Tenancy Support

We have a Tenancy Support Service with a dedicated support worker who can offer one to one support and guidance to vulnerable tenants.

The service includes issues such as:
- help with setting up your tenancy
- benefit claims and debt problems
- paying your rent
- accessing specialist services and health care
- issues relating to drug and alcohol misuse
- developing life skills such as cooking, cleaning and shopping, and
- making positive changes to your life.

All information given to our Tenancy Support Worker is treated in a confidential and non-judgemental way. No information will be passed onto any agency unless you give your permission.

Lifeplan

Our Lifeplan service helps tenants get into or return to education, training, employment and volunteer work. Lifeplan is a free and friendly service that offers support, guidance and opportunities to achieve goals that are set by you.

Lifeplan can help you if you:
- would like to volunteer but don’t know how to
- want to change career but are not sure where to start
- would like to gain an apprenticeship
- have low confidence and would like support in finding work
- would like to meet new people
- are a single parent on benefits and would like to find a part time job or do some training.

Please ring Customer Services and ask for the Lifeplan Advisor if you would like our help.
Fixed Term Tenancies

We will review your fixed term tenancy between 12 and 6 months before your term is due to end. We will renew tenancies for another fixed term of 5 years unless there has been a major change in your household’s circumstances or one of the following applies:

- The property is under occupied by more than one bedroom
- You are financially able to explore other housing options, such as private renting or purchasing
- You, or someone on your behalf, did not take part in the review of the fixed term tenancy
- The household no longer needs the adaptations that have been made to the property
- Major works are planned for your property in the next 5 years
- Tenancy conditions have been broken
- Tenancy fraud has been identified.

If your fixed term tenancy is not to be renewed, you will be served a notice at least 6 months before the term ends. The notice will state in detail the reasons for not renewing the tenancy. You will be given a leaflet ‘The Fixed Term Tenancy Review Process’, which provides information on your right to request a review of our decision not to renew your tenancy.

In some circumstances we may renew a fixed term tenancy for 2 years and not 5 years. The reasons for this are listed below:

- If your introductory tenancy has been extended
- Where your household is overcrowded at the time of the review, but no suitable accommodation has been found
- On certain estates where shorter tenancies could help to tackle antisocial behaviour

Estate Inspections

Your Neighbourhood Manager will visit and walk around your neighbourhood every three months with the local tenant representative. You are welcome to join them. They look for issues which are causing problems for residents including untidy gardens, abandoned vehicles, parking, graffiti etc.

In blocks of flats they look at the communal areas, such as stairwells, communal gardens, communal car parks etc. to see that they are clean and tidy. If necessary, the Neighbourhood Manager will contact you to discuss any issues. Neighbourhood Managers have a small budget to spend on improving their estates. The quarterly inspection helps them to identify areas that would benefit from improvements. In the past they have paid for the tidying up and securing of communal bin stores and improvements to parking areas.

If you would like to join your Neighbourhood Manager on one of these inspections, help make decisions and improve your estate, please contact them.
Living in your Home

Under your tenancy agreement you are responsible for the behaviour of every person (including children and lodgers) and animal living in or visiting your premises. You are responsible for their behaviour in your property, on surrounding land, in shared areas and in the local area.

Antisocial behaviour

Antisocial behaviour includes a wide range of activities including excessive noise, persistent dog barking, fly tipping, harassment and criminal activity.

If you or anyone living in or visiting the property receives a criminal conviction that is related to activities at or in the locality of your home, we may take legal action for possession of your property.

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that tenants keep to their conditions of tenancy. We do not tolerate antisocial behaviour towards our employees or contractors. This includes abusive and threatening behaviour whether in person or by any other means.

We work together with many agencies to deal effectively with all types of antisocial behaviour. When we are investigating whether a particular activity or issue is antisocial we will look at how the behaviour affects neighbours, the wider community and the environment.

We treat all complaints of antisocial behaviour seriously and investigate each one carefully. Your help is very important in dealing with incidents of antisocial behaviour. Here are some examples of what we will ask you to do to help us resolve the problem:

• Talk to Customer Services who will arrange for a Neighbourhood Manager to contact you to discuss and agree a way forward. This will involve you keeping a log of what is happening with times, dates and details
• If you feel able to, speak to the person responsible for the behaviour – they may not know the effect that it is having on you. We have found that where neighbours are able to speak directly to each other, problems are often resolved more quickly and without bad feeling
• If the problem is about excessive ongoing noise, fly tipping or piles of rubbish, contact Environmental Health
• Report any criminal behaviour to the Police.

Vehicles and Parking

If you want to park a vehicle on your property you must do so in accordance with your conditions of tenancy. Please speak to your Neighbourhood Manager for more information. You must not make any alterations to the front of your property without our written permission. This includes removing front fencing to park a vehicle on your premises.

Please park considerately and make sure that rubbish collection and emergency vehicles have clear access at all times.

Garages

We have a waiting list for people who would like to rent a council garage. You will not be put onto the list if you have rent arrears or owe council tax. You need to be resident in Kettering Borough and at least 18 years old.

Garages are for storing motor vehicles only and are allocated in date order of application, with priority given to “Blue Badge” holders and Council Tenants. You are allowed a maximum of three garages. Non council tenants pay VAT on all garages and council tenants pay VAT if they have a third garage.

Please contact Customer Services if you would like to be considered for a garage or download a form from our website. Please note that we prefer garage rent to be paid by direct debit.

If you rent a garage from us but are in arrears with your house rent we will consider terminating your garage tenancy so you can concentrate on clearing your house arrears.

• Where a court order for rent arrears is currently being paid on time.
Rubbish

You are responsible for disposing of all household waste properly. Where you are responsible for putting out your bins please do so by 6.30am on the day of collection.

It is against fire regulations to store any bins in closed communal areas or on balconies within your building.

Please help us to recycle your rubbish by doing the following:

Red box - paper
- Letters, Non-window Envelopes, Bills, Greeting Cards, Leaflets
- Newspapers, Junk Mail, Magazines, Phone Books, Catalogues etc
- Shredded paper

NO PLASTIC BAGS

Blue bin - recyclables (excluding paper)
- All Plastics
- All Cardboard
- Juice Cartons
- Milk Cartons
- Aerosols
- Bottles
- Cans
- Metal Foils
- Small Metal Items
- Baking Trays
- Glass

ALL ITEMS MUST BE CLEANED AND RINSED
NO ELECTRICAL GOODS, NO PLASTIC BAGS, NO KNIVES

*From Spring 2013

Running a Business from your Home

Many tenants carry out some kind of work from home. Please ask for our permission in writing before starting any kind of work. We usually give permission unless the business could damage the property or cause a nuisance. We can withdraw permission if these things happen.

Satellite Dishes

We understand that many tenants want to enjoy the benefits of digital satellite television and we will not unreasonably refuse permission to install reception equipment.

However, satellite dishes cannot be installed at all properties as there are planning restrictions on certain buildings; these include blocks of flats and listed buildings.

Before you install a satellite dish on any property you must get our written permission. You will also need to contact Development Services to check if planning permission is necessary and if so, obtain it.

For further advice contact your Neighbourhood Manager.
Large Items – Bulk Refuse Service

The Council runs a bulk refuse service for collecting large household items such as fridges, sofas and tables. The cost of this service reduces if you are in receipt of certain benefits. Please contact your Scheme Manager who will explain how much the service will cost and can arrange collection over the phone for you.

You can take rubbish to Kettering Recycling Centre in Garrard Way on the Telford Way Industrial Estate.

Fly Tipping

Fly tipping is the illegal dumping of rubbish. Fly tipping is expensive for us to clear and reduces the money we have to spend on your home and the local area. Therefore, if you see anyone dumping rubbish please make a note of their registration number or vehicle details and report them to Customer Services. It is a breach of your tenancy agreement if you are found to be responsible for fly tipping.

If you are having problems with stray dogs in your area you can contact Environmental Health. You will need our written permission to keep pigeons and any other livestock on your premises. You can keep chickens and rabbits as long as they are well looked after and don’t cause problems for your neighbours. Cockerels are known to cause a nuisance and you are not allowed to keep them.

We will give permission for you to erect a coop/cage/hutch etc but your Neighbourhood Manager will need to approve the size and positioning of it.

There are certain animals that we will not allow you to keep at your premises. Your Neighbourhood Manager can advise you of these. You must have our written permission to keep an unusual pet or animal at your premises.
Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is defined as any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality.

Domestic abuse committed by a tenant, family member or visitor in your home is a serious crime. We will always focus on the needs of the victim in dealing with this type of behaviour. We will refer victims to agencies specialising in dealing with domestic abuse. We do not usually become involved in the legal process, however we will advise and assist victims in matters relating to their tenancy. If a tenant has to leave a property because of domestic abuse we may take legal action to gain possession of the property.

Please contact your Neighbourhood Manager for more information.

Gardens

You are responsible for keeping your garden neat and tidy and getting rid of all garden rubbish properly.

Any trees and hedges in your garden are your responsibility to maintain.

Rats and mice can make their homes inside old sofas and mattresses so you must not leave items like this in your garden. If you want to erect a shed, fence or plant a hedge, you must get our permission in writing. Your Neighbourhood Manager will explain any conditions that apply.

In exceptional circumstances, where gardens are not maintained and kept tidy, we reserve the right to rectify the problem and charge you for the work.

Shared Areas

If you are a tenant of a flat or maisonette you and your neighbours are responsible for keeping corridors, walkways, stairways, balconies and halls free from rubbish.

If you live in a block of flats with rubbish chutes, you must only use the chutes for general waste. All waste that can be recycled must be placed in the correct recycling bin or box which must not be stored in any communal area. Rubbish chutes quickly get blocked if not used correctly. These blockages are expensive to clear and present a serious fire and health risk.

We aim to encourage all tenants to sign a ‘Block Agreement’ if they are responsible for shared areas.

If you have a tenancy for a top floor flat the loft space above is for maintenance purposes only. It must not be used for storing any items and is not included in your tenancy agreement.

Pets

You are allowed to keep a domestic animal, such as a cat or dog, at your property providing they do not cause a nuisance. You will need to ask for permission to keep more than one animal or pet on your premises. Your Neighbourhood Manager will take into consideration where you live, the type of property you live in, whether you have a garden and if there have been any complaints about your current pet before granting permission.

If your pet fouls in your garden or in the local area you are responsible for removing any mess and getting rid of it hygienically. You will need our written permission to fit a pet flap to a door. Permission will not be given for fitting a pet flap to a timber fire door (front door to a flat) or any composite door (plastic covered door).