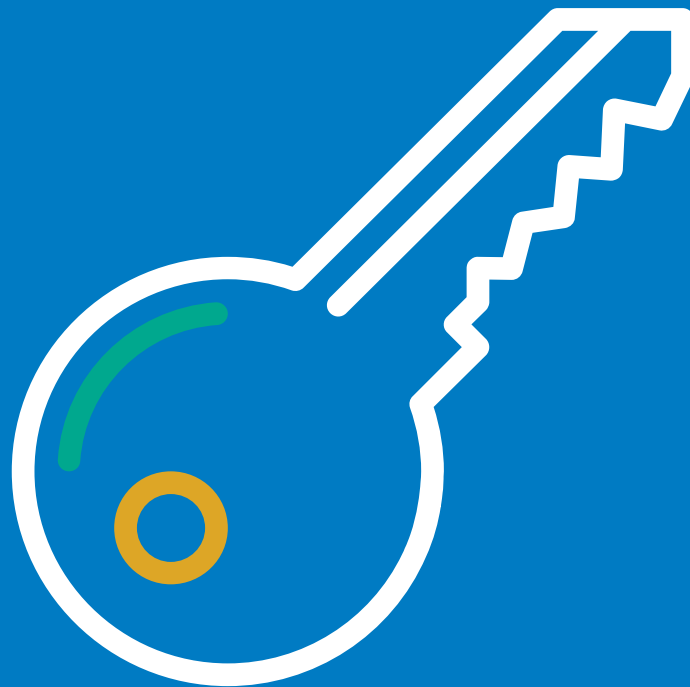


# Tenants' Handbook




## Tenants' Handbook Chairperson's Introduction

This Tenants' Handbook is a useful reference for you as a tenant. It has been written with tenants' involvement, in a readable language. Please keep this handy as you will find contact details of staff in Ochil View who can give you further information or advice on variety of topics. This can be anything from repairs, the Association and your responsibilities or how to get information on benefits and paying your rent.

I am one of fifteen board members, who are all volunteers with different life, work experiences and skills.

Ochil View Housing Association welcomes any comments you as a tenant may wish to make. If you have any ideas or suggestions on how we can improve our services to tenants or the information we provide in the Tenants Handbook then please don't keep it to yourself, let us know. Even better why don't you get involved in our Tenant Scrutiny Group? You will find more information on how to contact us in the Tenant Engagement Leaflet.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Savage". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J".

Jim Savage  
Chairperson

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# Emergency Information



## Emergency Contact Numbers

These phone numbers will provide services and advice in an emergency. There will be other numbers for use for routine enquiries. Contact numbers for routine calls are included in the handbook. Please do not use an emergency service if your call is not an emergency. Unnecessary calls to these numbers could prevent a person in need from getting help.

Contact	Number
Ochil View Housing Association All non-heating emergency, routine and urgent repairs within office hours	<b>01259 722899</b>
City Technical Services All heating repairs at all times	<b>0333 202 0708</b>
MP Group UK Ltd	<b>0141 343 7395</b>
Scottish Gas Network Gas supply emergencies	<b>0800 111 999</b>
For power cuts: Scottish Power (24-hour Emergency Helpline) For other electrical emergencies: Scottish Power Energy Networks From a landline From a mobile These numbers should be used even if another company provides your electricity.	<b>105</b> <b>0800 092 9290</b> <b>0330 1010 222</b>
Scottish Water	<b>0800 0778 778</b>
Police, Ambulance and Fire	Non Emergency <b>101</b> Emergency <b>999</b>
Clackmannanshire Council Emergency number for all services	<b>01259 450000</b>
Fife Council Homelessness Services Other Services	<b>0800 028 6231</b> <b>0345 155 0099</b>

## Emergency Repairs Service

We will respond to emergency repairs at any time.

Contact us immediately if the emergency happens when the office is open.

Contact the Emergency Repairs Service contractor immediately if the office is closed.

## What is an Emergency Repair?

This is a list of emergency repairs:

- A leak of water that cannot be contained, resulting in damage to the building fabric.
- A leak of waste water or sewage.
- A blocked toilet or drain.
- Faulty electric sockets or wiring.
- Faulty smoke detector or carbon monoxide detector.
- No central heating or hot water.

Our repair contractor will call at your home within 3 hours if you report an emergency repair. Stay at home after you report the repair. If you cannot stay at home, make arrangements for someone else to be there. Please make sure that person knows about the repair. If our contractor finds that the emergency work is the result of your (or any person in your home's) neglect, you will be recharged the cost of the repair.

## Gas central heating - what to do if you have no central heating or hot water

You should check your gas meter for any error message and ensure that any prepayment meter is in credit. Never try to make any repairs yourself.

Phone the Emergency Repairs Service. Suspected gas leaks should be reported immediately to Scottish Gas Network 0800 111 999 and to our Emergency Repairs Contractor 0333 202 0708 (at all times.)

## What to do if you have no electrical power

Faulty appliances or fuses in plugs cause many faults. If the electricity is cut off, check with your neighbours and call Scottish Power. There may be a general supply failure. (In most houses, we have fitted modern "Earth Leakage Circuit Breakers" (ELCB) to switch the power off if there is a fault).

In this handbook, we have called this the "Fuse Box". Check the "Fuse Box". Switch the electricity back on if one of more of these has switched it off. Remove all appliances from the circuit and switch them on one at a time. If one causes the power to go off, it may be faulty.

Do not use it again until you have had it checked by an electrician. If you try this and you do not find a faulty appliance and the power fails again, you should call the Emergency Repairs Service.

If electricity is vital to your health (for instance, if you use medical equipment at home) ask your electricity supplier to include you on their priority service register.

## Water Emergencies

What to do if you have a Burst Pipe or Flooding:

- Turn off the water at the stopcock.
- Turn off gas central heating systems. (If you have gas central heating).
- Turn on all the taps to drain the water from the pipes.
- Switch off the electricity supply at the meter if water comes into contact with electrical fittings to avoid short circuits or electrical shock.
- Contact the Emergency Repairs Service.
- Warn neighbours who might suffer damage - for example, downstairs neighbours.

## What to do if you have a blocked drain or toilet

Communal drains and sewers (drains that serve more than one property) should be reported to Scottish Water 0800 077 8778.

If the drain serves only your home, you must try and unblock the drain before you contact the Emergency Repairs Service.

**If our contractor unblocks the drain, we will charge you the costs of the repair.**

# Safety in your Home



## Gas Safety

### Gas Safety in your Home

If your home has a gas supply, we will explain how the central heating works and show you where the gas valve (the valve that can turn your gas supply on and off) is. Please ask us for more information, if you require it.



### Annual Safety Checks

All gas appliances are serviced once a year to make sure they work and are safe to use. It is essential that you give access to your home for this inspection. If you do not let our tradesperson in, we may take further action to disconnect your gas supply.

The inspection will look at all gas appliances in your home. We will check if they are working properly and safely. If they are not, we will repair any appliance that we own, such as the central heating boiler, gas fire or any hob or oven we have provided.

If the appliance belongs to you, we will not carry out any repairs. Our contractors may give advice about the appliance. If it is not safe to use, they will tell you and fix a warning label to it. It is illegal to remove the label and use the appliance until the appliance has been made safe to use. You are responsible for arranging any repairs that are necessary.

### Carbon Monoxide

If a gas appliance is not working properly, a poisonous gas called Carbon Monoxide can build up in your home. You cannot see or smell this gas.

There are signs that you can see including:

- Sooty stains above a gas fire.
- Sooty stains above the viewing window on a gas boiler.
- Yellow (not blue) flames.

If you do not allow access to your home for annual gas safety checks and servicing, you will put yourself and the other residents of your home at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

We have fitted Carbon Monoxide detectors in our homes. If this detector sounds you should

- Turn off all gas appliances straight away.
- Contact the Emergency Repairs Service.

We will always provide a carbon monoxide detector where there is a gas heating system.

### What to do if you think you have a Gas Leak

You may be able to smell gas in your home. If this happens you should check if any gas appliance is turned on and not lit. If this has happened, you should open windows to allow the gas to escape. If you cannot find any reason why you can smell gas then you should

- Turn off the gas supply at the gas valve.
- Turn off all gas appliances.
- Put out all naked flames such as candles.
- Do not smoke.
- Do not turn any electrical appliance on or off.
- Use a torch, if you need to.
- Open doors and windows to let any gas out.
- Call Scottish Gas Network on 0800 111 999.
- Contact the Association's Emergency Repairs Service on 0333 202 0708
- If the smell is very strong, get everyone out of the house and let your neighbours know what is happening.

### Gas Fires

If you have a gas fire in your home, do not paint or varnish the casing. This could cause poisonous fumes that could damage your health.

### Gas Hobs and Cookers

If you live in a flat, the law requires that any new gas hob or cooker has a flame supervision device fitted to shut off the supply and prevent a gas explosion or a fire if the flame is extinguished.

Make sure you check with us before you buy a new hob or cooker.

We do not recommend the use of gas cookers that incorporate a high-level grill.

Cookers must be fitted with a stability bracket and must be fitted by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

## Fire Safety

In the event of a fire, please ensure all occupants exit the building safely and call 999 immediately.

Here are some reminders about how to reduce the risk of fire in your home

Smoking causes many fires.

- Never leave a lit cigarette or pipe unattended.
- Empty ashtrays regularly.
- Furniture can catch light and give off deadly smoke and fumes.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Make sure pipes or cigarettes are out before going to bed at night.
- Don't leave lit candles unattended.

Chip pans are one of the most common causes of fire in the home.

- Never fill a pan more than one-third full of fat or oil.
- Never leave the pan unattended when the heat is switched on.
- If the pan does catch fire do not move it and never throw water on it.
- Turn off the heat if it is safe to do so.
- Call the fire brigade.
- Contact Ochil View if the fire has damaged your home.

Many fires in the home start at night. Make sure you have a bedtime fire safety routine to help keep your home and family safe. Here are a few simple things which you should do every night.

- Unplug all electrical appliances not designed to stay on.
- Make sure no cigarettes are still burning.
- Before emptying ashtrays make sure the contents are cold.
- Switch off portable heaters.
- Close the doors of all unoccupied rooms.

If you live in a flat, the common stairwell is your escape route so please keep it free of any items, rubbish or equipment. We regularly inspect these areas and will ask for items to be removed if they are blocking the fire exit or may remove them ourselves.

## Fire Check Doors

Some houses have fire-rated doors that have self-closing devices. This is usually between the kitchen and the living room and they are present to limit the spread of fire allowing time to evacuate from the property. This is a fire safety measure to protect all occupants of the property therefore you must not remove or deactivate the self-closer or wedge these doors open.

## Electrical Appliances

We encourage all tenants to ensure they are using fully certified electrical appliances in their home. Products therefore should bear the UKCA Mark, the British Standard Kitemark or the BEAB Approved mark.

Here are some reminders about using electricity safely in your home

- Switch off electrical appliances when they are not in use – unless they are intended to be left on.
- Do not pull plugs from sockets by pulling the cable.
- Do not overload sockets.
- Plug only one appliance into each socket.
- Always make sure your plugs and adaptors have the right fuse for the appliance you are using.
- If you are not sure, check with an approved electrician.

And do not forget to check wiring in your electrical plugs, they should be wired as follows: -

**Brown** - Live    **Blue** - Neutral    **Yellow/Green** - Earth

## Light Bulbs

Bulbs will “blow” at the end of their life. This may cause the fuse in the plug to blow, or the “fuse box” to switch off. Cheaper brands of bulb may have a shorter life. Use brands from reputable suppliers. Low-energy bulbs may be more expensive, but they have a longer life and will be better value. They help to reduce your energy bills, protect the environment and save money.

## Smoke Alarms

We have provided smoke alarms in all our houses and these should be hard wired smoke detectors with a battery back up in case there are any power cuts. Test your detectors every week by pressing the test button. If any do not work, let us know. Never try to tamper with any alarm or remove the built-in battery.



Never try to disconnect your alarm, move it or paint it.

If you have fitted your own smoke detector, we will not maintain, repair or replace it.

## Paraffin Stoves & Bottled Gas Heaters

It is not allowed to use heaters fired by paraffin or liquid petroleum gas. This is not permitted in your home. You may not store paraffin, liquid petroleum gas or any flammable substances in the house or in any of the common parts of your home.

## Safety Checks

We will check your heating and electrical systems to make sure they are safe.

Gas Heating – Every year.

Electrical Heating – Every five years as part of our electric periodic inspection programme.

Electrical System – Every five years to all homes

These checks are vital to ensure these systems remain safe, it is important you allow access when required.

## E-bikes & Scooters

Here are some handy tips on buying, using and keeping these items safely.

- Always ensure that any electrical item is purchased from a reputable supplier and meets relevant British or European safety standards
- Register all products with the manufacturer so that you get updated with any recall or safety information
- Do not store or charge e-bikes or e-scooters in common areas – these are escape routes. Batteries should be stored in a cool place and in line with manufacturer's instructions
- Keep e-bikes and e-scooters away from combustible or flammable materials – this includes whilst charging
- Check batteries regularly for any signs of damage

Safe charging is also vital:

- Unplug chargers when not in use
- Do not charge any items while you are sleeping or away from your home
- Ensure your smoke and heat alarms are working, and that you are charging in an area where these are present
- Use only the manufacturers approved charger, and ensure they are in good condition
- Do not cover items whilst they are charging
- If you must use an extension lead for charging, make sure it is correct for use, uncoiled and appropriately rated for charging and ensure it is not overloaded

In the event of an e-bike, e-scooter or lithium-ion battery fire, do not attempt to extinguish the fire. Get out, stay out, call 999.

Further advice can be found at <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/at-home/e-bike-and-e-scooters/>

## Buildings and Contents Insurance

We have a comprehensive Buildings Insurance Policy covering our property and the fixtures and fittings in your home. It does not cover your possessions, your decoration, your furniture, or any alterations you have made to your home. It does not cover anything in the garden, including any plants, sheds, and garages or parking areas you have provided. You must insure these items.

We recommend that all tenants have contents insurance to replace their possessions if they are lost or damaged through fire, water damage or theft. We can provide details of a low-cost Policy. Please ask us for more information.

If you are thinking about taking out Contents Insurance, make sure your decoration is covered.

## Damp and Mould

Damp can be an issue in homes, causing problems such as mould on walls and furniture or making timber window frames rot. Damp also encourages mould and mite growth which can be the source of many health problems, including respiratory infections, asthma and allergies.



There are three main types of damp:

**Penetrating damp** - is damp which results from issues with the building which leads to water ingress such as leaking pipes, cracks and blocked guttering.

**Rising damp** - is caused by defects in the foundation of the building.

**Condensation damp** - is caused by an excess of moisture in the air and poor ventilation. This causes water droplets to form on cold surfaces such as windows and walls. The risk of condensation forming is increased through daily living activities such as bathing, cooking and drying clothes. This type of damp can cause mould to form on the affected surfaces.

Things you can do to help reduce damp in your home:

- Report repairs promptly, particularly damaged gutters, roof tiles, broken fans, damaged roughcast.
- Keep your home well ventilated by opening windows every day. You should also ensure that trickle or drop vents on windows are kept open at all times. This allows additional airflow around your home. If you can see condensation on your windows, it is likely to be elsewhere in your home.
- Cover pots and pans when cooking and if you have an extractor fan, use it on the highest setting when cooking. This will ensure that any excess moisture from cooking is removed. Leaving an extractor fan on for longer than when you are cooking is a good idea. If you can, you should also open the kitchen window when cooking for additional ventilation.
- Dry laundry outdoors if you can. If you must dry clothes indoors, hang them in a room with the door shut and the window open. If you use a tumble dryer, vent it to the outside or buy a DIY 'self condensing' dryer kit.
- Ventilate rooms that people use regularly, especially bedrooms. A lot of moisture is produced by breathing.
- Always use extractor fans in bathrooms when using the bath or shower.
- Open windows when they steam up to stop moisture being trapped indoors.
- Close internal kitchen and bathroom doors when steam is being produced, to stop moisture spreading to the rest of the house.
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes, and avoid putting too much in them as this stops air circulating.
- Leave a small gap between furniture and walls. This allows the air to circulate away from the walls, otherwise moisture can become trapped and form as black mould in these areas.
- Do not block any air bricks or trickle vents. Chimneys should not be completely blocked but instead fitted with a ventilation grille. Blocking these areas reduces airflow and ventilation around your home.

If you are unsure then please contact us and our staff will be able to give advice and practical tips. Depending on the problem, we may also inspect your home to check for any building defects and if required, we may arrange repairs to alleviate the problem.

## Water Safety

Legionella is a type of bacteria found naturally in freshwater environments and it can become a health concern if it grows and spreads in systems like showerheads, taps, hot water tanks and heaters.

People can become ill by contracting Legionnaires disease, which is a form of pneumonia, through breathing in tiny droplets of water in the air, that contain the bacteria.

The risk of catching Legionnaires disease in your home is very rare however when certain conditions exist in the home it can increase your risk. Water between 20 and 45°C is a suitable breeding ground for the bacteria to grow. This can happen in large water tanks in lofts that are not used much, or pipes that go to a tap that is hardly ever turned on.

Here are some steps you can do to ensure the water in your home remains safe:

- If your home has been lying empty for at least a week, for example, if you've been on holiday, then you should flush out your water.
- To flush out your water you need to run the water in all showers, baths, wash basins, sinks and taps continuously for at least two minutes, beginning with the sink taps. You must do both hot and cold taps.
- Make sure you flush taps and showers through at least once a week, for at least 2 minutes, especially if you do not use them regularly.
- Turn taps on slowly to minimise the chance of splashing water, as this may release water droplets into the air.
- When flushing showers, remove the shower head and lower the hose into the bath. If you're unable to remove the head, wrap it in a towel or facecloth to make sure there is no spray that you could inhale.
- Make sure you clean and descale all your taps and showerhead every three months or when there is an obvious build up. This discourages bacterial growth.

If you have any concerns about the water in your home, please contact the Association for advice.

## Asbestos

Asbestos is a fibrous mineral which is mechanically strong and highly resistant to heat and chemical attack and as such, was widely used as a building material up to the year 1999, more so in older buildings. Although the presence of asbestos containing materials itself does not pose a danger, there is a risk when it is disturbed or damaged.

If you plan any work to your home that would interfere with the fabric and / or services, you should contact us for advice. Staff can advise whether asbestos is present and may or may not grant permission for the work to proceed. We may arrange for an asbestos survey to be undertaken.

If asbestos is known to be present within your home or is discovered during a tenancy, we will advise of its location and that it must not be disturbed, and we will take action to ensure it is removed, or encased to provide further protection.

Where we know asbestos is present, we need to carry out an annual check to make sure it remains in a safe condition. You must allow our staff or contractors access to carry out this inspection. This is important so we can monitor the material properly and, if needed, arrange any repairs or removal work to keep your home safe.

# Home Security



## Keys

We do not hold spare or "pass" keys for your home. You must return all keys to us at the end of your tenancy.



Make sure you have a spare key to open your home. Keep it in a safe place or give it to someone that you trust. It is expensive to have to break windows or force open your front door if you lose your key.

**We will recover the costs from you if we instruct a contractor to force access to your home. You must pay in advance for this service.**

**Some keys can't be copied without our permission. Tell us if you need copies made, and we will supply them. There will be a charge made for this service.**

## Security

The risk of burglary can be reduced if you

- Always lock your doors and windows if you are going out.
- Don't leave keys under the doormat or in places where others may find them.
- Ask a neighbour to keep an eye on your house while you are away, for example on holiday.
- When you are away, set time switches to switch lights on and off.
- Make sure you cancel any milk, paper or other deliveries.
- Do not leave valuables lying about where they can be seen.
- Hide or lock away passports and official documents - identity fraud is on the rise.
- Don't leave car keys near doors or windows - car theft through burglary is also on the rise, and burglars can stick poles through letterboxes to steal keys.
- Consider marking your property - this puts thieves off because it makes it harder to re-sell the stolen goods. The Police may provide invisible marker pens free of charge.

- Do not keep large sums of money in your home.
- If you live in a block of flats with a controlled entry system, make sure the entry doors are always locked - do not let anyone you do not know into the building.
- All our staff and contractors carry identification as do staff working for Councils, Scottish Water, etc. If anyone calls at your home ask to see identification before you let him or her in. If they do not have proper identification or you are not sure about them, do not let them in. If you are at all suspicious, telephone the Police.
- A Neighbourhood Watch Scheme can help to reduce the chance of break-ins as people keep an eye on each other's houses and watch out for anything suspicious in the area. The crime prevention or community involvement branch at your local Police station can give you advice on setting up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. We will help you to get organised, for example by setting up first meetings.

## Buildings and Contents Insurance

We have a comprehensive Buildings Insurance Policy covering our property and the fixtures and fittings in your home. It does not cover your possessions, your decoration, your furniture or any alterations you have made to your home. It does not cover anything in the garden, including any plants, sheds and garages or parking areas you have provided. This includes any contents/belongings in sheds and garages. You must insure these items.

We recommend that all tenants have contents insurance to replace their possessions if they are lost, stolen or damaged through fire, water damage or theft. We can provide details of a low-cost policy, please ask us for more information. Please remember if you are thinking about taking out contents insurance to make sure your decoration or items stored in a shed or garage are covered.

# Contacting Ochil View



## How to contact Ochil View Housing Association

You can contact us by writing to  
Ochil View Housing Association Ltd.  
Ochil House, Marshall, Alloa FK10 1AB

Phone 01259 722899

Text 07860 020474

E-mail: [customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk)

Website: [www.ochilviewha.co.uk](http://www.ochilviewha.co.uk)

Our office opening hours are:

Monday, Tuesday & Thursday: 9am to 5pm

Wednesday: 12.30pm to 5pm

Friday: 9am to 3pm

## Public Holidays

We are open on all Public Holidays except

- 3 days at Christmas
- 3 days at New Year
- Good Friday and Easter Monday
- First Monday in May

We will be closed on some other holidays in the Christmas and New Year period. We will let you know our holiday arrangements in our Newsletters, or a special letter.

## Staff

Our staff are responsible for carrying out the decisions of the Board of Management, and for providing services to tenants and customers.

This list will help you understand who is responsible for our work.

## Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for supervising the day-to-day business of the Association

## Finance and Corporate Services

Finance and Corporate Services staff are responsible for finance, administration and other corporate services.

- Director of Finance and Corporate Services
- 1 Finance Officer
- 2 Assistant Finance Officers
- 1 Corporate Services Administrator

## Customer Services

Customer Services includes all staff within Ochil View who deal directly with customers and service users, whether they are tenants, housing applicants or home owners who receive factoring and property management services.

This department includes:

- Director of Housing Services
- Director of Property Services
- Senior Housing Services Officer
- 3 Housing Services Officers
- 4 Assistant Housing Services Officers
- 1 Housing Assistant
- 1 Tenancy Sustainment Officer
- 1 Tenant Engagement & Communication Officer
- 3 Customer Services Assistants
- 4 Property Services Officers
- 2 Assistant Property Services Officer
- 3 Property Services Assistants

## Service Delivery/Standards

We are committed to delivering a high standard of service to our tenants. We will monitor the effectiveness of the services we provide by setting specified response times and targets relating to a range of day-to-day activities.

For example any general letter from a customer will be acknowledged within 5 working days and a formal response will be processed within 28 days. We have specific standards for how we deal with Complaints. Please read the section about Complaints for more information.

## Code of Conduct

As a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), we are required to adopt and comply with an appropriate Code of Conduct. This Code is based on the Model Code of Conduct produced by the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and Employers in Voluntary Housing - Supporting Social Employers (EVH). The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has confirmed that this Code fully complies with its Regulatory Standards.

The Code requires that staff will:

- Act at all times with honesty and integrity and must not use, or seek to use, their position to gain financial or other benefit for themselves or their family or friends.
- Declare all relevant personal interests and handle information in accordance with the Association's policies and procedures. Staff must report to the Chief Executive any reasonable and honest suspicions they may have about possible wrongdoing.
- Act in the best interests of Ochil View Housing Association at all times within the framework set by the Association, working to promote the Association's aims and objectives, upholding the Association's values and setting a good example by their conduct.

# Membership & Board of Management Structure



## What we aim to do

Our mission is to provide good quality, affordable and sustainable housing and associated services for people in housing need whilst protecting the long-term viability of the Association.

Our objectives are

- **Reactive & Planned Maintenance**  
Deliver and maintain high-quality, energy efficient homes (Strategic Objective 1)
- **Housing Management Service & Tenancy Sustainment**  
Provide excellent, accessible and responsive customer services (Strategic Objective 2)
- **Provision of New/Adapted Homes & Residential Property Acquisitions**  
Strengthen communities through engagement and sustainable growth (Strategic Objective 3)
- **Financial Management/Corporate Governance**  
Ensure Strong governance, financial sustainability and skilled people (Strategic Objective 4)

## Areas of Operation

We operate in Clackmannanshire and West Fife.

## How we operate

We have charitable status and are a non-profit making organisation.

We are controlled by a voluntary Board of Management who are elected by and from the members of the Association.

You can become a member by buying a £1 share. We welcome applications for membership from tenants of the Association. We will send you a Membership Application Form if you ask for one. The Board of Management will consider your application for membership as soon as possible.

Members can

- Attend our Annual General Meeting and other General Meetings.
- Vote at the Annual General Meeting and other General Meetings.
- Vote in elections to the Board of Management.
- Stand for election to the Board of Management.

We are striving to be an Equal Opportunities organisation. We welcome membership applications from all members of the community.

## What the Board of Management does

Our Board of Management comprises up to 15 members. They have a wide range of skills, experience and knowledge. The Board is responsible for managing the affairs of the Association and employing the staff to carry out the day-to-day business. The Board of Management meets monthly to discuss the Association's business and make policy decisions. The Board of Management has set up a number of Sub-Committees to look in detail at areas of our work.

- Finance Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.
- Health, Safety, Human Resources and Environment Committee.
- Customer Services Committee.

We are committed to consulting our tenants and providing opportunities for tenants to participate in our decision making process. We will consult with tenants in our decision making process. This may be in various ways including surveys or focus groups.

# Complaints Procedure



## Complaints Procedure

Ochil View Housing Association is committed to providing high-quality customer services.

**We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.**

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. This leaflet describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about our service standards and what you can expect from us.

## What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

## What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- delays in responding to your enquiries and requests
- failure to provide a service
- our standard of service
- dissatisfaction with our policy
- treatment by or attitude of a member of staff
- our failure to follow proper procedure.

Your complaint may involve more than one of our services or be about someone working on our behalf.

## What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints procedure. These include:

- a routine first-time request for a service, for example reporting a problem that needs to be repaired or initial action on anti social behaviour
- requests for compensation
- our policies and procedures that have a separate right of appeal, for example, if you are dissatisfied with the level of priority you have been given when applying for a house, you may have the right to appeal against the decision
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal

- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision following a Stage 2 investigation. If you are still not satisfied, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) for an independent review of the complaint.

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns we will give information and advice to help you.

## Who can complain

Anyone can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service. Please also read the section on 'Getting help to make your complaint'.

## How do I complain?

You can complain to us in the following ways:

- In person at our office (Ochil House, Marshill, Alloa)
- By phone on 01259 722899
- In writing to Ochil House, Marshill, Alloa or by email on [customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk)
- If you are registered on our tenant portal My Home complete the form available at the 'My Feedback' area of your dashboard

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. So please talk to a member of our staff at the service you are complaining about. Then they can try to resolve any problems on the spot.

When complaining, tell us:

- your full name and address
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- how you want us to resolve the matter

## How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- the event you want to complain about, or
- finding out that you have a reason to complain, but no longer than 12 months after the event itself.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

## What happens when I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint. Our complaints procedure has two stages:

### Stage 1 – frontline resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and close to where we provided the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem.

We will give you our decision at Stage 1 in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If we can't resolve your complaint at this stage, we will explain why. If you are still dissatisfied you can ask for your complaint to be investigated further through Stage 2. You may choose to do this immediately or some time after you get our initial response. We can help you with making this request.

### Stage 2 – investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation.

When using Stage 2 we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for
- give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

## What if I'm still dissatisfied?

After we have fully investigated, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it.

The SPSO cannot normally look at:

- a complaint that has not completed our complaints procedure (so please make sure it has done so before contacting the SPSO)
- events that happened, or that you became aware of, more than a year ago
- a matter that has been or is being considered in court.

You can contact the SPSO:

In Person: SPSO, Bridgeside House,  
99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS

By Post: Freepost SPSO

Freephone: 0800 377 7330

Online contact: [www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us](http://www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us)

Website: [www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk)

## Complaints about factoring

The SPSO does not normally look at complaints about our factoring service. From 1 December 2016 the First Tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber) will try to resolve complaints and disputes between home owners and property factors. So if your complaint is about a factoring service, and you are still dissatisfied after our investigation stage you will be able to go to the First Tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber).

## Reporting a Significant Performance Failure to the Scottish Housing Regulator

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) can consider issues raised with them about 'significant performance failures'. A significant performance failure is defined by the SHR as something that a landlord does or fails to do that puts the interests of its tenants at risk, and which the landlord has not resolved. This is something that is a systematic problem that does, or could, affect all of a landlord's tenants. If you are affected by a problem like this, you should first report it to us. If you have told us about it but we have not resolved it, you can report it directly to the SHR.

A complaint between an individual tenant and a landlord is not a significant performance failure. Significant performance failures are not, therefore, dealt with through this complaints handling procedure. You can ask us for more information about significant performance failures. The SHR also has more information on their website:

<https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/>

Or you can phone them on: 0141 242 5642

## Getting help to make your complaint

We understand that you may be unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend, relative, or an advocate, if you have given them your consent to complain for you.

You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance or Citizens Advice Bureau.

### Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Tel: 0131 510 9410

Website: [www.siaa.org.uk](http://www.siaa.org.uk)

Email: [enquiry@siaa.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@siaa.org.uk)

### Citizens Advice Scotland

Website: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/)

Or check your phone book for your local bureau.

We are committed to making our service easy to use for all members of the community. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help customers access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing please tell us.

We can also give you this leaflet in other languages and formats (such as **large print**, audio and Braille).

Our contact details

Ochil View Housing Association Ltd  
Ochil House  
Marshall  
Alloa  
FK10 1AB

Tel: 01259 722899

Email: [customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk)

## Quick guide to our complaints procedure

### Complaints procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by e-mail or in writing.

We have a **two-stage complaints procedure**. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But if it is clear that the matter will need a detailed investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.



### Stage 1: frontline resolution

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within **five working days** if we can.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at Stage 2.



### Stage 2: investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at Stage 1. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they are complex or need detailed investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **three working days**. We will give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **20 working days** unless there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.



### The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have handled your complaint, you can ask the SPSO to consider it.

We will tell you how to do this when we send you our final decision.

### Your Personal Details

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel. Work \_\_\_\_\_

Home \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### About Your Complaint

Please give details of your complaint. Try to include dates and all the main points. If you need extra sheets please enclose these with the form.

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Have you complained about this issue before?

Yes  No

If yes please write date, if known

Day  Month  Year

How did you complain?

Telephone  In Writing

In Person  My Home

Please give the name of the person who dealt with your complaint?

\_\_\_\_\_

How would you like us to put things right?

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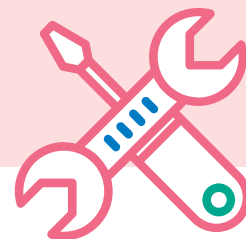
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Your Home Repairs



## Lettable Standard

When we let a home to you we will ensure that it meets our Lettable Standard prior to you moving in. This standard details the level and type of repairs we will undertake whilst the property is empty between lets. This work includes gas and electrical safety checks to ensure the property is safe for a new tenant.

Full details of our Lettable Standard can be found on our website – [www.ochilviewha.co.uk](http://www.ochilviewha.co.uk)

## Repairs

We are committed to providing a first class repairs service to you, and to getting good value for the money we spend on repairs.

We aim to make sure that homes meet your needs and are kept to a high standard.

We separate repair work into different types:

- **Reactive Maintenance** - this is work that needs to be done because a part of your home has worn out or broken. You need to let us know if this happens so that we can make arrangements to repair it.

- **Cyclical Maintenance** - this is work that is done to prevent things from wearing out or breaking, or to extend their life. This includes work like clearing gutters, servicing heating systems, painting the outside of the doors and windows of your home. Our maintenance staff will send tradespeople to do these jobs when they are due. You do not need to tell us about them.
- **Major repairs and modernisation:** This is work that we will do when a part of your home has come to the end of its life and needs to be replaced, such as the kitchen or bathroom fittings. We will inspect your home from time to time to see if any work like this is needed. When it is, we will let you know in advance so that you can plan for it, we will give you a choice, if this is possible, in the type of fittings we use.
- **Defects and Planned Maintenance works:** Please allow access to your home prior to the end of the first year 'Defects Liability Period'.

Our staff will carry out an inspection by appointment.

We will carry out most of the repairs needed in your home. There are some exceptions. It can depend on how the need for repair arose. Responsibility for carrying out repairs is described in the table below. Some repairs are completed more quickly than others. Others, e.g. those requiring specialist items, such as platform access may be delayed until there are sufficient orders to warrant the hire of equipment.

## E = Emergency

Completed within 3 hours

*(For gas repairs, temporary heating will be offered if we are unable to complete the repair)*

## U = Urgent

Completed within 24 hours

## R = Routine

Completed within 5 working days

## P = Planned

Carried out as part of larger contract

*(we will let you know how long this will be when you report it)*

## EX = External

Completed within 15 working days

## Heating

Item	Responsibility			Comments
	OVHA	Tenant	Priority	
Boiler	✓		E	See section on gas safety
Hearth	✓		R	If supplied by OVHA
Radiators, pumps, thermostats	✓		E/R	Emergency only if no heating
Chimneys or flues	✓		R	
Gas fires	✓		R	Emergency only if no heating. See section on gas safety

## Plumbing

Item	Responsibility			Comments
	OVHA	Tenant	Priority	
Pipes, taps, stopcocks, etc	✓		R	Leaks will be treated as emergencies. Turn the water off if you can
Tap Washers & dripping taps	✓		R	
Plugs and chains		✓		
Hot Water Cylinder	✓		E	
Storage Tanks	✓		R	Leaks will be treated as emergencies. Turn the water off if you can
Choked sinks or toilets	✓		U	Recharged if due to neglect or carelessness. Don't use until the blockage is cleared
WC Cisterns	✓		E/R	Leaks will be treated as emergencies.
WC Bowl	✓		E/R	Leaks will be treated as emergencies. Turn the water off if you can.
Toilet seats		✓		
Wash hand basins	✓		R	
Baths	✓		R	
Kitchen Sinks	✓		U	
Showers	✓		E/R	Only if provided by OVHA. If only form of bathing will be treated as emergency
Waste pipes	✓		U	Don't use until it has been repaired
Drains	✓		E/U	Don't use until it has been repaired
Gutters and downpipes	✓		R	
Washing machine connections		✓		Unless fitted by OVHA. Don't use until it has been repaired

## Electrical

Item	Responsibility			Comments
	OVHA	Tenant	Priority	
Switches and sockets	✓		R	Emergency if dangerous. Switch the power off at the Fuse Box
Light Fittings	✓		R	
Stair Lighting	✓		U	Emergency in common stairs
Wiring and	✓		E	Check Fuse box unit first consumer unit
Plugs and fuses		✓		
Immersion heater	✓		U	Routine if other means to heat water
Electric fires		✓		Unless fitted by OVHA
Storage heaters	✓		U	
Communal TV aerial	✓		R	
Controlled entry systems	✓		U	
Extractor fans	✓		R	
Door bells		✓	R	Unless fitted by OVHA
Smoke detectors	✓		E	
Electrical appliances		✓		Unless fitted by OVHA
Outside lighting	✓		R	Only if fitted by OVHA (tenants are responsible for bulbs to lights in individual gardens)

## Joinery

Item	Responsibility			Comments
	OVHA	Tenant	Priority	
External doors and frames (including handles and locks)	✓		R	Emergency if door not secure
Internal doors and frames	✓		R	Will recharge if due to neglect, etc.
Internal handles and locks	✓		R	Will recharge if due to neglect, etc.
Replacing lost keys		✓		
Skirting	✓			
Stairs, banisters and handrails	✓		U	Emergency if unsafe
Floors	✓		P	Inspection needed first
Kitchen units	✓		R	
Broken glass		✓		All glazing repairs will be rechargeable unless a crime reference number is provided.
Window frames, latches	✓		R	
Double glazing	✓		R	

## Structure

Item	Responsibility			Comments
	OVHA	Tenant	Priority	
Internal walls and ceilings (including plasterwork)	✓		R	We will recharge if due to neglect, etc
External walls, roughcast	✓		R/EX	Will be inspected first
Roof tiles, ridges etc	✓		R/EX	Emergency if unsafe
Chimney heads and cans	✓		R/EX	Emergency if unsafe
Carports		✓		Unless built by OVHA
External woodwork (including painting)	✓		EX/P	

## Outside the house

Item	Responsibility			Comments
	OVHA	Tenant	Priority	
Paths and steps	✓		EX	Only if provided by OVHA. Urgent if unsafe
Driveways	✓		EX	Only if provided by OVHA
Handrails	✓		EX	Emergency if unsafe
Fences and gates	✓		EX	Only where provided by OVHA and on a boundary. All divisional fences are tenants responsibility
Clothes poles	✓		R	
Rotary driers	✓		R	Only if provided by OVHA
Clothes ropes or dryer cords	✓	✓		OVHA dryer cords only
Retaining / Boundary Walls	✓		EX/P	

## Priorities

The categorisations shown on the previous pages relate to normal priority given. The priority may be changed to reflect particular situations e.g. where there is a strong medical need.

## Your Responsibilities

You must take good care of your home and not cause damage to it or any part of it. If other people cause damage, then this is the same as if you caused it. We will not carry out a repair if you or someone that was visiting you has caused damage in your home.

If a repair needs to be done because you have been careless or negligent, e.g. flooding from your washing machine or shower, then you will have to carry out the repair work yourself or pay the full cost in advance of works commencing if the association arranges this work. Remember that we will charge the costs of repairs to other residents homes, if they have been damaged, for example by flooding.

You must let us in to your home if we need to carry out repairs. We will give you as much notice as we can, and we will always give you at least 24 hours.

In an emergency, for example where there is a leak of water, or gas, we will need immediate access to your home. If you are not at home to let us in, we may force access. We will repair any damage that we do.

Once every year, we will service your gas central heating system. You must let us in to do this. If you do not, we will take action to force access to your home to isolate the gas supply or to complete the service. We will not repair the damage that we do because we will have given you the chance to let us in.

You must not store items in your roof space, the common stairwell, or communal stair cupboards.

You must be able to find the stopcock in your home. If you cannot find it, ask us where it is.

You must protect your home from cold weather, Each winter we issue advice in our newsletter about what to do.

## Right to Repair

By law Ochil View Housing Association is required to operate a Right to Repair Scheme.

This entitles tenants to have certain repairs called qualifying repairs carried out to their homes.

When a qualifying repair is reported to the Association the tenant will be advised of this and of the date when the repair should be completed by.

If the repair work has not been started by this date the tenant is entitled to have the work carried out by another contractor who will have been identified as an approved contractor by the Association and advised to the tenant.

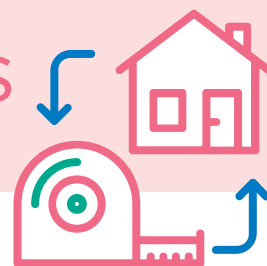
Where the usual contractor has failed to carry out the qualifying repair within the timescale given the tenant will be entitled to compensation.

The amount of compensation to be paid is a flat rate payment of £15 plus £3 for every working day until the repair is completed up to a maximum of £100.

The repairs that are included in the Right to Repair Scheme are:

- Blocked flue to open fire or boiler.
- Blocked or leaking foul drains, soil stacks or toilet pans where there is no other toilet in the house.
- Blocked sink, bath or drain.
- Electric power - loss of electric power or partial loss of electric power.
- Insecure external window, door or lock.
- Unsafe access path or step.
- Significant leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks, cisterns.
- Loss or partial loss of gas supply.
- Loss or partial loss of space or water heating where no alternative heating is available.
- Toilet not flushing where there is no other toilet in the house.
- Unsafe power or lighting socket, or electrical fitting.
- Water supply - loss of water supply or partial loss of water supply.
- Loose or detached banister or hand rail.
- Unsafe timber flooring or stair treads.
- Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working.

# Alterations & Improvements



## Alterations & Improvements

You do not need our permission to decorate your home - but you must not use "Artex" or textured paint and you must not decorate external doors or your windows.

You must get our permission if you want to:

- Alter, improve or enlarge your house, add to its fittings or features
- Put up a garage or shed, fencing or other structure in the garden or land around your home
- Decorate the outside of your house
- Form a driveway or make an off street kerb parking area. You must get consent from the council to lower the kerb
- Make any changes or alterations to the electrical system in your home by adding sockets, changing light switches or light fittings\*
- Carry out any work to the structure by altering walls, doorways or windows



You must get our permission if you want to add new fittings or fixtures - for example

- Changing or replacing the kitchen or bathroom or shower installations
- Replace skirtings or door facings
- Laying laminated flooring (Not permitted in upper flats) - you must follow the manufacturer's directions about underlay and soundproofing
- Changing the internal or the external doors
- Altering or changing the central heating system
- Adding double glazing
- Put up a satellite dish
- Tiling walls or splash back areas
- Install a gas cooker, hob or fire



**\*Regulations apply to electrical work in your home - work may have to be done or checked by a qualified electrician. Contact us for advice before you start work!**

Properties built before 2000 can contain asbestos products therefore it is vital you check with us before carrying out any alterations. We can advise on the presence of asbestos or have your home checked.

## Video Equipment

You must get our permission before installing any video equipment such as CCTV or video doorbells. As these systems record images and sounds, they fall under data protection legislation, and you must meet specific criteria and fully understand your responsibilities prior to using these. We can provide advice if you are considering such a system.

You need to ask for our permission and alterations are not approved until you have got our permission in writing. You may also need to get planning permission or a Building Warrant from the Council. It is your responsibility to check if you need this and get it if you do. You must pay any fee that they ask for, and comply in full with any conditions. You must tell us when the job is completed.

Our written permission must be in place before you start any alterations to your home. If you do work without our permission, we will tell you to re-instate it. If you do not, we may remove the alteration and charge you our costs.

## Applying For Permission

If you are registered on our tenant portal My Home you can complete the form online and email it directly to us. Alternatively we can provide you with an application form to send via post.

Use the form to put your request in writing. Tell us what you plan to do and how you plan to do it. We will reply within one month of receiving your request for permission. You should tell us if you need Planning Permission or a Building Warrant. If you have got these, send a copy of it.

## What Happens Next?

Our Property Services Officer will consider your request. He or she may visit your home to discuss your plans.

You will then be sent a written response to your request. We may give permission, give permission with conditions, or refuse permission. If we give permission with conditions or refuse, we will let you know why. You can use the Complaints Procedure if you are unhappy with our decision.

## How quickly we will answer your request?

By law, we must reply within one month. If we fail to give a reply within this time you can assume we have given our consent. We may take longer to reach a decision. We will keep you informed of progress.

Once you have completed the work you must notify the Association in writing that it is completed. The Association will then inspect the work. If we are not satisfied, we will ask you to improve it.

## Compensation for Improvements

You may get compensation if you carry out major improvements to your home. We will pay you compensation at the end of your tenancy if:

- You get our permission in advance and carry out the work to our satisfaction
- You move out of the house and end your tenancy properly
- The improvement has not come to the end of its “economic life” (this may be shorter than the actual life of the improvement)
- You will have complied with all the conditions set out in the letter of permission and submitted the appropriate receipts and work alteration certificates.

We can deduct any money you owe us - for example, rent arrears, from compensation

If you die, we may pay compensation to your family, if they do not inherit the tenancy.

If the amount due to you is less than £100, we will not pay compensation.

## Adaptations to your home

If you need your home to be adapted because of your health, age or a disability, we can carry out this work if funding is available to do so. Referrals for adaptations should come from an Occupational Therapist or a GP telling us what needs to be done. Examples of the type of work that we can do to help you manage in your home include:

- Fitting handrails at steps or stairs
- Changing the position or type of power points and taps
- Replacing a bath and fitting a shower
- Fitting aids for people with poor eyesight or hearing, for example visual doorbells or smoke detectors

This work will be carried out at no cost to you. Usually, the alteration will not affect your rent.

The Occupational Therapy Service can be contacted through the Social Work Department of your local Council.



There is a formula for working out compensation due. Ask us to explain it when you apply for permission for a qualifying improvement.

Qualifying improvements	Life in Years
1. Bath or shower	12
2. Cavity wall insulation	20
3. Sound insulation	20
4. Double glazing or other external window replacement or Secondary glazing	20
5. Draught proofing of external doors or windows	8
6. Insulation of pipes, water tank or cylinder	10
7. Installation of mechanical ventilation in bathrooms and kitchens	7
8. Kitchen sink	10
9. Loft insulation	20
10. Rewiring and the provision of power and lighting or other Electrical fixtures including smoke detectors	20
11. Security measures other than burglar alarm systems	15
12. Space or water heating	12
13. Storage cupboards in bathroom or kitchen	10
14. Thermostatic radiator valves	7
15. Wash hand basin	12
16. Toilet or cistern	12
17. Work surfaces for food preparation	10

We will not maintain any alterations you have made to your home - these are your responsibility. We will not maintain it during the tenancy of anyone you exchange homes with.

# Home Energy Advice



## What is Fuel Poverty?

Fuel Poverty is being unable to afford to heat your home to an adequate temperature. For many, fuel poverty means choosing between buying food and heating their home. Often fuel poverty is linked to increased risk of debt, ill health and social isolation.

The Scottish Government House Condition Survey 2023 estimated that around 34% of all households were in fuel poverty, which is around 861,000 households. This is higher than 2022 when it was 31%.

## Energy Saving Tips

Taking several simple steps to reduce your energy usage will save you significant sums of money and helps with climate change. Here are some simple steps you can do to save energy:

- Turning your thermostat down by one degree could save you up to 10% on your heating bills. The recommended living room temperature is between 18 and 20 degrees.
- Close your curtains at night to stop heat escaping through windows and make sure curtains don't cover radiators.
- Do not put furniture in front of radiators as it absorbs the heat.
- Don't light rooms that are not in use as lighting accounts on average for £155 of your electricity bill.
- Replace your light bulbs with energy saving ones, this can reduce your costs by up to £100 over the lifetime of the bulb.
- Spend one minute less in the shower each day will save around £8 off your energy bills each year, per person.
- Only fill your kettle with as much water as you need and remember to cover the elements if you are using an electric kettle.

- Cooking in an air fryer or microwave is cheaper than an oven and uses less power.
- The smaller food is cut up the less time it takes to cook and don't use pots that are larger than needed.
- Install radiator reflector panels and use draught excluders around draughty doors. You could try making your own with old jumpers.
- When replacing appliances look for ones displaying the energy saving recommended logo.
- Don't leave appliances like televisions and computers on standby and remember not to leave appliances like mobile phones on charge unnecessarily. Things left on standby are still using electricity and could be using 20% of your electricity per year.
- Remember to use the 'half load' or 'economy' setting on your washing machine if you do not have a full load. Also, all modern detergents are designed to clean successfully at 30 or 40° C and there is no need for a pre-wash. Washing at 65° C requires twice as much energy as washing at 40° C.

## Fuel Debt

Fuel debt to an energy supplier can arise in a number of ways. If you are in debt to a supplier, it is important not to ignore it. A good first step is to take up to date meter readings and phone your supplier to find out what you owe and discuss it with them. Suppliers are required to make reasonable efforts to negotiate affordable repayments with customers in arrears. They will be able to check that you are on the best deal and talk to you about your energy use.

Make sure you are maximising your income and claiming all the benefits you are entitled to. If you would like advice on benefits, then please contact Ochil View's Tenancy Sustainment Officer who will carry out a benefit check on your behalf.

## Energy Discounts and Payments

### Charitable Funds

There are various charitable funds which, accept applications from domestic customers and which make grants to clear or reduce fuel debt. Organisations that can advise and help with this are at the end of this leaflet.

### Warm Home Discount

This fund opens in October, you do not need to apply if you get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit, you will automatically get a letter telling you about the discount if you are eligible. If you are on a low income, then you need to contact your energy supplier to ensure you meet the criteria. This is a one off payment of £150 discount on electricity bills.

### Pension Age Winter Heating Payment

In Scotland the Pension Age Winter Heating Payment will be available to most pensioners. This will be a single annual payment of £100 for eligible pensioner households with some exceptions for those receiving certain benefits who will continue to receive £200 or £300.

### Child Winter Heating Payment

This is a Scottish Social Security payment to help families of disabled children and young people with fuel costs. It is a one time annual payment of around £265.50.

## Who Can Help

For more information on any of the above please contact our Tenancy Sustainment Officer who can advise you or refer you to an organisation that can provide free home energy advice or assistance with debt.

You can also contact any of the following independently for advice on energy bills or tackling fuel debt:

### Clackmannanshire Home Energy advice Team

Tel: 01259 450000

Email: [fuelenergyadvice@clacks.gov.uk](mailto:fuelenergyadvice@clacks.gov.uk)

### Fife Cosy Kingdom

Tel: 01592 807930

10am-3pm Monday to Friday

Text Cosy then your name to 88440

Email: [info@cosykingdom.org.uk](mailto:info@cosykingdom.org.uk)

### Home Energy Scotland

Tel: 0808 808 2282

(Mon-Fri, 8am to 8pm, Sat 9am to 5pm) or complete the online contact form on their website at <https://www.homeenergyscotland.org/contact-us>

### Citizens Advice Scotland

Clackmannanshire Citizens Advice

Tel: 01259 723880

### Citizens Advice and Rights Fife

Tel: 0345 140 0095 10am to 3pm

### National Debtline (for advice on debt generally)

Tel: 0808 808 4000

(9am to 8pm Mon-Fri, Sat 9.30 am to 1pm)

### StepChange (Debt and Budgeting Advice)

Tel: 0800 138 111

(8am to 8 pm Mon-Fri, 8am to 4pm Sat)

# Tenancy Agreements



## Joint Tenancy, Exchanges, Subletting, Assignations, and Lodgers

### Joint Tenancy

You have the right to request a Joint Tenancy with one or more people. They must have lived at the property as their only or principal home for the 12 months before you request, they become a joint tenant. You must also have notified us in writing that the person has moved in and that the property is the person's only or principal home and we must have given consent to this.

Joint tenants have equal responsibility for keeping the conditions of the tenancy. The law calls this "joint and several responsibility". For example, each joint tenant can be held responsible for paying the rent in full.

A joint tenancy can be created more than once. We will not allow a Joint Tenancy if the house would be overcrowded.

#### How Do I Apply?

You and the other person(s) wishing to become joint tenant(s) will need to advise us in writing by letter or completing an application form. If you have a 'My Home' Account, then please go to the Useful Forms section of your Dashboard and click on Tenancy Forms where you will find a Joint Tenancy Application Form to complete. If you do not have a My Home Account then you can request the application form to be sent to you by post or you can write to us.

#### What Happens Next?

We will make sure that all the applicants will be living in the house as their home. We will check if the house would be overcrowded. We will check our records to make sure

- You have lived at the property for 12 months or more or
- That there are no rent arrears or
- If you owe money to us for any other reason or
- If any of the people who would be joint tenants have been responsible for serious anti social behaviour.

We will reply within one month.

#### Permission for a Joint tenancy

The law states that we must grant you permission for a joint tenancy unless we have a good reason not to do it. A good reason would include:

- If we have begun legal action to end your tenancy or
- We have a Court Order to end your tenancy and evict you or

- The house would be overcrowded

If we give our permission, we will make arrangements for the tenancy agreement to be signed by all the new Joint Tenants.

#### What If Permission is refused?

If permission is refused we will give you our reasons in writing.

If you are unhappy with our decision you can use our Complaints Procedure to have the decision reviewed.

#### Termination of a Joint Tenancy

You have a right to terminate your joint tenancy at any time. You must give us at least 28 days notice. You can write a letter to us, or use the form we have. You must give the other joint tenants notice of your termination of tenancy and you must get the agreement of any other joint tenants, or your partner or spouse.

If you leave the house and you do not end your tenancy, we can serve a notice on you giving you notice that we plan to end your tenancy. You must contact us within 28 days of the date we give notice to you. If you do not contact us, we will serve another notice on you, giving a final warning that we plan to end your tenancy. 56 days later, your tenancy will end.

## Exchanging your home

You can request a mutual exchange with another of our tenants, a tenant of another Housing Association or the Council.

You must contact us to let us know about your plans. We have a form you can use. Tell us

- Who you want to exchange with and
- When you want the exchange to happen.

We will take a reference on the tenancy of the person you want to exchange with.

We won't let the exchange go ahead if you have rent arrears, or recharge arrears, or if the person you want to swap with has rent arrears or a history of anti-social behaviour. We won't let the exchange go ahead if our house would be overcrowded, or if it has been designed for a person with special needs and the house would not be lived in by someone with those needs.

You need our permission and permission from the other landlord. You must not move until you have this, in writing. Remember that we will not carry out any repairs for damage to your home, or improve the decoration. Your exchange partner must accept the house in the condition you leave it. We won't pay compensation for any improvements to the house that you have carried out.

## Sub-Letting Your Tenancy

Sub-letting is where you rent out your house because you are going to be away for a short time. For example if you get a temporary job away from home it can be better to have someone living in your house looking after it. However, you will continue to be responsible for the tenancy during your absence.

### Applying to Sub-let

Before you can sub-let, you must get our permission by completing a Sub-let Application Form which, is available in the Useful Forms section of your Dashboard if you are registered on My Home. If you do not have a My Home account then this can be sent on request.

- Who you want to sub-let to and how long they have resided in your property
- The amount of rent or any other payments you propose charging
- When you want the sub-tenancy to start
- Where you will move to on a temporary basis, and a contact number in case we need to contact you urgently.
- Why you want to sub-let your home

### What Happens Next?

When we receive your request we will check the following: -

- You do not owe us any money
- There is no legal action being taken against you or your proposed sub-tenant
- That we have not obtained a court order to end your tenancy
- The rent or deposit that you plan to charge the sub-tenant is reasonable.
- Your home will not be overcrowded.
- The Association does not intend to carry out major works to your home.
- That the type of tenancy agreement you plan to use is suitable and correct
- That your proposed sub-tenant has not been responsible for any anti-social behaviour.

### Granting/Refusing Permission

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced grounds for refusing a request to sublet if the proposed sub-tenant was not resident in the property for a minimum period of 12 months prior to the date of sublet.

By law the Association cannot refuse permission without a good reason and we will always tell you our reasons for refusing.

We must give you a decision within 1 month. If you do not get a reply then you can go ahead and sublet.

### How Long Can I Sub-let My House For?

To begin with permission will be given to sublet your house for up to 6 months. If you still want to sub-let at the end of this, permission will usually be given for a further 6 months. You can only sublet your house for 12 months at the most.

### Conditions For Sub-letting

If we allow you to sub-let you will have to meet the following conditions: -

- You must make sure that the rent is paid and that your sub-tenant keeps to all other tenancy conditions.
- You must ask our permission if you want to increase the rent or other charges.
- You must tell us if your sub-tenant moves out and get our permission to move a new person into your house.
- You must write and tell us and your sub-tenant once you know the date you will be moving back into your house if you are coming back. If you want to come back before the 6 months is up you should contact your sub-tenant and us and arrange for them to move out.

### What Happens To My Sub-tenant If I Do Not Come Back?

We will end your tenancy and your sub-tenant will have to move out. We will not give them the house.

### Other Things to Think About

In your agreement with you sub-tenant, you should make clear arrangements for making sure that the council tax and fuel bills, and any other bills are paid, any conditions for using your furniture or household equipment; how they can to contact you and when their sub-let will end.

Make sure you let your insurance company know that someone else will be living in the house.

## Assigning Your Tenancy

Assigning your tenancy happens when you pass on your tenancy to someone else who will take on all the rights and responsibility of your tenancy.

We will only consider giving permission to assign your tenancy if the house has been your only or principal home during the 12 months immediately before you apply for written permission to assign your tenancy. The person that you wish to assign to must also have lived at the property as their only or principal home for the 12 months before the application to assign is made.

The tenant, joint tenant or person they wish to assign their tenancy to must have notified us in writing that the person they wish to assign the tenancy to is living in the house. The 12-month period does not start unless the landlord has been notified that the person is living in the property as their only or principal home.

There are other conditions which are described below.

### Applying To Assign Your Tenancy

Before you can assign your tenancy, you must get our permission. Your request should be in writing giving all the details of who you want to assign the tenancy to. We have an application form for this and if you are registered on My Home then this can be found in the Useful Forms section of your dashboard. If you are not registered on My Home we can send this to you on request.

If you have been paid or promised to pay any money or get any other benefit to make the assignation, you must tell us about it.

### What Happens Next?

When we get your request we will carry out all the same checks as listed under 'Sub-letting Your Tenancy'.

We will also check that the person you want to assign the tenancy to has lived in the house as their only or main home for 12 months before the application has been made. If they have been living there as your sub-tenant, we won't give permission.

When we receive your request we will check the following: -

- You do not owe us any money
- There is no legal action being taken against you
- That we have not obtained a court order to end your tenancy
- The rent or deposit that you plan to charge the sub-tenant is reasonable.
- Your home will not be overcrowded.
- The Association does not intend to carry out major works to your home.

### Granting/Refusing Permission

By law the Association cannot refuse permission without a good reason and we will always tell you our reasons for refusing.

We must give you a decision within 1 month. If you do not get a reply then you can go ahead and assign the tenancy.

## Taking In Lodgers

Taking in a lodger is when you rent out a room in your home to someone who is not part of your household.

### Applying To Take In Lodgers

You must write and ask for our permission. The lodger may not move in until we have given our permission, in writing. You must tell us

- Who will live in your home as a lodger
- The amount of rent or any other payments you propose charging and
- When you want them to move in

You should put your request in writing giving all the details of who you want to take in as a lodger, the amount of rent or other payments you propose charging and when you want this to take place.

## What Happens Next?

When we get your request we will carry out all the same checks as detailed under sub-letting your tenancy.

We must give you our decision within one month. If you do not get a reply then you can go ahead and take in a lodger.

If we give permission for a lodger to live in your home, this will be for a maximum period of 6 months. You must tell us if there are any changes in this time. If you end your tenancy during this period, you must make sure that your lodger moves out. We will not let them remain in the house.

# Rent and Service Charges



## How do we set your rent?

We have a Rental Policy that sets out the rent levels we charge.

We aim to

- Charge rents that our tenants and people who apply to us for housing can afford to pay
- Have enough money to pay for the maintenance and repair of our houses, now and in the future
- Pay for a high quality management service
- Pay back loans that we have borrowed to pay for part of the costs of building our houses

Each year we review the rents we charge based on our Business Plan and in consultation with tenants.

We will always give you at least 28 days notice of any rent increase. Only one increase each year is allowed, unless it is linked to improvements we have made to your home.

## What Are Service Charges?

Service charges are added to the rent for extra services we provide and are included in your total rent charge. This includes services such as stair-cleaning, maintaining the grass, trees and shrubs in common areas and lifts.

The service charge is the cost of providing the service, and an amount for administration costs. This is added on to the rent and included in your total rent charge. Service charges are listed and described in your tenancy agreement. Any Service Charges we make should be eligible for Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing Costs. We will review service charges once a year and give you at least 4 weeks notice of any increase.

## What If My Rent And Service Charges Change?

We must tell you of any changes to your rent or service charges at least 4 weeks before the increase takes place. We will always consult with you before we make any decision about a rent or service charge increase. Consultation will be in October and November of each year.

We will consult with tenants before we make a final decision about increases.

## Paying your rent and rent arrears

### Paying your rent

Paying the rent is one of the major responsibilities of a tenancy. When we offer you a tenancy, we will ask you how you intend to pay the rent. This leaflet gives advice and information about how you can pay the rent and what will happen if you don't pay.

If you are a "Joint Tenant" - you are both responsible in full for seeing that the rent is paid. You are both legally liable in full for any arrears.

### Housing Benefit/Universal Credit

You may be entitled to have your rent paid by Housing Benefit or included in your Universal Credit payment.

If you are in receipt of housing benefit, then you need to make an application for this direct to the Council. We can assist you with making an application for housing benefit. If you are entitled to housing benefit, then this is paid directly to us every 4 weeks.

If you are in receipt of Universal Credit, then you need to declare your full housing costs on your online application or journal as a change of circumstances. You can opt for your housing costs to be paid direct to us through Scottish Flexibilities.

If you are a new tenant then you will be offered an appointment with our Tenancy Sustainment Officer who can assist you with making a claim for Universal Credit or Housing Benefit. They can also work out your entitlement and what rent payments you should make if any whilst your claim is being assessed.

Please note it is your responsibility to advise the Council if claiming Housing Benefit or the DWP if claiming Universal Credit of any change in your circumstances, and to reply quickly to any correspondence from them.

## Direct Debit



Direct Debit is our preferred way of paying the rent. This way your rent is paid direct from your bank account, on time, every month, without you lifting a finger. If you wish to pay by Direct Debit, this can be arranged by your Housing Officer.

## Paying by cash, cheque, credit or debit card



Take your payment card to any Post Office or shop displaying the Pay Point Sign.

## My Home

If you are registered on our tenant portal My Home, you can view your rent statement and pay your rent to us securely.

## Other ways of paying your rent

You can also make payments to us at any time by using the internet. Making payments securely online couldn't be easier. You simply need your Ochil View payment card and a debit or credit card. To make a payment online visit <http://www.allpayments.net>.

You can pay at the office by credit or debit card, either in person or over the phone.

## Your rent and service charges

We will tell you the rent and any service charges;

- When we offer you a tenancy
- When you sign a Tenancy Agreement
- Once a year, when we increase the rent and service charges
- At any other time you ask us

## Dealing with rent arrears

We will check your rent account when you call or phone the Association. If we need to discuss your rent account with you, we will transfer your call to one of our Housing Services Staff.

If you have difficulty paying your rent, you should let us know immediately.

- We can give advice and information that can help you to keep out of debt and we can negotiate an affordable payment plan to catch up on any overdue rent. This may include an onward referral to agencies that can help you
- You can contact us at any time during our office hours to discuss your rent account
- We can make out of hours visits to your home, by appointment
- We will contact you when you owe one month's rent

If you do not contact us or if you do not keep to agreements that you make, we will take action. This will include legal action to end your tenancy, evict you and recover unpaid rent. You will be liable for the costs of any legal action, which may be at least £300, but could be more.

## What happens if you fall behind with your rent?

We will try to contact you as soon as you owe one month's rent. We will keep trying to contact you and this may include phoning, texting, emailing or calling at your home out of office hours.

If your rent arrears exceed 1 month's rent, we will interview you and discuss your financial circumstances. We will give advice and information based on what you tell us. We will make an appointment for you to see our Tenancy Sustainment Officer (if you have not already done so) or arrange for you to see one of the advice agencies that are named in this leaflet. We will make an affordable agreement with you to reduce the arrears.

If you do not keep to the agreement we have made we will serve a Notice of Intention to Raise Proceedings For Recovery Of Possession. This is a formal legal warning that we may begin Court Action to end your tenancy. We will send a copy to each tenant and everyone over 16 years of age in your household.

At all times you should contact us to keep us informed about your plans to pay your rent and reduce the arrears. You should also contact the homelessness section of the Local Authority to take advice about what you should do if you become homeless after you have been evicted.

The Homelessness section can be contacted at:

**Clackmannanshire Council, Housing Options Team,**  
Kilncraigs, Greenside Street, Alloa FK10 1EB

Telephone 01259 225115  
Monday to Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm

Emergency number 01259 450000

**Fife Council, Homelessness Assessment Team,**  
Dunfermline Customer Service Centre, City Chambers,  
Kirkgate, Dunfermline KY12 7ND

Telephone 0800 028 6231

If the rent arrears have not reduced 28 days after the service of the Notice, we will begin legal action to end your tenancy. We will ask the Sheriff Court for a decree to end your tenancy and evict you. You will be liable for the costs of this legal action.

If we get a Decree we will instruct Sheriff Officers to repossess your home and evict you.

## Debt Counselling and Advice Agencies

**Clackmannanshire Citizens Advice Bureau**  
Glebe Hall, Burgh Mews,  
Alloa FK10 1HS  
Telephone 01259 219404



**Citizens Advice & Rights Fife (CARF)**  
4 Abbey Park Place, Dunfermline KY12 7PD  
Telephone 0345 140 0095 or  
email [norma@carfonline.org.uk](mailto:norma@carfonline.org.uk)

**Frontline Fife**  
57-59 Viewforth Street, Kirkcaldy KY1 3DJ  
Telephone 01592 800430

## How we can help

- We will always have trained and experienced staff available to discuss arrears during office hours
- All information you give to us will be kept in the strictest confidence
- Private interview facilities will be made available to discuss your arrears at our office
- We will make out of hours appointments to see you if this is more convenient
- We will notify you as soon as you owe one month's rent
- We will take into account your financial circumstances when negotiating repayment plans
- If you query how much you owe, we will tell you straight away by telephone and send a statement of account within 10 working days if you ask for one
- We will try to see you face-to-face before starting possession proceedings
- If you are vulnerable, elderly, disabled, under 18-years, have mental health problems or learning disabilities, have children less than 16 years or cannot read and write, we will refer you either for support or advice to a support provider who may be able to assist you in resolving the problem









# My Home Tenant Portal



## About My Home

Ochil View has a tenant portal, which is called My Home. It is designed to make your life as an Ochil View tenant easier. It is an online, one-stop place to organise and access all your tenancy services. My Home is secure, confidential and is available to you 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Once registered on My Home you will be able to see information about your tenancy and at the same time carry out various tasks to keep your tenancy records up to date or communicate with us. The main areas that you will find on My Home and an idea of what you will be able to see and do are: -

- 
**My Messages**  
 This area is where we will leave you a message or important information
- 
**My Household**  
 This is where you can tell us about changes in your household
- 
**My House**  
 See your repair history or report a repair
- 
**My Account**  
 View your rent account and make secure rent payments
- 
**My Tenancy**  
 Information on your tenancy such as your tenancy start date, a calendar with useful dates e.g. gas service due date, bin collection information
- 
**My Documents**  
 See a copy of all letters and messages between you and Ochil View
- 
**My Feedback**  
 Give us your views by completing surveys and questionnaires
- 
**Useful Forms**  
 This is where you can apply for permission, e.g. alterations to property, keeping a pet. You can also find other useful forms in this area.

Signing up to My Home will allow you to go paper free for a faster, greener and more cost-effective service. You will also be able to communicate with us by sending in any complaints, messages or even photographs.

## How To Register

Registering for a My Home account is easy. You can do this by visiting our website at [www.ochilviewha.co.uk](http://www.ochilviewha.co.uk) and click on the "Log In" or "Register" link at the top of the page.

You can register using a computer, tablet or your phone, it works well on all of them. You will need your tenant account number to register which can be found on the front of your tenancy agreement. If you are a joint tenant, you will both be able to register for an account however, you will need your own individual email address to register.

When you are registered for My Home you will see your tenant dashboard.

If you wish to register and would like help with this or further information on all the areas of My Home then we have dedicated staff at Ochil View who are our Digital Champions and will be happy to guide you through registering and all the tasks that you will be able to do on My Home. The Digital Champions can guide you through all the options and make sure you are getting the very best out of your My Home account.

**For more information or a referral to our Digital Champions please phone the office on 01259 722899 or email us at [housing@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:housing@ochilviewha.co.uk).**

# How to end your Tenancy



## How to end your tenancy

You must give us at least 28 days written notice to end your tenancy.

If you have a 'My Home' Account, then please go to the Useful Forms section of your Dashboard and click on Tenancy Forms where you will find a Termination of Tenancy form to complete. If you do not have a My Home Account then you can end your tenancy in writing either by sending us a letter, email or filling in a form, which you can get from our office. Your husband, wife or partner even if they are not a joint tenant will also have to sign to show that they agree the tenancy should be given up. If you are a Joint Tenant, then both tenants will have to sign to give up their part of the tenancy. Please remember to tell us the date you are moving out and your new address. You should also tell us who supplies your gas and electricity.

## What Happens Next?

We will write to you to confirm the date your tenancy will end and to make arrangements to visit you before you leave.

You must pay rent up to the end of the 28-day notice period even if you actually move before then.

The Housing Services Officer and Property Services Officer together will make an appointment to visit you before you leave and will be able to answer any questions you may have.

At that visit we will inspect the condition of your home. If there are any repairs that are your responsibility, you must complete these before you leave. We will also look at the decoration and if this is not in an acceptable condition, we will ask you to improve it.

You must leave your home in a good state of repair and decoration and leave your garden tidy. We will charge the costs of clearing it to you if you do not.

## If You Have Carried Out Home Improvements

If you have carried out any home improvements with our permission, you may be entitled to compensation.

You should make your claim in writing when you end your tenancy.

The leaflet "Alterations and Improvements" will give you further details on this.

## Before You Leave Remember!

Before moving out of your house, you must do the following:

- Leave the house in a clean and tidy condition as well as in good decorative order

- Remove all your belongings, including clearing the loft space and any rubbish from the garden
- Make sure any lodgers or sub-tenants leave with you
- Remove any fixtures or fittings you have installed without our permission and put right any damage caused
- Check with us to make sure you have made all payments due
- Contact your gas and/or electricity supplier to arrange final meter readings
- Turn off the water at the stopcock
- Give us a forwarding address where we can contact you if we need to.

If you do not do these, and we have to clear the house, we will recharge the cost of any work we do.

## What Do I Need To Do On The Day I Move Out?

You should call at our office and hand in all keys to the house (including window locks).

When you hand the keys in you will need to pay any rent and rechargeable accounts due to us.

## Abandonment

If you leave your home and do not end your tenancy, we can end your tenancy by serving notices on you and giving you fair warning that we plan to do this. We will try to find you but, 28 days after we have served the Notice, your tenancy will end.

If you are going to be away from your home for any good reason for a long period of time - for example, if you will be in hospital, staying with friends or even if you have been sent to prison, you should let us know.

If you abandon your home, we will clear it and dispose of any possessions we find there unless they would be more valuable than the costs of 6 months storage. The value will be the value at auction, and this will be much less than you paid for them. If your property is worth keeping, we can sell it after 6 months and keep any funds.

You will be responsible for paying rent due to the end of your tenancy - and the costs of clearing your home, changing the locks, etc.

If you come back later and you believe we have acted unfairly, you can use our Complaints procedure, and take legal action against us. If you can prove that we did not follow the law properly, we will provide a new tenancy for you.

We will keep a record of what we dispose of and the addresses we have cleared it from.

# Tenant Engagement & Communication



## Introduction

At Ochil View Housing, we understand the importance of engaging with our tenants. A dedicated approach to engagement and communication will help create an open and transparent environment, one which can empower tenants and help us continue to deliver the best possible services. We have a Tenant Engagement Strategy and Action Plan that set out this commitment. You can find these documents under 'Our Tenants – Getting Involved' on our website, or on request.

Benefits of effective engagement can include:

- Improved value for money
- Efficiency savings
- A more open and inclusive service
- Opportunities for tenants to socially engage and learn new skills
- An increased awareness of both staff and tenants' perspectives

We are committed to sharing the following information with tenants:

- Their rights and responsibilities as tenants
- How we are performing and developing as a housing association
- Our plans and vision for the future
- How tenants can play a role in the decisions we make

Good engagement, however, goes beyond information sharing. We want tenants to work in partnership with us to identify any areas for improvement, how we manage our resources and sustain the best possible homes and communities.

## How can tenants get involved?

It is up to tenants to engage in a way that suits them. This can be at home or getting out and meeting people. It can be taking an hour to read the newsletter, attending a tenant session once a month to joining our Board. Whatever way a tenant would like to get involved; we will support in any way we can.

### • Reading our materials

We produce 3 Ochil View Newsletters each year, along with our Annual Performance Report and an Annual Tenant Engagement Report. Tenants will find lots of key information on what is happening within the Association and how well we are doing within these publications, and they can feedback on each through our communication channels.

### • Accessing our website and social media

Our website contains a library of useful information and our social media channels provide rolling content on what is happening within Ochil View. Tenants can reply to what we post, as well as send us a personal message, should they have a query.

### • Communicating with staff

It sounds simple but talking directly with staff on the phone or in person is an effective way of engaging. By directly telling us your thoughts, ideas or concerns, means staff instantly have the information and can address it from there.

### • Surveys

We carry out a range of surveys during each year. These cover a wide range of topics, all designed to help us continue developing our services. Tenants may be asked for their thoughts on a recent repair they've had carried out, or how they have settled into their new home, if they have recently moved. We also issue surveys out if there is to be a possible change in service, or if we are reviewing a particular area. There are also annual surveys, for the likes of rent setting for the next budget year.

### • My Home

Our My Home service, available via our website, is accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This portal provides tenants with all the information they need in respect of their tenancy, as well as how to report a repair, pay rent etc. There is also a platform for feeding back on the services they receive and any suggestions they may have for improvement.

- **Register of Interested Tenants**

We hold a Register of Interested Tenants at Ochil View Housing. This is a list of tenants who have expressed an interest in engaging with us. We can then contact them to get their input into key issues. This can be done on a one-to-one or group setting, whatever the tenant prefers.

- **Tenant Scrutiny Group**

We have an independent tenant group called Ochil Voice who scrutinise our services and put forward recommendations for improvement. They are supported by the Association and meet monthly in our office. You do not need previous experience to be part of this group, full support and training is provided, as well as any transport requirements. You can contact us for an informal chat to learn more about the group.

- **Estate Walkabouts**

We regularly visit the communities where we have homes to check that the area is in a good state. Tenants are welcome to join us on these visits and we will notify all tenants in that area when we plan to come along.

- **Becoming an Ochil View Member**

By signing up to become a member of Ochil View, a tenant can attend our AGM and put themselves forward to be elected to our Board, or if a vacancy at another time during the year. This ensures we have engagement opportunities at every possible level within the Association.

## Getting started with engagement

Visit our website at: [www.ochilviewha.co.uk](http://www.ochilviewha.co.uk)

Our Facebook page is: @Ochilviewha

Our Instagram handle is @ochilViewHA

We have a Tenant Engagement and Communications Officer, who can be contacted via the following ways:

Email: [tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk)

Mobile: 07874 864 323

# Your Neighbourhood



## Being a good neighbour

Your Tenancy Agreement details all your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. These are the main points to remember in being a good neighbour.

- You, your family and visitors must take good care to prevent damage to the house, its decoration, any furniture we have provided, its fixtures and fittings, the common parts and your neighbours' property.
- You must not use or allow the house to be used for illegal or immoral purposes.
- You must take your turn along with all other tenants and owners in keeping the common area clean, tidy and free from clutter. If you share a common close you must also take your turn in regularly cleaning, washing and keeping it tidy. If you do not do the work, we may do it ourselves and charge you for it.
- Keep your garden neat and tidy. Put your rubbish into your own wheelie bins and ensure they are put out regularly for collection.
- Always keep any pets under control.
- Close gates and doors behind you, particularly doors in flats with controlled entry systems. Only allow access to common closes if you know who they are.
- Keep an eye on your children and ensure they are not a nuisance to neighbours.
- Expect to hear some noise from other properties at times and be tolerant of this.
- Make sure friends visiting or leaving your home late at night come and go quietly.
- Some flats have water tanks that you must access through a neighbour's property. Please give notice if you need access and allow access if you are asked.

## Showing Respect For Others

You, those living with you and your visitors must not harass or act in an anti-social manner to any person in the neighbourhood. This includes other residents, their visitors, our employees, agents and contractors.

Antisocial behaviour means doing things that cause or could cause alarm, distress, nuisance or annoyance to any person or causing damage to property.

This means that you, other people who live with you and your visitors must not:

- Be noisy or disruptive, including playing music, tv etc at loud volume, especially late at night
- Use your house, or allow it to be used, for illegal or immoral purposes
- Vandalise or damage our property or any part of the common parts or neighbourhood

- Harass or assault any person in the house or neighbourhood for whatever reason
- Use or carry offensive weapons
- Use or sell unlawful drugs or sell alcohol.

If you are affected by behaviour like this, you should let us know. You should also tell the Police. We will investigate and take any action that we can to tackle the problem. We will always keep your name and address confidential and we won't say who has made the complaint. Of course, your neighbour may be able to guess who has complained. We may try to use mediation and other ways to improve the situation. We will take legal action if we believe it is necessary.

## Estate Management

The Association regularly inspects its properties and the communal areas to ensure that they are managed and maintained to a high standard. The issues that are regularly monitored, include general environmental matters such as litter, street cleaning, refuse dumping, lighting, abandoned cars, caravan parking, condition of footpaths etc.

Tenants can assist us with maintaining the estates by taking their turn at cleaning the stairs and common areas, if applicable, or maintaining any individual garden to a satisfactory standard.

The Association organises the following services in relation to estate management –

- Communal Landscape maintenance
- Communal cleaning
- Communal window cleaning

If you want to find out more about Estate Management, you can contact your Housing Services Officer.

## My Home

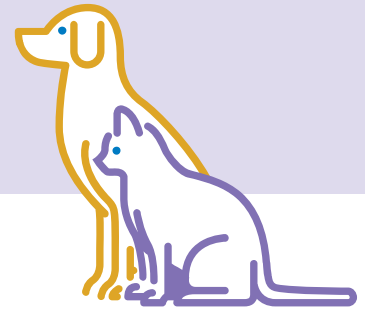
If you are registered on our tenant portal My Home you can report any incidents of anti-social behaviour to us from your dashboard.

## Noise App

The Noise App is a quick and easy way to record noise which is causing an annoyance or nuisance. You can instantly record noise nuisance on your smartphone to create an accurate record of the problem and how it affects you. Once you have recorded your evidence then this can be sent in directly to Ochil View Housing Association to investigate. This is a free service for our tenants.

If you want to find out more about the Noise App and how to download this to your smartphone then please contact your Housing Services Officer.

# Pets



## Keeping Pets in Your Home

You must obtain our written permission before keeping any pet in your home. Owning a pet is a significant responsibility and can be costly. You should carefully consider the expenses involved, including purchase costs, food, and veterinary care. You must also ensure there are suitable arrangements in place for the pet's care if you are away from home.

In most cases, we expect pets to be either a dog or a cat.

Permission will normally be granted for no more than one or two pets, depending on their type and size. Each request will be considered individually, taking into account factors such as the size of your property, the surrounding environment, and the type of animal.

Permission will not be granted for any dog prohibited under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 or any other relevant legislation.

We do not allow tenants to keep livestock or farm animals, such as sheep, goats, pigs, cattle, horses, chickens, or ducks.

We will provide a written decision within one month of receiving your request. This will confirm whether permission has been granted or refused, along with any conditions or reasons for refusal.

If permission is granted, it will be subject to the conditions outlined in our Domestic Pets Policy. You will be required to sign a formal agreement confirming that you understand and will comply with these conditions. Failure to meet these conditions may result in permission being withdrawn and you being required to remove the pet from the property.

These requirements are also in line with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Estate Management Policy. Copies of these policies are available on our website or can be provided upon request.

If you are registered on the My Home tenant portal, you can apply by completing the Pet Permission Form available in the "Useful Forms" section of your dashboard.

# Pest Control



## Our Responsibilities

Before you move in, we will ensure that your property, including the garden, is pest free. Staff will also undertake visual pest control inspections when undertaking estate inspections to ensure common areas are free from pest activity.

We will be responsible for carrying out repairs and treating infestations (regardless of the pest) if the infestation was caused by disrepair or lack of action on the Association's part.

The Association will be responsible for carrying out remediation work of neighbouring properties affected by the infestation, or commence the block treatment if the infestation spreads to another building.

The Association will intervene on the most serious infestations promptly (i.e. rats and cockroaches) as they can spread disease and are a risk to public health. Additionally, the Association will intervene if there is an infestation of bed bugs, as if they are not treated promptly, they can spread into the fabric of the whole building and can become very difficult and expensive to eradicate.

The Association will not be responsible for dealing with infestations caused by a tenant's own negligence (i.e. if they have left food out or have not disposed of rubbish correctly). In certain cases where the infestation is caused by a tenant's own negligence, the tenant may be held liable for the cost of treatment and will be recharged the cost incurred by the Association in doing so.

The Association will not be held responsible for any damage caused by pests to tenants' belongings.

## Your Responsibilities

Tenants are responsible for the treatment of minor infestations within their property and are also responsible for informing the Association if there is an infestation within their property so that the Association can assess the cause and advise the tenant on the next course of action.

Tenants must notify the Association if communal areas are infested with vermin/pests.

## Useful Advice

### Bees / Wasps

It's important to ensure you identify correctly whether you have a bee or wasp infestation. Bees are a protected species and as such, we cannot instruct any pest control work for them. Here is how you can identify them:

#### Bees

- Fuzzy
- Help humans by pollinating our plants
- Eat pollen and nectar
- Gentle in nature and rarely sting
- Legs are usually hidden when flying

#### Wasps

- Little to no hair
- Help humans by eating other insects
- Eat human food that is laying around
- Aggressive and ready to sting
- Legs hang down when flying

Prevention is always better than cure. There are things you can do to stop wasps invading your home such as keeping your home secure with items such as fly screens, keeping bin lids closed and secure and keeping bins away from your home, and checking for wasps' nests in early spring when they are easier to deal with.

If a nest is far from a building it may be best to just leave it alone. Wasps abandon their nests after Summer and will not return to it the following year.

We will arrange pest control services for wasps as these should not be treated by yourself as this can be dangerous.

**Mice**

Mice only need a gap of around 6mm to gain entry (roughly the diameter of a pencil) so it is important to look for any gaps or entry points in your property which can then be sealed. This can be around pipes and windows.

You can also remove potential nesting sites by keeping your garden clean and tidy, cutting back overgrown areas, and cleaning any piles of wood / debris.

Household waste or compost heaps that can be accessed, should have lids fitted and be kept covered.

You should store any food in airtight containers, making sure any food debris is cleaned up immediately.

**Rats**

Similar to mice, rats only need a small gap (around 15mm) to gain entry to a structure so it is important to look for any gaps or entry points in your property which can then be sealed. This can be around pipes and windows.

You can also remove potential nesting sites by keeping your garden clean and tidy, cutting back overgrown areas, and cleaning any piles of wood / debris. Compost wastes can become nesting sites, so protect these with wire mesh to prevent rodents.

Drain inspection covers should be in a good state of repair and any disused pipes should be sealed off. The Association can deal with these repairs.

**Managing your waste**

Make sure any cracked or broken bins are replaced, and ensure they have a lid. Your local council, can replace these. Keeping bins away from doors and windows can also stop easy access to the property for rodents.

Try not to put loose food waste straight into bins but rather keep it under wraps with compostable liners, plastic bags or refuse sacks. This will control smells and make sure it does not stick to the sides of containers. It's also a good idea to give your indoor and outdoor bins a rinse with disinfectant and hot water. This helps to reduce smells that can attract rats.

**Ants**

Ants can be treated using off the shelf bait / products however we would recommend using a professional pest control service through contacting the Association.

**Birds**

In the UK, every wild bird and their eggs is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

In general, birds will be attracted to areas where there is a food source therefore the best way to discourage birds is to remove food sources and to block off sites where they can perch or roost.

Whilst smaller native birds can be enjoyable in your garden, we strongly discourage feeding of birds in common areas, which often attracts gulls and pigeons which can be problematic to deal with.

Nests cannot be removed or disturbed until after the mating season which is generally in late summer.

In severe cases, we may consider bird prevention measures such as netting or spikes but only as a last resort.

**Bats**

All bats within the UK are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. If you find bats within your property, please contact the Association. Where bats have the possibility of being disturbed, we need to contact specialists to advise on the best course of action dependent on each location.

# Fair Processing Notice Summary

(How we use your personal information)



**The purpose of the Fair Processing Notice is to make you aware of how we will handle your personal information. The full version of the Association's Fair Processing Notice can be viewed at [www.ochilviewha.co.uk/dataprotection](http://www.ochilviewha.co.uk/dataprotection)**

**If you would like a copy sent to you, please call us on 01259 722899.**



## Who are we?

Ochil View Housing Association Ltd,  
a Scottish Charity

(Scottish Charity Number SC033130, a  
registered society under the Co-operative and  
Community Benefit

Societies Act 2014 with Registered Number  
2310R(S)

and having their Registered Office at  
Ochil House, Marshall, Alloa FK10 1AB.

Our Fair Processing Notice explains your  
privacy rights and how we gather, use and  
share information about you. If you would like  
to get in touch, our Director of Finance and  
Corporate Services can be reached by email at:

[customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk)

or by post at: Ochil House, Marshall,  
Alloa FK10 1AB.

Or by telephoning: 01259 722899



## How we collect information from you and what information we collect

We collect information about you directly.  
Sometimes for your safety or legal reasons we  
collect personal information by recording and  
monitoring calls and from CCTV. We may also  
receive information about you from third parties  
(for example from Allpay or from government  
departments):

See the full Fair Processing Notice for  
more details about how we gather personal  
information and what we gather.



## Why we need this information about you and how it will be used

We use your personal information to provide  
you with services, to comply with the law, to  
enforce our legal rights (including debt recovery)  
and to improve our services. Sometimes we  
need to use sensitive personal information such  
as medical details to make available services  
you have requested.

Find out more about how we use your personal  
information in the full version of the Fair  
Processing Notice.



## Sharing of Your Information

We share personal information with our  
suppliers and other third parties where  
necessary in order that we can supply a service  
to you. We may also share personal information  
with regulators or law enforcement agencies.  
Sometimes we transfer personal information  
to other countries (for example, when we use  
internet based survey companies), but only  
where suitable protection is in place.

The full version of the Fair Processing Notice  
will give you further details about this, a copy  
of which, can be found on our website at  
[www.ochilviewha.co.uk](http://www.ochilviewha.co.uk)



## How long we will keep your information

We keep your personal information securely for  
as long as is needed for the purposes described  
in the full version of the Fair Processing Notice.



## Your Rights

You have the right at any time to:

- ask for a copy of the information about you held by us in our records;
- require us to correct any inaccuracies in your information;
- make a request to us to delete what personal data of yours we hold; and
- object to receiving any marketing communications from us.

If you would like to exercise any of your rights above please contact the Director of Finance and Corporate Services at Ochil House, Marshell, Alloa FK10 1AB, by telephoning on 01259 722899 or by emailing us at [customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk).

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office in relation to our use of your information. The Information Commissioner's contact details are noted below:

The Information Commissioner's Office –  
Scotland

Queen Elizabeth House, Sibbald Walk,  
Edinburgh, EH8 8FT

Telephone: 0303 123 1115

Email: [Scotland@ico.org.uk](mailto:Scotland@ico.org.uk)

The accuracy of your information is important to us - please help us keep our records updated by informing us of any changes to your email address and other contact details.

You can read the full version at:  
[www.ochilviewha.co.uk/dataprotection](http://www.ochilviewha.co.uk/dataprotection)





Ochil View Housing Association Ltd.,  
Registered Office: Ochil House, Marshall,  
Alloa, Clackmannanshire FK10 1AB.

General Enquiries: 01259 722899  
Email: [customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk)  
Web: [www.ochilviewha.co.uk](http://www.ochilviewha.co.uk)

Honorary President: Jennifer, Lady Balfour of Burleigh, Chairperson: Jim Savage  
Chief Executive and Secretary: Anne Smith, MA CA  
Ochil View Housing Association Limited is a registered society under the Co-operative and  
Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 and with the Scottish Housing Regulator No HAL 213  
Ochil View Housing Association Limited is a recognised Scottish Charity No. SC033130 Property Factor Reference PF000367  
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HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

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