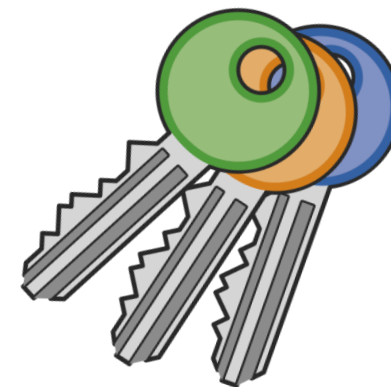


Contents Pages

YOUR TENANCY DETAILS		Re-chargeable repairs	14	Pets	28	Tiling	37
Your Tenancy details		Tenant responsibilities	14	Contents insurance	29	Lofts & cupboards	37
WELCOME		Permission/s	15	YOUR HOUSE, HOME & RESPONSIBILITY		Sheds greenhouses & gardens	37
Welcome		Planned and Cyclical Maintenance	15	Parking	30	Security	37
Equality and Diversity & GDPR		Spotlight on damp & mould	16	Communal areas	30	Keys	37
CUSTOMER AND TENANT ENGAGEMENT		Condensation & mould	17	Alterations & improvements	30	MOVING OUT – THINGS TO REMEMBER	
Our Aim		Damp	18	Avoid recharges Do's & Don'ts	31	Things to remember	38
Ways of being involved		STAYING SAFE IN YOUR HOME		YOUR RIGHTS		Good Luck from Westfield Housing	38
Tenant Satisfaction Measures		Gas safety	19	Your right to security	32	Consent sheet	39
MOVING IN		Smoke alarms	19	Your right to succession	32		
Moving in getting your utilities on		Carbon monoxide/alarms	19	Your right to subletting	32		
People to contact		Electrical safety	20	Your right to acquire	32		
YOUR RENT & SERVICE CHARGES		Asbestos	20	Your right to exchange	32		
Ways to pay your rent		Wider hazards	21	Your right to have a lodger	33		
Rent and Service Charges		Slips/Trips & Falls	21	Your right to buy	33		
Money or benefit advice		Fire safety	22	Your right to transfer	33		
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE		Communal Fire safety	23	ENDING YOUR TENANCY & MOVING			
A quick reference guide to help you		YOUR TENANCY AGREEMENT		How to start the process	34		
Out of Hours Service		Your responsibility to us	24	During my notice period	34		
Ways to report a repair		Our responsibility to you	24	Things to do before I leave	34		
What can you expect from us		How to make a complaint	24	Torts Interference with Goods Act1977	34		
What we can expect from you		Allowing access	24	Acceptable standard for ending your tenancy	35		
Getting it right		BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOUR (ASB)		MOVING OUT – CHECKLIST			
Repairs & Maintenance timescales		Tenant Responsibilities	25	Property standards checklist	36		
What to do with a Gas Leak		Respecting others	25	Bathroom	36		
Frozen Pipes		Types of nuisance	26	Walls plaster & paintwork	36		
Pest control		What to do if you have a complaint about your neighbour	26	Kitchens	36		
		Benefits of mediation	26	Electrics	36		
		What WHA will do	27	Gas appliances	36		
		ASB App	27	Plumbing	37		
		Legal action	27	Flooring	37		



At the back of this Handbook you will find the following documents;

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Tenancy Privacy Notice
- Annual Report

Your Tenancy Details

Your tenancy reference number is:

Your Type of tenancy is:

Your tenancy start date is:

Your Housing Services Officer is:

Our Mission: To enable people to thrive through the provision of high quality , affordable homes and excellent customer centred housing and community services.

Our Vision: Driving change, working with others to create great homes, great communities and great opportunities.

Our Values: Customer Driven – Making a real difference to customers is at the heart of what we do.
Honest, open and accountable – We work with integrity and build trust.
Empowered - We take responsibility and we empower others.
Collaborative - We work effectively with each other and with stakeholders
Challenge - We question and test and we are open with our views

Your Rent is charged over 52 weeks and made up of:

Basic Rent

Service Charge

Total Rent

Your gas supplier and contact details are

(See page 8 for guidance on getting your utilities switched on)

Meter point reference number is

Your Electric Supplier and contact details are

Meter point reference number is

To report a repair during office hours Monday-Friday 9am-5pm ring 01900 602906 or email repairs on repairs@westfieldha.org.uk or via your tenants portal. Please remember messages and emails will only be responded to during office hours.

To report an emergency repair out of hours ring You can find a list of what is classified as an emergency repair on page 15.

To pay your rent during office hours ring 01900 602906

You can also pay using your tenant portal www.westfieldha.org.uk . To register you will need your tenancy reference number shown above.

Our preferred method of payment is Direct Debit. Speak to us on 01900 602906 to set up your Direct Debit.

Welcome

On behalf of everyone at Westfield Housing Association (WHA), we are pleased to welcome you to your new home. This Handbook is designed to set out the key pieces of information needed to enjoy your home. We hope you find the information useful. If you think there is any information missing please let us know.

Your Handbook is designed to be an easy-to-read guide explaining the services you can expect from WHA as your landlord and information of your responsibilities as a tenant. We have tried to include as much general advice as possible with more detailed advice about rent and repairs.

From time to time the law or our policies may change. If you would like more information or a copy of any of the policies referenced, please check our website www.westfieldha.org.uk or contact the office on 01900 602906.

Everyone at Westfield is committed to providing you with the best possible service and an exceptional customer experience, whenever you contact us. If at any time you think we fall short on this promise or we can do better, please let us know as it helps us to improve.

Best wishes from everyone at WHA.

Westfield Housing

About us .. Westfield Housing Association was formed in 1950 by United Steel Companies Limited and its local subsidiary Distington Engineering Company Limited exclusively to house key workers moving to Workington for employment in the new iron foundry and engineering works at Chapel Bank.

Between 1952 and 1955, the Association built an estate of 134 family houses adjoining the United Steel Companies own development of 54 semi-detached dwellings.

The original Board was formed from senior staff at Distington Engineering, which provided management services until 31st March 1981 when its successor, British Steel Corporation, disengaged from housing involvement. From the outset there was trade union representation on the Board later extended to include, and eventually be replaced by, tenants.

British Steel Corporation's withdrawal from the direct provision of housing occurred eighteen months after the Association had embarked on major modernisation of the estate. To maintain the programme, the Board established the Association as an independent body registered with the Housing Corporation.

During 1985 the Association responded to the need for specially designed dwellings for pensioners and disabled people and three bungalows and 16 flats were built at Ashmore Gardens. In December 1992 the Association completed the construction of 22 flats for elderly people at Westfield Bridge Court, including two flats for disabled people.

After a very successful ballot with tenants of Allerdale Council, the end of 1993 saw the stock transfer of 223 houses from the Council. The year 1996 saw the completion of the Casson Road development. The scheme provides 32 flats and bungalows and in 2023/24 we saw the completion of our development of 17 bungalows in and around the Westfield estate. Since 1998, the Association has purchased over 200 properties in rural Allerdale. We currently have over 620 properties under our management and are committed to continuous growth by developing up to 130 new homes by 2030 including more older persons housing (e.g. bungalows), and more family provision.

In 2004, we opened Footsteps Nursery, and we continue to develop our setting and our practice to meet the needs of the children we care for, as well as their families. We have continued to develop the nursery and currently have the facilities to care for 108 children per session. Since 2009 we have been rated OUTSTANDING by Ofsted for three consecutive years.

Footsteps Nursery is a 'not for profit' organisation. Our primary concern is, and will always be, the wellbeing, happiness and holistic development of each individual child, surrounded by peace and love, ensuring the best possible start in life.

WHA and Footsteps nursery currently employ over 40 members of staff. You can find out more about our team on our website www.westfieldha.org.uk



Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Statement & GDPR

Westfield Housing Association (WHA) recognises we have the ability to reduce the disadvantages that people experience by making its services more responsive to all communities and individual needs. The Association values the diversity of all communities and wants its services, facilities and resources to be accessible to all.

We ask that you always advise us of changes to your household in relation to disabilities or support needs which may affect the way we provide services, to enable us to continue providing the best service required.

We also welcome feedback regarding our services and information we provide to our customers, be it a compliment or complaint.

If you require any special assistance or require this handbook in a different format, please let us know so that this can be arranged for you. Please contact our Customer Services Team, on 01900 602906 or email: enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk.



GDPR

GDPR stands for General Data Protection Regulation. It is originally a European Union (EU) law which was incorporated directly into UK law when we left the EU. It is now known as the UK GDPR. This law specifies the way in which organisations can use and store information about an identifiable, living person (personal data).

The UK GDPR requires organisations that collect personal information about people to tell them what information is being collected and how it's being used. It also requires them to give people more control over what is done with their information.

Westfield Housing Association does this through a document called a privacy notice, which is given to you as part of your sign-up pack and is also available on our website. <https://www.westfieldha.org.uk/page/privacy>

As the law applies to Westfield Housing Association, everything we do with our tenants' personal information must be legal and fair and in your best interests. We cannot mislead you about what we use your information for, and what we do with it. We must also keep it safe.

The UK GDPR specifies the rules that Westfield Housing Association must follow relating to the use and protection of our tenants' personal information in order to protect your rights and freedoms.

We listen through tenant & customer engagement

Our aim is to provide good quality homes and services that meet customer needs and aspirations. Building customer involvement enables us to better understand these needs and aspirations and to improve the services we provide.

Our community is at the heart of everything we do, your experiences and the benefit you get from our services are all important.

To help and encourage people to get involved we are committed to providing a range of different opportunities that suit individual aspirations and circumstances.

Our Customer Engagement Strategy on our website, sets out how we aim to do this and covers the different opportunities that being involved provides.

Being involved ranges from taking part in occasional surveys, contributing to a project or activity, to becoming a member of our Customer Panel.

Please get in touch if you would like to know more about being involved and having your say or if you can think of any ways in which we can improve our customer engagement on 01900 602906.



We are keen to hear your views and suggestions as tenant engagement can bring amazing benefits including:

- Comparing our performance against other social landlords of a similar size.
- Delivery of better services.
- Being involved in decisions affecting your home and community.
- Helping to set priorities for services.
- Your personal development, especially if you would like to become a member of the Board.
- Increased satisfaction and better communication between you and Westfield Housing.
- Improved links between the Association and the wider community.

We encourage feedback on various matters, such as:

- Changes in rent and service charges.
- Changes in tenancy conditions.
- Changes to policy or practice that affect how we manage your homes or repairs.
- Estate management services and improvements.
- Major repairs and planned works.
- Changes to our ways of working.

Ways to be involved

The next pages show a range of ways you can choose to engage.

Some options take just a few minutes of your time, and some require more regular commitment. Whatever suits you best, just get in touch. 01900 602906

enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk

We listen through tenant engagement

Don't have much time? Why not consider different ways of engagement



GROUP MEMBER: We currently have 3 established groups. **Customer Panel, Residents Group and Digital Group.** These members serve as a local link to Westfield Housing for their area and a representative for their neighbours. They also review key areas of our work. The groups meet quarterly to discuss and act on local issues, review our policies, review our performance and tell us what needs to change. We will provide you with support and training to carry out any of these roles so if you want to be a strong voice for change, get in touch and get involved.



DIGITAL GROUP: The Digital Group provides an easy and accessible way to communicate with us and give feedback on our day-to-day services or specific projects. You can communicate with us and provide your feedback through digital channels such as social media, our tenants portal and email. This can be to provide satisfaction information, identify areas for improvement, digital surveys and feedback/review forms or documents. This can all be done from the comfort of your armchair, and will require little time.



SOCIAL MEDIA: Follow us on social media and take part in surveys and questions via Facebook. You may even win a prize for taking part.



TENANT PORTAL: Use your tenant portal and give us feedback on your experience. It is important we receive tenant feedback whether it be a positive or negative experience.



HOME VISITS: If you want to talk to us and give your view on a matter, we are happy to call at your home. Alternatively you can call into the office between 9am and 1pm Monday to Friday, or call us on 01900 602906 between 9am and 5pm.



CUSTOMER SOCIAL EVENTS: Perfect for people who are happy to share their thoughts, but don't want to attend meetings.

This is an opportunity to have a good time whilst we take note of your views on serious subjects. You can attend as many or as few events as you like, and there is no ongoing commitment involved. If you have any ideas for future events please let us know.

CALL 01900 602906 or EMAIL: enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk for further details

Whenever you need to you can also use:

OUR COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS SYSTEM

Whether you have a complaint, or think we're doing something well, tell us about your experience. You can contact us in any of the advertised ways. We review all complaints and compliments weekly and use the feedback to shape our policies and ways of working. You can see our Complaints Policy on our website www.westfieldha.org.uk/about-us/our-policies and other key documents.



ESTATE WALKABOUTS

If there are specific issues in your area, why not join your Housing Services Officer on a walk round your estate or local area? It's an opportunity to talk about anything that you think we need to hear about. We also award prizes out for best kept garden. Let us know if you would like to take part in this competition or you have ideas of other ways for tenants to keep their properties looking nice.



ESTATE CLEAN UP DAYS - OPERATION RESPECT.

We hold an annual estate clean up event during the summer months in partnership with the Local Focus Hub. The events help us tackle fly tipping and littering, allowing tenants to dispose of unwanted rubbish and keeping the estate tidy. Members of our Customer Panel and Residents group join us to help collect items from gardens and agencies provide activities for children and useful information for residents. This also gives residents a chance to give feedback on our services.



We listen through tenant engagement

Tenant Satisfaction Measures - a new way to give your feedback

From April 2023, all social housing tenants are being offered a new way to give valuable feedback on the services provided by their landlords.

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) has created the new process, called 'Tenant Satisfaction Measures' (TSMs), for assessing how well social housing landlords in England are doing at providing good quality homes and services.

From the beginning of April 2023, like every social landlord in England, Westfield Housing Association (WHA) started asking tenants to complete a TSM survey. Surveys can be sent out to tenants or completed face to face during tenancy visit. For our tenants, this will usually be completed as part of our annual tenancy visit.

The TSMs aim to:

- let tenants see how well their landlord is doing
- give the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) an idea of which landlords might need to improve things

The survey has 12 TSM questions and starting from autumn 2024, the results will be published annually on our website www.westfieldha.org.uk. Allowing tenants to see how we are doing compares to others.

Westfield Housing Association, see TSMs as a vital way to make sure we're listening to your views, find out how we're performing and to learn where we can improve things. We urge as many tenants as possible to complete the survey, so that you can truly express your views."

Alongside the Regulator's TSMs, WHA will still complete our own satisfaction surveys. These can be posted out to tenants or we can post links on our social media pages. Most surveys are usually sent to residents after works or activities have been carried out in their homes by our contractors.

Our own satisfaction surveys and other feedback mechanisms are really important to us because they help us to quickly identify issues and make service improvements. If we know something hasn't met with our residents' expectations, we can then aim to put it right. TSMs have come about as a result of the Government's 2020 Social Housing White Paper, the [Charter for Social Housing Residents](#). The RSH is in charge of enforcing these standards, you can find out more about the new TSMs and why they are being introduced here: [Introduction of tenant satisfaction measures – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). If you have any queries or would like to find out more about the new TSMs, please contact us on 01900 602906.

Tenant satisfaction measures



Moving in to your home

By the time the property you have been offered is ready to let, your Housing Services Officer will have already made arrangements with to sign your tenancy agreement and other documents required. You will have also have been informed how to access your keys. The property will have been inspected and will meet the Decent Homes Standard.

We know moving home can be stressful, which is why we've pulled together this useful checklist over the next two pages to help you tick off all the important things you need to remember, making your move as smooth as possible as you embark upon your exciting new journey.

GAS & ELECTRIC SUPPLY TO YOUR HOME

It is your responsibility to organise the Gas & Electricity suppliers at your home and for paying all bills at your address. It is therefore your responsibility to register yourself as a new tenant with the supplier as soon as your tenancy starts. Where possible your Housing Services Officer will advise you who the supplier is during the tenancy sign up.

For safety reasons the gas supply to your property has been capped off whilst void.

When your tenancy starts it is your responsibility to arrange a **turn on and test** in order to have gas supply at your home.

Here is a guide of the steps you need to take to have gas and electric in your home:

1. Contact the current utility suppliers for your property. **You will find these details on page 2 of this handbook.**
2. Register yourself as the new tenant. Make sure you have the meter readings at hand.
3. Once registered with the current supplier, you need to arrange to have the gas supply uncapped. You do this by calling our Gas contractor, AFM on **01900 871396 and make an appointment that suits you.**
4. Always arrange a time that you know you can be at the property, this will prevent you from being recharged for missed appointments.
5. Please ensure you have credit on both Gas and Electric to allow the

WATER SUPPLY

It is your responsibility to register with United Utilities for your water bill.

If you have a water meter you will need to give a reading to them when you ring.

You usually find your water meter under the sink. This will be shown to you during your viewing.

CERTIFICATES YOU SHOULD HAVE IN YOUR SIGN UP PACK

Gas Safety Certificate

Electrical Safety Certificate

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

Please keep your copies of the certificates somewhere safe.

COUNCIL TAX

You are responsible for the Council Tax at your property at all times. Even if you do not move in on the date the property is signed over to you, you remain responsible for the Council Tax from that date.

You must register your Council Tax account with Cumberland Council www.cumberland.gov.uk
0300 373 3730

HELP WITH YOUR RENT

It is your responsibility to pay the rent for your home. In some circumstances you may be entitled to help towards your rent.

If you receive Housing Benefit, this is paid by Cumberland Council. When you move you will need to advise them of your change of address.

If you receive Universal Credit and want to claim help towards your rent this is called the Housing element of Universal Credit and is paid directly to you. It is your responsibility to pay the full rent to us.

You will need to advise Universal Credit of your change of address. You can do this on your journal but not until the date your tenancy starts.



Moving in to your home

There are people you need to contact when you move into a new home. Here is a check list for you to refer to and some other useful contact numbers you may need.



PEOPLE TO NOTIFY:

- ⇒ Redirect your post from your previous address to your new one at the Post Office. You can do this in person or you can do this online here;
<https://www.royalmail.com/personal/receiving-mail/redirection>
- ⇒ Contact your internet provider.
- ⇒ Contact your previous energy supplier to let them know you are moving. Giving them the final meter readings and close your old account.
- ⇒ Notify your employer, doctor, school, credit/loan companies, bank, insurance companies and TV licensing as appropriate.
- ⇒ Contact Cumberland Council to switch your Council Tax to your new address.
- ⇒ Contact the Department of Works & Pensions to notify of change of address.
- ⇒ Cancel your current home contents insurance and arrange new contents insurance, for your new home. (see advice on page 26 about home insurance).
- ⇒ Notify your life & car insurance provider of your new address.



USEFUL CONTACTS WHEN MOVING INTO A NEW HOME:

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL: 0300 373 3730
<https://www.cumberland.gov.uk/>

For:

Council tax registrations, change of address, changes in household members, changes to income.

Housing Benefit, for help with paying your rent.

Missing bins, for collection days and bulky item collections.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT: 0800 328 5644

For:

All change of circumstances including change of address. It is better to use your journal to notify Universal Credit of any changes but in the event you have no access to a journal you can always contact them.

UNITED UTILITIES: 0345 672 2888

To register as a new tenant at your property and set up your water account.

CITIZENS ADVICE: 03444 111 444

www.citizensadvice.org.uk Citizens Advice provide free, confidential and impartial advice. Their goal is to help everyone find a way forward, whatever the problem.

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

As a tenant of WHA, we are here to help you. We can provide information on the benefits you are entitled to and how to claim them. We can also help you access affordable household items, should you require. This help is funded through our Tenant Enablement Fund. We help an average of 25 households annually to set up and sustain their tenancy, contributing to social value within the community.

To find out more about the help we can offer, please contact our Income Officer on 01900 602906.

Please find below a list of other organisations who may be able to assist you.

Money Advice Service: The Money Advice Service can provide you with free and impartial money advice. They can provide you with advice and guides to help support you with your finance. Subjects covered are debts and borrowing.
www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk Tel; 0300 500 5000

Step Change Debt Charity: Step Change Debt Charity is a national charity which provides free debt advice, either over the telephone or online, to help transform the lives of those struggling with the stress and worry of problem debt.
www.stepchange.org / 0800 138 1111 (Free from all landlines and mobiles)

You will find practical advice about your home, guidance on your responsibilities and how to access information about other support services provided for you on our website We hope you find it useful <https://www.westfieldha.org.uk/page/tenancy-guide>

Your Rent & Service Charges

Ways to pay your rent

You will receive a rent statement every quarter. It tells you how much you should pay and how much you have actually paid. It shows if you owe any money (called “arrears”) or if you have paid more than you need (“credit”).

It is important that you pay your rent regularly and keep your rent account clear, we offer a range of ways to make payments. These are:



Direct Debit. This is a safe, easy way to ensure you keep your account up to date. To set up a Direct Debit payment you can contact us on 01900 602906.



Over the phone: You can pay using your debit card over the phone. Just call the office during normal office hours and we can take a payment (and process that via Worldpay).



Tenant Portal: As a tenant you can register on the portal which is accessed via our website. All you need is your tenant reference number. You can find this on page 3 of this Handbook.

Claiming help with your rent

If you are currently claiming any help towards paying your rent from either Cumberland Council or Universal Credit it is very important that you tell them about any change of circumstances.

If your entitlement is Housing Benefit you will need to let Cumberland Council know on 0300 373 3730 on the day your new tenancy starts.

If you are currently claiming Universal credit, you can let them know your change in circumstances via your Journal. Please remember you cannot do this until the day your tenancy starts.



Rent and Service Charges

Many Westfield Housing Association tenants pay an amount on top of their rent for extra facilities that we provide. We make these “service charges” for things like communal lighting, gardening and landscaping. Your tenancy agreement tells you if you pay for this sort of charge and offers a breakdown of what the charges are for.

We review rents and services charges every year and our aim, when we do this, is to strike the right balance between covering the costs of providing the services you want and need, and the impact the rent increase has on you.

Your rent is governed by the Rent Standard. The Regulator for Social Housing decides how this should be set and we must comply with this. The Regulator currently says that rents will not increase by more than the September Consumer Price Index (CPI), also known as inflation, plus 1%.

We will write to you giving you at least 4 weeks notice of any change/increase to your rent.

Money and benefit advice

Our Housing Team are structured to enable better levels of support and advice. If you are facing any problems or struggling with any aspects of your tenancy, we want you to know that we are here to help. For example, if you are unable to pay your rent or are facing any other financial hardship, your first, and so very important step, is to talk to us. We will listen and offer advice and support tailored specifically to your circumstances.

We also provide a money and benefit advice service and may be able to help in a range of areas. We can perform a benefits check, prepare a payment plan and budgeting plan. Please contact us on 01900 602906 for further details.

There may be instances where you could need more specialist financial advice and in which case, we can refer you to organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>



Repairs & Maintenance

This is a quick reference guide to help you:

- Find out which repairs are your responsibility as a tenant.
- Identify which repairs we will carry out as your landlord.
- Identify a problem quickly so you can tell us and help us send the right person with the right tools.
- Identify if the repair is an emergency. Such as, unsafe power, lighting sockets or electrical fittings, loss of electricity, gas, water supply or a burst pipe.

Please be advised if you call the out of hours service for an emergency repair that is not categorised as an emergency you may be recharged. The type of repairs that are considered emergencies are listed on page 15.

Emergency repairs

If you have an emergency repair during normal office hours Monday-Friday 9am-5pm. Please contact us immediately on **01900 602906**.

Out of Hours Emergency repairs

If you are calling outside of normal working hours and the office is closed we have an out of hours emergency service who are available to deal with your call any time of day or night. The out of hours number is;

0151 343 2762.

You must only contact this service if you have a real emergency, such as, a burst pipe, or if your home is insecure or dangerous.

The out of hours call staff will take all your details, and if the repair can wait until our Office re-opens, they will advise you of this.

You can report a repair in the following ways:

- In person at the office during opening hours 9am and 1pm Monday to Friday.
- You can make a pre booked appointment to speak to a member of staff when the office is closed, Monday to Friday 1pm to 5pm.
- Telephone the Westfield Housing office on 01900 602906.
- By email for non-urgent repairs to repairs@westfieldha.org.uk
- Via your tenants portal on the website www.westfieldha.org.uk
- By letter to Westfield Housing, The Minto Centre, Nilsson Drive, Westfield, Workington CA14 5BD.

Messages and emails will only be responded to during office hours.



Please do not put baby wipes, face wipes or toilet wipes down the toilet. This blocks the drains and will result in a recharge to you.

Repairs & Maintenance

<p>What you can expect from us</p>	<p>Our Repairs Team & Contractors:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are proud of their high levels of customer satisfaction and are always polite and courteous. • Will agree an appointment time with you. • Will behave in a professional manner, introduce themselves and always carry ID. We are happy to verify if you are ever in doubt. • Will aim to complete the repair first time. • Will be respectful of you, your family, and your home. • We will always respond positively to complaints when we get it wrong.
<p>Our responsibilities</p>	<p>We have legal responsibilities as your landlord to carry out certain repairs. If you are ever unsure about repairs responsibilities, please check your Tenancy Agreement or contact our Repairs Team who will always be happy to help on 01900 602906.</p>
<p>Your responsibilities</p>	<p>It is important you report repairs as soon as you become aware something is not right. There are some repairs which you must deal with yourself so before contacting us please use this Handbook as a guide.</p> <p>If you have questions, please get in touch with the Repairs Team. When we are scheduled to carry out a repair, we ask that you do not go out and are ready for their arrival. Our Repairs Team will respect your home, but as a precaution please move any items out of the way to ensure our contractors can safely access the area that requires repaired.</p> <p>Access - it is very important (and part of your tenancy agreement), that you must allow contractors and staff access to carry out repairs and inspections as required. Failure to do so may result in recharges for failed visits being passed onto you and we can progress to legal action in some cases.</p>
<p>Gifted responsibility</p>	<p>We may sometimes leave non-standard items in a property for a new tenant to use. When we do, we will always ask you if you would like to accept these items as a gift. If you accept these items as a gift, they will become your responsibility to repair or replace them when they come to the end of their life. It will also be your responsibility to remove these items when you terminate the tenancy. The cost of removing any items left in a property without prior consent from WHA will be recharged to you.</p> <p>These things include sheds, laminate flooring, carpets, and other floor coverings. This is normally agreed before signing your tenancy agreement and explained that this is a gift from the former tenant.</p>

Getting it right

When your repair has been completed we will contact you to ask if you are satisfied with the service you have received. If you are not happy please tell us what went wrong so we can learn from this.



There are 'qualifying repairs' such as unsafe electrical fittings, leaking roofs, blocked sinks and toilets etc.

The 'Right to Repair' Scheme applies when we fail to complete 'qualifying repairs' within our timescales and you may be entitled to compensation.

If you have any queries, please contact our office on 01900 602906.

Repairs & Maintenance timescales - How Quickly will Repairs be done?

We give all repairs a priority when they are reported and you will be advised of this at the time of reporting. Examples are:

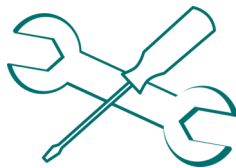
Emergency - within 24 hours

We aim to complete all emergency repairs within 24 hours, however, in most cases, we will attend same day.

In some cases the contractor may attend and carry out a temporary repair to make safe etc until they can get back to carry out a more lasting repair/with any parts required.

We would only recharge the cost of the emergency repair if the damage has been caused by yourself or a visitor to your property e.g. you lost your house keys and asked us to gain entry and change your locks. Other examples of emergency repairs are:-

- Uncontrollable leak from pipe/radiator/wastes/tank.
- Complete loss of power (no lights, no power).
- Secure property after break in/vandalism.
- Blocked WC (where only 1 exists in the property).
- Major Structural damage.
- Property entrance door won't open/lock.
- Complete breakdown of heating system. (*winter months*).
- Fire/Flood Damage.
- Make safe dangerous walls/ceiling /chimney/ loose slates.



Urgent - within 3 days

We aim to complete all urgent repairs within 3 working days.

- Partial breakdown of heating system (summer months).
- Sockets/switches not working.
- Overflows running (tank/toilet).
- Toilet not flushing properly.
- Blocked drain (WC and waste pipes).
- Electric light out in vulnerable areas (e.g. communal staircases, stairs) or if no other light source in the room (e.g. bathroom or kitchen).

GAS ESCAPE/IF YOU CAN SMELL GAS

**If you smell gas, you need to contact
TRANSCO immediately on
0800 111 999**

You should also:

- Switch off your gas at the meter (Isolator Valve).
- Ventilate the property -open the doors and windows.
- Do not smoke, use matches or any other naked flame.
- Do not use electrical appliances or switch lights on.

Routine- within 21 days

- Leaking/dripping taps.
- Repairs to broken fencing/gates.
- Gutter/downpipe repairs.
- Broken letter boxes.
- Roof repairs with no health and safety issue.
- Repairs to internal areas.
- Repairs to kitchen cupboards or drawers.
- Plastering before or after taking off wallpaper.
- External door repairs (not a security risk).
- Window repairs (not a security risk).
- Broken washing post.

FROZEN PIPES

Condensate pipes on combi boilers-these will stop your boiler working but the only remedy is for the pipe to thaw, there is nothing our Contractors can do / there is no quick fix for this.

PEST CONTROL

If you have problems with pests, such as rodents or insects, it is your responsibility to deal with this. Details of Pest Control Services can be found on the Cumberland Council website.

www.cumberland.gov.uk. However;

If you are struggling to deal with a pest issue please contact us.



Repairs & Maintenance

There are a number of repairs which are the responsibility of the tenant and if you ask Westfield are asked to complete these works, they would therefore be rechargeable to the you. When you contact us to report the repair, we will let know you about additional charges before we log the works and give an estimate of the cost.

Rechargeable Repairs

We have a Rechargeable Repairs Policy to ensure our approach is fair, consistent and clear. The money we allocate for repairs must be spent on work we have a responsibility for as the service is paid for from the rent we collect from tenants. Examples of work we will charge you for include:-

- Damage to any fixtures and fittings e.g. electrical (socket, switches, lights) internal doors, kitchen units, walls.
- Repairs caused by your own appliance(s).
- Blocked toilets due to excess paper or any type of wipes.
- Blocked sinks due to excess fat/grease/food.
- Blocked shower and bath drains due to excess hair etc.
- Smashed doors/windows (without a Crime Reference Number).
- Failed Access visits – When appointments have been arranged with contractors/staff to visit and you are not available/don't re-arrange beforehand.

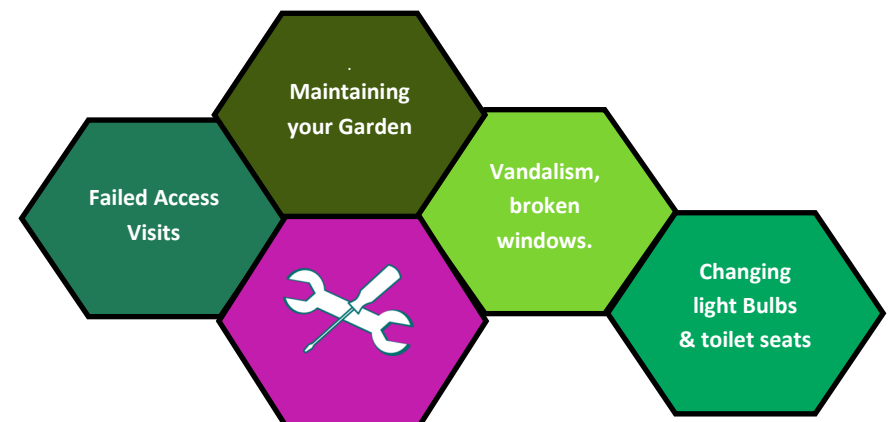
The above applies if damage is caused by anyone living at your home or visiting you, even if this is accidental, you will be responsible for arranging and paying for any repairs needed. If you engage with your own contractor, you MUST inform Westfields Maintenance Team as we may need certification for certain works and we will need to inspect the works after completion.

We strongly advise that you consider contents insurance which will cover the cost of repairs caused by accidents or damage. For example if a radiator leaks and caused damage to your carpet, this is not something that Westfield would cover. You will receive information about insurance during your sign up. Information is also available on our website www.westfieldha.org.uk. If you need advice at any time, please contact our office on 01900 602906.

Tenant Responsibilities

There are some repairs which are your responsibility, examples are:

- Damage to any fixtures and fittings belonging to Westfield Housing (doors, plaster, bathroom)
- Changing light bulbs.
- PEST Control.
- Installing appliances (cooker, fridge etc).
- Repairing your own appliances and electrical work resulting from a fault caused by your appliances.
- Replacement of toilet seat.
- Decorating inside your property.
- Maintaining your gardens (grass cutting, hedge pruning, tree works as required)
- TV Aerials (unless communal)
- Easing doors following carpets/laminate being fitted
- Outside tap installs.
- Repairs to components you have replaced - kitchens, bathrooms, doors, showers etc.



Repairs & Maintenance

Permission Requests

You may wish to carry out improvements and works to your home and we would ask you to send a request in writing by emailing repairs@westfieldha.org.uk with full details of the works you want to carry out including quotes & contractor details. Our Technical Services Officer may need to visit to discuss further and make the decision whether to allow or not allow the works to be completed and reasons for this.

If permission is given you may still be asked to remove items such as a shed or decking when terminating the tenancy. However, this would be explained in your permission letter/email and will be discussed during your pre-void inspection. Examples of works you need to ask permission for are as follows:-

- ◇ Kitchen or bathroom replacements.
- ◇ Retiling of kitchen/bathrooms.
- ◇ Boarding or cladding of kitchens/bathrooms.
- ◇ Flooring – fixing laminate or tiled flooring.
- ◇ Door replacements.
- ◇ Fire replacement.
- ◇ Outbuildings/sheds.
- ◇ Garden/landscaping works (decking etc).
- ◇ Shower installs.
- ◇ Driveway.
- ◇ Structural – removal of internal walls.
- ◇ Radiator/towel rail replacements.
- ◇ Painting kitchen units.
- ◇ Painting tiles (kitchen or bathroom).
- ◇ Install outside / security Lights.
- ◇ Install outside taps.

There are others, so if you need advice please speak to our Repairs Team on 01900 602906



Planned Maintenance

We will write to you and let you know when your home is due any upgrades and to advise you of the work that will be carried out. There may be situations where you do not want the works to be carried out due to illness and so we can look at deferring the works until a later date.

Typically, this work involves:-

- ⇒ Kitchen replacements.
- ⇒ Bathrooms replacements.
- ⇒ Window replacements.
- ⇒ External door replacements.
- ⇒ Heating system replacements.

We will liaise with you about your choices wherever possible. In most cases, you will not need to move from the property while the work is done, but there will inevitably be some disruption.

Cyclical Maintenance

We carry out some aspects of property maintenance on a cyclical basis for example:-

- ◆ Gas servicing-every year.
- ◆ Electrical safety testing-every 5 years.
- ◆ External decoration of properties 4 to 5 years as required.
- ◆ Fire alarm servicing-communal areas of flats every 6 months.
- ◆ Internal painting of communal areas of flats every 4 years.

You will be informed when the Contractors are attending and it is important that you allow access for this work to be completed. Failure to allow access will result in recharge to you for failed visits. This could also be considered a breach of tenancy as you may be putting your household and neighbours property at risk.

Repairs & Maintenance - Condensation, Mould and Damp

In October 2021, the Housing Ombudsman published a “Spotlight on Damp and Mould” report, highlighting the approach they expect social landlords to take when dealing with tenants who report or complain about damp and mould.

This report outlined 26 recommendations that landlords should review as part of their management of damp and mould issues within their tenants’ homes and the aims of our Damp & Condensation Policy are to reflect these recommendations.

The Policy demonstrates that we take a zero tolerance and pro-active approach to damp and mould interventions, ensuring that it is easy for our tenants to report issues to us and that we act in a timely manner.

We will investigate to determine the cause of damp using a holistic process, carry out required remedial works in a timely manner, offer advice and guidance where appropriate and take all reasonable steps to eradicate damp including, managing and controlling condensation via reasonable ventilation and insulation improvements to the property.

We will ensure that we are also using the data we hold about our residents and their homes to try and identify and put right issues before a complaint is made and where possible utilise available technologies.

We will also work with our tenants to ensure that they live in a safe environment and are treated in a fair and consistent way, with respect and dignity.

What you can expect from us and what we can expect from you.

Westfield Housing’s Responsibilities

- Any reports of damp/mould from a tenant will have an inspection arranged by our Technical Officer within 14 working days of being notified.
- During the visit, a diagnosis to the cause of any mould/damp will be made by our Technical Officer and advice given as appropriate to the tenant(s).
- If required, we will make emergency repairs within 24 hours of reporting.
- Works required are logged accordingly to a contractor, within 7 working days after our Technical Officer has visited.
- The contractor will be in touch to arrange a suitable time/date and will aim to have works fully completed within 21 days of our Technical Officers visit.
- Where extensive work is required, we will support tenant(s) by considering their individual needs and requirements including any vulnerabilities. We will take this information into account as part of our plans to address the issues.
- Extensive works may take longer than our routine target of 21 days but tenant(s) will be informed and updated with timescales etc.
- Once works are completed, our Technical Officer will revisit to confirm that the issue has been resolved and also arrange a follow up visit.
- We will ensure that any staff who visit your home have appropriate training for identifying and addressing damp, mould and condensation concerns.
- Westfield Housing will undertake any required works to assist in the management and control of damp, mould and condensation, such as, installing mechanical extractor fans, improving insulation etc.

Tenant Responsibilities

- We need tenant(s) to report any issues with damp and mould to the Association as soon as possible so that a home visit by our Technical Officer can be arranged.
- Issues can be reported by telephone, email, by letter, via our website or by calling into our office.
- It is really important that you give us your contact details/email address and allow access for the appointments made with our Technical Officer and Contractors to ensure we get the damp/mould dealt with as soon as possible.
- Any advice or instructions given by our Technical Officer or Contractors to the tenant(s) needs to be followed to mitigate the risk of the damp/mould returning.
- If the damp/mould issues do re-occur, please report these to us as soon as possible.



Repairs & Maintenance - Condensation, Mould and Damp

Condensation & Mould

Condensation



Condensation happens when moisture is absorbed into the warm atmosphere of your house and when the house cools down the moisture condenses on cool surfaces like external walls, around window and door reveals and uninsulated areas of ceilings. The result is condensation, which is almost certainly the most common form of dampness reported within buildings by tenants.

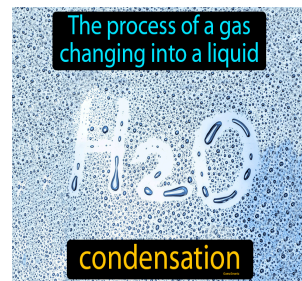
What is Condensation?

Condensation is largely the result of improved standards of insulation, double glazing and draught proofing of properties that all give the benefit of better heat retention, but results in a lack of air ventilation, stale air and trapped moisture within a property.

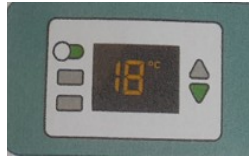


Without regular ventilation, condensation often results with the possibility of black mould growth, peeling decorations, damage to clothing or fabrics and unpleasant musty damp smells within a property.

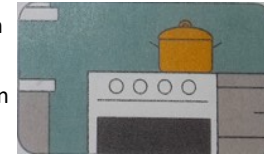
A common sign of condensation is water collecting on the inside of windows. It is generally noticeable where it forms on a non-absorbent surface, i.e. a window or tiles, but it can form on any surface and it may not be noticed until black mould growth is seen, decoration is affected or damage to clothes and furniture occurs. This is also normally coupled with a strong musty smell.



How to tackle Condensation & Mould-TIPS & ADVICE



Set heating to come on for longer at lower temperatures – this can help reduce condensation.



Keep pan lids on when cooking this will prevent steam escaping and save energy too.



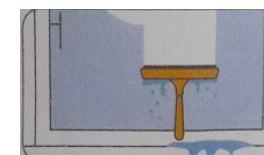
Have the extractor fan on and door closed when showering, bathing or cooking.



Tumble dryers can also cause a build up of condensation, vent them outside through the wall.



Dry clothes outside whenever you can. Not on radiators.



Wipe windows and walls daily of condensation to help.



If you do get mould use a cleaning product to remove.



Move furniture away from radiators and external walls as this stops air moving around your home.



Something as opening a window in the morning can help reduce moist air and help drying and open trickle vents on windows as much as possible.

Heating and Ventilation is required to reduce condensation and mould.

Sometimes, damp and mould can be caused by an issue with the property. If you do see damp and mould and you have tried the tips we've shared but its not making a difference please let us know and our Technical Services Officer will call and do an inspection.

Repairs & Maintenance - Condensation, Mould and Damp

Damp

Penetrating Damp

Penetrating Damp is caused from external water which is most likely to be from rainfall or a burst pipe which provides a constant source of dampness to a property.

Water can then enter a property through missing or loose roof coverings, cracked render coatings, defective masonry, doors and windows. Water can find its way through the smallest of cracks & holes. Internal signs of water penetration include staining to plaster, paintwork or wallpaper. Mould growth can some times also occur while in extreme cases over a period of time wet rot issues can arise.



If the stain occurrence is above a height of 1 metre from ground level—the most likely cause is water penetration.

Penetrating Damp Signs/Causes:-

- Staining to external walls on any level of the building includes flaking paint, and damp wallpaper caused by water damage.
- Staining getting worse when rainfall occurs / changing appearance etc.
- Any cracks to brickwork or render can allow water to enter a building.
- Blocked/overflowing guttering can cause water to flow down an elevation of a property.
- Any damaged pipework can provide a source of constant moisture which can cause water penetration issues.
- A defective seal on a door or window frame can allow water in to a property.

Remedy

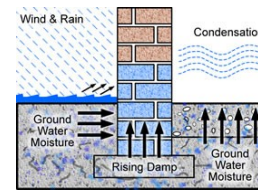
- Repair the cause e.g damaged render, leaking pipe, roof repair etc.
- Damaged plaster will be removed and replastered.
- Damaged woodwork will be removed and replaced.
- A decoration allowance will be given as appropriate.



Rising Damp

Rising dampness in buildings occurs when water from the ground rises up through the bricks and mortar of a building by capillary action.

In simple terms, the water rises up the wall of a building in the same way that a sponge will soak up surrounding water if placed into some water in a sink or bowl.



Any masonry structure, unprotected by a properly installed rising damp treatment (damp proof) course, is susceptible to natural rising damp. Damp will rise by capillary action through the pores of the masonry, seeking a means of escape by evaporation.

The moisture will continue to rise until it reaches a height where, unless no evaporation is possible, gravity takes over and pulls it down again. This height is seldom more than 1.2 of a meter from ground level.

Rising Dampness Diagnosis

Rising Damp only occurs on ground floor levels as it is moisture from the soil that is being drawn up the walls and thus causing the rising damp problem. If it is the case that your damp problem is on the first floor or above, it may be that you have a penetrating damp or a condensation issue. Without using any equipment, you can use certain visual signs to help identify rising damp:

- 'Tide' marks on the walls up to 1 metre high caused by rising dampness evaporation and salts from the ground.
- Wallpaper coming off or peeling from the wall/flaking of paint
- Decayed skirting boards, possible development of wet rot occurrence.

Remedy

- Remedy the cause e.g missing damp course.
- Damaged plaster will be removed, and a waterproofing product. will be applied prior to replastering.
- Damaged woodwork will be removed and replaced.
- A decoration allowance will be given as appropriate.

If you feel you have any condensation, mould, penetrating or rising damp. Please contact us and our Technical Services Officer will call and inspect.

Staying Safe in your home - Gas Safety

Your safety and that of our colleagues and contractors are of the utmost importance. We must ensure we meet our health and safety responsibilities and that our policies and procedures adhere to all legal requirements. We can provide detailed information on any health and safety matters if you need it but the following pages contain some key points to help you stay safe and comfortable in your home.

Gas Safety

If your property has a gas supply and appliances provided by us then we are required by law to carry out a gas safety check every 12 months. A significant number of fatalities occur in the UK every year as a result of faulty gas appliances and so this annual check is essential to ensure the safety of you and your family.

It also helps us to ensure your boiler is working efficiently so you are not wasting money on high fuel bills. The check identifies faults or worn-out parts and allows us to replace these before they fail, helping to ensure you always have heating and hot water.

You must allow us access to carry out the checks. Our contractor will contact you when your check is due with a proposed appointment date. If this is not suitable, the contractor can be contacted to re-arrange, however failure to re-arrange and not being available will lead to recharges for missed appointments.

Our contractors will be flexible around times which are suitable and work around your commitments. It is important to note, however, that if you do not allow access, this is a breach of your tenancy and we will commence legal proceedings to obtain access to ensure safety. If this happens, legal/court costs will be recharged to the tenant(s)).

Following a Gas Service being completed, our consultant (currently Morgan and Lambert) carry out a sample of 10% of completed services and if your property is identified, they will arrange to visit to carry out the Quality Assurance Audit inspection.

Tenants should not arrange to carry out any repairs under any circumstances on the boiler/heating system or gas fires in a property belonging to Westfield Housing Association.



Smoke Alarms & CO Alarms

Smoke Alarms detect the presence of smoke, providing early warning of a potential fire and this early detection allows tenants to escape safely before the situation worsens. Smoke inhalation is a major danger in house fires, and quick notification is critical, therefore properly installed and maintained smoke alarms reduce the risk of dying from a fire and safeguard lives by providing critical seconds to get out of the property.

As your Landlord, we are required to install **Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarms** in our properties:-

Smoke Alarms: at least one smoke alarm is installed on every storey of their rental property where there is a room used as living accommodation (e.g. living room or bedroom).

Carbon Monoxide Alarms: Landlords must install a carbon monoxide alarm in any room used as living accommodation that contains a fixed combustion appliance, such as a gas boiler or a wood-burning stove (excluding gas cookers).

We will test the Smoke and CO alarms annually as part of the Annual Gas Service and at the start of each new tenancy. If any alarms are found to be faulty or close to expiry, we will repair or replace promptly. You can test your Smoke Alarms regularly as an additional precaution.

Carbon monoxide is known as a "silent killer" as it has no smell, taste or colour. This is why we are legally required to carry out annual Gas Servicing to ensure your appliances are in good order. If you have your own Gas Cooker, it is your responsibility to fit a CO alarm in your kitchen.

- **DO NOT** remove the battery unless to replace it with a new one.
- **DO NOT** remove the Alarm during decorating etc
- **DO NOT** disconnect the alarm.
- **DO NOT** cover over the alarm.
- **DO NOT** paint over the alarms / cover expiry dates



Staying Safe in your home - Electric Safety

Electrical safety

We are required to carry out an EICR (Electrical Inspection Condition Report) on all of our properties every 5 years to ensure all electrical wiring/outlets are safe.

We will also complete the required repairs following the inspection if required.
PLEASE NOTE - this work is extremely important and we must gain access to complete. If you do not allow our contractor access you may be putting yourself and your family at risk and will be charged for failed appointments or visits.

Some advice on electrical safety in the home:-



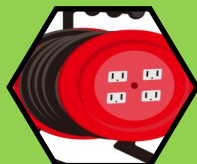
Avoid over loading sockets, extension and outlets.



Unplug appliances when not in use to save energy, risk and minimise the risk of shock fire.



Regularly inspect electrical cords/cables and extensions for damage.



Extension cords should only be used on a temporary basis.



Never plug space heaters or fans into an extension cord or power strip.



Never run cords under rugs/carpets, doors or windows.



Make sure cords/cables do not become trip hazards.



Keep paper and other combustibles at least three feet away from space heaters and other heat sources.

Many fires are caused by faulty electrical appliances. A list of recalled appliances is available on the UK Government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/household-appliances-recalled-due-to-fire-risk>.



Always ensure portable heaters are secured up against a wall to stop them from falling over and keep them clear from curtains and furniture.

NEVER place clothing etc. over them to dry. Only use heaters with a safety cut out switch should they fall over.

If your electrics trip when you switch on one of your appliances (e.g. Hoover, toaster, kettle) - this indicates a fault with that appliance and so would be your responsibility.

PLEASE SEEK PERMISSION FOR ANY ELECTRICAL WORKS YOU WISH TO COMPLETE IN YOUR HOME.

ALL ELECTRICAL WORK MUST BE COMPLETED BY A QUALIFIED ELECTRICIAN.



Asbestos

We are committed to ensuring the safety of our residents. As a responsible landlord, our properties are surveyed to understand where asbestos is located in your home.

If your home was built before 2000, then it may well have asbestos containing materials within its fabric, but don't worry, it is perfectly safe, as long as it is maintained in the proper manner. We hold information on Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) on our Asbestos Register. The Register lists all properties owned and managed by the Association and is kept updated with survey information.

Staying Safe in your home - Wider Hazards

Although we try to keep our homes and developments as hazard-free as possible, we cannot do it by ourselves. If you have an accident and you think it may be related to a Westfield Housing property or activity, please let us know. If you see any issues in your development or areas that need repaired, please get in touch in any of the usual ways.

Smoke & CO alarms

Working smoke alarms can save lives so make sure yours is in good working order. Westfield Housing will test the alarms annually during the Gas Service, however tenants can also:-

- Test your smoke alarm every week by pressing the button until it sounds. If it fails, please contact us immediately.
- Change the battery - Annually at least or if you hear a beeping sound coming from the smoke alarm it is warning you that the battery needs replacing. If you are unable to do this yourself, please contact us.
- **Never** remove the battery unless to replace it with a new one.
- **Never** disconnect the alarm.
- **Never** cover over the alarm.
- **Never** paint over the alarm/the edges.
- Vacuum the grill area of the smoke alarm every 12 months.

Window safety

Cords from window blinds can be hazardous to young children. Keep cords out of reach and tied up, or better still, choose blinds with the appropriate safety mechanisms. Always supervise young children and keep their play area away from windows. Keep furniture away from windows and keep window keys in safe place.

Safety in the kitchen

Do not overload kitchen wall units or pull on the doors. Overloading and pulling on the doors can pull the fixings from the wall leading to the unit falling off or shelving collapsing, which could result in injuries. If you notice any movement in your wall units, please contact our repairs team on 01900 602906.

Burns and Scalds

Check the temperature of the bath before getting into it, if it is too hot (above 43°C), the (TMV) Thermostatic Mixing Valve may need to be adjusted or replaced. Radiators, heaters and the connected pipework can get very hot when in use. Keep young children and vulnerable people away from these heaters and ensure they are supervised.

Trips, Slips and Falls

- Avoid leaving items on the stairs.
- Ensure floor coverings are in good condition. Fraying or other damage to flooring can be a trip hazard.
- If rugs are to be placed on a slippery surface, ensure they have a slip-resistant backing.
- Keep floor areas clear of obstructions and trailing cables.
- Spills on the floor should be cleaned up immediately to prevent slips and falls.
- If you have an over-bath shower, consider using a slip-resistant mat in the bottom of the bath to prevent slipping.

Personal items in communal areas

Fire safety regulations require all communal corridors and fire escape routes to be kept clear. This means tenants are not permitted to keep any items other than a door mat, outside of their flat. This also includes plants, furniture, bicycles, mobility scooters or pushchairs.

We realise this may be inconvenient for some but our overriding concern and priority is for our tenants' safety. Any obstruction to the common areas can hinder escape in the event of a fire, and can also provide fuel to a fire. If we find items in shared areas it may lead to them being removed and you being charged for the cost of doing so.



Staying Safe in your home – Communal Areas & Fire Safety

Smoking



It is against the law to smoke in communal hallways in blocks of flats and this law came into effect in England on July 1st, 2007.

Therefore all of our communal areas are designated smoke-free areas. Also bear in mind as a smoker that if you have a member of Staff or Contractor is booked to visit you, you should refrain from smoking prior to and during the visit.

NO SMOKING

You may smoke in your home but we ask you to note the following:

- 1) It's safer to smoke outside
- 2) Never throw cigarette outside, they could start a fire elsewhere.
- 3) Never smoke in bed.
- 4) Don't leave cigarettes unattended.
- 5) Empty ashtrays regularly - make sure smoking materials are out, cold and preferably wet them before throwing into a bin.
- 6) Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach and buy child resistant if applicable.



Never smoke if you use healthcare equipment like medical oxygen or an air flow pressure relief mattress.

PEEP (Personal Evacuation Emergency Plan)

It is important you know what to do in case of fire and plan your escape. We want to ensure that all of our tenants are able to leave the building safely in the event of a fire / emergency. Some tenants may require extra help due to their circumstances concerns. If you feel you would need, we can create a PEEP - contact your Housing Services Officer who can advise further.



If you have any Fire Safety concerns, please ring us on 01900 602906

Lithium-Ion Batteries

In recent years, the number of fires caused by lithium-ion batteries has increased significantly. Lithium-ion batteries are rechargeable batteries that are found in many modern-day devices like mobile phones, tablets, laptops, e-cigarettes, hearing aids, portable chargers, power tools, and electric bikes and scooters.



DO NOT

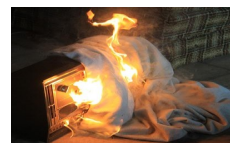
- Leave batteries unattended when charging / charge overnight / unplug when fully charged
- Buy fake or cheap chargers.
- Cover the charger/batteries/power leads when charging.
- Overload sockets or use extension leads.
- Dispose of batteries in general household waste.

Smoke from battery fires is highly toxic and the fires are particularly hard to extinguish, therefore to mitigate the risk of fire, when using devices with lithium-ion Batteries:

Government Data on Causes of Fire

Over recent years, the most common causes of fire have been:

- Misuse of Equipment or Appliances
- Placing articles too close to Heat
- Faulty Appliances /Leads
- Careless handling of Fire



Staying Safe in your home – Communal Areas & Fire Safety

Fire Regulations for Communal Hallways

The Fire Safety Act 2021 (the Act) came into effect on May 16, 2022. Landlords of multiple-occupancy residential buildings are required to “manage and reduce the risk of fire”. Fire regulations for communal hallways in flats are designed to protect tenants and minimise fire risks in shared areas and focus on preventing the spread of fire inside the building for all tenants and ensures that escape routes remain clear and accessible in case of an emergency.



Communal Areas / Storage

We must ensure all communal areas are clear of any objects, combustibles, and other fire hazards that could serve as a possible ignition source, spread a fire, or restrict escape and emergency services in an emergency.

No goods, including furniture, bicycles, motorbikes, plant pots, recycling bins, or rubbish bins should be stored/kept in the communal areas. Corridors, stairs and landings MUST be clear at all times and personal belongings must only be kept in individual flats – this includes Meter cupboards.



We do a weekly check of all communal areas and any such items will be removed and tenants charged as applicable.

Fire Doors

All of our flats in communal areas have Fire Doors which prevent the spread of fire, heat and smoke by 30 to 60 minutes which we inspect every year to ensure they have not been breached in any way e.g. damage, gaps, seals etc.

Fire doors are there to protect the whole escape route to a place of ultimate safety outside the building and must not be tampered with. If you note any defects - it is your responsibility to report these immediately to Westfield Housing.



Fire Risk Assessment



The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) requires a thorough fire safety risk assessment to be conducted in all communal areas to determine the risks and also to be able to protect against the risks of fire and all landlords must abide by this law. Westfield Housing employ a qualified/trained individual to carry out our Fire Risk Assessments annually

Fire / Smoke Alarms

All of our blocks of Flats have a communal Fire Alarm system installed which are Serviced twice a year along with the Emergency Lighting.



As well as the flats in communal areas, all of our properties have independent Smoke Alarms installed on each floor of the property which are tested annually as part of the gas service. If you do not have gas appliances in your home, then these will be tested annually by our Electrical Contractor(s).

CO Alarms

If you have a gas appliance in your flat (gas boiler / gas fire) then there will be a CO alarm in the room where your appliance is. This will be checked on the annual Gas Service by our Contractor.



Fire Extinguishers

We do not supply Fire Extinguishers in our communal areas of blocks of flats. The primary purpose of not having fire fighting equipment in communal areas of blocks of flats is to protect lives. It is not practical / feasible to require tenants to complete fire safety training and this equipment should only be used by trained operatives.



Your Tenancy Agreement

This section aims to answer some of the questions you may have about your tenancy with Westfield Housing Association. It should be read alongside your tenancy agreement.

When you start your tenancy with us, we will ask you to sign a Tenancy Agreement. This is an important legal document which details your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. If you are a joint tenant with another person you both have equal rights and responsibilities.

Your tenancy agreement outlines your responsibilities to us and ours to you. Please take the time to read your agreement to ensure you understand what those are.

We will give you a copy of this agreement to keep. You should keep your Tenancy agreement in a safe place to refer back to should you need to.

Your responsibilities to us

- To pay your rent and any service charges on time.
- To live in the property as your main home.
- To look after the property and keep it in good decorative order.
- To report repairs and allow access to carry out these works.
- Allow us access to carry out major repairs such as replacing your kitchen or bathroom.
- To always show respect to others.
- To get permission from us before you make any changes to your tenancy or home.
- To allow our engineers access to service your boiler and gas supply (if applicable) and undertake other repairs.
- To give us a minimum of 28 days notice in writing if you want to end your tenancy.

Our responsibilities to you

- To provide a habitable home that is wind and watertight.
- To keep the property in good repair and working order.
- To carry out repairs within our agreed timescales.
- To consult with you before setting new rent or service charges or making changes to our services.
- To provide you with a Tenancy Agreement and certain other information such as how you can complain. ✓

Allowing access to you Home

As well as allowing access to our contractors, to carry our repairs in your home, it is a condition of your tenancy that you allow access to your Housing Services Officer and other WHA staff.

- Your Housing Services Officer will carryout 2 visits in the first year of your tenancy. One at the 3 months stage and one at the 12 months stage. Following this we carry out Tenancy visits on a 3 year rolling period. This is an opportunity for us check your details against the ones we have registered and update information about your household. It will also establish any potential tenancy fraud issues.
- WHA can give you 24 hours notice to carryout an inspection in your home at anytime.

Complaints-when we get it wrong

We aim to give you a great service and to get things right first time. When we don't we'll make sure your complaints and feedback are investigated fairly and timely. We'll always aim to find a quick resolution that resolves things for you and build your confidence in us, knowing we care. Our complaints policy covers all services provided by us and contractors. You can find out more about how to make a complaint on our website www.westfieldha.org.uk. **You can make a complaint in any way that suits you** - in person, online, by email or by phone or by using your tenants portal.

We are very keen to know if you are not happy about something we have done but we are equally as keen to know when you think we have got something right. Look out for the happy and sad faces on our webpage.

If you have exhausted the Association's complaints process and are not satisfied with the outcome you can refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service for investigation. Further details of this service can be provided by us and are also available online:

www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk Fill in the online complaint form Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Phone: 0300 111 3000. Phonelines are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Lines will be closed for staff training every Thursday from 3.30pm to 5pm. Please note: The Housing Ombudsman Service strongly encourage

customers to use email or the online complaint form rather than sending post to their PO Box which is detailed no our website.



Being a Good Neighbour: Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Everyone has the right to enjoy life in their own way, providing they do not disturb those living near them. A good neighbour will tolerate and understand the different lifestyles of others. We are all part of the same community, and it is great when we get on well, respect each other and support one another when in need. However, sometimes problems can occur due to differing lifestyles, ages, cultural backgrounds, work or sleeping patterns, health conditions and people different points of view. Most issues can be resolved early on by simply talking to each other and we would always encourage you to do this politely and respectfully. But at other times it is important to know what you and your neighbours' rights are and when it's best to contact us. This section gives an overview of what your responsibilities and expectations as a tenant are, to ensure everyone lives peacefully in their home.

Tenant responsibilities

Your Tenancy Agreement is a legal document which provides a basis for legal action if it is breached. It gives the legal definition of nuisance and anti-social behaviour, and what will happen if such behaviour occurs. All tenants have a responsibility to keep to the terms of the Tenancy Agreement, including respecting neighbours and the community.

When you signed your Tenancy Agreement you agree not to cause nuisance, annoyance, distress and harassment to your neighbours.

Harassment is behaviour intended to cause a person alarm or distress. The behaviour must occur on more than one occasion but it does not have to be the same kind of behaviour on each occasion. Common harassment incidents include: texts, voicemails, letters or emails, comments or threats.

You also agreed not to allow anyone living with you or visiting you to act in any of these ways. Your commitment to behaving responsibly is particularly important in common areas where noise, the behaviour of children and other lifestyle differences can all lead to disputes.



We aim to provide a quality service in dealing with behaviours that cause annoyance, nuisance or harassment to anyone living or otherwise associated with our properties or neighbourhood.

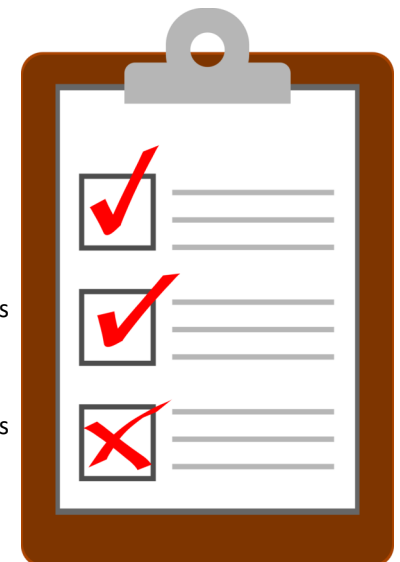
We recognise that it is important to deal with matters in a sensitive and timely manner which encourages complainants to feel confident about how the matter will be progressed. Complainants will receive reports on what we have decided is the most appropriate action to be taken.

We regard the tackling of anti-social behaviour as one of our priorities and will do our best to help resolve issues. We understand we will be unable to resolve every case but endeavor to liaise with outside agencies where we feel they are best placed to deal with the situation.

All anti-social behaviour complaints will be treated seriously, with a response proportionate to the impact on the community and the levels of risk to the individual and the Association.

In your welcome pack you will find a guide to ASB which gives you a brief description of issues we may be able to help you with and examples of where we would need to signpost you to other agencies. You can also find a more details guide to anti-social behaviour on our website

www.westfieldha.org.uk/your home Anti-social behaviour.



Being a Good Neighbour: Tackling ASB

We recognise that problems with neighbours do occur, and we will do what we can to help. We cannot get involved if it is a dispute between neighbours where no one is actually doing anything wrong, but we will intervene if someone is in breach of their tenancy – including taking legal action against the most serious forms of nuisance and anti-social behaviour. The term ‘anti-social behaviour’ covers a wide range of issues, from inconsiderate behaviour to serious criminal activity. It can include: causing noise which can be heard by others at an unreasonable time, harassment towards a neighbour or visitor, or allowing your home to be used for illegal purposes, including misuse of drugs.

Types of nuisance

Common examples of nuisance are; excessive noise from music or appliances, shouting late at night, dumping of rubbish, abandonment of cars, persistent noise and mess caused by dogs, and obstructing communal areas.

Noise continues to be the most common cause of problems between neighbours. From time to time all of us can be bothered by noise – usually from other people. We can also often make noise that affects others without realising it and a lot of this noise can be avoided. Noise can cause problems depending on:

- How loud it is, how long it lasts and how often it occurs.
- What time of the day or night it happens.
- The effect it has on others.

Noise can be caused in several different ways below is a list of the most commonly reported causes of noise nuisance

- Loud music/loud TV/loud cars/musical instruments/shouting/dog barking

Obstructing Communal Areas - Living in Flats

If you live in a flat, it is very important that the shared areas inside the building are kept clear. Obstructions such as bicycles can be a nuisance to other residents, and could impede your exit in case of an emergency.

What to do if you have a complaint about your neighbour

If you have a nuisance complaint about your neighbour, as a first step, try talking to them in a tactful manner, as they may not realise the effect their actions are having. If this proves unsuccessful in resolving the matter, discuss this with your Housing Services Officer, who will be able to advise you on what action you and we can take.

Noise nuisance remains the most common type of ASB reported. Making up 37% of reported cases between 2023/2024

What we will do

Wherever possible, we will work with you and your neighbour to try and work out your differences. We will not ‘take sides’, but will remain neutral. We will either try to mediate ourselves, with you and your neighbour’s agreement, or use one of the local mediation agencies to do so. This approach is usually effective in reaching a solution when all parties accept there is a problem and are keen for it to be resolved.

If we feel that professional mediation is a good idea to help resolve the situation we will discuss this option with you first.

MEDIATION



We can only refer you to the mediation service if everyone agrees.

Mediators are trained and experienced volunteers who do not judge who is right or wrong but help everyone involved to listen to each other, identify what they want, clarify issues, and reach an agreement. WHA would contact the mediator on your behalf and if mediation takes place, Westfield Housing will not be involved but will be updated on any outcomes or agreements reached. The service will be provided free of charge to you.

We will only take legal action against a tenant who is in serious breach of their tenancy. We must have sufficient evidence of the anti-social behaviour if we are to be successful, which means you will need to help us gather evidence for the case. It may result in you or other witnesses having to appear in court. We will work with the police in trying to resolve these serious cases, sharing information with them as required. We may seek an injunction, which is an order from the court to prevent a person from doing something or, in the case of anti-social behaviour carried out by children, we may try to obtain an Anti-Social Behaviour Order. We may also seek possession of the home in very serious cases .

Being a Good Neighbour: Tackling ASB

If your report of anti-social behaviour is a repeated incident, we will need further information to allow us to look at the bigger picture and assess what is the best course of action. In order to do this we will need your help.

ASB APP

If we are dealing with a case where there has been persistent nuisance and we are at the stage where we need to gather evidence, we will send you an invite to download our ASB App. This is a free App available from the Apple Store for Apple phones or Play Store for Android phones.



ASB App

The App provides you with the tools to capture live nuisance as it is happening. You can upload videos, images, record live noise and tell us how the situation is making you feel. It also allows you to keep communications updated between you and your Housing Services Officer. This information plays a vital part in ASB management and forms a valuable chronology should we need to take legal action at a later stage.

The invitation will be sent in an email and once you have accepted the invitation and registered on the App, you will receive a courtesy call from one of the App managers which is a company called CRM. They will give you a simple step by step guide over the phone of how to use the ASB App, ensuring the best outcomes for all concerned. There is also a guide in paper format at the office should you need it.



Westfield Housing works in partnership with other agencies and statutory services to deal with neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

In some cases, these agencies have more powers to deal with a problem or can act more quickly. If we have asked other agencies to be involved you may also need to provide them with evidence to support their investigations.

Legal Action

When all non-legal solutions have been tried or ruled out, several legal options can be considered. We will take advice from our solicitor and consider the options advised before talking you through our planned approach. The options can include:

- Applying to the Court for an injunction
- Serving a legal Notice of Seeking Possession

If a tenant causes serious anti-social behaviour, persistent and repeated nuisance or deliberately ignores warnings about breaking tenancy conditions, we will ask the Court to grant a decree for eviction.

Before we can take legal action against a tenant, we need to have evidence that proves they have been causing the nuisance.

As a social landlord we need to present a case to a judge and prove that on “the balance of probability” event/s have occurred. The court considers that, on the evidence presented, the occurrence of the event was more likely to have happened than not.

Legal action can take several months to go through the Court process. If you are a complainant you need to keep recording incidents and reporting any problems in the meantime, as these will be used as evidence.

We will support you throughout this process by keeping in touch and giving you the help you need. When the case goes to court, the judge will listen to all the evidence and then decide whether the tenant should be evicted or not. We need to satisfy the judge that we are acting reasonably in seeking to evict someone.



It is therefore vital that you gather relevant evidence that can be used in a court of law.

Being a Good Neighbour: Pets

The benefits of having a pet is widely recognised and we are keen to support any tenant who could benefit from the positive aspects of pet ownership. We must also ensure that consideration has been given to others and there is a commitment to animal welfare.

If you would like to keep a pet, please contact us first, as we need to run through a couple of questions regarding the type of pet, whether it requires a licence and to discuss aspects of our Pet Policy.

Pets in properties with a shared entrance

For the benefit of doubt Westfield Housing Association will not grant permission to a tenants that has a shared entrance to keep a pet, unless it is an assistance dog to support a disability.

Tenants should not keep cats or dogs in their Property without prior written permission. Permissions will be discussed and agreed during your Pre Tenancy Assessment process in line with the Tenancy Agreement;

Section 4.24 Pets.

Details of breeds and number of pets are recorded and a signature is required on the pet permission sheet in this Handbook.

We will monitor additional pets being brought into the home without permission after the tenancy starts, during follow-up visits and any Tenancy visit.

Pets in properties with their own front door

Clause 4.24 of the Tenancy Agreement states, we give you permission to keep Pets in your Home, the Property and/or on the Estate as long as you ensure that:

- the Pet is kept under control at all times
- the Pet does not cause nuisance or annoyance, harm or damage to any other person or property
- the Pet is not mistreated or kept in poor or unsanitary conditions or conditions inconsistent with the Pet's welfare
- the Pet is not unattended for long periods of time
- the Pet does not foul in the Building, the Communal Areas and/or the Estate. If the Pet does foul in the Building, the Communal Areas and/or the Estate, you agree to remove the waste and clean the area
- the Pet is not kept for commercial breeding purposes without first getting our written consent and any licences or other permissions that may be needed
- you do not keep more than two Pets without first getting our written consent.



Contents Insurance

Westfield Housing Association has insurance that covers the structure and fixtures of your home. It does not cover any contents unless they have been provided by us.

You are strongly advised to take out home insurance to cover the replacement of your belongings, redecoration and making good any damage caused to your home in the event of theft, flood, fire or accident.

Contents insurance is designed to help protect your possessions. No matter how careful you are there is always a risk that your belongings could be broken, damaged or stolen so home contents insurance can help provide peace of mind.

To help you decide whether home contents insurance is right for you, Westfield Housing Association have teamed up with Thistle Tenant Risks and Ageas Insurance Limited who provide the My Home Contents Insurance Scheme, a specialist Tenants Contents Insurance policy.

To get further information.

- Visit our website: www.westfieldha.org.uk/your home/Tenancy Guide/Home Contents Insurance
- Ask your Housing Services Officer for an application pack.
- Call Thistle Tenant Risks on 0345 450 7288

Alternatively, please visit the www.thistlemyhome.co.uk for more information.

There is a form to sign with this book to confirm we have explained that insuring the contents of your home is your responsibility.



Your house, your home, your rights & responsibilities



Parking

Some of our developments have private parking or access to communal parking areas. Communal parking bays are on a first come, first-served basis as they are not allocated to individuals. All vehicles are parked at their owner's risk and Westfield Housing cannot be held responsible for any damage which may occur whilst vehicles are parked on our land.

All tenants are asked to have consideration for others and park within designated spaces to maximise the use of parking areas. There may not always be enough spaces for additional cars, and residents take priority over visitors. Please avoid parking in turning spaces on double yellow lines and do not block fire exits or access for emergency service vehicles.

All vehicles parked on our property must be taxed and hold a valid MOT, otherwise, we will ask for it to be removed. If it is not moved, we will take steps to get it moved and charge you any costs incurred.

Please note: We do not give permission for any of our tenants to park a caravan, lorry, trailer, boat or a commercial vehicle (over 5.5 metres long) on Westfield Housing Association's land. As explained in the **Vehicle** section 4.30 of your Tenancy agreement.

Communal areas

Many of our properties have communal areas for you and your neighbours to use and enjoy.

We ask for your consideration and co-operation in keeping these areas in good condition. Stairwells, drying areas and car parks must be clean, tidy and clear of refuse.

Stairwells and communal corridors must also be kept clear for your safety and that of others. If you need to dispose of large items such as beds, mattresses, furniture, or white goods you should contact Cumberland Council and arrange for a collection. Please note there is a cost for this service. Always let us know if you have placed items outside your property awaiting collection so that we know the matter is in hand and not fly tipping.

If we have to remove items from outside your property we will recharge you any costs incurred.

You can find out more about rubbish collections on Cumberland Council's website.

www.cumberlandcouncil.gov.uk

Alterations and Improvements

You have the right to carry out improvements to your home, but you **must** get our permission before carrying out any work.

Making changes to walls, ceilings and doors can affect the fire safety of your home so it is important to get permission before carrying out any work. Alterations that may reduce the safety or value of the home will not be given consent.

By improvements we mean any alteration or addition to your home, such as an addition or alteration to the fixtures or fittings, or related to services, eg. fitting a new kitchen sink, or carrying out external decoration.

You must apply for permission to put up a shed or greenhouse in your garden.

We will not unreasonably refuse you permission to make improvements but may impose certain conditions, for example, the size of a shed and stipulate that the work must be carried out to a certain standard or by suitably qualified tradesperson.

Your house your home your rights & responsibilities

AVOID RECHARGES
ALWAYS
ASK PERMISSION
BEFORE DOING
ANY DIY



We are responsible for keeping your home in a good, safe working order. We therefore ask that no alterations are made to fixtures and fittings in the property without prior written consent.

Below is a list of things you should not carry out without prior consent (but not limited to)

- Paint kitchen units.
- Paint kitchen or bathroom tiles.
- Paint or replace worktops.
- You cannot use a vinyl or similar materials to cover worktops or unit doors.
- You can not change kitchen unit handles.
- You cannot change light fittings switches and light pendants.
- You cannot remove or replace parts of the bathroom suite/shower/tiles/toilets.
- You cannot remove any pre-fitted non slip flooring.
- You cannot paint the outside of your property including the external doors/window frames.
- You cannot remove radiators or tamper with the boiler or gas supply.
- You can not tamper with the electrics.
- You can not take feeds or run cables to an external shed/building/garden.

All our properties are let in a safe condition, if you, as a tenant compromise this safety by carrying out unauthorised work it can put you and your family at risk. It is also an offence and a breach of your tenancy. The cost of putting unauthorised repairs right will be recharged to tenants.

If you change any fittings even with consent, you are also required to return the property back to the standard fittings installed at the beginning of the tenancy before you leave.

IF IN DOUBT

Always ask permission before you make changes to your property.

You can ask permission by emailing.

enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk

or in writing to:

Westfield Housing Association.
Minto Centre
Nilsson Drive
Westfield
Workington
CA14 5DB

or by ringing us on
01900 602906.

Your Rights

As a tenant you have rights and the following pages give you a brief examples of some of your rights.

The Right to Security

You have the security of knowing that as long as you use your Westfield home as your main principal home, keep to the tenancy agreement including paying your rent, you can keep your tenancy for as long as you like. Your tenancy can only be ended under certain circumstances and we have to go to court to convince a judge that we have the right to move you out.

If the situation is not your fault (we may need the property empty to make major structural repairs for instance), you will be offered another home and you will keep all your rights. In other cases, if you break rules in the Tenancy Agreement or refuse to pay off unpaid rent you may be evicted and will not be offered another property with WHA or other social landlords.

The Right of Succession

You must keep us informed of who lives in the property with you as this could affect their succession rights. When a sole tenant dies the tenancy will naturally come to an end.

However, in certain circumstances, anyone living with you may have the right to take over the tenancy. This is known as succession or succeeding a tenancy. Your Housing Services Officer will be happy to discuss any questions you may have. Succession can only happen once. If succession is appropriate but the home is too large for that person, or has been developed for a specific need not required by the successor, we may offer another property so that the existing home can go to a household who needs it.

Sub-letting your home

You do not have the right to part with possession or sub-let (including granting any holiday lettings) to the whole, or any part of your home or the property. **This is tenancy fraud.**

Right to Acquire

You may have the right to acquire the property as provided for under Section 180 of the housing and Regeneration Act 2008 in the circumstances and on the terms set out in part V Housing Act 1985 and the Housing (Right to Acquire) Regulations 1997.

To find out if you have the Right to Acquire contact us at enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk

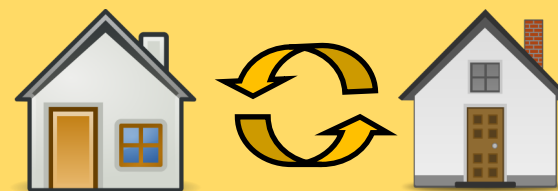
Your right to exchange

A mutual exchange is when two or more social housing tenants agree to swap homes. Once you have had your tenancy for a minimum of 12 months you may be able to exchange your home with another tenant from Westfield Housing or another social landlord. Providing both parties have a secured or assured tenancy, the Association will welcome applications for mutual exchanges. If you know someone who would like to exchange with you, whether you are both Westfield Housing tenants or your interested party are tenants of another social landlord, please complete a mutual exchange form on our website www.westfieldha.org.uk/find_a_home/mutual_exchange or ask for one to be posted out.

You can also register your interest finding a mutual exchange in the mutual exchange file held in our reception. We may know someone else who is looking for a mutual exchange and can put you in touch with each other.

You could also find an exchange on Cumbria Choice, you can register your interest online www.cumbriachoice.org.uk.

You can search for people interested in exchanging with you all over the UK, by using the Home Swapper website. Home Swapper uses the details you supply to automatically match you to other interested tenants. You can access this service by logging onto www.HomeSwapper.co.uk and registering.



Your rights



The right to take in a lodger

You can take in a lodger as long as this does not mean that your home will be overcrowded. However, you must let us know if this is something you are thinking of doing as we will need more information about the person you are thinking of moving in (we will tell you the maximum number of people allowed).

Before anyone moves in with you, there are a number of checks that we need to make. We will carry out a pre-tenancy assessment to ensure we have all the details we need to confirm they have the right to rent in the UK, they have not previously been evicted by us or another landlord, have no outstanding debt with us or a former landlord or confirm that there has been no involvement in anti-social behaviour.

You need to make sure you check how this affects your Housing Benefit or Universal Credit or any help you are receiving to pay your rent. You are responsible for the behaviour of lodgers. If they cause a

The 'Right to Buy',

Tenants who lived in a Council property prior to 1999 and were transferred as part of the stock transfer to Westfield Housing Association may have the preserved rights such as the right to buy.

To find out if you have the Right to Buy please contact your Housing Services Officer 01900 602906 or email enquiries on enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk

Transfers

If your current home becomes unsuitable due to being underoccupied and you are struggling with the bedroom tax element of your rent, please talk to your Housing Services Officer as they may have options to avoid you having to move. If that is not possible, they will be able to offer help and advice on applying for a transfer to another Westfield Housing property.

If you would like to register for a transfer you can complete a form in the find a home section on our website however, it is our Policy that we will only consider an internal transfer where there is evidence of a housing need.

To see the way we let our homes please see our Access to Homes Policy on our website. www.westfieldha.org.uk /about us/our policies and other key documents.

Ending your tenancy

If you are reading this page, you must be already thinking about leaving us. If there is something we can do to avoid you having to move, please talk to your Housing Services Officer as they may be able to help. Once you have decided to leave you are required to give us 4 weeks notice to terminate your tenancy. There are several ways you can let us know you wish to terminate your tenancy however, we do require a signature from you before we can process the termination and start your notice period. Your tenancy will end 4 weeks on the Sunday after the date the signed termination notice is received by us.

Ways to start this process include

- You can let us know by letter ensuring your signature is clearly displayed.
- You can email us or ring the office and we will post a Notice of Termination form out to you, or send a copy via DocuSign for you to sign electronically.
- You can call into the office during opening hours and a member of staff will be happy to assist you to complete Notice of Termination form in person.

What can I expect during my notice period

- During the notice period, **you must** allow access to your property so it can be inspected to assess what work may need to be carried out to let the property to the next tenant.
- A Westfield Housing Association representative will make arrangements to carry out a pre-void inspection and with the information disclosed will give an indication of any repairs that you will be responsible for, or if there have been any recharges identified.

What must I do before you leave

- You must remove all your furniture and personal belongings from inside & outside of the property. Including in the loft space, sheds or garage.
- You must leave your property & garden area in a clean and tidy condition and remove all floor covering if you have not been given permission to leave them for the incoming tenant.
- You must remove any none standard electrical fittings.
- You must have all your electric and gas appliances removed by an approved tradesman.
- It is important that you take meter readings on the day you move out. You must give these readings to your utility supplier to ensure you have closed your account. Failure to do this can cause problems for you, us and the new tenant.

During your sign up and again at your pre vacation inspection you will be asked to sign a **TORTS (Interference with Goods) Act 1977 disclaimer**. Agreeing that it is tenant's responsibility to remove all goods from the property or outside areas before handing the keys back. This confirms that any items left in the property are no longer required and permission is therefore given to Westfield Housing Association to remove and dispose of any good. We accept no responsibility for any belongings you leave in the property after your tenancy has ended. If you do leave any belongings, we will dispose of them after taking reasonable steps to tell you. We will follow the TORTS (Interference of goods) act 1977 recommendations and we will charge you for any cost accrued during this process.

Moving Out

Acceptable Standards for ending your Tenancy

It is your responsibility to ensure that all unwanted refuse, furniture and other items that belong to you are removed from your property, both inside and out. Please do not leave bagged refuse alongside any bins as the refuse collectors will not remove it and you may be charged for its removal. Your property should be left in good clean condition and any work identified either during your pre-void inspection or leading up to your notice period that you have been asked to carry out should be fully complete.

The following pages outline the condition the property should be left in.



Moving Out - Checklist

Bathroom and sanitary ware

- All sanitary ware (for example, toilets, baths and washbasins) should be clean, free from grime or stains and in an acceptable state of repair, with no cracks or visible leaks.
- All toilets should have clean and unbroken seats in place.
- Baths and wash basins should have a plug and chain.
- All taps should be clean and in good working order.
- Tiles around baths and washbasins should be clean.
- Sealant around baths and basins should be clean.

Walls, plaster & paintwork

- Surfaces should be free from damage, nails, hooks and any wall plugs removed, leaving walls in good decorative order for the incoming tenant. Walls or other structures that have been altered or removed without our written consent must be reinstated and you must also let us know you are doing this.
- All paintwork (eg. walls, ceilings, doors and woodwork) should be in a clean presentable condition. This means free from grime, dirt, grease and tobacco stains.

Kitchen sink units and work surfaces

- The kitchen sink should be clean and have a plug and chain fitted. Taps should be clean and in good working order.
- Units and worktops should be clean and clear of food deposits, dirt and grease.
- Unit doors should be intact and in good working order.
- Tiles should be clean and free from grease and grime.
- If your washing machine hose is fitted to the sink waste please plug the waste to stop the sink unit being flooded.
- Kitchens should be left with the same or a greater number of units and worktops than were originally provided.
- Any kitchen units or worktops that may have been removed without our consent should be reinstated or replaced.
- If you intend to remove any fitted units or worktops that you have installed with our consent, you must reinstate the original pieces or replace these and we should be informed accordingly.
- You should let us know if you need to carry out any replacement or reinstatement works ahead of your tenancy ending.

Electric switches, sockets & pendants

- All switches, sockets and light pendants should be safe, in good working order, clean and free from dirt, grime and paint splashes.
- All non-standard fittings should be replaced with standard sockets or pendants.
- Where you have carried out your own DIY work by installing your own electrical fittings, these fittings must be safe and conform to national safety standards.

Gas appliances

- If you have a gas cooker you must ensure it is disconnected by a qualified Gas Safe engineer and the property is left safe.

Moving Out - Checklist

Plumbing

- Any plumbing works you have done should be safe and secure with no visible leaks.
- The waste pipe from the kitchen sink and any washing machine outlet should be clear to ensure that it is free from grease and other items that may cause obstruction to the flow of waste water.
- Washing machine water inlet and outlet taps **must be securely closed to prevent water leaks.**

Flooring

- All carpets and underlay should be removed unless you have been given permission by us to leave them for the new tenant.
- Where foam backed carpets have been removed, any rubber backing and dust should be removed from the floor surface.

Tiling

- Ceramic wall and floor tiles should be clean and free from grease and grime. Broken or missing tiles should be replaced along with any regrouting that may be required.

Lofts & Cupboards

- Roof spaces, must be clear.
- Fitted wardrobes and storage cupboards must be cleared and free from refuse or unwanted items.

Sheds, Greenhouses & Gardens

- All temporary structures (eg. Lean-to or a shed) must be removed, unless we have agreed you may leave them.
- External buildings (and sheds where we have agreed you can leave them) must be cleared and left clean.
- Gardens must be free from refuse, toys and furniture.
- Hedges should be maintained and in good condition.
- Paths should be free of obstruction.
- Lawns, shrubs and plants need to be tidy and patios and/or decking must be in good condition.
- Any items left in communal areas will be considered abandoned (unless we have agreed otherwise). You will be re-charged if we have to remove refuse or any other items.

Security

- All external doors and frames should be secure and in good repair.
- All glazing should be in good condition with no broken panes.
- Windows should be able to open, close fully and secure properly.
- All doors and windows should be securely closed on leaving your property.

Keys

- During your void period there will be a key safe fitted at your property. You will be advised of the code by your Housing Services Officer. On the day you leave the property you should place a front door key and a fob if necessary, in the key safe and leave the rest of the keys inside the property.
- You must inform us as soon as you have left the property so that we can terminate your tenancy, preventing you being charged another week's rent. Ring 01900 602906 or email enquiries@westfiledha.org.uk

Moving Out - Things to remember

Re-direct your mail with the Post Office. Visit www.royalmail.com to do this online.

Notify relevant authorities in your old and new areas regarding council tax and electoral registration.

Notify water, gas and electricity suppliers to close your accounts and services for your current address on your moving day and arrange for utility connections at your new home.

Arrange to transfer your home insurance or set up a new policy to begin the day you move in.

Transfer your TV licence to your new address. You can do this online by visiting www.tvlicensing.co.uk/moving.

Arrange to disconnect your phone and broadband services and arrange to installation at your new address.

Notify the DVLA if you need to. For online information visit www.dvla.gov.uk and inform your car insurance company of your move.

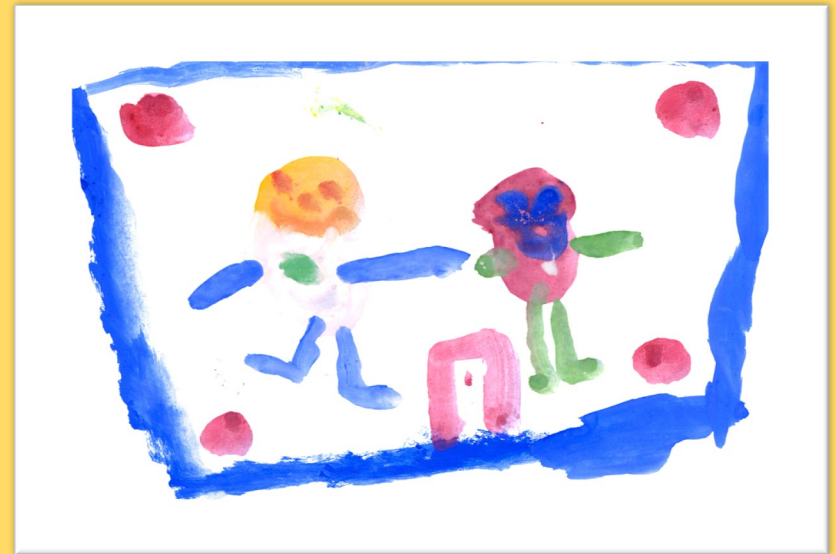
Notify schools, doctors and dentists of your move.

Notify your bank, credit and any store card companies of your new address.

Take meter readings on moving out day.

If you would like any more information about anything in this Handbook, please get in touch in any of the usual ways or contact your Housing Services Officer directly.

*We wish you
Good luck and happiness in
your new home.*



Tenant Engagement	Pet permission	Contents insurance	TORTS (Interference of goods) ACT 1977
<p>I/We would like to be involved with Westfield Housing Association to help shape and deliver the services to tenant(s) in the following ways;</p> <p>Social Events <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Residents group <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Customer Panel <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Armchair/digital surveys <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Editorial group <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Estate/Rural walkabouts <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No thank you <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I/We understand that tenants who wish to keep a pet must, firstly, have written permission from Westfield Housing Association, permission will be assessed on a case-by-case basis where the Tenancy Agreement allows;</p> <p>Pets section 4.24 and page 29 of the Tenant Handbook</p> <p>I confirm the animals I have at the time my tenancy starts are</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>I can confirm, my dog(s) are not listed as a band breed on the Dangerous Dogs Act list.</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I/We understand Westfield Housing Association are responsible for the fixtures and fittings and the building of my home and that I/we as tenant(s) are responsible for insuring home contents and personal belongings.</p> <p>I/We understand that if I/We do not arrange home contents insurance for my home, contents and personal possessions, Westfield Housing Association cannot compensate me if they are lost, stolen or damaged in any way.</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I/We confirm that the TORTS act has been explained to me during sign up and accept, I/We need to remove all items and personal belongings before I/we leave.</p> <p>I/We Authorise Westfield Housing Association to dispose of any personal items and belonging left behind.</p> <p>I/We understand we will no longer have rights to such goods and that they will be legally disposed of.</p> <p>I/We also accept financial liability for all costs and that Westfield Housing Association will pursue any outstanding costs.</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Consent statement

I/we understand everything that has been explained to me during this sign up and I/we agree to the terms and condition of the Tenants Handbook.

I/we understand that Westfield Housing Association will process and retain the information provided by me during my access to housing process in accordance with UK General Data Protection Regulations.

Name(s)			Address
Signature(s)			Date