



South
Cambridgeshire
District Council

Tenants' Handbook



03450 450 051
www.scams.gov.uk

Readings and other information

Meter	Reading	Serial Number
Electricity		
Gas		
Water		
Date taken:		
Taken by:		

Item	Location
Stopcock	
Electric fuse box & trip switch	

Contact numbers for utility providers

To find out the current electricity supplier for this property, please telephone **0845 601 4516** and quote your postcode.

To find out the current gas supplier for this property, please telephone **0870 608 1524** and quote your postcode.

The telephone number for Cambridge Water Company is **0800 3167 676**.

The telephone number for Anglian Water is **0800 3167 676**.

Other formats

You can also read this handbook online at **www.scamb.gov.uk**.

If you would like this handbook in a different format (large print, braille, audio book or a different language), please contact us on **03450 450 051** and we will be happy to arrange this for you.

Welcome

We hope you that will enjoy living in your new home.

This handbook features key information that we think will be most useful to you. Please keep it somewhere safe, as it also includes important things such as your rights and responsibilities.

If you have any questions at all about your tenancy please get in touch with your housing services officer.

We want to provide the best housing service we possibly can; so if you have any feedback on this handbook, or any other ways you feel we might better the service, please get in touch with us.

Please also consider joining the South Cambridgeshire Housing Facebook group by requesting to join at www.facebook.com/groups/southcambridgeshirehousing. This is another avenue for you to receive updates and ask us any non-urgent housing related questions.

We would also just like to take this opportunity to thank the tenants and staff that helped us in putting this handbook together.

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Our service to you



Our service to you

Our purpose is to provide decent affordable homes.

South Cambridgeshire District Council owns your home and will deal with all aspects of your tenancy. Rent and services charges are paid to us and we will use the money kept by the authority to keep all of the homes in good repair and pay for housing services.

Our Housing Service is responsible for providing you with good quality affordable housing. Our staff are trained to deal quickly and efficiently with all issues regarding your home and tenancy and we want you to feel free to contact us.

Tenancy agreement

Before you move into your new home, you will be asked to sign a tenancy agreement, this is your contract with us and it explains what our responsibilities are and what yours are.

We have tried to make the agreement easy to follow, but like many legal documents, some parts may be harder to understand. Please talk to a Housing Services Officer if you are unsure about anything.

Equality and Diversity

Equality is about treating individuals fairly, supported by legislation designed to promote equality and eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Diversity is about the recognition and valuing of difference for the benefit of the Council and the individual. Equality and diversity are not interchangeable but are interdependent. There is no equality of opportunity if difference is not recognised and valued.

We are committed to identifying, understanding and eliminating all barriers that prevent access to services, information and employment.

As a major employer and provider of services, South Cambridgeshire District Council is committed to actively promoting equality and diversity, and working to combat discrimination across all nine protected characteristics;

- Age
- Disability

- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnerships
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion/Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Standards

Our staff will be polite at all times. They will carry identity badges and will always tell you their name and what they do. They will tell you when you can expect your enquiry to be dealt with and by whom.

When visiting your home, our staff and contractors will keep to any appointments agreed. If you are out, they will leave a card saying who called and when, along with details of who to contact. Contractors will always clear up after themselves and make good any damage that may be necessarily caused in the course of their work. Our offices will be open at publicised times and provide a comfortable place for you to be seen.

Putting service first

If you phone us we will:

- resolve your enquiry as quickly as possible
- provide voicemail if the person you need is unavailable
- answer your phone message within three working days

If we write to you we will:

- write in plain language
- arrange for translation, large type, braille or audio tapes upon request

If we visit you we will:

- carry identification that you can check with a 'phone call to our contact service on 03450 450500

- arrive at the time we say we will, or give you as much notice as possible if we have to change the time

If we get it wrong we will:

- apologise if we have made a mistake or failed to meet our standards;
- acknowledge your written complaint within three working days
- reply in full to your complaint within 10 working days

Tell us how we're doing

We're proud of what we are trying to achieve and recognise we can always do better. To help improve our services, we need your feedback.

Whether it's a compliment, a general comment or a complaint, we want to hear from you.

Help us to Help You

- have any reference numbers to hand when contacting us
- allow reasonable access for repairs, including gas/oil/solid fuel servicing
- keep appointments with us or our contractors and let us know with as much notice as possible if you need to change an appointment
- keep the interior of your home and garden in good decorative order
- provide all the original documentation we ask for so that we can assess your housing benefit claim (if applicable)
- let us know as soon as possible if you are having difficulty paying your rent

Please be polite when telephoning or writing to us, even if you feel we have done something wrong.

Access to Records

We keep files on each property and tenant. You have the right to see your file, although we do have to get permission from your doctor to

disclose medical details. There is, however, a small administration fee involved which you will need to pay in advance.

Your dealings with us will be confidential. Information may have to be given to other agencies if we have a duty to supply it for the prevention or detection of crime. We will also supply information to our housing benefit team should the need arise.

2

Rents and money matters



Rents and money matters

When to pay

Your rent is due every Monday; however you can pay this either weekly, fortnightly or monthly - providing that this is paid in advance.

If you have any questions about your rent please call our rents team on 03450 450 064.

How to pay

Direct Debit

This is one of the easiest ways to pay your rent, as it is taken automatically from your bank account on either the 1st or the 15th of each month. This means you won't have to remember to do it each month, your rent account should be up to date at all times and you only have to fill in one form.

Pay it online

Simply head over to www.scambs.gov.uk and click 'pay for it' with a debit card.

Pay it over the phone

Pay the rent with a debit card 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, just call 03450 455 218.

Pay it by bank transfer or standing order

Set this up with your bank by giving them the following details:

Sort Code: 20-17-19

Account Number: 30466441

Bank: Barclays

You will have to make sure that every payment quotes your tenancy reference number and you should allow about 3 or 4 days for the payment to go through.

Post Office and PayPoint Payment Card

To order a card simply give us a call on 03450 450 064, again please allow 3 or 4 days for payments to be processed.

Difficulties paying your rent

Paying your rent is part of the legally binding contract that is your tenancy agreement, if you don't keep your rent account up to date you will be breaking the terms of your tenancy agreement.

We understand that from time to time people may experience difficulties that affect their finances. If you are finding it difficult to pay your rent please get in touch with us as soon as possible.

We are on hand to provide help and advice, and contacting us early and working with us to resolve any issues may prevent any action being taken against you.

Housing Benefit

Dependent upon your income, you may be entitled to claim housing benefit to help pay your rent – even if you are in full time employment. You can apply for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support online through our website, www.scambs.gov.uk. You are also able to report any changes to your existing circumstances there too. If you need help filling out the form, we may be able to arrange for someone to visit you and assist you in completing it.

It is important that you make any claim for housing benefit as soon as possible, because it will usually be paid from the Monday after (providing you are living in the property) your form is received. If you submit your claim late you can ask for backdated housing benefit to be considered, although this would only happen if you could provide 'good cause' for not submitting your claim sooner.

Housing Fraud

What is housing fraud?

Unlawful Sub-letting

When a tenant lets out their council or housing association home without the knowledge or permission of their landlord they are unlawfully subletting. This also includes the tenant moving out and leaving relations at a property. They often continue to pay the rent for the property directly to their landlord, but charge the person they are subletting to at a much higher rate. It is not fair to sublet and to profit from a property which could be given to someone in greater need.

Obtaining Housing by deception

When a person gets a council or housing association home by giving false information in their application, for example not telling the landlord they are renting another council or housing association property, they are committing housing fraud.

Unlawful succession

When a tenant dies, there are rules that say what should be done with the tenancy. Wrongly claimed succession is when someone, who is not entitled, tries to take over the tenancy. For example, they might say they lived with the tenant before they died, when in fact they were living elsewhere.

Non-Residence

A tenant of a Social or Registered Landlord who ceases to live at the address provided by that landlord may lose their assured tenancy status and lose their right to retain occupation of that property.

Housing fraud can be a crime under the Fraud Act 2006. The maximum penalty for a person found guilty of this type of offence is ten years imprisonment. People who sub-let their properties can have court orders for costs and recovery of the proceeds of their crime awarded against them, even without being prosecuted.

If you suspect someone is a Housing Cheat, let us know. It could make a real difference and could save you money. Anything you tell us will be held in the strictest confidence. You do not need to leave your name or details.

For more information please visit www.cambstenancyfraud.net or call us on 0800 952 0075.

Rent arrears

If you fall behind with your rent, we will contact you to ask you to bring your payments up to date. If you do not pay the arrears in full, or make a repayment arrangement with us, legal action will be taken to recover the money owed.

Legal action will mean you will also have to pay court costs and can lead to you being evicted from your home.

Obviously we would prefer not to have to take this action so it is

important that you contact us immediately if you are unable to pay your rent for any reason.

Former tenant arrears

If you have outstanding rent when your tenancy ends, you must still pay this money back. You should contact us straight away to discuss how you can repay the arrears.

Helpful advice - Managing your money

Making sure that you manage your money is an important part of running your home. We all know how difficult it can be sometimes to juggle your finances to pay all the bills.

In order to help you plan your finances you need to work out how much money you have coming into the household each week and then subtract the amount you have to spend on essentials such as food, rent and fuel bills.

If you are struggling to meet all of your financial commitments, you will need to organise your outgoings to make sure that you are paying the most important bills first.

- Priority payments include rent, food, council tax and utility bills (gas, electricity, water)
- Non-priority payments include television packages

If you are having difficulties paying your bills, you should seek advice as soon as possible, before it becomes a problem. Extra charges for late payments will only add to the problem, so you should contact anyone you owe money to as soon as possible to discuss available options.

You may also wish to seek independent advice. Details of organisations that can provide free and impartial advice are included in the contact details section of this handbook.

Other benefits

You maybe entitled to benefits you are not claiming such as:

- Disability Living Allowance
- Invalid Care Allowance
- Working Families Tax Credit
- Council Tax Benefit

Contact Job Centre Plus, the Citizens' Advice Bureau or your housing services officer for advice on how to claim benefits.

3

Our service to you



Looking after your home

Looking after your home is both your responsibility and ours. It is up to you to tell us about any repairs that need doing as soon as possible.

See the section on repairs and maintenance for further details of our responsibilities.

Insurance

South Cambridgeshire District Council does not insure the contents of your home.

You are responsible for having adequate contents insurance to cover your possessions against loss, criminal or accidental damage. We are only responsible for insuring the structure and exterior of your home.

You will need to arrange for home contents insurance yourself through a reputable insurance company for things such as your carpets, white goods, electrical items and valuables.

We would recommend comparing quotation prices from a few different providers to make sure that you are getting the best value for money; we would also advise on getting cover for things such as accidental damage.

We have teamed up with Thistle Tenant Risks to bring the Crystal Home Contents Insurance Scheme, which offers home contents insurance from as little as £1.50 fortnightly, (*£1.15 fortnightly for residents aged 60 and over*). You will have received a leaflet as part of your welcome pack, however if you would like another copy or would like some more information, please give us a call on 03450 450 051.

Security

When you move in you will be provided with a home that has secure doors and windows. Please make sure that you keep all of them locked and closed when you go out. Most burglaries take place unplanned and happen when a thief spots an opportunity; don't provide one.

Depending upon eligibility criteria, you may qualify for extra security measures through a third party service. Please get in touch with us on 03450 450 051 for more information.

Always ask to see photo ID before allowing a stranger to enter your home. We will always carry branded identity cards that have a photo of the staff member on them and our staff will always wear these when visiting you.

If you have any doubts, please call our contact centre and they will be able to verify if the visit is legitimate and from a member of our team.

Smoke alarms

Do not tamper with your smoke alarm as it may save your life.

For general housing smoke alarm advice

Once a week test each alarm by pressing the test button till the alarm sounds.

Once a year change the battery (*unless it's a Council fitted ten-year wired alarm*).

Twice a year gently vacuum the smoke alarm using the soft-brush attachment to remove dust from the sensors.

If you think a Council owned alarm is faulty please call the repairs line straight away.

Communal areas

The storing of personal possessions in communal areas of flats and housing for older people is not permitted. This can present a fire risk and action will be taken to remove items where they are found.

Solid fuel heating

We will carry out an annual safety check and sweep your chimney. You must give us access to carry out this work as your home will be at risk of a chimney fire if you fail to do so.

Gas safety

We will arrange for your gas central heating appliance to be serviced at intervals of no more than 12 calendar months. This service and safety inspection is very important. Faulty appliances can cause dangerous situations and can give off poisonous carbon monoxide fumes, which could ultimately cause death. We therefore have a legal duty to make sure properly qualified gas engineers check all of our gas appliances

every year and a visual inspection of any tenant owned appliances for your safety and that of your neighbours.

We or our gas contractors will contact you when the service/ safety inspection becomes due. You must allow the gas contractor into your home to carry out this work as part of your tenancy agreement. Failure to do so is treated very seriously and we will take legal action if necessary.

If you think your gas boiler is faulty, call the repairs line as soon as possible. For gas, oil, solid fuel boilers or air-source heat pumps contact Mears directly on 0333 207 0766.

Electrical heating can be reported to Mears on the usual repair number, 0800 085 1313.

Gas Escapes/Smell Of Fumes

If you suspect a gas leak, or smell of fumes open the windows turn off the supply at the meter and call National Grid directly and immediately on 0800 111 999.

Do not operate switches as a spark could ignite the gas.

On attending the National Grid engineer will “make safe” and may advise you that they are unable to repair the gas leak or faulty appliance, because it is the responsibility of South Cambridgeshire District Council. You will then need to phone the Council and we will arrange for our gas Contractor to attend as soon as possible.

Any gas appliances you have installed are your own responsibility. Once you have obtained written permission from us to install an appliance, you must use a Gas Safe registered engineer.

- If a gas flame, which normally burns blue, burns orange, this may be a build up of carbon monoxide – **DO NOT USE and have your appliance checked immediately.**

Tenants own gas appliances

We are unable to service a tenant’s gas appliance, such as a cooker or gas fire.

However, the Councils gas contractor will carry out and document a visual inspection to check that the appliance is safe to use; any defects

will be reported to you and, where considered necessary, the appliance will be disconnected from the gas supply as a safety precaution.

When buying gas appliances look for the British Standards safety mark or British Seal of Approval and beware of second hand bargains.

If you live in a flat when buying a new gas cooker it must be fitted with 'flame supervision devices' on all burners. These are devices that automatically shut off the gas supply should the flames be extinguished to any burner. The fitting of a cooker without these devices is a contravention of the Gas Regulations.

Oil, solid fuel and air-source heat pump annual inspection and servicing

It is important that we carry out annual inspections and safety checks to ensure all equipment is functioning correctly and efficiently. You are required to provide access to the Council's contractors for this to take place as part of your tenancy agreement.

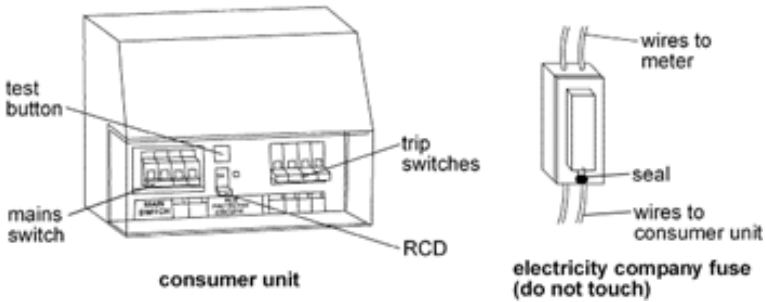
Electrical safety

Electricity must be treated with respect.

- Do not use appliances with worn or damaged flexes.
- Keep portable mains-operated appliances out of the bathroom
- If an appliance appears faulty stop using it and have it checked at once
- Never overload sockets with adaptors
- Always unplug an appliance before working on it
- Look for the CE mark, the BEAB mark, BS safety mark or British Standard number when you buy electrical equipment.

Resetting a trip switch

If you have an old 'fuse board' unit with rewirable fuses or cartridges do not touch it and contact us immediately.



General advice

Modern electric circuits are fitted with circuit breakers called trip switches.

If a fault develops, a switch is tripped and the circuit is broken for safety.

All of the fuses or trip switches are in the consumer unit.

A trip switch usually operates because:

- There are too many appliances on a circuit and it is overloaded;
- An appliance is faulty or has been misused, such as a kettle has been overfilled, a toaster has not been cleaned, water has leaked into a circuit or spilt onto a plug
- A light bulb has blown or an immersion heater is faulty

If one of your electrical appliances is faulty, keep it switched off and get a qualified electrician to check it.

Make sure your hands are dry when you touch electrical fittings.

Damp and mould

What is condensation?

In essence, condensation is the complete opposite to evaporation. So where as evaporation is the transformation of water into steam, condensation is when steam becomes a liquid. The air around us can hold water, however the warmer the temperature, the more the air can carry. When this warm air meets a cold surface, or cools within the atmosphere, it releases this excess water vapour. This is often seen when you have a hot shower or bath; the warm air comes into contact with your bathroom mirror for example, which then begins to steam up. Condensation can occur anywhere in the home and, depending upon the severity of the problem, can have serious effects. However, it can easily be avoided.

Condensation between windows (DGU's)

If you have condensation between your window this needs to be reported to Mears via the repairs line. A visit will be made with yourself for the unit to be inspected, measured up and replaced. These are currently going through Mears via Clearview.

Preventing Condensation

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it. When moist air hits a cold surface tiny drops of water appear. You can see this when the mirror mists up when you have a bath. This is condensation...

Condensation occurs mainly during cold weather

It appears on cold surfaces and in places where there is little movement of air. Look for it in corners, on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards and in rarely used rooms. Condensation can lead to mould which can contribute to asthma and other respiratory problems.

Reduce Condensation

1. Produce Less Moisture:

- Cover pans when cooking;
- Dry washing outdoors, whenever possible, or over the bath

with the door closed and the window open;

- Vent any tumble dryers outside, or buy a self-condensing type. Drying clothes in an un-vented tumble dryer produces a massive 10 pints of water!

2. Ventilate:

- Keep a small window ajar or trickle ventilator open;
- Ventilate kitchen and bathrooms when in use, by opening windows or use a humidistat-controlled electric fan. These come on automatically when the air becomes humid, and are cheap to run;
- When having a bath or shower, keep doors closed to prevent moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms. Having a bath produces two pints of moisture!
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes, and where possible position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls.

3. Insulate and Draught proof:

- Condensation occurs in cold spots. Insulating your loft, draught proofing windows and doors and installing cavity wall insulation will reduce cold spots and make your home cheaper to heat.

4. Heat more efficiently:

- Try to avoid cold areas in the home. It is better to heat your whole home to a lower temperature rather than heat one room to a high temperature. Condensation often affects the rooms you are not heating, for example, a spare bedroom rather than where you are making the moisture. This is because they are colder.

Treating Mould

If you deal with the basic problem of condensation, then mould should not appear. To kill and remove mould, wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash. Follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely. Disturbing mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning can increase the risk of respiratory problems.

After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring. Note that this paint is not effective if it is overlaid with wallpaper. The only lasting way of avoiding severe mould is to follow these steps to eliminate condensation.

Top Tips

- To prevent condensation on mirrors or windows rub a cloth with a small spot of washing up liquid over the surface. Try this at home or in the car - taxi drivers have been doing this for years!
- Alternatively to prevent condensation on windows, cut a potato in half and rub across the surface then buff with a cloth.
- You can download our Condensation Leaflet from our website.

Still having issues?

If you are a council tenant and have done all of the above and are still having issues with damp or mould then ring our freephone repairs hotline on 0800 085 1313.

You can also send photos of the affected area to damp.mould@scambs.gov.uk which can then be assessed to determine whether a surveyor needs to come out to inspect the problem.

Winter Protection

Winter can bring extra problems for everyone. Here are some hints to help avoid trouble:

- Familiarise yourself with your property, locate and check the main stopcock before winter comes. If the stopcock does not work, contact our repairs team.
- If you are going away for a long period, make arrangements for all water systems to be drained down
- If your going away over night or the weekend leave background heating on

Check that the overflows are not running. They could freeze causing the water tank to overflow into your home

- Make sure that all exposed pipes and tanks are lagged. Here are some tips if trouble strikes:
- If cold water pipes freeze, turn off the main stopcock. Never use a naked flame to thaw pipes, apply gentle heat such as a hairdryer at a low setting or a hot water bottle
- If hot water pipes freeze, turn off any heating appliance and call the emergency repairs freephone
- If a pipe bursts, turn off the main stopcock and turn on the taps to drain the system down quickly. Switch off all heating appliances including immersion heaters and, if you have solid fuel heating, let the fire die down. Phone the emergency repairs freephone

Lofts

Please do not store goods in your loft as it is not intended as a storage area. We may need access to replace insulation or carry out repairs to water or electrical services etc. that are present.

4

Repairs and maintenance



Repairs and Maintenance

Looking after your home is a joint responsibility. We are responsible for most repairs to your home. It is your responsibility to tell us when repairs are needed and you must allow reasonable access to your home for the work to be done. Please also see the section called Looking after your home.

How to report a repair

Telephone our freephone repairs hotline on 0800 085 1313.

The repairs contact centre is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week including bank holidays.

Emergency repairs will be carried out within 24 hours and all other repairs will be categorised as urgent or routine.

Access

You have a responsibility under your tenancy agreement to provide reasonable access for us and our contractors to carry out repairs. We may also wish to inspect work completed to ensure it has been done correctly.

If your home is supplied with gas we have a legal responsibility (as a landlord) to check the safety of the installation and our appliances every 12 months. We will take legal action if necessary if you do not provide access when reasonably requested.

Repair responsibilities

We have a landlord's duty to carry out certain repairs and maintenance and maintain our properties in a safe condition and good working order. You are responsible for keeping your home in a reasonable, clean condition and for keeping the inside of your home in a good decorative state.

The repairs you are responsible for generally include:

- your own bathroom floor coverings
- your own kitchen floor coverings
- reglazing within your home (unless crime reference number provided)
- chipped baths, sinks and wash hand basins
- minor hairline plaster cracks
- infestation (such as rodents, wasps and other insects)
- deliberate damage to your front door (unless crime reference number provided)
- deliberate damage to bath panels
- replacement of bath/sink plugs
- washing lines (unless communal)
- any domestic appliance (unless SCDC installed integrated appliance)
- loose internal door handles
- blown fuses
- your own built-in wardrobes
- toilet seats inclusive of all fittings (except for older (75 years and over) and disabled people)
- your own shower
- shaverlights and battery operated smoke alarms
- aerials
- all works associated with 'lock outs' - getting access, replacing locks and keys

- bleeding air from radiators
- draught excluders to doors and windows
- garden maintenance including trees and hedges (unless there is a risk to health and safety or it forms part of our annual hedge cut)
- additional security
- clearing blocked kitchen sinks, hand basins and baths
- all repairs associated with your own appliances
- all repairs caused by your misuse, neglect, damage and/or the same caused by visitors, family and pets
- maintenance and repair of any additional fittings that you have installed
- door bells unless part of a communal door entry system
- internal doors - it is very important that you keep to current safety standards and do not remove internal doors
- light bulbs, fluorescent tubes and starters
- curtain rails
- fences, unless these form an external boundary onto a road or footpath
- your own garden sheds and patios
- your own fireplace surrounds

The Right to Repair

This is a government scheme that lists 20 common repairs (*called qualifying repairs*) and sets a prescribed period (*number of working days*) in which they must be completed. If we do not complete the repair within the prescribed period you have the right to ask us to get a second contractor. You may also be entitled to compensation in certain circumstances.

If an inspection is needed, we are allowed extra time. If the inspection identifies the need for major works, this is no longer covered under the right to repair and you will be given more details on the target time for completion.

The qualifying repairs must be our responsibility; that is, not caused through misuse. We will recharge you if the repair is found to be your responsibility.

The contact centre will determine the priority of repairs at the point of reporting.

Priority will be given to vulnerable groups such as older people (over 75 years of age), disabled people and people with young children (0-5 years of age).

Planned maintenance and improvements

Improvements we do

We are committed to keeping our houses, bungalows and flats in a good state of repair and carry out external maintenance, modernisation and improvements under our major works programmes.

Programmes include heating replacement, insulation, rewiring, re-roofing, kitchen refurbishments, bathroom refurbishments and window replacement as well as regular external redecoration programmes.

If you are in rent arrears we may not carry out improvements to your home.

Energy efficiency

We're working hard to ensure that our homes are as energy efficient as possible.

Some homes have been fitted with energy efficiency measures. These include items such as loft and cavity wall insulation, solar photovoltaic panels, air source heat pumps and external cladding/insulation.

For any enquires, please contact the warm homes team on 03450 450 051.

Improvements you arrange yourself

How do I request permission?

You must write to your housing services officer requesting a tenants' alteration form.

This form can be found on the main website at:
www.scams.gov.uk/tenant_alterations

What happens next?

After receiving your request, we will check your rent account to make sure you do not have any arrears. If you are in arrears, permission will not be granted. You will need to re-apply once the rent account is clear. We will reply within 10 working days of receipt of your letter to inform you of our decision.

If permission is granted you must notify your housing services officer on completion of works, in order for arrangements to be made to inspect the alterations.

If you have carried out any improvements and later decide to buy your home, the work you have done will not increase the price of your home.

If you have carried out any improvements with our permission and want to move, you may be able to claim compensation under the government's compensation for improvements scheme.

If you want to move and have altered the layout of the property or made any additions without our permission you may be required to remove them and return the property to its original condition. You may also be recharged for any further work we are required to do as a result.



5

Your rights

Your Rights

Your tenancy agreement explains your Rights in detail.

You have the Right to live in your home for as long as you have a valid tenancy agreement and we would only ask you to leave if you break the agreement, except in very rare circumstances such as compulsory purchase.

Please read your tenancy agreement and keep it somewhere safe. If there is anything you don't understand please ask your housing services officer about it or give us a call.

Right to pass on your home (also called succession)

Most tenants are able to pass on their home to someone else when they die, or following a divorce. If you want to find out more about this, please talk to your housing services officer and visit our website.

Right to exchange

Most social housing tenants on a secure, flexible or assured tenancy have the ability to swap their home with another council or housing association tenant - providing written consent is obtained from both landlords.

This can be really helpful if you are looking to move to be closer to family, work, amenities, if you are looking to downsize or if you are just looking for a more suitable property for you and your family.

We will endeavour to accept mutual exchange requests, however there are certain criteria that the exchanger must meet. An application can only be rejected on grounds outlined within Schedule 3 of the Housing Act (1985) and within Schedule 14 of the Localism Act (2011). Some of these grounds include:

- have no rent arrears (there may be discretionary exceptions, e.g. for downsizing etc.)
- be on a secure, flexible or assured tenancy (introductory tenants or demoted tenants will not be able to carry out a mutual exchange)
- the property to apply to move to is suitable for your needs (i.e. not too big, or too small for your household)

- it is an adapted property which the incoming tenant does not require or is unsuitable for their needs
- the property is in a sheltered scheme and the incoming tenant does not require such accommodation
- the property is currently subject to a notice of seeking possession
- there are anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues

There are lots of things to consider and make yourself aware of before deciding upon seeking a mutual exchange. We've put together a leaflet that goes over the process, gives tips on creating good mutual exchange adverts, provides advice on health and safety considerations when arranging viewings and lots more. You can view this on our website or ask a member of staff for a copy.

Right to take in lodgers

Tenants that hold a secure or fixed term tenancy have the right to take in a lodger; however you will need to inform us if you plan to do this by filling in the 'Notification of taking in a lodger' form. Introductory tenants do not normally have the right to take in a lodger. By taking in a lodger, a tenant's home must not become overcrowded.

Tenants must also notify the relevant departments of their change in circumstances where applicable; for example Council Tax and taking in a lodger may affect your housing benefit entitlement.

There are some statutory checks that must be carried out before a tenant is able to take in a lodger.

The Immigration Act (2014) requires that immigration checks have to be carried out on all new lettings in England from February 2016. By law tenants must check that their prospective lodger is legally able to rent in England; this is called the 'Right to Rent'. All private landlords must check their tenant's eligibility to rent and this also applies to those that are taking in a lodger. This must be done for every lodger; it is against the law to only carry out the checks on people that you do not believe are British citizens.

The Government provides some guidance on this subject, which you can read at www.gov.uk; just search for 'Right to rent document checks: a user guide'.

The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) has also produced a leaflet around the changes, and we would encourage anyone that is considering taking in a lodger to take a read of it. It is entitled 'Practical implications of immigration checks on new lettings' and is available to view on their website (www.cih.org).

Right to buy

The Right to Buy scheme gives tenants the right to buy their council home.

You will be entitled to a discount depending upon the length of tenancy that you have. This is worked out on a percentage but is subject to a maximum limit.

Once we have received your application form it will be checked to see if you are eligible. We will also check your rent record to see if there are any outstanding rent arrears or court orders in existence. The Government states that we have four weeks to respond to you or eight weeks if we have to write to other authorities to confirm tenancies.

When all the checks have been carried out we will write to confirm whether you have the right to buy your home or not. At this time we also instruct an external valuer to carry out a current market value of your home. Upon receipt of the valuation, your discount entitlement will be calculated and an offer will be sent to you.

This will tell you the value of your property, less your discount entitlement, and the selling price.

As a tenant you have 12 weeks in which to consider if you wish to proceed with the purchase. Once you have confirmed that you do wish to buy the property, the papers are passed to our legal team which will then send out draft documentation to you or your solicitor.

Right to be consulted

If we want to make any major changes to the housing service, we must tell you and give you a chance to tell us what you think of the proposed changes. We will consult you in as many ways as possible.

Your full rights are detailed in your tenancy agreement; please read it and talk to a housing services officer if there is anything you don't understand.

6

Being a good neighbour



Being a good neighbour

As a tenant of South Cambridgeshire District Council, you must keep to the rules set out in your tenancy agreement. You must also do your best to make sure that everyone living with you, or visiting you, keeps to these rules. This means treating your home, your neighbours and the environment with respect.

It is a condition of your tenancy agreement that you do not cause a nuisance or disturbance to your neighbours. We take anti-social behaviour very seriously and will take action if it is necessary.

A widely used definition of anti-social behaviour is the definition contained in the Crime and Disorder Act (1998): 'Acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as (the defendant).'

South Cambridgeshire District Council will not tolerate any form of abuse, physical or verbal towards any of its employees or contractors working on behalf of the Council.

Unfortunately there are sometimes problems between neighbours, but there are steps you can take to prevent things from getting out of hand.

How to avoid neighbour disputes

Get to know your neighbours. If you are being disturbed by someone else's behaviour, politely ask them to stop or request that they put a time limit on it. Do not simply let the situation build up until you are angry.

Be considerate, tolerant and polite yourself. Remember, it is normal for babies to cry and children to play; this is normal life and the same for anyone, whether they are in social housing or private homes.

Encourage all members of your family and your visitors to be polite and considerate of others.

Make sure that your pets are well trained and that you clear up after them if they make a mess.

If you have to make a noise – for example, if you are putting up shelves – do it at a reasonable time of day. If you can, tell your neighbour what you are doing and explain how long the noise may last.

If you have a car, park it considerately and do not obstruct others. Keep your garden maintained and do not let rubbish accumulate.

If a problem persists

You should firstly contact your housing services officer. They will give you clear information on how to report harassment, nuisance and anti-social behaviour. All reports will be treated in confidence. Any report will be quickly and formally acknowledged. Investigations will start at the earliest possible date and all possible remedies will be explored including the use of mediation.

Contact the police if criminal activity is happening. In certain cases, we will take action leading to eviction and, where criminal activity has taken place, will press charges against the perpetrator.

Keep a written record of all incidences of the offending behaviour, making a note of the date, time and circumstances. The vast majority of reports of nuisance are dealt with through letter, visit, discussion or mediation, but some result in legal action. This can take the form of injunction or possession (eviction) action.

Note: If you are a nuisance to your neighbours you can lose your home.

SCDC has a dedicated team of Neighbourhood Support Officers who are specifically trained to deal with serious anti-social behaviour. Your housing services officer may refer your case to the team to consider enforcement action following government guidelines and the most appropriate current legislative orders available.

Domestic violence

We will act on any report of domestic violence promptly and sympathetically. We work in partnership with the police, and other agencies to support the victim and address the behaviour of the perpetrator including, if necessary, action leading to eviction and/or conviction.

If necessary we will provide alternative secure, safe accommodation for the victim.

Where children are affected, particular care will be taken to ensure their interests are taken into account. Where appropriate, we will

involve the local statutory, voluntary and other support agencies, provided that parental rights and wishes are followed (*unless the law requires us to act differently*).

Illegal or immoral use of your home

We take crime very seriously and will take the most appropriate action against any tenant who commits a serious offence in or near their property. This could result in eviction.

Vandalism

If you witness vandalism please report it to the Police, and to your housing services officer.

If you, anyone living with you, or anyone visiting you deliberately damages or defaces any part of your home, estate or anything belonging to South Cambridgeshire District Council or the adjoining owners, you will be recharged the cost of putting the matter right and you may also face action for breach of your tenancy conditions.

Litter and rubbish

We collect the rubbish regularly from every home in the area. Please put your rubbish out on collection day using the bins provided and make use of our recycling facilities.

To find out which day your rubbish is collected, please refer to our website, social media, the *South Cambs Magazine* or contact our environmental services team.

If you have large items to dispose of, there are tips at Butt Lane, Milton and Gravel Pit Hill, Thriplow. Alternatively you can call us on 03450 450 063 and our environmental services team can arrange collection at a charge for each item.

You must not dump rubbish in the street, in your garden or any other part of your estate or local environment. We want everyone to be proud of their home and locality.

Fly-tipping is an offence and we will prosecute offenders.

Pest control

You are responsible for pest control within your home.

We do not have an in-house pest control service, so you would need to arrange for a reputable company to help you with this. It is recommended you obtain three quotes from professionally qualified and accredited firms who have suitable insurance cover in place. As a guide, suitable contractors may be members of the British Pest Control Association (BPCA) or the National Pest Technicians Association (NPTA) or other appropriate professional bodies.

However, we will organise for any pest control issues in communal areas (such as communal areas in flat blocks or communal rooms) to be dealt with.

Our website also contains information and advice about pest control, which you can view at www.scams.gov.uk/services/pest-control.

Pets

We love animals and are happy for you to have one domestic pet without seeking our permission, if you live in a house or bungalow. They must be well looked after, not be dangerous and not cause a nuisance or health hazard.

Please don't let them foul on other people's gardens or any communal land or walkways. If they foul in a public place, please be responsible and clean it up.

If you live in a flat or maisonette you will need to request permission from us to keep any animal, reptile or bird.

If you live in a bungalow or house and want to have more than one pet, you would need to seek permission from us. Please download the 'Pet Permission Request Form' from our website or speak to your housing services officer and they will be happy to help you through the process.

We won't unreasonably withhold permission but we will need to consider a number of areas before we can provide our approval. These may include (but are not limited to):

- The size of the property
- The type of property

- The location of the property
- The type/breed of animal
- Access to open spaces

Tenants that live in a house or bungalow do not have to apply for permission for gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs or rabbits.

We will always allow a guide dog or hearing dog for a member of a household.

Cockerel(s) are not permitted to be kept in domestic gardens.

You (and anyone living with you) must not keep (or allow your visitors to bring into the area) any breed of dog specified as dangerous in the 'Dangerous Dogs Act 1991' or any animals registered under the 'Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976' (unless a court order has exempted them).

Aerials and satellite dishes

You may install a television aerial to your home, provided that you request our permission in advance and do not damage the structure of the property. You must not drill through window frames or doors.

If you want to erect a satellite dish you must also get permission from us in advance. In certain circumstances you may also need planning permission. The work must be carried out by an approved contractor and, if you leave the property, you must remove the dish and restore the property to its original condition.

Gardens

It is your responsibility to make sure your garden is tidy and in a reasonable condition. You must not use it to store rubbish or unwanted items of furniture.

Parking

Please park considerately. Do not park on grass or open spaces, including your garden, unless there is a dropped kerb and you have written permission and a properly constructed driveway.

If you want to build a driveway or carport you must get permission from us.



7

Sheltered housing

Sheltered housing

Services for older people

We recognise the value of older people in our community and want to ensure there are services and housing available to enable them to live the life they choose.

What is sheltered housing?

Sheltered Housing is for older people who want to lead an independent life in their own home. It is designed to provide independence in a secure and friendly environment. We manage 43 sheltered housing schemes in 30 villages throughout South Cambridgeshire. The schemes consist of groups of bungalows or flats, with communal facilities available on most schemes.

Where are our sheltered housing schemes?

Below is a list of the villages where we have sheltered housing schemes; the numbers are the number of properties in each village.

Arrington	20	Girton	73	Orwell	47
Balsham	24	Grantchester	43	Over	37
Bassingbourn	59	Harston	42	Papworth Everard	25
Barton	28	Haslingfield	23	Sawston	78
Bourn	31	Histon	95	Great Shelford	47
Comberton	41	Impington	44	Stapleford	33
Cottenham	126	Linton	48	Swavesey	25
Duxford	41	Longstanton	34	Waterbeach	63
Fulbourn	57	Melbourn	53	Whittlesford	47
Gamlingay	67	Meldreth	22	Willingham	64

Who is eligible?

Applications are welcome from people aged 60 or over. For a joint application, at least one of the applicants must be aged 60 or over.

Applicants below the age of 60 with a physical or other disability who may have a particular need for sheltered housing may be considered. You will be required to have an assessment to assess your eligibility for sheltered housing and a home visit by the sheltered estate service will take place. If your application is not successful you can request a review of the decision, which will be undertaken by the Sheltered Housing Manager.

The role of the Sheltered Estate Officer

The sheltered estate officer is there to provide you with support, deal with emergency situations and assist you to obtain and access other services you may require (such as home care, chiropody or the meals service). Sheltered estate officers are not on duty 24 hours a day and cannot provide nursing or home care services. However, they can be contacted between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

Here are some of the things they get involved in:

- management of the communal facilities at designated schemes.
- reporting and monitoring repairs relating to the communal facilities
- Assessing tenants' levels of need and if applicable refer onto the visiting support team.
- Facilitating communal activities for residents and older people in the community
- Viewings, sign-up and induction for new tenants and equity share leaseholders
- 6 and 36 week tenancy check visits
- Installing lifelines, equipment testing and collecting equipment
- Tenancy issues, estate management, grounds maintenance concerns and improvements
- Health and safety checks of communal buildings and areas
- Risk assessments
- Communal room bookings
- Well being checks

Sheltered estate officers do not collect pensions, collect prescriptions or administer medication. The sheltered estate officer will be able to offer advice to you and your family.

We are required to record and monitor the services that are provided to you to demonstrate that they are appropriate to your needs and wishes.

Will I be required to give the sheltered estate officer personal information?

When you move in, the sheltered estate officer will ask you for some personal details, such as your next of kin. These details will be kept strictly confidential. Your privacy will be respected at all times, but it would be helpful to have information on your medical condition, should an emergency situation arise. When you are away from your property, on holiday or in hospital, it is helpful if you let your sheltered estate officer know.

When is the sheltered estate officer on duty?

Sheltered estate officers normally work five days per week, generally Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am and 5pm.

Lifeline alarm units

Your sheltered estate officer will arrange to install a Lifeline unit to your landline telephone unit, a pendant comes with the unit. If this is pressed it calls through to our monitoring centre who will answer and contact the relevant emergency service or family member.

Your sheltered estate officer will explain the Lifeline system to you and answer any queries you may have.

Key safes are provided on the outside of all of our properties and enable quicker access to you in an emergency. Your sheltered estate officer will explain how they work and programme in a number of your choice. The number will be given to the monitoring centre who will only then give the number to authorised services, for example the police, ambulance or fire services in an emergency.

Please note you should make your insurance company aware that a key safe has been fitted to your property.

Testing Lifeline units and smoke alarms

- Your sheltered estate officer will test your Lifeline unit and smoke alarm monthly.
- If you have a smoke alarm only your sheltered estate officer will test this every three months along with a wellbeing check.
- You can choose to self-test on both of the above, speak to your sheltered estate office for more information.

What does the rent, service charge and support charge cover?

Residents of sheltered schemes are required to pay a weekly rent, support charge and service charge.

The support charge includes the following elements:

- alarm systems/pendants/smoke detectors
- sheltered housing service

The service charge includes:

- heating and lighting for the communal areas

You may be eligible for help with paying your support and service charges, depending on your circumstances. We can advise you about this before or after you move into your home.

Communal services

The costs of maintaining, paying for utilities and running communal areas are met through a weekly service charge. The types of service and facilities will vary at different schemes but may include the following:

- cleaning communal rooms, corridors, stairs, floors and windows in communal areas.
- maintaining communal gardens, lawns, shrubs and trees

Activities

Your sheltered estate officer will advise you about activities and tell you what is going on at the communal building.

The communal facilities are also used on occasions by outside organisations and sometimes for council purposes such as training and

meetings. Any outside organisations need to arrange a booking with the sheltered estate officer before they can use the facilities.

You may arrange a booking with your sheltered estate officer if you wish to use the room, for example, for a birthday or wedding anniversary celebration.

Please note that no animals, except guide or support dogs, are allowed in the communal facilities for health and safety reasons.

The council's no smoking policy applies in all communal areas including corridors.

Laundry facilities

The laundry is for residents' personal use only and is not for use by non-residents. If you have a carer, they may put the laundry in for you. Your sheltered estate officer will show you how to use the laundry and explain the rota system, if applicable.

Guest rooms

Some schemes have a furnished guest room in which your relatives or friends may stay overnight, for a small charge, either when on a social visit or at the times they are giving you support. If a friend or relative would like to use the room, this can be arranged through the sheltered estate officer.

Extra care housing

Extra care housing is for older people who are still able to live in the community but need both support and care to enable them to do so.

To find out more about extra care housing please contact our housing needs and options team.



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Other services

Other services

We provide housing management and maintenance as our core activity. We also provide a number of related services.

Housing advice and options service

All tenants experiencing housing difficulties that could potentially lead to homelessness, such as rent arrears, may contact the housing advice service. Housing advice officers can work with the rents service and your housing service officer to advise you appropriately with the aim of helping you to resolve your current difficulties.

Tenancy support services

We can offer a support service for those who find it difficult to keep to their tenancy agreement. This could include debt counselling, help with housing benefit claims, and help with filling out forms.

Garages and parking

We have a number of garages that are available to rent to tenants and local residents. If you are interested in checking availability, please visit our website and search for 'Garages' or give us a call.

Lifeline services

We operate a community lifeline service, which has proved to be extremely beneficial to many older and disabled residents living in the district. We hope to extend this valuable service to all age groups where a lifeline could help to promote independence, security and a sense of wellbeing.

In any emergency situation, such as the risk of falling or even an unwanted bogus caller at your door, the lifeline system enables help to be obtained quickly and simply by pressing a button on a small pendant which can conveniently be worn around the neck, or around the wrist on a strap.

The service is available to our tenants and the wider community.

If you would like further information about this service please get in touch:

Tel: 03450 450 051

Write to:

**South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park,
Cambourne, Cambridge, CB23 6EA**

Email: scdc@scambs.gov.uk

Alternatively information packs are available from most doctors' surgeries, district nurses, hospitals and social services.



9

Have your say

Have your say

Our commitment

We believe that tenant and leaseholder involvement is a vital part of making sure that we achieve our aim of providing the best possible housing service we can.

We have a small team of Resident Involvement staff that are on hand to support our tenants and leaseholders that would like to get involved in shaping our housing service.

You can get a lot out of being involved; you can learn new skills, meet new people and help shape and form strategies & policies that have a direct effect on the way your services are run.

If you are interested in getting involved, or would like to know a little bit more about resident involvement, please give our team a call on 03450 450 051 or e-mail them at resident.involvement@scambs.gov.uk.

Getting involved

We understand that not everyone is able to commit to becoming fully involved or attend every meeting in person.

There are lots of different ways to get involved and you can choose the area you would like to become involved and tailor it around your schedule. For example, if you know you won't be able to attend anything during working hours, we also offer digital only involvement where you may receive policy and strategy drafts that you will be able to provide comments on at a time that suits you.

A full list of ways you can get involved are on our website, but here are a few examples of the sort of thing that we do:

- Simply just read and respond to articles in the Tenant and Leaseholder News magazine, our Facebook housing group (www.facebook.com/groups/southcambridgeshirehousing) or any surveys we send out.
- Come along to our Housing Portfolio Holder meetings and observe the decision making around the provision of your housing service. See our website for dates and times – under Council & Democracy/ Committees & Meetings. All meetings

are held at our offices in Cambourne.

- Consider joining the Tenant Participation Group (TPG), which is our overarching tenant and leaseholder group.
- Join other tenants and leaseholders in the Scrutiny Review Team (SRT) which works with staff at the Council and acts as a critical friend to review areas of the housing service. You can check out previous projects that the team have completed by visiting our website.
- Come to a Sheltered Housing or Leaseholder Forum. These are held regularly and are open to all sheltered housing tenants and/or leaseholders. They discuss services and any items raised by tenants about their specific area. Suggestions for service improvements often arise from these meetings
- Become involved in focus groups and task & finish groups.
- Become involved in management groups that are responsible for monitoring contracts such as repairs and grounds maintenance
- Become a Village Voice - tenants that live in villages can act as a representative for the other tenants in that village.
- Visit the housing surgery for your area, dates of these are available on our website.
- Attend events run by the Resident Involvement team

To assist everyone to fully participate, we aim meetings to be flexible in terms of time and venue, with reasonable expenses being paid for travel (mileage allowance) and childcare arrangements (invoice from registered child minder). We can also provide taxis to and from meetings where there is no other reasonable means of attending.

We will consult and encourage participation from all our tenants and residents regardless of age, disability, gender or gender identity, race, religion or faith, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status.

Annual Report for Tenants

Our Annual Report for Tenants & Leaseholders' provides information

about our performance for each financial year; this is published on our website and paper copies are available upon request. We will announce when this is to be published within our 'Tenant & Leaseholder News' magazine.



10

Comments, compliments
and complaints

Comments, compliments and complaints

We have fully trained staff and aim to get things right first time.

However, we know that listening to your comments and complaints is a valuable way to improve service delivery. We are keen to know when you think we are doing things well and when you think things could be improved. We welcome any suggestions you may have.

Comments

If you think there is a way of improving or adding to our service to you, please tell us. We will listen to all comments and let you know whether or not it is possible to make the change you suggest.

Compliments

If we are doing something you like, we want to make sure we keep doing it that way so please tell us! If the compliment is for a particular member of staff, we will make sure they are told about it and it will be logged on their personnel record.

Complaints

We aim to get the service right first time, but if we don't succeed we want to hear from you.

There are several ways that you can log a complaint with us:

- you can email or write to us. This is the preferred method as it means that you can include as much detail as you feel is necessary
- you can fill in the online contact us form
- you can fill in a form at reception at the Cambourne offices
- via the telephone 03450 450 051 (*although it is easier to record information more accurately if your complaint is in writing*)

Once your comments have been received, we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days.

Your complaint will be passed to the appropriate service manager

who will then contact you within ten working days. If for any reason the investigation into your complaint will not be completed within ten working days, then you will be contacted and informed of progress and expected timescales.

The full complaints process can be viewed on our website, along with a leaflet that outlines the process.

Please contact us if you would like any further information or for a printed version of the leaflet.



Moving out



Moving out

Transfers

We would like tenants to have a home that best suits their needs. So, if your circumstances change (for example if your family becomes bigger or smaller), then you can ask to move into a different property.

There are always more people who want to live in our properties than there are vacancies, so we have to balance the needs of tenants who want to move with those who are waiting for a home. However, we will do all that we can to help.

Homes are allocated under the choice based lettings system called Home-Link.

Home-Link is a scheme offering more choice to housing register applicants across South Cambridgeshire and 6 neighbouring authorities. Home-Link choice based lettings (CBL) offers greater flexibility for applicants allowing them to consider properties from across all authority areas.

You can apply for housing by filling in the online application form or by contacting us if you need a paper copy.

All available properties are advertised weekly on the Home-Link website and applicants registered on the housing register may place a bid (expression of interest) for up to three properties. At the end of the advertising period a shortlist will be produced and the property will be offered to the applicant with the highest housing need who has expressed an interest in the property.

Priority is assessed through a banding system comprising of 4 housing need bands. Priority within each band is based on date order of applicants being placed in that band. Full details of the council's lettings policy are available on the website or at our office in Cambourne.

Contact details:

All housing register and Home-Link enquiries should be made to 03450 450 051 or cbl@scambs.gov.uk

If you feel you need to move urgently, please contact your housing services officer.

Mutual exchanges

Most social housing tenants on a secure, flexible or assured tenancy have the ability to swap their home with another council or housing association tenant - providing written consent is obtained from both landlords.

This can be really helpful if you are looking to move to be closer to family, work, amenities, if you are looking to downsize or if you are just looking for a more suitable property for you and your family.

We will endeavour to accept mutual exchange requests; however there are certain criteria that the exchanger must meet. An application can only be rejected on grounds outlined within Schedule 3 of the Housing Act (1985) and within Schedule 14 of the Localism Act (2011). Some of these grounds include (visit our website to view all of the grounds for refusal):

- have no rent arrears (there may be discretionary exceptions, e.g. for downsizing etc.)
- be on a secure, flexible or assured tenancy (introductory tenants or demoted tenants will not be able to carry out a mutual exchange)
- the property to apply to move to is suitable for your needs (i.e. not too big, or too small for your household)
- it is an adapted property which the incoming tenant does not require or is unsuitable for their needs
- the property is in a sheltered scheme and the incoming tenant does not require such accommodation
- the property is currently subject to a notice of seeking possession
- there are anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues

There are lots of things to consider and make yourself aware of before deciding upon seeking a mutual exchange. We've put together a leaflet that goes over the process, gives tips on creating good mutual exchange adverts, provides advice on health and safety considerations when arranging viewings and lots more. You can get this from our website or from your housing services officer.

If you would like to learn more about mutual exchanges please feel free to contact us and we will be happy to guide you through the process.

Leaving your home

Please give your housing services officer at least four weeks' notice, in writing, of your intention to move out of your home. Before you leave you must make sure that:

- gas and electrical supplies are safe and turned off
- you have taken readings from all meters
- you have informed all suppliers (gas, electricity, water, phone)
- you have told the council tax office and, if you receive any benefit, the housing benefit office
- your rent is paid up to date
- all of your belongings have been removed
- the property is in a good state of repair
- the property is clean
- you have locked all windows and external doors and have a key for each door lock
- you must hand your keys into our main office at Cambourne. If you are unable to do this you must contact your housing services officer

If you do not have the correct number of keys and/or if your home is not left in a reasonable condition then you may be liable for charges.

All rubbish must also be removed, as we will recharge for the disposal of it and any other items left in the property, garden or sheds.

Top tips to avoid recharges

Moving home can be exciting and stressful all at the same time. To try and remove some of the difficulties, we've put together a list of top tips to avoid any recharges when you leave one of our properties – as it is expected that it will be returned in a reasonable condition.

Once you have provided your housing services officer with notice that you will be leaving the property, they will arrange a 'pre-termination'

inspection. This is basically an appointment in which both your housing services officer and a member of our surveying team will come out to see you and go through the process of moving out. During this meeting you will be given a form that will outline the works that you will need to complete before handing the keys back over to us. Anything that is requested, but isn't done, may result in an invoice being sent to you for the costs incurred in South Cambridgeshire District Council having to complete the works.

Some of the more common requested tasks are listed below...

- Clear all rubbish from inside and outside the property (including the garden)
- Leave no surface holes in the walls, from hanging pictures etc
- All doors, radiators, bannisters etc. should be left in place
- Clean and tidy the property thoroughly, including the garden and cutting grass/hedges
- Any improvements to the property that you have made must have had written permission from South Cambridgeshire District Council
- Any sheds, greenhouses or outhouses that you have put up yourself should be removed (unless it is agreed that it can be left)
- Don't leave goods/items for the next incoming tenant. Even if you sell them, the workman may remove the items
- The decoration should be in a good condition, with no damage/discolouration from smoking etc
- Remove any dado rails, wood panelling, ceiling tiles etc. that you have installed since being in the property and make good decorations

Before you hand the keys back, try to take the time to make sure that all of the above items, and any other ones that are noted on your pre-term paperwork, are completed.

If you have any queries regarding recharges, please feel free to contact us on 03450 450 051.

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Other useful numbers



Other useful contacts

Please note that this is intended as a small helpful list of organisations that may provide useful information. We are not endorsing or recommending any organisation specifically.

Age UK	0800 169 2081 www.ageuk.org.uk
Alzheimers Society	0300 222 1122 www.alzheimers.org.uk
Cambridge Re-Use	01223 576 535
Cambridgeshire Bobby Scheme	01480 413 311 www.thebobbyscheme.org
Care Network (Cambridgeshire)	01954 211 919
Carers Trust (Cambridgeshire)	0345 241 0954 or 01480 499 090
Citizens Advice	03454 04 05 06 www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Emmaus	0300 303 7555 www.emmaus.org.uk
Get Safe Online	www.getsafeonline.org
Local Government Ombudsman	08456 021 983 or 0300 061 0614 advice@lgo.org.uk
MIND	0300 123 3393 www.mind.org.uk

National Debtline

0808 808 4000
www.nationaldebtline.org

Rainbow Saver Anglia Credit Union

www.rainbowsaver.co.uk

Royal British Legion

0808 802 8080
www.britishlegion.org.uk

Samaritans

116 123 (free - 24 hrs, 365 days)
www.samaritans.org

Notes:

Notes:

South Cambridgeshire District Council
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridgeshire
CB23 6EA

Tel: 03450 450 051
(Monday to Friday 8.00am to 5.30pm)

www.scambs.gov.uk