

Rent Standard

You must pay your rent and service charges on time. We use this money to provide services and improvements for you.

- When we offer you a property, we will tell you how much your weekly rent is and whether or not it includes service and other charges.
- You must pay your rent every Monday, one week in advance (for the week to come) from the start of your tenancy.
- We may increase your rent once a year, usually in April. We will give you at least 28 days' written notice if we need to change your rent.
- We will send you a rent statement four times a year, or if you ask for one.
- At the start of your tenancy, you will receive an allpay payment card, which you can use to pay your rent.

Different ways you can pay your rent

We have tried to make it as easy as possible for you to pay your rent, by providing as many different payment methods as we can.

- Cash, cheque or debit cards – You can call at the housing office from 9am to 4.15pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and from 10am to 4.15pm on Wednesday. (The Fitton Hill office is closed between 12.30pm and 1.30pm every weekday.)
- Direct debits – This is the easiest way to pay, either weekly or monthly. All you need to do is fill in a form and return it to us. When there is a change in your rent we will arrange this for you.
- Allpay – You can use your Allpay payment card at a post office or anywhere with the Allpay logo.
- Standing order – You can arrange a standing order by filling in a form, which is available at our office, and taking it to your bank. When there is a change in your rent, you need to ask your bank to change the payment details.
- By phone – You can ring the office to pay by debit card during cash-desk opening hours.
- Post – You can pay by post, just send a cheque made payable to 'The Villages Housing Association' to the office.

- Housing Benefit - You may be entitled to Housing Benefit, and you must fill in an application form at the start of your tenancy so that a detailed assessment of your individual circumstances can be made. You may be surprised at the amount of income you need to be earning before you have to pay full rent. If you need advice and help filling in forms, please ask our staff. You must tell us and the council (who pay your Housing Benefit) about any change in your income when you get Housing Benefit so we can charge the correct rent.

Falling behind with your rent

Your home is at risk if you don't pay your rent on time. Paying your rent on time is one of your most important responsibilities. You are personally responsible for paying your rent, even if you claim Housing Benefit.

- If you are having problems paying your rent, please contact us for advice and help as soon as any problems begin.
- It is easier to pay off a smaller amount of debt, so don't leave it until your debt becomes too big.

What you can you do

- Contact our Customer Service Team straightaway if you have any problems paying your rent.
- Always respond when we get in touch with you.
- Choose a convenient payment method so that you don't miss any payments.
- Do not make any arrangements that you can't keep to.

What we can we do

- We will contact you if you have missed a payment.
- We will discuss any issues with you privately, sympathetically and politely.
- We will offer you a private interview at our office or we will visit you at your home.
- We will make sure we are consistent in our approach to all customers by taking firm but fair action against anyone who owes rent.

Where to go to get help and advice

- We can give you advice about claiming Housing Benefit.
- We can give you details of other agencies that can help you claim other benefits.
- If you live in Knowsley, our Tenants Extra Support Team (TESS) can provide you with help and advice. You can contact them at our Stockbridge office on 0151 480 1313.

If you, or someone you know, would like this leaflet in another format, for example in large print, on audio CD, in Braille, or in another language, please ask a member of staff.

The Villages Housing Association

✉ 16 The Croft
Stockbridge village
Knowsley
Merseyside L28 1NR
☎ Phone: (0151) 480 1313
☎ Fax: (0151) 480 5189
@ e-mail: info@villages.org.uk

✉ 2 Fircroft Road
Fitton Hill
Oldham
OL8 2QN
☎ Phone: (0161) 633 4060
☎ Fax: (0161) 628 5920
@ e-mail: info@villages.org.uk

