

Villages HOUSING

More than just a Landlord

Tenants' Handbook



Crystal
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19405
Clarity approved by
Plain English Campaign





More than just a Landlord

Villages Housing Group Tenants' Handbook

2010

This information is available in Braille, on audio tape and CD, in large print and in different languages. Please contact your Area Office.

Disclaimer

This handbook only provides general information. Your tenancy agreement provides detailed information about your tenancy and your legal responsibilities.

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Welcome to Villages Housing

Welcome

I would like to welcome you to your new home and I am pleased that you have chosen to live in one of our properties.

I hope that you will enjoy living in and looking after your new home, and that your tenancy will be a long and happy one.



We have produced this handbook to give you information about your tenancy and also to provide extra information which might be useful to you during your tenancy.

It is full of useful advice to help you make the most of your home, as well as information on the standards of service you can expect from us.

If you need any more information, please ask us.

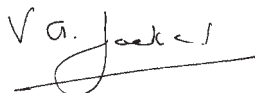
The Handbook has been split into easy-to-read sections and covers all areas of our service. If you would like more information, or if something is not clear, please contact us. We will be happy to help.

You can also find useful information on our website at www.villages.org.uk

I hope that you find the Handbook useful and if you have any

suggestions on how we can improve any of our services, please let us know.

Please note that the information in this handbook is only to provide you with general information. For specific information relating to your tenancy, and your legal responsibilities, you should refer to your Tenancy Agreement.



Vernon Jackson
Chief Executive

Who we are

We, **Villages Housing**, are made up of The Villages Housing Association Limited and Villages Community Housing Association Ltd.

We own and manage approximately 2,800 homes in Merseyside and Oldham. This includes 900 homes which were transferred to us from Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council on 15 March 2004. Those homes are at Fitton Hill.

Our mission statement is 'To be more than just a landlord working in partnership to create an environment for communities to flourish'. We are committed to providing quality accommodation and services to our tenants.

Villages Housing Association Limited (VHA) was established in June 1983. It is Knowsley's longest-standing locally based housing association. It is an Industrial and Provident Society registered with the Financial Services Authority (registration number 24123R) and the Office for Tenants and Social Landlords – known as the Tenant Services Authority (registration number L3417).

Villages Community Housing Association (VCHA), established in 1999, is the charitable subsidiary of Villages Housing Association Limited. It has its own independent board. The association specialises in supported accommodation. Some of the housing, such as the award-winning scheme in St Helens for people with dementia, is specialist accommodation for people who need extra support to live independently.

VCHA is an Industrial and Provident Society registered with the Financial Services Authority (registration number 28874R) and Office for Tenants and Social Landlords – known as the Tenant Services Authority (registration number LH4231).

The Tenants Services Authority and The Audit Commission both regulate the service we provide. For more information about these two organisations, visit their websites at **www.tenantservicesauthority.org** and **www.audit-commission.gov.uk**.

How to contact us

You can contact us in person, by phone, fax, in writing, by email or by visiting our website at www.villages.org.uk.

We have two offices – our Head Office in Stockbridge Village, Knowsley, and one in Fitton Hill, Oldham.

Stockbridge Village, Knowsley

16 The Croft
Stockbridge Village
Merseyside
L28 1NR

Phone: 0151 480 1313
Fax: 0151 480 5189
Email: info@villages.org.uk
Website: www.villages.org.uk



The office is open between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday, except Wednesdays when we open at 10am. **The payments counter closes at 4.15pm.**

For out-of-hours emergencies (5pm to 9am Monday to Friday, weekends from 5pm on Friday until 9am on Monday, and bank holidays), Stockbridge Village tenants can call **0151 290 7375**, or can call KHT (heating repairs) on **0151 290 7000**.

These numbers are only for reporting emergency repairs.

Fitton Hill Office, Oldham

2 Fircroft Road
Fitton Hill
Oldham
OL8 2QN

Phone: 0161 633 4060
Fax: 0161 628 5920
Email: info@villages.org.uk
Website: www.villages.org.uk



The office is open at the following times.

Monday	9am to 12.30pm	1.30pm to 5pm
Tuesday	9am to 12.30pm	1.30pm to 5pm
Wednesday	10am to 12.30pm	1.30pm to 5pm
Thursday	9am to 12.30pm	1.30pm to 5pm
Friday	9am to 12.30pm	1.30pm to 5pm

The payments counter closes at 4.15pm.

For out-of-hours emergencies (5pm to 9am Monday to Friday, weekends from 5pm on Friday until 9am on Monday, and bank holidays), Fitton Hill tenants can call Jackson Lloyd on **0845 389 7247** or Premier Heating Repairs on **0161 303 3801**.

These numbers are only for reporting emergency repairs.

Website

You can also get information about us from our website at **www.villages.org.uk**.

Your Tenancy

Your tenancy agreement explained

You will have one of five types of tenancy – a starter tenancy, a secure tenancy, an assured tenancy, an assured shorthold tenancy, or a protected assured tenancy.

To find out what type of tenancy you have, check your tenancy agreement or contact your local housing office.

When you sign the tenancy agreement for your new home, you are entering into a legal contract with us.

The table below summarises the legal rights tenants have under each type of tenancy.

Legal right	Secure tenancies and protected assured tenancies	Assured tenancies	Starter tenancies
Right to live in your home without the risk of being evicted for no good reason	Yes	Yes	Yes
The right for your partner or family member to take over the tenancy after your death	Yes	Yes	Yes
The right to repair (see page 23)	Yes	Yes	Yes

The right to be consulted on issues related to how we manage our housing	Yes	Yes	Yes
The right to transfer your tenancy to someone else	Yes	Yes	Yes
The right to buy (see page 38)	Yes	No	No
The right to acquire (see page 38)	Check with your local housing office.		
The right to take in lodgers	Yes	Yes	No
The right to complain	Yes	Yes	Yes
The right to improve (see page 27)	Yes	Yes	No
The right to exchange your tenancy with that of another person	Yes	Yes	No
The right to be consulted if we intend to transfer the management of our housing to someone else	Yes	Yes	Yes
The right to take part in monitoring the contract for managing our housing	Yes	Yes	Yes

Whichever type of tenancy you have, we will consult you on matters affecting the management and maintenance of your home.

See your tenancy agreement for more information on your rights. If you do not have a copy of your tenancy agreement you can get one from your local housing office.

If you do not keep to the terms of your agreement, the legal action we can take to evict you from your home depends on the type of tenancy you have, as explained below.

- **Secure tenancies**

We would have to go to court to prove that you have broken your tenancy agreement. If we cannot prove this, we cannot evict you. If we do prove that you have broken your tenancy agreement, the judge will decide whether or not we can evict you.



- **Starter tenancies**

We give all new tenants starter tenancies. Starter tenancies last for at least 12 months. After 12 months:

- if you have kept to the starter tenancy agreement your tenancy will become an assured tenancy; and
- if you have not kept to the starter tenancy, we will either end your tenancy or extend your starter tenancy.

- **Assured, assured shorthold and protected assured tenancies**

As with secure tenancies, to evict you we would have to go to court to prove that you have broken your tenancy agreement. A judge will decide whether or not we can evict you.

Our main responsibilities

We will:

- keep the structure of your home in good repair;
- keep all fixtures and fittings we have provided in good working order; and
- carry out a programme of repairing and painting the outside of properties, and any shared parts such as corridors, every five years.

Your main responsibilities

You must keep to all the conditions set out in your tenancy agreement including:

- paying your rent and service charges on time;
- not acting in an antisocial way;
- not causing nuisance to your neighbours;
- keeping your home clean and your garden tidy;
- allowing our contractors into your home to carry out necessary repairs and carry out gas-safety checks; and
- keeping pets under control.

Some of these responsibilities are explained in more detail in the following sections.

Breaking your tenancy agreement

Antisocial behaviour

We are committed to making sure that all tenants and leaseholders enjoy their right to peace, quiet and security in their own homes.

We will take positive action to deal with disruptive tenants and anyone else causing a nuisance in the area.

Our policy is to take action against anyone who acts in an antisocial way.

You and any joint tenants are responsible for your behaviour, and the behaviour of anyone living with you or visiting you, while in your home and the surrounding area.

If you behave in an antisocial way, we may take legal action that could include taking you to court and evicting you.

More information is given in our antisocial behaviour leaflet, which you can get from your local housing office.

Harassment

We will also take action to tackle any kind of harassment. We will work with the police and other agencies to make sure that harassment is tackled firmly, and we will take legal action against tenants where appropriate.

Domestic violence

We will also act upon any reports of domestic violence. We will work with the police and other agencies to make sure that victims of domestic violence are protected, and that any abusive tenant is evicted.

Disputes between neighbours

We offer a 'Mediation' service for tenants who have difficulty getting along with their neighbours.

Disputes between people can sometimes get out of hand. With mediation, an independent person helps people to reach acceptable solutions. Mediators are trained volunteers who are experienced in settling disputes. They:

- visit everyone involved in the dispute;
- act as a go-between or arrange for people to meet on neutral ground;
- will not take sides or judge who is right and who is wrong; and
- help everyone to come to an agreement.

If you are having difficulties with a neighbour, contact your Estate Management Officer. They will be able to give you help and advice, and will decide whether or not to refer the matter to our Anti-Social Behaviour Officer.

Running a business

You cannot run a business from your home unless you get our permission in writing. If you break this condition, we will take action against you.

Hygiene

We expect you to keep your home clean and tidy. We also expect you to respect the surrounding area and your neighbours by doing the following.

- 'Doing your bit' to keep any shared areas (pathways, stairs, foyers, halls and landings) tidy. If you leave any items or rubbish in shared areas it will be removed and we may charge you for our cost for doing this.
- Making sure you do everything possible to prevent pests, such as mice and rats. Report any pests immediately by phoning Environmental Services on 0151 443 2455 or 0151 443 4712 (Knowsley) or 0161 770 4509 (Fitton Hill, Oldham). Wrap food up before throwing it away. Clear up any of your pet's waste, both inside and outside your home.
- Not doing anything which might cause your drains to become blocked (for example, putting nappies, newspaper or other bulky items down the toilet, or putting cooking oil or fat down the kitchen sink). If the drains do become blocked, you must phone your local housing office immediately. Although we will arrange for a contractor to unblock drains, if you caused the blockage we will charge you the cost of having the blockage cleared.

Animals

If you keep a pet you must make sure that the animal or bird does not cause a nuisance or a health and safety risk to neighbours.

You must not keep more than two cats or two dogs, or one of each, and you cannot have a dangerous wild animal, or a dangerous dog, in your home. **Please see your tenancy agreement for more information.**

You cannot keep a pet if your home has a shared entrance or a shared garden.

If we receive any complaints about your pet we will take action against you.

Please see your tenancy agreement for more information.

By law you must keep your dog on a lead and under control when it is outside your home. So do not let your dog out on its own. If you do, it may be picked up by the Animal Warden and you would have to pay to get it back. Make sure your dog is wearing a collar with your contact details on, or that it is microchipped.

Do not let your animal mess any shared or other areas. Not only is this unpleasant for someone else to have to clean up, but it can cause disease, especially in children. You must clear up any animal mess. If you don't, you could have to pay a £60 'on the spot' fine.

You are not allowed to keep any animal other than a caged bird in multi-storey or three-storey flats. If you break this condition of your tenancy we will take legal action against you.

Gardens

Before, or shortly after you move into your new home, any rubbish will be cleared and gardens will be tidy. Overgrown hedges will be cut back and grass will be a reasonable length. You must keep your garden neat and tidy. If you do not look after your garden, we may carry out the necessary work to put it back into reasonable order and charge you the cost of this.



If you accept a tenancy, you accept responsibility for maintaining the garden, including any trees that are within its boundary, and any litter that builds up.

Basic garden maintenance

We expect you to do the following.

- Keep the garden clear of rubbish such as household waste, old toys, damaged garden furniture and old car parts.
- Mow the lawn, if you have one, at least twice a month during the growing season (usually from March to October).
- Regularly weed plant borders and between any flagging.
- Be responsible for maintaining any trees within the garden.

We will also recognise those who look after their gardens to a high standard by arranging an annual garden competition. You can get more information from your local housing office.

Gardening service

Our Landscape Team provides a gardening service which includes cutting the grass and hedges every two weeks from April to October (if the weather allows this).



This service is offered to tenants of Villages Community Housing Association and those within Stockbridge Village who are elderly or vulnerable, who have very poor health or mobility problems. This service is also provided to tenants in bungalows in Fitton Hill.

There is a small charge for this service. The charge depends on the size of your garden. Our Landscape Team will assess the charge and agree this with you before the work is agreed. You would need to pay the charge one month before the work is carried out. If you cannot pay at the Rent Office, a member of staff will call to collect the payment.

There is a waiting list for this service, which makes sure it is provided to those most in need.

Vehicles

You should not allow vehicles to be parked on your property, unless there is a properly built driveway. Avoid parking vehicles on shared grassed areas, as this will ruin the grass and make it difficult for our gardeners to maintain it properly.

Do not leave any untaxed vehicle on our land as we will remove it and charge you for our costs. We set these conditions because:

- it is illegal to drive or park an untaxed vehicle on public roads;
- abandoned vehicles may be a target for vandals and a danger to children; and
- abandoned vehicles spoil the appearance of the area.

Health and safety

- **Always ask callers to your home for identification** - genuine callers will have identification readily available.

Tenants of **Villages Community Housing Association** (all sheltered homes in Stockbridge Village, and some bungalows) will have an 'Identislot' security device on their front door. This allows people calling at your home to slide their ID card through. Genuine callers are happy to provide ID.

- Keep any shared entrances closed at all times and do not let any visitors into the block unless you know them.
- Fit smoke alarms in your home. The best place to fit them is usually in the hallway or at the top of the stairs.
- Keep all doors and windows locked.
- Report repairs immediately, particularly leaks and broken windows.
- Don't store flammable materials in the property, or use oil, paraffin or gas-cylinder heaters.

- Get rid of rubbish properly. If you need to get rid of bulky household items, phone:
 - Oldham Council on 0161 770 6644 (many items will be removed free of charge); or
 - Knowsley Council on 0151 443 2400 (there may be a charge for this service).

Warm-air heating

Some properties in Stockbridge Village have warm-air heating rather than central heating. Do not put clothes in the warm-air cupboard as this could cause a fire.

Asbestos

See page 39 for more information about asbestos.

Paying your rent and service charges

You must pay your rent one week in advance, so when you pay, it is for the week in which you are making the payment. If you want to pay over a longer period (for example, once a month), you must pay in advance (for the month ahead).

The amount you pay is made up of rent and service charges (for example, if you receive extra services, shared heating or cleaning of shared parts).

The rent year usually runs for a set number of weeks, with you not having to pay rent at set times during the year. These are known as 'no rent due' weeks. However, if you are behind with your rent, you will have to make payments on the weeks when rent wouldn't normally be due. We will tell you when you do not have to pay rent.

We review most of our rents once a year, but some are reviewed every two years. Please contact your local housing office for more information.

To help make paying your rent easier, you can pay in any of the following ways.

- At your local Villages office using cash, cheque or debit card.
- Online through the Villages Housing website at www.villages.org.uk.
- Over the phone using your debit card.
- At any place that displays the PayPoint sign, using your tenancy card.
- By direct debit every Monday or on the 1st or 15th of the month.

- At any post office or other place that displays the allpay logo.

For more information, please visit our offices or call us on **0151 480 1313 (Stockbridge Village)** or **0161 633 4060 (Fitton Hill)**.

Service charges



We provide extra services for some of our tenants, and we collect this payment every week with the rent. The amount you pay depends on the level of services you receive.

The services we provide include caretaking, cleaning, heating and lighting shared areas, security equipment, maintaining lifts and door-entry systems, warden costs for our sheltered schemes and so on. The total of the year's running costs for a block or housing scheme is then shared equally between all the residents receiving the services.

If you get Housing Benefit, this **may** cover your service charges.

Leaseholders have to pay a yearly charge for insurance, and we expect them to make a contribution towards the cost of any repair work needed to their property. We would consult leaseholders on this.

Residents at the Cliffs and Craigs multi-storey blocks and Portland House also have to pay a weekly charge for heating. However, Housing Benefit cannot cover this cost.

For more information, phone 0151 480 1313.

Ways to pay your rent explained



- **Direct debit**

Direct debit is the most efficient and reliable way to pay your rent. You can pay by direct debit every week or month.

Some benefits of paying by direct debit include the following.

- No need to go anywhere to pay in person.
- Most current accounts allow you to set up direct debits.
- You can pay direct debits from another person's account not just yours (but please give us full details if this is the case).
- You can change the amount of the direct debit at any time.
- If the amount you have to pay changes, we change the direct debit for you. You do not need to do anything.
- If your direct debit needs to change, we would agree this with you at least 10 days before the change.
- If we or your bank make a mistake you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch.
- You can cancel a direct debit at any time.
- We can only collect the amount we agree with you.
- You will be entered into a free cash draw every three months.

If you want to pay by direct debit, you will need to fill in a direct debit form, which you can get from us. Our staff will be happy to help you fill in the form if necessary.

- **PayPoint and allpay**

PayPoint and allpay give you the freedom to choose where you pay your rent. We provide free payment cards to all our tenants. If you want more information, contact your local rent office. You can make payments at any of the shops and garages displaying the PayPoint sign. Many of these are open late in the evening and on Sundays, giving you more opportunity to pay when you want.

You need to use the payment card we have given you. You should keep the receipt you are given to prove that you have made the payment. You will not be charged for paying this way.

We usually receive your payment on the following day, unless you pay on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday, in which case we will receive the payment on a Monday.

To find out where you can make your payments, go to the website at www.allpay.net or ask at your local housing office.

Problems with paying

If you have difficulty paying your rent, contact the Customer Services Department or your Estate Management Officer. They will explain various options available to you, including what benefits you might be entitled to, how you can budget more effectively and the best way to pay off the rent you owe. They may refer you to our Tenants' Extra Support Scheme (TESS), if you live in Knowsley, or Housing Support if you live in Oldham.

If you would prefer to discuss your rent payments or other debts with someone who is independent of us you can contact your local citizens advice office by phoning 0845 120 3703 or visiting the website at www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

Always remember, if you have problems with your rent, contact us as soon as possible.

What happens if you don't pay your rent?

It is important that you always pay your rent on time. If you miss a week's rent you must speak to your Estate Management Officer and bring your account up to date the next week.

It is important that you contact us as soon as possible if you have problems paying your rent. Ignoring the problem will not make it disappear. Our staff have experience helping people with rent problems so will probably have encountered other cases that are similar to yours. You can then both agree a course of action.

If you don't agree a course of action with us, the following will happen.

- Your Estate Management Officer will phone, write to you and visit you.
- If you do nothing about your overdue rent, we may send you a legal notice instructing you to pay us what you owe.
- You must pay off your overdue rent within four weeks of receiving the notice, or make an arrangement to reduce your debt. If you do not pay off what you owe or agree a payment arrangement with your estate management officer, we will apply for a court order to force you to pay. If we do this, you will also have to pay any court costs and our legal costs associated with this action.
- If the matter is not settled, we will take court action to evict you.

If you are a joint tenant

If you have a joint tenancy, you and any joint tenant are equally responsible for making sure the rent is paid, so it is important that you all know how much you owe.

Housing Benefit

One of the main ways people on a low income can get help with their rent is through Housing Benefit. You can apply for Housing Benefit regardless of whether you:

- live with a partner or are single;
- live alone or with other people;
- are a pensioner;
- are employed, self-employed or unemployed; or
- have or have not paid any National Insurance contributions.

You can only get benefit if you have your permanent home in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland.



If you think you are entitled to Housing Benefit, contact your local council (the contact information is listed below) and ask for an application form. You can also use the form to claim Council Tax Benefit (to reduce the amount of council tax you have to pay).

Stockbridge Village, Knowsley

Housing Benefits Section
Municipal Buildings Kirkby
Cherryfield Drive
Kirkby
L32 1CX

Phone: 0151 443 4042

Email: benefits@knowsley.gov.uk

(You can also get information from 'One Stop Shops' throughout Knowsley.)

Fitton Hill, Oldham

Unity Partnership
Civic Centre
West Street
Oldham
OL1 1UH

Phone: 0161 770 6633

24-hour phone line to ask for a form: 0161 770 3915

Email: benefits@oldham.gov.uk

Don't forget, if you are not sure whether you are entitled to Housing Benefit you should always apply.

Repairs, improvements and maintenance

Repairs to your home

This chapter sets out how our repair service works. To find out more, pick up one of our service standard leaflets from reception.

Repairs we are responsible for

We are responsible for the following repairs.

- Repairs to the structure of your home (for example, walls, floors and ceilings) and the outside of your home (for example, doors, roof, windows, floors, pipes and drains).
- Services in your home (for example, the water supply pipes within the boundary of your garden, the gas supply after your gas meter, your electricity supply after the electricity meter).
- Fixtures and fittings (for example, kitchen units, bathroom fittings and heaters) provided by us.
- Shared parts of flats (for example, staircases, landings and so on).

For more information, contact your local housing office.

If the repair is needed because of damage caused by you or anyone living with or visiting you, you will have to pay the cost of the repair. More information is given in our 'Rechargeable Repairs Policy', which you can get from your local housing office.

Repairs you are responsible for

Listed below are examples of the type of repairs you are responsible for. Your tenancy agreement gives more details.

- Your cooker's connection to the electric point or a gas point we provide.
- Coat hooks.
- TV aerials (unless they are shared aerials provided by us).
- Toilet seats
- Letter boxes
- Blockages in waste pipes when caused by items such as nappies, newspapers, or other bulky items being flushed down the toilet.



How to report repairs

You can report a repair in a number of ways – in person at your local housing office, by phone, by letter and by email. This chapter sets out how our repairs service works.

When reporting a repair, please tell us:

- your name;
- your address;
- a daytime phone number;
- the type of problem and where it is; and
- when we can get into your home.

Inspecting reported repairs

Sometimes we have to carry out an inspection before we can do the repair. If we need to carry out an inspection, we will tell you this when you report your repair and arrange an appointment with you.

We will inspect some repairs that have been carried out to check the standard of the work and make sure you are happy with it.

If we need to inspect a repair in your home we will try to contact you to arrange a convenient time.

Appointments for repairs

For all repairs (except emergency repairs) and inspections we will offer you an appointment. We will agree a convenient time with you.

Repair priorities

Repairs are ordered using one of the following priorities.

- **Emergency**

A repair is considered to be an emergency if it is needed because the fault or damage puts people at risk, could lead to more serious damage, or means that the home is not secure. We intend to carry out emergency repairs within 24 hours.

- **Urgent**

Urgent repairs are those which, if not carried out, will cause discomfort to the tenant and potential damage to the property. We will carry out urgent repairs within five working days.

- **Routine**

A routine repair can be anything that does not immediately affect a person's day-to-day life or their health and safety. We will usually carry out routine repairs within 20 working days of the repair being reported.

- **Batched**

Sometimes we may need to group together (batch) routine repairs so that they are carried out as part of our programme of planned repairs. This means that the repair may be delayed.

If we are going to carry out the repair as part of our programme of planned repairs, we will tell you this either when you report the repair or within five days of you reporting the repair. If possible, we will also tell you when we expect to start and finish the work.

Out-of-hours emergencies

To report emergency repairs outside office hours:

- phone 0151 290 7375 if you live in Knowsley; or
- if you live in Oldham, phone 0845 389 7247 for emergency repairs and

0161 303 3801 for emergency repairs to heating.

In most cases we will carry out a temporary repair and make arrangements to return to carry out a permanent repair.

Examples of emergencies

- **Electrics**

No power at all, or water has got on to the electrics after a burst.

- **Fire damage**
Damage caused by a fire that the fire service was called out for.
- **Heating**
No heating at all.
- **Water**
Serious bursts
- **Weather**
Damage to property after bad weather.
- **Security and vandalism**
Damage that means that the home is not secure (for example, broken windows).

You can report an emergency repair during the working day by phoning or visiting your local housing office.

Leaks and floods

To report a leak, phone the United Utilities Leak Line on 0800 330 033.

If there is a leak, turn the water off at the stopcock. If you are not sure where the stopcock is, contact your local housing office. When you report the leak, we need to know the following.

- Is it a slow drip or more serious?
- If you live in a flat, is the leak coming from the flat above?

- If a leaking pipe is the problem, can you see the leak and describe where it is?
- Is it the hot-water or cold-water supply that is affected?
- Are the electrics affected by the problem?

In the case of a flood:

- turn your water off; and
- turn your taps on.

If the water is near any electrics, turn the electricity supply off at the meter. If water is coming through your ceiling, turn off your water and your electricity supply. Put a bucket under the leak, and try to make a small hole in the ceiling under the leak to let the water drain away. This will help reduce the possibility of your ceiling being badly damaged.

If you have no water supply, the water company may be carrying out work in the area. Before you contact us you should ring the United Utilities Leak Line on 0800 330 033.

Customer care

Our staff and contractors will always carry ID. Please ask to see an identification badge before you let a staff member or contractor into your home. If you are not sure whether the person is who they say they are, ring your local housing office to check (0161 633 4060 for Fitton Hill, 0151 480 1313 for Stockbridge Village).



Customer satisfaction

Once the work is finished the tradesman must tidy up and remove any rubbish. We will send you a questionnaire to fill in and return to tell us what you think of our service. Please take time to fill this in so we know whether we are doing what you expect. We will also sometimes carry out a survey by phoning you.

If you are unhappy with a repair that has been carried out and you want to complain, please contact your local housing office. We will send someone out to check your complaint and, if necessary, make sure it is put right.

Disrepair – always speak to us first

If you are approached by a solicitor or receive a card inviting you to make a claim against us about the condition of your home, please contact your housing office first. If we do not know about your problem we cannot put it right. In most cases we can settle complaints to your satisfaction.

Some solicitors try to persuade tenants to take us to court to get repairs done. They are doing this for their own financial benefit. If we have to spend a lot of time and money dealing with such claims, your rent money will be spent on legal fees rather than on improving your home. We believe that rent money should be spent on your homes and services.

Right to Repair

On 1 April 1994, the 'Right to Repair' law came into force. The Right to Repair scheme gives you the right to have certain types of repair carried out within agreed timescales, and to receive compensation of up to £50 if we fail to carry out a satisfactory repair on time.

To qualify under the 'Right to Repair' scheme, a repair must be what is known as a qualifying repair. Qualifying repairs are those which:

- have an estimated cost of less than £250; or
- are classed as an emergency or urgent repair.

You can claim compensation if we fail, after two attempts, to complete a qualifying repair to a satisfactory standard within the relevant timescale. When this happens, you are entitled to £10 compensation immediately, plus a further £2 for every day the repair is still needed, up to a maximum of £50.

The Right to Repair scheme does not apply if:

- the repair is not classed as an emergency repair or an urgent repair;
- the cost of the repair is estimated to be £250 or more; or
- you have failed to provide access for an inspection or for the repair to be carried out, after you have had a reasonable opportunity to do so.

Once you have applied to claim compensation, we will decide whether the repair qualifies for the scheme. We will tell you if the repair does not qualify.

Examples of qualifying repairs are:

- unsafe power, lighting sockets or electrical fittings;
- a blocked flue to an open fire or boiler;
- a leaking roof;
- a toilet which doesn't flush, if it is the only working toilet in your home;
- a blocked sink, bath or basin (unless the blockage was caused by you or someone living with or visiting you);
- leaks from a water or heating pipe, tank or cistern; and
- loose or broken banisters or handrails.

There is more information in our 'Right to Repair' leaflet which you can get from your local housing office.

Planned repairs and improvements

Painting the outside of properties

We carry out this work every five years as part of a planned programme of work. Details of the programme are published in our newsletter 'Our Times'.

Between November and January each year we will carry out a survey of all properties included in the programme of work for the following year. Tenants of the properties included in the programme will be told what work will be carried out.

Planned maintenance.

Details of any maintenance we plan to carry out that is not a repair or part of our programme of work will be published in 'Our Times'.

Satisfaction of work carried out

While our contractors are in your home they will keep any noise, nuisance and inconvenience to a minimum. They must use dust sheets and protective coverings whenever dust, dirt or paint could fall on your property.

We will only use contractors who are on our list of approved contractors, and we monitor their performance.

We welcome tenants' comments on any of the work and repairs we carry out and may give you the opportunity to attend a 'Contract Review'.

Asbestos

Asbestos was used in many building materials and products between the 1930s and 1999, most commonly in the 60s and 70s. If your home was built or refurbished during this period, it may contain some asbestos material.

Is there a health risk?

Asbestos does not pose a risk if it is in good condition and is not disturbed. When asbestos becomes disturbed or damaged, such as when it is drilled, sawn, scrubbed or sanded, it can release fibres into the air. If these fibres are breathed in, they can be harmful to a person's health.

Where is asbestos likely to be found?

Here are just a few examples of typical asbestos products used in homes.

- Bath panels
- Textured coatings such as Artex
- Soil pipes

- Casing and boxing around pipes
- Plastic floor tiles
- Guttering and downpipes
- Toilet cisterns
- Door linings on heating cupboards

What we are doing about asbestos in properties

We have an Asbestos Management Plan which sets out how we identify and manage asbestos in our properties. We will be continuing to carry out surveys of our properties and shared entrances. This will identify materials suspected to contain asbestos. We will leave those materials in place if they are in a good, sealed condition. If the material is damaged or dangerous, we will have it removed.

Your responsibilities as a tenant

You must get our permission in writing before you carry out any work on your home. This will give us the chance to identify any materials containing asbestos.

When you contact us we may refer you to qualified staff who will make sure the proper action is put into place to help stop you, your family or anyone doing the work from being exposed to asbestos. If you carry out any work or allow others to carry out work without written permission from us, you will be responsible for all costs.

What to do if you think there is asbestos in your home

If you think any material in your home contains asbestos, or you think you have discovered damaged asbestos, please contact us. Don't try to deal with it yourself!

Where can I get more information?

You can get more information by contacting your local housing office.

Mould and condensation

If your home is damp or you find mould patches on walls, furniture or clothing, this is probably caused by condensation. You can get rid of the patches using specialist products or by washing the affected surfaces with a diluted bleach solution. You can also buy special paint to help prevent mould. However, the only permanent cure is to reduce the amount of moisture in the air.

Here are a few handy tips to reduce moisture in the air.

- Ventilate your home by opening windows to allow a change of air.
- Do not block up chimneys, flues or air vents.
- Do not use paraffin or Calor gas heaters as they produce lots of moisture. It also breaks a condition of your tenancy agreement.
- During cold weather, try to leave your heating on a low level all the time.
- Do not dry clothes on radiators.
- Never dry clothes on electric heaters.
- Do not use a tumble dryer without a vent to the outside.

- Do not let kettles or pans boil any longer than necessary.
- Close kitchen and bathroom doors when you are using them, so that the moisture does not go into cold rooms.
- Wipe down surfaces where moisture settles (on walls, mirrors, wall tiles and windows) to prevent mould.
- Turn extractor fans on.
- If you can, leave a small bedroom window slightly open when you are asleep.
- If your windows have trickle or night ventilators, try and leave these open at all times.

Are you insured?

Although we insure our buildings, you are responsible for insuring your own belongings.

If you live in Fitton Hill, you may be eligible to join First Choice Homes Oldham's insurance scheme. Contact the Fitton Hill housing office for more details.

Stockbridge tenants should take out their own contents Insurance.

Improving your home

You must get our permission in writing before you carry out any work to your home. We will be as flexible as possible in allowing you to improve your home. To ask for permission, write to your

local housing office, explaining what you propose to do. Include any drawings if you can.

If we give you permission to carry out the necessary work, follow the guidelines below.

- Get any planning permission and building regulation approval you need (if any).
- Follow any advice and guidance notes you get from your local housing office.
- You will be responsible for all the costs relating to the work, for putting right any damage caused, and for maintaining the improvement.
- Let your local housing office know when you have finished, so the work can be inspected.
- When you move out of the property, you must either leave the improvement in place or return the feature to its original condition. If you don't, we will charge you the costs of us putting the work right. So it would be a good idea for you to keep, in your shed or loft, any fittings or features you remove.

If you leave your improvement in place when you move out, and it is in a good condition, we will consider paying you compensation.

Here are some examples of improvements that you will need permission for.

- Putting in extra electrical sockets
- Installing extra heating
- Building a shed, greenhouse or pigeon loft
- Fitting a new bathroom suite
- Fitting new kitchen units
- Building a fireplace
- Building a garage, lean-to or drive for your car
- Removing a wall inside your home

This is not a complete list of all the improvements you would need permission for. If you want more advice on improvements, contact your local housing office.

If we do not give you permission

We will only refuse to give you permission to carry out an improvement if it could affect the safety of your home or mean extra costs for us.

If you start work without our permission you will have broken your tenancy conditions and we may ask you to:

- return your home to its original condition;
- pay for any work we need to do; and
- pay for any damage caused by the improvement.

Aids and adaptations

If you need a special adaptation to help you manage better in your home, phone the Social Services Community Occupational Therapy Team on 0161 770 1447 (Fitton Hill) or 0151 443 4335 (Knowsley). They will assess your needs.



You can get more information or a copy of our 'Aids and Adaptations' leaflet from your local housing office.

Connecting to services

Service connections – gas, water and electricity

When you move into your home you will need to make arrangements to get a gas, electricity and water supply. You can choose to take your supply from a number of companies.

Gas

To find out which supplier has been providing the gas to your property call 08706 081524 (you need to give your postcode, house number and street name).

If you want to stay with that supplier you will need to call them to give them the current meter reading.

Electricity

To find out which supplier is currently supplying your home, phone 08707 510093 or 0845 2709101.

If you want to stay with that supplier, call them to give them the current meter reading.

Water

You will need to register as the new customer with United Utilities as soon as you move in. To do this, phone 01925 461100.

If you have a problem with your water supply (for example, if you have no water or you have a poor supply), phone 01925 462 200.

Heating your home

When you sign your tenancy agreement you will receive a 'Gas Certificate' to let you know that the system is safe. Keep this by your meter or in a safe place.

Once you have had both your gas and electricity supply turned on, we will arrange for an engineer to call to your home to check that the gas system is working properly and show you how to use it.

Gas-safety check

It is very important that you allow our contractors into your home once a year to carry out a gas-safety inspection. This must be done by law, for your and your neighbours' safety.

If you do not allow our contractor into your home you will have broken your tenancy agreement. If our contractor has called at your home three times and you have not let them in, we will take legal action against you. This may result in you being evicted.



Useful tips for getting the most from your heating

- In very cold weather, keep a low background heat on all the time to prevent frozen pipes.
- Fit draught excluders around doors, windows and letterboxes.
- If you can, use thick curtains at your windows.
- Close doors when moving from room to room, especially if you are opening your front or back door.
- Do not cover radiators or warm air vents with curtains or furniture.
- If you can, put a good underlay under your carpets.

Gas emergencies

If you smell gas:

- don't turn electric switches on or off;
- don't smoke;
- don't use naked flames;
- turn the gas supply off at the meter;
- open doors and windows to get rid of the gas;
- phone 0800 111 999 (textphone: 0845 955 5502); and
- wait outside, if you can, until an engineer arrives.

Flats and sheltered housing

Advice for tenants living in flats



Living in any sort of flat is very different from living in a house. There are areas that you have to share with other residents (for example, lifts, foyers, staircases and bin areas). Not only will you have a neighbour next to you, but you may have one above and below you. So, you need to be considerate to them at all times.

Please help to keep shared areas clean by not letting rubbish build up. The more you and your neighbours contribute, the more pleasant these areas will be.

Security

Always make sure that the main entrance door is locked behind you when you enter or leave the flats. **If there is a door-entry system, do not let anybody into the flats unless you know who they are.**

Do not give out spare keys or fobs to anyone other than family or carers.

Getting rid of household rubbish

If you live in a low-rise block (not a multi-storey block), use the bins on the landing or ground floor. Please do not put large household items in the shared areas as this will cause problems for other residents and can be dangerous.

If you have any large items you need to get rid of, phone us on 0151 443 2400 (there may be a charge for this service) or use the skips we provide.

Noise

Noise in flats travels far and fast. It is important to consider your neighbours and keep any noise to a reasonable level when watching television or playing music. This will avoid any unnecessary conflict.

Fire

The advice given below does not apply to tenants in multi-storey flats. Please see the multi-storey handbook for more details.

If there is a fire in your block or flat, you must:

- leave the building, making sure you close all doors behind you;
- not use the lift;
- call the fire brigade; and
- raise the alarm.

If the fire is on your landing, stay in your flat and close all windows and doors. Your front door is designed to give you maximum protection.

Preventing fires in flats

- **Do not** leave rubbish or bulky goods in the shared areas. If you need advice on how to get rid of rubbish or bulky items, contact your local housing office.
- **Do not keep** flammable materials (portable gas, paraffin or oil heaters) in your home.
- **Do not** leave chip pans on when there is nobody watching them, and always keep towels or laundry away from cooking rings.
- **Do not** throw lit cigarettes on the floor.

Sheltered housing

If you are moving into sheltered housing, you can find information in the Tenants Handbook for Sheltered Housing Tenants. If you need any more information, you can speak to the scheme managers or the manager of Villages' sheltered housing.



Staying safe and secure in your home

Most accidents can be prevented. This section draws your attention to simple measures you can take to make your home safer.

Electrical safety

Different appliances use different fuses inside the plug. If you need to replace the fuse, make sure you use the correct fuse for the appliance.

Check flexes and plugs regularly to make sure there are no loose or bare wires.

If a socket or switch is faulty, turn off the relevant trip switch at the consumer unit.

Do not touch exposed wires or wet fittings, or touch any plug, socket or switch when your hands are wet.

Do not overload sockets. Have no more than a total of 13 amps on each socket.

Turn off all your sockets before you go to bed, or if you are out.

Gas safety

- Do not seal off or obstruct vents in walls and doors.
- Check gas appliances for signs that they are dangerous (a yellow-orange flame, staining around the burner, soot marks or a smell like rotting cabbage).
- When putting in any gas appliance, always use a Gas Safe registered contractor.
- Make sure your gas appliances are serviced regularly by a

Gas Safe registered contractor. (We will maintain your heating and hot-water systems.)

- It is essential that you do not use any fire or appliance with a chimney or flue when a ceiling fan is being used. This is because the ceiling fan could cause carbon monoxide to be drawn into the room rather than out of the chimney or flue. If you are not sure whether this applies to you, contact your local housing office.



Fire

Buy a smoke alarm. They can cost less than £10, are easy to install and maintain, and could save your life. Choose one which has a British Standard Kitemark. You can ask the fire brigade to come to your home and fit your smoke alarm for free.

The fire brigade recommend that you use a deep-fat fryer instead of a chip pan. If you do use a chip pan, never fill it more than one-third full with oil or fat, never leave it without someone being in the room, and never put food in the pan if the oil begins to smoke. If the pan does catch fire, turn off the heat (if you can get to it) and cover the pan with a damp cloth or tea towel. Never throw water onto the fire.

If you smoke:

- never leave a lit cigarette anywhere and don't smoke if you think you may doze off;
- never smoke in bed; and
- never leave matches or lighters lying around if you have children.

Preventing crime

- Keep all your doors locked, even if you are at home.
- If you go out when it is dark, leave a light on.
- If you go out in the day but it will be dark when you return, use a timer to turn your lights on in the evening.
- Fit an intruder alarm.
- Fit window locks.
- When answering the door, switch on an outside light (if there is one).
- Use your doorstop, chain, door peephole or entry phone if you have one.
- Ask callers for ID and check it carefully. If you are not sure that the caller is who they say they are, phone the organisation they say they are from and ask the caller to return when you have checked them out.
- Always stay with the caller once you let them in and do not allow anyone into your home if you are not sure about them.
- If you have an alarm, think about having a panic button fitted.

When going on holiday

Try to make the house look occupied (for example, set timers to turn lights on just before it gets dark).

Make sure that a neighbour or a friend has a spare key so they can check the house for you while you are away.

Put your valuables where they cannot be seen from outside.

Neighbourhood Watch

Most neighbours are friendly and welcoming. Get to know them, and think about joining the local 'Neighbourhood Watch' or tenants' association if there is one. A crime prevention officer from the police will be able to help you.

New possessions

If you buy an expensive item, do not leave the empty box outside your home as this will 'advertise' that you have valuable property.

Think about 'marking' your valuable possessions with your postcode, followed by your house or flat number. To do this you can buy a security marker from most DIY shops. Your local crime prevention officer will also give you stickers for your windows to show that your property is protected.

Thinking of moving?

Applying for re-housing

Do you need to move?

People decide to move for a variety of reasons. If you want or need to move, discuss this with us before making your decision. We may be able to sort out any problems you have.

There may come a time when your current home may not be suitable for your needs (for example, it may be too large or too small). In this situation we may be able to help you find a new home. We are keen to make the best use of our properties.



To apply for a transfer to a new home, you will need to fill in a form, which you can get from your local housing offices. Once you have returned the form, your Estate Management Officer will visit you and give you advice on the options available to you.

For more information on transferring to a new home, pick up a 'Right to transfer' leaflet from your local housing office or visit our website at www.villages.org.uk.

Exchanges

You can arrange to 'swap' (exchange) homes with another tenant. It does not have to be another tenant of ours, but check what your rights would be if you accepted a tenancy with another landlord.

We will not normally refuse an application to exchange. However, we may turn down your application if any of the following apply.

- Action is being taken against you or the tenant you want to exchange with to end your or their tenancy.
- Your property is too big for the needs of the person you want to swap with. However, we may allow the exchange to go ahead if your home has only one bedroom more than the other household needs.
- The property would be too small for the needs of the person you want to swap with.
- Your property, or the property you want to move to, was provided as part of a job, or it is part of, or in the grounds of, a building that is not housing (for example, a school).
- The property is designed or adapted to suit the needs of a disabled person and nobody in your household needs this type of property.
- The property is part of a group of properties which are let to people with special housing needs and you could move to a suitable social service or special facility (for example, sheltered housing) near the property.

You cannot exchange if legal action has or will be started against you or the other tenant for antisocial behaviour, or if a court order relating to antisocial behaviour is in place. Your estate management officer can give you more information.

We may attach conditions to the exchange if you (or the other tenant) are behind with your rent or have broken any of the conditions of your tenancy. For example, we can make it a condition that you bring your rent payments up to date before you move.

To apply for an exchange, please fill in a form at your local housing office.

Before the exchange can go ahead your estate management officer will visit your home to make sure it is in good condition, and to ask you to sign a document to agree that we will not:

- repair any alterations that have been made to the property;
- carry out any repairs that are not considered to be fair wear and tear; or
- carry out any decorating, or provide materials.

You will accept responsibility for these things, both while you are living in the home and when you move out. This does not affect our usual repairing responsibilities.

For more information on exchanging homes, pick up a 'Right to exchange' leaflet from your local housing office or visit our website at www.villages.org.uk.



Moving to another part of the country

You may want to exchange with a council or housing-association tenant outside the area. To do this you can use a website that specialises in putting people in touch with tenants they might be able to exchange with. An example of such a website is www.home-swap.co.uk. The rules for exchanges also apply to these moves.

Leaving your home

If you decide to leave your home, you should do the following.

- Give us four weeks' notice, ending on a Monday, by filling in and signing a 'Notice of Termination' form at your local housing office. We will need to know the address you are moving to so we can send on any mail or any money that we owe you.
- Give the council four weeks' notice (for council tax purposes).

If you move without giving us notice, you will be charged four weeks' rent from the time we find out that you have moved.

Returning the keys

You must hand back all the keys to your property. If we do not get all the keys back, we will change the locks and charge you the cost of this. You must hand your keys in by midday on the Monday your tenancy ends on. If you don't, you will have to pay rent for every week during which you have the keys.

Bringing your rent up to date

You must pay all the rent you owe before you move. Tenancies start on a Monday and end on a Sunday. Your last payment is due during the last week of your tenancy.

If you hand in your keys on a Tuesday or later, you will be charged an extra weeks' rent.

Clearing your home

Before you return the keys, make sure that you:

- have removed all your furniture, carpets and belongings;
- have emptied all cupboards, sheds, loft spaces and outhouses; and
- cleared all rubbish or unwanted items from the property, including from the garden and shared parts.

If you leave any items behind, we will charge you the cost of us removing them.

You can arrange for your local council to take away any bulky items before your tenancy ends.

Knowsley – call 0151 443 2400

Oldham – call 0161 770 6644



Alterations you have carried out to the property

When you move out you must usually leave any home improvements or alterations that you have carried out in good condition or working order and they will become our property.

In some cases, you may be able to take the items with you (such as a gas fire). However, you must replace whatever fitting was there before, make sure it is in good working order, and repair any damage this may cause.

Before you move out you must carry out any repairs you are responsible for. If you don't, we will do the work and charge you our costs.

Warning: only contractors on the Gas Safe register can remove gas appliances because the supply pipes have to be sealed properly. If they are not sealed properly, legal action may be taken against you, as this is very dangerous.

Remember, if we have to replace or repair fittings, improvements or alterations in your home, you will have to pay our costs.

Meter readings

Before you leave, contact your gas and electricity suppliers to arrange for your meters to be read. They can often do this on the day that you leave, but will generally need at least two days' notice.

Water supplies

On the day that you move, turn off the water at the stop tap, and turn off the gas and electricity at the meters.

Dealing with rubbish

When you prepare to move home, you may decide to throw some things away. Do not leave large piles of rubbish or overflowing bins outside your home.

Golden goodbye

You can qualify for a 'golden goodbye' reward of £70 when you end your tenancy if you:

- give us four weeks' notice and allow potential new tenants to view your home while you are still living there;
- leave your home in an excellent condition; and
- let us inspect the home, and carry out any minor repairs, before you move out.

Golden goodbyes are only available to tenants who end their tenancy.

Exit survey

When you tell us you are going to move we will ask you to fill in a form which tells us why you are moving. Your views will help us to improve services to our customers.

Right to buy and right to acquire

If you have applied to buy your home, we will only carry out repairs which we are responsible for. Once the sale has gone through, we are no longer responsible for repairing your home. If it is a flat, we may still carry out repairs to the outside of the property, and provide services such as lifts and lighting in shared areas. If this is the case you will have to pay us a service charge.

More information on the right to buy and the right to acquire is given in our 'Right to buy' and 'Right to acquire' leaflets, which you can pick up from your local housing office. There is also more information on our website at www.villages.org.uk.

Equality and diversity



We are committed to equal opportunities. We will not discriminate against anyone who applies for housing or for a job, or to sit on any of our boards or committees, because of their race, colour, age, ethnic or national background, religion, sex, disability, relationships or sexuality.

We have an Equality and Diversity Policy which gives lots more information on how we make sure that we provide equal opportunities for everybody. You can get a copy of this policy from your local housing office.

Service standards

Our customer service standards

We have a set of service standard leaflets which explain the standards you can expect from us when we provide our services. These leaflets are available in reception areas and on our website.

Some of the main points from our service standard leaflets are set out below.

We will:

- help you get the services you need;
- have up-to-date information on our services in our reception areas;
- provide a range of leaflets about our services;
- have policies and standards for all the services we provide, and be open and honest about how well we are doing against those policies and standards; and
- provide opportunities for you to become involved in how we work.

If you write to, email or fax us, we will:

- reply within five working days (if we can't provide a full response, we will let you know who is dealing with the matter and when you can expect a reply); and
- use plain English when we write to you.

If you phone us, we will:

- try to answer in 20 seconds and give you the name of the person you are speaking to; or
- if you cannot speak to the person you want, try to help you

- or take a message; and
- if you leave a message, try to get back to you by the next working day.

If you visit us, we will:

- make sure that you are seen on time if you have an appointment, or within 15 minutes if you don't have an appointment;
- arrange a private interview if you would prefer;
- provide a free phone line to other agencies;
- make sure our employees wear a name badge; and
- keep our reception areas clean and tidy.

If we visit you, we will:

- show you ID;
- behave professionally at all times; and
- keep to any appointment we have made. (If we can't keep an appointment we will contact you as soon as possible to rearrange the visit.)

If we get anything wrong, we will:

- apologise;
- try to put the matter right as soon as possible;
- keep you informed of what we are doing about the matter; and
- learn from our mistakes.

Equal opportunities

We will:

- treat all customers fairly and according to their needs;
- make sure our offices have access for people with disabilities;
- provide a hearing loop system in our offices for people who wear a hearing aid;
- provide an interpretation service when necessary;
- give you the same standard of service, wherever you live; and
- allow you to see any personal information we hold about you.

You can help us by:

- keeping any appointments you have with us;
- telling us if you cannot keep an appointment; and
- being polite and treating our staff with respect.

Complaints, compliments or suggestions

Making a complaint

We aim to provide a reliable and efficient service to all of our customers.

If you have a complaint, we hope that we can sort the matter out by discussing the problem with you. If you and we cannot sort the matter out and you want to make a formal complaint, you can fill in the tear-off form attached to our Complaints leaflet, which you can get from any reception area. Take or send your filled-in form to your local housing office.

You can also make your complaint in any of the following ways, whichever suits you best.

- By speaking to any staff member
- By writing to the Stockbridge or Fitton Hill office
- By sending an email to info@villages.org.uk
- By phoning the Stockbridge or Fitton Hill office
- By calling in at the Stockbridge or Fitton Hill office

If you would like a copy of the full complaints policy, please ask a member of staff.

If we partly or fully agree with your complaint, we will:

- explain what went wrong;
- apologise;
- tell you what we will do to stop the problem from happening again; and
- explain how we can put things right.

If you would like to make a suggestion, or to compliment our staff or contractors, please contact your local housing office.

Getting involved

We actively encourage all our tenants to have a say in decisions that affect their lives. We have built up an excellent relationship with a number of tenants' and residents' groups and associations throughout Stockbridge and Fitton Hill.

You can influence the services we provide by doing the following.

- Joining or setting up a tenants' group in your area
- Attending 'focus groups' to help influence policies and plans
- Joining the Tenants Forum.
- Taking part in surveys we carry out by phone, post and email
- Having one-to-one discussions with staff
- Taking part in 'Area Walkabouts' (This is when staff make regular inspections of the estates to identify any 'grot spots', potential dangers and any repairs needed to the outside of properties.)
- Filling in any questionnaires asking for your comments



If you want more information on how to get involved, or would be interested in setting up your own tenants' group, phone our community development officers on 0161 633 4060 (Fitton Hill) or 0151 480 1313 (Stockbridge).



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16 The Croft,
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