

Tenant Handbook



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About Us

Key Housing Association is a registered social landlord (Housing Association) and we provide housing within 15 local authority areas across Scotland. Majority of our housing is let to people with support requirements. A small amount of our properties are allocated on a general needs basis.

At Key, we are committed to:

- Providing good quality housing
- Delivering a high standard of housing service
- Engaging with our tenants on all aspects of their housing service
- Offering a range of personalised housing solutions
- Offering expertise in adapting your home to suit your needs
- Working closely with organisations which support our tenants, particularly Key and Community Lifestyles.

In this handbook we will detail what we must do as a landlord, Your Rights, and what you must do as a tenant, Your Responsibilities.



Your Tenancy

As a tenant of Key Housing, you have a right to a written Tenancy Agreement. Your Tenancy Agreement is a formal contract which will be signed by you and Key. It sets out your rights and responsibilities as a tenant and what we will do to give you a good quality housing service.

Your Tenancy Agreement is an important document and should be kept in a safe place. When you sign the agreement you agree to the terms set out in it. Any breach of these terms will be discussed with you and could affect your ongoing tenancy.

Our property should be considered as your only or principal home.

Types of Tenancy

Scottish Secure Tenancy

New tenants who are the sole occupant will sign a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST). We may also offer you a Short SST in exceptional circumstances. This would be discussed in advance.

Shared Tenancy

You may share your property with people you are unrelated to and in these circumstances we would give you a Shared Tenancy. This means you have the sole use of 1 of the bedrooms and access to all communal rooms, as specified in your Tenancy Agreement.

Joint Tenancy

You have the right to a Joint Tenancy which can be created when the Tenancy Agreement is first signed. You can request to have it changed to a Joint Tenancy at any point during your tenancy too. A letter must be sent to the Housing Officer and they will let you know if this is possible.

Terms of the Agreement

Below we go through the key points within the Tenancy Agreement.

Sub-letting

Sub-letting is when you let someone stay in your house for a short period of time when you are not living there. You would have to discuss this with your Housing Officer before arranging this as well as agreeing the type of Tenancy Agreement and the rent you would be asking for.

Transference of a Tenancy (Assignment)

You have the right to pass on the tenancy of your house to another person, if the property has been their only or principal home for the past 12 months. They will require proof of residency and you must ask us for permission before doing this. Permission is given at Key's discretion.

Terms of the Agreement cont...

Succession

When a tenant dies, we should be told as soon as possible. The tenancy can be passed on to a number of people:

Your Husband/Wife/Joint Tenant/Partner: so long as it was their main home at the time of your death. In the case of a partner, they must have lived there for over 12 months as their only or principal home to inherit the tenancy.

A Family Member: so long as they are over 16 and it was their only or principal home at the time of death.

In-House Carer: If nobody else has the right, an in-house carer can succeed to the tenancy. The person must be aged over 16, have lived there as their only or principal home at the time of death, and must have given up a house to live there as a carer.

In all situations a proof of residence will be required. The tenancy can only be inherited twice under these rules; any further succession would be granted at Key's discretion.

Right to Buy

You do not have the right to buy your house.

A photograph of a two-story brick residential building with a courtyard. The building has several windows and a red door. In the foreground, there is a green lawn and a paved path. A semi-transparent text box is overlaid on the image, containing the text: "Always ask your Housing Officer if you are in doubt about anything which might affect your tenancy."

Always ask your Housing Officer if you are in doubt about anything which might affect your tenancy.



Being a Tenant

We want everybody to enjoy their time as a Key tenant and in the following section we go through your tenant responsibilities. Following these guidelines will help you and your neighbours have a peaceful, and enjoyable, tenancy.

Being a Good Neighbour

We ask that everybody has consideration for their neighbours. This means being aware of who lives nearby and how certain actions would impact on them. If you become concerned that you have not seen a neighbour of recent, please speak to your other neighbours and your Housing Officer.

Being a Good Neighbour cont...

Anti-Social Behaviour

You should be allowed to enjoy living in your home without fear of harassment, nuisance, distress or annoyance and your neighbours have that right too. The sorts of behaviour that can upset people living around you include:

- Loud Noises (TVs, music, DIY tools)
- Harassment by neighbours/ tenants' visitors
- Actions or threats of actual violence
- Unable to control your pet
- Carrying or use of an offensive weapon or firearm
- Vandalism or deliberate damage to property

We do not tolerate this type of behaviour towards anybody, including neighbours or any staff. You should ensure that you, anyone living with you and your visitors do not do anything in or around your house which could upset your neighbours or is against the law.

If you feel frightened or intimidated in any way by your neighbour's behaviour, please contact the police immediately and phone your Housing Officer as soon as possible with the full details. Any calls made to the office are dealt with confidentially. We will make every effort to resolve neighbour complaints and, if necessary, we will ask other agencies for help.

If you want further details about our Anti-Social Behaviour policy please visit our website, www.key.org.uk/key-housing, or ask your Housing Officer.



Car Parking

Normally we are only able to offer very limited car parking spaces in and around our properties. We ask that you park in a way that does not restrict any of your neighbours or make it difficult for emergency services to get access. Motorbikes should be parked in a designated space and not in gardens or common hallways.

If you would like a space designated to your property then please contact your Housing Officer. We will provide you with a copy of our [car parking policy](#). You can also find this on our website.



Pets

Our Pets Policy is in place to ensure the health and well-being of your animals and to stop them from being kept in unsuitable properties.

You should seek written permission before purchasing or bringing an animal into your property. We will send a copy of the policy and application form. Our policy details the process of applying for a pet and the standards of care we expect from pet owners.

If you do not keep to the terms of the pet policy then we may ask you to remove the pet from the property.

Please speak to your Housing Officer, or check the [website](#), for more information about applying for a pet.

Communal Areas

Stair Cleaning

If you share a communal stairwell then you are required to share the cleaning of this with your neighbours (including common area windows and doors). If you need help coming to an arrangement then speak to your Housing Officer and we can provide a cleaning rota.

Some of our developments have arranged for a cleaning company to clean the communal hallway. We will manage this for you and the costs will be added to your monthly rent.

Any communal landings must be kept clear at all times for safety reasons. Bikes should be stored inside your flat or chained outside the building.



Bin Area

It is your responsibility to ensure that your bin area is regularly cleaned and swept. All bin bags should be securely tied and placed directly inside the bin and that you put your flat/ house number on your bin. Please take note of your local councils recycling arrangements.

If you have any bulk uplift, you should get in touch with your local council to arrange this. The charge for this service varies between local authorities; your local council office will be able to tell you these.



Gardens

Depending upon where you live, you will have a private or communal (shared with your neighbours) garden. Below we go through our general guidelines.

Structures

If you would like to put up a shed, gazebo or any other large item (for example a trampoline) then you need to apply in writing to us with a copy of the plans of where the item will be. You must do this before purchasing the item. We may ask you to remove any items that you did not seek permission for.

If you are in a communal garden, you must also ask the permission of all your other neighbours who share the garden. Any structure you put up is your responsibility which means you are responsible for any loss/damage to it and for its disposal if you no longer want it or move away. If you put up a shed, we strongly recommend there is no flammable material stored in it.

Garden Maintenance Service

In communal gardens, we organise the grass cutting and hedge/shrub trimming. This service is charged in your rent. Any hanging baskets or flower pots kept by tenants are welcomed. If you would like a bigger area of the garden, please speak to your Housing Officer about this.



Contents Insurance

Key is responsible for insuring the building and permanent fittings; this is commonly known as Buildings Insurance. You will not need to buy this while living with Key. As a tenant you are responsible for insuring the personal contents of your home; this is commonly known as Home Contents Insurance. This can cover things like televisions, electrical goods, clothes, jewellery, furnishings, etc.

We advise that you purchase the appropriate level of contents insurance when you move in.

Smoking

If you are a smoker we expect you to provide your own sand bin for your cigarette ends in your garden area. We ask that you do not smoke in any communal stairwells/ hallways.

Running a Business

You should not run any business from your home which would affect your tenancy or cause annoyance to your neighbours. If you have any questions about running a business from your home, please contact your Housing Officer.

Satellite Dishes

If you want to have satellite television installed, we would suggest that you first consider a cable television service if this is available in your area. If you still wish to opt for the satellite service, please contact your Housing Officer. We will write back to you within 14 days to inform you of our decision.



Change of Circumstances

If you have any change in circumstances then please speak to your Housing Officer. By change of circumstances, we refer to changes in:

- income/ savings
- contact details
- household composition
- health needs.



Rent

The rent that you pay is to cover the costs of providing and maintaining your home. Your rent may also include an amount for service charges, for example garden maintenance.

Rent Charge

The rent that you pay for your property meets all the reasonable costs that we incur to manage and maintain your home. All of our rents are set according to our rent policy. You can access a copy on our website.

We will review the rent each year and consult with you about any proposed rent increase. This will be in writing and it gives you an opportunity to comment. You will then get 1 month's notice of the actual change in your rent.

Service Charges

We set the service charges at the same time as the rent. The charge will reflect the actual costs in providing specific services you receive. The main services which we will charge for are:

- Basic Communal Garden Maintenance
- Common Hallway Electricity Charges
- Servicing of Equipment (this charge is for any specialist equipment within the property)

Certain areas may have other charges, such as stair cleaning. This will all be detailed in your annual rent review letter.

How to Pay

There are several ways in which you can pay your rent:

In Person

You can come to our main office at The Square, 70 Renton Street, Glasgow

By Standing Order

You can request a standing order mandate from your Housing Officer. Once you complete this you hand it in to your bank. Keep in mind that if rent payments increase, you need to change the standing order amount at the bank

At the Post Office/ Paypoint

You can request a payment book from your Housing Officer and pay at your local Post Office/ Paypoint

By Post

Send a cheque (made payable to Key Housing Association Revenue Account) to: Key, The Square, 70 Renton Street, Glasgow, G4 0HT

Benefits

If you are in receipt of benefit payments towards your rent you may need to organise a standing order. Your Housing Officer will advise you of any payments you need to organise. You can find out more about the latest changes in welfare reform on our [website](#).



Council Tax

You will be liable to pay Council Tax on your property to your local council office and they will notify you of the amount to pay. You may be eligible to apply for an SMI (Severe Mental Impairment) exemption and you should contact your local council about how to apply .

You should inform your local council office of any change in circumstances which would affect any council tax exemption claim.

Difficulties Paying Your Rent

If you are struggling with your finances, please speak to us. We can help you with any alternative arrangements that can be made with your rent or look at what benefits you are entitled to. Sometimes we work with specialist agencies to help with any financial difficulties you may be experiencing. Any information given will remain confidential.

If you repeatedly miss rent payments and are not working with us to help reduce the arrear, we may have to look at whether you can continue to live in your house and may have to take legal action. You should be aware that this could ultimately lead to you losing your home. This would be the final step after looking at all the ways of assisting you to pay the rent.

If we evict a tenant, we would pursue them for any outstanding debts (rent arrears, rechargeable repairs, etc) and seek to recover our legal costs.



Maintenance & Repairs

Both Key, as landlord, and you, as a tenant, have responsibilities for your house.

We are responsible for:

- keeping the property in a wind and watertight condition
- keeping all fixtures and fittings in good working order
- maintaining common areas including closes, common gardens, paths and lighting.

You are responsible for:

- your house being treated with care and respect
- decorating the inside of your house
- reporting all defects or repairs to your house to the maintenance department as quick as possible.

Repairs

It is important to us that repairs are carried out properly and as quickly as possible.

The best way to report a repair is by calling:

0141 342 1820

Calls are answered between 9am & 5pm, Monday to Friday.

If all the lines are busy when you call, please leave a message on the answerphone and the next available person will get back to you.

If you have a routine repair outside of these times you can leave a message on our answerphone which will be responded to the next working day. You can also report a repair on our [website](#).



When reporting the repair, please give as much detail about it as possible. We will also ask a preferred date for the contractor to attend and if you prefer morning or afternoon visits. Once reported, your repair will be processed and we will be in touch to let you know when a contractor is expected to attend. You are expected to stay in or arrange access for the repair. If you do not stay in, we may charge you the missed appointment fee.



Emergency Repairs

If you have an emergency repair outside office hours please refer your emergency contractors list. We will send an updated list every December. If you have misplaced your copy, you can get a [replacement from the website](#) or call the Maintenance Team on **0141 342 1820**.

You should only use this list for emergency or urgent repairs which cannot wait until the office opens again. You can check which category your repair comes under on [page 20](#).

If you cannot get a response from the contractors on your list, you can use any other local contractor and we will meet the cost.

As with all repairs, the cost will be met by us, unless the damage was caused by carelessness or neglect.

You will be charged for the call out if these numbers are used for non-urgent work.

Right to Repair

You have the right to carry out repairs and seek repayment from us. However, you can only do this if a repair you reported has not been carried out in the time that we state (see response times). You may also be entitled to compensation for this work.

Response Times

Below are our response times for emergency, urgent and non-urgent repairs. This can help determine if you have an emergency repair and need to use your emergency contractors list.

Repair Category	Emergency	Urgent	Non-Urgent
Make Safe Timescale	8 Hours	24 Hours	-
Repair Complete Timescale	-	-	10 Days
Examples of Repair	Gas Leak	Partial electric failure	Leaking gutters
	Fire/ Flood/ Storm Damage	Broken Window (non-hazard)	Fence/gate repairs
	Sewage Backup	Minor roof leak	Faulty taps
	Broken Window (hazard)	Partial failure of heating	Minor kitchen unit repairs
	Electric Failure	Minor flood damage	Pest infestation
	Loss of heating		Loss of TV signal
	Loss of toilet/ bathing facilities		
	Structural collapse		
	Complete Lighting Failure (in house or stairwells)		
	Loss of drinking water		
	Door lock failure (resulting in non-access)		



Servicing

There are various items in your home that require servicing. It is our responsibility to make sure this is carried out at the correct time but we also need your help to make this happen.

Gas Servicing

If you have a gas boiler we are legally obliged to service this every year. It is very important as it ensures that your boiler is running safely and efficiently. We will give you at least 7 days notice of when we have arranged the servicing.

If you are unable to give access on the agreed day and time it is very important that you let the maintenance team, or the contractor, know straight away. We can agree another suitable date with you to make sure that the work is carried out on time.

Other Servicing

The programme also includes servicing of:

- Fire Alarms and Emergency Lighting Systems
- Sprinkler Systems (every year)
- Carbon Monoxide Detectors (replaced every 5 years)
- Check of Electrical Installations (every 10 years)
- Blender Valves (every year)
- Smoke Detectors (every 2 years).



Major Repairs Programme

Major Repairs are when we replace bigger items in your property (such as heating systems, windows etc) and are carried as part of planned programme.

We refer to this as our Major Repairs Programme. When you are due for a replacement item, we will send you a letter with the full details of what will be involved. The items that are replaced under this programme are:

- Heating Systems
- Kitchens
- Bathrooms
- Windows
- Roofs

We have a factsheet with further details about the programme available on our [website](#) or you can speak to your Housing or Maintenance Officer about it.

We redecorate the external parts of our developments on a regular basis. This includes your front door, external window frames and timber fencing. We also decorate common areas (closets) when required and you will be asked for your views on any new colour schemes. If you want to repaint, repair or replace your front door or any fencing, you must speak to us before starting this work.

Alterations & Decoration

Alterations

Before carrying out any home improvements or alterations you should speak to your Housing Officer. They will also discuss the future ownership of any alteration and maintenance.

If you retain ownership of the item you may be paid some compensation when leaving Key. For this to be considered work would have to be carried out to a certain standard and details and receipts submitted to Key Housing. For more information please speak to your Housing or Maintenance Officer.



Decoration

When you move into your property it will be in a good condition, clean and ready for you to live in. You are expected to keep it up to this standard at all times. You can redecorate the walls to your taste but we may ask you to return it to its original state before moving out.

Hardwood floors and laminates are not recommended in flats as they can be very noisy for neighbours who live below you. Although hardwood floors may be a good replacement for carpets, if they have to be lifted to complete a repair and there is any damage then we cannot be held responsible for the costs

Rechargeable Repairs

We may recharge the cost of repairs if they were caused by neglect or deliberate damage. Before doing this, we ensure that there was no other cause for the repair. If we have determined it is rechargeable, we will write to you about the damage and make you aware that you are responsible for the cost. You can get further details in our rechargeable repair policy which is available on the website.



Transfers, Exchanges & Moving Out

There may be a number of reasons why you want to move house. Key can help to meet your housing needs where possible.

Transfers

Key will take applications for transfers both within and between our housing areas. You can get an application form from your Housing Officer and once filled in these will be held on file until a suitable house becomes available. All transfer applicants will be considered along with other nominations for the property. The vacancy will generally be let to the person in greatest housing need.

If you receive support funding, it is very difficult to transfer between local authority areas. You would need to have agreement from both social work authorities for a transfer to take place.

Mutual Exchange

You could swap your house with somebody in another housing provider's accommodation (as long as both landlords agree).

Both you and the person you want to exchange with will be visited to confirm that your house is suitable for the person or family that wants to swap. It is advised that any agreed move is based on the current condition of the property (the property is 'taken as seen'). Any repairs needed or damage will be noted at the End of Tenancy Inspection.

We may not always agree to your application for a mutual exchange. In these instances we will give reasons as to why. You can find full details in our Allocations Policy and the Policy on Mutual Exchanges; you can request a copy from your Housing Officer.



Suitable Housing

There may be situations where your current housing is unsuitable due to health grounds or size. In these circumstances your Housing Officer may be able to assist you to find more suitable accommodation or transfer. Please speak to them for more advice.

Leaving Key

Notice

If you decide to leave you must give us 28 days notice in writing. You should ensure that anyone that lives there as a lodger or sub-tenant is included in your notice. If you are not able to do this yourself we can only accept notice from a legal guardian. This person must have the necessary powers to end a tenancy.

End of Tenancy Inspection

When we know you are leaving, your Housing Officer will come and carry out an end of tenancy inspection. This is a full house inspection to check that the it is in a good state of repair, note any repairs and that no major changes have happened to the property. If there are any changes/damage, you may be asked to return these to their original state. For instance, replacing any fittings you removed such as fires, doors etc. You may also be asked to redecorate any room not in a satisfactory condition. A follow-up inspection will be carried out before the tenancy ends to ensure that the work has been completed.

Your property should be left in a clean condition. If you wish to leave anything behind, you should phone the Local Council Office and arrange to have the items taken away.

Gas & Electric Readings

Before leaving, you should give your final meter readings and new address to your gas and electricity providers. You should also notify your Housing Officer.



Leaving Key cont...

Keys

All sets of keys for the property should be handed in either to your Housing Officer or to staff at the development. Failure to return keys may result in you being asked to pay the costs of replacing the locks or the keys. We would normally ask for a forwarding address so that any mail can be sent on to you.

Abandonment

If Key believes that you have left your house without giving notice and are not going to return, we may take action to reclaim your home. Key will make every effort to find out if you are going to return. If we believe that you are not returning we will give 4 weeks notice that we intend to re-claim the house and change the locks. We may enter it before that date to ensure that it is safe and secure.

If you would like any further advice about moving out your home, please get in touch with your Housing Officer.



Tenant Engagement

We are committed to having you involved in our decision making process. As a tenant you have the right to be consulted about a variety of issues regarding the management of our properties.

My Home Group

We have a tenant engagement group, [My Home Group](#), who meet every 2 months. They look at various different topics and help influence changes in our policy, procedure and how we report back to them. You can find out more about what the group have been speaking about and how to join on our [website](#).

'At Home' Newsletter

We send a copy of our newsletter, '[At Home](#)', 3 times a year. This gives you an update on our major developments, feedback on our latest consultations and articles we think will be of interest to you. We also have an email version of the newsletter which can be sent to any interested people, not just tenants. You can sign up through our website or email athome@key.org.uk with your name and email address.

Consultations

Letter or Phone Consultation

As our properties are spread across the country, we occasionally choose to consult with you by letter or phone. We hold a list of interested tenants who are happy to be consulted by letter/phone. If you would like to be added to this list, please get in touch by emailing athome@key.org.uk or calling 0141 342 1810.



Consultation Groups

We will consult with/ organise tenants' working groups anytime there are major changes in policy or services within Key Housing. We will invite interested tenants when a group is in their area. We often work with [The Advisory Group \(TAG\)](#) on some of our consultations.

Surveys

We sometimes issue a survey to you; the most recognisable being Tenants' Satisfaction Survey and Repairs Satisfaction Survey. We really appreciate all feedback received through these and your opinions help us decide on our future actions as a landlord.



Membership

As a tenant of Key you have the right to become a member. Membership only costs £1 and you will receive a certificate that confirms your membership. As a member you can attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The management committee is elected at this meeting and we will also update you on our work over the past year.

You can download a copy of our membership policy and application from the [website](#).



Complaints

Key regards a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

What Can I Complain About?

You can complain about things like:

- delays in responding to your enquiries and requests
- failure to provide a service
- our standard of service
- dissatisfaction with our policy
- treatment by, or attitude of, a member of staff
- our failure to follow proper procedure.

Your complaint may involve more than 1 of our services or be about someone working on our behalf.

What Can't You Complain About?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints procedure.

- A routine first-time request for a service. For example reporting a problem that needs to be repaired or initial action on anti-social behaviour
- Requests for compensation.
- Issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court.
- An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint.
- Having a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision following a stage 2 investigation. If you are still not satisfied, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman for an independent review of the complaint.

How to Make a Complaint

There are several different ways you can make a complaint:

- Phone your Housing Officer
- Write a Letter
- Complete the form on our website: www.key.org.uk/key-housing
- Email us at hello@key.org.uk

Make sure you tell us:

- your full name and address
- full details of the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- how you want us to resolve the matter.

It's often easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to a member of our staff and they can try to resolve any problems on the spot. You can access a copy of our procedure from the [website](#).



Contact Us

In Person

You can contact us at our office.

The Square, 70 Renton Street, Glasgow, G4 0HT

Telephone

You can reach Housing on 0141 342 1810 or you can report a repair on 0141 342 1820.

Email

You can send in information by email to hello@key.org.uk

Online

We have a lot of tenancy information and forms on our website:

www.key.org.uk/key-housing

Emergency Repairs

If you have an emergency repair, please refer to your emergency contractor list (more information on [page 19](#)).



Important Info

Housing Officer

Maintenance Officer

Location of Water Shut Off

Fuse Box Location

Additional Info

A society registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, company no. 1938 R(S) and the Scottish Housing Regulator, No 141. Key, Key Community Supports and Key Housing are names used by Key Housing Association Limited, a charity registered in Scotland, charity number SC006652.