

# Tenants Handbook



To report a repair  
**0800 131 3348**  
**0300 123 3511**

 Sanctuary  
Scotland

If you have any questions about your tenancy or wish to report a repair, please phone our 24-hour Customer Service Centre on **0800 131 3348**. Please note that we receive fewer calls in the evenings. We can often deal with calls made during these hours more quickly.

## 1. Our Services

### Maintaining your home

Our in-house maintenance company, Sanctuary Maintenance, repairs all of our homes.

You can report a repair at any time on any day of the year.

With multi-skilled operatives across a range of building trades, we aim to fix the issue first time.

Anyone visiting your home on our behalf will carry photographic identification. If someone cannot prove who they are:

- Do not allow them to enter your home
- Alert our Customer Service Centre on **0800 131 3348**

If you fail to keep an appointment you may be charged for the cost of the visit.

### Maintaining your neighbourhood

Our grounds maintenance staff deliver a variety of services including communal grass cutting and weed control.

We also provide an estates cleaning service. Our teams work hard to keep your area looking its best.





As your landlord, we require to carry out an annual gas safety check. You must allow us to access your home once a year for this purpose.

If you experience a gas leak:

- If possible, turn off the gas supply at the meter
- Open windows and doors
- Leave the building
- Phone the National Gas Emergency Service on **0800 111 999**

## Reporting Repairs

Keeping your home in a good condition is a responsibility shared between you and Sanctuary Scotland. We are responsible for general 'wear and tear' to your property. You are responsible for any damage you cause. You are also responsible for such things as decorating, replacing bath plugs and changing the locks if you lose your keys.

### If you need to report a repair

Our Customer Service Centre (CSC) is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

The easiest way to report a non-emergency repair is to visit **[www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk/report-a-repair-form](http://www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk/report-a-repair-form)**

You can also report a repair by:

- Emailing **[csc.requests@sanctuary-housing.co.uk](mailto:csc.requests@sanctuary-housing.co.uk)** (non-emergency repairs only)
- Phoning **0800 131 3348** or **0300 123 3511**
- Texting **07795 265 843**
- Typetalk / minicom – **01482 580 576**

### Whenever you contact us, please tell us:

- Your name, address, postcode, contact phone number and email address
- Details of the repair or fault
- If you are hard of hearing or need time to get to your door

If we are responsible for the repair, we will arrange for someone to visit your home to fix the problem.

## How long will it take to repair?

We prioritise repairs by how urgent they are.

### Emergency repairs

Emergency repairs should be carried out within **6 hours**. A repair is deemed an emergency where there is:

- A serious health and safety risk to people in or near the property (such as a gas leak or dangerous electrical fault)
- A risk of serious damage to the property (such as water leaking through the ceiling)
- A problem with important services (such as the water or electricity supply)
- A security risk (because of a broken window, or an external door that cannot be secured)

We will visit within **6 hours** to make the situation safe. A follow-up visit will often be needed to fully complete the repair.

### Appointed repairs

This applies to all non-emergency repairs for which access to your home is required.

We will try to agree an appointment with you within **20 working days** of the first point of contact.



## Planned repairs

We sometimes group repairs together to create a programme of works. Where this applies a repair may take longer than 20 working days.

For example, if several homes on one estate need new guttering, this work may be done at the same time. This helps to minimise the disturbance to tenants and provides the greatest value for money.

Each year we invest millions of pounds improving Sanctuary's properties. This programme includes the replacement of windows, kitchens and bathrooms.

For more information on our repairs service, visit [www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk/report-a-repair](http://www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk/report-a-repair)


## 2. Paying Your Rent and Service Charges

If you do not pay your rent on time, you may lose your home.

### Ways you can pay

#### Allpay Payment Card



Your Allpay payment card can be used to pay rent by any means at Post Offices and PayPoint outlets. 

To find your nearest outlet, visit **www.allpayments.net**

Alternatively:

- Phone Allpay's 24-hour automated service on **0844 557 8321**
- Visit **www.allpay.net** and pay online or using the Allpay payment app

If you lose your Allpay card, please phone our Customer Service Centre on **0800 131 3348** and ask us to order you a replacement.

#### Direct Debit or Standing Order



To set up a Direct Debit or Standing Order, please phone our Customer Service Centre on **0800 131 3348**

#### Cheque or Postal Order



To pay by post, simply send a cheque or postal order to:

Sanctuary Housing Association  
Bodicote House  
White Post Road  
Bodicote  
Banbury OX15 4AA

Make the cheque payable to 'Sanctuary Scotland' and put your name and address on the back.

## Cash



Cash payments can be made at your local office. Never post money to us or put cash through our letter box.

## Debit or Credit Card

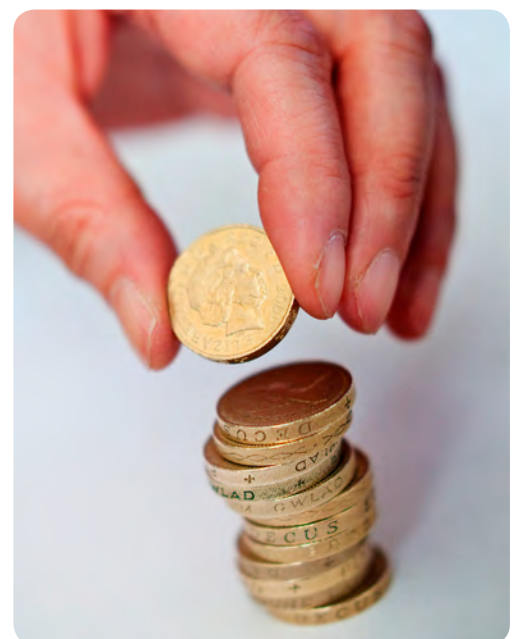


You can pay your rent using a Debit or Credit Card by phoning **0800 131 3348**

## Housing Benefit (HB) or Universal Credit (UC)



Universal Credit recipients should arrange for us to receive regular payments from you. If your HB or UC payment does not cover your rent you will have to pay the remainder using one of the methods listed above.





## I'm struggling to pay my rent – what can I do?

Our Welfare Rights and Housing teams offer impartial and confidential advice to help you:

- Maximise your income
- Reduce your arrears
- Budget and deal with debt

Our trained officers can refer you to independent organisations for items including:

- Basic bank accounts
- Contents insurance

Please phone **0800 131 3348** to make an appointment. Home visits are available.

**Remember, non-payment of rent is serious and could result in you losing your home.**

## Rent Reviews

Your rent is reviewed once a year and will usually change on 1 July.

You get at least 28 days notice in writing before a change takes effect.

## Service Charges

You may need to pay a service charge if we manage communal areas on your behalf. This can include cutting your grass and cleaning your windows.

Details of the charges that apply to your home are listed in your tenancy agreement. We send a reminder of your service charges to you each year, including details of any changes.

## 3. Your Home and Neighbourhood

### Our responsibilities

As your landlord, we will:

- Provide you with information on our services
- Carry out any necessary repairs within a fixed timescale
- Provide you with the information we have about you
- Consult you on any changes to your rent or service charges
- Keep communal areas clean and tidy (if we charge you for this service)
- Allow you to swap homes with a housing association or local authority tenant (with our written permission)
- Address your complaint if we fail to deliver any aspect of our service

### Your responsibilities

These include:

- Paying your rent and other charges
- Using your home as your only or principal home
- Taking responsibility for the behaviour of anyone living with you, plus any pets or guests
- Being respectful to our staff and contractors
- Keeping your home and communal areas in good order

Please read your tenancy agreement carefully so you know your responsibilities.

## Keeping your neighbourhood clean and tidy

**Your Garden** You are responsible for the condition of your garden including any trees, grass, shrubs or weeds. The state of your garden should not annoy or endanger others.

Before planting a tree in your garden, let us know the type of tree and where you would like to plant it. We will check the tree and location are safe.



**Communal Areas** Please keep communal areas clean and tidy. If you fail to do this and we intervene, we may charge you for this service. We will clean communal areas if this task is included in your service charges.

If you are unsure who is responsible for a particular area, please phone **0800 131 3348**

**Parking** We expect neighbours to show consideration. We have garages for rent and our Customer Service Centre can tell if there are any available near you.

**Household Rubbish** To keep your neighbourhood clean and tidy, please:

- Place your rubbish in wheelie bins. If you share communal bins, use a plastic sack before putting it into the bin provided
- Do not put hot ash in bins – it could start a fire!
- Clean your bins regularly to prevent them from smelling
- Do not overfill bins or leave rubbish outside your home – this encourages rats and other pests

Wherever possible, make use of your council's recycling collections. Most operate regular collections for paper, glass, cans and certain types of plastic.

Visit [www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk/local-to-you](http://www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk/local-to-you) for more information on council collections.

**Bulk Rubbish** Your local council may run a bulk refuse collection service for household items too big for your bin. Things too bulky or awkward for normal collection can also be taken to your nearest public refuse site.

Visit [www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk/local-to-you](http://www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk/local-to-you) to find out:

- If your local council runs this service, and – if so – how to arrange a special uplift
- The address of your local refuse site, if you wish to dispose of bulk waste directly

**Fly-Tipping** Fly-tipping is the illegal dumping of waste. It is a risk to people and wildlife, damages our environment and spoils our enjoyment of our towns and countryside. It also costs a lot of money to clear up.

If you witness fly-tipping, please tell our Customer Service Centre by phoning **0800 131 3348**

## Please phone our Customer Service Centre on 0800 131 3348 if you wish to:

**Make changes to your home** Contact us if you wish to improve or alter your home.

**Take in a lodger** Contact us if you wish to take in a lodger.

**Sublet your home** Contact us if you wish to sublet your home.

**Work from home** You should not run a business from your home without written permission from us. If we can't give you permission, we will tell you why in writing.

**Keep a pet** You need our permission to keep a pet. If we give you permission, your pet must not disturb others.

**Fit a satellite dish** If you would like to put up a satellite dish, ask for our permission in writing.

If you're not sure whether you need our permission, check your tenancy agreement.



## 4. Feeling Safe in your Home

### Antisocial behaviour

Neighbourhoods should be safe and pleasant places to live.

We do not accept antisocial behaviour (ASB) by our tenants, their visitors or their pets.

ASB covers a wide range of unacceptable activities, including:

- Verbal abuse
- Noise nuisance
- Graffiti
- Fly-tipping or dropping litter
- Threatening behaviour
- Nuisance driving or parking
- Pets fouling public spaces
- Racial, sexual and other harassment

We take reports of ASB very seriously and will take any necessary steps to protect our tenants.



## I am experiencing antisocial behaviour – what should I do?

If you feel comfortable doing so, talk to the person. They may not know they are causing a problem.

To report ASB please phone our 24-hour Customer Service Centre on **0800 131 3348**

We deal with situations sensitively and explain what can be done. If you are threatened with violence or witness something illegal, contact the police immediately.

## How can I avoid annoying my neighbours?

- Keep noise to a reasonable level
- Respond positively if someone complains
- Warn neighbours of potential noise (e.g. before a party or major repair)

You should also prevent your pet from:

- Fouling your home, garden, public footpaths or communal gardens – always clear up after them!
- Straying outside your home and garden
- Making a noise (e.g. barking) for long periods
- Being aggressive towards people or other animals

## Domestic abuse

We support and assist tenants who experience domestic abuse.

We maintain strict confidentiality and provide information about other agencies that can help.

You should not give up your tenancy unless a solicitor, independent advice centre or the police advise you to do so and you have somewhere else to live.

If you are a victim of domestic abuse, we may be able to:

- Help you move away from the problem
- Provide additional security at your home

We can also refer tenants who need temporary accommodation to your local council.

### **Domestic abuse is a crime – don't suffer in silence.**

If you suffer or witness domestic abuse, please get help by contacting your local office or by phoning:

- Police Scotland on **101** (use 999 only in an emergency)
- the Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline on **0800 027 1234** (24 hours)



## Hate crime

Hate crime is where people are targeted because they are believed to be different.

This may be because of their age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, background, disability or faith.

**We investigate every report of hate crime and may pursue legal action to evict any tenant found guilty.**

Please contact us to report any incidents or phone:

- Police Scotland on **101** (use 999 only in an emergency)
- Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**
- Victim Support Scotland on **0345 603 9213**

Scotland - No Place for Prejudice

Targeted because  
of who you are?  
**REPORT IT.**

Together we can  
make a difference

A full list of Third Party Reporting  
Centres can be found at  
[www.scotland.police.uk](http://www.scotland.police.uk)



## 5. Changes to your Household

### What if the number of people in my household increases?

If someone plans to move in with you or has already done so, please phone **0800 131 3348** to let us know.

If you would like to add someone to your tenancy, phone **0800 131 3348** to discuss this.

Please let us know if you have a baby so we can add them to your household details.

### Can I take in a lodger or sublet part of my home?

Subletting is when a tenant rents their home to someone else. You need to ask our permission before:

- Taking in a lodger
- Subletting part of your home

If we do not give permission, we will explain why in writing.

### Can someone take over my tenancy?

Some conditions must be met before this can happen. This includes you:

- Asking us for written permission
- Having no rent arrears
- Having lived with the person for a year at that address

## What if my relationship breaks down?

If you have a joint tenancy and your relationship ends, ask our Customer Service Centre what this means for your tenancy.

We normally allow one person to continue the tenancy solely in their name, provided both parties agree and there is no outstanding rent or related debts.

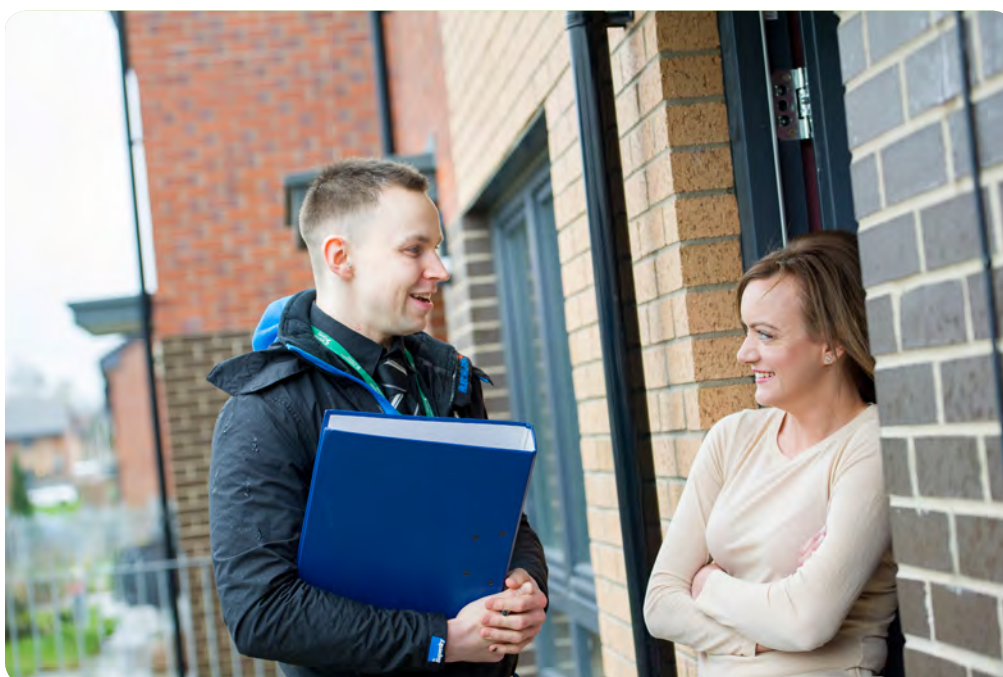
## When a tenant dies

If a Sanctuary tenant dies, please phone **0800 131 3348** to let us know as soon as possible. We will need to speak to the next of kin or whoever is responsible for the tenant's estate.

## Will someone be able to succeed the tenancy?

When a tenant dies someone may be eligible to take on the tenancy. Successors must:

- Be at least 16 years old
- Have lived in the property for a year



## 6. Moving Home

### Can I swap homes with another tenant?

You can apply to exchange homes with another Sanctuary or housing association / council tenant if your tenancy agreement allows it.

We approve all reasonable requests to exchange but may refuse in certain circumstances. Factors taken into account include:

- Any history of rent arrears, antisocial behaviour or other breaches of tenancy by you or the other tenant
- The condition of your property

If you find a tenant happy to exchange, we will visit you to discuss your application and let you know if the exchange can take place. If your application is rejected, we will explain why.

### How do I find someone to exchange with?

To swap a home in:

<b>Aberdeen</b> <b>Aberdeenshire</b> <b>Dundee</b>	Register with <b><a href="http://www.houseexchange.org">www.houseexchange.org</a></b>  This service is free to Sanctuary Scotland tenants and helps allocate our homes in the North East.
<b>Angus</b> <b>Edinburgh</b> <b>East Dunbartonshire</b> <b>Glasgow</b> <b>Inverclyde</b> <b>North Lanarkshire</b> <b>Renfrewshire</b> <b>South Lanarkshire</b>	Register with <b><a href="http://www.homeswapper.co.uk">www.homeswapper.co.uk</a></b>  The free HomeSwapper service helps you arrange a mutual exchange with thousands of tenants across Scotland.  You should also ask our Customer Service Centre for a transfer or mutual exchange form.

## How can I transfer to another Sanctuary property?

If you would like to move to another Sanctuary home in:

### **Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire or Dundee**

Register with HomeHunt North East at **[www.homehunt.info](http://www.homehunt.info)**

### **Angus and the West of Scotland**

Phone **0800 131 3348** for an application form.

### **Cumbernauld**

Visit **[www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk)** and search for the North Lanarkshire Common Housing Register.

Wherever you apply, we will assess your priority and update you accordingly.

## What if my home is under-occupied or overcrowded?

Tenants whose home becomes too large for them may be given priority for smaller accommodation.

Overcrowding occurs when there are not enough bedrooms for a family. This is worked out from the ages and gender of those sharing a bedroom. If your home is overcrowded, or your family increases, you may be given priority to transfer to a larger house. Phone **0800 131 3348** for details.

If the number of people in your household changes, please let us know. Your level of entitlement may be affected if you are in receipt of benefits.

## How do I end my tenancy?

You can end your tenancy by giving us 28 days notice in writing.

If you give us less than 28 days notice, we charge rent for the full notice period. We need this time to arrange for another tenant to move in.

Before you move out:

- Phone **0800 131 3348** to tell us you wish to end your tenancy **at least 28 days** before the date you wish to move. Our Customer Service Centre will tell you where to send your notice in writing
- Clear rent arrears and other debts
- Remove furniture and personal belongings including carpets and other floor coverings – or you may be charged for their removal
- Make sure your home is clean, in good repair and free from rubbish
- Return your keys to your local office
- If you receive benefits, let the Benefits Office know

## Can I be considered for sheltered housing?

Sheltered housing can help older people live independently.

Phone **0800 131 3348** for more information on our sheltered schemes in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.



## 7. Get Involved

Having your say improves our services and helps us make your community better.

By getting involved you can:

- Meet new people
- Learn new skills
- Have your say on your neighbourhood and our services
- Develop and improve our services
- Ensure value is received for your rent and service charges
- Influence our work, locally and nationally

Use one (or more) of the following channels to make your voice heard:

### **Working Groups, Focus Groups or Registered Tenants Organisations**

These groups discuss specific topics. This can include our policies and procedures, or areas of service under review.

### **Tenant Inspections and Estate Walkabouts**

Tenants and staff tour a neighbourhood, monitor how we are doing and flag up potential improvements.

Reports from these inspections help us shape and improve our service to you. You can request an estate walkabout by calling the Customer Service Centre and asking to speak with your Housing Officer.



## Your National Resident Review Panel

Our National Resident Review Panel enable tenants and service users to improve our performance and influence and innovate our services.

By reviewing our governance and performance at regular meetings, Panel members hold us to account. They also ensure our business decisions address our tenants' needs and work with staff to achieve better outcomes.

For more information on how you can have your say:

- Phone **0800 131 3348**
- Email **GetInvolved.Scotland@sanctuary-housing.co.uk**
- Visit **[www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk/get-involved](http://www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk/get-involved)**
- Ask at your local office



## How do I make a complaint?

We deal with complaints quickly and learn from them to improve our service to you.

You can complain:

- By phoning our 24-hour Customer Service Centre on **0800 131 3348**
- By emailing **[cscrequests@sanctuary-housing.co.uk](mailto:cscrequests@sanctuary-housing.co.uk)**
- By writing to **Sanctuary Scotland, Customer Service Centre, 160 Francis Street, Hull HU2 8DT**
- Using the complaints form at **[www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk](http://www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk)**
- In person at your local housing office

If they have your signed permission, a friend or relative can complain to us on your behalf.

The channels above can also be used to tell us what we are doing well.





## Resident Feedback

Regular surveys and consultations let us know what you think about our services. This tells us what we're doing well and what might need attention.

Feed back to us at any time by:

- Visiting [www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk/we-are-listening](http://www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk/we-are-listening)
- Emailing [cscrequests@sanctuary-housing.co.uk](mailto:cscrequests@sanctuary-housing.co.uk)
- Phoning our 24-hour Customer Service Centre on **0800 131 3348**

## Resident Newsletter

Voice is issued three times per year (spring, autumn and winter). You will find the most recent edition in your sign up pack. To comment on Voice, or suggest content for inclusion:

- Email [Kevin.Turner@sanctuary-housing.co.uk](mailto:Kevin.Turner@sanctuary-housing.co.uk)
- Phone **0141 876 4913**





## Notes:

If you would like this publication in an  
alternative format or language, please phone  
**0800 131 3348**



**[www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk](http://www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk)**

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