

Sanctuary
H O M E S

Tenants
Handbook



Contact us

0300 123 3511

0800 131 3348

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The '0800' numbers in this handbook are free from a landline. '01' and '03' numbers are charged at the normal national rate and are included in 'free minutes' if you have them. For exact charges from your mobile phone, check with your provider.

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| Our Services |



Our Customer Service Centre

Our Customer Service Centre wants to help you manage your tenancy. Any questions about your tenancy should be directed to them. If our Customer Service Centre cannot help, they will do their best to help you contact someone locally who can.

Please note that our local offices and housing officers cannot order repairs to your home. All repairs issues should be reported directly to our Customer Service Centre (see page 7).

Our commitment to equality and diversity helps us meet the needs of people who may be vulnerable as a result of characteristics including gender, race and sexuality. We abide by the Data Protection Act with your personal information.



Our Maintenance and Estates Services

Maintaining your home

Our in-house maintenance company Sanctuary Maintenance, with support from its approved sub contractors, repair all of our homes.



You can report a repair at any time, day or night, on any day of the year (pages 7 to 10 have more information). Our Customer Service Centre will log the issue and arrange for maintenance staff or a contractor to visit you and complete the repair.

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



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**

It is also our duty to carry out an electrical safety inspection every five years. On certain occasions, we may carry out this inspection more frequently.

Reporting Repairs

Keeping your home in a good condition is a responsibility shared between you and Sanctuary. We are responsible for general 'wear and tear' to your property. You are responsible for damage to your home caused by yourself, other household members, visitors or pets.

You are also responsible for such things as replacing bath plugs and changing the locks if you lose your keys. Door locks should only be changed in the event of an emergency. We may then ask to be provided with a copy key. If you wish to alter or add a lock to the door of your home, you must ask us in advance for permission.

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-housing.co.uk/report-a-repair-form

You can also report a repair by:

- Phoning **0300 123 3511** and **0800 131 3348**
- 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

The details of your repair will be logged.

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

How long will a repair take?

We prioritise repairs in the following ways:

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 where access to your home is required.

We will try to agree an appointment with you within **3 - 20 working days** depending on whether the repair is classified as 'urgent' or 'routine'.

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

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-housing.co.uk/report-a-repair



Paying Your Rent AND SERVICE CHARGES



Paying Your Rent

It is very important to pay your rent on time. If you do not pay your rent, you may lose your home. Please refer to your Tenancy Agreement for details on how much your rent is and when it is due.

There are many ways you can pay:



Direct Debit payments are spread equally throughout the year, usually on a monthly basis. We would normally expect Direct Debit payments to be received on the 1st of each month.

We also accept weekly Direct Debit payments, collected each Monday.

If your rent changes, we can adjust the Direct Debit for you.

To set up a Direct Debit, please phone our Customer Service Centre.



Standing Order payments are usually monthly and spread equally throughout the year. These can, however, be weekly or fortnightly payments if your bank or building society allows it.

If your rent changes you must tell your bank to alter the payments.

To set up a Standing Order, please request a form by phoning our Customer Service Centre.

Debit / Credit Card you can make a payment by:



- Phoning our card provider Allpay's 24-hour automated service on 0844 557 8321
- Visiting **www.allpay.net** and pay online or using the Allpay payment app

If you lose your Allpay payment card, our Customer Service Centre can order a replacement.

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

If you find yourself in this situation, please contact our Customer Service Centre in the first instance. We appreciate that circumstances can change and we will assist you in any way that we can.

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 communal grass cutting and cleaning of any communal windows and stairs.

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.

Tenancy Deposit and Inventory

What is a tenancy deposit?

A tenancy deposit is a sum of money that Sanctuary requires you to pay at the start of your tenancy, and which will normally be returned to you at the end of your tenancy. The money is security against you not fulfilling any obligations within your Tenancy Agreement.

What is an inventory?

Before your tenancy begins an inventory will be prepared to record the condition of the property and any fixtures, fittings and contents within. A copy will be given to you at the start of your tenancy which you must check and sign to confirm that you are happy that the inventory is complete and accurate.

From your tenancy start date, you will have seven days to highlight any errors within the inventory. We ask that any discrepancies are noted on the inventory and returned to your local office. If you do not do this, as the tenant, you will be held liable to return the property in the same condition as detailed on the original inventory.

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
- Inform 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 other Sanctuary Homes mid-market rent tenants (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 If you have one, 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 our Customer Service Centre.

Parking We expect neighbours to show consideration if parking is in short supply. In certain areas we have garages for rent. Ask our Customer Service Centre if we have any garages 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 councils operate regular collections for paper, glass, cans and certain types of plastic.

Visit 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 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 your Customer Service Centre, or alternatively, contact your local council.

You need our permission to:

Make changes to your home

Contact us if you wish to improve, decorate or alter your home.

Take in a lodger

Contact us if you wish to take in a lodger.



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. You will need to pay an additional fee to your deposit to cover any cleaning and/or damage costs at the end of your tenancy.

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 or ask your local office.

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, household members, any visitors or pets within the property or surrounding communal areas.

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 aim to prevent and deal effectively with all forms of ASB.



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.

You can report incidents at any time of the day by calling our Customer Service Centre on **0300 123 3511** or **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 on **Police Scotland 101** (use 999 only in an emergency) or contact **Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111**

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 their local council.

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

If you suffer or witness domestic abuse, please get help by contacting our Customer Service Centre 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 will 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



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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 let us know.

If you would like to add someone to your tenancy, phone our Customer Service Centre 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?

You need to ask our permission before taking in a lodger.

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
- Meeting the basic eligibility criteria for the mid-market rent development



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. You must let us know as soon as possible if there is a change in your circumstances. In this situation we may carry out a review of your finances. If you fall out-with our income criteria then your tenancy may be at risk.

When a tenant dies

In the unfortunate circumstance where a Sanctuary tenant dies, it is important that we are informed about this as soon as possible. Whilst we appreciate that this can be a difficult time, we will need to speak to the next of kin or whoever is responsible for the tenants' estate. Any debts left by the tenant will be the responsibility of the estate.

Will someone be able to succeed to my tenancy?

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

- Be at least 16 years old
- Be the husband, wife or civil partner or someone who was living with the deceased tenant as their husband, wife or civil partner
- Have lived in the property as their only or main home when the tenant died.

| Moving Home? |



Can I swap homes with another tenant?

You can apply to exchange homes with another Sanctuary mid-market rent 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 Sanctuary mid-market rent 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 end my tenancy?

You can end your tenancy by giving us two months notice in writing.

If you give us less than two months 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:

- Clear rent arrears and other debts
- Remove furniture and personal belongings or you may be charged for their removal
- Make sure your home is clean, in good repair and free from rubbish – leave it as you found it
- Return your keys to your local office
- If you receive benefits, let the Benefits Office know

Repayment of your deposit

At the end of your tenancy, you must replace, repair or pay the cost of any of the contents on the inventory which are destroyed, damaged, removed or lost during the tenancy. You may also need to pay for the cost of any cleaning found necessary at the end of the tenancy.

Where this is applicable, Sanctuary may deduct any costs from your tenancy deposit. Please see your Tenancy Agreement for more information.

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Homes WE SELL



Our new homes – right for you?

Some of the hundreds of homes we build each year are sold through the Scottish Government's New Supply Shared Equity (NSSE) scheme.

As a result these new homes are more affordable than similar properties sold on the open market.

Each scheme's qualifying criteria is set by the Scottish Government or local authority on a project-by-project basis.

If you wish to buy a home, we may have the right property for you.

With NSSE:

- You pay between 60% and 80% of the home's market value
- The Scottish Government retain the remaining stake, in the form of an interest-free loan

Those who buy using the NSSE scheme pay no rent and own their home outright.

To find out where we currently have homes for sale:

- Visit www.sanctuary-homeownership.co.uk/scotland
- Phone **0141 876 4900**
- Email nsse@sanctuary-housing.co.uk

| Have Your Say |



Have Your Say / 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.



Your Local Resident Review Panel

Our Review Panels 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 **0141 876 4900**
- Email **GetInvolved.Scotland@sanctuary-housing.co.uk**
- Visit **www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk/get-involved**

How do I make a complaint?

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

You can raise a complaint at any of our local offices:

- In person
- By phone
- By letter
- By email (**Scotland.Midmarket@sanctuary-housing.co.uk**)
- By contacting our Customer Service Centre

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
- Emailing **Scotland.Midmarket@sanctuary-housing.co.uk**
- Phoning or writing to your local office





If you would like this publication
in an alternative format or
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Sanctuary
H O M E S

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