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## Useful Information for Every Tenant

This Handbook is for you, and every tenant of Perth & Kinross Council.

It covers a wide range of what we hope is useful information about your tenancy, and the help that's available from the staff of Housing Services.

Because it's for easy reference, the information we've included has been kept short. If you need more details, please ask at your Area or Sub Office.

*Nothing in this Handbook replaces legally binding and specific information and details in individually-signed tenancy agreements.*

## Getting the Best From Us

Tenant involvement is an important part of Housing's work. We encourage tenants to participate and work with us, so that they get the best from our Services.

- ❑ *There's a place at the end of this Handbook where you can keep important documents about your home, along with information leaflets we'll send you from time to time.*
- ❑ *Please keep the Handbook where you can find it when you want it.*
- ❑ *Take this Handbook with you if you transfer to another of our properties.*
- ❑ *Updates on these contents will be issued from time to time.*

*continued*



*If you need a copy of this Handbook (your Tenancy Agreement, or any other document we provide) on audio tape, in Braille or in a different language or format, please let us know, and we will provide it as soon as possible.*

Information given, which was accurate at the time of publication, is subject to change.

# Section 1

## How to Contact Us



## **Housing & Community Care**

Perth & Kinross Council  
Pullar House  
35 Kinnoull Street  
PERTH  
PH1 5GD

Tel 01738 476000

Fax 01738 476010

Text phone - 01738 442573

Out-of-Hours Emergencies - 0845 301 11 10

We have a number of Area Offices and Sub Offices throughout Perth and Kinross. These offices can deal with

- allocation and waiting list enquiries,*
- rent and council tax payments,*
- reporting repairs,*
- rent enquiries,*
- rent arrears,*
- housing benefit enquiries,*
- council tax benefit,*
- house sales,*
- neighbour complaints, and*
- any general enquiry about council housing.*

Some Area Offices offer a full Registration Service for births, deaths and marriages. Opening and Cash Collection times, addresses and phone numbers, are given here. Area Offices do not close on some local public holidays.

Sub Offices don't offer the full range of services, but they can tell you who to contact, or they may be able to do it for you.

**Reminder: All Housing offices, and their switchboards, delay opening until 11.00 am on the first Thursday of each month, for staff training.**

Area Office	Settlement	
<b>Perth Central/ Perth City</b>	Aberargie	Friarton
	Abernethy	Glencarse
	Abernyte	Inchture
	Bridge of Earn	Invergowrie
	Bridgend	Kilspindie
	City Centre	Kingoodie
	Craigie	Leetown
	Errol	Longforgan
	Forgandenny	Moncreiffe
	Scone	
<b>Blairstown</b>	Alyth	Kinrossie
	Ardler	Kirkmichael
	Balbeggie	Meigle
	Blairstown	Meikleour
	Burrelton	Murthly
	Caputh	New Alyth
	Carsie	Ratray
	Collace	Saucher
	Coupar Angus	Spittalfield
	Guildtown	Wolfhill
	Kettins	Woodside

continued

Area Office	Settlement	
<b>Crieff</b>	Aberuthven	Dunning
	Auchterarder	Gilmerton
	Blackford	Greenloaning
	Braco	Madderty
	Comrie	Muthill
	Crieff	
<b>Pitlochry</b>	Aberfeldy	Kenmore
	Ballinluig	Killiecrankie
	Birnam	Kinloch Rannoch
	Bridge of Tilt	Loch Tay
	Dull	Logierait
	Dunkeld	Pitlochry
	Grantully	Weem
<b>Kinross</b>	Glenfarg	Cleish
	Kinnesswood	Blairingone
	Kinross	Powmill
	Milnathort	Crook of Devon
	Scotlandwell	
<b>Letham/Hillyland</b>	Almondbank	Pitcairngreen
	Hillyland	South Letham
	Methven	Tulloch
	North Letham	Chapelhill
<b>Muirton</b>	Bankfoot	Muirton
	Fairfield	North Muirton
	Luncarty	Stanley

Area, Address and Telephone Number	Opening and Registration Times	Cash Collection Times
<b>City Central</b> Area Office Pullar House 35 Kinnoull Street PERTH PH1 5GD <b>01738 476000</b>	Monday to Friday 8.45 am to 5.00 pm	Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 4.30 pm
<b>Letham Area Office</b> Letham Centre Tweedsmuir Road Letham PERTH PH1 2HJ <b>01738 625898</b>	Monday to Friday 8.45 am to 5.00 pm	Monday & Friday 9.15 am to 12.45 pm & 2.00 pm to 4.15 pm  Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 9.15 am to 12.15 pm
<b>Hillyland Sub Office</b> 61 Tulloch Terrace PERTH PH1 2PJ <b>01738 626621</b>	Monday to Friday 8.45 am to 5.00 pm	Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 2.00 pm to 4.15 pm
<b>Muirton Area Office</b> 19b Ainslie Place Muirton PERTH PH1 5DF <b>01738 632485</b>	Monday to Friday 8.45 am to 5.00 pm	Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 12.00 noon

continued

Area, Address and Telephone Number	Opening and Registration Times	Cash Collection Times
<b>North Muirton Sub Office</b> 17 Coll Place North Muirton PERTH PH1 3AY <b>01738 628664</b>	Opening hours as Cash Collection Times	Monday & Friday 1.30 pm to 4.30 pm  Wednesday 9.00 am to 12 noon
<b>Blairgowrie Area Office</b> 46 Leslie Street BLAIRGOWRIE PH10 6AW <b>01250 872051</b>	Monday to Friday 8.45 am to 5.00 pm  <b>Registration of Births, Deaths &amp; Marriages:</b> Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 1.00 pm & 2.00 pm to 4.30 pm	Monday to Friday 8.45 am to 4.30 pm
<b>Coupar Angus Sub Office</b> Town Hall Union Street Coupar Angus PH13 9AE <b>01828 627090</b>		Monday & Tuesday 9.00 am to 12.45 pm & 1.45 pm to 4.00 pm

continued

Area, Address and Telephone Number	Opening and Registration Times	Cash Collection Times
<b>Crieff Area Office</b> 32 James Square CRIEFF PH7 3EY <b>01764 657540</b>	8.45 am to 5.00 pm  <b>Registration of Births, Deaths &amp; Marriages:</b> Monday to Friday 10.00 am to 12 noon & 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm <b>01764 657550</b>	Monday & Friday 8.45 am to 4.30pm  Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 8.45 am to 12 noon
<b>Auchterarder Sub Office</b> Aytoun Hall AUCHTERARDER PH3 1QD <b>01764 662155</b>	Monday to Friday 8.45 am to 1.00 pm & 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm  <b>Registration of Births, Marriages &amp; Deaths:</b> Monday to Friday 10.00 am to 12 noon & 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm	Monday, Wednesday & Friday 8.45 am to 12 noon  Tuesday & Thursday 8.45 am to 1.00 pm & 2.00 pm to 4.30 pm
<b>Kinross Area Office</b> 21 High Street KINROSS KY13 8AP <b>01577 862351</b>	8.45 am to 5.00 pm  <b>Registration of Births, Deaths &amp; Marriages:</b> Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 1.00 pm & 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm or by arrangement	Monday & Friday 8.45 am to 4.30 pm  Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 8.45 am to 12 noon only

Area, Address and Telephone Number	Opening and Registration Times	Cash Collection Times
<b>Pitlochry Area Office</b> 26 Atholl Road PITLOCHRY PH16 5BX <b>01796 472323</b>	Monday to Friday 8.45 am to 5.00 pm  <b>Registration of Births, Deaths &amp; Marriages:</b> Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 12 noon & 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm	Monday & Friday 8.45 am to 4.30 pm  Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 8.45 am to 12 noon only
<b>Aberfeldy Sub Office</b> Bank Street ABERFELDY PH15 2BB <b>01887 820475</b>	Monday & Friday 8.45 am to 12.45 pm & 1.45 pm to 4.00 pm  Thursday 1.45 pm to 4.00 pm	Monday & Friday 8.45 am to 12.45 pm & 1.45 pm to 4.00pm  Thursday 1.45 pm to 4.00 pm

continued

# Section 2

## Living in Your Home



### Your Tenancy

When you accept the keys to your home you will sign a Tenancy Agreement. This is a legal document. It covers your rights and responsibilities as a tenant, and the rights and responsibilities of the Council as a landlord.

As a Council tenant you have a Scottish Secure Tenancy. This means:

#### **you are entitled to**

- a written agreement covering information you have the right to get,*
- a rent card,*
- a home that's wind and watertight,*
- pass on your tenancy to a qualified successor if you die,*
- see information we keep about you,*
- challenge unreasonable tenancy conditions,*
- compensation for authorised improvements on termination of your tenancy,*

#### **and you can apply to**

- take in lodgers,*
- sub-let your house,*
- exchange your home with another Secure Tenant, and*
- buy your home.*

*continued*

## As a Secure Tenant you have agreed to

- ❑ *stay in the property,*
- ❑ *pay your rent in advance,*
- ❑ *allow other tenants to enjoy their home,*
- ❑ *keep communal areas, including stairs and bin areas, clean and tidy,*
- ❑ *keep tidy any garden area that goes with the property,*
- ❑ *report repairs as soon as possible,*
- ❑ *ensure the property, and its fixtures and fittings, are not damaged,*
- ❑ *ask permission to keep pets, run a business, make alterations and so on,*
- ❑ *tell us if you are living away from home,*
- ❑ *leave the property in good condition, and*
- ❑ *give 28 days notice when you decide to leave the property.*

*The next Sections explain your rights and responsibilities in terms of the law and your tenancy agreement.*

## Giving Up Your Tenancy

For more information on what to do when you want to give up your tenancy, see Section 10, page 95.

## Paying Your Rent

Your rent is assessed annually at the beginning of the financial year. The calculation to set rent levels is based on the size and type of house and facilities provided, like central heating.

The only other time your rent might change would be after improvements or modernisation, or when a new service is introduced, like caretaking. You will be notified in writing four weeks in advance of any increase in the weekly rent.

The rent of your home, stated in your tenancy agreement, is due weekly in advance. If you wish to pay on a monthly basis, you should pay in advance to avoid falling into arrears.

## How to Pay Your Rent

### ❑ **By Post**

*To make a postal payment, send a cheque (with your name, address, and rent reference number written on the back) to your Area Office, or to Rent Payments, Housing Services, Pullar House, 35 Kinnoull Street, PERTH PH1 5WJ. Cheques should be made payable to Perth & Kinross Council. Don't enclose your payment card.*

*continued*

### ❑ **In Person**

*Please present your plastic payment card each time.  
You can pay by cash, debit card, cheque, or postal order.*

### ❑ **In Person at any Post Office, or anywhere there's a Paypoint or Payzone Sign**

*No charge is made for this service. Please present your plastic payment card each time.*

### ❑ **By Phone**

*You can call 01738 476105, or your Area Office, and pay with a debit card (like Switch or Delta). Additionally, you can phone us and pay with a credit card, but only if you are paying the full balance.*

### ❑ **By the Cheapest Method**

*Direct Debit is the cheapest and the most popular way of paying. It's easy for you and effective for the Council. If you have any questions about this, please phone 01738 477430.*

## **Council Tax Benefit**

To find out if you qualify for Council Tax Benefit, phone Pullar House on 01738 476059, or ask at any Area Office (see pages 10 to 13).

## **Rent Card**

A Rent Card is issued to you at the start of your tenancy. You will receive a new Carrier for it each April, telling you about

your new weekly rent. The plastic Rent Card itself should, however, last five years.

If you lose the plastic Rent Card you will be charged for a replacement. You can still pay your rent at the Area Offices if you have forgotten your Card.

## **Rent Free Weeks**

There are four rent free weeks each year: One in April, one in July, and two in December.

If you fall behind with your rent you should continue paying throughout the free weeks to reduce your arrears.

## **Rent Arrears**

If you do not pay your rent regularly, arrears will mount up.

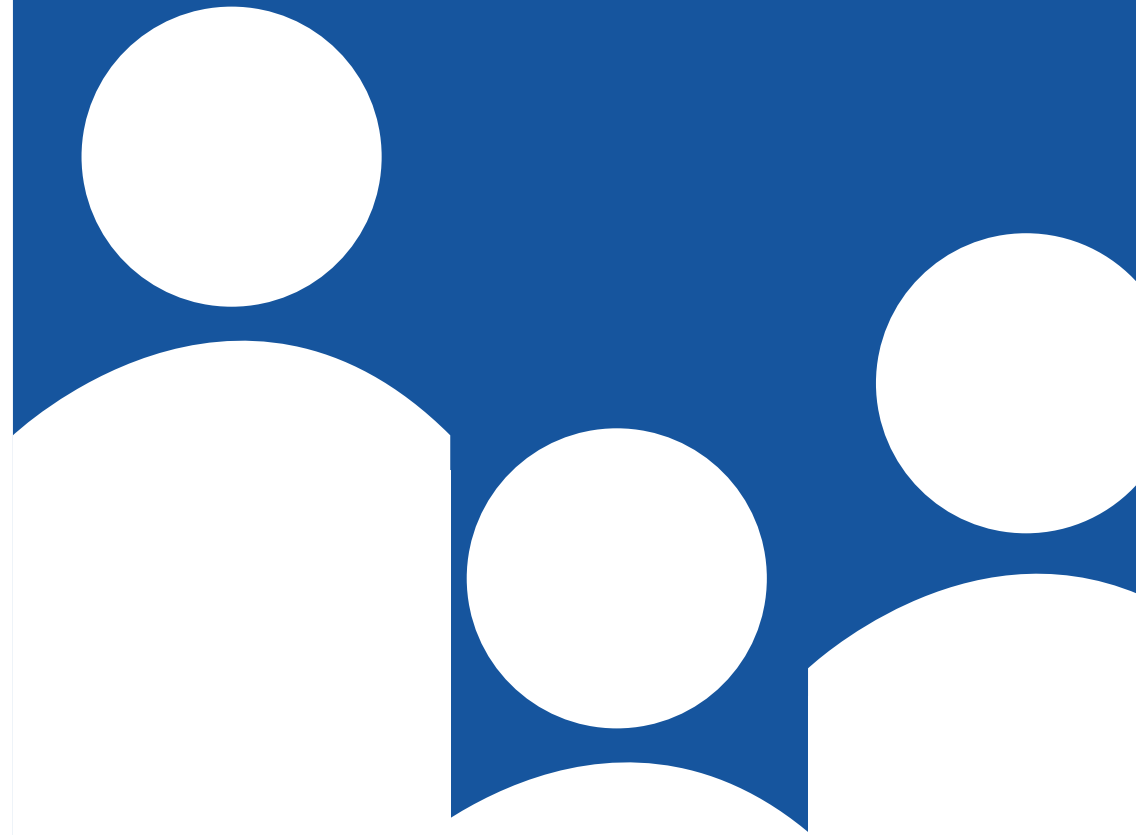
If you find it difficult to pay your rent please contact your Area Office as soon as possible, to talk about it.

*If you don't pay your rent or keep to any agreement, our next course of action will be lodgement to Court. This could incur further expenses. Non-payment of rent may result in you losing your home.*

*Tenants are required to make rent and, like all residents, Council Tax payments.*

*continued*

# Section 3 Housing & Council Tax Benefit



## 3 Housing & Council Tax Benefit

You may be entitled to Housing/Council Tax Benefit. It goes towards meeting all or part of these payments.

Housing/Council Tax Benefit takes account of your circumstances. This covers the number of people in your household, income, and whether anybody has special needs, for instance.

Water and sewerage charges are not covered.

Your Council Tax bill will be reduced if you qualify for Council Tax Benefit but it may *also* be lower

- if you live on your own,*
- if someone in the household falls into a disabled category or*
- if your house has been adapted to meet the needs of a disabled person.*

This information will be detailed in your Council Tax bill.

### **Do you have to declare everyone who is living in your home?**

Yes, even if it is only a short term arrangement. If anyone leaves or joins your household you must inform your Area Office immediately, so that your Housing/Council Tax Benefit claim can be amended.

### **Do you have to reapply for Housing/Council Tax Benefit if you move home?**

Yes. But, if you do move from one Council house to another, we'll give you a new Housing/Council Tax Benefit application form, and help you to claim again.

*continued*

### **What happens to your Housing/Council Tax Benefit if you go into hospital?**

If you are in hospital for less than 52 weeks there will be no change to your Housing/Council Tax Benefit. We must be notified if you go into or come out of hospital, and someone can do this for you, of course.

Housing/Council Tax Benefit will end if more than 52 weeks have passed since your admission to hospital, or if you no longer intend to return home, whichever is the earlier.

### **What if you receive Income Support/Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based)?**

Normally, if you receive this allowance, you will be entitled to maximum Housing/Council Tax Benefit, excluding deductions for meals, fuel charges, water charges and non-dependents.

### **Where do you find out about Housing/Council Tax Benefit?**

At Pullar House, Perth, and you only have to complete one form. To find out more, you can phone 01738 476059, or ask at your Area Office. If you're not sure, ask anyway. Make sure you get any entitlements.

If you move, remember to notify the Council Tax Unit. By law, you are required to notify any changes in your circumstances within 21 days.

### **What about Housing Benefit/Council Tax appeals and reviews?**

If you disagree with a decision about Benefit, you can ask us to explain it and look at your situation again. If, then, we do not change our decision, you can appeal in writing.

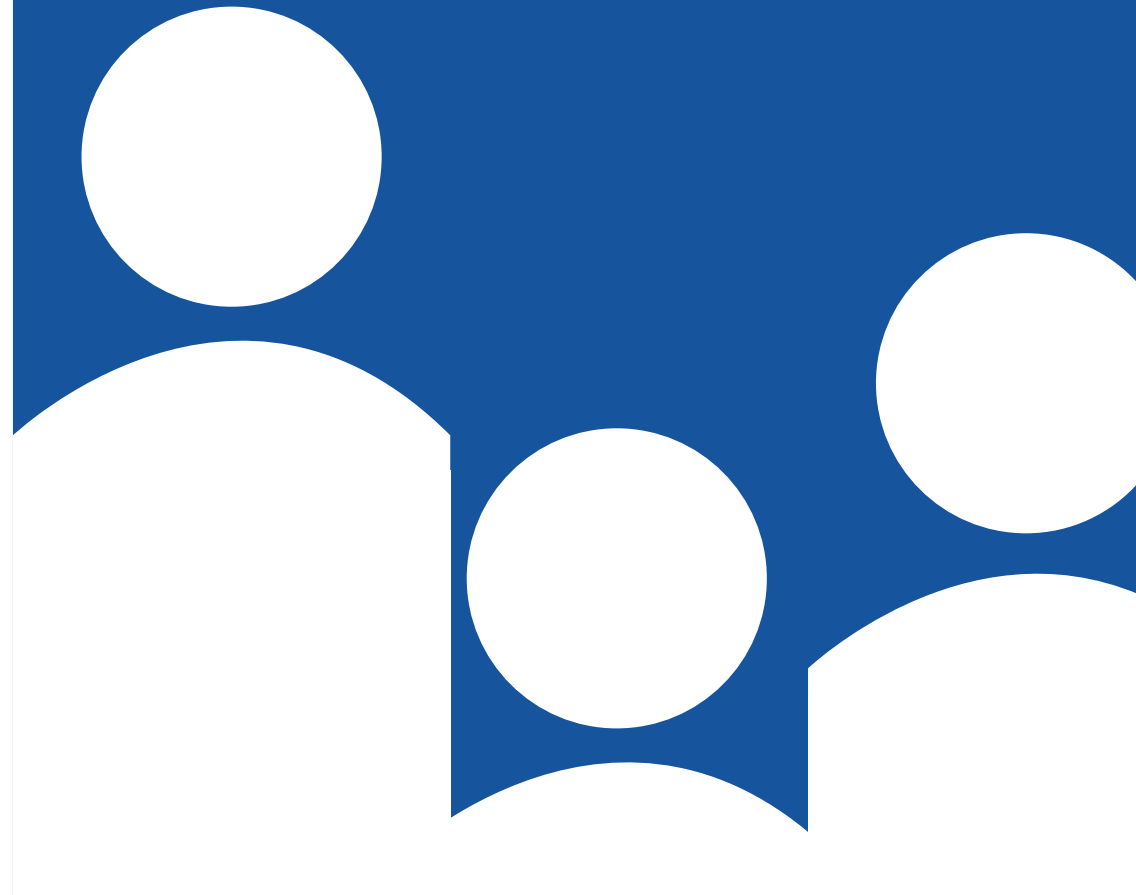
Appeals must be lodged within one month from the date of the decision. Any appeal that's not upheld will be forwarded to the Appeals Service for a Tribunal Hearing.

*We have a booklet that explains Benefit Appeals. You can ask for a copy at any of our Area Offices.*

*continued*

# Section 4

## Repairs & Maintenance



## 4 Repairs & Maintenance

By law

- ❑ *we must make sure that wind and rain cannot get into your home, and*
- ❑ *we have to maintain installations in your home which supply gas, water, electricity and drainage (but not your cooker or any appliance you install).*

It is our responsibility to make sure your home meets those standards.

You are responsible for the contents of your home, so we strongly recommend that you insure them. There's more about contents insurance in Section 16, on page 137.

We have to carry out some of the repairs in your home, but there are some that you must do yourself. In the next table you'll see who's responsible for what.

We recognise that fittings vary from house to house. To clarify repair responsibilities, if you feel this might be necessary, please contact your Area Office.

The Council's Responsibilities	The Tenant's Responsibilities
	Any fitting or appliance belonging to you must be repaired and maintained by you.
<b>Electrical</b>	<i>continued</i>
Wiring circuits/outlets installed by us.	Electric Fire. Individual television aerials.

*continued*

The Council's Responsibilities	The Tenant's Responsibilities
<b>Electrical</b> <i>continued</i>	
Immersion heater. Standard light fittings. Extractor fan. Smoke detectors. Communal stair lighting. Communal television aerial.	Plugs and fuses. Light bulbs.
<b>Plumbing</b>	
Domestic water supply and distribution (including the storage tank and the hot water cylinder). Downpipes. Drains (not main sewers - they are the responsibility of Scottish Water).	Sink plugs and chains. Washing machine fittings. (Accidental damage to sanitary ware should be claimed on your house insurance).
<b>Windows</b>	
Windows, external doors and external glazing will be repaired where breakage is by a third party and the incident is reported to the Police. Be sure to obtain an incident report number from the Police. Sash cords (ropes for windows). Sills.	All glazing other than broken by a third party and reported to the Police. Curtain rails.

*continued*

The Council's Responsibilities	The Tenant's Responsibilities
<b>Windows</b> <i>continued</i>	
Window catches. Window frames. Window handles. Window locks (where already fitted).	
<b>Doors</b>	
External door locks. Maintenance of door entry systems where fitted. (Maintenance on multi-tenure blocks and areas of high vandalism may be limited). Outside doors (including doors to flats in closes). Internal doors, not deliberately damaged. <i>Please note that the provision, maintenance and/or installation of doors or door entry systems is entirely at the discretion of the Council, and may be vetoed by private owners through cost contribution reasons.</i>	Door bell. Door chain. Glass on internal doors. Inside doors, locks (damaged by you or your visitors). Keys (lost or broken).

*continued*

The Council's Responsibilities	The Tenant's Responsibilities
<b>Bathroom</b>	
Plumbing repairs.	Shower unit/overhead shower, including plumbing and electrics, which you have installed. Tap washers. Replacement of damaged sanitary fittings.
<b>Kitchen</b>	
Kitchen units, sink bowl and drainer (through fair wear and tear).	Your own domestic appliances. Tap washers.
<b>Heating</b>	
Chimney, fireplace, firebasket, Babybricks and tiles. Gas/electrical/solid fuel installations.	Chimney sweeping. Heating system or individual appliances fitted by you.
<b>Miscellaneous (items we provided)</b>	
Clothes drying poles and 'whirly-gigs'. Boundary and divisional fencing/gates - subject to safety considerations. Communal access footpaths (share rechargeable to private owners). External redecoration.	Clothes ropes and pulley ropes. Internal redecoration. Access paths that are not shared. Hat/coat racks and hooks. Shelving.

continued

The Council's Responsibilities	The Tenant's Responsibilities
<b>Pest Infestations</b>	
Infestations inside the house (where they are not directly related to tenant ownership of a pet) like ants, carpet beetle, and silver fish.	Infestations outwith the house in gardens, around paths and so on.
<b>Special Cases</b> <i>Important</i>	
If an elderly or disabled tenant requires assistance replacing the battery in smoke detectors, or replacing a tap washer, we will provide this service. Please ask.	You are responsible for any repairs or replacements required as a result of any misuse or neglect by you, your family, or your visitors.

## Asking for a Repair

Phone, call in person, or write to us at your Area Office, or to Pullar House. *When you report a repair, please tell us as much as you can about the problem, and where it is, inside or outside the house. Tell us when access will be available, or where a key can be obtained, ideally from a neighbour nearby.*

## What Happens Next?

1. We issue an Order to an appropriate Contractor to carry out the work.

continued

2. If we need to clarify what's needed to put the repair right, we'll arrange for one of our Maintenance Inspectors to come and see you in a few days. When we've checked what work is needed, we'll issue an Order for it to be done.
3. Work is given a suitable priority, and carried out in the appropriate time.
4. Whatever comments you have about the Repair Service, please let us know. It's useful to hear when you're happy about repair work, as well as when you're not.

Except for emergencies, repairs will usually be carried out within normal working hours.

A card will be left if you're not at home when the Maintenance Inspector, or Workmen, call.

#### Important Reminder

*Please watch out for people pretending to be Officials or Workmen. **Always** ask for identification, give yourself time to **check it carefully**, and be satisfied with it **before** you let anyone into your home.*

*continued*

## How Long Will Repairs Take?

### 1. Emergency Repairs: *Priority 1*

These are likely to have something to do with fire or flood or structural damage, resulting in homelessness, or the interruption of a mains service (gas, electricity, or water). *We operate an emergency repair service outside normal office hours for genuine emergencies only.*

As far as possible, Priority 1 Repairs will be attended to within two hours, and made safe and secure. An emergency repair may be an interim measure and the work properly completed as soon as possible.

The Duty Inspector's phone number is **0845 301 11 10**.

### 2. Essential but Non-Urgent Repairs: *Priority 2*

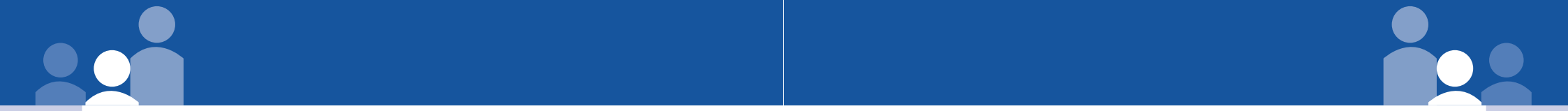
Examples include minor wind and weatherproofing repairs, minor electrical faults, internal joinery work, and repairs to windows and doors. They may cause inconvenience, but don't need immediate attention.

Priority 2 Repairs are completed in no more than seven days, provided there are no problems with access to the property, or with the supply of materials.

### 3. Routine Repairs: *Priority 3*

Examples include minor repairs to and cleaning of gutters, minor damage to timber, repairs to gates, fences and dustbin areas. Priority 3 Repairs will be completed in no more than 28 days.

*continued*



We will do everything we can to complete repairs on schedule, but some repairs may take longer because a lot of them happen at the same time. So, if your repairs are not completed in the time we say, please contact your Area Office.

*During emergency circumstances and situations, like severe winter weather, some repairs may take longer to complete.*

## Chargeable Repairs

Some repair work is chargeable and will be done only after you have agreed to meet the costs, which will include an administration charge, and VAT.

*Repairs like this are probably not due to fair wear and tear. Generally, they are the result of an accident, neglect, or misuse by yourself, a member of your household, or your visitors.*

Chargeable repairs can be arranged for you by a Maintenance Inspector, after you've signed the necessary form. An account will be sent in due course, for you to pay.

As an alternative, you can make all the arrangements to have the repairs done yourself, as well as paying for them. We strongly advise you to use only competent tradesmen, to get high quality work.

*We strongly recommend that you make arrangements to insure your household contents. You'll find more information about this in Section 16, page 137.*

*continued*

## Maintenance of Gas Appliances

It's our duty to make sure that Gas Appliances we own or lease are safe for you to use. This means it's necessary for appliances to have a safety check/service every year.

This work will be carried out by suitably qualified Engineers, and will include safety checks to the appliance and the flue.

*It's your responsibility to ensure the Engineer can get into your house to make these checks.*

When the work's done, you'll get a copy of the safety check record.

New tenants will get a copy of the latest safety check record before they occupy the premises.


*If we have to instigate Court proceedings to get access to your house and satisfy the legal requirements to service any Gas Appliances or supply system, you will be recharged for all the service and legal costs.*

## Planned Maintenance

By doing this kind of work, we aim to keep the external fabric of the houses in as good a condition as possible, to extend the period before replacement becomes necessary.

It includes external joinery like windows, doors, external timber linings and eaves boarding, slates, rainwater gutters and downpipes, and external repainting.

*continued*



Your house is likely to have this kind of work every five years. However, if major improvements are planned, we would normally defer Planned Maintenance so that all the work happens at the same time.

In any case, we will write to you beforehand to let you know what we're intending to do.

**Point to remember:** *Planned Maintenance does not cover Improvements.*

If your home is due for Planned Maintenance the outside will be surveyed to identify the work that's needed. Where, for instance, exterior doors have deteriorated to the point where repairs aren't economic, they will be renewed.

If your home has had no maintenance work for more than five years, or if you have any questions about maintenance, please check with your Area Office.

# Section 5 Improvements & Modernisation



## 5 Improvements & Modernisation

We try to make sure that all our houses are improved to a similar standard, but various types of Improvement projects are undertaken. It depends on the condition and design of the houses concerned.

*Regardless of the content of any planned Improvements work, we will write to you about our proposals as far in advance as possible.*

In most cases, we do the work while you continue to live in your home. We do our best to cause you as little inconvenience as possible but, inevitably, Improvements work causes disturbance. Recognising this, we have a standard scale of disturbance allowances. They are paid when improvement or modernisation contracts have been completed.

Only in exceptional cases does anyone have to be decanted to alternative houses while work is being done. Usually, it's only necessary where comprehensive Modernisation is happening, or where the level of disruption is expected to be more severe than normal.

*If you feel you can't cope with the stress of having your home Improved or if, at any time, you just need more advice or information, please contact your Area Office.*

*continued*

## How will we advise you about Plans for Your Home?

If your house is being Modernised, these are the notification procedures:

- ❑ *We'll send you an initial letter, with details of the work to be done to your house, as soon as it appears in the Council's approved budget. Usually, this is two years before work begins. The letter will give you an approximate start time.*
- ❑ *If, at any time, the proposed timing changes, we will write and tell you about the revised dates.*
- ❑ *During the early stages of the project, we'll send you an update letter. Additionally, this letter may tell you when Surveyors will be calling to gather information to enable them to make detailed plans.*
- ❑ *About four to six months before work starts, a member of our staff will contact you. They will explain the project in more detail, talk about your individual requirements, obtain your preferences on any choices or options available to you and, generally, answer any questions.*
- ❑ *If it will be necessary for you to be temporarily decanted from your home while work is done, this will also be discussed with you.*
- ❑ *When a Contractor has been appointed, we will send you a Project Guide. It will give you detailed information about the extent of the work, how it will be done, with the names and contact numbers for everybody involved in arranging, supervising and checking the work.*

*continued*

- ❑ *We will give you a likely start date for your specific house as soon as we agree the working programme with the Contractor.*
- ❑ *Tenants' meetings are likely at different stages to give everybody, as a group, the chance to discuss any concerns with the local Councillor, Housing Officers, the Architect and the Contractor. Meetings like these are particularly important if, for instance, there are widespread concerns about the plans, or if the work is extensive and calls for decanting to alternative accommodation.*
- ❑ *About six weeks before work starts, the Contractor will contact you to make arrangements to carry out a House Survey. This is to finalise the details of doing the work, and take note of any special circumstances. As far as practicable, the Contractor will agree the positioning of items like central heating radiators, to suit your wishes.*
- ❑ *No later than two weeks before work starts on your house, the Contractor will give you a definite start date. You will be visited the day before work actually begins, to confirm any final arrangements for access, decanting and similar practicalities.*
- ❑ *If the work we do affects the rental value of your house, any change in what you pay will apply as soon as the work has been completed. We will, however, give you at least 28 days notice before we apply any rent increase.*

*continued*

## During the Contract

*You will get regular visits during the Contract by one of our Clerks of Works and the Contractor's Site Manager. They are responsible for making sure you are satisfied with the service you experience, and that the work is completed to specified standards.*

The Clerk of Works and the Contractor's Site Manager are there to help you, and they are your first point of contact if there are any difficulties. Usually, it's best that you don't complain directly to tradesmen. They may not have authority to deal with your problem.

If, for any reason, you are unable to make contact with the Clerk of Works, or if you need to talk to a more senior member of Housing staff, please contact your Area Office.

## About Insulation

When we survey your home for an Improvement project, we always check to make sure the insulation meets required standards. If it's necessary, the insulation in the attic, around hot and cold water tanks, and the pipes, will be increased while other work is done.

Where possible, we have installed cavity insulation to all of our homes. Unfortunately many of our houses were built with solid walls of brick or stone, which can be uneconomic to insulate. Even so, we will consider ways of improving the insulation of walls like these when we do other Improvement work.

*continued*

If you are concerned about thermal heating in any part of your home, please enquire at your Area Office, or phone the Perth & Kinross Energy Advice Project, on 01738 476183.

## About Central Heating

Thanks to a widespread programme of installations and upgrades, all Council houses have adequate heating. Generally, as heating systems become ready for replacement, you will be offered the choice between gas, electric or solid fuel systems, depending on availability and price. We keep an eye on the steadily-changing specifications of all forms of heating, because our intention is to offer you the most energy-efficient system, within the limits of reasonable installation costs.

Some of the heating systems we have installed are leased from a finance company, rather than being purchased outright, but this makes no practical difference to your rights. We repair, maintain and service your heating system. If you decide to buy your home, the central heating is included in the purchase price for your house. Ownership of the system passes to you when the sale is concluded.

## About Window and Door Replacements

After approval in principle that double glazed windows and doors should be fitted in all of our houses where it's practicable, a major programme was successfully completed, on time, in 2003.

Regrettably, we can't install double-glazing to some houses because they are Listed Buildings subject to Planning Restrictions, for instance.

*continued*

## About Electrical Wiring

When we carry out any internal Improvements to your home, we will inspect the wiring and any necessary repairs to it will be included in the overall contract.

### Important Reminder

*Faulty electrical wiring is a very common cause of household fires. If you have any concerns **at all** about the condition of any of the electrical installations in your home, please contact your Area Office immediately.*

## About Kitchens

If planned Improvements to your home include Modernisation of the kitchen, we will offer you the choice of at least three different styles of drawer fronts and worktops. We will talk about available choices when we visit you, between four and six months before the work starts.

## About Disturbance Allowances

Recognising the fact that there's always some upset when work is done in your home, we have a standard scale of Disturbance Allowances. They are paid when Improvement work is complete.

These payments are intended to compensate you not only for the disturbance, but also to give you some help towards the cost of any repairs to your décor that you may feel are necessary.

*continued*

## What Happens at the End of the Contract?

Before we sign-off the house as "complete", we'll check to make sure you are happy with the Improvements.

The Clerk of Works will ask you to sign a form to confirm that you are satisfied with the work. But, if you're unhappy with it, or you believe it's not been fully completed, you should refuse to sign the form - and say why.

We hope that any queries will soon be ironed-out but, if you feel you're not getting satisfactory answers, please get in touch with your Area Office.

The Contractor should show you how to use new installations, like heating controls, or locks on windows or doors. If that's not done, or you would like more advice, please tell the Clerk of Works or your Area Office.

After work on your house is completed and signed-off, we will give you a Tenant Satisfaction Survey sheet. Please fill it in, and us what you think about the work we've done for you.

All of our Improvement Contracts require the Contractor to guarantee work for 12 months. If any defects appear in any of the work done during the Contract please report it to your Area Office in the normal way.

## Can You Save Money on Your Fuel Bills?

We can't alter the fact that heating all the rooms of your home will increase your gas or electricity bills but, to try help, we contribute to an independent Energy Advice Project. It can

*continued*



give you advice on the most effective use of your heating system, and how you can reduce costs.

To find out more, ask the Clerk of Works, or staff at your Area Office.

Alternatively, contact the Perth & Kinross Energy Advice Project directly on 01738 476183, or through its Dundee HQ, on Freephone 0800 512012.

# Section 6

## Being Comfortable and Safe in Your Home



### Avoiding Dampness

Dampness is dangerous. As well as being a health risk, it can make mould grow, damage furniture, clothes, and decoration. There are three main kinds dampness

#### 1. Rising Damp

*This happens when moisture in the ground is not prevented from rising up walls. It can be cured by repairing or inserting a damp proof course.*

#### 2. Penetrating Damp

*This occurs when structural defects in the roof or walls let rain in. It can be stopped by fixing what's wrong, like replacing missing roof tiles or cleaning out gutters.*

#### 3. Condensation

*This happens when warm moist air meets a cold surface. Warm air can carry more moisture than cold air so, when warm air cools, water settles on the cold surface of, say, windows, cold walls and, perhaps, the ceiling.*

In Scotland, condensation is the most common kind of dampness. To reduce or control it

- Open windows, especially in the kitchen and bathroom,*
- try to keep the house warm, and*
- use an extractor fan if there is one.*
- Don't*** *use a tumble dryer if it's not properly vented to the outside.*

*continued*

- ❑ **Don't** dry clothes in an airing cupboard if it has no ventilation.
- ❑ **Don't** use paraffin or portable gas heaters. They create more moisture - potential dampness - than anything else.

If your home gets damp, please contact your Area Office.

## Home Safety: Gas

*Never try to find or repair a gas leak yourself*

**Phone Transco Emergency 0800 111 999**

**Or our emergency number 0845 301 11 10**

### If you smell gas

1. **Turn off** the gas main (at the meter).
2. **Open** windows and doors.
3. **Don't** use a naked flame.
4. **Don't** turn electrical switches on or off.
5. **Don't** smoke.
6. Phone Transco.

***Under no circumstances turn the gas supply back on until someone from Transco has checked it.***

*continued*

## Home Safety: Electricity

Report any electrical faults to us immediately.

**Our emergency number is 0845 301 11 10**

Be sure you know where your mains switch is, and how to turn it off. If you're ever in any doubt, switch off.

**If there's a power cut, phone the Hydro Board**

**0800 300 999**

## Home Safety: Fire

### To reduce the risk of fire

- ❑ *Make sure all your smoke detectors work.*
- ❑ *Keep matches out of reach of children.*
- ❑ *Never leave pans unattended on the cooker.*
- ❑ *Make really sure that cigarettes are out properly, particularly when you go to bed.*
- ❑ *Close **all** the doors at night.*

### If there is a fire

- ❑ *Get everyone out of the house.*
- ❑ *Close all the doors and windows if possible.*
- ❑ **Call the Fire Brigade: 999**
- ❑ *Switch off anything that uses gas or electricity, if it's safe to do it.*

*continued*

## Home Safety: *Smoke Detectors*

We have installed mains or battery operated smoke detectors in all of our houses. Please look after them.

### **If your detectors are battery operated**

- Change the battery at least once a year, or sooner.*
- Remember that if it “beeps” you’re hearing the special low battery signal.*
- Never leave a battery-operated smoke detector without a battery.***
- If you go away for a few days, check that your detector is working. You may have missed the low-battery signal.*

### **If you have a mains-electric smoke detector**

- Make sure that the mains supply is permanently connected and the fuse or back-up battery has not been removed.*

To keep battery and mains electric smoke detectors free from dust, blow or vacuum them regularly.

We will replace the battery in your smoke detector if you are elderly or disabled and don’t have a relative or friend able to do it either. If you get in touch with your Area Office, we’ll arrange it for you.

*If you have any problems with any smoke detector we have installed, please contact us. **Please do not abuse or disconnect your smoke detector. The life it saves could be yours.***

*continued*

## Home Safety: *Carbon Monoxide Detectors*

We’ve fitted these detectors in most of our houses with gas-fired appliances.

If your house hasn’t been fitted yet, please phone our gas team on 01738 448385.

Some Carbon Monoxide Detectors have been fitted in houses with solid fuel heating systems and, here again, if your house has not been fitted with one of these detectors, please call us on 01738 448385.

When we install detectors we issue explanatory leaflets but, if you would like more information, do contact us.

## Home Safety: *Timber Cladding*

If you want to fit timber cladding anywhere inside your home, you must have a Building Warrant and our permission, as landlord. Importantly, timber cladding or lining must meet with fire safety standards, to make sure you are safe in your home. (See Section 9 on Permissions on page 83.)

It may be possible to ask for a retrospective Building Warrant for timber cladding done in the last five years. If it was put in before that, you might apply for what’s called a Letter of Comfort. For more information, please ask at your Area Office.

If you give up your tenancy without having obtained permissions for any alterations, including timber cladding, we will reinstate the property. You will be charged for the cost of this work.

*continued*

If you want to apply to transfer to another home, or arrange a mutual exchange with another tenant, we must check - if cladding has been put into either of the houses - that permissions were obtained.

If permissions were not obtained, agreement will have to be signed to pay the costs of removing the cladding, or you must remove it and reinstate the wall(s) and/or ceiling(s) to Clerk of Works satisfaction, before the transfer happens.

All fees charged for these permissions are the responsibility of the tenant.

## Home Safety: Security

Most break-ins are not by hardened criminals, but by petty, opportunistic thieves. They take advantage of people who have not made their homes as secure as possible.

These are three important things to remember

- ❑ *Don't make it obvious that there's nobody at home.*
- ❑ *Don't leave windows or doors open or unlocked, even if you just pop round the corner for a minute or two.*
- ❑ *Don't leave valuables clearly visible through windows.*

**Always be very careful about who you let into your home. Official identification is vital. Take time to check it very thoroughly, before you let anyone in.**

***If you have any doubts at all about any callers, keep them out.***

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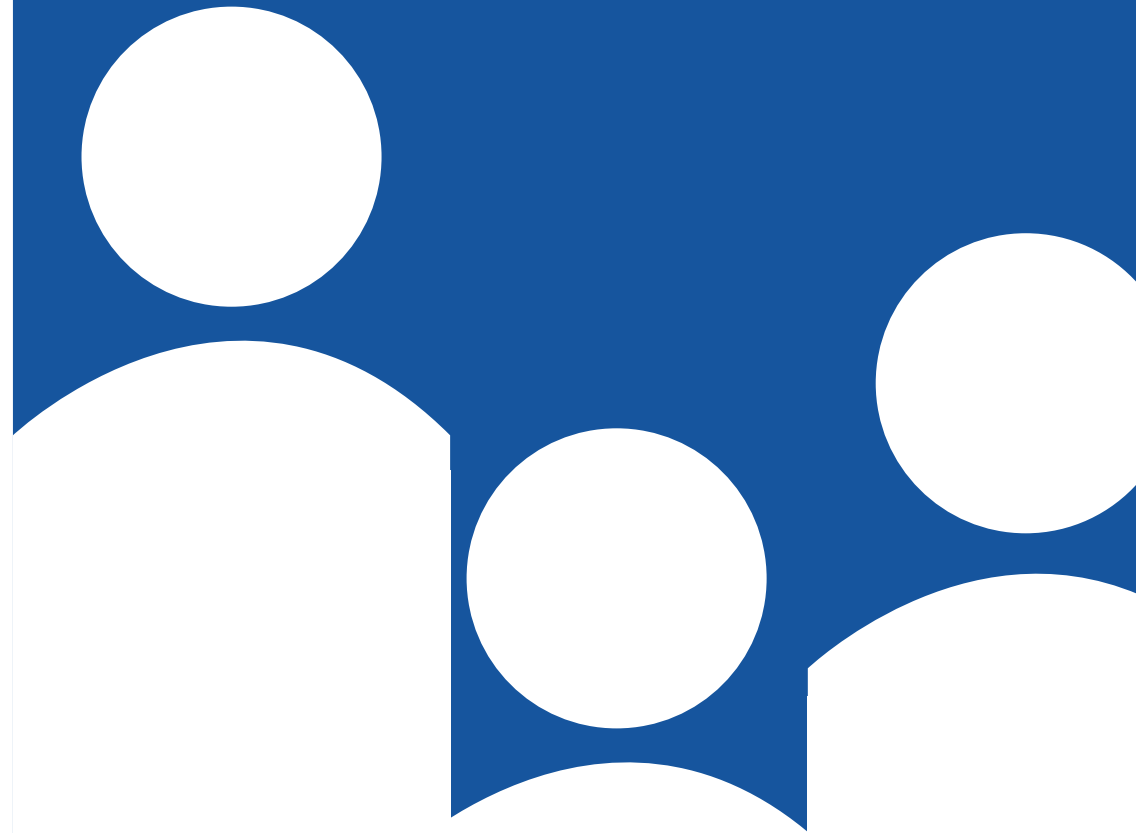
## Home Safety: Frost Precautions

Winter's cold weather causes all sorts of problems with water supplies, but you can avoid most of the risks with these steps

- ❑ *If you're going away from home for a few days, drain the water system before you go. We'll help to drain and reinstate your plumbing system, without charge, if you give us between ten and 14 days notice.*
- ❑ ***Be sure you know how to find the stopcock, and check that you are able to turn it off.*** *If you have a problem finding it, or you can't manage to turn it off, ask your Area Office for help.*
- ❑ *Check that no part of the water system is overflowing on the outside of your property. If it is, please tell us. We'll fix it.*
- ❑ *If you have a loft area, always remove the hatch or door in cold weather, to let warm air to circulate up there. It's easy to do, and it can help to prevent burst pipes.*
- ❑ *In extreme weather, when the temperature drops to 5 degs C or less, keep the house as warm as possible both day and night, if you can.*
- ❑ *If you're not in the house for a couple of days, ask someone to go in and make sure your heating is working.*
- ❑ *In any emergency, turn the water off at the stopcock, then open all the taps, to drain both hot and cold systems. Draw off any coal fires - carefully - and switch off any water heating. Next, get in touch with your Area Office.*
- ❑ *Insure your Home Contents (see Section 16 page 137).*

# Section 7

## Respecting Others



At the start of your tenancy, when you signed your Tenancy Agreement, you will have agreed to keep to certain conditions. They are intended to make sure that you and your neighbours can enjoy your homes in peace and comfort, and that the area around your home looks reasonable.

### Visitors

You are responsible for the actions of your visitors while they are in your house or in the neighbourhood of your house.

### Noise

Repetitive day-in day-out noise can lead to stress and make life miserable, especially for people who are housebound and people with health problems.

Remember that different people have different sensitivities and expectations.

While we all enjoy our own leisure, we should think about the impact that any of our activities are having on others. Too much noise - from parties and music systems, household appliances, shouting and swearing, banging doors, fighting and screaming - will annoy neighbours.

How can you be a considerate neighbour? Here are some suggestions:

- ❑ ***Radios and televisions, music systems and musical instruments***

*Think about the volume and keep it as low as possible, especially the bass control, particularly at night. Use*

*continued*

*headphones, or a personal stereo. It may help if you have your television and speakers away from shared walls. Raise speakers up and away from the floor, if you can.*

*If you or any member of your family plays a musical instrument, please don't practice early in the morning or during the late evening. If the instrument has an amplifier, turn the volume down or, preferably, use headphones.*

**Fact:** *The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 provides powers for the Police to seize noise-making equipment which is disturbing neighbouring households.*

#### ❑ **Parties**

*Remember the neighbours if you are planning a party or a barbecue. Let them know beforehand or, better still, invite them. Keep the noise and music to a minimum, and encourage your guests to be respectful of others.*

#### ❑ **Using household appliances**

*It's best to avoid mowing the lawn or starting do-it-yourself work at the crack of dawn or late in the evening. As a general rule, do noisy jobs - or operate unavoidably noisy equipment like washing machines and vacuum cleaners - during the day.*

*Position fridges, freezers and washing machines well away from shared walls. Stand washing machines and spin-dryers on a solid floor, or put them on a carpet/ rubber mat, to reduce vibration.*

*continued*

#### ❑ **Cars**

*To be a good neighbour, don't rev your car or van engine excessively.*

*Always close vehicle doors quietly.*

*Use vehicle horns only in emergencies.*

*Keep music levels - including base speakers - down.*

#### ❑ **Barking dogs**

*Dogs may bark because they're lonely, so don't leave yours by itself or, for any reason, let it bark or whine for long periods of time.*

#### ❑ **General**

*Do not bang internal or external doors.*

*Let neighbours know if you're going to be using powerful or noisy DIY equipment.*

*Try not to raise voices.*

### **What should you do if you have a Noise Problem?**

First, try talking to your neighbour. They may be okay about reducing noise, if they realise it's causing problems. If that doesn't work, you can make a formal complaint about them to us, through your Area Office. We'll respond and investigate your complaint in no more than five working days. If we think it's suitable, we may suggest the case is referred to the Perth & Kinross Community Mediation Service.

*continued*

Where cases are severe, and if all other methods of resolving the issue have been pursued, legal action is among the options available to us to help you.

## Pets

You are responsible for any disturbance caused by your pet, and you must have our permission - in advance - to have and keep it in your home.

Tenants must ensure not only that they have permission to keep a pet, but also that it does not cause any nuisance, like

- ❑ *Excessive noise,*
- ❑ *Smell, and*
- ❑ *Fouling within a garden area or common parts. **This includes urinating and leaving faeces in communal closes etc.** Laws and regulations in this context were strengthened in October 2003.*
- ❑ *Damage to property including house, garden or common parts, neighbouring property, or any part of the neighbourhood,*
- ❑ *Leaving pets on balconies or in closes, and*
- ❑ *The breeding of pets.*

*Tenants must always ensure that pet faeces are removed and disposed of in the appropriate manner. Bags are available at all Area Offices.*

While appropriate fencing or enclosures must restrain pets, it's recognised that cats are the exception, because they have the right to roam.

*continued*

Tenants are also responsible for the behaviour of any pets who belong to visitors.

You should also ensure that your pet is free of fleas and, generally, should not cause any kind of hazard to anyone visiting or carrying out work to your house.

## Running a Business From Home

Generally speaking, you must not run a business from home. Our permission is required and, even where this is granted, it's on the strict understanding that no nuisance or disruption is caused to neighbours.

## Children

You are responsible for any nuisance or disturbance caused by your children.

## Illegal Dealings

You must not use your house or allow it to be used for illegal purposes. You must not, for example, use or sell drugs from your home, deal in controlled drugs, run a brothel, deal in stolen goods, illegally bet or illegally gamble from your home.

We will start legal proceedings for Recovery of Possession where a tenant, a person residing or lodging with a tenant, or a person visiting the house, has been convicted for using the house for immoral or illegal purposes. (There's more about Repossession on pages 96 and 97).

*continued*

## Common Areas

If you live in a block of flats, you must take your turn in sweeping and washing the common stair, close, and bin areas, unless you pay for this service. If you feel that any of your neighbours is not taking a turn, try to discuss and agree a rota between you.

If this doesn't work, contact an Estate Management Assistant at your Area Office. We are entitled to decide exactly what you should do and when, in Common Areas, but we'll consult with you and the others before we make our decision. Once it's made, our decision is binding.

In instances of disability or serious illness, the Area Office should be contacted. If this work is not done or arrangements made for it, we may do it, and charge you. This is in addition to any other legal remedies open to us.

## Vandalism/Graffiti

You must not vandalise or damage your house or any part of the Common Area or neighbourhood where you live. Contact your Area Office if you are aware of any vandalism or graffiti, especially if it's about anything racial.

## Household Rubbish

You must put all your household rubbish for collection in the bin, in the bin store, or any other proper place allocated for it. You must not leave your household rubbish in unauthorised areas. You have to take reasonable care to see that your rubbish is properly bagged.

If rubbish is normally collected from bins in the street, they should not be put out earlier than the evening before the day of collection.

Rubbish bins should be returned to their normal storage places as soon as possible after the rubbish has been collected. If you miss your collection date and your rubbish is not uplifted, you are responsible for ensuring it's kept properly, or disposed of at a Council Refuse Disposal Site.

If you have large household items that you no longer want, phone the Refuse Helpline on **01738 476476**. You'll hear about disposing of the items properly, and any applicable charges.

## Neat and Tidy Gardens

You are responsible for making sure that your garden is kept neat and tidy.

*There is a Garden Maintenance Scheme but, to be eligible for it, tenants must be at least 65 years old, with no able-bodied people in their household. Assistance is also available for people under 65, if they are unable to look after a garden themselves.*

Eligibility of the Scheme for people who are less than 65 years old, and unable to cut their grass or hedge, depends on getting Disability Living Allowance, Severe Disablement Allowance or Attendance Allowance. You can apply for help with your grass even if you are likely to get those allowances for a limited period, but you must keep us updated on your circumstances.

In the Scheme

- ❑ *Grass is cut and edged, and hedges trimmed,*

*continued*

*continued*

- ❑ *Grass is cut every fortnight between April and September (weather permitting) to a maximum of 16 cuts a year,*
- ❑ *Grass cuttings are raked, bagged, removed and disposed of (by the contractor) to the contractor's own tip,*
- ❑ *Grass edges are cut every second visit, to a maximum of eight cuts a year, and*
- ❑ *Tenant hedges are cut once in July, once in October, and the cuttings collected and removed.*

The contractor will not cut grass if, on it, there's any rubbish, like discarded furniture, or dog faeces.

*There is a small weekly charge for this Service. It's payable with your rent account or your Direct Debit (weekly, monthly, or annually). It is not eligible for Housing Benefit. Phone 0800 521660 for initial or routine questions about the Garden Maintenance Scheme.*

## Vehicle Parking

You should park your car or van, caravan or trailer without any inconvenience to or for your neighbours. Similarly, you should not work on any vehicle at any time, in any way or place that causes nuisance or annoyance to anybody.

Only in a very few instances - where, for example, there's a car parking space allocated specifically to a property - does any tenant or occupier have the right to park in any particular position.

*continued*

Routinely, parking depends on legally-available space. You must not block or interfere with roads or pathways, create an obstruction, or a nuisance. Action will be taken to remove abandoned cars, in conjunction with the Police and the Council's Environmental Services.

### ❑ **Caravans and Trailers**

*These may not be left in any parking area or Council-owned car parks, whether or not they are adopted or unadopted.*

*Police action may be taken if caravans and trailers are parked on a roadway and cause an obstruction. We will take action to remove any caravans/trailers left illegally in any parking area.*

*If you would like to park your caravan or trailer in your own garden you must obtain written permission from us, **first**. We will only grant permission if a caravan or trailer can be parked behind the front line of the building, for instance. In any case, a caravan or trailer must not cause a nuisance for any neighbour.*

### ❑ **On Adopted Roads and Parking Areas**

*All roads and parking areas adopted by the Council as public highways are maintained at public expense. The Council's Roads Service is responsible for the management and maintenance of them.*

***Since 1 October 2002, under a Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement Scheme, enforcement of parking restrictions on yellow lines is the responsibility of parking attendants employed by the Roads Service.***

*continued*

*Tayside Police deal with inconsiderate or dangerous parking on other areas not covered by yellow line restrictions.*

❑ **On Unadopted Roads and Parking Areas**

*These are roadways and parking areas which have not been adopted as public roads, but remain in private ownership. Under legislation, it is likely that there will be right of public access to these roads: the private tag only relates to the maintenance of the surface.*

*Enforcement of parking restrictions in these areas is a civil matter, concerning (and carried out by) the owners of these areas.*

❑ **Heavy Goods Vehicles**

*Any vehicle over 3.5 metric tonnes requires an operator's licence. It should detail where the vehicle is to be stored.*

*Road legislation states that there is an absolute ban on lorry parking in all areas, because this kind of parking can only take place in designated parks with the correct planning permission.*

*Action will be taken against any operator of a goods vehicle improperly parked and against any resident breaking regulations.*

❑ **Lock-ups and garage sites**

*If you have a car, you may want to rent a lock-up, or a garage site from us, to erect your own garage. They are available in most areas, but there are waiting lists for them. Please contact your Area Office for further details.*

*The rent for a lock-up is charged weekly in advance and users receive a Rent Card for making payments. Garage sites are rented on an annual basis and users receive an account for payment each year.*

**Please Note:** *If you intend to sell an existing garage where it stands, you must contact your Area Office in advance, because we retain ownership of the site on which the garage stands.*

*continued*

Section 8  
Disagreements with  
Neighbours, Neighbour  
Nuisance & Anti-Social  
Behaviour



## 8 Disagreements with Neighbours, Neighbour Nuisance & Anti-Social Behaviour

If you have any complaint about nuisance, annoyance or harassment being caused by your neighbours, or anyone living with them, or their visitors, you should

1. *If possible, try to solve the problem between yourselves. Your neighbours may not have realised that they are annoying you. In this case, a friendly word from you can sometimes be enough to sort things out. Discuss the problem calmly and be willing to compromise if possible. Otherwise, you might find that a small disagreement turns into a major row.*
2. *If the situation doesn't get any better, or if you think that it's too serious for you to deal with yourself, contact your Area Office.*

*We will investigate your complaint as quickly as we can. Minor complaints are investigated in less than five working days. Serious complaints are investigated in no more than one working day.*

3. *One of our Housing Officers will visit, to look into the nature of the problem. If the Officer feels it appropriate, contact will be made with the Community Mediation Service on your behalf (there's more about this on the next page).*

*If you or your neighbour are breaking any condition in the Tenancy Agreement, we will take all reasonable steps to prevent the behaviour happening again including, where necessary and in severe cases, legal action.*

*continued*

If it is not a housing matter, we will direct you to those who can help, such as Social Work Services, or the Police.

Disagreement with neighbours can be very difficult to sort out.

*You can help us and yourself by keeping written notes of what happens, and when. It is important to have an accurate record of disturbances if the case goes to Court, or if you decide to involve the Police or a solicitor. Where possible you should try to get corroboration from neighbours or visitors.*

You can get a copy of the Neighbour Complaints leaflet from your Area Office.

## Options for Action

There are various kinds of action we can take to ensure that you are able to live in peace in your home. Some of them are listed here.

- 1. We have introduced an independently-operated Community Mediation Service. It's available without charge to help neighbours in dispute to find a mutually satisfactory resolution.*
- 2. We can work with others like Social Work, the Fire Brigade, Tayside Police, and Environmental Services, to try to resolve neighbourhood issues such as vandalism, fire raising, drug or alcohol abuse, and instances of general nuisance.*
- 3. Through the Environmental Protection Act 1990, we can serve an Abatement Notice on anyone who creates or allows excessive noise. Any failure to comply with an*

*continued*

*Abatement Notice can be dealt with by the Criminal Courts. This Act empowers Tayside Police to request that noise from a property be reduced if it is annoying neighbours. If this request is ignored the Police may confiscate the offending equipment.*

- 4. Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs for short) may be tried if other preventative measures fail.*

*An ASBO is aimed at putting a stop to any continuing anti-social behaviour that is causing serious stress, alarm, nuisance or annoyance. We can apply for an ASBO against anyone over the age of 16 living in the Perth and Kinross area, whether or not they are the tenant, an owner, or they are just lodging in someone's house.*

*Anyone can approach an Area Office with a request for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order. The process asks applicants to provide, for instance, any or all of the evidence collected, and an account of the steps already taken to resolve matters. There must be sufficient evidence to proceed to Court.*

*If the action is successful, the Court will arrange for the ASBO to be served on the offender. In very clear terms, Orders spell out what an offender is not allowed to do.*

Copies of ASBOs are lodged with the Police, and all affected neighbours are informed. If an offender continues to act in the manner that led to the Order being issued, you should contact Tayside Police on 01738 621141. They will advise you about what they will do next.

*continued*



## If Closes are not Kept Clean

The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 requires all occupiers of tenements to keep their closes clean. If this duty is not met, Environment Services Officers have powers to take such cases to Court, and this may result in a fine.

This Act would be useful if you live near a home owner who fails to take a reasonable and regular turn in close cleaning.

## Eviction: Our Last Resort

Our policy about eviction is that it's the last resort. However, when all other avenues are exhausted and there is no change in the circumstances, we will start proceedings to recover possession of the property.

# Section 9 Permissions



In your Tenancy Agreement you'll find full details about circumstances where our written consent is needed before you go ahead with any plans.

Here's an outline of the steps to follow

- ❑ *Write to your Area Office, say what you'd like to do, and ask for permission to go ahead.*
- ❑ *Expect a member of staff to arrange to visit you and assess your request, although this is not always necessary.*
- ❑ *Anticipate getting our decision in writing.*
- ❑ *If you've not heard from us in 28 days you're entitled - by law - to assume permission has been granted, as long as all the required information has been provided to enable us to make a decision.*
- ❑ *Keep all the correspondence for future reference.*
- ❑ *Remember to reapply for permission if you transfer to another council house.*

*We'll not refuse any request without a good reason but, sometimes, there will be certain conditions you have to meet. If we refuse, we'll tell you why.*

We may withdraw permission if, at any time, the activity we agreed to causes a nuisance or annoys neighbours or people in the vicinity.

You must ask for permission **first** if you're thinking about:

- ❑ *Transferring your tenancy to someone else,*
- ❑ *Taking-in lodgers,*

*continued*

- ❑ *Sub-letting part or all of your house,*
- ❑ *Carrying out alterations or improvements to your home,*
- ❑ *Keeping pets,*
- ❑ *Running a business from home,*
- ❑ *Parking vehicles, and*
- ❑ *Becoming a childminder.*

What factors do we take into consideration when we make our decisions? Here are some examples:

## Transferring the Tenancy to Someone Else

We try to be reasonable with this but, depending on the circumstances, we have the discretion to say no. If we refuse, we'll explain why, in writing.

## Lodgers

If you have enough room we may agree to you having a lodger. Important considerations are that no overcrowding happens, and the rent you charge is not excessive. Every application is considered individually.

If we agree, there will be a number of points to bear in mind, such as

- ❑ *Lodgers don't have Secure Tenancies and we may have no obligation to re-house them if you terminate your tenancy, unless they qualify under the terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.*

*continued*

- ❑ *Any entitlement you may have to Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Income Support, or any other Benefit, will be affected by any income you receive from your lodger.*

## Sub-Letting

Under certain circumstances it may be possible to sublet your home for a temporary, defined period. At the end of that time you have to resume occupancy, or terminate your tenancy.

Sub-tenants don't have Secure Tenancies and we may have no obligation to re-house them when you resume or terminate your tenancy, unless they qualify for assistance under housing legislation. Remember that your entitlement to Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Income Support, or any other Benefit will be affected when, with our permission in writing, you sub-let your home.

## Alterations

This covers any physical alteration or improvement to your home or any of its garden ground.

For example, you would need our permission to

- ❑ *Alter, improve or enlarge your house, boundary fences, walls, and hedges,*
- ❑ *Construct a path or driveway,*
- ❑ *Add new fittings or fixtures like kitchen or bathroom installations, central heating, fixed heaters, double glazing, and any kind of aerial or satellite dish,*

*continued*

- ❑ *Put up a structure, such as garage, shed, or greenhouse, and*
- ❑ *Install any form of pine lining and timber cladding. Anybody who is thinking about putting any kind of cladding on walls or ceilings inside a Council house must apply for and get a Building Warrant before carrying out any work.*

Some proposed alterations also require Planning Permission and/or a Building Warrant in accordance with the Building Regulations as amended 4 March 2002.

When you end your tenancy, you may be entitled to compensation for your approved alterations. You'll find more about compensation on page 103 in Section 11.

## Pets

Our standard list includes a dog, cat, caged bird, rabbit, fish, a rodent such as a hamster, a gerbil or a mouse, a small non-poisonous reptile like a terrapin or a tortoise, a non-poisonous insect, and an amphibian such as a newt. Our list does not include every animal category and, in any case, if you're not sure, check with us as soon as possible.

If we grant permission, it will be subject to these conditions

- ❑ *You're responsible for supervising and keeping the pet under control.*
- ❑ *You must take all reasonable steps to prevent your pet causing any nuisance, annoyance or danger to anyone in your neighbourhood.*

*continued*

- ❑ *You must take reasonable care to see the pet does not foul or cause damage to your house, garden or common parts, to any of your neighbours' property, or any part of the neighbourhood.*

When you write to your Area Office to ask for permission, please include all the details, such as the number and types of pets you wish to keep.

Among all the factors, we'll consider the suitability of your house.

For instance, we don't give permission for dogs or cats in multi-storey flats, or purpose-built sheltered housing units, unless you're a new tenant and you already have, perhaps, a cat or a dog. When, eventually, a pet like that dies, you are not allowed to replace it.

**Remember:** *Written permission is required, in advance, for every pet you keep.*

## Running a Business

Approval will depend on the type of business you propose and its effect on the neighbourhood you live in.

## Childminding

If you plan to register as a childminder, our permission must be obtained first. When we have written to you with our decision and your request has been approved, you must contact the Care Commission, at Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY. Their phone number is 01382 207200.

*continued*



They will carry out an inspection of your premises and make the final decision.

Some of the factors taken into consideration are

- ❑ *The number of children in your own family,*
- ❑ *How many children you plan to mind both during the day and/or after school,*
- ❑ *Whether your childminding would cause a nuisance for your neighbours from excessive noise and suchlike.*

**Remember:** *If you are claiming Benefits and become a childminder, your income will be amended and you should notify Housing and other Benefits sources without delay.*

## Parking

You need our permission in advance if you're planning to park a car, van, caravan, trailer, or any other vehicle on land belonging to us in the neighbourhood of your house.

You may park one private motor car or motor cycle in an area of ground belonging to your house, if it's designed for that purpose.

If you want to park more than one vehicle in your driveway you need our permission, first. This will only be granted if additional parking causes no annoyance or nuisance to your neighbours.

Please refer to Section 7, from page 70, where you find more information about parking.

*continued*

## What can you do if we Refuse Permission?

If you object to our decision, you can appeal, using our Complaints Procedure.

There's more on Complaints in Section 14, on page 125.

# Section 10

## Changes of Tenancy



When may a tenancy be changed?

This could be because you want to change the status of a tenancy from

- Joint to single tenancy,*
- Single to joint tenancy, or*
- to assign a tenancy to someone else.*

Initially and as soon as possible, contact your Area Office for advice, and to find out how to make an application.

## Succession

When a tenant dies, the tenancy may be inherited in a number of ways

- Level 1**

- (1) *The tenancy is inherited by the tenant's surviving spouse if the house was their only (or principal) home at the time of the tenant's death.*
- (2) *The tenancy is inherited by the deceased tenant's co-habitee or same sex partner, if the house was their only, or principal, home for at least six months before the tenant's death,*
- (3) *The tenancy is inherited by a joint tenant, if the house was his/her only principal home when the tenant died.*

## ❑ **Level 2**

*If no one qualifies at Level 1, or if a qualified person does not want the tenancy, it may be inherited by a member of the deceased tenant's family, as long as*

- (1) He/she is aged 16 or more at the time of the tenant's death, and*
- (2) The house was his/her principal home at the date of the death.*

## ❑ **Level 3**

*If no one qualifies at Level 1 or 2, or a qualified person does not want the tenancy, it can be inherited by a carer, as long as*

- (1) He/she was aged 16 or over at the date of the tenant's death,*
- (2) The house was his/her principal home at the date of death, and*
- (3) He/she gave up another only or principal home before the death of the tenant.*
- (4) The carer must be providing or have provided care for the tenant or a member of the tenant's family.*

If more than one person qualifies and they are unable to decide among themselves who should succeed the tenancy, we will decide.

*continued*

## **Change to Tenancy Name**

In certain circumstances we may allow the names on a tenancy to be changed. Requests should be submitted in writing to your Area Office.

If the tenancy is in joint names and one party is unwilling to consent to the transfer, perhaps in the case of a marital dispute, for example, we cannot legally change the tenancy without a Court Order. In these circumstances you should seek legal advice.

## **Ending Your Tenancy**

If and when you end your tenancy, you must make sure the house is left clean and tidy for the next tenant.

If your home is left untidy, or the fittings and fixtures are damaged, you will be charged what it costs to clean the house and repair the damage.

If you have large items of furniture to be removed, please phone the **Special Uplift Helpline** on **01738 476476**.

Normally, Secure Tenancies can only be ended in one of these ways

### **(1) Written Notice of 28 Days**

- (a) **By you as the tenant:** If you want to end your tenancy you must write and give us 28 days notice of when you are to move out. If you don't return the keys to your Area Office by the due date the additional time will be charged at the appropriate weekly rate. (If a tenant is admitted to permanent*

*continued*

residential care, or dies, the rental charge is terminated as soon as the keys are returned to the Area Office).

- (b) **By us as the landlord:** If your tenancy is terminated through legal proceedings, you have to pay the rent for the period up to the date of eviction and, in addition, pay all Court Expenses and Sheriff Officer's Fees.

(2) **If a Tenant Dies and No-one has the Right of Succession**

The tenancy will be terminated and the rent will stop on the date that the keys are returned to the Area Office.

(3) **Repossession**

Your tenancy is at risk if you have not followed your tenancy conditions, despite being made aware of your responsibilities or obligations. Breach of your tenancy conditions can include:

- You have not paid us the rent that's due,
- Anyone in your household has been convicted of using your house or allowing it to be used for illegal or immoral purposes,
- The condition of your house or common parts has deteriorated because of neglect or damage caused by you or somebody in your household or visitors to your household,
- If you acquire the tenancy as a result of false information,
- Failing to use your house as your principal home.

continued

Initially, a **Notice of Proceedings for Recovery of Possession** of your dwelling house will be served, stating the grounds for eviction. If a satisfactory solution is not achieved in the following 28 days, an action will be lodged in Court. The Sheriff will determine whether it's reasonable to terminate your tenancy.

At any stage during these proceedings, you can contact your Area Office to agree what may be needed to resolve the situation, and avoid the need for Court action.

You can defend any legal action taken against you.

(4) **Abandonment**

If we have reason to believe you have left the property without telling us, we will serve **Notice of Abandonment** to end your tenancy. It may be necessary to forcibly gain access to the property to make it secure. If you don't contact your Area Office in 28 days or less, the tenancy will be formally terminated.

In some cases and if their value justifies it, we will store household contents for six months. After that, we'll dispose of your belongings. Any money made from the disposal will be set-off against your debts.

You have a **Right of Appeal** to the Sheriff, if you feel we have acted unreasonably.

# Section 11

## Your Rights as a Tenant



As a Council tenant, you have a Secure Tenancy.

It gives you the

- Right to Buy*
- Right to Manage*
- Right to Repair*
- Right to Compensation*
- Right to Information*

If you would like to know more about these Rights, which are subject to local authority policy and applicable conditions, please ask at your Area Office.

## Right to Buy

If you are a council tenant, you have the Right to Buy your home. If your tenancy began before 30 September 2002 the conditions of your original Right to Buy will apply. This means that after two years you have the right to buy, and the price you will have to pay for your house will be the market value less a discount based on the length of time you have been a council tenant.

Tenants who began their tenancy from or after 30 September 2002 have the Modernised Right to Buy. This means you can apply to buy your home after five years. There is a ceiling to the amount of discount available.

You can get more information, and an application form, from your Area Office.

When you have completed and returned the form, you will be contacted to discuss the related costs of buying your home, and the discount entitlement.

*Be careful.* It's for you to say if and when you're interested in the possibility of buying your home, not us. If anybody calls to see you and suggests it, they are unlikely to be a member of Housing staff or a member of the Council.

**Important:** *If you arrange a mortgage and get into arrears at any time, the lenders can evict you and sell the house to get their money back. If this happens we may have no obligation to re-house you, and you may become homeless.*

## Right to Manage

A group of tenants can set up a Tenant Management Organisation and take over the responsibility of managing their own homes, although we would still own the properties. If you want to know more about this, please contact the Tenant Participation team in Pullar House. Their phone number is on page 143.

## Right to Repair

You will be notified on a Repair Slip whether or not your repair is a qualifying repair, such as blocked drains, toilet not flushing, and unsafe electrical sockets. If it is, we'll tell you

- (a) *the maximum time we have to complete the repair,*
- (b) *the last day of the qualifying time,*

(c) *arrangements for access, and*

(d) *the name and address of the alternative Contractor.*

We will issue a Works Order to the usual Contractor. This will give the date by which the work should be started, and access arrangements to enable them to carry out the repair.

If you have any questions about repairs, please contact your Area Office.

## Right to Compensation

The Government amended the Right to Compensation for Improvements in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. This enables you, as a Secure Tenant, to claim compensation for certain improvements that you may have made to your home, when your tenancy has ended.

The right to compensation applies to improvements such as

- a bath or shower,*
- cavity wall insulation,*
- double glazing,*
- draught proofing (external doors or windows),*
- insulation of pipes and loft,*
- water tanks or cylinders,*
- kitchen sink,*
- rewiring,*
- space or water heating,*

*continued*

*continued*

*storage cupboards in a bathroom or kitchen,  
radiators or valves,  
wash hand basin,  
water closet (WC), and  
work surface for food preparation.*

*Remember that you must always have written permission from us before you make any improvements.*

You will not be eligible for compensation if you purchase your house or flat under the Right to Buy scheme.

You will not receive any compensation if we repossess your home, or if we have granted you a new tenancy of your existing house.

## What To Do

When you have written permission from us to carry out the improvement, keep a record of the costs incurred, and forward copies of any bills to us. We will keep them on file until a time when the level of compensation needs to be calculated. We will take account of the age and quality of the improvement.

A member of your Area Office team will visit you

- (1) before you carry out the improvement,*
- (2) once the improvement's complete, to ensure the work has been done satisfactorily and*
- (3) again before any compensation is paid.*

Your Area Office will explain all this in greater detail.

*continued*

## Right to Access Personal Information (Data Protection Act 1998)

You have the Right to see any personal information we have about you. This covers what we hold on our computer as well as in manual files. Wherever it might be, you have the right to have corrected any inaccurate information we may have.

There are some limitations to these rights. You may not see, for instance, information that identifies any third party, without their consent.

You will be charged £10.00 for each request to see your file although you are, however, entitled to check - free - the information you provided in connection with your housing application.

If you want to see your file, apply through your Area Office. Staff there will give you an information leaflet and an application form which should be returned, along with the £10.00 fee, to the Executive Director of Housing & Community Care at Pullar House.

You must be given access to your files within 40 days of your request.

If the Executive Director asks you to give further details so that your request can be processed, the 40-day period will start from the time that these further details are received from you.

*continued*

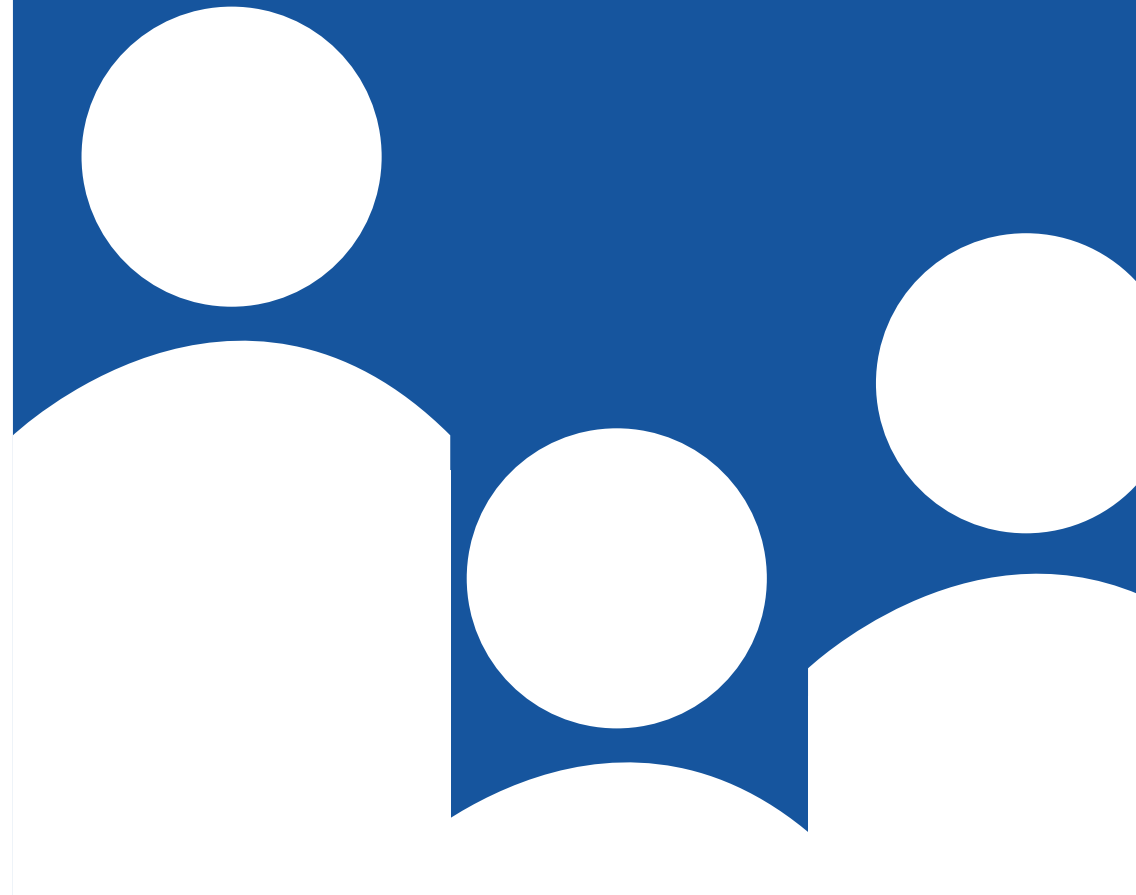


## Right to Information About Your Tenancy

*See Section 8 of your Tenancy Agreement for other Rights to Information on, for example, terms of your tenancy, transfers of tenancies, repairs and maintenance, and the right to buy your house.*

# Section 12

## Moving House & Getting Help



### (a) Transfers

Existing tenants who need re-housing are eligible for admission to the Common Housing Register. Once you have been admitted to the Register, your housing needs will be assessed and your transfer application prioritised, in accordance with our Allocation Policy.

We may withhold an offer of housing if you are in serious breach of your Tenancy Agreement - if, for example

- you have current or former rent arrears,*
- your house or garden is in poor condition,*
- you have annoyed your neighbours or been a nuisance to them, or*
- you have been convicted of a serious crime, like supplying illegal drugs*

### (b) Non-transfer Applications

If a member of your household would like their own home they should complete a Housing Application Form and give it to an Area Office.

Points are awarded in accordance with need as defined by the Allocations Policy.

### (c) Nominations

When you make an application for a transfer, you can choose to be re-housed by a number of housing providers who have properties in Perth and Kinross.

*continued*

We have an agreement with other providers to nominate applicants from our waiting list to fill an agreed number of their vacant properties in Perth and Kinross.

You can ask about these housing providers, and the location of their properties, at your Area Office.

### (d) Clearing Up

Failure to remove all your belongings, failing to leave a council house in a clean and tidy condition, or failing to make good any damage caused through abuse, negligence or malicious behaviour, will result in you being charged with the costs incurred in clearing up after you.

## Homeless Persons

We have a responsibility to help tenants who qualify for re-housing under the terms of Housing and Homeless Acts. If you would like to talk about this, please ask at your Area Office.

*If you need to get in touch with us urgently about being homeless, and our offices are closed, phone 01738 623745.*

## Special Needs: Sheltered Housing

Sheltered Housing is self-contained accommodation with a Warden Call System to help you if you ever find yourself in difficulty. Some Sheltered Housing units have Common Room facilities you may use, if you choose to.

*continued*

If you need to apply for this type of housing, please complete a Housing Application Form and return it to your Area Office.

You will be visited by a Housing Officer and, in some cases, an Occupational Therapist from Social Services. Your name can be added to the waiting list when your needs have been assessed.

## Helping You to Stay in Your Own Home

We may be able to help if you have special requirements and you believe that your own home, as it is, is not best-suited to your needs.

A Special Panel (it has representatives from Housing, Social Services, and Health) considers the housing and support needs of people who may need help if they are to maintain their tenancy and live independently in the community.

Successful applicants for rehousing with support will be placed on the waiting list until suitable accommodation becomes available. The Panel will make sure that necessary support is provided, to help the applicant to manage a tenancy, as well as meeting social and health care needs.

Support and assistance could include

- The Community Alarm Scheme, via Social Services.*
- Handrails on steps/stairs, via the Occupational Therapy Service.*
- Bath aids, grab rails, and ramps, via Occupational Therapy and Social Services.*

*continued*

- ❑ *There's a Grass Cutting Scheme for the elderly and disabled. You can read about it in Section 7, page 69.*
- ❑ *To find out more about Fully Adapted Housing, or any of these examples, please ask at your Area Office.*

If you have a physical disability, a mental health problem, a learning disability, an alcohol-related problem, or any other community care needs, and you are having difficulty in managing your current home, please contact your Area Office for further advice.

## Mutual Exchange

As a Perth & Kinross Council tenant, you may be able to exchange your home, by agreement with another council tenant, a tenant of a registered social landlord, or a housing association.

A Mutual Exchange application form can be obtained from your Area Office.

If you move, please remember to notify the Council Tax unit. The law says you must notify any change in your circumstances within 21 days.

## HOMES and the Tenants' National Exchange Scheme

Perth & Kinross Council takes part in HOMES (short for the Housing Organisations' Mobility and Exchange Service), and the Tenants' National Exchange Scheme.

As their names indicate, these schemes help UK tenants exchange homes in different parts of the country.

If you're interested, please ask your Area Office for more information.

*continued*

Section 13  
Having Your Say:  
Local Associations and  
The Federation



## 13 Having Your Say: Local Associations and The Federation

We do everything we can to say *to every single tenant* that what they think and tell us about our Housing Service makes a real difference.

Working with tenants, we have put a long-term plan together. It's called the Perth & Kinross Tenant Participation Strategy.

It confirms that we're committed to providing active encouragement and resources to help groups of tenants get together, so they can talk about and decide priorities *and take an active part in making decisions about our Service*.

We believe it's very important for every tenant to say what they think about Housing issues that have a significant affect on them, like home improvement programmes.


### Your Right to be Consulted

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 gave you a statutory right to be consulted, and we would like as many tenants as possible to help us make decisions on issues like rent levels, and how we spend rent money on improving homes.

Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) have the right to be consulted on issues about the area they represent. If you're interested in the possibility of forming an RTO, we'll be pleased to send you a guide and application form, and talk to you about what's involved.

To help keep every tenant and members of their households updated, we send out a magazine called '*On the House*' in Spring and in Summer, as well as the Tenants' Calendar, which doubles-up as a handy information guide.

*continued*



Regularly, we send news to the local Media, and we answer any questions they ask us. From time to time, we publish leaflets on a variety of topics. We arrange tenant meetings where we go through our plans, and invite open questions.

You can use all sorts of ways to get back to us with your thoughts and reactions. Please choose the route that suits you best.

You might like to give us your opinions or ideas through the Comments Form called *'How Did You Find Our Service?'* We sent a copy of it to every tenant. More copies are available in Area Offices.


If you ask us, we'll be pleased to put your name on the list of what we call 'Interested People'. We'll send updates to you, and invitations to meetings, where your views and reactions will be appreciated. We always try to make these get-togethers interesting and enjoyable.

Where there is one, you can join your local Tenant Association or Registered Tenant Organisation. Going to their meetings means you can meet other tenants from your neighbourhood, to talk together about things that are important, locally. If and when we're invited, members of Housing staff go to meetings to talk about selected topics, and answer questions.

*If there's no association in your community, you could help to start one.*

Perth & Kinross Tenants and Residents Federation is always happy to offer help and advice. It supports and encourages existing tenant groups, who you can phone for a chat, and share information or ideas.

*continued*



For a copy of our Tenant Participation Strategy, our Tenant Participation Policy, our participation guide *Policy into Practice*, or for any other information, please contact the Tenant Participation team at Pullar House. You'll find the address and phone number on page 143.

## Perth & Kinross Tenants and Residents Federation

The Federation was formed in 1993, to bring tenants and residents in Perth and Kinross together.

Its aim is

*to promote tenants' rights and the maintenance and improvement of their housing conditions, amenities and environment within the area of Perth and Kinross.*

The Federation has its own staff, and premises at 20 North Methven Street, Perth. It's funded through a direct grant from us.

The Federation helps by

- sharing information with tenants and member associations, helping them to make decisions about issues connected with their housing environment, safety, security, and well-being,*
- gathering information from tenants and associations, so that their opinions and decisions may be passed on to the right people,*
- acting as a consultation connection, to link with Housing and the Council, other agencies and organisations,*

*continued*

- ❑ *providing a base and, from it, offering support and advice to member associations and individual tenants,*
- ❑ *helping with training about housing issues and the way the council works, to make sure that members know how decisions are made and, in turn, how services could be improved,*
- ❑ *helping with training so that members can run effective associations, and*
- ❑ *awarding grants to help cover the running costs of member associations.*

## Helping to Represent Communities

Associations are important because they help to collect, focus, and represent the views of local communities. If you think your area needs this sort of voice, and you might be interested in setting-up an association, please get in touch directly with the Federation. They will be pleased to help.

If there aren't enough people to form an association, but you're still interested, you could become what's called a Tenant Participation Volunteer for your locality. The Federation will be pleased to tell you more about it.

## A Key Component

Please remember that increasing tenant and resident involvement is a key component of all the various mechanisms used to improve communities, housing conditions and services. Help if you can.

*continued*

Here are the contact details:

Perth & Kinross Tenants and Residents Federation ®  
 20 North Methven Street  
 PERTH  
 PH1 5PN

Tel 01738 442302 Email: pktrf@btconnect.com

Office Hours (Monday to Friday): 10.00 am to 12 noon, and  
 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm.

## Tenant Associations

® *signifies Registered status with the Scottish Executive, which confers legal and other rights.*

Almondbank Residents Association ®  
 Alyth Area Tenants and Residents Association ®  
 Appin & Breadalbane Tenants & Residents Association  
 Auchterarder Tenants Association  
 Bankfoot Tenants & Residents Association ®  
 Bridge of Earn & District Tenants & Residents Association  
 Broompark (Murthly) & Caputh Residents Association ®  
 City Centre Tenants & Residents Association ®  
 Coupar Angus District Tenants Association  
 Craigie Tenants Association  
 Crieff Residents' Association  
 Friarton Tenants & Residents Association ®  
 Invergowrie & Kingoodie Tenants Association  
 Kinross Residents Association ®  
 Letham Residents Association  
 Longforgan Tenants Association  
 Luncarty Tenants & Residents Association ®  
 Milnathort & Portmoak Tenants & Residents Association ®

*continued*



Muirton Tenants & Residents Association ®  
North Muirton Residents Association ®  
Potterhill Residents Group  
Rattray & District Tenants and Residents Association  
Scone Tenants Association  
Stanley Tenants & Residents Association ®  
Tulloch Tenants & Residents Association ®

*This list of associations was accurate at the end of 2003.*

To find out about or to contact the association for your area, phone the Perth & Kinross Tenants and Residents Federation Office on 01738 442302. The Federation will put you in touch with your local organisation's secretary.

# Section 14

## About Complaints - and How to Complain



## 14 About Complaints - and How to Complain

There are several ways to complain, but it's important to make a difference between a complaint and something going wrong.

If, for example, your central heating goes wrong, and you tell us about it, this is called a request for service. It only becomes a complaint if, in your opinion, we fail to deal properly with that request for service.

A *Service Complaint* is something that we, in Housing, have failed to do, or done wrongly, or disappointed or angered you about. Or you might feel that a member of our staff hasn't treated you politely.

There are other kinds of complaints.

A *Neighbour Complaint* is about the behaviour of people near you, including teenagers and young children as well as adult tenants, and their visitors.

An *Environmental Complaint* is about what goes on outside your door, in gardens and closes, on pavements. Rubbish may be left, or damage done.

Whatever it's about, your complaint should be made, initially, through your Area Office, in these stages

### □ **Stage One**

*You have the choice of complaining **in person** and, if necessary, a member of staff will help you to complete a Complaints Form.*

*You might prefer to complain **by phone**, through your Area Office, when a member of staff will write down what you say.*

*continued*

Alternatively, you can complain **in writing**, posting your letter to the Complaints Monitoring Officer, Housing, Pullar House, 35 Kinnoull Street, PERTH PH1 5GD.

You can **fax** your written complaint to 01738 476010.

Or you can **email** it to enquiries@pkc.gov.uk

Within three working days of your complaint being received, you will get a formal acknowledgement. It will summarise the details, and tell you the name and phone number of the Officer dealing with your complaint. If you feel that the summary doesn't describe your complaint fully, you should tell us as quickly as possible.

You should get a response to your complaint no more than 15 working days after the acknowledgement reaches you. Then, you'll get an explanation of what happened, along with information about any further action we intend to take.

#### ❑ **Stage Two**

If you are unhappy with that response or any action we intend to take, you should contact us again as soon as possible. Your reaction will be passed to the relevant senior manager, who will attempt to resolve the matter and get back to you again, in 15 working days or less.

#### ❑ **Stage Three**

If, after that, you're still unhappy about our responses, you should get in touch with us once more, through the Executive Director of Housing. You should say, then, why you are still dissatisfied, and how you wish to see the matter resolved.

continued

If you have discussed the matter with the Executive Director already, you should contact the Chief Executive. You should have a response to your letter within 15 working days.

#### ❑ **Complaining Through Your Local Councillor**

Your local Councillor can look into your complaints. He or she will ask us to investigate, and our response will be made to the Councillor who, then, will get back to you.

#### ❑ **Complaining Through Your MP or MSP**

If you make a complaint through your Member of Parliament, or your Member of the Scottish Parliament, your complaint will be passed to us to look into. We'll investigate the complaint and reply to your MP or MSP who, then, will contact you.

#### ❑ **Complaints Involving More Than One Council Service**


In these circumstances the investigation will be co-ordinated by the Complaints Monitoring Officer of the Service you contact.

We'll write and acknowledge your complaint in five working days or less, giving you the name and direct phone number of the Officer co-ordinating the investigations, and the response. You'll be kept informed about the way your complaint is being handled, and when we expect to respond.

#### ❑ **The Local Government Ombudsman**

You can take your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman at any time. However, if you've not

continued



*contacted us first, it's likely that the Ombudsman will refer your complaint to us, to give us a chance to resolve the problem.*

*The Ombudsman is independent, with the power to investigate complaints of bad administration (if, for example, we've not stuck to our rules, or dealt with your complaint in a reasonable time).*

*Here are the contact details*

**Scottish Public Services Ombudsman**

4 Melville Street  
Edinburgh  
EH3 7NS

Tel 0870 011 5378  
Fax 0870 011 5379

Email [enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk)  
Website [www.scottishombudsman.org.uk](http://www.scottishombudsman.org.uk)

# Section 15 Council Tax



If you have any questions about your Council Tax payments or liability, you can phone Local Taxes on 01738 477430.

Alternatively, you can ask at Reception, at Pullar House. *We make every effort to attend to everybody quickly but, at busy periods, you may have to wait. If this could be inconvenient, please phone, and we will arrange an appointment.*

You can also write to Local Taxes, PO Box 7300, Perth PH1 5WH, or email [localtaxes@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:localtaxes@pkc.gov.uk)

The explanatory note enclosed with your bill gives further information about Council Tax, and how your payment might be reduced.

These are the main kinds of reductions that are not related to income

- A discount of 25 per cent for people who live on their own.*
- A reduction if a house has been adapted to meet the needs of a disabled person (such as using a wheelchair indoors).*
- Discounts or exemptions where full-time students are living.*
- Discounts where full-time care is being provided in the home (but there's no reduction for caring for a spouse).*
- If a property is unoccupied.*

## Frequently Asked Questions

- Q.** Why can I get more than one bill?
- A.** *We send one every time there's a change in your circumstances or your Benefit entitlement.*
- Q.** What must I do if I leave my address?
- A.** *You must write and tell us in no more than 28 days, giving the relevant dates and details, including your new address. If any of your circumstances change, you must write and tell us.*
- Q.** If my income is low, how can I apply for Council Tax Benefit?
- A.** *Ask for a Benefit application form, complete it, and send it in.*
- Q.** I'm finding it difficult to pay my Council Tax. What can I do?
- A.** *Phone the team, 01738 477430, to talk about and agree a different way of paying that suits you and the Council.*

## Making Payments

### □ **By Post**

*To make a postal payment, send a cheque (with your name, address, and account number written on the back) to the Executive Director of Corporate Services, PO Box 7299, Pullar House, 35 Kinnoull Street, Perth PH1 5WJ. Cheques should be made payable to Perth & Kinross Council. **Don't enclose your payment card.***

### □ **In Person at any Area Office**

*As well as presenting your plastic payment card each time, it's helpful if you have your Council Tax bill with you, so that we can check that payment details are correct. You can pay by cash, debit card, cheque, or postal order.*

### □ **In Person at Any Post Office, or Anywhere There's a Paypoint or Payzone Sign**

*No charge is made for this service. Please present your plastic payment card each time, and have your Council Tax bill with you, so that the payment details can be checked.*

### □ **By Phone**

*You can call 01738 477438 and pay with a debit card, like Switch or Delta. Additionally, you can ring us and pay with a credit card, but only if you're paying the full balance.*

### □ **By the Cheapest Method**

*Direct Debit is the cheapest and the most popular way of paying. It's easy for you and effective for the Council. To pay this way, complete and return the form sent with your bill. If you have any questions about it, please phone 01738 477430.*

## Council Tax Benefit

To find out if you qualify for Council Tax Benefit, phone Pullar House on 01738 476059, or any Area Office.

*continued*

# Section 16

## Home Contents Insurance



We are responsible for insuring council houses as buildings, but tenants are responsible for insuring the contents of their homes.

While tenants can choose their own insurers, the Council has arranged a scheme with Royal and Sun Alliance. Through it, house contents can be insured for as little as £1.04 a week or, for senior citizens, 78p a week, depending on circumstances.

The benefits of this insurance scheme include

- No excess payable on any claim,*
- Weekly payment with rent,*
- Availability to all Perth & Kinross Council tenants,*
- Cover against loss or damage from theft, fire and flood,*
- Cover for theft of keys,*
- Cover for freezer contents, and*
- Cover for improvements made, such as a bathroom suite.*

To apply for this insurance please phone Royal and Sun Alliance on 08457 33 77 88 (a lo-call number), or ask at your Area Office for a leaflet.

# Section 17

## Useful Contacts & Handy Phone Numbers



### Refuse Helpline - 01738 476476

Please call this number - provided by the Council's Environment Services - for information and help with refuse collection, street sweeping, dog fouling, and other clean-up situations. *Liners for wheelie-bins can be purchased.*

### Special Uplifts

By arrangement, through the Helpline, Environment Services will dispose of large household items like cookers, beds, suites, fridges and freezers, washing machines, carpets, prams and bikes.

Charges, which depend on what's to be taken in a special uplift, can be paid at any Environment Services office, or at an Area Office.

Please note that Trade Waste like bricks, rubble, and scrap wood are excluded from the Uplift Service.

### Dog Control

To report dog fouling, noisy dogs, stray dogs, or anything else to do with dogs, please contact the Dog Control Section of Environment Services on 01738 476476.

*Dog Scoops are available from Area Offices.*

### Litter Control

Report local litter problems to the Litter Ranger on 01738 476476.

## Recycling

For information on what can be recycled, and how, please contact the Recycling Section of Environment Services on 01738 476476.

## Energy Advice

For free and impartial advice on how to save money on fuel bills, phone the Energy Advice Project on 01738 476183.

## Council Information Line

0845 301 1100    Text phone 01738 442573

## Emergency Numbers *(out of office hours)*

Repairs	0845 301 11 10
Homelessness	01738 623745
Roads & Transport	<i>Perth</i> 0845 301 11 50 <i>Blairgowrie</i> 0845 301 11 60
Social Work Services	0845 301 1120

## Housing

<i>during weekday office hours</i>	01738 476000
Housing/Council Tax Benefit	01738 476049

Arrears & Rent	01738 477889
Improvements Maintenance	01738 476184 01738 448380
Housing Research	01738 476092
Tenant Participation	01738 476165

## Other Useful Numbers *in alphabetical order*

Ark Housing Association Ambulance	0131 447 9027 999
Bield Housing Association Building Services	01382 228911 01738 638600
Citizens Advice Bureau	01738 624301/2
Communities Scotland	0131 313 0044
Dept of Work and Pensions <i>(formerly Benefits Agency or DSS)</i>	01738 412000
Electricity (Emergency) Energy Watch Textphone	0800 300 999 0845 906 0708 0845 609 6677
Fairfield Housing Co-operative Fire Service Freeline Social Security	01738 630738 999 0800 66555566
Gas Emergency (Transco)	0800 111 999

*continued*

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Hanover Housing Association	0131 557 7404
Hillcrest Housing Association	01382 224083
Link Housing Association	01324 634768
Litter Ranger	01738 476476
Local Authority Ombudsman	0870 011 5378
Margaret Blackwood Housing Association	0131 317 7227
Members of the Scottish Parliament	
Roseanna Cunningham ( <i>Perth Area</i> )	01738 444002
John Swinney ( <i>North Tayside</i> )	01250 876576
George Reid ( <i>Ochil - Kinross</i> )	01259 726655
Andrew Welsh ( <i>Angus - Invergowrie &amp; Longforgan</i> )	01241 439369
Perth & Kinross Council HQ	01738 475000
Perth & Kinross Leisure	01738 477900
Perth Women's Aid	01738 639043
Perthshire Housing Association	01738 441088
Perth & Kinross Tenants and Residents Federation	01738 442302
Police	01738 621141
<i>Emergency</i>	999
Refuse Helpline	01738 476476
Scottish Water	0845 601 8855
Servite Housing Association	01382 480915
Shelter	0131 473 7170
Social Work Services	01738 476700

## Councillors

Ward	Councillor	Address	Tel
<b>Ward 1</b> <i>Rannoch &amp; Atholl</i>	John Culliven	Craigmhor Calvine PITLOCHRY PH15 5UA	01796 483250
<b>Ward 2</b> <i>Pitlochry</i>	Eleanor Howie	Moulinearn Ballinluig PITLOCHRY PH9 ONB	01796 482248
<b>Ward 3</b> <i>Rattray &amp; Glenshee</i>	Elizabeth Grant	Rossearn Perth Road BLAIRGOWRIE PH10 6EJ	01250 873295
<b>Ward 4</b> <i>Alyth &amp; Old Rattray</i>	Ian Miller	Millbank 8 Upper Mill Street Blairgowrie PH10 6AG	01250 873304
<b>Ward 5</b> <i>Coupar Angus &amp; Meikle</i>	Alan Grant JP	Rossearn Perth Road Blairgowrie PH10 6EJ	01250 873295
<b>Ward 6</b> <i>Rosemount</i>	Sandy Bushby	Braemore Meikle Blairgowrie PH12 8QX	01828 640397
<b>Ward 7</b> <i>Blairgowrie</i>	Bob Ellis	15 Ann Street Blairgowrie PH10 6EF	01250 873899

continued

continued

Ward	Councillor	Address	Tel
<b>Ward 8</b> <i>Kinclaven &amp; Clunie</i>	Alan Telfer	Kilburn Stanley PERTH PH1 4PT	01738 787449
<b>Ward 9</b> <i>Strathtay &amp; Dunkeld</i>	Alistair Barr	Tir nam Beann Weem ABERFELDY PH15 2LD	01887 829204
<b>Ward 10</b> <i>Breadalbane</i>	Ken Lyall	No 4 Weem Cottages Weem ABERFELDY PH15 2LD	01887 820183
<b>Ward 11</b> <i>Comrie</i>	Colin Crabbie	Balmuick Comrie CRIEFF PH6 2LY	01764 670286
<b>Ward 12</b> <i>Crieff North</i>	Helen MacDonald JP	Newbigging Farm CRIEFF PH7 4HW	01764 653107
<b>Ward 13</b> <i>Crieff South</i>	Ann Cowan	The Old Inn Fowlis Wester CRIEFF PH7 3NL	01764 683319
<b>Ward 14</b> <i>Strathord &amp; Logiealmond</i>	Bob Scott	37 Westfield Luncarty PERTH PH1 3HJ	01738 828406

continued

Ward	Councillor	Address	Tel
<b>Ward 15</b> <i>Strathalmond</i>	Robert Lumsden	13 Strathview Place Methven PERTH PH1 3PP	01738 840384
<b>Ward 16</b> <i>Scone</i>	Lewis Simpson	20 Woollcombe Square Scone PERTH PH2 6PN	07909 884516
<b>Ward 17</b> <i>Dunsinnan</i>	John Lloyd	30 Lynedoch Road Scone PERTH PH2 6RJ	01738 551338
<b>Ward 18</b> <i>East Carse</i>	Peter Mulheron JP	Miramar Templehall Longforgan DUNDEE DD2 5HS	01382 360368
<b>Ward 19</b> <i>Central Carse</i>	Dr John Hulbert JP	Wayside Castle Road Longforgan DUNDEE DD2 5HA	01382 360294
<b>Ward 20</b> <i>Barnhill &amp; West Carse</i>	Peter A Barrett	16 Corsiehill Road PERTH PH2 7BZ	01738 571527

continued

Ward	Councillor	Address	Tel
<b>Ward 21</b> <i>Picstonhill</i>	James Doig JP	Hillgarden Queen's Avenue PERTH PH2 OEL	01738 625046
<b>Ward 22</b> <i>North Inch</i>	Joan McEwan	Flat 20 King James VI Buildings Hospital Street PERTH PH2 8HP	01738 643748
<b>Ward 23</b> <i>Muirton</i>	Gordon Hunter	23 Mull Place PERTH PH1 3DR	01738 629045
<b>Ward 24</b> <i>North Muirton</i>	Archibald MacLellan	104 Moulin Crescent PERTH PH1 2EB	01738 635401
<b>Ward 25</b> <i>Hillyland</i>	David Scott JP	149 Crieff Road PERTH PH1 2PB	01738 622871
<b>Ward 26</b> <i>Ruthven Park</i>	Alan Livingstone	6 Lauder Crescent PERTH PH1 1SU	01738 638866
<b>Ward 27</b> <i>North Letham</i>	John Flynn JP	58 Feus Road PERTH PH1 2BA	01738 629201

continued

Ward	Councillor	Address	Tel
<b>Ward 28</b> <i>South Letham</i>	Callum Gillies	111 Brahan Terrace PERTH PH1 2LW	01738 625254
<b>Ward 29</b> <i>Wellshill</i>	Alexander Stewart	5 Hawarden Terrace PERTH PH1 1PA	01738 443365
<b>Ward 30</b> <i>Oakbank</i>	William Wilson JP	3 Fairhill Avenue PERTH PH1 1RP	01738 626270
<b>Ward 31</b> <i>Craigie</i>	Lorraine Caddell	Hillgarden Queen's Avenue PERTH PH2 0EL	01738 625046
<b>Ward 32</b> <i>South Inch</i>	Jack Coburn	35 King Street PERTH PH2 8JA	01738 625939
<b>Ward 33</b> <i>Moncreiffe &amp; Friarton</i>	Margo Lennie	6 Mavisbank Gardens PERTH PH1 1HY	01738 632255
<b>Ward 34</b> <i>Earn</i>	Alan Jack	Flat 3 The Stables Moncreiffe Estate Bridge of Earn PERTH PH2 8PZ	01738 813241

continued

Ward	Councillor	Address	Tel
<b>Ward 35</b> <i>Auchterarder Mid Earn</i>	John Mair	Heathfield Villa Muirton AUCHTERARDER PH3 1DN	01764 662269
<b>Ward 36</b> <i>Strathallan &amp; Glendevon</i>	David Dow	Dunragit Greenhaugh Court Braco DUNBLANE FK15 9PS	01786 880392
<b>Ward 37</b> <i>Auchterarder Craig Rossie</i>	Colin Young	Meadowland Newton of Pitcairns Dunning PERTH PH2 OSL	01764 684521
<b>Ward 38</b> <i>Abernethy &amp; Glenfarg</i>	Kathleen Baird	Easter Clunie Newburgh Fife KY14 6EJ	01337 840218
<b>Ward 39</b> <i>Milnathort &amp; North Kinross</i>	William Robertson	85/87 South Street Milnathort KINROSS KY13 7XA	07909 884042
<b>Ward 40</b> <i>Kinross Town</i>	George Hayton	6 Montgomery Way KINROSS KY13 8FD	01577 863055

Ward	Councillor	Address	Tel
<b>Ward 41</b> <i>Kinross-shire</i>	Michael Barnacle	Moorend Waulkmill Road Crook of Devon KY13 7UZ	01577 840516

continued

# Section 18

## Glossary of Terms & Words



### **Area Office**

Staff at your Area Office (or Sub Office) attend to your queries. If you're not sure which Office serves you, please refer to Section 1, page 10: *How to Contact Us*. If you're still not sure which Office to contact, please phone our headquarters at Pullar House, 01738 476000, during office hours, and we'll confirm it for you.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour**

Generally speaking, this term means behaviour by anyone at any time that falls below society's accepted standards. It can cover criminal acts as well as vandalism, threatening behaviour, nuisance and noise, as well as dumping rubbish, for instance.

### **Council Tax**

This is a local tax. It replaced the Community Charge (Poll Tax) in 1993. Money raised from Council Tax is used to support essential services provided by Perth & Kinross Council, such as Education, Fire, Police, Social Work, Roads & Transport, and Environmental Services.

Charges are based on property Valuation Bands, determined by the Tayside Valuation Joint Board. Each property's band is set by its market value. Details of various discounts and exemptions are included with each Council Tax bill.

### **Housing Benefit**

This is a locally-administered income-related welfare benefit. It helps low-income households by contributing towards the cost of rented accommodation.

## **Housing Stock**

A term used to refer to all the dwellings in Perth and Kinross under the ownership and management of Housing & Community Care.

## **Joint Tenancy**

A tenancy held jointly by two or more people, such as (but not exclusively) a wife and husband.

## **Maintenance Contract**

A legal document. It describes and agrees the responsibilities of a contractor undertaking maintenance duties on behalf of Housing & Community Care.

## **Mutual Exchange**

Transfer of accommodation between two parties who - with written, advance permission of the Council (and any other organisation involved) - exchange houses.

## **Notice of Abandonment**

A legal document served when a tenant leaves home without notifying the Council.

## **Notice of Proceedings for Recovery of Possession**

A legal document served on a tenant to enable the Council to start Court Proceedings for house recovery.

## **Nuisance**

Behaviour unreasonably interfering with the rights of others to use and enjoy their home and community in peace and harmony.

## **Points System**

Measurement based on points awarded for factors like overcrowding, medical conditions, and homelessness.

## **Rent Arrears**

Unpaid and outstanding rent payments.

## **Security of Tenure**

Rights given to tenants which prevent us as the landlord regaining or repossessing a home, unless we can prove to a Court that there are grounds for possession, as set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

## **Tenancy Agreement**

A written agreement under which we, as a landlord, let property to a tenant.

## **Transfer**

A tenant's move from one property to another.

*If there are any terms or comments in this Handbook that you don't understand, please ask at your Area Office or at Pullar House.*

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# Section 19 Summary Index



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The range of references in this Index is wide, but not conclusive. Page numbers are in **bold** type.

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Published in 2004 (with the valued assistance of Tenant Volunteers, and Perth & Kinross Tenants and Residents Federation) by Tenant Participation, Service Development Support, Housing & Community Care, Perth & Kinross Council, Pullar House, 35 Kinnoull Street, PERTH PH1 5GD. Tel 01738 476165. Text phone 01738 4424573.

*Designed by Performance Planning & Management*