**Welcome**

Chorley Community Housing (CCH) was set up in March 2007 when it took over all of Chorley Borough Council’s 2,916 homes by transfer after a decisive vote in favour by tenants. We are a not for profit registered social landlord and a member of the Adactus Housing Group.

**Our Vision:**

**Our Vision is:** Working together to make great homes and sustainable communities.

This handbook is a guide to the services we offer to our tenants. Please keep it where you can find it in your home. It helps to answer your queries and advises you who to contact for further information.

We welcome any comments you may have about this handbook.

- Is the information easy to read?
- Can you find the right information quickly?
- Are there any queries not addressed in the handbook?

**Please contact us with any comments:** Chorley Community Housing, 24 -26 Gillibrand Street, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 2EJ

Tel: 01257 414900       Emergency out of hours : 01257 414970
Email: enquiries@chorleych.co.uk       Web: www.chorleych.co.uk

This information can be made available to you in larger print or on audio tape. Please telephone **01257 414900** to access this service.
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1 Tenancy Rights and Responsibilities
Tenancy Agreement

All our tenants have a tenancy agreement. Your tenancy agreement is a legally binding document. It sets out the responsibilities and duties we have as your landlord, and those you have as our tenant.

Types of Tenancy

• **Starter Tenancy**
  Under the terms of the Housing Act 1996, all new tenants will be given a Starter Tenancy. Usually this will run for a trial period of 12 months.

  Unless an action occurs that results in the tenancy being brought to an end, the trial period commences on the date the tenancy starts and ends on the anniversary of that date. The tenancy then becomes Assured.

• **Assured Tenancy**
  Under the terms of the Housing Act 1985, you have statutory security of tenure. This means that we cannot evict you from your home without being granted an order for possession from a County Court.

  You will remain as an Assured tenant should you transfer to another of our properties or exchange your home with another Assured tenant.

• **Statutory Rights**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statutory Right</th>
<th>Starter</th>
<th>Assured</th>
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<tr>
<td>Right to Succession</td>
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<td>Right to Repair</td>
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<td>Right to Exchange</td>
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<td>Right to Vote to Transfer</td>
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<td>to New Landlord</td>
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Right to Occupy
As long as you comply with the terms of your tenancy agreement and respect the rights of other tenants and neighbours, you have the right to occupy your home without interruption or disturbance from us. You must permit reasonable access, on 24 hours notice, to our authorised employees or contractors. You must occupy the property as your only or main home. If you are going to be absent from the property for more than thirty consecutive days you must let us know in writing and make sure the property is secure in your absence.

Right to Information
As a tenant you are entitled to information from us on how well we do our job, how successful we are at collecting rent, rent levels and how quickly we carry out repairs.

This information is available through regular information sent to you, at tenant meetings, on our website or on request from our offices.

Under the Data Protection Act, you have the right to inspect and check details we hold about you on computer or on file. (There may be a charge for this.) The only exception to this is confidential information provided by third parties. If you wish to see this information please make your request in writing to us. You will be asked to provide identification before you can see the information. This is to protect your privacy. If you believe our information is incorrect you have the right to ask us to amend our files or record your disagreement.

Right to Consultation
You have the right to be consulted by us about:

- Changes to the conditions of your tenancy
- Changes in the housing management and repairs service we provide
- New major programmes of work
- Issues that are the subject of serious complaint by our tenants

We can consult you in a variety of ways, such as by letter, other written information, home visit, in meetings or through surveys. See the section on ‘Resident Involvement’ for more information on how we involve tenants, and how you can have you say on important issues.

Preserved Right to Buy (PRTB) / Right to Acquire (RTA)
If you were a secure tenant of Chorley Borough Council at the time...
of the housing stock transfer (26th March 2007) you may qualify for the Preserved Right to Buy. As a Tenant of CCH whose tenancy commenced on or after 26th March 2007, you may qualify for the Right to Acquire.

To qualify for either the Preserved Right To Buy or Right To Acquire, you must meet certain criteria, which, relates to when your tenancy started, the length of time that you have been a public sector tenant and the type of dwelling you are wishing to buy or acquire.

For more detailed information about these schemes, you can obtain a copy of our “Homebuyers Guide for Tenants” by contacting your Neighbourhood Officer and you can obtain individual advice from our Home Ownership Officer (during office hours) on 01257 414900.

**Lodgers and Sub-Letting**

You have the right to take in lodgers, so long as you do not overcrowd your home. You must inform us in writing immediately if you take in a lodger, and when a lodger leaves your property.

If you wish to sub-let part of your home you must get written approval from us. Permission to sub-let may not be granted if this will overcrowd your home, and may be withdrawn at any time.

If you are receiving Housing Benefit you must inform the Benefits Agency and your Local Authority Housing Benefits department, as your Housing Benefit or other benefits could be affected.

At the end of your tenancy lodgers and sub-letters will be required to leave the property or they will be treated as unlawful occupiers. They have no legal right to take over your tenancy.

**Succession**

If you die whilst you are our tenant, your spouse or another member of your family, who has lived with you for a period of 12-months prior to your death, may have the right of succession to your tenancy.

There are certain conditions that must be met for the right of succession and further details of these can be obtained from your Neighbourhood Officer.

**Home Improvements**

You have the right to make improvements or alterations to your home. You should ask permission from us in writing before you start any improvement work. We will write back telling you if you can do the work.
We can ask you that the work is done in a certain way, or to a specified standard. We will check that the work will not damage your home or make it unsafe. You must make sure that you or your contractor is adequately insured against damage to our property or other people’s possessions, and personal injury during the course of the work. We can inspect works in progress and on completion.

Our surveyor will need to inspect some kinds of structural work. If any work on your home causes damage, we will either insist that you carry out the necessary repairs or charge you for them.

Major improvements, such as the installation of central heating, will not increase your rent.

If you remove any alterations or improvements you must provide a good quality replacement and leave the property in good order, either at or above its original standard.

**Compensation for Home Improvements**

You could be entitled to compensation for improvements you have made to the property if you end your tenancy.

This list details the improvements we will consider for compensation:

- Bathroom suites
- Replacing bath (colour to match existing fittings)
- Shower (replacing bath)
- Shower (above bath)
- Full kitchen replacement
- Additional kitchen units (to match existing fittings)
- Additional kitchen work surfaces for food preparation
- Replacing external door
- Full central heating
- Balanced flue gas room heater
- Electric storage heater
- Gas fire (only if appliance being replaced is over five years old)
- Expansion of existing heating system (provided boiler has sufficient capacity)
- Mains wired smoke alarms
- Additional lights
- External security lights
- Extractor fans to bathroom or kitchen
- External window replacement
- Replacement of single glazing with double glazed unit
- Loft insulation (must bring insulation up to 200mm)
- Insulation of pipework, water tanks and cylinder
- Cavity wall insulation
- Draught proofing of external doors and windows
- Door or window locks of improved specification to those currently fitted
You will need to get three written cost estimates for the work and send them to us. You should tell us which one you want to accept and why. We will write to you telling you whether or not we are happy with the estimate. Once you have our written agreement to the estimate, you can go ahead.

You must inform us when the work is finished and we will come and check that it has been done properly.

**How do you get compensation?**

You should make a claim for compensation when you tell us you want to end your tenancy. You will have up to 14 days after the end of your tenancy to make a claim.

You will not receive compensation if you are buying your home through Right to Buy, because improvements are not included in the purchase price.

We will need enough information to decide how much compensation you should receive, including:

- Your name and address
- The improvements you have made
- How much the improvements have cost
- The date each improvement was started and then completed

**How do we calculate compensation?**

We look at the cost of your improvements. We then look at the current value of the improvement. The value will reduce over time. We also assess your compensation depending on the condition of the improvement when you claim.

We can offset any outstanding arrears from the compensation you receive when your tenancy ends. You can receive up to £3,000 for improvements. We will not pay compensation for claims valued below £250.

You can claim compensation for the cost of materials and the labour costs of a genuine contractor. You cannot claim compensation for time you have spent working on any improvements. You will need to give us an invoice as evidence of what you paid. If you make a false claim, we can take you to court.

**What if we will not pay any or part of your claim?**

You have the right to appeal. If you are still not happy you can follow our Complaints procedure. See the section on how to make a complaint, compliment or comment for more information.
2 Moving In, Transferring and Moving On
Between Signing for a Tenancy and Moving in

After you have signed for your new tenancy there are a number of things to do before you move in, which your Neighbourhood Officer will discuss with you:

• You should contact gas and electricity suppliers so they can arrange for you to take responsibility for the meters. When this is done you must contact our Repairs Hotline 01257 414900 to arrange a safety check on the gas appliances in your new home. **The gas supply will not be connected until this check is done.**

• Our insurance policy covers the bricks and mortar of your dwelling. However, you need to arrange your own home contents insurance. Details of a scheme on offer to our tenants is available on request.

• You must contact the Local Authority Council Tax Department, informing them of your tenancy commencement date.

• If you are applying for Housing Benefit you are strongly advised to complete a Housing Benefit claims form immediately. Claims forms can be obtained from either Chorley Borough Council’s Union Street Offices or the local office of Department of Works and Pensions.

**Housing Benefit is only payable from the date you actually move into your home.**

**Transfers**

Assured tenants are entitled to apply for a transfer to another of our properties, which may be more suitable to their needs if their circumstances change. This might mean that you would prefer to live in a smaller home, or in a home that enables you to feel more secure, or to maintain your independence as you grow older.

Tenants wishing to transfer to another home need to complete an application form and these applications will be assessed against the same criteria as all applications to our Housing Register.

Where we are unable to provide accommodation of a type or in a location needed for genuine reasons by a tenant, we may be able to provide help through nomination agreements with other Registered Social Landlords and accredited Private Landlords.
**Mutual Exchanges**

A mutual exchange is a means of swapping your property with somebody else.

To get started you need to find somebody who wants to swap. You can do this by adding your name to the mutual exchange register which can be found in our office reception area. Other housing associations also display lists in their reception areas too. You may find someone to exchange with by looking at the lists, or they may even find you. We are also to include the Homeswapper online exchange service on our website.

When you have identified somebody who might like to swap with you it is usual to visit each other's property.

When you have agreed with someone that you want to swap homes you will need to complete a mutual exchange application form (available on request) and return this to your Neighbourhood Officer.

We have 42 days from receiving the exchange form to make a decision on whether to approve a move, although most take much less time than this.

The Neighbourhood Officer carries out an initial check of the tenant's rent account and tenancy history. If the initial check is satisfactory, both tenants will be visited to ascertain the circumstances of the proposed exchange.

**Rent Arrears**

Where the tenant has rent arrears, we will not withhold consent provided that there are no other reasons for refusing and provided that the arrears are cleared beforehand.

**Tenant Damage**

When a mutual exchange is requested, our Asset Management Team carries out a maintenance inspection to identify any tenant damage/repairs the tenant is responsible for. If any damage is identified the tenant will be asked to repair it before consent to the exchange is given.

We aim to support tenant exchanges and do not withhold consent unreasonably. The most common reasons for refusal are:

- Breach of tenancy and a recent notice to seek possession has been served on the property;
- The property is too big or too small for the family moving in (although we will usually allow you to move to a property which has one bedroom more than you need);
• The property has been adapted for special needs and there is nobody with special needs moving into the property;

• The property has been specially designated for the elderly.

Once the move has been approved your Neighbourhood Officer will agree with you a time for you to call in at the office to sign the necessary paperwork. Once a date has been agreed between yourself, the other tenant and the landlord, it is up to you to arrange the move.

**Do not exchange before you have the written permission of your landlord.**

**When You Wish to End Your Tenancy**

All tenants wishing to end their tenancy must give us four weeks notice in writing. If you are transferring to another of our properties or if there are good reasons why you are not able to give four weeks notice, we will consider allowing a shorter notice period.

All the keys to your property must be returned to us by 12 noon of the Monday on which your tenancy ends. You must ensure that all your furniture and belongings are removed from the property.

We may ask you to complete an exit survey as part of our commitment to monitor and improve our service to tenants.
3 Rents
How rents are set

In December 2000 the Government launched a publication called “Quality and Choice: a Decent Home for All”. This publication has changed the way that rents are set. Rents for both council housing and for housing association homes will now be set in relation to local property values and local earnings. Eventually the rents for council homes and housing association homes in an area will be the same, reaching what is called a ‘target rent’.

It is intended that the majority of our housing will achieve the target rent by the year 2012.

The target rent will be based on the following calculation:

- 30% of rent charge will be based on relative property values
- 70% of rent charge will be based on relative local earnings
- The number of bedrooms in a property is taken into account, so that smaller properties have a lower rent

Rent charges on newly built properties will be set at the target rent.

We will produce an annual Rent Plan and you will receive at least two rent statements each year.

Rent Payment Options

You can pay your rent by:

- Allpay Swipe Card at all Post Offices and selected PayZone outlets. This service is free of charge. (Further details available on request).
- Postal payments (cheques only) to our offices
- Standing Order/Direct Debit through your bank
- Interactive telephone service 24-hours a day, seven days a week (Further details on request).
- On-line via our website at www.chorleych.co.uk

To make phone or internet payments you will need your Allpay card to quote your number. (Further details on request).

Rent Arrears

Our rent arrears policy

The rents you pay enable us to keep your homes in good repair and provide services to you. We recognise the need to help you to maintain prompt and regular payments, preventing you from getting into arrears.

It is important to understand that your rent must be paid in full and on time. Most of our tenants do pay
their rent on time, but sometimes things go wrong and payments are missed.

When this happens we act fast to prevent the problem getting out of control. We will give you all the help we can to stop you getting into arrears. Our rent arrears recovery policy is based on early action, which is fair but firm. Staff try to establish and maintain a relationship with tenants in arrears to ensure that they receive sound advice at every stage of the procedure.

Money problems
If you are faced with money problems and are struggling to pay your rent, you are encouraged to talk to our Income Recovery Team who are there to help you. Although we consider rent arrears to be a priority debt, we will take into consideration other debts and commitments when arranging for arrears to be paid off. All discussions about your financial circumstances will be dealt with in confidence.

The Income Recovery Team can help you by:

- Discussing your circumstances with you before your arrears become too serious.

- Advising you on any welfare or Housing Benefits you may be entitled to, and helping you to apply for these benefits.

- Putting you in touch with other agencies that can offer you support, such as the Citizens’ Advice Bureau or Welfare Rights Resource Centre.

- Referring you to our Tenant Support Team for assistance.

- Setting up a voluntary arrangement for you to pay regular amounts off your arrears.

When arrears build up
If you are responsible for paying some or all of your rent and fall into arrears, either your Neighbourhood Officer or a member of the Income Recovery Team will contact you to agree a way of clearing the debt within a reasonable time. This might be by paying one lump sum, or making regular smaller payments. The speed at which arrears are cleared depends on your ability to pay. We will not expect anyone to pay off arrears at an unreasonable rate. It is always better to pay off the debt through an agreement with us, rather than take out a loan that might have high interest charges.

If you clear your arrears or keep to your agreed payments we will take no further action.
If you fail to keep to agreements you have made or do not respond when we try to contact you there may be no alternative but to commence court action against you, which could lead to your eviction.

Court action
Court action begins with us issuing a legal document called a Section 21 Notice (for Starter Tenancies) or a Notice of Seeking Possession (for Assured Tenancies). These documents do not mean that you have to leave your home, but it is the first stage in legal action to recover the arrears and/or repossess the property.

If you begin to make payments towards clearing your arrears the case will not proceed to court. However, if agreed payments are missed we will proceed with court action.

Going to court is a very serious matter and can lead to:

- An order to clear the arrears and pay our legal costs
- Eviction
- A County Court Judgement (CCJ) against you, which may affect your credit rating in the future

We will continue to try and make contact with you and agree a suitable repayment programme before the case is heard in court. If the case results in eviction, Chorley Council may regard you as intentionally homeless and will have no statutory responsibility to re-house you. The court will be told if a repayment agreement has been set up.

We will seek an adjournment order through the court. This is an agreement for the repayment of any arrears. However, in some cases a possession order will be sought.

If a suspended possession order is granted you will receive a letter from the County Court telling you what repayments you need to make to prevent an Eviction Warrant. If you default on the court order you will receive a final warning and eviction proceedings will follow.

Housing Benefit
If the reason for your arrears is a problem with Housing Benefit, we assist you to try and resolve this.

If the problem is that you have not made or renewed your Housing Benefit application we can help you to make your application. We will also advise you of what will happen if you do not secure your Housing Benefit.
If after our advice you still do not secure your Housing Benefit the case will be treated as outlined and we can take legal action.

**Avoiding rent arrears**

- Always make regular payments.
- Let us know if you cannot make a payment for any reason and make sure you catch up again as soon as possible.
- Make sure you are claiming any Housing Benefit or other benefits you could be entitled to. We can offer you advice on this.
- Always renew your Housing Benefit claim when it is due.
- Tell the Housing Benefit office if your rent or service charge increases.
- If you are in arrears, keep in touch with us so that we can resolve any problems as quickly as possible. We will do all we can to help solve the problem.

**Income from Rents**
What is your rent money used for?

- The day-to-day management costs of running our housing.
- The maintenance and repair of homes.
- Planned improvements such as central heating, new kitchens and bathrooms.
Living in Your Community
Being a Good Neighbour

Your tenancy agreement includes some rules to encourage people to be good neighbours. As a tenant you are responsible for the actions of your family and visitors to your home.

• Please act with consideration for your neighbours and try not to do anything to cause them anxiety or annoyance.

• Please make sure that you are not making an excessive noise, particularly at night. Loud noise from televisions or music systems is a common source of complaint. This can be a particular problem in flats.

• You must not run a business from your home without our written permission. We usually give permission unless the business is likely to cause a nuisance or damage the property.

• You must not put up structures such as sheds, garages or pigeon lofts without our written agreement.

• Please make sure that your garden is kept clean and tidy. Lawns should be cut and hedges trimmed.

• Your pets must not annoy or frighten other people, and you must clean up after them. You must not keep an animal that we decide is unsuitable for your home or garden.

• When parking please do not obstruct access for emergency services or a neighbour’s parking space. If your home has a designated resident’s parking space only you and your visitors can park there, you must not give or sell the space to anyone else.

• There is a no smoking rule in all indoor, communal areas. Please do not smoke in these areas.

Neighbour Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour

People are entitled to live their own lives in the way they want to, but the rights of others also need to be respected. Noise, rubbish dumping, disagreements, noisy dogs or overgrown gardens are just some of the issues that can bring neighbours into conflict. The problem can often be resolved by talking it through, or by one or both parties being more thoughtful about how their behaviour affects others.
Talking it through
There is always a better chance of solving a dispute if people are willing to talk. Sometimes a person may just need reminding that his or her behaviour is upsetting someone else.

If the nuisance does not involve threats, violence or harassment you should try and talk it through with your neighbour.

Mediation
If you feel uneasy about approaching your neighbour, we can offer the services of Active Mediation. They have a proven record of improving and resolving disputes. They offer a way to resolve conflict without having to go to court. Mediation can help people to find ways of living together peacefully.

Taking Action
Sometimes the problem continues or gets worse. In these circumstances, we will get involved. We take strong action against serious complaints of nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

You can report serious instances of nuisance or anti-social behaviour to us. All complaints are treated with the strictest confidence. We will investigate the complaint and gather any evidence.

Having collected the evidence, spoken to all those involved and analysed the situation we will decide whether further action needs to be taken.

In some cases, we will take further action to prevent the nuisance from happening again and will continue to monitor the situation.

We may need to involve other agencies such as the Police, Social Services or Youth Services.

In very serious cases, where someone has been put in danger or illegal activities have taken place, we will go straight to legal action. This can result in court injunctions being issued or a tenant being evicted.

Harassment
Serious cases can include harassment such as physical assault, threat of violence, property damage, graffiti, arson and abuse. We recognise that all kinds of harassment can severely damage quality of life and affect your safety. We consider all complaints of this nature to be a priority issue.

In all such cases, gathering evidence is vital. You and other witnesses may be asked to fill in an incident diary.
If harassment is violent, you should contact the police immediately.

**Racist Incidents**

We define a racist incident as: “any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.”

A complaint of a racist incident will be investigated in the same way as a complaint of anti-social behaviour. The complaint will also be reported to an officer in Chorley Council who is responsible for monitoring racist incidents.

If you have any concerns about nuisance, anti-social behaviour or harassment or would like a copy of our Neighbourhood Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour policy please contact the Anti-Social Behaviour team.
Looking After Your Home
This section gives you advice on how to stay safe and secure in your home.

Gas Safety

Using gas as a fuel in the home is normally very safe. However, poorly maintained gas appliances can put people’s lives at risk. Gas leaks can lead to explosions, which could kill. Faulty gas appliances and lack of ventilation can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning, which has serious health effects. You must let us into your home and allow us to inspect your gas appliances.

Gas Leaks

If you think you can smell gas or fumes:

• Turn off the gas supply at the gas meter.
• Extinguish all sources of ignition.
• Do not smoke.
• Do not operate any electrical light or power switches/appliances (on or off).
• Open all doors and windows.
• Call the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999.

Gas Safety Tips

By allowing us access to your home to carry out regular servicing and by following the tips below you can ensure the safety of your gas appliances:

• Make sure you know where your gas meter is located and how to turn off the gas in the event of an emergency.
• Never use a gas appliance if you think its not working properly. Signs to look out for include yellow or orange flames, soot or stains around the appliance and pilot lights that frequently blow out.
• Never cover an appliance or block the convection air vents.
• Never block or obstruct any fixed ventilation grilles or air bricks.
• Never block or cover outside flues.
• Never attempt repairs to gas pipe work or gas appliances installed in your home.
• Be cautious if buying second hand gas appliances – don’t scrimp on safety.
• Certain types of electric fans, including ceiling fans, can affect the safe operation of gas appliances. Before installing any type of fan in your home contact the repairs hotline on 01257 414900 for more information.
• Not all types of gas fires and boilers are suitable for use in bedrooms. If you intend to sleep in a room containing a gas fire or boiler contact the repairs hotline on 01257 414900 for more information.

Water

If you have a water burst:

• Turn off the main stop valve and switch the immersion heater or central heating boiler off. Make sure you know where the stop tap or valve is and that it is working before you need to find it in an emergency.

• Turn all hot and cold taps on, to drain as much water off as possible.

• Cold water storage tanks and toilet cisterns have overflow pipes to prevent flooding. If there is an overflow and you cannot stop it yourself call our repairs hotline.

Electricity

Appliances

• Switch off and unplug all electrical appliances when not in use.

• Check that all appliances and plugs are correctly wired.

• Make sure that the right fuse is being used.

• Check that the flex is not worn and never run flex under carpet or rugs.

• Avoid using extension leads, but if you have to, make sure they are suitable for the appliance, unwind them fully and unplug them after use.

• In the unlikely event of a power cut turn off all appliances. This will prevent a surge of electricity when the power comes back on again.

Fuses

Fuses may blow if lights or electrical appliances fail. To replace a fuse:

• Switch off the mains supply.

• Unplug the appliance you think has caused the fuse to blow.

• Check the fuses in the fuse box to see which one has blown.

• Replace the burnt out fuse with new fuse wire of the same rating: 5 amp, 15 amp or 30 amp.

• Switch on the mains supply.

If you are unsure call our repairs hotline.
Circuit breakers are installed in some newer homes instead of fuses. Circuit breakers are switches that automatically turn the electricity supply off if lights or electrical appliances fail.

If this happens, switch off and unplug the appliance that you think is causing the problem and reset the circuit breaker to the ‘on’ position. If the supply goes off again, call our repairs hotline as there may be a fault in the electrical system.

**Preventing Fire**

- We will check your smoke alarm annually but between checks please test your smoke alarm regularly.

- Never leave matches or cigarette lighters within the reach of children.

- Use a fire guard in front of an open fire. You must not leave a child under the age of 12 in a room with an unguarded fire.

- Do not hang clothes over heaters or near the cooker or fire.

- Close all doors when you go to bed.

- Try not to use a chip pan in your home. They are a major cause of domestic fires.

**What to do in a fire**

- If a chip pan or frying pan catches fire, turn the heat off, cover the pan with a damp cloth and leave it for at least fifteen minutes. Do not pick it up – it will be very hot. Do not throw cold water onto a frying pan or chip pan fire – this is very dangerous.

- If a fire starts in your home, close the door on the room where the fire is, make sure everyone leaves the house, call 999 and ask for the fire brigade.

- If the fire is outside your home – for example in communal areas such as stairwells – call 999, tell any of your neighbours who could be affected and leave the building.

**Avoiding scalds and burns**

- Do not leave pan handles hanging over the edge of the cooker.

- If someone is scalded or burned drench the affected part in cold running water immediately. Do not rub butter or oil onto the burn or scald.

- Call the doctor or an ambulance if scalding is severe.
Preventing Falls

- Never polish floors under the carpet, rugs or mats.
- Repair or cover holes or frayed edges of carpets, especially on the stairs.
- Make sure that stairs are well lit and carpets are secure.
- If you have young children, fit gates or guards at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- If you spill something onto lino or tiled floor surfaces mop it up immediately.

Frost Precautions

- Make sure all pipes and tanks in the roof space are adequately lagged. If they are not let us know.
- Ensure taps are turned off at night.
- Keep your house warm.
- Make sure you know where your stop tap or valve is.

Security

You can reduce the risk of burglary in your home by following these guidelines:

- At night, and when you go out – even for short periods – make sure you have closed all windows and locked all doors.
- Check the identity of callers to your home before letting them in. Genuine callers should carry identification cards.
- Never leave notes outside your house for callers or friends when you go out.
- If you are living in a flat, do not leave communal doors jammed open or let strangers into the building.
- Do not leave keys under the doormat or on a string inside the letterbox.

Going Away

If you are going to be away from home, for example if you are going on holiday or into hospital, take the following precautions:

- Always cancel newspapers and milk if you are going away. Ask a trusted neighbour to check on your home and alert police if they see anything suspicious.
• Ask your friend or neighbour to come in and turn lights on and off. You can buy a time control switch that will do this automatically.

• During winter, turn off the immersion heater and empty the water tank by turning off the water at the stop valve and turning on all the taps until the water stops running. Flush the toilet cistern to make sure it is empty and put salt in the toilet bowl to stop it from freezing.

• When you return, turn on the stop tap or valve and check that there are no air locks by turning on all the taps again to make sure water flows to them all.

• Lock all windows and doors.

• Switch off and unplug any electrical appliances. Remove all food from your fridge or freezer, switch off and defrost it if you are going to leave it unplugged.

• Turn off the gas by the tap located next to the meter.

• Inform us if you are going to be away from your home for more than 30 consecutive days. You should give us contact details in case of emergency.

Condensation and Damp

Condensation is caused when moisture, carried by warm air, reaches a cold surface such as windows or walls. The vapour cools and turns back into water droplets. You can see this as a ‘mist’ on cold surfaces such as windows, mirrors, walls and tiles.

Modern features such as double glazing and loft insulation are important to keep your homes warm, but they can also cause problems associated with poor air circulation. Where there is inadequate ventilation, condensation and stale air can result.

If condensation continues it will promote mould growth, which can damage decorations, furniture and clothing.

With high cost of heating we do not want to keep our windows open particularly when it is cold outside. So we need to minimise the problem.
To minimise condensation in your home:

- When cooking, cover pans to reduce steam.
- Do not block up airbricks or vents.
- If you have a tumble dryer ensure it is vented to the outside (unless it is a self-condensing type).
- After bathing, cooking or if you are drying clothes, open windows to allow steam to escape. If you have an extractor fan use this.
- Keep your home warm.

Whenever possible, particularly in cold weather, you should try to keep your home warm with some form of background heating.

Damp is caused by water seeping into your home, because the protection provided by the roof, walls, windows or floor has failed. If you think your home is suffering from damp please contact our repairs hotline.
Repairs Priorities

We set time limits for carrying out reported repairs. These are called repairs priorities. Our repairs priorities are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Time Limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Repairs</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urgent Repairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routine Repairs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 working days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Urgent Repairs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20 working days (by appointment)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: any Priority 1 and 2 work may be issued with a priority E, which indicates that a 2 hour response is required, (or to be carried out sometime during the same day on agreement with the tenant). The decision to issue the job as an ‘E’ job is at the discretion of maintenance staff and depends upon the severity of the reported defect.

Emergencies

An emergency is defined as something that could not have been foreseen, and which could cause danger to health, residents’ safety or serious damage and destruction to property. Our emergency call out service will usually make things safe so that full and proper repairs can be completed during normal working hours. If the emergency call out service finds that the job is a simple repair, and they have the parts and materials available they will complete the job during the call out.

The emergency call out service is not an out-of-hours repair service that can be used to short cut the normal repairs system. If our emergency call out service is called out to carry out a repair as an emergency when an emergency repair is not justified then you are liable to be charged for all costs involved.
The types of work classed as emergency repairs are:

**Emergency Repair Classification (Priority E)**
- Emergency boarding up
- Severe roof leaks
- Burst pipes
- Blocked drains with sewage discharge
- Total loss of electrical power or light
- Major gas leak (call National Gas Emergency Services on 0800 111 999)

We recognise that elderly or vulnerable tenants will need special consideration in certain circumstances.

**Urgent repair classification (priority 1)**
- Unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting
- Total loss of water supply
- Total or partial loss of gas supply
- Blocked flue to open fire or boiler
- Total loss of space or water heating between 1 November and 30 April
- Blocked or leaking foul drain or blockage of only WC in property
- Only WC in property will not flush
- Leaking from water or heating pipe, tank or cistern
- Insecure external window, door or lock

**Routine repair classification (priority 2)**
- Partial loss of electric power
- Partial loss of water supply
- Total or partial loss of space or water heating between 1 May and 31 October
- Blocked sink, bath or basin
- Tap which cannot be turned
- Loose or detached banister or hand rail
- Rotten timber flooring or stair treads
- Leaking roof
- Door entry phone not working
- Mechanical extractor fan to kitchen or bathroom not working

**Non-urgent repair classification (priority 4)**
- All other works not listed above

**Annual Gas Safety Check**
As your landlord, we are bound by law to carry out an annual safety check on our gas fittings installed in your home. As a tenant, you too have responsibilities. This section sets out what these are, how to avoid putting yourself at risk from faulty gas fittings and what you can expect from us.
Our duty as your landlord

We are committed to your safety and we take our responsibilities on gas safety very seriously. As your landlord we will ensure:

• Gas fittings (appliances and pipework), and flues, installed by us are maintained in a safe condition.

• All installation, maintenance safety checks and annual gas servicing is carried out by a CORGI registered installer.

• A gas safety check and service is carried out on each relevant gas fitting / flue and smoke alarm in your home every year. When you take up a new tenancy all gas appliances / flues and smoke alarms will be checked before you move in.

• We keep a record of each annual safety check and service.

• We give you a copy of the gas safety certificate for your home on completion of the safety check.

Your duty as a tenant

As a tenant, you too have responsibilities:

• You should allow us prompt access to your home to carry out the maintenance or safety checks on our gas fittings / flues.

• You should ensure that any gas fittings which you own including your gas cooker are installed correctly and are checked annually for safety and serviced.

• You should always contact us before making any alterations to your home, no matter how minor.

• For your safety, always use a qualified CORGI registered gas installer to carry out any gas work in your home.

Failure to give reasonable access to your home to allow us to complete the annual safety check is dangerous for you, your family and your neighbours.

It’s also a breach of your tenancy conditions, which could result in legal action to enforce access or end your tenancy.
Your questions answered:

Q How do I know when my gas safety check is due?

A You will receive a card giving details of the appointment date and time. If the appointment is not convenient you will be given the opportunity to rearrange the appointment on the Gas Safety Check Freephone 0800 073 0263, by email gas servicing@chorleych.co.uk or in person at our office. Gas safety check appointments are available Monday – Friday 8.00am to 7.00pm and Saturday 8.00am to 12.00pm.

Q What will happen if I don’t allow you access to complete a gas safety check?

A As your landlord, we are bound by law to maintain and service our gas fittings every year, even if you do not use gas. Your tenancy agreement states that you must allow us access to your property at all reasonable hours to do the gas safety check.

If you repeatedly refuse to allow access or co-operate, we will make an application for an injunction to the Court to force you to give us access to your property. Failure to comply with the injunction could result in a prison sentence.

If we have to do this, we will ask the Court to order that you pay all the legal costs. We could also seek possession of your home.

Q Which gas fittings will you check?

A Your annual gas safety check will cover any gas fittings that have been installed by us. There will also be a visual inspection of any appliances which you own that are fitted to a flue maintained by us for instance a chimney, and your gas cooker.

If we find a faulty appliance or fitting that does not belong to us we will disconnect and advise you to seek help from a qualified CORGI registered installer.

Q What will happen if a gas appliance fails the annual gas safety check?

A Our gas engineers will repair or replace the faulty appliance if it belongs to us. Your gas safety certificate will include details of any repairs completed.

It is an offence to use, or for us to allow the use of a gas appliance known to be unsafe.
Rechargeable Repairs

We will charge for damage caused, thoughtlessly, deliberately or by neglect. This work is called rechargeable repairs. These repairs will not be rechargeable if:

- The damage has been caused by fair wear and tear or because of the age of the property or installation.
- The damage has been caused by a crime that has been reported to the police with a crime number provided.
- The damage happened because the tenant was a victim of anti social behaviour.

If you have to pay for a rechargeable repair we will provide an estimated cost of the work before it is carried out. Arrangements can be made to pay for the work in instalments. Legal action can be taken if payment is not made.

You cannot refuse to have the work done if it would cause a health and safety risk or cause more damage to the property. You can choose to have the work done by yourself or others but we will inspect the work to ensure it is of acceptable standard.

Reporting a Repair

The best method of reporting a repair is by phoning the repairs hotline on 01257 414900 between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday. However, you may report a repair by visiting our office in Chorley or by post.

You can also report repairs online by visiting our website at www.chorleych.co.uk

When reporting a repair it is important to give as much detail as possible. To help with describing the repair required we have provided a series of diagnostic diagrams in this section of the handbook. The customer assistant who receives your telephone call has access to the same diagrams and so can provide accurate information to go on the job ticket issued to the contractor.

Right to Repair

If we don’t do certain small urgent repairs on time, you can tell us to get another contractor instead. This is called the Right to Repair scheme and was introduced for tenants from 1 April 1994 as part of the Citizen’s Charter scheme. It was introduced to make sure that certain small urgent repairs, which might affect your health, safety or security, are done quickly and easily. We are required by law to carry out these repairs within a certain time.
The small urgent repairs covered by the Right to Repair scheme are called qualifying repairs. Our qualifying repairs are listed earlier as Emergency Repairs (Priority E), Urgent Repairs (Priority 1) and Routine Repairs (Priority 2). If the second contractor doesn’t do the repair in time, we will pay you compensation.

Compensation
If the second contractor doesn’t do your repair on time, you will get £10 in compensation. For every day you wait, you will get another £2. The most compensation you will get for any one job is £50. We will pay you compensation unless you owe money. If you do owe money to us, the amount you owe will be deducted from your compensation.

Responsibilities
As your landlord we have a legal duty to carry out certain repairs when these are needed. As legislation changes, the responsibility for specific repairs may also change. This means that there may be times when we have carried out some repairs in the past, but because of changes in the law, a specific repair may become your responsibility, or vice versa.

We expect that as time passes, normal wear and tear will occur to your home. However, should your home need a repair because of either neglect or damage either by you your friends or family, we will expect you to carry out any necessary repairs. If a repair is needed because of your neglect or damage, we may give you notice to make good, and in some cases we may carry out the repair on your behalf and then charge you for the cost. There may, however, be some occasions when we will carry out a repair for which we are not generally responsible. This will usually depend on your circumstances, and these are known as discretionary repairs.

Your Responsibilities
You are responsible for keeping your home in a reasonable condition and for attempting to solve minor problems. You are also responsible for insuring the contents of your home. Details of a scheme are available on request. Your responsibilities are:

- Making good any minor cracks in plaster
- Decorating the inside of your home
- Changing fuses
- Changing light bulbs
- Replacing keys
- Replacing locks where you lose the key
- Replacing plugs and chains to baths, basins and sinks
• Replacing shower heads
• Replacing bathroom cabinets
• Replacing mirrors
• Replacing towel rails
• Replacing toilet roll holders
• Replacing toilet seats
• Replacing floor coverings
• Changing fluorescent tubes
• Changing starters to fluorescent light fittings
• Fitting plugs to electrical appliances and equipment
• Replacing washing lines
• Bleeding radiators
• Maintaining garden areas
• Taking reasonable precautions to prevent damage by fire and frost
• Taking reasonable precautions to prevent blocking of drains
• Clearing any sink blockages
• Replacing TV aerials
• Plumbing in washing machines
• Plumbing in dishwashers
• Connecting and maintaining gas cookers
• Adapting doors to accommodate carpets
• Replacement of dividing fences
• Sweeping chimneys

Our Responsibilities

We are currently responsible for keeping in good repair the structure and exterior of your home and the building in which it is situated. We are also currently responsible for keeping in good repair and proper working order installations for the supply of water, gas and electricity, for sanitation, space heating and water heating. We are responsible for repairing:

• Roof
• Chimney
• External flues
• Outside walls
• Gutters
• Rainwater pipes
• External doors
• Window frames
• Window sills
• Window fittings
• External painting and decoration
• Basins
• Sinks
• Baths
• WC’s
• Flushing systems
• Drains
• Waste pipes (fitted by us)
• Electric wiring
• Gas pipe work and taps
• Water pipe work and taps
• Water heaters
• Space heating
• Fireplaces
• Fires (fitted by us)

Note: Remember that someone else will be moving into your home if you decide to leave. Please make sure that the property is clean, tidy, reasonably decorated and that all your unwanted belongings have been cleared, including any in the roof space.
• Sockets
• Light fittings (fitted by us)
• Gates (fitted by us)
• Perimeter fencing
• Boundary walls
• Footpaths, steps and ramps (within the boundary of the dwelling)
• Outhouses
• Garages
• Common areas in flats and maisonettes

Repairs Service Standards

Quality Control
We will inspect a proportion of repair jobs when they are completed, and instruct the contractor to remedy any unfinished or poor quality work. You can help us to achieve the highest quality by returning any satisfaction slip or questionnaire that may be sent to you or completed at your home. Alternatively, you can request an inspection of repair work that you consider to be of unacceptable quality, by telephoning the repairs hotline.

Code of Conduct
We require contractors to ensure that works are carried out with the minimum of disruption to tenants. They are required to:

• Introduce themselves to the customers and show proof of identity.
• Explain the nature and purpose of the job.
• Behave in a proper and professional manner at times, refraining from smoking, bad language and playing radios.
• Take care of the customer’s property and possessions and protect them at all times from dust, paint, etc.
• Keep the customer’s home secure at all times.
• Keep safe all materials and equipment used on site to avoid danger to occupants and visitors.
• Reconnect and test services such as water, gas and electricity at the end of each working day.
• Clear any rubbish arising from the works from the garden and other areas outside the property.
• Make good any damage to the fabric of the property.
• Comply with health and safety legislation and relevant codes of practice.
• Comply with our equal opportunities policy.
• Where major works are involved, agree the extent of removal of carpets, furniture, etc and their condition, before the work commences.
• Contractors and staff always carry identification. Do not hesitate to ask to see it.
**Basin**

### Before you contact us

- If water is near electrics, **DO NOT TOUCH**. Turn electricity off at consumer unit main switch.
- Stop leak causing more damage.

### Tell us

- Are electrics affected?
- Where is leak? (bath or basin)
- What is affected? (waste pipe/trap pipe or tap. See diagrams opposite)
- If pipework is affected, is it hot or cold supply pipe, or waste pipe? (See diagrams opposite)

**01 bath/basin water leaking**

---

**02 bath/basin blocked**

- Can you clear blockage yourself?
- What is blocked? (bath or basin)
- What caused the blockage?

**03 bath/basin damaged/broken**

- What is damaged? (bath or basin)
- What is affected part made from? (metal, plastic or china etc)
- If a bath panel is affected, which panel? (side or end panel)
- Does it need to be replaced or refixed?
Before you contact us

Tell us

04/05/06 water not heating up

- If gas, check time clock controller is set for hot water and timer is set correctly.
- If electric, is there a power cut? Are neighbours affected? If so, contact your electricity company (see under ‘electricity’ in phone book).
- If coin or credit meter, has it run out of credit.

- What heats water? (gas, electric or solid fuel)
- If electric, are other electrical facilities working?
- Are heating controls set correctly?
- Is room heating still working?
- Do you have an alternative source of hot water? (immersion heater or gas heater etc.)
- Do you have a hot water cylinder?
Before you contact us

Tell us

07 seal gone around shower tray

08 shower tray broken

• What is it made of? (ceramic or plastic)

09 shower not working

• If it is your own shower, this is your responsibility.
• If electric, check power is switched on (by cord or switch) and controls are set correctly.

• What type of shower is it? (electric or connected to the central heating. See diagrams opposite)
• What is happening? (no water, or only hot or cold water)
• Do you have hot water in rest of home?
• Can you see a make or model number on shower?
Before you contact us

10 shower curtain damaged

• If it is your own shower curtain, this is your responsibility.

11 shower blocked

• If limescale is the problem, use descaler fluid which can be bought from a DIY shop.

• What is causing blockage?

12 shower switch broken

13 shower hose broken

• How did it happen?

Ceiling ‘pullcord’
power switch (for electric shower)

Shower attached
to mixer tap
Before you contact us

Tell us

14 damaged wall tiles

- Are tiles loose, broken or damaged?
- How many are affected?
- What size and colour are they?
- How did it happen?

15 toilet leaking

- Try to stop leak and any damage it is causing.
- If serious, turn off water at stopcock and gate valves from cold water tank. Open all taps to drain water from system. Turn off heaters affected.

- Where is leak? (pan, cistern, overflow, supply, flush or waste pipe or pipe joint. See diagrams opposite)
  If leak is from cistern, is it high or low level cistern? (see diagrams on next page)
- Is affected part loose, cracked or broken?
- Is it your only toilet?

16 toilet will not flush

- Has water authority said that water would be going off?
- You can use a bucket of cold water to flush until problem is fixed.
- If cistern is not filling, lift lid and see if anything is stopping the float from working. Try moving the float up and down to see if it will fill.

- Is the handle or chain moving properly?
- Is the float still working?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before you contact us</th>
<th>Tell us</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>17 overflow running</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• As a temporary solution, tie float in the up position, thus closing the ball valve.</td>
<td>• Does the overflow run outside?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is the cistern flushing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is the float working?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is overflow running continuously?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18 seat damaged</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is it broken, damaged or missing?</td>
<td>• What is it made from? (plastic, wood etc...)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What colour is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>19 toilet blocked</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Try unblocking it yourself by removing excess water into a bowl, and using a toilet brush or plunger (without metal disk).</td>
<td>• What caused the blockage?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20 soil stack blocked</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do you live in a house or flat?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If a flat, which floor are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is your toilet causing the blockage?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before you contact us

Tell us

21 door jammed
- Is it front or rear door?
- What type of door is it?
- What is door made of? (wood, metal or plastic etc...)
- Is door jammed open or closed?
- Can you still get in and out of your home?

22 door frame damaged/rotten
- Is door or frame affected?
- Is it front or rear door?
- What type of door is it?
- What is door made of? (wood, metal or plastic etc...)
- What is wrong with it? (damaged or rotten)
- Is home insecure as a result of this problem?

23 threshold rotten/needs repair
- What type of door is it?
- What is door made of? (wood, metal etc...)
- What is wrong with it? (rotten, broken etc...)

Wooden front door
Before you contact us

Tell us

24 door lock not working

- Tenant’s own locks are your own responsibility.

- What type of lock is it? (see diagrams)
- What is wrong with lock? (lever handle faulty, spring worn out, striking plate out of place or lock not fitting into keep etc... See diagrams)
- Which door is affected?
- What is door made of? (wood, metal or plastic)
- Is your home secure?

Cylinder rim night latch

Mortice deadlock

Outside door pull
Before you contact us  
Tell us

25 keys lost/locked out

- This is usually your own responsibility.
- Are you locked out of your home?
- What type of lock is it? (see diagrams)
- Where is door? (front, rear, patio or store)

26 ironmongery missing/not working

- Tenant’s own fittings are your own responsibility.
- What fitting is it? (letterplate, handle, chain, door viewer, house numbers etc... See diagrams)
- Is door not closing properly?
- Is your home insecure?

Oval cylinder

Rim lock

Mortice sash lock

Tenant handbook
Before you contact us

Tell us

27 gate jamming

- Tenant’s own locks are your own responsibility.
- What is gate made of? (wood or metal)
- What is causing it to jam? (hinge broken etc...)

28 gate latch/bolt broken

- What is gate made of? (wood or metal)
- What is causing it to jam? (hinge broken etc...)

29 gate post rotten/broken

- What is post made of? (wood or concrete etc...)

30 gate post stop defective

- What is gate post stop made from? (wood or metal etc...)

Ledged and braced gate

Braced gate

Building a new housing future
Before you contact us

Tell us

31 no power at all

- If you have a coin or credit meter, check that it has credit on it.
- See if trip switch is activated or a fuse has blown on consumer unit.
- Are your neighbours affected? If so, contact your electricity board (under ‘electricity’ in the phone book).

- Is yours the only property affected?
- Has trip switch been activated or a fuse blown on the consumer unit?

Trip switch

Electricity consumer unit

Types of fuses

Tenant handbook
Before you contact us

Tell us

32 electrical fitting smoking

- DO NOT TOUCH FITTING.
- Turn electricity off at consumer unit main switch.
- What is fitting is it? (light, plug etc...)
- Where is it located?

33 light circuit failed

- See if trip switch is activated or fuse has blown on consumer unit.
- Has bulb blown?
- Are power sockets working?
- Are power sockets working?
- How many lights are affected?
- Is light fitting causing the problem? (the pendant, batten holder, wall or ceiling switch etc)

34 fluorescent tube not working

- What is the problem? (tube flickers, broken etc...)

Fluorescent lights

Electricity meter
### Before you contact us

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Before You Contact Us</th>
<th>Tell Us</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35 plug socket not working</td>
<td>• Is it appliance rather than power socket that is faulty? If so, see problem 36, below. &lt;br&gt;• Is trip switch activated or a fuse blown in the consumer unit? &lt;br&gt;• Is there no power at all in your home? If so, see problem 31.</td>
<td>• Are other power sockets working? &lt;br&gt;• Is trip switch activated or a fuse blown in consumer unit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 appliance not working</td>
<td>• Tenant’s own appliance is tenant’s responsibility. &lt;br&gt;• Is it power socket rather than appliance that is faulty? &lt;br&gt;• Has fuse blown in the plug? If so, renew it with a suitably rated fuse. &lt;br&gt;• Is trip switch activated or a fuse blown in the consumer unit? &lt;br&gt;• Is there no power at all in your home? If so, see problem 31.</td>
<td>• Are other power sockets working? &lt;br&gt;• Is trip switch activated or a fuse blown in consumer unit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 smoke detector defective</td>
<td>• If it is battery operated, check batteries. &lt;br&gt;• If you have a scheme manager, contact them.</td>
<td>• Is it battery operated? &lt;br&gt;• Where is the smoke detector? &lt;br&gt;• What appears to be problem?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before you contact us

Tell us

**Digital programmer**

- Is fan switched on?

**38 extractor fan faulty**

- Where is fan?
- What type of fan is it?

**39 central heating boiler faulty**

- Is it your only source of heat?
- Do you have hot water?
- Can you see manufacturer’s name and what model it is?

**Clock programmer**

- If electric, check that power is still on, and that meter is still in credit.
- If gas, check that pilot light is on.
- Check that boiler thermostat is set correctly (usually between 18°C and 22°C. See diagram opposite).
- Check that clock or digital timer is set correctly.

**Room thermostat**

- **Storage heater controls**

- Heat output
- Heat input
### Before you contact us

**Tell us**

#### 40 communal heating faulty

- This is usually your own responsibility.
- Is this your only source of heat?
- Is there any hot water?

#### 41 radiator not heating up

- Check that thermostatic valve is turned up enough.
- Try bleeding radiator.
- Is thermostatic valve turned up enough?
- How many radiators are affected?
- Have you tried bleeding radiators(s affected?)
- Do you have hot water?
Before you contact us

Tell us

42 radiator leaking

• Try to stop leak causing damage.
• Turn radiator valve off.

43 fumes appear in room

• If gas leak, DO NOT SMOKE, USE MATCHES, OR TURN ELECTRICAL SWITCHES ON OR OFF. Open windows.
• Turn off any appliances that are causing fumes.

• Where is leak coming from? (see diagram)
• What is causing fumes?
• Has flue been cleaned recently?
• If the heating system is the cause, can you see manufacturer’s name and the model?
### Before you contact us

**44 storage heater defective**

- Make sure heater is turned on at socket.
- Check thermostat is set correctly.
- If no power in rest of home, see problem 31.

**Tell us**

- How many heaters are affected?
- Where are they?
- What appears to be the problem?
- Can you see manufacturer’s name and model?

### 45 raidant/convector heater faulty

- Check thermostat is set correctly.
- If faulty plug, see problem 35.

- What appears to be the problem?
- Can you see manufacturer’s name and model?
Before you contact us

Tell us

46 damaged cupboard

• Which unit is affected? (a corner unit, floor or wall unit, with single or double doors)
• What part is faulty? (see diagram overleaf)
• In what way is it damaged?
• Do you think it can be repaired or will it need to be replaced?
• What is it made of? (wood, plastic or metal etc...)
• What colour and size is it?

47 sink unit leaking

• Try to stop the leak causing more damage.
• Where is leak coming from? (pipe, tap or waste pipe/trap).

48 sink blocked

• Try to clear it yourself using a plunger.
• Stop others using sink while blocked.
• Are other outlets affected?
• Is washing machine blocked?
• What caused the blockage?
Before you contact us

Tell us

49 damaged wall tiles

• Where are tiles?
• Are they broken, loose or missing?
• How many are affected?
• What size and colour are they?

Typical kitchen unit

Tenant handbook
Before you contact us

Tell us

50 tiles/slates broken

- Which part is affected? (stack, pot or flashing etc... See diagrams opposite)
- Is it damaged, loose or missing?
- Does chimney have more than one flue?
- Is it dangerous?

51 flat roof damaged

- What type of roof is it? (slate, tile etc...)
- If roof is tiles, which type of tile? (flat or not flat)
- Are they missing, broken or loose?
- Which bit of the roof is affected? (see diagrams)
- How large is area affected?
- Is roof leaking?
- Are electrics affected?

Chimney stack

- If electrics are affected by water leakage, DO NOT TOUCH, and turn electricity off at consumer unit main switch.
- If there is leakage, try to stop water causing more damage.
- If it is dangerous, warn others.

Pitched roof

- What type of roof is it? (felt, asphalt or lead etc...)
- Which bit of roof is affected? (see diagrams)
- How large is affected area?
- Is roof leaking?
- Are electrics affected?
Before you contact us

Tell us

52 chimney stack damaged

- If it is dangerous, warn others.
- Which part is affected? (stack, pot or flashing etc...) See diagrams opposite
- Is it damaged, loose or missing?
- Does chimney have more than one flue?
- Is it dangerous?

Types of roofs

- gable end
- hipped roof
- flat roof
- valley

Tenant handbook
Before you contact us | Tell us

53 manhole cover defective
- If dangerous, put something over it to alert others to the danger.
- Where is it?
- What is the problem? (loose, broken or missing)
- What is it made of?
- Is it dangerous?

54 manhole overflowing
- Where is it located?

55 gully cover defective
- Where is it?
- What is the problem? (loose, broken or missing)
- Do you think it can be refixed or does it need to be replaced?
- What is it made of?
- What size is it?
Before you contact us

Tell us

56 gutter overflowing

• Where is the overflow coming from? (gutter, hopper, pipe etc... See diagram)

57 gully blocked

• What is blocking the gully?

58 drains blocked

• What is blocking the drain?

Typical household drainage system
Before you contact us

Tell us

59 guttering/downpipe defective

- What is affected? (gutter or downpipe. See diagrams)
- What is the problem? (guttering or downpipe is blocked, cracked, loose etc...)
- If it is leaking, can you tell where from? (joint, or pipe etc... See diagrams)
- What is it made of? (metal, plastic etc...)
- Can it be refixed or does it need to be replaced?

Typical gutters and downpipes
### Before you contact us

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stairs</th>
<th>Tell us</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• If hazardous, warn others.</td>
<td>• Is it inside your home or a communal staircase?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is the rough size of affected area?</td>
<td>• What are stairs made of? (wood, concrete etc...)</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If hazardous, warn others.</td>
<td>• Is it inside your home or a communal staircase?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Which part is affected? (handrail, post, individual baluster etc... See diagram)</td>
<td>• Which part is affected? (handrail, post, individual baluster etc... See diagram)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Stairs Diagram

- Handrail fixed to wall with brackets
- Open balustrade
- Wall string
- Quarter landing
- Stair string
- Individual baluster or spindle
- Newel post
- Nosing
- Tread
- Riser
- Closed balustrade
7 Resident Involvement
Our Aim
We are committed to putting resident involvement at the heart of everything we do.

We aim to give residents key roles in making decisions about how their homes and neighbourhoods are managed and maintained.

Why Get Involved
Residents get involved for many reasons.

- They may wish to tackle problems in a neighbourhood like vandalism or a lack of play facilities by joining a residents group.
- Others may wish to improve services and attend meetings held directly with managers.
- Others may go further still and help manage CCH by joining the Board.
- Some people want to express their views by filling in satisfaction surveys.
- There are many reasons for getting involved and many ways to do so.

Menu of Involvement
The ‘Menu of Involvement’ gives residents a number of ways to get involved. We understand residents have different levels of interest and other commitments so we need to be flexible. Whatever way residents are involved, each has a real voice and a say in how we do things. Here is the ‘menu’.

The Customer Panel
Residents can complete postal or telephone surveys from the comfort of their homes. We use these surveys to find out your views on a wide range of issues, and use the information to shape our services. We always tell you the results of any surveys you complete so you know it has been time well spent.

Service Improvement Groups
Residents meet directly with managers to discuss specific services and work areas. For example, residents influence decisions about sheltered housing, the publications we produce for example this hand-book, day to day repairs, the improvement programme, and the way we tackle anti-social behaviour. There are many groups each giving residents a direct say.
Focus Groups
Residents get together for one-off discussions on specific subjects in focus groups. We use focus groups to explore the views and experiences of our customers in more depth than we are able to do through surveys.

Resident Groups
Sometimes residents organise themselves into groups with a committee and accounts. These residents groups can be a powerful force in their local community, improving local services and accessing funding to deliver projects. Examples of successes achieved by residents groups are the renewal of the garden at Eldon House, increased parking provision on Windsor Avenue, and speed bumps on Devonshire Road.

Neighbourhood Forums
In some neighbourhoods residents may wish to get together, but do not want to have a committee and accounts. Or residents may be at the early stages of forming a residents group. These groups play an important role in their neighbourhoods and our resident involvement officers will offer additional support to them with training and direct input.

The Tenants and Residents Panel (the Panel)
Representatives of residents groups and the service improvement groups come together to form the Tenants and Residents Panel (the Panel). Residents from areas without residents groups can join the Panel as Neighbourhood Ambassadors.

The Panel plays a very important role as the main residents’ consultation body for us. Members of the Panel will review feedback from all the groups and make suggestions for improvements.

As all groups report to it, the Panel helps with the co-ordination and development of existing and new groups.

Members of the Panel are given additional training to ensure they are better informed and feel more able to influence how we provide services.

Training
Training is an essential part of resident involvement for us. We encourage active residents to focus on key areas of interest and to learn about best practice. Best practice is what other organisations are doing very well or innovatively. We want to raise residents’ expectations and to challenge us to continuously improve.
Opportunities for All

We believe every resident has a valuable role to play in influencing our services and are committed to ensuring that any resident who wants to be involved has the opportunity to do so.

We actively encourage younger residents and those from rural neighbourhoods and black and minority ethnic communities to get involved.

We take practical steps to ensure that everyone can get involved by holding some meetings in the evening (for those who work), helping with childcare, paying travelling expenses and where possible providing interpreters.

We want every resident who attends meetings to have the opportunity to air their views, but recognise that being new to a group and speaking up is not always easy so we provide personal training and support to develop confidence and meeting skills. Members of our groups also give a warm welcome to new members and the opportunity to contribute.

Are you Interested?

If you are interested in getting involved give one of our Resident Involvement Officers a call on 01257 414900. New members are always welcomed. If you like we can arrange to have a chat at your home or our office.
8 Neighbourhood Services
When Chorley Community Housing was set up one of the promises to tenants was to have a new service working with them in their own neighbourhoods.

This service is now fully operational and is headed by the Neighbourhood Services team. The team coordinates a range of services for the homes and neighbourhoods we manage. It is made up of a manager and four neighbourhood officers, each responsible for a specific area.

**Our responsibilities and what neighbourhood officers do**

**Estate Management**

- Ensuring that contracts such as maintaining grassed areas on estates are carried out satisfactorily.
- Ensuring that all communal areas are well maintained.
- Managing our garage sites.
- Carrying out neighbourhood inspections of all areas where we have landlord responsibilities. The neighbourhood officer will take responsibility for ensuring that any issues identified are dealt with at the earliest opportunity.

These are some of examples of what may be earmarked for attention during an inspection.

- The removal of rubbish dumped illegally.
- Trees and hedging that need attention.
- Arrange for the removal of abandoned cars.
- Uneven or broken paving stones

**Tenancy Management**

- Being the first point of contact for our tenants regarding their tenancy.
- Dealing with any changes to tenancies (in cases of marriage or divorce, for example).
- Dealing with mutual exchange requests.
- Enforcing tenancy agreement conditions.
- Keeping up to date records of who lives in our properties, and any relevant information about tenants.
- Dealing with complaints of anti social behaviour and if necessary refer serious cases to our specialist Anti-Social Behaviour Team.
Tenancy Support

• Providing advice about our services.

• Helping tenants to sustain their tenancy. Where there is a need for a high level of support the neighbourhood officer will contact our Tenant Support team.

• Providing advice and assistance to tenants regarding domestic violence and racial harassment.

What You Can Expect From Us

We Will:

• Provide a professional service from experienced and trained staff.

• Be polite and courteous at all times.

• Listen to your needs.

• Look for ways to resolve any matters and explain clearly what we are able to do to help, even if sometimes this means having to say no to your requests.

• Answer phone calls promptly.

• Reply to letters within ten working days.

• Arrange home visits if appropriate.

• Attend tenants’ and residents’ association meetings when invited.

In order to provide a comprehensive and effective neighbourhood service the team work very closely with our other sections and with external organisations such as Chorley Borough Council and the Police.

How Do You Contact Us

The Neighbourhood Team work out of our main offices in Chorley but spend a large part of their time on the estates. You can phone your neighbourhood officer on our main number 01257 414900. Your neighbourhood officer will be happy to visit you at home or see you in the office by appointment to deal with any concerns you have about your home.

Caretakers/handypersons

Our services in neighbourhoods also includes a team of caretakers/handypersons. They keep our neighbourhoods clean, tidy and safe and also do minor DIY jobs and repairs for residents in our sheltered accommodation schemes.
9 Additional Care and Support
The role of the Tenant Support Team

- Helping tenants to sustain their tenancy, help and advice from a Tenant Support Officer
- Installation of Lifeline alarms and Telecare
- Sheltered Housing providing a Scheme Manager

What is Tenant Support?
Tenant Support Services are available to all tenants.

Our aim is to help any tenant who may be experiencing problems related to their tenancy.

We aim to provide practical advice and support to vulnerable tenants to enable them to maintain their tenancies.

What Can We Do?
- Listen to you in confidence
- Help you to complete forms
- Give you advice on welfare benefits and debts, rent and other payments
- Help you to find out what services you are entitled to
- Put you in touch with other organisations who may be able to help you

What We Don’t Do
The Tenant Support Service cannot provide you with in-depth counselling, legal advice, financial assistance or personal care.

However, if we find that we cannot help you ourselves, we will try to put you in touch with someone who can.

Lifeline Alarms
We install ‘Lifeline’ alarms, which allow people to remain in their own homes whilst having the peace of mind that they can contact someone for assistance should they require it.

A Lifeline is a unit that works alongside your own telephone. Should you require help, at the touch of a button you will be connected to an operator at a 24-hour monitoring centre. Within seconds of pressing the button an operator will answer the call and instantly know who is calling, where you live and retrieve health and personal details. Contact details for friends, relatives, neighbours, doctor and emergency services will have been supplied to the monitoring centre and can be called for assistance if needed.

If you are interested in having a Lifeline installed, please contact the Tenant Support Team for further information or a demonstration.
Contact us:

You can contact us by post or phone at our head office. The details are in the front of this book.

You can call into the office or we can make an appointment to see you at your own home.

Sheltered Housing Schemes

We manage more than 400 sheltered properties, which provide additional support for residents through the services of a Scheme Manager. Sheltered properties are intended for residents aged 60 or over, although consideration will also be given to people with disabilities who are under pensionable age. Sheltered schemes enable residents to maintain their independence with some additional support.

This part of your handbook sets out the services we provide to residents living in our sheltered housing.

The Role of the Scheme Manager

Each sheltered scheme benefits from the support of a Scheme Manager.

The support they provide includes:

• Making daily contact (Monday – Friday) with each resident. Contact will be made by visit or via the intercom system. The only exception to this is at one location, Charnock Richard, where contact is made twice a week.

• Assisting residents to access a range of services available to support independent living, including:
  - making contact with external agencies on behalf of the tenant for example doctors, Social Services, Occupational Health.
  - Help in completing forms for example Housing Benefit or Attendance Allowance
  - Assistance in reporting repairs
  - Assistance in organising social activities and events

• The Scheme Manager is not responsible for:
  - Personal care of residents such as washing or nursing
  - Collecting and administering medication
  - Helping with washing and ironing
  - Cleaning of accommodation
  - Shopping and errands
Emergency Calls

Systems are in place for all our sheltered housing residents to enable a quick and effective response to an emergency.

All residents have pull cords in each room and are provided with a pendant to enable them to call for help. Emergency cover is provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week. When the Scheme Manager is on duty all calls will go directly to them. At other times calls will automatically be diverted to staff at a Control Centre who will deal with the emergency.

Family Responsibilities

When a resident moves into sheltered accommodation they will be asked to provide details of two people who are normally relatives or friends who act as nominated keyholders. These contacts will be asked to respond to requests for assistance from the Control Centre when the Scheme Manager is not on duty.

The daily presence of a Scheme Manager is not intended to replace family involvement. Where alternative arrangements have not been made, residents and their families will still be expected to be responsible for personal care, washing and ironing, shopping and cleaning.

Security

Each resident will generally be provided with two front door keys and two fobs (fobs are provided on those schemes where there is a door entry system). A master-key is held by the Scheme Manager. Tenant Support staff who are on call for emergencies also have a master key. Our staff will only enter your home with your permission or where it is believed you may need emergency assistance.

Additional security information:

- The Scheme Manager cannot give access to accommodation to anyone but the resident or the emergency services.

- Residents should be aware that if they fit their own locks, bolts or burglar alarms it may hinder access in an emergency.

- On those schemes with a door entry system, each resident will be provided with a fob to operate the system. Residents must ensure that the door closes behind them. Visitors will use an intercom to contact residents and they can be admitted into the flat using this way.
Residents are requested not to let anyone else into the building. Extra fobs and front door keys can be purchased for relatives friends.

- Residents are requested to inform their Scheme Manager if they will be away from their homes overnight or for longer periods.

**Communal Lounge**

Some of our sheltered schemes have a communal lounge. Where there is a communal lounge, the Scheme Manager will help to arrange social activities there.

**Laundry Facilities**

In those schemes with a laundry room, tenants will have the use of washing machines and dryers. Relatives or friends may use the facilities to do a resident’s washing but they cannot use them to do their own.

**Guest Rooms**

At some sheltered housing schemes a guest room is available. This can be booked through the Scheme Manager at a small nightly charge.

**Pets**

Sheltered schemes with shared access are unsuitable for keeping cats and dogs but there is no objection to small pets such as caged birds. This restriction does not apply to self-contained flats or bungalows, which have individual access.

Details of our sheltered housing schemes are in the following sections.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name &amp; Location</th>
<th>Facilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eldon House, Brooke Street, Chorley</strong></td>
<td>Block of flats and bungalows on Brooke Street and Eldon Street (total 49). Communal room, laundry &amp; guest room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheme Manager on duty 8.45am – 5pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arcon House, Arcon Road, Coppull</strong></td>
<td>Block of flats and some flats on Arcon Road (total 50). Communal room, laundry &amp; guest room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheme Manager on duty 8.45am – 5pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Willows, Milton Road, Coppull</strong></td>
<td>Block of flats and bungalows on Milton Road (total 26). Communal room &amp; laundry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheme Manager on duty 9am – 2.30pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hodder Avenue, Chorley</strong></td>
<td>Bungalows on Hodder Avenue, Calder Avenue and Eaves Green Road (total 54). Communal Room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheme Manager on duty 8am – 4.30pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Fields, Eccleston</strong></td>
<td>Bungalow Scheme (total 33) on The Fields &amp; Gilcroft. Communal Room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheme Manager on duty 9am – 4pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Heys, Coppull</strong></td>
<td>Bungalow Scheme (total 44) on The Heys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheme Manager on duty 8.15am – 3pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heapey</strong></td>
<td>Bungalow Scheme (total 35) on Ryecroft and Ryefield.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheme Manager on duty 9am – 3pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charnock Richard</strong></td>
<td>Bungalow Scheme (total 30) on Chorley Lane and Leeson Avenue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheme Manager on duty 9am -2pm (two days per week)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hurst Green, Mawdesley</strong></td>
<td>Bungalow Scheme (total 20) on Hurst Green. Communal Room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheme Manager on duty 9am – 3pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heath Charnock</strong></td>
<td>Bungalow Scheme (total 16) on Heathfields and Rawlinson Lane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheme Manager on duty 9am – 1pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Church Hill, Whittle-Le-Woods</strong></td>
<td>Bungalow Scheme (total 16) on Church Hill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheme Manager on duty 9am – 1pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These working times are approximate and may vary according to service requirements for each scheme.
Guide to Aids and Adaptations

We provide a wide range of adaptations for tenants in need which can be separated into two categories.

**Minor Adaptations**  
**Major Adaptations**

**Examples of Minor Adaptations are:**  
- Grab handles  
- Additional stair handrails  
- External metal handrails  
- Small Ramped access  
- Lever taps  
- Half steps to doors

**Examples of Major Adaptations are:**  
- Shower over bath  
- Level access shower  
- Ramped access  
- Stair lifts  
- Car Hard standings

**Minor Adaptations**

Chorley Community Housing will install minor Adaptations without the need for an assessment.

If you think you are in need of a minor Adaptation you can contact the Tenant support Team on 01257 414900.

A member of the Tenant Support Team will arrange an appointment to assess your needs.

Once your needs have been assessed the agreed work will be ordered. Depending on its urgency, the work will be carried out within one to 4 weeks.

**Major Adaptations**

For major adaptations an assessment will need to be carried out by our Occupational Therapist who will assess your needs and forward a referral to us.

This referral may include a mixture of major and minor adaptations. (Minor adaptations will be ordered as set out in the section above.)

Major adaptations may need to be surveyed before they are ordered to see if they are feasible – for example, it may be very difficult to carry out major adaptations to your home because of structural reasons.

We will aim to complete major adaptations within 6 months. This will be subject to available funds. Notice will be given to you prior to commencement.

**Other related services that are available**

**Lifeline**  
**Telecare**

For information on these services please contact the Tenant Support Team on 01257 414900.
10 Complaints, Comments and Compliments
This section tells you how you can make a complaint, give us compliments or comments on how we provide our services.

It also sets out the compensation amounts we will pay if we fail to meet our targets for responding to complaints, or providing information in a different format such as large print or translated into another language.

Complaints

We aim to provide high quality services but recognise that there may be instances when we don’t meet our standards. These could lead to inconvenience or financial loss. We seek to continuously improve and recognise that customer complaints give us valuable information on how we can improve our services.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a stated standard of service provided by us or a failure to provide an agreed service.

Complaints might be when we have:

- Failed to do something that we should have done
- Done something that we should not have done
- Done something badly.

What is not a complaint?

A complaint is not a request for service such as reporting a repair or contacting us about a neighbour dispute.

How can a complaint be made?

All our customers are welcome to complain about our services and challenge decisions through our complaints system. Customers will not receive adverse treatment because they have made a complaint.

A complaint can be made in a variety of ways. Customers can make a complaint face to face, by phone, fax, letter, e-mail, or by filling in a complaints, comments and compliments form.

How are complaints handled?

Dealing with complaints at source

Whenever a complaint is made we will try to deal with it at source within five working days. If a complaint remains unresolved after five working
days or is not dealt with to the satisfaction of the complainant the complaint is advanced to Stage 1 of our procedure.

**Stage 1 – Unresolved complaint**

An unresolved complaint will be referred to the relevant service area and will be acknowledged within three working days.

We will fully investigate the complaint and a full response will be sent within ten working days, addressing all the points raised and notifying the complainant of any action that has been undertaken as a result.

If it will take longer than ten working days to respond we will write to the complainant about when they are likely to receive a full response.

**Stage 2 – Service Director Review**

If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, they should notify us that they would like to advance their complaint to Stage 2 of the process, explaining the reasons why they are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

The complaint will be acknowledged within three working days by a Service Director.

A Service Director will fully investigate the complaint and a full response will be sent within ten working days, addressing all the points raised and notifying the complainant of any action that has been undertaken as a result.

If it will take longer than ten working days to respond we will write to the complainant about when they are likely to receive a full response.

**Stage 3 – Managing Director Review**

If a complainant does not feel that their complaint has been dealt with satisfactorily so far they should notify us that they would like to advance their complaint to Stage 3 of the process, explaining the reasons why.

The complaint will be acknowledged within three working days by the Managing Director.

The Managing Director will fully investigate the complaint and a full response will be sent within ten working days, addressing all the points raised and notifying the complainant of any action that has been undertaken as a result.
If it will take longer than ten working days to respond we will write to the complainant about when they are likely to receive a full response.

**Stage 4 – Appeals Panel**

If the complainant still does not feel that the complaint has been dealt with satisfactorily they can request that it is advanced to Stage 4, explaining why they are dissatisfied.

Stage 4 gives the complainant the opportunity of a final and personal hearing with members of our Board of Management. The Panel consists of at least two Board Members, some of whom may be tenants.

The Panel will be convened within 15 working days of a request to advance a complaint to Stage 4.

Once this hearing has taken place a final response confirming the outcome of the Appeals Panel will be sent to the complainant within 5 working days of the hearing.

The Appeals Panel is the final stage of our Complaints Procedure.

**Independent Housing Ombudsman**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response from the Appeals Panel they can contact the Ombudsman for Housing Associations, an independent body which governs our activities.

The Ombudsman will want to make sure that any complaint referred to them has followed our complaints procedure before they deal with it.

The Ombudsman can be contacted in any of the following ways:

- **Telephone:** 0207 421 3800
- **Lo-Call:** 0845 712 5973
- **Minicom:** 0207 404 7092
- **Fax:** 0207 831 1942
- **In writing:**
  - **Housing Ombudsman Service**
  - **81 Aldwych**
  - **London WC2B 4HN**
- **E-mail:** info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

**Compensation for service failure**

If we fail to meet our target times for responding to customer complaints and the complainant has not been notified previously of a delay in the process, a graduated scale for compensation will be awarded.

Failure of service will be monitored and payments will be made automatically where targets have not been met.
### Other payments

A Service Director investigating a complaint may agree to make compensation if:

- A customer suffers loss due to service failure
- Failure of service causes distress
- Customers have to spend excessive time and trouble achieving a solution to a complaint.

**The result may be:**

- A payment of compensation
- Compensation in kind (for example decorating materials)

### Customer satisfaction

We will regularly review the way we deal with complaints and everyone who makes a complaint will be asked for feedback after the closure of the complaint.

### Comments

**What is a comment?**

A comment is a suggestion for a service improvement or an observation or remark. Comments can prove useful when determining service priorities and identifying areas for improvement.

**How can a comment be made?**

All our customers are welcome to comment on our services.

A comment can be made in a variety of ways. Customers can make a comment face to face, by phone, fax, letter, e-mail, or by filling in a complaints, comments and compliments form.
How are comments handled?

Comments are recorded and reviewed by individual services and play a key role in determining service improvement priorities.

Customers will be notified of any changes made as a result of a comment they have made.

Compliments

What is a compliment?

A compliment is praise regarding a staff member, service and so on.

How can a compliment be made?

All our customers are welcome to compliment us on our services.

A compliment can be made in a variety of ways. Customers can make a compliment face to face, by phone, fax, letter, e-mail, or by filling in a complaints, comments and compliments form.

How are compliments handled?

Compliments help us to understand the areas in which we are doing well and where we are meeting the high standards of service we have set. This in turn helps us to identify areas where improvements could be made and helps us develop best practice across the services we provide.

Failure to provide information in other forms when requested

As well as compensation for failing to respond to complaints within our target times, we also offer compensation if we do not meet our target times for giving information in other forms when asked.

If we are unable to meet our original targets we will give a revised date. If the revised date is not met we will give £10 compensation for each form.

The following details set out the target times for providing information in other formats.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requested format</th>
<th>Target for provision</th>
<th>Compensation Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large print</td>
<td>3 working days</td>
<td>£10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio tape</td>
<td>5 working days</td>
<td>£10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative language</strong> (written and text only)</td>
<td>5 working days</td>
<td>£10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oral translation or</strong> interpretation service (by telephone)</td>
<td>Within 24 hours of request (excluding weekends)</td>
<td>£10.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contact details**

Any customer wishing to make a complaint, comment or compliment can contact us by phone, in writing or email using our contact information at the front of this book.
Useful Contacts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Chorley Council</strong></th>
<th><strong>Telephone</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General enquiries/switchboard</td>
<td>01257 515151</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits (Housing and Council Tax Benefit applications)</td>
<td>01257 515410</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council Tax enquiries</td>
<td>01257 515431</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refuse Recycling &amp; street cleansing</td>
<td>01257 515355</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Services (general queries)</td>
<td>01257 515722</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Other Useful Contacts</strong></th>
<th><strong>Telephone</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence Helpline (Chorley area)</td>
<td>01257 260200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens Advice Bureau</td>
<td>01257 279807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help the Homeless</td>
<td>01257 273320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connexions</td>
<td>01257 248900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth and Community Services</td>
<td>01257 270483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorley &amp; South Ribble Family Support Centre</td>
<td>01257 279360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dept. of Work &amp; Pensions (formerly Benefits Agency)</td>
<td>01257 565700</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>01257 841000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>01257 516000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Mind Centre</td>
<td>01257 260714</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Drugs Team</td>
<td>01257 230452</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chorley Police HQ</td>
<td>01257 269021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Debtline</td>
<td>0808 808 4000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Free confidential &amp; independent money advice.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>