pets are kept a safe distance from the area.
- Please treat our staff and contractors with respect and do not

abuse or threaten them.

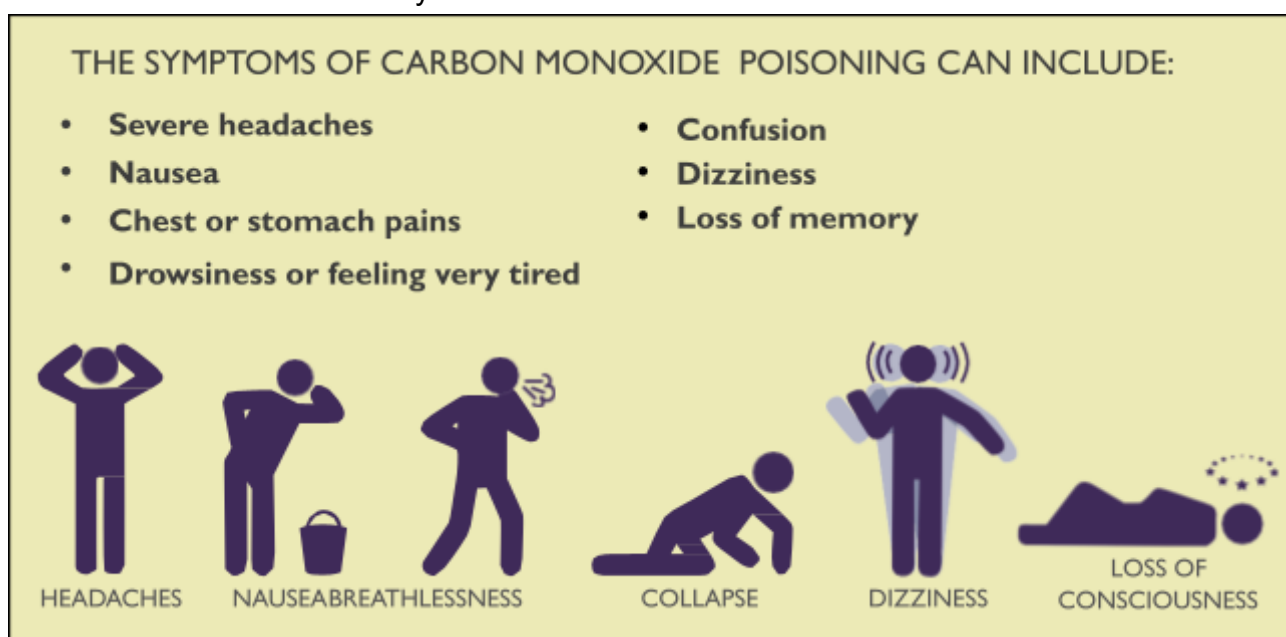
- Please give us 2 working days notice if you need to cancel an appointment.

Please note:

- We may refuse to carry out repairs if your home is very dirty or poses a risk to the health and safety of our operatives. We will let you know if such circumstances arise and give you sufficient time to address them.
- If the repair works are rechargeable, repairs will not be undertaken until they are agreed with the resident. If the work is deemed an emergency repair or its disrepair is likely to cause further damage to Adur Homes property, we will carry out the work, and arrange a recharge after completion.

Advice on Carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a highly poisonous gas produced when carbon fuels don't burn completely. It has no taste, smell or colour and can kill without warning in a few hours. Gas, oil and solid fuels are safe to burn so long as the appliance is installed, maintained and used correctly.



If you suspect a CO leak or think you are suffering from CO poisoning, switch the appliance off, open windows and then get out into the fresh air immediately.

Phone the National Gas Emergencies number on 0800 111999. Only use a mobile phone from outside the property. The number is free and available 24 hours a day.

If the symptoms are serious you should go straight to your doctor or emergency department.

Protecting yourself from CO

- If an appliance has soot or staining on or around it, please report it.
- Check the flames in your appliance – if they are orange or yellow instead of blue there may be a problem.
- Do not block ventilators, as these are needed to allow enough fresh air into the room. Similarly, do not block flues or chimneys.
- Do not install any gas, oil or solid fuel heating appliances without our written permission.
- Do not use portable LPG heaters.

We will carry out an annual safety check – please make sure you arrange access for us as a matter of priority when you get your appointment.

Advice on Condensation

Some condensation in any home is normal and unavoidable, especially in kitchens and bathrooms. If left untreated, however, condensation can lead to mould growth and cause damage to our homes and belongings.

Further information can be found at our website:

<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/housing/conditions-and-empty-properties/damp-and-mould/>

Condensation and damp – what's the difference?

Condensation is caused by warm, moist air coming into contact with cold surfaces, such as windows and walls. Penetrating damp, which is much less common, is caused by moisture entering the home from an external source, such as leaking plumbing or moisture from the ground.

Tackling condensation

While damp is an issue that requires further investigation, there are some ways we can all reduce the impact of condensation in our homes:

- **Reducing moisture:** Condensation is caused when warm damp air meets cold surfaces. Cutting down moisture levels in our homes can reduce this. When cooking, keep lids on saucepans where possible and close kitchen doors to stop steam from escaping. When taking a bath or a shower, keep the bathroom door closed and wipe down wet surfaces after use. Opening windows and using extractor fans, if you have them, can also help damp air escape.

- **Drying laundry:** During the winter, we may be more likely to dry wet clothes inside and on radiators. Unfortunately, this can put moisture back into the air. If possible, hang washing outside to dry. If this is not possible, keeping a window open will help moisture escape.
- **Air circulation:** A lack of ventilation can cause dampness and a musty smell in our homes. We can help air to circulate by keeping furniture away from walls, not blocking radiators or overfilling wardrobes and cupboards. Opening the windows for ten minutes each morning is also great to let in some fresh air. While it may be chilly, the fresh air will take less energy to heat up than the damp air in our homes.
- **Heating:** We understand that keeping the heating on is not always financially possible. However, maintaining a low temperature of at least 15°C can help reduce condensation in our homes.

Mould

If you notice small spots of mould in your home, wipe these away using a damp cloth as they appear. This will help to prevent it from spreading. While some condensation is common and can be managed using the guidance above, excessive moisture in our homes can indicate a bigger issue, such as damp. If you are worried your home is experiencing damp or mould, please get in touch and let us know by calling 01273 263030.

Asbestos

Asbestos is a naturally occurring material which was used in a wide range of building products during the last century. Although asbestos is no longer used, buildings constructed before 2000 may contain some asbestos in one form or another. Asbestos materials in good condition are safe, provided they are not damaged or disturbed. Asbestos is only a risk to health if asbestos fibres are released into the air and breathed in. Today, the main risk is to builders and other workers who may accidentally disturb asbestos materials, however regulations have been in place for some time to minimise their risk of exposure. The Health and Safety Executive advises that there is no need to remove asbestos which is in good condition.

What is Adur Homes doing about asbestos?

We have developed an asbestos management plan to enable us to identify and manage asbestos risks. This includes maintaining a register showing the locations

and types of asbestos-containing materials. We also ensure that all surveying and trades staff have received training to identify asbestos and only employ contractors with the appropriate knowledge, skills and equipment to work safely with asbestos materials. We will ensure that any asbestos materials in poor condition are removed or made safe by competent people.

Before undertaking DIY

Please contact us for advice before carrying out any DIY work which might disturb asbestos. Do not cut, sand down, drill, break or otherwise disturb any material which you suspect may contain asbestos, nor should you allow anyone else to do so. Please contact us if you think you have accidentally disturbed asbestos.

New Homes

If you live in a property that has been built in the last year, it will be covered by a 12-month defect period. This is effectively a one-year warranty and means that problems caused by design, materials, workmanship or specification will be dealt with by the builder. This excludes faults and issues that arise as a result of tenant misuse, neglect, wilful acts or accidental damage. Please contact us to report any defects.

It is important with a new property that you allow it to 'settle' and dry out gently. This will usually take between 9 – 12 months. At the end of the defects period, we will carry out an inspection to check that everything is in order and agree any work needed.

Drying out, cracks and shrinkage

Small cracks in the walls and gaps in joinery are both common signs of shrinkage. This happens when materials contract as they dry out. It's extremely unlikely that these cracks are anything significant and you can easily put them right with filler during routine decoration. It is wise to wait until the drying out process is complete before trying to fill any gaps, as they may continue to grow or new ones may appear.

To keep cracks and gaps to a minimum, you need to allow your home to dry out gradually and try to keep an even temperature throughout the property. Leaving your window vents open will help to air your home and allows moisture to evaporate more naturally.

Efflorescence

The appearance of a white deposit on the wall (known as efflorescence) can also be an effect of the drying-out process. These white deposits are natural salts that come out of the wall materials and are quite normal. The salts are not harmful and usually disappear over time. Where they appear on internal walls, they can be brushed or wiped away.

Living in your home

Moving in

If you are just moving in, there are a number of things you need to do or know about.

Getting connected

Contact the electricity, gas and water companies to make sure supplies are connected. Make a note of all meter readings as soon as you move in.

Letting people know

Below are some examples of who you might need to give your new address to:

- your doctor, dentist or healthcare visitors
- your bank
- your home help and support workers
- the benefits agency
- TV licence
- council tax
- your employer and children's school
- library service
- household insurance company
- DVLA

What can I expect?

Once you have moved into your property, we will contact you to check you are settling into your new home and give you an opportunity to ask any questions.

If you are an introductory tenant, you will receive a number of visits during the introductory period to see that your tenancy is running smoothly. We will contact you to arrange this. At the end of the year, your tenancy will automatically become secure unless we have taken action to end or extend your introductory tenancy.

Our staff also visit all households. These prearranged visits are to find out how we can help you make sure the property is being looked after and check the property is occupied by the tenant.

If you live in sheltered housing, your scheme manager will also give you information about our support and wellbeing services.

Insurance

As the owner of your property, we insure the building you live in. Buildings insurance covers the permanent parts of the building e.g. walls, doors, windows, roof, bathroom suite and fitted kitchen. You are responsible for buying your own contents insurance, however, which should cover your belongings for theft and damage. This usually includes items such as electrical equipment and gadgets, clothing, furniture and upholstery – think about it as everything you would take with you if you moved. Make sure your insurance also covers you for damage caused to other people's property -

for example, if your washing machine overflows and causes damage to a neighbour's property, this would be your responsibility.

Please be aware that even if a problem is caused by something which we are responsible for repairing, any damage caused to your belongings would have to be claimed against your own contents insurance. For example, if there was a flood caused by a burst pipe, we would repair any damage to the structure of the building and you would have to claim on your own insurance for any water damage to your furniture, carpet or floor coverings, loss of water / increased water bill, etc. If you need to make a claim against our buildings insurance, please contact the Customer Service Centre.

Emergencies

If you need the fire and rescue service, police or an ambulance dial 999 immediately. Do not contact us first.

If your personal safety or the safety and wellbeing of others is at risk, you should dial 101 (999 in an emergency) and seek police assistance. The police will then have a record of the event, which they can share with us if necessary.

If you need to contact us in an emergency, please call 01273 263030 and you will be re-directed to our out-of-hours service.

Pets

We respect the joy and companionship that pets can bring to our lives, owning a pet can provide comfort, reduce stress and promote a healthier lifestyle. Whilst we like to see pets in our communities it is important that you recognise the responsibility that comes with pet ownership and respect your neighbours by cleaning up after your pet and ensuring they are supervised at all times.

You must ask our permission to keep a pet. We will only give permission for a reasonable number of pets that are suitable for the size of property. We will only grant permission for one dog in a property that does not have direct access to a garden. We do not permit pet breeding in our properties and strongly recommend that you have your pet neutered. There are an enormous number of unwanted pets and neutering helps control the problem. Your vet can explain the procedure and tell you about the health benefits it can also have for your pet.

Below are some things to remember when deciding whether to get a pet:

- Where appropriate the animal must be microchipped and spayed/neutered
- Pets must have all of the recommended annual vaccinations
- Dogs must wear a collar with identification and be kept on a lead in public areas
- Pets must be insured and properly looked after to animal welfare standards
- No more than two animals are to be kept in the property at any one time

- The animal must not cause a nuisance, annoyance or interference with the peace of neighbouring occupiers
- You must not breed or sell animals from your property
- Pets must be put away while we are working in your property.

Permission is not given for the following:

- Any wild animals detailed in the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- Any livestock
- Any restricted breeds of dog as specified in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
- All venomous animals including insects and spiders

We may refuse or withdraw permission upon reasonable grounds, including suitability of the property. You and your visitors must not cause, encourage or allow any animal to do anything which causes or is likely to cause a nuisance to anyone else.

Access to your home

We have the right to gain access to your home to inspect or repair the property. We will always try to give you notice or make an appointment. Always ask to see identification – all Adur District Council staff and contractors should have ID with them. If you are not sure, please contact us for verification.

Locks and keys and Fobs

You are responsible for the keys or fobs to your home. We do not hold a spare set and will not pay for replacements if you lose them. If you lock yourself out and ask us to arrange a locksmith to let you back in, we will send you the bill (this may include additional administration charges). This also applies to any damage caused getting back in.

If a lock to an external door is broken as a result of daily wear and tear, or a genuine fault, it is our responsibility and we will either repair or replace it. At the end of your tenancy, you must ensure that all keys or fobs to your homes are handed in to us.

Satellite dishes

You must gain our written permission and any relevant planning approval before installing any of these items of equipment. We have the right to refuse permission to erect satellite dishes and, in some cases, the council will place a limit on the number of dishes that can be installed on one block of flats.

Gardens and hedges

If you have a garden, you are responsible for keeping it tidy. This includes maintaining trees, shrubs and hedges. Do not fill it with rubbish and unwanted

household items as this creates a nuisance and spoils the look of your neighbourhood. Please contact us if you are having problems maintaining your garden.

If you have a shed or outbuilding, you should only store gardening equipment, garden furniture and outdoor toys or bicycles inside it. Other items may become damp or damaged as these buildings do not have insulation and tend to get cold. Keep it locked when not in use to protect your property. It is also your responsibility to have adequate cover for any belongings on your home contents insurance policy.

Going away from your home

Your Tenancy Agreement states that your property must be your main home. You must tell us if you are going to be away from your home for 28 days or more and must provide us with a forwarding address and telephone number. This is so that we can contact you or a nominated representative if there are any emergencies while you are away.

If you don't tell us that you are temporarily away, we may decide that you are no longer living at the property as your main home and treat it as abandoned. We will then serve a Notice to Quit and/or a Notice of Seeking Possession on the property to end your tenancy and take legal action to take it back.

If you decide to move out, you need to tell us and provide four weeks' written notice to end your tenancy. Information on how to do this is included in the 'Ending your tenancy' section.

Running a business from your home

You need to apply to Adur Homes for permission to use your home for business purposes. Permission will depend on the nature of the business and the likely impact on your neighbours – for example, we might not give permission for businesses involving car repairs or using controlled substances. If we do grant permission but receive complaints at a later date, we will investigate and may withdraw the permission.

Some requests may require permission from the council's planning department. To find out more about planning permission visit:

<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/planning/applications/>

Keeping your neighbourhood clean, safe and tidy

We aim to make all our neighbourhoods safe, green and clean places to live, helping to improve the quality of life for all residents. We work closely with our colleagues in the council's refuse, recycling and park services to help us do this.

The duties you can expect from us are:

- keep communal areas of blocks clean
- keep bin areas clean
- check for safety hazards
- report repairs to communal areas
- arrange the removal of dumped rubbish
- check and change communal lights as necessary
- emergency lock changes (charges may apply)

You can help by letting us know if anything in particular needs to be done. To do this or give feedback on the service, please call the Customer Service Team.

Residents can help to keep their estates and buildings clean by:

- taking litter home or putting it in bins
- wrapping and bagging rubbish and putting it in the bins provided, do not leave anything beside bins and chutes keeping entrances and common ways clear – do not leave anything in corridor or landings, it will be removed as it is a fire risk
- clearing up any spills or leaks when taking rubbish to the bin rooms
- removing any marks on the floor or walls made by bikes, prams, or by dragging items in or out of the building

Grounds maintenance

Some of our neighbourhoods have shared grassed areas, which we are responsible for. We maintain landscaped areas and cut the grass and prune shrubs and hedges regularly, although we do not collect grass cuttings.

We encourage residents to take an active interest in their local areas and will not normally refuse permission to anyone wishing to cultivate or maintain shared areas and gardens. However, you must get written permission from Adur Homes first.

Refuse and recycling

You are expected to dispose of your rubbish responsibly by bagging it up properly and putting it out for collection on the day it is due. If you live in a flat, please place your rubbish in the provided bin areas.

If you have large or bulky items that you need to dispose of, the council's refuse and recycling service can collect it for a charge – please see our webpages for more information: <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/bulky-waste/> Large and bulky items should not be left next to, or placed into your refuse or recycling bins.

If you are disabled, elderly or not well enough to put your bin, recycling or garden waste out for collection, we can help you.

If you apply for this service, we will need to assess your needs to see if you are eligible. For example, if you live with someone who would be able to help you, it is unlikely you will qualify. We may also need to visit your home.

To apply please fill in our online form:

<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/recycling-and-waste/assisted-collections/>

The council encourages tenants to recycle and reduce waste as much as possible. Please use your recycling bins to recycle everything you can. Items must be clean, dry and loose. If you want to find out more about recycling facilities in your area, visit: www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/recycling-and-waste/

Tenant Alterations and improvements

The council allows you to do improvements to your home, but you must get written permission first. You will need our permission to put down any hard floor finish such as laminate flooring, hardwood overlay and ceramic tiles, or if you want to have bare floorboards in any room. This is because these types of flooring can cause a noise nuisance to neighbours. We will not refuse permission unreasonably, but are only likely to agree if you live in a house or a ground floor flat where there is less risk of neighbours being disturbed.

For more information, and to complete an online form, please visit:

<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/adur-homes/looking-after-your-home/making-alterations-and-improvements/>

Pest Control

As a general rule, it is your responsibility to deal with pests in your home, and some you can deal with yourself. However, some pests need specialised treatment and it is essential to get professional advice on how to deal with them safely without damaging the environment. Further guidance on pest control can be found on our website: <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/pest-control/>

Being a good neighbour

How can I be a good neighbour?

- welcome new neighbours
- make sure your house/flat contributes positively to the appearance of an area, eg keeping your garden tidy
- alert someone, such as the Housing Officers, if you notice a change in your neighbour, eg if you haven't seen them for a while
- help neighbours who are unable to use communal bins by taking their rubbish out for them
- become involved in local groups
- don't carry out noisy DIY work at night or early in the morning
- be co-operative if asked by a neighbour to reduce noise
- be quiet when you return home late at night – don't slam doors or shout to your friends
- respect the fact that different people have different lifestyles, but do not impose your lifestyle on your neighbours
- if you have permission to keep a pet, look after it properly, clean up after the animal, don't let it foul public areas, or let it cause a nuisance in any other way

- dispose of rubbish properly

Abuse against staff

The council will not tolerate violence, threats of violence or abusive language towards our staff and contractors. We will support the prosecution of tenants or members of the public if any council employees are assaulted. Tenants who threaten staff could be taken to court and face eviction proceedings.

Anti social behaviour

Tenant responsibilities

As a council tenant your tenancy agreement states that you, anyone living with you, and your visitors must not behave in an antisocial manner or use your home or neighbourhood for any criminal activities, such as drug dealing.

You must not cause a nuisance, harass anyone or do anything that unreasonably interferes with the peace, comfort and enjoyment of other residents or adversely affects their health and safety. ASB can be anything that prevents another person from enjoying their home, garden or neighbourhood. You are responsible for the behaviour of every person (including children) living in or visiting your home, both within your home and in the surrounding area.

Examples of ASB include:

- loud music
- criminal damage and graffiti
- drug dealing
- vandalism, ie causing damage to property
- harassment or intimidation
- dumping rubbish
- Hate crimes including racist and homophobic behaviour
- problems caused by pets such as noise or fouling
- abuse or violence towards someone living in your home, neighbours, other people in the community or council officers and contractors
- vehicle related nuisance
- verbal abuse
- Violence

What is not considered anti-social behaviour

- Appliance noise i.e washing machine, Hoover etc
- D.I.Y during permitted hours
- One off parties
- General family noise i.e children playing, babies crying etc
- BBQ's or cooking smells
- Neighbour disputes i.e parking or boundary issues

Reporting anti social behaviour

Sometimes your neighbours may be completely unaware that they are behaving in a way that is causing a disturbance. If you feel able to, you should try and have a conversation with them to resolve this.

If this does not resolve the situation you can call us on 01273 263356 or report your concerns online:

<https://adur-worthing-eforms.onmats.com/w/webpage/report-anti-social-behaviour>

In an emergency, you should contact the relevant emergency service, fire, police or ambulance on 999

Harassment

You or anyone living with you or visiting you must not harass or threaten any other person (or group of people) at all and in particular not do so because of their age, disability (which includes mental health conditions) ethnicity/ race, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or for any other reason. This applies to residents, their family, friends and visitors, officers and employees / agents of the council. Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to:

- physical violence or assault, threats of violence or violent gestures
- using intimidating abusive or insulting words or behaviour
- persistent and vexatious or offensive contact by post, telephone or any other means
- damage or threats to damage property
- stalking
- displaying any notice which is visible outside your home that is inflammatory; offensive or defamatory
- using social media to post any material which is indecent ,abusive, offensive or false which causes needless anxiety or distress
- allowing your property to be used as a platform for radicalism or extremist activities or to publish/broadcast hate messages

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is defined as an incident or series of incidents of controlling, coercive, or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse. No one deserves to be a victim of domestic abuse; however, it is unfortunately not uncommon. You can get help from the council by coming to Worthing Town Hall. For opening times see:

<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/contact-us/#in-person>

What help you receive will depend on your circumstances but it may include being offered a safe place for you and your family to stay, or it may be a referral to another service who can help you.

If you are not able to attend in person you can contact the Housing Needs team:

- by phoning 01903 221063 (9am to 4pm, Mon to Fri)
- or sending an email to housing.needs@adur-worthing.gov.uk

Out-of-Hours help: If you need help urgently at other times, you can speak to an out-of-hours housing officer by phoning 07713 889 128. This service is available in the evening and at night time, weekends and bank holidays

Communal areas

What are communal areas?

Communal areas are shared areas of a block of flats, or an estate, which tenants, residents and visitors can use. This includes stairs and lifts, landings, bin stores, shared gardens and car parks.

Are there any special considerations if I live in a flat?

Living in flats and maisonettes brings extra responsibilities. Everyone living in a block is responsible for keeping the communal areas clean and tidy, and must not:

- leave rubbish or property on the stairs or in the hallways - rubbish should be disposed of carefully
- smoke in enclosed shared areas
- interfere with fire safety equipment
- block emergency exits
- throw rubbish or other items from balconies - if you, your family or visitors do this, you will be considered to have broken your tenancy agreement and legal action may be taken
- let someone you do not know into the building
- wedge the door open or leave it open for any reason

The fire service and the council have agreed that personal goods should not be stored in communal areas as they could be a hazard if people need to leave the building in an emergency. If we need to clear any items belonging to you from shared areas, you will need to pay our costs.

Mobility scooters

You must contact us before purchasing any mobility scooter in order to get permission and to discuss safe storage options. It is your responsibility to find a

suitable location to store scooters. We will take action to remove any items left in shared areas without our permission, including mobility scooters, and apply appropriate charges for removal, if this becomes necessary.

Parking and garages

Where can I park my car?

There are different parking control schemes and it is your responsibility to ensure you and your visitors follow the rules relevant to the area.

Vehicles cannot be kept in front gardens unless you have a driveway with a lowered kerb and a hard standing for your vehicle, then you can use this to park.

How can I rent a garage?

We are currently reviewing our garage provision and the waiting list for applications is currently closed. Further details can be found on our website:

<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/parking/rent-a-garage/>

Can I repair my car outside my home?

You can carry out minor routine maintenance to your own vehicle in your garage, parking space or outside your home, if you do not cause a hazard or nuisance to your neighbours and do not make a mess. If the council has to clear up after you, you will be charged.

You are not allowed to do welding, spraying or major car maintenance on housing land. You must not dispose of oil or oil-based paint down the drains. If you do, we may take legal action which could result in you losing your home.

Caravans, boats, trailers and other vehicles

If you want to park a caravan, boat, trailer or other such vehicle in your garden, in a parking space or on other housing land, you will need to get permission from the council.

You cannot leave a vehicle, which has been declared SORN -(Statutory Off Road Notification) on housing land without permission from the council.

Abandoned and unroadworthy cars and motorbikes

You are not allowed to leave unroadworthy vehicles in your front garden or in parking areas. If you do, we may take action against your tenancy. Any vehicles considered to be abandoned can be removed and disposed of and any costs will be recharged to the tenant.

Gardens and balconies

Tenants are required to maintain their own gardens and balconies to make sure they look acceptable and do not cause a nuisance to their neighbours. If you are having difficulty maintaining your garden, please contact Adur Homes.

You are responsible for:

- keeping the garden tidy and free of rubbish, household items and vehicle parts
- trimming shrubs, hedges or trees to make sure they do not become a nuisance to neighbours
- maintaining any fencing that is your responsibility (unless it faces a public area / walkway)

You will need our written permission to:

- put up a garage, shed or greenhouse
- put up or change a wall or fence
- cut down, remove or destroy any bushes, hedges or trees unless you planted them

Ending your tenancy

Arrangements for ending your tenancy

What if I want to end my tenancy?

If you want to end your tenancy, you need to give us a minimum of four weeks notice in writing, with your tenancy normally ending on a Sunday. If you are transferring to another Adur Homes tenancy, you can give up to two weeks notice.

This is a requirement of your tenancy agreement.

If you do not give us the required notice before you leave, you will still be responsible for the rent until the end of the notice period.

You should complete a 'Notice to end a tenancy' form, available from Customer Services.

Once you have returned your written notice to us, we will arrange for a member of Adur Homes to visit you at home before you move out.

At this visit we will tell you about any work you need to do before you leave. This could include repairs which are your responsibility or returning any work done without our permission to its original state. However, we may only identify this after you move out, in which case you will be recharged for the work.

Your home must be left in a clean and tidy condition. All fixtures and fittings supplied by the council should be left in the property. All your items and possessions must be removed, including anything kept in lofts, sheds and gardens. In some cases, fittings such as carpets and curtain rails can be left for the incoming tenant but please discuss this during our visit.

If we need to remove anything after you leave or if you do not complete any work identified, you may be charged.

Moving checklist

- it is your responsibility to tell all parties that you are moving, including your gas, electricity, water and telephone suppliers
- you must return all keys and/or pendant alarms to us on or before your tenancy end date
- you will need to pay any outstanding rent and any other charges owed to us
- if you receive housing or council tax support, you must tell Benefits when you intend to leave

If you want your mail to be redirected to your new address, please contact the Post Office. If you have any questions or need help or advice about ending your tenancy, please contact the Customer Services Team.

Compensation for improvements

If you move, you can apply for compensation for certain improvements you have made with our permission, eg fitting a new kitchen or bathroom. Please contact the Customer Service Team for more details.

Please tell us if you would like to claim when you give notice to end your tenancy. We will need to see bills for the work – if you do not have these, tell us the cost and when the work was done.

Ending a tenancy following the death of a tenant

Ending a tenancy following the death of a tenant

We understand that this is a difficult time for families and friends and want to make the process of returning the property as simple as possible. We give a broad outline of what to do here, but for more advice or to arrange an appointment contact the Customer Services Team. Details are also available in our Tenancy Policy and the Tenants Agreement.

Who can take on my tenancy if I die?

If a tenant dies, their tenancy can be passed on to a joint tenant, spouse, cohabitee or civil partner, and in certain circumstances a family member - this is called succession. Under the Housing Act 1985, only one succession is allowed for each tenancy. The successor will have the same tenancy conditions as the previous tenant.

We appreciate this is a difficult time and our staff will work closely with family members if they are affected by this. If we cannot offer a further tenancy, we will provide advice and help on other housing options, and allow a reasonable time for the family member to find another home.

If your tenancy began before 1 April 2012

In the event of your death, the tenancy may pass on to your spouse or civil partner, a joint tenant or a member of your family if certain conditions are met. This is called 'succession'.

If your tenancy began after 1 April 2012

In the event of your death, the tenancy may pass on to your spouse or civil partner or a joint tenant or a cohabitee (a person living with you as if they were your spouse or civil partner) if certain conditions are met.

There are some rules we have to follow when someone wants to succeed to the tenancy:

- if you are a joint tenant, your surviving joint tenant will succeed to the tenancy and can stay in the same property
- if you are a sole tenant, your married partner, cohabitee or civil partner can succeed to the tenancy and can stay in the same property
- if a member of the household is able to succeed to the tenancy, but is required to move to smaller accommodation and refuses to, we can take legal action to take back the property and enforce the move to suitable alternative accommodation

If there is no one to succeed to the tenancy, the tenancy will need to be legally ended. This can happen in two ways:

- If there is an executor, they will need to provide four weeks notice. Rent will be charged for the four week period but we appreciate this places a burden on the deceased tenant's estate.
- If there is no executor, we will serve a notice to end the tenancy and register it with the Public Trustee. If there is a next of kin, we will provide them with a copy of this notice.

Downsizing - Transfer incentive scheme

If your house is no longer suitable for your needs because it is too big you may be able to apply for a transfer to a smaller property under the Transfer Incentive Scheme and receive an incentive payment of up to £5,000. Transfer applications may be refused if you are in breach of your tenancy agreement. Should a transfer incentive be agreed, any debts owed to the Council, including rent, court fees or re-charges will be deducted prior to any incentive being paid. Further details can be found on our website:

What to do if you want to move

If you are already a council tenant but need to move to alternative accommodation you can apply to join the Housing Register. Your housing need is assessed in the same way as any other housing applicant. This means that if you want to move but are in accommodation that is deemed suitable for your needs, you are unlikely to be given any priority to move and should instead consider a mutual exchange. Further information on applying to the housing register is available here:

<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/housing/looking-for-a-home/housing-register-applying-for-housing/>

Mutual Exchanges

If you are already a council or housing association tenant, you may be able to swap your home with another tenant. A mutual exchange can be a quicker way of finding a new home than applying for a transfer via the Housing Register, especially if your transfer application is not considered to be high priority.

If you would like to swap homes you will first need to register with a Homeswap scheme. This will enable you to search for other people who are looking to swap homes.

Once you have found a swap you must contact your landlord for permission, before you swap homes. Who is eligible?

- you must be a tenant of either a council or housing association
- you will not usually be allowed to swap homes if you have rent arrears
- you will not usually be allowed to swap homes to move into a property that is either too large or too small for your family

Further trails are available on our website:

<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/housing/homeswap-mutual-exchange/>

Private sector

You can also consider renting in the private sector where properties are in far greater supply; though costs may be higher and you will not have the same security of tenure. This gives you choice over where you live and the type of property you want to live in. If you are on a low income or benefits, you may be entitled to help with the rent through the local housing allowance. Please contact the Customer Services Team for further information and guidance.

When you are asked to move.

There are some circumstances when we might ask you to move. These include if:

- we need to carry out major works to repair or modernise your home – if this happens, we will provide financial and practical help
- you succeeded to the tenancy, but the property is too big for you
- the property is designed for someone in a wheelchair or who has mobility problems and you do not need this type of property

If we ask you to move, we will explain why and give you as much notice as we can. We will discuss your rehousing options with you and make sure we keep you informed. Please contact the Customer Services Team for further advice.

Buying your home

If you are a secure tenant with us, and have been the tenant of a public sector landlord for at least three years, you can apply to buy your home. If you are interested in buying your home please see our website for more details:

<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/adur-homes/information-and-publications/right-to-buy/>

Getting Involved

How to get involved and make a difference

Your opinions about your home and neighbourhood are very important to us. We want to hear your views about the service you receive. Your involvement helps us make improvements.

We have numerous ways you can get involved and have your say:

- **Surveys:** we carry out surveys regularly, from an overall satisfaction survey, to questionnaires about a specific service. We try to keep them short, so they don't take too much of your time, but they provide us with a lot of valuable feedback. Make sure we can include you by ensuring we have an up-to-date email address for you.
- **Neighbourhood Meetings:** We have regular neighbourhood meetings for Shoreham, Lancing, Sompting, Fishersgate and Southwick where you can find out what's happening and give officer feedback on any changes needed. Details of these meetings are included in our regular residents newsletter, Adur Together.
- **Customer interviews:** sometimes we'll ask if we can call you for a more in-depth chat about a service and your experience. This helps give more detail than we can get using surveys alone.
- **Scrutiny meetings and projects:** We are looking at developing focus groups where residents can come together to help improve service areas and perhaps start to run activities themselves. More details on these and how to get involved will be included in our newsletter, Adur Together.
- **Resident board members:** to make sure our residents' voice is heard at a strategic level, we have residents on our Adur Homes Advisory Board. Keep an eye out for vacancies if you are interested!
- **Sheltered housing meetings:** if you live in one of our sheltered housing accommodation, there are often

resident-led meetings. These are great opportunities to discuss ideas or concerns with our neighbours and feed them back to your scheme manager.

Living Independently

Sheltered Housing tenancy support

Our sheltered housing provision is a positive housing choice for older people, over 55 years, who want to live independently in a sociable community. Through this provision we are able to offer:

- a variety of locations and accessible properties
- a secure tenancy with the privacy of your own front door and living space
- support from a housing officer
- a 24-hour alarm that allows residents to call for help in an emergency
- a vibrant community so residents can sustain friendships and feel a sense of belonging.
- regular scheme meetings and other get-togethers
- opportunities for residents to comfortably maintain or improve their health, care, resilience and wellbeing
- shared gardens and lounges where residents may sit and relax

Sheltered housing is not a nursing home or residential care – it is specialist housing that enables older people to live an independent and enjoyable life. Housing does not provide social or medical care although staff can advise how to contact Adult Social Care for referrals or for a health practitioner.

General Tenancy Support

What if I need extra support managing my tenancy?

If you are having problems managing your tenancy, please contact Customer Services for advice. Depending on your needs, this may involve referring you to another service. The support we offer may include:

- advice in running your home well
- making the most of your neighbourhood
- putting you in touch with extra help

What if my tenancy is at risk?

Our Tenancy Sustainment services offer flexible support to tenants experiencing difficulties maintaining their tenancy, and who may be at risk of homelessness without appropriate advice and intervention. The aim of the service is to prevent residents losing their homes, and to make sure they are supported with extra services where needed. The Tenancy Sustainment can provide support that includes:

- help to access other services to meet health, financial or social needs - this may include employment, education, training,
- statutory health and social care services, local community and voluntary sector organisations
- accessing services that help with budgeting and managing debt
- advice and assistance to maximise your income and claim benefits
- advice and assistance on housing options
- help to manage neighbour problems
- help to access services in the local community

You must be willing to work with us to agree and work through a support plan to address tenancy problems so that you do not lose your home.

If you would like to find out more about the Tenancy Sustainment service or if you think you could benefit from the support it offers, please contact the Customer Services Team for information and advice.

Adaptations

If you or someone living with you has a disability that restricts quality of life or ability to live independently, there are a number of ways we can help you to remain in your home.

This includes advising you about equipment you can buy, providing equipment to make daily tasks easier, or adapting your home to improve access or help you use bathing facilities, etc. Alternatively, if your current home is unsuitable, we can help you move to a property that will be more suitable for your needs. In the first instance tenants need to contact the West Sussex County Council Occupational therapy service

If your home is too big for your needs, we can also support you to move to a smaller, more suitable property. You may also be entitled to transfer incentive scheme money if you agree to move to a smaller home. See our 'Moving options' section in 'Ending your tenancy' for more information.

If you think you would benefit from an assessment, please contact the council's Customer Services Team. They will take your details and your needs will be assessed by a disability professional, who will discuss their recommendations with you. If these include an adaptation, the Adaptations Team will contact you to organise a visit.

If you are eligible to have your home adapted, the Adaptations Team will tell you when this work will be done. Priority is given to people in greatest need and there is likely to be some delay as the demand for the work exceeds the budget we have available each year.

Useful Contact Details

The best way to contact us is via our online services such as email or online contact forms. We have online tools that can be used to report repairs, report missed bin collections or to arrange bulky waste collections etc. Our telephone lines are very busy so it is best to try and resolve your query via our online methods before calling us. Below are some contact details that you may find useful:

Department	Telephone number	Email address / website
Council Tax	01273 263111	https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/council-tax/
Complaints/Complaints	01273 263000	https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/complaints/
Housing Benefit	01273 263444	https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/benefits/
Parking services	01903 221180	https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/parking/
Recycling, refuse and waste	01903 851729	https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/recycling-and-waste/
Adur Homes Customer Services Team	01273 263030	adurhomes@adur-worthing.gov.uk
To report a repair		https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/adur-homes/request-a-repair/