

Your Tenancy



**Housing
Management**



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

Dear tenant

Welcome to your new home. We want you to get the most out of your home, so we have created this handbook about the services we offer, with help and information about your tenancy. It explains what you can expect from us and what we expect from you. You will find information on a range of topics including how to request a repair and how to pay your rent.

We want to deliver the best possible housing service to you, but if you have any concerns, this handbook has details about how to contact us if you want to make a complaint. If you have questions that are not answered in this handbook, please contact a member of staff for advice.

Kensington and Chelsea Council is the landlord and manager of your home. We encourage tenant participation and feedback so that we know what you like or dislike about our services. I would like to thank all residents who have already had input into this handbook through the Task and Finish groups.

We look forward to meeting you during home visits, visits to our offices or at meetings.

Contacting us



Your Neighbourhood Services Coordinator is responsible for the area where you live, but there are other staff who can assist you on specific issues.

Online

You can contact us with questions or requests about your home by visiting:

🌐 www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing. We have lots of useful information, and you can use our online services to see information about your home and to contact us.

By telephone

You can also call our Customer Service Centre: ☎ **0800 137 111** or our mobile friendly number: ☎ **020 3617 7080** from 8am to 6pm.

Council's main switchboard: ☎ **020 7361 3000**

Council's housing line: ☎ **020 7361 3008**

Visiting in person

You can visit us at:

📍 Network Hub

**292a Kensal Road
London W10 5BE**

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

If you live in the south of the borough, you can also visit:

📍 World's End Estate Office

Blantyre Street, London SW10 0DS

🕒 Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

☎ **020 8964 6161**

Local housing management teams

- North of the borough (postcodes beginning with W2, W10 or W11 (apart from Lancaster West Estate, see below): ☎ **0800 137 111**
- South of the borough (postcodes beginning with SW3, SW5, SW6, SW10, W8 or W14): ☎ **0800 137 111**
- Lancaster West Estate, Bramley House and Treadgold House (Barandon Walk, Bramley House, Camborne Mews, Camelford Court, Camelford Walk, Clarendon Walk, Hurstway Walk, Morland House, Talbot Walk, Talbot Grove House, Testerton Walks, Treadgold House, Upper Talbot Walk, Verity Close): ☎ **07710 053431** or ☎ **07710 053437** or ✉ LancasterWestoffice@rbkc.gov.uk



Your introductory and secure tenancy

Your tenancy agreement is a legal contract between you and your landlord and sets out the terms and conditions of your tenancy. Your landlord is the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Council.

When you signed your tenancy agreement you agreed to all its terms and conditions. It is very important that you read and understand everything in your tenancy agreement, so you are clear about the Council's responsibilities and what is expected of you.

Although the Council has stopped issuing Fixed Term Tenancies, some may still exist because of tenancy issues or court orders. If you need any advice, please contact your Neighbourhood Services Coordinator.

Introductory tenancies

If you are a new tenant, you will start off with an introductory tenancy. This means that your first year with the Council is a trial period. You will need to show us that you understand your responsibilities to your neighbours and to your landlord. We will expect you to:

- pay your rent on time and not allow your rent account to fall into arrears
- make sure that you, anyone living with you, or anyone who visits you, do not cause a nuisance to your neighbours or the local community.
- look after your home, including any outside spaces which are your responsibility, such as balconies and gardens, and generally meet all the conditions of your tenancy.

Tenancy Fraud

You do not have the right to sub-let the whole of your property. If you sub-let the whole of your home, you will cease to be a secure tenant and could be evicted. You have a right to sub-let a part of your property but only with our permission. Sub-letting the whole property is tenancy fraud and a criminal offence.

Remember that additional people in your home may affect your entitlement to Housing Benefit. If you do not keep to the terms of your Tenancy Agreement, for example if you fail to pay your rent or you behave anti-socially, you will break the agreement. This is known as a 'breach of tenancy'. If you do not correct a breach of tenancy, we may have to take legal action. This could ultimately result in you being evicted from your home.

Your rights and responsibilities

We will make regular checks, including looking at your rent account every week and visiting you at home from time to time. Please make sure you tell us if you are having problems, as we can offer practical help and advice.

While you are an introductory tenant you do not have the right to move to another council or housing association home, to take in a lodger, to sub-let part of your home, to carry out alterations or improvements to your home (except painting and decorating), or the right to buy your home. However, your family may have succession rights to your tenancy if you die. You will get full rights automatically as soon as you become a secure tenant.



Introductory tenants have one extra responsibility that secure tenants do not have. You must ask us for permission if you want someone who was not listed as a member of your household when you signed your Tenancy Agreement to come and stay with you, either temporarily or permanently. This includes children, relatives, friends or other guests. We will not normally refuse unless there is a good reason.

As an introductory tenant you can be evicted more quickly than a secure tenant. However, if you show us that you can act responsibly you will automatically become a secure tenant after 12 months.

We have discretion to extend your introductory tenancy for a further six months if we feel we need to monitor your behaviour a little bit more before your tenancy becomes secure. We will give you notice if we are intending to do this together with our reasons.

Secure tenancies

Provided you observe the conditions of your tenancy and we have not started legal action against you, you will automatically become a secure tenant after 12 months. As a secure tenant, you will have greater protection in law, but you still have responsibilities. We expect you to continue to look after your home, pay your rent on time and respect your neighbours.

Responsibilities of a secure tenant

Your responsibilities are to:

- live in the property as your main and only home. If you do not, you may lose your rights as a secure tenant
- keep your home properly heated and ventilated
- pay the rent and other charges on time
- take care of the property and keep the inside properly decorated
- complete any repairs that are your responsibility
- ensure that everyone in your household and any visitors behave responsibly to others, including our staff
- not overcrowd your property
- let us know if you are going away and leaving your home unoccupied for more than four weeks
- let us know at least four weeks before you leave if you intend to end your tenancy
- let us know if your home needs repair.

Rights of a secure tenant

The Council's main responsibilities to you are to:

- consult you on any proposed changes to the tenancy
- keep your home wind and watertight and in good repair
- keep all pipes, drains, gutters and installations for heating, water, gas or electricity supply in working order
- provide you, if you ask, with information about our services
- advise you of new changes to your rent or other service charge payments at least four weeks before it is due to be paid



Your tenancy

- come into your home to carry out inspections or repairs, or to service appliances. We must give you at least 24 hours' warning unless it is an emergency
- As a tenant, you also have certain rights under Acts of Parliament and Government Regulations.

Right to manage

A tenants' or residents' organisation has the right to set-up a Tenant Management Organisation, which may be able to take on responsibility for the day-to-day management of your homes. If you would like more information about this right, please contact us.

Right to be consulted

You have the right to be consulted about major changes in how we manage your home. We will consider any comments received during consultation before we reach a decision.

Right to repair

All tenants have the right to have repairs for which the Council is responsible carried out in reasonable time. For certain repairs, you are entitled to have them carried out within set time limits. Your entitlements are set out in The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994. They are called 'qualifying repairs'.

If we do not complete a qualifying repair within the correct time, you have the right to ask us to get another approved contractor to do the work. If this contractor fails to do the work, you may seek compensation.

Please go to www.legislation.gov.uk for further information.

In addition, all residents have a right to:

- receive information about the Council and the Council housing services. We will provide this information in the normal course of delivering services to you.

Ending your tenancy

If you decide to end your tenancy, you need to give us 28 days' notice by completing a termination of tenancy form. You must return all keys to your Neighbourhood Team by the last day of the notice period. Please ensure that your rent is paid up in full.

If you are late returning the keys, you will continue to be charged rent until the Sunday following the date they are returned. If we need to change the locks, you will be charged for this.

You must carry out any repairs that are your responsibility before leaving. We will inspect your home and discuss this with you before you move out. We will charge you for any work we need to do that you should have done before you left.

You must also leave the property clear of all belongings. We will charge for any clearance or cleaning that we need to do after you have left. Please leave your home in the condition you would expect it to be in if you were moving in.

Please also remember to make the necessary arrangements with utility companies, benefits agencies, the Council (for Council Tax) and any other agencies to advise them that you are leaving. You may want to arrange for your post to be redirected to your new home until you have contacted everyone you need to about your change of address.



Joint tenancies

A joint tenancy is when two or more adults are named in the tenancy agreement. Each tenant is jointly and individually responsible for paying the rent and keeping to the terms of the tenancy. This means, for example, that each tenant is responsible for the full rent, and if one fails to pay then both are legally responsible. Joint tenants also have equal rights, so either can give notice to terminate the whole tenancy.

All residents have a right to:

- receive information about the Council and Council housing services. We will provide this information in the normal course of delivering services to you
- request a copy of any personal information held about themselves by the Council. This is known as a subject access request
- access information about the Council. This is known as a freedom of information request.

Changing or passing on your tenancy

Sole tenancy to joint tenancy

If you want someone living with you to become a joint tenant, you must write to us to request permission. Partners must have lived with you for at least 12 months to be eligible, unless you are married or in a civil partnership.

Joint tenancy to sole tenancy

If you want to change a joint tenancy into a sole tenancy, for example in the case of a relationship breakdown, we recommend that you seek legal advice.

Useful addresses correct as at November 2020:

📍 **North Kensington Law Centre**
Unit 13 Baseline Business Studios
Whitchurch Road
London W11 4AT

☎ **020 8969 7473**

🕒 Open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday: 10am – 5pm

📍 **Nucleus Legal Advice Centre**
298 Old Brompton Road
London SW5 9JF

☎ **020 7373 4005**

🕒 Open Monday (9.30am – 8pm), Tuesday (9.30am – 6pm), Wednesday (9.30am - 5pm), Thursday (9.30am – 8pm) and Friday (9.30am - 5pm)

📍 **Citizens Advice Kensington**
2 Acklam Road
London W10 5QZ

☎ **0300 330 1174**

🕒 Open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: 10am – 4pm

📍 **Citizens Advice Chelsea**
Chelsea Old Town Hall
Kings Road
London SW3 5EE

☎ **0300 330 1174**

🕒 Open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: 10am - 12.30pm

📍 **World's End Neighbourhood Advice Centre**
2 World's End Place
London SW10 0HE

☎ **020 7351 5749**

✉ **info@wenac.org.uk**



☉ Open Monday, Wednesday and Friday:
10.30am – 1.30pm (other times by appointment)

Succession for tenancies starting before 1 April 2012

If a tenancy was entered into before 1 April 2012, when a tenant dies, the tenancy will automatically pass to the remaining joint tenant. If there is no remaining joint tenant, a spouse or civil partner or a family member may succeed (take over) the tenancy.

A spouse and civil partner will have to show that they were living with the tenant as their principal home at the date of death.

In the case of the tenant's family members, they will also have to show that they were living with the tenant for at least 12 months before the death occurred and have continued to occupy the property as their principal home. This is called 'succession', and only one succession is allowed with each tenancy.

The family members (other than a spouse or civil partner) who may be eligible to be assigned the tenancy are:

- parent
- grandparent
- child
- grandchild
- sibling
- uncle or aunt
- nephew or niece
- a half brother or sister.

Succession for tenancies starting on or after 1 April 2012

Statutory succession to a secure tenancy entered into after 1 April 2012 only applies to the spouse

or civil partner of the deceased tenant, or a person living with the tenant as if they were a spouse or civil partner. In some cases, we may require the family member to move to an alternative, more suitable home – for example, if the tenancy is part of a sheltered housing scheme and services are not needed, or if the property is larger than you need.

Assignment

Tenants can also pass on a tenancy before they die to someone who would have been allowed to take it on after their death. This is known as an assignment.

Relationship breakdown

If you are experiencing a relationship breakdown and are concerned about how this affects your housing situation, please contact your Neighbourhood Management Team for further advice.

The Council is committed to helping anyone in the property we manage who is experiencing actual or threatened domestic abuse. If you are experiencing domestic abuse, you can contact your Neighbourhood Team for confidential help and advice.

Family members, lodgers

Any members of your close family may share your home. You can also take in lodgers. A lodger is someone who shares your home as a member of your household. However, you are not allowed to overcrowd your home and you must get prior permission from the Council. You must let us know within four weeks if someone moves in with you on a permanent basis. In addition, you cannot charge a lodger more than your weekly rent.

Remember that additional people in your home may affect your entitlement to Housing Benefit.

Money and benefits



Your rent

Your rent is set by the Council, following Government guidelines that are designed to ensure your rent is fair in relation to where you live. As well as the rental element, your rent also contains service charges.

Depending on the type and location of the accommodation, you may have to pay for your heating and hot water with your rent. If your building has a communal gas and electrical supply, this will be divided by all residents and a proportion added to your rent. You can also see how much you pay towards the services we provide, such as communal cleaning, lighting and general maintenance. As a tenant, you will be informed of any charges when you sign your agreement. Your tenancy agreement states that payments need to be made weekly in advance on the Monday of each week. However, we appreciate that it may sometimes be more convenient for you to make payments fortnightly or monthly, in line with when you receive your income. Your Rent Income Officer may be able to agree to your request to pay fortnightly or monthly, provided you contact them beforehand and you have no history of arrears and payments are made in advance.

When you become a new tenant, we will supply you with a rent payment card to enable you to make payments into your rent account. The card has an 11-digit payment reference number that is required to make payments. It starts with '20' and can be found on the bottom right hand side of your swipe card.

Ways to pay

Paying your rent is important. It goes towards meeting the costs of managing your home, undertaking repairs and maintenance, improving our older properties, and providing services and support to tenants who need extra help.

You are responsible for paying your rent and making any Housing Benefit claims. It is important that you make an application for benefit as soon as possible and provide the Council with all the information needed to progress it. Your Rent Income Officer will give you advice on completing the claim form.

How to apply

- www.rbkc.gov.uk
- benefits@rbkc.gov.uk
- **020 7361 3006**
- See someone from the New Claims Team: you can make an appointment or just call at the **Town Hall, Hornton Street, W8 7NX** (8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday)
- Request a visit (if you have a special need – for example, if you are elderly or disabled, request a home visit)

Direct Debit

Direct Debit is the easiest way to make payments to us, including rent, service charges and parking payments.

You can download and print a form from our website or contact us to request one. Just complete and sign the form and return it to us to enable us to set up a direct debit payment.

Standing Order

Call your bank/building society directly to arrange for the standing order to be set up. You will need our bank account details:

Head Office Collection Account
Housing Rents and Service Charges
Natwest PLC

Sort code: 57-20-40

Account number: 00000000

Please contact us to find out your swipe card/ payment reference number before setting up a Standing Order.



Money and benefits

By phone

If you have a debit or credit card, you can pay over the phone: ☎ **0800 137 111** or ☎ **020 3617 7080** Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Alternatively, you can use the automated payment line (which also operates out of hours): ☎ **020 3974 4670**. Select option 6.

Online

To make an online rent payment:
🌐 www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing/rents

By post

Please make your cheques payable to, 'Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea' and include your address and payment reference details on the back.

Please send a cheque or postal order to:

Director of Finance

PO Box 5523

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

The Town Hall, Hornton Street,
London W8 7NX

At any post office

You can pay with cash or by cheque. Please make cheques payable to The Post Office Ltd. You will need your swipe card. Please allow three days for the payment to reach us.

At the Town Hall

You can make payments by cash, cheque or debit card at 📍 **the Town Hall, Hornton Street, London W8 7NX**.

Housing Benefit

If you are claiming Housing Benefit it will usually be paid directly to us. Remember, your Housing Benefit does not cover the full amount of your rent. Please make sure that you arrange to pay us the outstanding amount.

If you are in receipt of Universal Credit, your rent element of your claim will be paid directly to you so you will need to use one of the methods above to pay your rent. Direct Debit is our preferred option and you can arrange for your rent to be taken shortly after your monthly Universal Credit payment.

Struggling to pay your rent?

If you do get into difficulties meeting your rent payments, please contact your rent income officer as soon as possible: ☎ **0800 137 111**. They will give you free advice and support or refer you to an independent advice agency. We are here to help.

53-week rent years

Every five or six years, there are 53 weeks in a payment year rather than the standard 52. This is due to spare days in each year adding up and creating an extra week. A 53-week year will occur when there are 53 Mondays in the year.

Keeping track of your payments

We have a specialist Rent Income Team. There are several things that your Rent Income Officer can do that may help you.

You should always check that any payments you have made are on your rent statement. You will receive a rent statement every three months and can request additional statements to be sent to you at any time.



Money and benefits

- children who can't share because of a disability or medical condition
- a carer (or team of carers) providing overnight care.

One spare bedroom is allowed for:

- an approved foster carer who is between placements, but only for up to 52 weeks from the end of the last placement
- a newly approved foster carer for up to 52 weeks from the date of approval if no child is placed with them during that time.

Your eligible rent is the part of your rent for which Housing Benefit is payable or Universal Credit entitled and includes service charges (such as lift maintenance) but not heating and hot water. If you are assessed as having more bedrooms than is necessary for your household, you will be considered under-occupying your accommodation and your eligible rent will be reduced as follows:

- 14 per cent for one spare bedroom.
- 25 per cent for two or more spare bedrooms.

The benefit cap

The benefit cap is a limit on how much someone can receive in benefits, no matter how many of the relevant individual benefits are being paid to a claimant and no matter how much these individual benefits add up to.

Universal Credit

Universal Credit applies to people currently aged between 18 and 65 who were previously getting several benefits. Universal Credit is a single monthly payment, paid in arrears. If you need help to pay your bills or cover other costs

while you wait for your first Universal Credit payment, you can apply to get an advance. If you are refused, you should come to see us about payment arrangements.

Housing Benefit is included in this payment and claimants will be responsible for paying their own rent from it. If you would like more information please contact us:

✉ benefits@rbkc.gov.uk or

☎ 0800 328 9344.

Housing and employment

There is support available through the Council and Jobcentre Plus and other organisations that can provide help and guidance, for example learning a new skill, finding childcare, job seeking and starting a business. Visit the Council's website 🌐 www.rbkc.gov.uk/jobs/help-find-job

Contents insurance

While the Council insures the building you live in, it is your responsibility to insure your personal possessions. Remember to include provision for replacing flooring and decoration. This is known as contents insurance and is stated in your tenancy agreement.

While some people hope that nothing will happen to their belongings and don't take out contents insurance, things can go wrong unexpectedly. Contents insurance covers most of your household goods and contents for such things as damage caused by fire, theft, water, vandalism or floods. It also covers replacement of external locks if your keys are lost or stolen, and the contents of your freezer. We also strongly recommend that your contents insurance includes provision for replacing flooring and decoration.



Quality of workmanship

We carry out regular checks to make sure that we are maintaining a good standard of service. This is done by randomly selecting several completed repairs and carrying out visits to those properties. We also carry out weekly telephone surveys asking tenants their opinion on work that has recently been done in their homes.

Dissatisfied with the work

If a repair was not completed within the time allowed or if you are not satisfied with the work that has been done, please let us know. We will investigate all complaints thoroughly in line with our complaints procedure (see details on page 47).

Repair responsibilities

The repair obligations and responsibilities of the Council and yourselves are outlined in your tenancy or licence agreement.

Policy commitment

The Council has a duty as a landlord to repair and maintain its properties. The Council is committed to providing safe, sound and comfortable homes which function, and meet or exceed health and safety requirements. It is also committed to delivering a high quality, responsive repairs service that provides value for money.

Although the Council is responsible for carrying out most repairs to a property, some repairs are the tenant's responsibility. The following section covers most issues and tells you who is responsible for them.



How to request a repair

The Council offers a range of ways that residents can request repairs. Residents may contact us between 8am and 5pm ☎ **0800 137 111** or ☎ **020 3617 7080** to speak to a Customer Service Advisor. Our advisor will answer your call as quickly as possible giving their name. They will identify you and your property records, ask you relevant questions to ensure the repair report is raised correctly the first time, give you a target completion date and an appointment slot. The Council can send SMS text messages and emails to confirm appointment times.

Residents may request repairs online:
🌐 www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing or:
✉ HM-CustomerServices@rbkc.gov.uk

Residents can request repairs at either of our two neighbourhood offices (North: Network Hub, 292a Kensal Road, London, W10 5BE and South: Blantyre Office, Blantyre Street, London, SW10 0DS). Offices are open between 9am and 5pm.

For more complex or specialist repairs we may need a surveyor to inspect the works and write a specification for the Council or its contractors to keep. The Council will provide updates including survey reports as required.

Out of hours emergency repairs – ☎ **0800 137111**

Outside of the Council's office hours (8am – 5pm Monday - Friday), the Council provides an out-of-hours service. We will extend our Customer Service Centre opening hours to 8am – to 6pm in 2020. Residents can request emergency repairs 24-hours-a-day, every day of the year including bank holidays and weekends.

Only issues that cannot wait until the following working day will be dealt with by the out-of-hours emergency service. This means issues

which present a serious risk to residents' safety or to the property itself.

Serious leaks and burst pipes, unsafe wiring, unsecured doors or windows will be attended to in under four hours. In all cases the priority is to 'make safe' and it may be necessary for a follow-on visit to complete the repair fully.

Appointments

Appointments for routine repairs are offered in set timeslots from Monday to Friday or Saturday mornings. They are split into several bands:

AM band – between 8am and 1pm

Mid-morning band – between 10am and 2pm

PM band – between 1pm and 5pm

Saturday morning band – 9am to 1pm (from 2020)

If you require a more specific time, please advise us at the time of requesting the repair and we will try to meet your request. If you are unable to attend the appointment, please contact us and we will rearrange for another time.

If we have missed an appointment or an emergency has not been dealt with in the specified time, you may be eligible for compensation (see Compensation and Redress Policy). To qualify, you must have kept the appointment and given our staff or contractor the opportunity to carry out the work. This compensation will usually only apply to appointments missed for repairs within your home.

Maintaining your home



Your Neighbourhood Services Coordinator is responsible for the area where you live, but there are other staff who can assist you on specific issues.

Online

You can contact us with questions or requests about your home by visiting:

🌐 www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing. We have lots of useful information, and you can use our online services to see information about your home and to contact us.

By telephone

You can also call our Customer Service Centre:
☎ **0800 137 111** or our mobile friendly number:
☎ **020 3617 7080** from 8am to 6pm.

Council's main switchboard: ☎ **020 7361 3000**

Council's housing line: ☎ **020 7361 3008**

Visiting in person

You can visit us at:

📍 **Network Hub**
292a Kensal Road
London W10 5BE

🕒 Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

If you live in the south of the borough, you can also visit:

📍 **World's End Estate Office**
Blantyre Street, London SW10 0DS

🕒 Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

☎ **020 8964 6161**

Local housing management teams

- North of the borough (postcodes beginning with W2, W10 or W11 (apart from Lancaster West Estate, see below): ☎ **0800 137 111**
- South of the borough (postcodes beginning with SW3, SW5, SW6, SW10, W8 or W14):
☎ **0800 137 111**
- Lancaster West Estate, Bramley House and Treadgold House (Barandon Walk, Bramley House, Camborne Mews, Camelford Court, Camelford Walk, Clarendon Walk, Hurstway Walk, Morland House, Talbot Walk, Talbot Grove House, Testerton Walks, Treadgold House, Upper Talbot Walk, Verity Close):
☎ **07710 053431** or ☎ **07710 053437** or
✉ LancasterWestoffice@rbkc.gov.uk



Estate Inspections

Regular inspections of the communal areas on estate are carried out by the Estate Services Team. This includes checking the cleanliness of the estate, reporting any communal repairs, lighting and general upkeep of these areas. Caretakers maintain a written record of these inspections and take the necessary action to deal with any defects.

Estate inspections with residents are carried out quarterly on all estates. These are an opportunity for residents to meet with their Neighbourhood Services Coordinator, caretaker and a member of our repairs team to review the appearance and cleanliness of their estate and to report any communal repairs. The dates and times of estate inspections are advertised in your local estate noticeboard.

Chutes, bins and recycling

To find out which days the bins in your area are collected and for information on recycling in the borough, check the Council's website:

🌐 www.rbkc.gov.uk. On estates there will be chutes or paladin bins (large circular or square bins on wheels) in which to put your domestic waste. If you need help to locate these, please contact us.

The chutes have limited space and can get blocked easily. Please do not put bulky items such as building waste and cardboard down the chutes as these are the main cause of blockages. If you have your own dustbin or share a larger bin with neighbours, please ensure that you dispose of your rubbish responsibly.

You can book a special 'bulky waste' collection online. Just visit: 🌐 www.rbkc.gov.uk/specialcollections or call Streetline: ☎️ 020 7361 3001.

Reuse and recycle your bulky waste items

If you think someone else or a neighbour might want an item you want to get rid of, don't dump it, Freegle it free of charge! Freegle is a charity and enables you to exchange unwanted items for free. To find out more, and to see what is currently available: 🌐 www.ilovefreegle.org/explore/Kensington-Chelsea-Freegle

Contact Us

If you have any questions, about the following, please contact our Customer Service Centre:

- ☎️ 0800 137 111 or ☎️ 020 3617 7080
- 🌐 www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing
- In writing to:

📍 Customer Service Centre

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Housing Services
Network Hub
292a Kensal Road
London W10 5BE

Gardens

If you have a garden, just for your own use, it is your responsibility to ensure that you maintain it to a reasonable standard and do not allow it to become overgrown. If you are unable to do this because of age or because you have a disability, you should speak to your Neighbourhood Services Coordinator

Keys

You can buy keys and key fobs from the Network Hub or the World's End Estate Office. The keys we issue are security keys and cannot be cut at a locksmith.



Making improvements to your home

You can carry out improvements to your home, but you must get our written permission before you start any work. We will consider your request and get back to you within one month. You should include in your request full details including what you plan to do and who will carry out the work as well as any planning permissions and building regulations required.

Fitting wooden or laminate flooring

You must get permission in writing first, if you want to fit a wooden or laminate floor.

Water and waste connections

If there are no water and waste connections for a washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher, you must get written permission if you want to install them. You are responsible for any problems (leaks, breakages and blockages) with your appliances (such as a washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher), including the flexible pipes leading to and from them. If you caused the damage, we will recharge you for the work required.

TV aerials and satellite dishes

We do not generally allow individual residents to fit TV aerials and satellite dishes to their home. If you consider that you have a need, you should contact your Neighbourhood Services Coordinator.

We visually inspect and repair the communal aerials when required. Removal of redundant TV aerials will be included in planned maintenance programmes

Gas, electrical and fire safety



Gas safety inspections

It is a legal requirement under regulation 36 of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 that we must carry out an annual inspection of gas installations in your home. These inspections are vital for your safety. They make sure that appliances are safe to use and are working correctly and efficiently.

We will try to organise this at a time which is convenient for you, but you must give us access to your home to complete the checks.

We will contact you 60 days in advance of the expiry date of the last service. The first letter will tell you when we will call; if this is not a suitable day and time for you, please call the number provided and we will arrange an appointment to suit. If you're not in when we call, we will leave a card asking you to contact us. We will always try to fit the appointment around you. After three missed appointments, under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 and to ensure your safety we will seek forced entry.

Forced entry will always be a last resort. The safety check will cover your central heating boiler, smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm along with a visual check of any other gas appliance. A landlord's gas safety record will be produced, and this will be sent out to you within 28 days. All our engineers are members of the Gas Safe Register and will have identification (ID) with them. When the engineer has completed the check, they will ask for your signature to confirm it has been done. We also quality check a sample of the gas safety checks, and you may receive a letter advising you of this.

Please contact our Customer Service Centre:
☎ 0800 137 111 if you would like more information.

Gas Facts

If you smell gas, call Gas Emergency Service immediately on 0800 111 999.

- Do not phone inside your home (not even on a mobile phone) because it could spark an explosion.
- Open doors and windows.
- Do not use any electrical equipment including mobile phones.
- Do not use naked flames such as candles or matches.
- Do not smoke.
- Obtain medical attention if you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Make sure that you know where your gas supply is located. Write down where the gas supply is located on page 40.
- Always use a Gas Safe registered engineer if you have a gas appliance fitted.
- If you must switch off the mains supply, turn the mains gas tap to the off position.

When you turn the supply on again:

- you may need a Gas Safe registered engineer to turn the supply back on
- you must make sure that all gas appliances and pilot lights are turned off. Once the gas is on you can ignite the pilot lights
- if you use a charge key or a slot meter and the gas runs out, turn off all gas taps before you put money in the meter. Check that the pilot lights are still lit when the gas comes on.

Make sure that there is good ventilation around gas appliances.

- If your gas supply has been disconnected because you have not paid your bill, you will have to relight the pilot light and reset the controls yourself.



Gas, electrical and fire safety

Carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless gas from which older people, children, pregnant women and those with breathing problems or cardiovascular disease are at increased risk.

Sources

CO is not just produced by malfunctioning or poorly flued gas appliances. Bottled gas, coal, coke, oil, biofuel, wood stoves, fires, boilers, water heaters, paraffin heaters and room heaters are all potential sources. Caravans, boats and mobile homes with portable devices using these fuels are also potential sites of exposure. Exhaust gasses from vehicle engines, diesel and petrol powered electricity generators and BBQs can also contain or emit high levels of CO.

Signs and symptoms

Recognising CO poisoning is not at all easy as it may simulate many other conditions like influenza or food poisoning.

The onset of symptoms is often deceptive and may not be recognised by either the patient or a health adviser. Commonest symptoms and signs, and an indication of their approximate frequency in CO poisoning, are shown below:

- Headache 90 per cent.
- Nausea and vomiting 50 per cent.
- Vertigo 50 per cent.
- Alteration in consciousness 30 per cent.
- Subjective weakness 20 per cent.

What look like classic cases of food poisoning of a whole family may be produced by carbon monoxide poisoning. Prolonged exposure to concentrations that produce only minor symptoms may, in some cases, be associated with lasting neurological effects. These include difficulties in concentrating and emotional ability.

There are four key questions that should be asked to help diagnose domestic carbon monoxide poisoning. These questions can be remembered using the acronym COMA:

C for Co-habitees and co-occupants - is anyone else in the house affected (including pets)?

O for Outdoors - do your symptoms improve when out of the house?

M for Maintenance - are heating and cooking appliances properly maintained?

A for Alarm - do you have a carbon monoxide alarm?

The answers given for each question should raise or lower suspicion of poisoning by carbon monoxide.

The following signs may be recognised in the home:

- Black sooty staining on or around an appliance (e.g. stoves, boilers and fires) such as on the walls.
- Smoke or excessive condensation accumulating in rooms due to faulty flues. Though you cannot smell carbon monoxide, you can often smell other combustion products.
- Yellow or orange, instead of blue, flames from gas appliances or boiler pilot lights.



Gas, electrical and fire safety

- If the trip goes again, it is probably being caused by a faulty appliance or light. You should identify which circuit is being affected and which appliance on that circuit is causing problems.

Main causes of fire

Each year across the UK there are approximately 37,000 accidental fires in the home. Many of these are caused by a single moment of distraction and could easily be prevented.

Many home fires are caused by cooking accidents. Other causes are faulty or misused white goods and electrical appliances, overloaded sockets and damaged wiring. Careless use of matches, cigarettes and candles can also cause home fires. Airing clothing on or near fan heaters, not using fire guards, covering storage or convector heater vents, or using portable heaters close to curtains, also cause fires.

Under the conditions of your tenancy, you must not use, or store liquefied or petroleum gas (LPG), Calor gas or paraffin anywhere in your home.

What should I do if there is a fire? If your flat or maisonette is affected by fire or smoke:

- get everyone out, close doors (if safe to do so) and calmly leave the building
- do not go back into the building. Personal items can be replaced, you cannot
- if it's safe to do so, call **☎ 999**. Give your address, the number of your flat and state which floor the fire is on when speaking to the emergency services. Wait outside until London Fire Brigade arrive.

If there is a fire in another part of the building

- If your block has been provided with a common fire alarm system, the alarm will alert you of the need to evacuate. You should leave the building upon hearing the alarm.
- In most purpose-built blocks the building is constructed in a way that keeps a fire in the flat that it starts in, protecting others in the building. It should therefore be safe to remain in your own flat if there is no fire or smoke affecting you, unless you are told to leave by London Fire Brigade. If you become aware of a fire, you may choose to leave, although you do not have to if there are no signs of fire within your flat.
- If you become aware of a fire at any time, wherever it occurs, you should phone 999 and advise the London Fire Brigade of the address and location of the fire.
- If you are within the common parts of the building and become aware of a fire, leave immediately and call **☎ 999**.

I am worried that I am unable to leave my home in the event of a fire because of mobility issues

If you or a member of your household would have difficulty leaving your home and getting to a place of safety if there was a fire, we will ensure that we develop an appropriate plan, or provide suitable equipment, to keep you safe. This is called a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan or PEEP. Please contact us: **☎ 0800 137 111**.



Smoke alarms

The single most important thing that you can do to protect your family from fire is to ensure you have a working smoke alarm in your home. This will detect smoke at the earliest opportunity and give you that vital extra time to leave your home and get safely away from the fire. It is important that this is correctly located, tested regularly, and any faults are reported immediately to the Customer Service Centre: ☎ **0800 137 111**.

Electrically operated (with battery back-up) smoke and heat alarms have been installed in most tenants' homes and a programme is underway to install alarms in the remaining homes. All residents living in homes where no smoke alarm is currently fitted are encouraged to fit a battery-powered alarm immediately. The London Fire Brigade will fit a battery-operated smoke alarm as part of its Home Fire Safety Visit which is free and available on request. You can arrange a Home Fire Safety Visit by calling the Fire Brigade: ☎ **08000 28 44 28**. You can also book a visit on the London Fire Brigade's website: 🌐 **www.london-fire.gov.uk**

It is important that smoke and heat alarms are maintained, kept clean, tested regularly, and the battery replaced when required. You should test your alarms at least every month, but we recommend that it is better to test them every week. An easy way is to remember 'Test it Tuesday'. Remind yourself to do this every Tuesday.

Fire doors

Our blocks are provided with self-closing fire doors to protected escape routes, such as corridors, lobbies and staircases. It is important that these critical fire doors are always kept closed, and are undamaged, so they perform their function in a fire.

Please do not prop them open at any time, as this will allow fire and smoke to pass through them.

If you notice that the door is not self-closing properly, please report it as soon as possible: ☎ **0800 137 111**.

Flat entrance doors

Flat entrance doors in enclosed blocks of flats are also self-closing fire doors. They keep escape routes clear of fire and smoke in the case of a fire within a flat. The Council is replacing all tenants' flat entrance fire doors over the next two years with new, high-performing fire doors. These will provide better fire protection and security than the previous doors.

Leaseholders will be able to purchase the higher standard door from our supplier at a reduced cost at the same time that tenants' doors are replaced. We recommend that leaseholders make use of this offer. However, if they can provide certification for their existing flat entrance door that proves the door meets requirements, they may be able to keep their existing door.

Flat entrance doors should not be changed without first seeking advice and approval from the Council. Installing a door that is not adequately fire-resistant is an offence under Building Regulations and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and can have serious costs and consequences to residents.



Gas, electrical and fire safety

Doors inside your flat

Most doors, even if they are not technically fire doors, will hold back a fire for some time. As most fires start in kitchens and living rooms, it is advisable to always keep those doors closed, particularly at night.

If you live in a maisonette, it is particularly important to close doors at night so that you have time to escape down or up the stairs.

You should not remove doors to rooms within your flat, as they can perform an important function in keeping you and your family safe.

Fitting of security gates at flat entrance door

Some residents have installed a security gate at the entrance to their flat. These can be extremely dangerous in a fire because they require a key to open the gate. They also delay access by the London Fire Brigade. We strongly recommend that these gates are never installed, and if you have a gate, we encourage you to remove it immediately, or at least keep it unlocked for the safety of you and your family. The new flat entrance doors have a higher standard of security and are 'secure by design', which removes the need for a security gate.

Balconies

Many fires start on balconies and these can be easily prevented. Balcony fires can spread to inside your flat, so it is important that you keep your balcony free from storage and never cook or have a barbecue on it. If you smoke on your balcony, please do not throw your cigarette over the balcony. Extinguish it fully in an ashtray before disposing of it in a bin.

White goods

Some white goods, such as tumble dryers, fridges and dishwashers have been identified as having faults that cause them to unexpectedly catch fire. We recommend that you check the goods in your home to ensure that they have not been subject to a recall. Details can be found at: www.gov.uk.

How can I be fire safe when using a chip pan or deep fat fryer?

Chip pans (or pans filled with cooking oil at high temperature) are particularly dangerous. Please exercise care when using chip pans. In particular:

- never fill more than one third full of fat or oil
- dry your potatoes before frying them as this reduces the risk of fire
- if the oil or fat gives off smoke it is too hot – switch off the heat immediately
- never leave a chip pan unattended with the heat on. If the telephone or doorbell rings, switch off the heat whilst you are attending to them.

If your chip pan catches fire:

1. Switch off the burner/ring immediately
2. Do not move the pan
3. Never throw water on the fire as this will make the fire spread and could significantly increase the risk of injury
4. Do not cover it with a wet or damp towel
5. If possible, cover the pan with the pan lid or a fire blanket after turning off the heat source and leave it for at least half an hour. If the lid or fire blanket are removed too soon, the fire may reignite
6. Close the door to the kitchen and call the Fire Brigade: **☎ 999**.



Fire safety and smoking

Smoking is a major cause of fire fatalities, as well as a major risk to your health. Whether you are smoking inside your home or outside, make sure you put out your cigarettes completely and dispose of them properly. Never throw cigarette butts from your balcony. The London Fire Brigade has some safety tips for smokers:

🌐 www.london-fire.gov.uk

Fire Risk Assessments

The Council regularly carries out Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) of all blocks. The FRAs look at fire prevention measures and consider whether these are adequate to keep people safe. We use independent, third-party certified specialists to provide the reports, which tell us what improvements to buildings are necessary. We will publish executive summaries of each of our FRAs on our website. Residents can request copies of the full assessments, some of which may require the redaction of personal information.

Visit our Fire Risk Assessments web page:

🌐 www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing/fire-safety/fire-safety

Communal corridors and staircases

In almost every block the route from the main entrance door of your building to the front door of your home is your primary means of escape in a fire. It is therefore vital that all communal corridors, staircases, lift lobbies and so on are always kept clear and free from obstructions. Please do not store any combustible materials in the communal areas at any time.

Access roads

It is important that fire service access roads to blocks of flats are kept clear and unobstructed to allow access for the London Fire Brigade and other emergency services.

Advice from the London Fire Brigade

What to look out for in your building:

Fire safety in all buildings is also dependent upon good maintenance and housekeeping.

In maisonettes and blocks of flats it is essential that:

- all flat front doors and doors on corridors and staircases must be 'self-closing' fire doors
- fire doors must 'self-close' properly, and not be held or wedged open - they are designed to stop the spread of fire
- items are not stored in corridors or staircases. They can block escape routes, stop firefighters doing their job, and can also feed the fire
- storage on balconies is kept to a minimum
- everyone who lives in the building knows the evacuation plan.

Fire Brigade Home Fire Safety Visits

If you have concerns about fire safety, please contact our Health and Safety Team:

✉ HM-HealthandSafetyTeam@rbkc.gov.uk

Alternatively, the Fire Brigade can carry out a Home Fire Safety Visit. They will visit you, carry out a Fire Risk Assessment of your home, offer you specific fire safety advice and advise you on what to do in the event of fire. They will also fit a smoke alarm if you do not already have one fitted. You can arrange a Home Fire Safety Visit by calling the Fire Brigade: 📞 **08000 28 44 28**. You can also book a visit on the London Fire Brigade's website: 🌐 www.london-fire.gov.uk



Maintaining your block/estate

Communal heating

Communal heating systems will run from 1 October to 1 May.

Lifts

Working lifts are essential for residents living in high-rise blocks. We carry out monthly inspections and testing. During a service visit, an engineer will check the safety features on a lift, in addition to cleaning, lubricating and adjusting all components for optimum performance. An engineer will record any work carried out and make recommendations for any repairs or works of improvement that are not covered in the service visit.

We have a rolling programme for lift works and improvements that ensures the safe use of lifts.

Door entry systems

Door entry systems are carefully checked and refurbished, where recommended, to ensure that you have continuous access and control over entry to your block.

Water assessment

A clean communal water supply is vital for health. Our team carries out risk assessments and tests all water and storage tanks in a property throughout the year to help prevent Legionella and other water-borne diseases from being a threat to you and others in your home

We have a duty to ensure that the risk of exposure to tenants and visitors is properly assessed and controlled. Legionella bacteria can breed in other places where water is stored such as water systems and cooling towers. The risk in your home is low because your water is usually stored in temperatures above 60C and used daily.

Asbestos

Many homes built before the year 2000 contain asbestos in several different forms. Asbestos was used in building materials such as floor tiles, roof tiles, insulation, ducting and various other common building products installed during the course of the building's construction and refurbishments.

Left undisturbed in a good condition, asbestos-containing materials are not a risk to health, however asbestos has been found to be the cause of some fatal diseases. If asbestos materials become damaged, asbestos fibres can be released into the air and can be breathed into the lungs, which over time with prolonged exposure can cause cancer.

To prevent exposure, it is important that asbestos-containing materials are protected and remain in a good condition. In some cases they will need to be removed to allow works to be carried out, such as in kitchen and bathroom replacements and other types of work. Asbestos will also be considered for removal if it presents a risk of becoming damaged during everyday activity.

Tenants who would like to make improvements or alterations to their home, must obtain permission in writing from the neighbourhood office before work begins. The neighbourhood team will refer the request to the repairs technical surveyor who is responsible for checking or requesting asbestos information associated to the works within the property. Permission will not be refused unreasonably, although some conditions may be applied. If uncertain about permitted home improvements, tenants should contact the Council. Information can be found on the Council's website: www.rbkc.gov.uk



- **Do not** cut into, sand, scrape or drill anything you think may contain asbestos.
- **Do not** try to remove textured coatings (Artex) from ceilings.
- **Do not** remove old floor tiles or lino flooring.
- **Always** soak wallpaper before removing it.

Asbestos Register

The Council is required to maintain an asbestos register. The register lists asbestos materials which have been identified within our housing stock and you may request information from the register about your home.

Asbestos management surveys are carried out on empty homes and when properties are refurbished. Where asbestos-containing materials remain present new tenants are advised in writing of the locations, and given guidance on controlling the risk.

Condensation

Condensation happens in all homes when warm moist air meets a cold surface and tiny water droplets develop. The more moisture in the air, the more water is produced.

Everyday activities such as cooking, washing clothes and bathing create moisture in the air. There is always some moisture in the air and warm air holds more moisture than cold air. You notice it when you see your breath on a cold day or when the mirror mists over when you have a bath.

Condensation often happens because warm damp air from kitchens and bathrooms moves to cooler areas, such as bedrooms. It happens more in cold weather, whether it is raining or dry. Look for it in corners, on or near windows and in or behind wardrobes and cupboards.

How it affects you

If left unchecked and untreated, condensation can become a serious problem. Too much condensation will make your home damp. House dust mites and mould growth both occur more often in damp conditions and these are associated with allergic reactions.

Damp conditions can also cause damage to your home, such as causing windows to rust or rot, and plaster to perish, and in serious cases can damage electrics. Your decorations can be spoilt by damp and mould growth.

Is it condensation or a leak?

Condensation is caused by moisture produced in the home, but it's not the only cause of damp. It can also come from building or plumbing leaks or rising damp.

Typical signs of condensation

1. Dampness occurring in winter rather than summer.
2. Damp and black mould in the corners of rooms, behind furniture and in cupboards.
3. Walls, ceilings and cold surfaces, such as cold-water pipes, 'sweat' with moisture.
4. Water appears on the inside of windows.
5. Outside walls are affected rather than walls between rooms.
6. Clothes in cupboards and drawers have a musty smell and mildew on them.

Signs of dampness from leaks

It can happen at any time of year. You can see a definite damp area with water staining. Little or no black mould appears on the damp area. If you suspect that dampness in your home is caused by a leak you should report it to us.



Maintaining your block/estate

Preventing condensation: your responsibilities

- Remove mould growth by using a mould and mildew cleaning product (available from most supermarkets and DIY stores). Make sure you use a product which has a Health and Safety Executive approval number and that you follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Wipe down the inside of windows if they become wet with condensation.
- Do not place beds and wardrobes against outside walls as mould is more likely to grow behind furniture.
- Don't put too many things in wardrobes and cupboards as it stops the air circulating.
- Report any repairs to us promptly, including any problems with extractor fans and heating systems.

Decorating

1. When you redecorate your bathroom or kitchen use a paint designed to be used in these rooms.
2. If you are decorating a room where mould is a problem, it's best to remove any wallpaper and instead use a good quality fungicidal paint.
3. Treat and remove the mould before redecorating; there are various products on the market that will help, such as fungicidal treatments available in DIY stores.
4. Use a stain block or sealer to help stop mould coming back.

Reducing steam and moisture

1. When cooking, cover pans with lids and keep the kitchen door closed to stop wet air from circulating around your flat or house. Make sure a window is open or the extractor fan is on.
2. If you use a tumble dryer, make sure it is vented so that the air escapes to the outside.
3. If you need to dry clothes indoors put them in a room and close the door, leaving the window wide open or fan on.
4. When bathing, run cold water into the bath first and then run the hot water. This creates less steam.

Heating your home

1. Heat all rooms even if they are not being used – radiators with thermostatic radiator valves will give you greater control over the heat from each individual radiator.
2. If you have central heating use the thermostat to set the temperature to a comfortable level (around 18°C to 21°C). Remember, turning the thermostat down by one or two degrees can save energy and save you money.
3. Do not place furniture in front of radiators, as this will stop them from heating the room.
4. Do not use the heating on a high setting for short periods of time. Heating your home for a longer time at a lower temperature will keep your home warmer and cost you less.
5. Do not use portable LPG (Calor Gas) heaters. These produce a lot of moisture and are not allowed in our homes for health and safety reasons.



Ventilating your home

1. It's important to allow plenty of fresh air into your home to stop the air indoors becoming stale and humid, which is not good for your health.
2. Always keep a small window or an air vent open when you are at home. It's best to keep air vents open all the time.
3. After you've had a bath or shower, open the bathroom window until the steam has cleared or use the extractor fan if you have one.
4. When cooking, make sure the kitchen door is closed and either the extractor fan is on (if you have one) or a window is open.

Extractor fans

1. Some of our homes are fitted with extractor fans. These can quickly remove damp air from kitchens and bathrooms, where most moisture is produced.
2. Extractor fans should be used whenever you are cooking or bathing. After you've finished in the bathroom or the kitchen, leave the fan on for about 20 minutes to make sure all the steam has cleared.
3. When using an extractor fan keep the windows in the room closed. If a window is open the fan will draw air in from outside, rather than drawing the damp air out from the room. Make sure your curtains or blinds don't cover the fan.
4. Some fans switch on and off automatically according to the amount of moisture in the air. Do not turn these off at the power switch as they are designed to work when they are needed. If you suspect that they are coming on more, or less often, than they should please report this to us.

Repairs and improvement work for tenants: our responsibilities

In most cases if you follow the steps here you will be able to keep condensation under control. Hopefully this will avoid the need for repairs, but please let us know if condensation continues to be a problem.

Older and tenants with disabilities

If you are a tenant over 65 years of age or are disabled, we may be able to help you treat mould in your bathroom, toilet or kitchen. Please contact us to arrange an inspection.

We will consider carrying out work if:

1. there is widespread mould growth in a bedroom or living room
2. you have followed the advice in this handbook and still have very bad condensation and mould growth.

If you have bad condensation and mould in a living room or bedroom, please contact us to arrange an inspection. We may need to carry out works, which could range from a professional mould clean, to insulating walls or fitting extractor fans.

We will not carry out work:

- on small areas of mould
- in hallways, bathrooms, toilets or kitchens
- if you have small patches of mould growth, you will need to remove it yourself using cleaning products and anti-mould paints.



Maintaining your block/estate

Capital repairs

As well as day-to-day repairs and ensuring that gas and electrical installations are safe, the Council carries out major works such as:

- mechanical and electrical works including renewing lifts, boiler house replacements/repairs, lateral mains and door entry systems
- exterior works for example: roofs, windows, building fabric, balconies, painting and decorating etc
- works in communal areas.

The programme is based on the results of the 2018 homes survey which looked at roofs and windows and around 20 per cent of the interior of tenants' homes. Our aim is to make sure that homes are secure, warm and weather-tight. All work will be carefully planned to minimise disruption and costs, for example if scaffolding needs to be put up to carry out major roof repairs, we will try to do other work at the same time.

It's worth remembering that unforeseen things do happen, and new information comes to light. If planned programmes of work are held up for any reason, or not delivered according to the plan, they can also affect the schedule. Before work starts on any estate or block, we need to carry out a more detailed survey. We will consult locally with residents and provide more detailed information before work begins on any home.

If you would like to see where your property is in the current draft programme of work, please visit:

🌐 www.rbkc.gov.uk



Anti-social behaviour

We want everyone who lives on our estates and in our street properties to enjoy living in their home. To do this, neighbours must be tolerant of other people's lifestyles and conscious of how their own behaviour affects others. This part of the handbook sets out your responsibilities and gives you some advice about what you and your Neighbourhood Services Coordinator can do if you have problems with a neighbour or visitor. Anti-social behaviour is a breach of your tenancy and we will not tolerate it on our estates. We take robust action against anyone who we identify committing this type of behaviour. This can result in eviction for those responsible. For more information about how we address anti-social behaviour, you should refer to the Council's Antisocial Behaviour Policy.

It is an important condition of your tenancy that you do not commit anti-social behaviour. It is also your responsibility that everyone in your household and visitors, including pets, abide by the tenancy condition which states:

Tenancy Condition 5

5.1 For the avoidance of doubt the tenant is responsible for his/her own actions and those of any other person (including children) living in or visiting the property and the term 'tenant' in this section shall be construed accordingly. The tenant will ensure that any other person (including children) living in or visiting the property will not do anything that the tenant is required not to do by this agreement.

Many of the properties that we manage are converted from an original dwelling into several flats or maisonettes. This means that you will be living close to your neighbours and sharing some areas of the property. Many of the things you do may affect your neighbours. Please read the pamphlet Everyone Needs Good Neighbours which is in your welcome pack.

We take all complaints about anti-social behaviour seriously. If you report anti-social behaviour to us, we will:

- support and advise you throughout the incident(s)
- take a full description of what happened
- arrange an interpreter if you need one
- with your consent, investigate and speak to all the parties involved
- consider the most appropriate action, when we have fully investigated
- work with the Police and any other agencies who may be able to help to resolve the situation.

We aim to contact you in five working days. The information you provide will only be used for the investigation of your report and for no other purposes. All information will be treated in confidence.

Mediation

Mediation is a free service offered by the Council to tenants to help parties to resolve their differences. We offer the help of an impartial, trained mediator to work with you to try to reach a solution that suits everyone involved. Mediation can help in less serious disputes about a clash of lifestyles, use of shared spaces, parking disputes where the Council would be unlikely to take enforcement action, but a resolution is still required. If you think this course of action can help you, please contact us.

When to ask for help

If a crime is taking place or anyone is in immediate danger always call 999. If it is not an emergency call the police on 101 (available 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week). Also use 101 to contact your Local Neighbourhood Policing Team or to contact your local police station for advice or information on policing matters.



Court action

We will only take court action after trying other means to resolve problems. If we decide to take you to court, we always deliver a legal notice stating the reasons for the action and the date after which we will start proceedings. The court would then write to you to let you know when and where the court hearing would take place. At the hearing the judge will give you the chance to put your side of the case and will then decide whether or not to give possession back to the Council. A secure tenant cannot be made to leave their home unless a court has ordered them to do so during their tenancy term.

Types of anti-social behaviour

Listed below are types of anti-social behaviour. The list is not exhaustive and describes a wide range of anti-social behaviour.

Noise

Noise nuisance is the type of antisocial behaviour we get the most complaints about every year. This includes complaints about noisy DIY, shouting, slamming doors and loud music. The Council's Noise and Nuisance Team has powers to serve legal notices, get warrants, seize amplifiers and loudspeakers. You can contact the team: ☎ **020 7361 3002**, ✉ **environmentalhealth@rbkc.gov.uk** or 🌐 **www.rbkc.gov.uk**. You can also contact a Citizens Advice Bureau, law centre or solicitor for advice.

Groups gathering

Groups of people hanging around on estates can be intimidating and increases residents' fear of crime. Tackling nuisance caused by groups of people gathering on estates is a high priority for us and our residents. We will take legal action against tenants, their children/occupants or visitors who have carried out serious acts of anti-social behaviour.

Drugs

If you have concerns about the misuse of drugs, or illegal activity involving drugs near your home, you should contact the police and your Neighbourhood Services Coordinator. You can remain anonymous.

Harassment

Harassment takes the form of threatening or intimidating behaviour. It can include vandalism or verbal or physical abuse. It is a crime to harass someone. We will take legal action against any resident or member of their family, who harasses or abuses their neighbours. If you are a victim of any form of harassment, please tell your Neighbourhood Services Coordinator or the police. If you are involved in a serious or violent incident outside normal office hours and you need help, please call ☎ **999**.

Communal areas

You must not store personal items in the communal areas of your building. This includes the walkways outside of your building. These can be a fire risk as well as inconveniencing other residents. Our Estate Services Teams carry out regular inspections and any items found in communal areas will be removed. The Council is committed to keeping high standards of cleanliness on its estates. You can help us by disposing of rubbish properly. When using a rubbish chute, do not block it with items that are too large. If you find the chute blocked, don't add to the blockage, report it to us: ☎ **0800 137 111** or let your Neighbourhood Services Coordinator or Estate Services Team know.



Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse includes any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members. Abuse can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Domestic abuse can affect women and men in both heterosexual and gay or lesbian relationships.

The Council's priority is to offer appropriate advice and assistance to the person facing domestic abuse. Any action taken will aim to increase the safety of those experiencing abuse. Wherever possible, the Council will take action against the perpetrator.

If you need to leave your home immediately:

in an emergency always dial **☎ 999**

- if possible, go and stay with someone you know and trust, where you feel you will be safe
- emergency accommodation may be available, particularly if you have children, are pregnant or are vulnerable due to age or disability
- if it is safe to remain in your home, make sure your Neighbourhood Services Coordinator is aware of the situation so that they can discuss options with you.

When a tenant who has fled domestic abuse is safe, if the perpetrator remains, the Council will take legal action to take possession of the property.

Clause 5.16 of the tenancy agreement states that:

The tenant must not commit violence towards a husband, wife, partner or former husband or wife or partner or other member of the family. The tenant must not harass or use mental, emotional or sexual abuse that might be expected to cause anyone who lives with the tenant to leave the property. If there is a breach of this clause, the landlord may seek a possession order against the remaining tenant or occupier.

You can find out more about dealing with domestic abuse from the Council's pamphlet on Domestic Abuse **☎ www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing/get-involved/housing-publications**

Useful contacts

National Domestic Violence Helpline

☎ 0808 2000 247 (24-hour freephone)

Police Community Safety Unit

☎ 020 8246 0226

A specialist unit dealing with all domestic abuse, including same sex domestic abuse. Trained officers investigate cases, take statements, and give advice on legal options and safety issues, as well as putting victims of domestic abuse in touch with local support services.



Keeping a pet

The tenancy conditions state:

The tenant will not keep at the property any animal without the prior permission of the landlord or its agents in writing, and will not keep the animal or pet at the property if permission is withdrawn by the landlord or its agents in writing. If permission is given, whether by the landlord or its agents, permission may be given subject to conditions and the tenant will comply with any such conditions. The landlord or its agents will not grant permission or will withdraw permission if the animal is or is likely to become a nuisance, annoyance or health hazard to any neighbour or person within the locality.

If you want to keep a pet, you must get permission from your Neighbourhood Services Coordinator and sign a responsible pet owner agreement. The agreement sets out the terms and conditions under which the Council grants permission for you to keep a pet at your property. By signing it you confirm that you agree to be bound by it.

The agreement should be read in conjunction with your tenancy or leasehold agreement. Failure to abide by the conditions of this agreement may be deemed to be a breach of tenancy or lease and may result in legal action. You will have to confirm that you are a responsible dog owner by agreeing to keep your dog in a satisfactory manner. Permission for you to keep the pet will normally be withdrawn if you breach any of the terms of this agreement.

In the UK it is against the law to own certain types of dog, these are:

- Pit Bull Terrier
- Japanese Tosa
- Dog Argentino
- Fila Brasileiro

Under no circumstances will permission be granted for any of these breeds to be kept in Council property. If any of these breeds are found, they will be reported to the Council's Animal Warden for removal.

If a dog becomes lost and is picked up as a stray by the Council's Animal Warden, the owner avoids paying kennel fees if the dog is registered under the Dog Watch programme. For more information on the Dog Watch programme or to report a dangerous dog call Streetline on **020 7361 3001** or visit your local library.

Parking

We manage parking on housing estates through a variety of different types of permits. All applications can be downloaded from our website www.rbkc.gov.uk or can be obtained from the Customer Service Centre.

Residents' parking permits

Our standard form of parking permit, applicable to most users, enables the permit holder to park in any available bay on an estate (except those specifically designated for visitor or disabled parking). Each estate parking zone has a three-letter code that is displayed on the signs and on permits (for example, HDC for Henry Dickens Court).

In addition to parking bays, we also have lock-up garages available on some estates. These must be used purely for the purposes of parking vehicles and not for general storage.



Anti-social behaviour

Disabled Parking Permits

If you are an estate resident and hold a current Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea purple disabled person's badge, we will provide you with free parking in a dedicated bay which is convenient for you to access. This bay will be marked out as a designated disability parking bay.

Carers

For residents with carers or other regular visitors, we can provide an annual multi-registration permit for several vehicles; but only one vehicle at a time can use the permit. This type of permit is free, but you must provide evidence of need when you apply.

Visitor parking

All households are entitled to up to three days' free visitor parking per month. These permits are issued as a scratch card for use only in the designated visitor bays marked 'VIS' (if available) on a first come, first served basis. If there are no designated visitor parking bays available on an estate, visitors can use the permit to park in a visitor bay on another nearby estate, where this is practical. If there are no visitor bays available, unfortunately the visitor will have to make other arrangements.

Even if a resident does not have an annual permit, they still have an entitlement to free visitor parking. The visitor scratch cards are available upon request to all Housing Management estate households. Our customer services staff need at least 48 hours' notice to process a request before the scratch cards can be collected from either our office in Blantyre Street or Kensal Road, so please request your scratch cards in advance if you think you might need them.

Enforcement

On most estates parking controls are managed by Civil Enforcement Officers, who will issue a parking ticket to any vehicle which is parked without displaying a valid permit or outside of a designated parking area.

Contact Us

If you have any questions, please contact the estate parking team in our Customer Service Centre:

- ☎ 0800 137 111 or ☎ 020 3617 7080
- ✉ HM-Parking@rbkc.gov.uk
- Write to:

📍 Customer Service Centre

**Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Housing Services
Network Hub
292a Kensal Road
London W10 5BE**

Keeping you informed and your records safe



The Council has an obligation to:

- publish certain information proactively
- protect your personal information; and
- respond to requests for information.

Information and consultation

We must provide you with information about your Tenancy Agreement and about certain policies and procedures. We must consult you about any changes to your Tenancy Agreement, any modernisation and improvement planned for your home, and changes to our neighbourhood management policies.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the UK Data Protection Act 2018

The Council is committed to ensuring that all data is:

- processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner
- collected for a specific and legitimate purpose and not used for anything other than this stated purpose, or as provided for in our privacy and fair processing notices
- relevant and limited to whatever the requirements are for which the data is processed
- accurate, and where necessary, kept up to date. Any identified inaccuracies will be amended or removed without undue delay
- stored for as long as required, as specified within the Council's Records Retention policy
- secured with appropriate solutions, which protect the data against unauthorised or unlawful processing and accidental loss, destruction or damage.

For further information about the Council's commitment to GDPR, please see the Council's website.



Resident engagement and complaints

This is your home, and the Council is committed to ensuring you can play a part in how your home and estate are managed. We have a resident engagement team who are here to support you to get involved through a range of different ways.

- Consulting with you about works and improvements to your estates.
- Ensuring you are consulted on policies and strategies that will affect your home.
- Supporting the setting up and running of Residents' Associations, providing grants and advice and ensuring they are open and inclusive.
- Running training sessions, allowing residents to gain new skills.
- Inviting you to look over our performance figures.
- Supporting you to set up specific projects for your community, for example composting or up-cycling.
- Holding a series of roadshows that bring all our services to your estate and annual residents' summit.

Please get in touch:

✉ HM-communityinvestment@rbkc.gov.uk

Complaints

The Housing Management Complaints Policy explains how to make a complaint, the issues covered under this policy, and how we deal with complaints about housing management services. The policy can be found on the Council's website or you can request a copy.

For complaints or comments you may have about Housing Management services please use the Complaints and feedback form:

🌐 www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing/get-involved/housing-management-complaints-and-feedback

You can also make a complaint or comment:

- ✉ HM-complaints@rbkc.gov.uk
- ☎ **0800 137 111** or ☎ **020 3617 7080**
- by writing to us at Housing Management, 292a Kensal Road, London W10 5BE

Moving to a new home



There are many reasons why people may decide they wish to move home, such as a change in personal circumstances. If you do decide you want to move, there are several ways you can do this.

Mutual exchange

A mutual exchange is when two or more tenants decide to swap homes. You can swap with another Kensington and Chelsea Council tenant, a tenant of another council or a tenant of a housing association. You must write to us and the other landlord to get permission to exchange, but we will not refuse without good reason. Reasons for refusal include if either of the properties are too big or small for the incoming tenant, or if either of the tenants is in breach of their tenancy conditions. When you exchange you must accept the other property as it is left and take responsibility for any improvements or alterations made by your exchange partner.

If you move through the mutual exchange system, you may be subject to different tenancy terms and lengths. Potential exchangers should take advice on all aspects of the new tenancy terms thoroughly before agreeing to move.

It is illegal to pay anyone or to persuade anyone to swap homes with you. If this happens, legal action could be taken against you and your exchange partner.

Transfer

Social housing in the borough is in such short supply that, realistically, it is very unlikely that you will be able to move to another council property or elsewhere in the social housing sector unless you are an under-occupier (you have more space than you need). If you want to move to another home managed by Kensington and Chelsea Council, you will have to apply through the Council's allocations scheme which aims to make sure properties are offered to the

people most in need. Households with little or no priority for rehousing who want to move from existing Council tenancies need to register with a mutual exchange scheme or consider other options.

Sheltered housing

There may be a time when you want to move to accommodation specifically to support over 55 year-olds or people with disabilities. The Council has five sheltered housing schemes situated across the borough. These have a flexible 24-hour service which consists of planned, on-site Sheltered Housing Officer support (during workday working hours) and an out-of-hours Community Alarm Service.

The support service includes:

- a planned and structured introduction to the scheme for all tenants
- pre-agreed check calls and contact from your Sheltered Housing Officer
- advice and practical support regarding day-to-day tenancy matters and repairs
- planned individual assessments, support plans and reviews to ensure you have the appropriate level of support and assistance
- planned scheme meetings with the Sheltered Housing Officer
- planned surgeries with surveyors, housing officers and other support agencies
- immediate assistance in an emergency.



Moving to a new home

Our schemes are warm and friendly with a range of homely and accessible communal services and facilities for tenants that include:

- communal lounges and kitchens where tenants can meet and socialise
- a laundry room with washing machines and tumble dryers
- landscaped gardens
- social activities organised by tenants' associations and social groups, and supported by the Sheltered Housing Officer when they are on duty.
- furnished guest rooms at three schemes (Nursery Lane, Tavistock and Whitchurch) for friends and relatives to use for a small charge when they visit.

Right to buy

If you've been a Council tenant for at least three years, you may think about buying your home.

Remember, buying your home is a big decision for you and your family. You should always get independent advice before deciding whether buying is right for you. For more information visit:

🌐 www.righttobuy.communities.gov.uk.

You can make a joint application with someone who shares your tenancy or with up to three family members who have lived with you for the past 12 months (even if they don't share your tenancy).

You will need to fill out an application form, then your property will be valued at market value. Depending on how long you have been a social housing tenant, you may get a discount on the market value. However, if you want to sell the property within three years of buying it you would have to repay the discount.

It's also worth remembering that you will have additional expenses when you buy your home. If you get a mortgage, you are likely to still need an initial lump sum, plus money for legal fees, Land Registry charges and Stamp Duty.

If you buy a house, you will be responsible for building insurance and all repairs and maintenance. If you buy a flat you will be responsible for paying your share of the building's insurance, service charges and any major works charges.

If you are thinking of buying your home you should get as much advice and assistance as you can, so you can be sure you are making the right decision.

My notes



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My notes

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English

Information from this document can be made available in alternative formats and in different languages. If you require further assistance please use the contact details below.

Arabic

يمكن توفير المعلومات التي وردت في هذا المستند بصيغ بديلة ولغات اخرى. إذا كنت في حاجة إلى مزيد من المساعدة، الرجاء استخدام بيانات الاتصال الواردة أدناه.

Farsi

اطلاعات حاوی در این مدارک به صورتهای دیگر و به زبانهای مختلف در دسترس می باشد. در صورت نیاز به کمک بیشتر لطفاً از جزئیات تماس ذکر شده در ذیل استفاده کنید.

French

Les informations présentées dans ce document peuvent vous être fournies dans d'autres formats et d'autres langues. Si vous avez besoin d'une aide complémentaire, veuillez utiliser les coordonnées ci-dessous.

Portuguese

A informação presente neste documento pode ser disponibilizada em formatos alternativos e em línguas diferentes. Se desejar mais assistência, use por favor os contactos fornecidos abaixo.

Somali

Macluumaadka dokumentigan waxaa lagu heli karaa qaabab kale iyo luuqado kala duwan. Haddii aad u baahan tahay caawinaad intaas dhaafsiisan fadlan isticmaal xiriirka faahfaahinta hoose.

Spanish

La información en este documento puede facilitarse en formatos alternativos y en diferentes idiomas. Si necesita más ayuda por favor utilice la siguiente información de contacto.

☎ 0800 137 111 or 020 3617 7080