

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.

Your Rights

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 receive
- a rent card
- a home that's wind and watertight
- pass your tenancy on 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.
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and you can apply to

- take in lodgers
- sub-let your house
- exchange your home with another Secure Tenant
- buy your home (with exceptions for homes within designated Pressured Areas)

Your responsibilities

As a Secure Tenant you have agreed to:

- live in the property
- pay your rent regularly and in advance
- allow other tenants and residents 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
- give 28 days notice when you decide to leave the property.

Types of Tenancy



Scottish Secure Tenancy

Most Council tenants will have a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) which guarantees them certain rights, and also places certain duties upon them as tenants.

The main rights under a Scottish Secure Tenancy are:

Security of tenure

You cannot be evicted from your home without a court order.

Joint tenancy

You and anyone who lives in your house and uses it as their only home can apply for a joint tenancy.

Succession

If you die, your tenancy can be passed on to:

- your spouse
- your partner who was living with you for at least six months before your death
- the other joint tenant
- another member of your family who was living with you when you died
- a carer who lived with you in your home before you died and gave up their only or main home to care for you or a member of your family.

Exchanges and Sub-letting

You can sublet your tenancy, exchange your house or take in a lodger with written permission from the Council. You can also sign over your tenancy to anyone who has lived in your home for at least six months.

Right to Repair

The Council must carry out certain types of small urgent repairs on your home.

Compensation

You have a right to compensation at the end of your tenancy for certain types of improvements you have made to your home. The Council must have given you written permission to make the improvements.

Information

The Council must give you a written tenancy agreement, information about the complaints procedure, and information about right to buy and any responsibilities you may have if you buy your home.



Consultation

The Council must consult with tenants, and take account of their views, before making or changing any housing management policies that are likely to significantly affect you, such as repairs or rent and service charges. How we will do this in Perth and Kinross is set out in our Tenant Participation Strategy.

Right to Manage

You and your neighbours can get together to form a tenant management co-operative and enter into an agreement with the Council to manage your own homes.

Short Scottish Secure Tenancy

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced a new type of tenancy, which can only be used in limited circumstances - the Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST).

The SSST includes the same rights as the full Scottish Secure Tenancy, with the following exceptions:

- there is no right to buy
- your tenancy cannot be passed to someone else if you die
- your right to stay in the house is more limited than with a full SST

Short SSTs are useful where people are only looking for a short-term place to stay, or where support measures need to be put in place to help someone meet their responsibilities as a tenant.

You will be advised if you are being offered a short SST before you sign any tenancy agreement. If you are not happy with the offer of a short SST you have the right to appeal to the Sheriff Court. You can get advice on appealing from a solicitor or the Citizen's Advice Bureau.



Looking for more information?

Check the Perth & Kinross Council website www.pkc.gov.uk or contact any Council office to request a copy of:

- Tenants' Guide on Your Rights as a Tenant (section 9)
- Tenants' Guide on Permissions (section 10)
- Tenants' Guide on Changes of Tenancy (section 11)

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 property you live in. You will be notified in writing four weeks in advance of any increase in your rent.

You can choose to pay your rent weekly, fortnightly, every four weeks or once each calendar month. However, please remember that under the terms of your tenancy agreement you must pay rent at least one week in advance, so whichever payment frequency you choose should be in advance to stop you from falling into arrears.

Rent Card

A plastic rent payment 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 payment card itself should, however, last five years.

If you lose the plastic Rent Card you will be charged for a replacement. Please contact your local Area Office if you need a replacement card.

Remember you will not be able to pay your rent at a Post Office counter, PayPoint or Payzone outlet without your rent payment 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 during the year you should continue to pay during the free weeks to reduce your arrears.

Rent Arrears

If you do not pay your rent regularly arrears will mount up. We understand that everyone faces money problems from time to time, and if you contact your area housing office as soon as you realise you might have difficulty meeting your rent payments we will work with you to manage the situation.

The payment of your rent is an important part of your tenancy agreement, and if you do not pay your rent, or fail to keep to any repayment arrangement, we will take action against you in court. Non-payment of rent may ultimately result in you losing your home. Most landlords will also take into account any outstanding rent arrears when considering whether to offer you somewhere to live.

How To Pay Your Rent

There are several ways in which you can pay your rent. If you have an enquiry about making a housing rent payment, email housingrents@pkc.gov.uk



Direct Debit

Direct Debit payments are made automatically from your bank account on an agreed date. This is an efficient and reliable method of payment, and it helps keep down the Council's costs of collection so that more of your rent money can be invested in maintaining and improving your home. Speak to any member of your local area housing team or ask at Pullar House to have a Direct Debit payment set up for your rent.



Online

You can pay your rent securely online via the Council's website at any time of the day or night using a debit or credit card. You will need your 16 digit reference number which can be found at the bottom of your plastic rent payment card. Go to the online payments page at www.pkc.gov.uk for further information.



By Post

To make a postal payment, send a cheque (with your name, address, and rent reference number written on the back) to your local Area Housing Office or to Rent Payments, Housing Services, Pullar House, 35 Kinnoull Street, Perth, PH1 5GD. Cheques should be made payable to Perth & Kinross Council. Please do not include your payment card.



In cash, by cheque or by card

During normal opening hours payments can be made in cash, by cheque or by debit or credit card at the cash/ payments desk in Pullar House and Letham Housing Office. Please don't send cash payments through the post, or put cash through the letterbox of any Council office.



Post Office/Payzone/Paypoint

At your local Post Office counter, or shop offering the Payzone or Paypoint service. No charge is made for this service but you need your rent payment card with you. The advantage of this over paying at your local Area Housing Office is that these businesses tend to open later during the week, and are also open at weekends, so you can pay when it's most convenient for you.



Over the phone

You can make payments by debit or credit card at any time of the day or night by using the automated touch tone telephone payment facility. Simply call 0845 603 0121 and quote your 16 digit reference number found at the bottom of your plastic rent payment card.

Home Contents Insurance



If you lost your television, would your landlord replace it?

More than likely ... NO!

Your landlord is responsible for insuring the building you live in but not your contents. You, as the tenant are responsible for insuring your belongings against theft, fire, flood and other potential damage.

No one really likes paying insurance premiums until, in situations like flood, fire or theft, it becomes very worthwhile. If you take a moment to work out how much it would cost to replace every item in each of your rooms, including new carpets and redecorating, you'll find that it soon mounts up.

Making sure that you are covered with a suitable home contents insurance policy means that you don't have to worry about it too much.

Perth & Kinross Council has arranged an insurance scheme for its tenants with Royal & Sun Alliance. Standard cover can be as low as £1.04 per week and there is no excess to pay if you make a claim - a small price to pay for peace of mind.



Looking for more information?

Contact your local Area Housing Office for more information about the Royal & Sun Alliance insurance scheme.

You can also check the Perth & Kinross Council website www.pkc.gov.uk or contact any Council office to request a copy of:

- Tenants' Guide on Home Safety - Security (section 7.5)
- Tenants' Guide on Home Safety - Winter Precautions (section 7.6)

Gardens



If you have any area of garden ground associated with your home it is your responsibility to make sure that the garden is kept neat and tidy.

The current Garden Maintenance Scheme is open to households where all members are over the age of 65, or for tenants under 65 who are unable to look after a garden themselves due to ill health or a disability. The terms of the Garden Maintenance Scheme are currently being reviewed, and more information on the proposed changes will be communicated to tenants in the near future.

Who qualifies for the Garden Maintenance Scheme?

Perth & Kinross Council provides a Garden Maintenance Service for certain tenants who qualify. The scheme is open to tenants who are aged 65 or over. Tenants who are under 65 and are physically disabled also qualify, providing they are in receipt of either Disability Living Allowance, Sever Disablement Allowance or Attendance Allowance. In addition to the above conditions, there must be no able-bodied person within the tenant's household who could maintain the garden on their behalf.

What does the Garden Maintenance Scheme do?

The Garden Maintenance Service provides the following assistance:

- Grass cut every fortnight between April and September (weather permitting)
- Grass edges strimmed at every cut
- Grass cuttings raked, bagged and removed
- Where tenants have hedges, these will be cut once in March and once in October. Cuttings will be collected and removed.

There is a charge of £52.80 for this service. The charge can be spread over the year with your weekly rent.

If you are interested in applying for this scheme, please contact your local area office or go to www.pkc.gov.uk for a copy of the application form.

If you would like to park a caravan or trailer in your garden you must first obtain written permission from your local area housing office. We will only grant permission if the caravan or trailer can be parked where it does not cause a disturbance or nuisance for any neighbour.



Looking for more information?

Check the Perth & Kinross Council website www.pkc.gov.uk or contact any Council office to request a copy of:

- Tenants' Guide on Vehicle Parking (section 2.6)
- Garden Maintenance Scheme application form

Vehicle Parking



You should park your car, van, motorbike, caravan or trailer without any inconvenience to or for your neighbours. Similarly, you should be careful to avoid blocking access or causing nuisance or annoyance to anybody when washing your vehicle or carrying out maintenance on it.

Only in a very few instances - for example where there's a parking space allocated to a specific property - does anyone have the right to park in a particular spot. It may be more convenient to you to park directly outside your house, but unless that ground is part of the property you rent you have no more rights than anybody else to park there.



Generally where you can park depends on legally-available space. You must not block or interfere with roads or pathways, create an obstruction, or a nuisance.

Caravans and Trailers

These may not be left in any parking area or Council-owned car park. Police action may be taken if caravans and trailers are parked on a roadway and cause an obstruction. We will also take action to remove any caravans or trailers left illegally in any parking area.

If you would like to park your caravan or trailer in your own garden you must first obtain written permission from your local area housing office. 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.

The enforcement of parking restrictions on yellow lines is the responsibility of parking attendants employed by the Roads Service. Tayside Police deal with inconsiderate or dangerous parking in 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 rights of public access to these roads; the term 'private' only relates to the maintenance of the road 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 (HGV)

Any vehicle over 3.5 metric tonnes requires an operator's licence. This 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 on. They are available in most areas, but there are waiting lists for them. Please contact your local area office for more details.

City Centre Residents

To help residents of the central controlled parking zone in Perth to find parking near their homes at a reduced cost the Council operates a resident's parking permit scheme. Since 9 June 2008, a central zone permit costs £160 per annum and an outer zone permit £90 per annum.

Both permits allow residents to park on-street within 100 metres of their home but the central zone permit also allows residents to park in a designated car park and in the Canal Street multi storey car park.

Residents of the Perth controlled parking zone should apply to the Parking Services Office, The Atrium, 137 Glover Street, Perth PH2 0HY. Tel 01738 477212.

Helping You to Stay at Home



We may be able to help you if you have special requirements and you believe that your own home, as it is, is not best-suited to your needs, or you need additional support to help you to continue to maintain your independence at home.

Support and assistance could include:

- adaptations to your home, such as handrails or bath aids
- community alarm
- home care
- community meals

If you want it there are also a number of sheltered housing complexes within Perth and Kinross. Sheltered housing is self-contained accommodation with on-call support to help you if you ever find yourself in difficulty. Some sheltered housing units also have common room facilities for residents to use if they want to.

To apply for this type of housing ask about making an application at your local area housing office.

Adaptations

We offer a wide range of services and support for people with a learning and/ or physical disability. These services include day care, respite/short breaks, supported accommodation and employment development.

Occupational Therapy, is a service which aims to "enable children, adults and older people with physical, mental and / or learning difficulties to be as independent as possible."

Occupational Therapists undertake assessments of need and, where appropriate, provide equipment and adaptations to improve levels of ability and promote a safer home environment.

This service may include:

- providing information, support and / or equipment to increase your independence and confidence with daily activities, such as, toileting, dressing, bathing and moving around your home,
- providing support to you and your carer in understanding and managing your disability,
- arranging for minor adaptations to be carried out to your home, such as grab-rails and banisters,
- Giving advice and assistance with major adaptations, e.g. ramp and shower installations and widening doors for wheelchair access,
- giving advice on how to meet your educational, work and leisure requirements.

Community Alarm

The Community Alarm Service is designed to enable people to live safely, securely and independently in their own homes. All users of the Community Alarm Service are provided with a pendant which should be worn on the person at all times. This can be used to contact help from anywhere in your home or garden via a base unit.



The base unit is connected to the Community Alarm Monitoring Centre, where staff are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to respond to any alerts.

Home Care

The Home Care service can support you in your home by providing personal care and practical domestic help in a way which fits in with your assessed individual needs and routines and those of your carers, providing you meet the eligibility criteria.

In general terms, Home Care staff can provide assistance with getting up, dressing, undressing and going to bed as well as with personal hygiene, such as going to the toilet, washing and shaving.

Household tasks are also carried out, such as bed making, laundry and some housework, but only as part of a more complex care package.

Meals Service

The Council provides a delivered meals service to people who are assessed as requiring this support.

The service delivers a choice of meals to your home. You choose what you would like to eat from a wide selection of starters, main courses, and desserts, and the meals are delivered to you once every two weeks. They are stored in a freezer and heated from frozen using a microwave or conventional oven.

Everyone who joins the service will receive an assessment to agree how many meals they require, and whether they need any additional assistance to use the service.



Looking for more information?

Check the Perth & Kinross Council website www.pkc.gov.uk or contact any Council office to request a copy of:

- Community Alarm Service leaflet
- Home Care Services leaflet
- Meals Service leaflet

If you are not already receiving any community care services from the Council you can find out more about the services which are available to help you by contacting the Community Care Access Team on 0845 30 111 20 or by emailing AccessTeam@pkc.gov.uk