

Below is some general guidance for you during your occupancy along with the repairs handbook which will details what repairs we are responsible for and what you are responsible for. Please make sure you have read carefully what we will and won't do. If you have any questions please speak to you property manager.

Occupancy agreement: Please make sure you read this thoroughly so you are aware of the responsibilities of the occupant and the landlord. Please note that only people listed on the occupancy agreement may live at the property. Should you want to add a partner to your household then you must have an appointment with a caseworker and they will decide if your partner can be added on. If we think there are people other than those listed on your occupancy agreement staying at the flat an investigation will be carried out.

Fire Safety: If you are moving into an apartment block please take a moment to familiarise yourself with the fire exits and any fire safety instructions on the communal notice board. You should make sure you keep the area outside your front door clear and do not store items in communal walkways.

Change in Circumstances: It is important that you update housing benefit with any changes in your circumstances as soon as they happen. This includes any changes to your income, benefits or family size. You will have a rent account and it is important to keep up to date with your payments. If you need to talk to someone about your rent account please contact your rent officer, **Jamie Merrison** on 0207 641 1000.

Maintaining the Property: You are responsible for normal household maintenance at the property i.e. replacing light bulbs, cleaning windows, cutting lawns, maintaining hedges, borders, the removal of such pests as fleas, bed bugs, ants, etc. and any other tasks that are considered normal household management. If there is a garden with your property you must keep it in good seasonal order. You must not uproot established trees and shrubs and you must not remove lawns as already laid at the commencement of your tenancy.

Contractors: We use several contractors to carry out repairs and scheduled maintenance. In order for appointments to be arranged your telephone number will be shared with them via our job booking system. It is very important that once an appointment is booked with a contractor that you are home to give access or you may have to pay a missed appointment fee of £45.00

Decorations and Alterations: Your landlord wants the property to be treated as your own home. However, the landlord's consent must be obtained prior to any redecoration or alterations being carried out. Failure to comply with this may result in you being charged the cost of returning the property to its original condition at the end of your tenancy. This includes painting, changing the flooring and attaching things to walls such as TV brackets. **You are not permitted to alter, add, pull down or remove any part of the fabric of the building.**

Lost Keys: If during your tenancy you lose your house keys, whatever the circumstances, you are responsible for the cost of replacement. In the first instance, please contact your property manager as they may have a spare set of keys. The cost of having additional sets cut is to be borne by you, the tenant (including any additional sets that may be held by your landlord or Managing Agent) If a lock change is required as a result of you losing a key you will also be charged the cost of the lock change. You must return the same number of keys to the property at the end of the tenancy and you will be charged for the cost of any duplicate keys or lock changes required if you do not do this.

Break-ins: If you have suffered a break-in that has resulted in damage to the external doors or windows, please report the incident to the police, and then contact your property manager who will arrange for a contractor to secure the property. It is important that the police are advised and a Crime Reference number obtained as failure to do so may prevent you or your Landlord from making an insurance claim.

Contents Insurance: You are advised to have your own contents insurance for your personal possessions. These items will not be covered by your Landlord's insurance if the property is broken into or subjected to flooding, fire, etc. The landlord accepts no liability for the occupants' personal possessions.

Rubbish collection: Please note the rubbish collection instructions for your building. Please do not store bin bags outside unless instructed to do so. If you are not sure then please check with your property manager.

Satellite dishes: Please do not install dishes without permission. If you want to put a dish up you need to check with the block management that you are allowed to do this. Sometimes building already have a dish on the roof and you can use this. Check your notice board for the block management contact details and ask them the process for using a satellite dish.

Blocked sinks and drains: Please note that before you call us to report a blocked sink or drain you should first do the following: Use a sink or drain un-blocker such as Mr Muscle and try using a plunger. It is also a good idea to have a drain snake, this is a long, firm wire that can be used to unblock sinks and toilets. You should never put oil or fat based products down the sink as these can solidify and cause a blockage. You should also use a sink hole drainer to collect food waste. If we attend and the sink is blocked with fat or food waste you will be charged for the sink or drain to be unblocked. The average charge for this is £95 per hour.

Washing: You may find that you have to dry your clothes indoors. If you have to do this make sure clothes are not hung too close to the walls and that you have the surrounding windows open. If you do not ventilate the room properly you will cause condensation and damp.

Washing Machines: We do not provide washing machines. If there is a washing machine in your property it is because the owner has decided to leave it there. We are not required to maintain or fix washing machines so if you have one and it breaks down you will be responsible for the repairs yourself.

Electric cookers: If you have an electric cooker please make sure the pans you use are as close to the size of the ring as possible. If you use a pan that is smaller/bigger than the ring it can cause damage to the cooker. Please do not burn incense on the cooker rings. Do not let pans boil over, If water gets under the rings it can affect the wiring. Clean the top of the cooker with a damp but not wet cloth.

Important safety information: We have taken steps to ensure your property meets all the relevant safety requirements. You have a **fire door** in your kitchen which self-closes. This door will prevent fire spreading in or out of the room for up to thirty minutes. It is there for your safety and should be kept closed. Please do not wedge it open or store things behind it. You will also have **window restrictors** if you are not in a ground floor property. This allows your windows to open but only a few inches so as to avoid anyone falling out of the window. Please do not remove these restrictors. In your kitchen you will have a **heat sensor** which will sound if the temperature in the room rises to an unsafe level (such as heat caused by fire). It is not activated by smoke. Please do not cover the heat sensor or remove it. If your property manager finds you have removed it you will be required to put it back and this will require an electrician which could be costly. If you have a boiler in your property you will have a **CO alarm** which detects carbon monoxide in the air. It is very rare for this alarm to sound. If it does sound it will most likely be the batteries running low but open all windows and call National Grid on **0800 111 999**. You will also have **smoke alarms** in your hallway. For your own

safety do not cover or remove these. If you have moved into a block then please familiarise yourself with the fire safety signs throughout the building.

Pets: You are not permitted to have any pets in your property.

Pest Infestations: Please note that if, during your occupancy, you have a pest problem you will need to advise us immediately. It will then be decided who is responsible for the treatment. In most cases we will not pay for any treatment and you will be responsible for this, especially where there are bed bugs and cockroaches. Your beds will be new when you move in and the property will be professionally cleaned so there will be no pest problems when you move in. You must keep your home clean and tidy and not leave food debris on work surfaces or floors.

Furniture: Your property will come furnished unless you state otherwise at the start of your occupancy agreement. Once you move in you will not be able to request for furniture to be removed or for more furniture to be provided so please make sure you ask for everything you need before you move in. The furniture provided is expected to last for the duration of your occupancy and it is extremely unlikely that any furniture will be replaced if it breaks so please look after it.

Damage and excessive repairs: If you break something within the property then you should have it repaired. If we have to arrange for damages to be repaired we will look at recharging that cost to you.

Moving out: If you are due to leave the property for any reason you must let us know as soon as possible. Please do not take anything from the property that is not yours, this includes furniture, fixtures and fittings. You need to leave the property in the same condition in which you found it, less any minor wear and tear. Your property manager will meet you at the property to conduct a check-out inventory. If there any costs incurred by us when you leave you may be recharged. You must make a note of your meter reading and inform all utility providers when you leave and if you have a key meter you must make sure there is not a debt on it.

Council Tax: You must make a claim for council tax support (previously called council tax benefit). This is separate to your claim for housing benefit. If you are moving outside of Westminster you must apply for council tax in the borough you move to within a week of moving.

If your new property is in Westminster you must make sure that you make it clear to housing benefit that you want to claim for housing **AND** council tax benefit. Please make a note of the date you claimed and your reference number here on the utilities form provided.

Gas Safety appliances: By law your landlord must comply with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1994 and subsequent associated legislation. Your landlord must have all gas systems, appliances and flues checked at least every 12 months by a GAS SAFE registered engineer. It is in the interests of your own safety and welfare that you cooperate fully with contractors making appointments with you to carry out a gas safety inspection. – If you have gas appliances in your property then every 12 months an engineer will need to come and carry out a safety check. It is a legal requirement for the owner to arrange this. It is essential that you allow access for this. **You must also make sure you have money on your meter** (if you have one). If the gas engineer cannot carry out the test because there is no money on the meter they may charge £45.00 for the failed appointment. You should ensure that if you have a boiler cupboard you do not store things in it. The area around the boiler should be kept clear at all times to ensure easy access for any repairs or maintenance. If you change any of your telephone numbers you must let us know straight away so we always have up-to-date information for you. If you are planning to be away from the property for anything more than 2 weeks you need to let us know so arrangements can be made before you go if necessary.

We may also need to carry out electrical safety checks and will arrange these well in advance with you.

Gas Leak: In the unlikely event that you smell gas and think there is a leak then call National Grid on **0800 111 999**.

Utility Providers: You must register with both gas and electricity providers. This is essential even if pre-payment meters are fitted. There can often be debts on these meters and a new tenant whom has not registered can often find that they are paying on a very high rate to clear a debt from a previous tenant. Some properties will not have a gas supply. If you are not sure please ask us. Please enter your meter readings on the utilities form provided.

If you are not sure who provides your gas and electric you can call the following two numbers to get this information. Please make sure you give the utility providers a meter reading when you register so they do not charge you more than they should.

Gas Meter Point Administration Service **0870 6081 524**

Electric Meter Point **0845 6015 467 or visit website**
<http://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/internet/en/help-and-advice/who-is-my-supplier/>

Once you have established who your supplier is you can contact them for assistance.

Water – You are responsible for paying the water bill at your property and must register with Thames Water when you move in. Make a note of the date you registered and your account number on the utilities form provided.

Contact Thames Water on **0845 9200 888** or go online and advise them that they are moving in to the property. If you are moving outside of London please check who supplies your water.

Location of water stop valve

Familiarise yourself with the location of the stopcock. If you have a leak in your flat you should turn the stopcock off to stop the water until the leak can be fixed.

Leaks in apartment blocks: If you have a leak coming into your flat from another flat then the first thing to do is to inform the flat you think the leak is coming from. Make a note of their door number and take their contact details if they are happy to provide them. They should either get the leak fixed or report it to their landlord to fix. You can also report the leak to your property manager and take photos of the affected area. You can also contact the building management company to let them know – you can find their details on the communal notice board. If you live in a Westminster block you can call their repairs number on **0800 358 3783**

Loss of Power: If your electricity suddenly turns off this can sometimes be because of a faulty appliance. If you feel able to you can check your main fuse board to see which circuit has tripped (for example 'kitchen'). Unplug everything on that circuit, reset the trip switch on the fuse board and then plug in the appliances one by one. If the power trips out when you plug something in then this is the faulty item. If it is your own item such as a kettle or toaster then you need to dispose of this. If it is something we have provided please let us know.