

Sheltered residents' handbook



Diverse communities – one vision



gateway
Group of Companies

300

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What is sheltered housing?

Sheltered housing is designed especially for people who are over 60 years of age. We have 17 sheltered housing schemes, including two schemes which are for people aged 55 or over.

Sheltered housing helps to remove the fear of isolation and loneliness that many people experience as they become older. Knowing that other people live in the same building in similar circumstances may help to relieve these fears.

Each scheme is made up of self-contained flats which have their own front door. A scheme manager will be on duty from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, to provide any extra support you may need.

Each flat is connected to an alarm service, which links to the scheme manager during the day and to a 24-hour call service when the scheme manager is off duty.

Each scheme has a communal lounge where residents can socialise and a shared laundry. Most schemes also have a garden for you to enjoy.

Vision for sheltered housing

At Gateway, we see a future where sheltered housing will add to the quality of life of any older person in Tower Hamlets by being a welcoming focal point, valued by the whole community, where people know they are respected and in control of the services they need.

This handbook will help you and your family to understand more about what sheltered housing is, the role of the scheme manager, and what type of support you can expect.

If you want this document in large print, in Braille, translated into another language or on tape, please call us on 020 8709 4300.



Standards of service

As your landlord, we will:

- provide a service that is available to everyone;
- continue to improve your home and the surrounding area;
- manage our organisation effectively to keep rents as low as possible and provide the best-value service we can, in line with Government guidelines;
- give you information about the estate services you receive, including cleaning and gardening;
- support community development initiatives;
- encourage you to take an active role in the work we do;
- give you information about how we set your rent, and how well we are providing services to you; and
- send you a copy of our residents' annual report.

We will only end your tenancy if you have not kept to the conditions of your tenancy. We will only evict you if we have proper authority from the courts.

Information about us

We will continue to:

- send out at least four newsletters each year, which will contain information about our work and performance;

- give you information and training on how you can get involved in our work;
- encourage you to set up a residents' association and give you ongoing support;
- give you plenty of notice if we need to carry out major repairs and improvements which affect your home, and consult and involve you during each stage of the work;
- regularly ask you for your views about the quality and standard of our services, and provide feedback; and
- produce a series of information leaflets, which will provide useful information on the following.

- Being a good neighbour
- Antisocial behaviour
- Major work
- Rent
- Domestic violence
- Estate services
- Parking
- Lettings
- Racial harassment
- The 'Right to Acquire'
- Repairs and maintenance
- Resident involvement
- Sheltered housing
- Moving to a new home
- Aids and adaptations
- Service charges

When you contact us, you can expect the following service.

If you phone us, we will:

- answer the phone between five and 10 rings;
- tell you who you are speaking to;
- be polite (and we also expect you to be polite to us);
- be available on the phones between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday;
- deal with your enquiry there and then, if we can;
- put you through to someone who can help, if the first person you speak to is not able to deal with your enquiry (if there is no-one available to help you, we will arrange for someone to call you back within one working day); and
- check our voicemails each day, and phone you back within one working day if you have left a message.

If you write to us or send us an email, we will:

- let you know, within two working days, that we have received it;
- send you a full response within 10 working days (if we need to look into the matter further, we will send you a letter within eight working days explaining why and when you will receive a full response);
- write in plain English;
- arrange for a translation if you need one;
- have the name and contact number of the person who is dealing with your enquiry printed clearly on the reply; and
- visit you at home within 10 working days if you have asked us to.

When you visit the office, we will:

- provide suitable access for everyone;
- be open between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday;
- make sure our reception area is clean and tidy;
- be polite and helpful and treat you with respect;
- make sure all our staff wear identification badges with their name and photo on;
- have a private room available for you to talk to us in;
- greet you when you arrive, or within five minutes if our customer service team is busy; and
- arrange for a member of staff to see you within 10 minutes if you do not have an appointment.

When we visit you in your home, we will:

- always wear identification;
- call at a reasonable time of day (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday), unless we have arranged a specific appointment with you;
- give you warning beforehand if we are not able to keep an appointment with you, and rearrange a convenient time as soon as possible;
- give you the opportunity to see a member of staff who is the same sex as you, if you ask;
- always confirm, in writing, any agreements or arrangements we have made with you;
- be polite and respectful at all times; and
- be sensitive to the different lifestyles of all our residents.

It is important that you let us know if your contact details change.



Your tenancy agreement is an important legal document, so you should keep it in a safe place. If you lose it, let us know and we will send you another copy.

The agreement sets out our rights and responsibilities as your landlord, and your rights and responsibilities as one of our residents.

The type of tenancy you have is printed on the front of the agreement. The main legal differences are between secure and assured tenancies, but we try to treat everyone the same if possible. The other main difference is in the way we set your rent. We explain this in the 'Rent' section of the handbook.

Your rights

As a tenant, you have the right to:

- stay in your home (known as 'security of tenure'), as long as you keep to the conditions of your tenancy agreement;
- live in your home peacefully;
- look at your file or any computer records we hold about you;

- use our formal complaints procedure if you are not happy with our service;
- receive compensation under certain circumstances, as set out in our compensation policy;
- expect us to keep information we have about you and your family confidential, unless you give us your permission, or we have a duty to the public to share it;
- swap your home with another Gateway resident, local-authority tenant or tenant of another registered social landlord, as long as you and they meet certain conditions; and
- receive a rent statement every three months.

You also have a number of legal rights as a tenant, which are explained in your tenancy agreement, in the Housing Corporation's tenant's charter and in this handbook.

Section 3

Your scheme manager



The scheme manager is usually on duty from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Your scheme manager will make sure that you have access to services and facilities that help you to stay independent. They will give you advice and information about the care you receive and help you get as much support as you need.

Your scheme manager is responsible for your scheme and monitors cleaning, gardening and repairs.

Daily duties

They will check on your wellbeing each day by calling you over the alarm system or visiting you at home, depending on which one you choose. You can choose not to have this daily call if you prefer.

If you are ill, they will contact your doctor (and your family, if they have your permission to do so) and will help to make the best arrangements for your care.

They will help you stay in contact with your relatives, and with social services, health services and other organisations that can help you.

If you want to talk, they are there. They will always respect your privacy and your right to confidentiality.

If you need a repair done, they can help you arrange it with our maintenance contractor.

If you need your home to be adapted to help you stay independent, your scheme manager can help by contacting social services and our maintenance contractor.

If you need help with other things, such as filling in a Housing Benefit form, they can provide this. They have information about the services available through social services and other health and voluntary organisations.

Social events

Scheme managers also organise activities for residents. There are often events, parties and trips that are run jointly with our other sheltered housing schemes.

Other services

Some schemes also have visits from a chiropodist, optician or hairdresser.

Support plans

Your support plan includes your health and social needs and aims to make sure that you are getting all the support you need.

You do not have to have a support plan, but we still need some basic details (such as your doctor's and your close relatives' details) so we know who to contact in emergencies.

We will review your support plan at least every six months, or more often if we need to. You can get a copy of the plan from your scheme manager.

Things your scheme manager will not do

Although scheme managers will do a lot of things for you and the scheme, there are some things they cannot do.

Scheme managers are not nurses, so they are not allowed to change dressings or give you any kind of medication. Instead, they will make arrangements with your doctor or the health authority (for example, arranging for the district nurse to visit you regularly).

Cooking and shopping is not part of your scheme manager's normal duties. However, if you urgently need a prescription, or cannot do your own shopping or cooking for a while because you are ill, they will try to arrange for someone to give you the help you need, whether this is a neighbour, family member or the home care service.

Cleaning

If you are finding it difficult to keep your home clean, you should speak to your scheme manager. They will try to arrange for social services to help.

Finance

Scheme managers are not qualified to give advice on your financial affairs, although they may give you general advice (such as the best way of receiving your pension or how to pay your rent). They can refer you to someone who will be able to help you.

Scheme managers may collect money for social events. You should always get a receipt for any money you have given to them. The scheme manager should always keep a record of the money they have collected, or make it clear how the money is being handled.

Gifts to staff

We hope you are happy with the service your scheme manager provides, but please do not offer them money or gifts as a way of saying thank you.

How you can help the scheme manager

You can do several things to make your scheme manager's job easier.

Personal information

Make sure they have all the information they may need if there is an emergency, such as how to contact your doctor and another person you choose (this could be a friend or relative).

Health problems

Make sure they have details about any special health problems that you think they should know about, such as if you're diabetic.

Holidays

Please let your scheme manager know when you are away. If there is a fire alarm or the building has to be evacuated, they will know not to look for you.

Security

Do not let anyone into your home or the scheme unless you know who they are and why they are coming. Make sure that the main entrance doors are shut at all times and ask your visitors to do the same.

Making a will

We strongly suggest that you make a will.

Your scheme manager can tell you where to get advice and information on making a will. However, they cannot act as an executor of your will (that is, the person who handles your financial affairs after you die) or give you advice on what to do with your belongings.

Access to information we hold about you

You have the right to ask to see information we hold about you. To do this, you need to put your request in

writing to the housing officer. We will allow you to see your file within a reasonable time.

Confidentiality and sharing information

We treat all information you give to us as confidential and we will only use it for the purpose we originally requested it for.

We may pass information you give us to others in the Association in order to provide you with a service.

We may share information with other agencies with your permission, if we have a legal duty or a public duty to do so, or if we need to do so to protect our rights.

Housing officer

Your housing officer will visit your scheme regularly and keep in contact with your scheme manager.

Your housing officer can give you advice on your rent account, tenancy matters and moving home.

If you need to see your housing officer, there are a number of ways you can do this. You can see them when they visit your scheme, or you can make an appointment to see them at the head office. You can also contact them by phone, email or letter.

More benefits of sheltered housing

Concessionary TV licence

As a resident of sheltered housing, you are entitled to a concessionary TV licence. This means that you pay less for your licence. The scheme manager will collect the money for this from you each year. Once you reach the age of 75, you are entitled to a free licence.

If you paid for a licence before you moved into sheltered housing, you can claim a refund for any full months left to run on your licence.

Laundry

Your scheme has a laundry with washing machines and tumble dryers. These facilities are only for residents to use and are covered by the service charge.

You will need to provide your own washing powder and fabric conditioner.

Phones

If you do not have a phone in your flat and you need to make a call, talk to your scheme manager.

Safety and security

If the scheme manager finds that you need emergency help, they will get it for you. If you do not respond to the daily

call and they do not know whether you are all right, they will use the spare key or master key to get into your home. The scheme manager will keep this key in a locked filing cabinet in their office. You can choose not to receive this service.

If you choose to receive this service, it **does not** mean that your scheme manager or the care alarm officers will enter your home without your permission or that your neighbours can get into your property.

It is a good idea for a friend or relative who lives nearby to hold a spare key. Because we have only a limited number of spare keys, you must let your scheme manager know who you have given a key to. This will also help keep your housing scheme secure.

Entry systems

Our sheltered housing schemes have a door-entry system so you can talk to visitors through an intercom (a type of speakerphone) before you open the door.

Do not let anyone into your home or the shared areas of the scheme unless you know who they are and why they are calling. Ask to see their identity cards if they say they are calling for a specific purpose. If the caller is genuine, they will not mind if you call their office to check they are who they say.

If you are concerned, let your scheme manager know immediately.

Section 5

Vulnerable adults



We will do everything we can to protect you from abuse.

There are many different types of abuse.

- **Physical abuse** – this may include hitting, pushing, kicking, shaking, and misusing medication.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity that a person does not understand or want.
- **Psychological abuse** – this includes threats of harm or abandonment, emotional or verbal abuse, humiliation and intimidation.
- **Financial abuse** – this may include theft, fraud, denying a person access to their money or belongings, or putting pressure on someone in connection with their inheritance or will.
- **Neglect** – this includes failing to provide health-care and social-care services or food, or ignoring someone's needs for medical or physical care.
- **Discrimination** – this includes any harassment associated with a person's race, sex, disability and so on.

What you should do

If you or someone you know is a victim of any form of abuse, it is important that you tell someone.

You can report abuse to us confidentially:

- by phone on 020 8709 4300;
- by speaking to your scheme manager or housing officer, or another member of staff;
- by pulling your alarm cord; or
- by writing to us at Gateway Housing Association, 409-413 Mile End Road, London, E3 4PB or sending us an email at enquiries@gatewayhousing.org.uk.

You can also call any of the following organisations.

- Social services
Phone: 020 7364 5005
- The police
Phone: 020 7515 1212
- Age Concern
Phone: 0800 00 99 66
- Tower Hamlets Supporting People team
Phone: 020 7364 7016
- Action on Elder Abuse
Phone: 0808 808 8141
- Dignify
Phone: 020 7392 2976

These agencies will work with you and other people to make sure you are safe.

If you want a copy of our policy on vulnerable adults, please call us on 020 8709 4300.

Some do's and don'ts for sheltered housing

Pets

You can keep a small bird or fish, but you must have our written permission for any other animal.

Please ask your housing officer to see our pet policy for more information.

Door locks and chains

Please do not fit extra locks to your front door.

If you want to fit a door chain, you must first get our written permission. You should also remember that:

- locks and chains may prevent help getting to you if you need it; and

- you must cover the cost of repairing any damage if we need to force our way into your home in an emergency.

If you are concerned about your security, please speak to your scheme manager.

Visitors

We are happy for people to visit you at any time. But you are responsible for making sure that your visitors do not cause a nuisance or annoy your neighbours.

If your visitors behave in an unacceptable way, the scheme manager has the right to ask them to leave.



Section 7

Communal facilities



Lounge

Most of our schemes have a communal lounge. The lounge is for residents to use, but people who live in the surrounding area can join in any activities if they have been invited.

The lounge is for regular activities such as coffee mornings or bingo, as well as a place for you to socialise.

In some schemes you may be able to use the lounge for a private party. Please speak to your scheme manager to arrange this.

We will let you know if the lounge is not available for any reason.

Social activities

We try to arrange social activities for residents, and cater for a wide range of interests. Many events and trips are run jointly with our other sheltered housing schemes.

You can organise your own activities too. If you have any ideas or want to help with any activities, talk to your scheme manager.

You do not need to join in activities or events if you do not want to.

Shared gardens

Our contractors look after any shared gardens and grounds. If you want to do some planting, you will usually be able to. Just ask your scheme manager.

Guest rooms

Many of our sheltered housing schemes have guest rooms for relatives or friends who want to stay overnight. Please ask your scheme manager for more details.

We will give priority to people who need to stay to look after residents who are ill.

How long can I book the guest room for?

You can book the guest room for up to two weeks. However, the stay can be longer if you are ill and need more support, or if your visitor lives far away and they cannot visit you regularly.

How much does it cost?

There is a small charge for using the guest room. Your scheme manager will be able to tell you what this is.

How do I book?

Discuss your guest-room booking with your scheme manager. They will be able to check when the room is available and deal with any extra requests you may have.

You and your guest are responsible for keeping the room clean and tidy.

Health and safety

We want you to stay safe in your home and sheltered housing scheme.

Fire precautions

We test the fire alarms every week. We also have a fire drill once a year to find out how people respond. If you don't know what to do in an emergency, please ask your scheme manager.

All schemes have a 'stay-put procedure' for all residents. This means that you should **stay** in your flat, unless:

- the fire is in your flat;
- you are in one of the shared areas; or
- you are in danger.

Please do not prop open any fire doors and do not interfere with or remove the self-closing system on the doors inside the scheme. They are designed to stop any fire from spreading. Do not use the lift if there is a fire.

Other safety matters

To help keep everyone safe, do not leave wheelchairs, walking frames and walking sticks or bags of rubbish outside your home.

If you have any concerns about safety, please discuss them with your scheme manager.

Risk assessment

Each scheme has a health and safety manual, which sets out how often health and safety inspections and risk assessments should take place.

Your scheme manager is responsible for making sure health and safety inspections and risk assessments take place.

Section 9

Moving in



When you first move into your home, your scheme manager will welcome you and show you around the shared areas. They will explain the 'Care Alarm' system and other facilities, and tell you about the local services and social activities. They will ask you for the name, address and phone number of your doctors, your relatives or anyone we should contact in an emergency.

Once you are a tenant

Your scheme manager will check on your wellbeing each day. We encourage you to agree to this, but you can choose not to have this call if you prefer.

Furnishing your home

Furniture agencies

There are organisations that offer furniture at reduced prices to people who are on low incomes. Contact us if you want to find out more.

Carpets

If you have people living in flats below you, it is important to have carpets in your home. Bare or wooden floors can cause noise and disturb your neighbours.

You must get our permission before you lay laminate flooring if you live above someone else.

Rubbish

If you have a lot of rubbish after you move in, you will need to arrange a bulk rubbish collection. Ask your scheme manager about this.

Getting connected

Electricity and phone

Your electricity supply should be connected when you move in.

In some schemes, the heating and hot water is covered by your service charge, while in others you may have to contact the power companies to let them know you have moved in. Your scheme manager will be able to tell you what happens in your scheme.

If your new home has a phone, you should arrange to transfer it to your name.

Water

Your water rates are included in your service charge. Your Housing Benefit does not cover water costs.

Council tax

You will not automatically get bills for council tax. It's your job to tell the council that you have moved in. It's better to sort this out quickly as you

could face a huge bill later if you do nothing. Your housing officer will help you with this.

Here to help

We are here to help you with any problems you may have. If there's anything you don't understand, or if you need any help or advice, ask your scheme manager or call us on 020 8709 4300.



Section 10

Repairs and maintenance



If you report a repair to us, we will:

- send the repair request to our contractor within one working day;
- give your repair a priority code and let you know when we will have completed the work by;
- offer you either a morning or afternoon appointment (we can avoid school-run times, if you ask us to);
- offer you an appointment, within seven working days, if we need to carry out an inspection before we do any repairs;
- leave your home clean and tidy after doing the repair;
- inspect the repair, if we need to, within 20 working days of doing the work;
- make sure that all our contractors keep to our code of conduct for contractors (you can get this by phoning us on 020 8709 4300);
- send you a repair satisfaction questionnaire, which you can fill in to tell us how satisfied you are with the repair; and
- carry out an investigation if you are not happy with the repair, and tell you what we plan to do to sort out the problem.

We will fully meet our legal duties as your landlord and make sure that your home is in good condition.

To report a repair

You must tell us about any repairs as soon as possible.

- Phone our customer services team on 020 8709 4300 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.
- Email any repairs that are not urgent to repairs@gatewayhousing.org.uk.
- Report the repairs at our office.
- Tell your scheme manager or caretaker, who will report the repairs for you.
- Write to us at our head office, Gateway Housing Association, 409-413 Mile End Road, London, E3 4PB (only for repairs that are not urgent).

If you have an emergency out of office hours, call **0800 086 6064**.

You have a right to expect us to do repair work efficiently when you report a problem in your home. We are committed to improving the service all the time.

When we have done the work, we will send you a repairs satisfaction questionnaire to find out if you are satisfied. Please fill it in and return it to us.

Our responsibilities

We will:

- keep the structure and the outside of your home in good condition;
- repair fixtures and fittings inside your home, such as kitchen units, doors, pipes and heating;

- make sure that water and electricity are supplied safely and that waste is taken away properly; and
- repair and maintain shared areas such as landings, stairways, communal lounges and shared entrances.

Your responsibilities

You should keep the inside of your home in good condition. Make sure that you or your visitors don't damage your home either accidentally or deliberately.

Please read our repairs and maintenance leaflet for more information.

Emergency repairs

If you need an emergency repair outside office hours or over a holiday period, you should call our emergency repairs hotline on 0800 085 9922.

Please report urgent problems straight away. These could be a threat to your health and safety, make your home dangerous or cause serious damage.

Please read our repairs and maintenance leaflet for more information.

Charges for deliberate damage

If you have caused deliberate damage to your home and need a repair, we will charge you for this work.

Improving your home

If you want to carry out improvement work to your home (for example, fitting a new kitchen or bathroom), you must give us details, in writing. We will then decide whether to give you our written permission to do the work. You must not do any work until you have our permission.

Aids and adaptations

We can provide aids and adaptations if you need help to live in your home. Examples of these aids and adaptations include hand rails, or a shower that is the same level as the floor so it is easier to get in and out of.

Please read our aids and adaptations leaflet for more information.

Satellite dishes

You are not allowed to put up a satellite dish without our written permission.

Security gates

We do not allow security gates to be fitted on any of our homes. This is because you could become trapped inside a property if there is an emergency (for example, a fire).

Home contents insurance

You should take out home contents insurance to get things replaced if they're damaged or stolen. Ask your scheme manager or housing officer for more details.

Burglaries

If you need a repair after a burglary in your home, you need to give us the crime reference number (available from the police).

Estate inspections

Your housing officer will inspect your scheme regularly. You can accompany your housing officer on these inspections if you want to.

We hold meetings with residents' groups throughout the year so you can tell us if we are providing our services to a good standard. You can have your say at any time – just tell your housing officer if you think we could improve the services.

Getting involved



We encourage you to get involved in our activities and decision-making processes.

We want to give you as many opportunities as possible to have your say in how we run the service. There are many ways for you to get involved.

Consulting you

If we plan to change or improve the way we run the service, we will tell you what we want to do and ask you what you think, before we make a decision.

We will consult you in the most appropriate way for where you live. This could include:

- talking to your residents' group;
- calling a meeting of all the residents in your scheme;
- sending a letter to everyone concerned; or
- a combination of these.

Getting your views

We regularly carry out residents' satisfaction surveys to find out what you think about us and the services we provide. We use feedback from this survey to improve how we work.

Starting or joining a residents' group

Residents' groups represent your interests and can help bring communities together. Sometimes you may choose to campaign around a common issue, at other times you may want to organise fun days and social events.

We provide support so residents' groups can run effectively and get things done. We also offer a small grant if your group meets our policy of being open, fair and democratic (that is, where anyone can join and where everyone is entitled to have their say).

Tenant involvement group (TIG)

Each of our sheltered schemes has a tenant involvement group (TIG) who get together to sort out any issues people in your scheme or community are worried about. You can also put your views across and suggest improvements to our services, as well as organising social activities and outings. The TIG is open to all residents in your scheme.

Sheltered Housing Forum

The Sheltered Housing Forum meets every three months. It aims to represent residents from all our sheltered schemes. We will display notices of meetings on the noticeboards in your sheltered scheme two weeks before each meeting.

The Sheltered Housing Forum aims to:

- help arrange joint social activities;
- improve the services we provide to sheltered residents;
- share information between schemes, and highlight areas where we can improve; and
- provide information and advice for all residents.

Residents' Forum

The Residents' Forum is a group of residents who meet regularly with senior managers and other officers to discuss issues that matter to them. It also awards money from the community chest (a fund where you can apply for money for community events or projects) and approves the environmental improvements grant programme for the year.

We will provide support – including training, advice and resources – if you want to become a member of the Residents' Forum.

Residents' Panel

The Residents' Panel is a new group we are setting up to give you an opportunity to influence the decisions we make about the main aims of our business. We will provide training and support if you want to join the panel. You will also need to take part in a formal interview before you can join. The panel will meet every two months.

(This information is correct at the time of printing – summer 2008.)

100 Club

The 100 Club is a questionnaire we send out to members every three months, asking about one area of our service. Each questionnaire only takes about 10 minutes to fill in.

Focus groups

We hold focus groups whenever we want to look at specific areas of our service. People who attend give their opinion on how we are performing and how we can improve the service.

To join or find out more about any of these opportunities to get involved, please call the resident involvement team on 020 8709 4300 or email involvement@gatewayhousing.org.uk.

Rent and money matters



Your rent

We use your rent in four ways.

- 1 To repair your home when things go wrong or need replacing.
- 2 To pay for the housing management service.
- 3 To help repay loans we used to build new homes and update older ones.
- 4 We also use some of the money for larger repair work we sometimes carry out, such as replacing roofs or window frames.

The tenancy agreement you sign when you first move in tells you how much rent you should pay.

We do not make a profit from your rent.

How we work out your rent

Your rent depends on:

- how many bedrooms your home has;
- how old it is;
- where it is;
- the condition it is in; and
- what facilities it has.

Service charges

You will pay an amount on top of your rent for services we provide. This is called a **service charge**. The services are usually for all residents in your scheme.

If we are likely to change a service or how much it costs, we will try to involve you and your neighbours to find out if you think you are getting good value for money.

Below is a list of items that could be included in your service charge statement.

- Scheme manager
- Gardening
- Window cleaning (shared areas)
- Bin hire and rubbish collections
- Small items
 - Light bulbs for shared areas
 - Water rates for shared areas
 - Replacing electrical equipment, such as a cooker or fridge
 - Lift insurance
- Our heating, water and lighting costs
- Cleaning
- Servicing and repairs
 - Our lighting
 - Water treatment
 - Lifts
 - Carpets and furniture in shared areas
 - Fire and smoke alarms
 - Entry phones
 - CCTV
 - TV aerial
 - Firefighting equipment
 - Cookers and fridges
 - Washing machine and dryers
 - Other

▪ Administration charge

▪ Replacement costs

For example, lifts, emergency lighting, warden-call systems, door-entry systems, fire equipment.

For services where prices are affected by inflation (such as heating and lighting), we will use the latest available retail price index.

If we charge you too much or little for any year, we will pay or charge you the difference in the following year's service charge budget.

When we change the amount you have to pay for your services, we will give you one month's notice, in writing.

Our responsibilities

We have a duty, by law, to consult you and give you information about the cost of the service charge you pay and what this cost involves.

We must give you:

- a yearly summary of your service charge compared to the income for your scheme for that year;
- any documents about the summary of your service charge costs, if you ask for them; and
- a statement, if you ask for one.

Paying your rent

Your rent is due every Monday. You should pay each week or each month for the week or month that follows. When you first move in, we will give you a rent payment card which you can use to pay your rent.

We offer a wide range of ways to pay.

From your bank account

You can set up a regular payment from your bank account by standing order or direct debit. Please call us on 020 8709 4300 to set this up.

Online at allpayments.net

You can pay your rent online at www.allpayments.net.

Simply log on, enter your rent payment card number and follow the instructions.

By phone - automated service

You can pay your rent over the phone. Call 0870 243 6040 and follow the instructions. Make sure you have your rent payment card and debit card ready when you call. When you are asked to, enter your allpay.net account number. (This is the 19-digit number on the front of your rent payment card.)

By Phone – Call pay

Our staff are now trained to take payment over the phone. Simply call 020 8709 4300 with your rent card number or tenancy reference number. You can pay any amount up to £4,000 by credit or debit card. If the bank authorises your payment, we will give you a confirmation number.

By text

You can also pay your rent by text message. Go to www.allpayments.net/textpay to setup your account. Then text 'pay', the amount and your code and password to 81025.

Where you can use your rent card to pay



Where?	In cash	By cheque	By debit card
Any post office	Yes	Yes	No
Anywhere that displays the PayPoint sign	Yes	Some	No
Anywhere that displays the PAYzone sign	Yes	Some	Some
Anywhere that displays the e-pay logo	Yes	Some	Some

If Housing Benefit only pays some of your rent, you will need to pay the rest using one of the methods above.

Help to pay your rent

You may be eligible for Housing Benefit to help pay for some or all of your rent. This will depend on your income and how much you have in savings. The council's Housing Benefit office will give you a form to fill in.

How can I check my rent account?

We will send you a rent statement every three months. It tells you how much you have paid and how much you owe us.

If you want to know how your account stands at other times, call us on 020 8709 4300 and ask for the 'current balance' of your rent account.

What happens if I don't pay?

If you fall behind with your rent, you can make an agreement with us to pay off what you owe in extra amounts each week. But we will take legal action against you if you refuse to clear your debt – you may even lose your home.

Talk to us

Contact us if you get behind with the rent. We can help you to arrange to pay off any debt. If you are struggling to find the money to pay, talk to us straight away – by keeping the problem to yourself, the debt is likely to get worse.

Expert help

Ask your housing officer or scheme manager for help. They will:

- check if you're entitled to benefits;
- make sure you're getting all the right benefits;
- give you claim forms and help you fill them in;
- explain the benefit rules; and
- give you advice on how to manage your cash.

We can also refer you for independent debt counselling called Money Matters. This is free and totally confidential. They will be able to give you expert advice on benefits, help you with debt problems and help you to manage your money. Ask your housing officer for more information.

Supporting People

Supporting People is a way of paying for housing-related support services. It pays for some of the cost of your scheme manager's salary and the care alarm system. You pay a Supporting People charge as a separate amount on top of your rent and service charge.

The Supporting People charge varies from scheme to scheme, depending on how much it costs to provide the support in each scheme.

How does Supporting People affect me?

This depends on whether you are entitled to help towards your housing costs. If you claim and receive any Housing Benefit towards your rent and service charge, you do not have to pay the Supporting People charge. Instead, we receive the charge on your behalf direct from the council.

If you do not get Housing Benefit, you are responsible for paying the Supporting People charge with your weekly rent and service charge.



Section 13

Being a good neighbour

You have the right to enjoy your home quietly and peacefully. You must not make too much noise, be a nuisance or disturb your neighbours. You should make sure that anyone who visits your home behaves in a reasonable way.

We expect all our residents to consider their neighbours. It is part of your tenancy agreement that you do not cause a nuisance to your neighbours.

Antisocial behaviour

To see a statement of our policy on antisocial behaviour, go to appendix 1 on page 30.

Antisocial behaviour can take many forms, including the following.

- Loud noise
- Verbal abuse, harassment, intimidation or threatening behaviour

- Hate-related incidents (based on someone's race, sexuality, religion and so on)
- Disputes between neighbours
- Nuisance from pets or other animals
- Alcohol and drug abuse and drug-dealing
- Domestic abuse and violence
- Physical violence
- Graffiti and vandalism
- Litter, rubbish and fly-tipping (dumping rubbish illegally)
- Garden nuisance (for example, letting your garden become very overgrown)
- Misusing shared areas and public spaces (for example, loitering)
- Prostitution, sexual acts and kerb-crawling
- Other criminal behaviour or crimes not described above

You are responsible for your own behaviour and the behaviour of children and other adults who live with or visit you.

Your tenancy agreement says you **'must not behave in a manner which causes or is likely or capable of causing harassment, alarm and distress to others'**.

We will take action against you if you break your tenancy agreement.

Please read our leaflet on antisocial behaviour for more information.

Disputes between neighbours

We try to deal with neighbourhood disputes in an informal way. If this is not possible, we will arrange mediation between you and your neighbour. This is where a counsellor talks to you both to help you reach an agreement.

Legal action

We may give a formal warning to the person who has committed the offence. In serious cases, we will consider taking legal action against anyone who continues to cause a nuisance to their neighbours. This could mean evicting that person from their home.

Please read our leaflet on antisocial behaviour for more information.

Domestic violence

If you, or someone you know, are a victim of domestic violence and you live in one of our schemes, please contact us. We can help you. We will give you advice and details of specialist organisations that can help. We will keep the details of your case confidential.

Remember, domestic violence is a crime. Always phone 999 in an emergency.

Please read our leaflet on domestic violence for more information.

Moving home

We believe that you should have every chance to move when you need to.

Moving to another social housing home

To transfer to another of our homes, or a home provided by a London Borough of Tower Hamlets Common Housing Register Partner, you will need to register by filling in an application form. Please ask your housing officer for a form.

Once you are registered, you can apply for homes advertised in **East End Life** or on www.thhs.org.uk. Properties are also advertised in Tower Hamlets one-stop shops.

For a copy of our lettings policy, call us on 020 8709 4300.

Moving to extra care

These schemes provide accommodation and support for frail older people in a high-standard, purpose-built facility.

A specially trained team of care staff are on-site 24 hours a day to provide personal care and domestic help for tenants. If you are finding it difficult to manage and would like to know more about moving to another type of accommodation which would better meet your needs, your scheme manager

can help by referring you to the council's Social Care team.

Moving to another part of the country

Seaside and Country Homes is a scheme where you can move from London to a home in a rural or seaside area. Ask your housing officer for more details.

Ending your tenancy

You must tell us at least four weeks before you move out of your home. You must fill in a 'Notice of Termination of Tenancy Form', which you can get from your housing officer or scheme manager. Please ask them for advice.

You must return all your keys (including meter cupboard keys) to us when you move out.

Please make sure you do not leave anything behind, and that you leave your home clean and tidy and in good condition. If it is damaged or needs redecorating, you may have to pay for us to put it right.

You must make sure that you have cleared your rent account and do not owe us any money.

Please let us know your new address in case we need to contact you.

Making a complaint



We make every effort to keep our standards high. However, there may be times when our services do not meet your expectations.

Your opinions are very important to us and we want to hear from you if you feel that we have got something wrong or failed to provide a service to a high enough standard.

By using our complaints process, you can give us the opportunity to put things right quickly and effectively.

How to make a complaint

We accept complaints in any of the following ways.

- **Phone** – call our complaints number on 020 8709 4414. We will record your call.
- **Letter** – write to Gateway, 409-13 Mile End Road, London, E3 4PB.
- **In person** – at our head office (as above). We will also accept complaints from another person on your behalf.
- **Email** – send your email to complaints@gatewayhousing.org.uk
- **Website** – visit www.gatewayhousing.org.uk and click on ‘make a complaint’.

Help with making a complaint

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to make a complaint. If you ask, we will provide:

- translations of this leaflet into other languages;
- an interpreting service by phone;
- this leaflet in large print, in Braille or on audio tape; and
- home visits, if you find it difficult to leave your home.

It helps us if you fill in a complaints form as it is more likely we will get all the information we need.

We define a complaint as:

‘any dissatisfaction about something we have or have not done, or the standard of service we have provided or someone else has provided on our behalf’.

You can also report your complaint to Supporting People if you are not happy with our response. Citizens Advice or another independent advice centre can also give you advice. Please read our ‘How to make a complaint’ leaflet for more information



Section 16

Equality and diversity

We believe that the services we provide should be available to people from all sections of the community. No-one should be at a disadvantage because of their race, colour, ethnic background, religious beliefs, age, sex, sexuality, appearance, physical disability or marital status.

We work to policies that make sure we consider equality and diversity (people's differences) in how we manage the services we provide, and in how our staff provide those services.

To provide equal access to our services, we can translate information into your language and we use interpreters when they are needed. We use a service called Language Line who provide interpreting for all languages when we speak to you over the phone or in a face to face interview.

At our Asian and Somali elders sheltered housing scheme, we will employ people who speak the relevant languages (Bengali at Mosque Tower and Somali at Bustaan Radaa).

We also carry out regular ethnic monitoring (checking whether our staff represent the community we work in) and provide diversity training for all staff.

We do not accept any form of harassment, and you would be breaking your tenancy agreement if you harassed someone. We have a clear procedure for dealing with harassment – there is more information in our 'Harassment' leaflet.

If you think you are a victim of harassment, please call us on 020 8709 4300.



Diverse communities – one vision

Appendix 1

Statement of our policy on antisocial behaviour

- 1** We will deal with reported antisocial behaviour effectively and efficiently.
- 2** Our antisocial behaviour policy clearly sets out our position on antisocial behaviour.
- 3** We will not accept antisocial behaviour when it is causing misery, distress or damage to residents and the environment.
- 4** We will take a firm approach towards antisocial behaviour.
- 5** We will work with other agencies to achieve the best outcome.
- 6** Our staff are trained to know which options are available to you.
- 7** We use measures which aim to prevent antisocial behaviour as early as possible. This is to stop the number of reported antisocial behaviour cases growing.
- 8** We have a wide range of ways to deal with antisocial behaviour quickly.
- 9** We support you to make a complaint and provide ongoing support if you need to go to court.
- 10** We review and monitor all antisocial behaviour cases and keep you up to date with our progress.
- 11** We monitor and report how effective our antisocial behaviour policies and procedures are by recording statistics, producing performance reports and carrying out regular reviews.

Useful contacts

Gateway customer services	020 8709 4300
Gateway out-of-hours emergency repairs hotline	0800 085 9922
Tower Hamlets Council	020 7364 5000
Social services – older people	020 7364 3838
Supporting People (Tower Hamlets)	020 7364 7016
Housing Benefit	020 7364 5001
Council tax	020 7364 5002
Bulk rubbish collection	020 7364 5004
Noise nuisance	020 7364 5007
Allpay.net (for paying your rent)	0870 243 6040
Police	020 7515 1212
Transco (if you smell gas)	0800 111 999
Age Concern	020 8981 7124
Citizens Advice	0870 126 4014
Action on Elder Abuse	0808 808 8141
Dignify	020 7392 2976

Homeswapper Email: tenants@homeswapper.co.uk
Website: www.homeswapper.co.uk



Gateway Housing Association
409-413 Mile End Road, London E3 4PB

Phone

Residents: 020 8709 4300

General enquiries: 020 8909 4409

Fax 020 8709 4400

Email enquiries@gatewayhousing.org.uk

Website www.gatewayhousing.org.uk

