



West Lancashire
Borough Council



TENANT HANDBOOK 2026

This handbook should be read in conjunction with the tenancy agreement. It is numbered to reflect the sections in the agreement to offer supplementary information.

1.1 Introduction

Your Tenancy Agreement

One of the first and most important things that you will be asked to do is sign your tenancy agreement. It is a legal contract between you, as the tenant, and West Lancashire Borough Council, as your landlord.

It is important you take time to read your tenancy agreement. If you breach the conditions in the agreement it could lead to an order for repossession of your home or other legal action against you. The document sets out clearly what you need to do, the things you are not allowed to do and the things your landlord will do.

Types of Tenancy

Introductory Tenancy

Unless a new tenant (or one party to a joint tenancy) already has a secure tenancy, or another social housing equivalent such as an assured non shorthold tenancy, the Council will grant an introductory tenancy for a trial period which lasts for a year. During the trial period, it is easier to evict you if you break the terms of your tenancy.

Your Introductory tenancy will automatically become a secure tenancy at the end of the year if there have been no issues with your tenancy.

The trial period can however be extended for another six months if you do not fully comply with the tenancy terms e.g. running up rent arrears.

As an Introductory tenant you will not be able to do the following:

- Exchange
- Buy your home
- Make alterations and improvements
- Take in lodgers
- Sublet your home

Secure Tenancies

A Secure Tenancy gives you additional rights. A Secure Tenancy is not for a fixed length of time; it can carry on indefinitely. You can end your tenancy by giving 4 weeks' notice in writing. The Council can only end a Secure Tenancy if you breach the tenancy agreement and would have to go through the court before they can evict you.

Joint Tenancies

We will only grant a joint tenancy to spouses, partners or cohabiters. We will not normally grant a joint tenancy to more than two people or to family members for example a brother and sister, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Moving In

New tenancy Contacts

We aim to contact all new tenants within the first six weeks to find out how you are settling in. This is also a chance for you to raise any questions or concerns you may have. In particular, we need to:

- Check the right people have moved in
- Make sure you understand your responsibilities as a tenant and are complying with your tenancy conditions
- Find out if you need any extra support
- Identify any issues with the property

Allowing access to your property is a condition of the tenancy to allow us for example to carry out a new tenancy visit. You will receive a letter once you have moved in letting you know the date and time of the appointment. You will be visited as part of the Tenancy audit process

Supporting Vulnerable Tenants: Our Approach

We aim to support those who may be facing short-term or long-term challenges that may affect the ability to manage a tenancy. These challenges may arise from personal circumstances or vulnerabilities.

All staff are expected to stay alert to signs of vulnerability. This could come from information shared by you or during routine work, such as home visits or calls.

- Where we can we use alerts to flag potential vulnerabilities and adjust our processes
- We keep records of known vulnerabilities, communication or access needs, and details of anyone authorised to speak/act on your behalf (e.g. a family member or support worker).
- This helps staff deliver services with full awareness of any additional needs you may have.

Customers are asked about any communication needs at the tenancy sign up and at other opportunities during the tenancy. When needed we will make documents available in other languages and formats such as large print and audio or use sign language interpreter or language interpreters.

Please contact your Housing Officer or visit our website www.westlincs.gov.uk/access or telephone Customer Services on 01695 577177.

We visit all tenants at regular intervals to make sure we have up to date information and understand their needs.

Each service area will consider what extra help or adjustments may be needed for vulnerable tenants depending on individual circumstances.

Safeguarding

If we have concerns about a tenant's safety, or any one in the home we will report them in line with our Safeguarding Policy. This means vulnerable adults and children are supported and that statutory agencies are involved promptly.

Our Responsibilities to you

3. Your Rights as an Introductory Tenant

3.2 Succession

Successions

Joint Tenancy

In cases where one joint tenant dies, the remaining tenant will take the tenancy on the same terms and this will count as a succession under the 1985 Act. A tenancy can only be passed over under succession once.

Spouse

On the death of a sole tenant who is not a successor themselves the Secure or Introductory tenancy will pass to their spouse, whether or not the couple are married, and including same sex spouses, so long as:

- The spouse occupied the property as his or her only or principal home at the time of your death.

The 'spouse' means the person who was living with you as your wife or husband.

In cases of succession by a spouse to an Introductory tenancy, any qualifying successor would succeed to the remaining period of the Introductory Tenancy, which would then become secure at the end of that period.

Other Family Members

Where the tenancy is Secure and began before 1st April 2012 family members are allowed to succeed the tenancy under the 1985 Act, so long as the below clauses A and B are complied with.

Where the tenancy is an Introductory or secure tenancy, family members may be allowed to succeed the tenancy under the 1996 Act, so long as the below clauses A and B are complied with.

- a) In all cases, the deceased tenant must not have been a successor him/herself.
- b) In all cases, the family member must have occupied the property as his/her only principal home at the time of your death and for at least twelve months prior to your death.

In cases of succession by a family member to an Introductory tenancy, any qualifying successor would succeed to the remaining period of the Introductory tenancy, which would then become secure at the end of that period.

Minors

A minor (an individual under the age of 18) may succeed to a tenancy where they meet the succession eligibility criteria outlined above. However, as a minor cannot legally hold a

tenancy, the succession will result in an equitable tenancy being held on trust for the minor until they attain the age of 18.

A relevant legal guardian must act as Trustee for the minor and enter into a Deed of Trust with the Council until the minor attains the age of 18 in order for the succession to apply. The Council will only allow a succession to a minor under the age of 16 where it is legally obliged to do so and where appropriate support and safeguards are in place.

3.3 Assignment

Assignment means legally transferring a tenancy from one person to another. Secure tenants may have the right to assign their tenancy to someone else under the following circumstances:

- a) By way of a Mutual Exchange (A Mutual Exchange will not extinguish a tenant's right to use the one right of assignment under the tenancy, if applicable) – not applicable if Introductory tenant.
- b) By way of a property transfer made by a Court in connection with matrimonial proceedings; or
- c) By way of an assignment to a person who would qualify to succeed the tenancy if you died immediately before the assignment.

Introductory tenants have the right to assign their tenancy to someone else under the following circumstances:

- a) By way of a property transfer made by a Court in connection with matrimonial proceedings; or
- b) By way of an assignment to a person who would qualify to succeed the tenancy if you died immediately before the assignment.

You will need to obtain the Council's written agreement before an assignment takes place. The Council will only grant consent if the following conditions are met, but are not limited to:

- a) That each party needs to sign deed of assignment.
- b) There must be a clear rent account.
- c) The person being assigned the tenancy are taking on the rights and responsibilities of the tenancy agreement.

3.4 Your right to repair.

In some cases, you have a legal Right to Repair. This means that if certain small but important repairs are not completed within a set time, you may be able to get compensation.

Examples of qualifying repairs include:

- A leaking roof
- A blocked toilet (if it's the only one in the home)
- Unsafe electrical sockets or light fittings

- A broken door lock
- Loss of heating or hot water

If the repair isn't done on time and a second contractor also fails to fix it, you may receive a small payment for the inconvenience.

3.5 Your right to be consulted

The Housing Regulator is the government body that sets out the legislative standards that all Social Housing landlords need to comply with. As a landlord we will be inspected every four years by the Housing Regulator and must show that we meet the requirements of the consumer standards for:

- Safety & Quality,
- Neighbourhood & Community standards,
- Tenancy
- Transparency Influence and Accountability

Each standard has required outcomes and specific expectations that the Housing Regulator uses to measure if a landlord is meeting the standards.

As part of these standards each year we must carry out a Tenant Satisfaction Survey. These are called Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM). This is a legislative requirement, and it is important that you take time to be involved.

The perception questions are standard questions that all Landlords must ask tenants in addition to the management performance data that we collect. Each year the outcomes of the measures are submitted to the Housing Regulator. We publish the results on the website every year usually in Summer.

Your feedback matters and when you reply to the TSM survey it helps us to find out what we are doing well and where we need to improve.

Customer satisfaction

We will regularly ask for your feedback after you have received a service with a view to improving and resolving any issues. These are transactional satisfaction surveys, and we would always encourage you to be involved. However, if you don't wish to be contacted, please email us at unsubscribehousing@westlancs.gov.uk

We also welcome compliments, which we pass on to the person who carried out the work or went the extra mile

Tenant Voice

We will consult you on changes to your tenancy agreement and how we manage our services we will ask your views about proposals and service delivery. To provide the best services that we can, we need you to help us to do this.

We want to listen and act on your views so we need you to let us know what's working, well, what isn't, and what we can do to improve. So, in addition to the annual TSM survey there are lots of opportunities to be involved, consulted and kept informed.

You can get involved in a way and time that suits you, by joining us for face-to-face activities, virtually on Microsoft Teams calls or just giving your views and feedback through online surveys and questionnaires. We will consult with you on service, changes and anything that will substantially alter how we deliver services to you.

Tenant Voice Group – Be involved with our teams and managers to review a range of housing services. This can be as often as you like and on services that you are most interested in for example how we allocate homes or work to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour.

Tenant & Leaseholder Advisory Group (Scrutiny) - Give us a reality check by reviewing services in depth, identifying areas for improvement, and suggesting recommendations on how to do this. You can even be trained to mystery shop for us.

Repairs and Servicing Group – This group challenges our policies and procedures, looks at the services we deliver to maintain our homes and get involved in the timescales for repairs, the standards of our homes before we offer them. This group meets regularly to recommend changes to repairs and asset management related topics.

Landlord Services Working Group – This is our formal group of tenant volunteers who work with our local Councillors to consider performance, ensure all relevant policies and strategies are in place and have overview of all landlord services. They also consider reports from across our involved groups and service managers.

If you prefer to be involved on-line, we have a dedicated platform:

Our "[Tenant Hub](#)", is a space on [Your Voice West Lancashire](#) for tenants who live in a West Lancashire Borough Council's home. If you join the Tenant hub on-line you can get involved by giving feedback on surveys for Housing and across the Council, and find information such as the annual report, and frequently asked questions e.g. 'how can I report a repair online?'

Your feedback is extremely useful and helps us to continually improve and shape the services that we deliver.

Whether you are interested in any of these groups or would like to be part of our wide range of involvement activities such as mystery shopping, estate walkabouts, community impact days or becoming a block champion and more, the best way to get involved is to get in touch.

Email: tenantvoice@westlancs.gov.uk or call 01695 654010 or 01695 585143

4. Your Additional Rights as a Secure Tenant

4.1 Exchange - Mutual Exchange

If you meet certain conditions and have the permission of your landlord, you can exchange your property with another council or housing association tenant in any part of the country. Mutual exchanges can often be a quicker way of moving house than a transfer.

You will have the right to a mutual exchange once you become a secure tenant of West Lancashire Borough Council.

The Council subscribes to House Exchange an internet based mutual exchange service allowing:

- (a) You to register an interest in arranging a mutual exchange through the mutual exchange service without payment of a fee
- (b) You to enter your current property details and your requirements for the mutual exchange property you hope to obtain
- (c) You to be provided with the property details of those properties where a match occurs

If you do not have access to the internet, you can access support in using the mutual exchange service via your Housing Officer.

4.3 Lodgers

Tenants may take in lodgers during the Secure Tenancy, but not during the Introductory Tenancy. A lodger is someone who lives in your home with you but doesn't have exclusive right to any one part of the property. This is different to Sub-letting

4.4 Buy - The Right to Buy

If you hold a secure tenancy (i.e. not an introductory tenancy) and have been a council tenant for at least three years, you may have the right to buy your home. This is the qualifying period and may be subject to change. In some circumstances, you cannot buy your home.

For example, if you have a possession order, rent arrears, bankruptcy, live in a home suitable for elderly people or have been served a demolition notice. We explain the right to buy on our website. For an application form or more information, visit westlancs.gov.uk

Moving home

As a WLBC tenants, you can apply to transfer homes once you have lived in your home for two years. A transfer enables you to move without finding someone to move into your current property. You must complete a HomeFinder Application form which you can do online at westlancshomefinder.co.uk

Your application will be assessed and prioritised based on your circumstances at the time and against the same criteria as if you were applying for rented housing for the first time. This criterion is outlined in the Councils Allocations Policy.

When you give notice to leave your home, we kindly ask for your cooperation with two important steps: an asbestos test and a pre-termination inspection. The asbestos test helps us identify any materials that may contain asbestos, ensuring future maintenance or refurbishment work is carried out safely and in line with health regulations. The pre-termination inspection allows us to assess the condition of the property, plan any necessary repairs, and support a smooth transition for the next tenant.

If you agree to let us carry out both the asbestos test and the inspection, we will credit your rent account with £25.00 as a thank-you for your support.

5. Your Responsibilities as a Tenant

5.1 False Statement & Tenancy Fraud

West Lancashire Borough Council is committed to dealing with tenancy fraud ensuring fair allocation of its properties and making best use of its housing stock. The Council will tackle fraudulent applications, unlawful subletting and tenancy misuse promptly and effectively, to ensure all its housing stock is used by those with legitimate housing need.

To combat tenancy fraud, we will:

- Ask all applicants to supply proof of identification, and provide evidence to support their housing need e.g. income details, tenancy agreements, medical information
- Check information with other agencies including Experian
- Hold photographs of all tenants so visiting staff and contractors can confirm your identity
- Prevent and detect abandonment and/subletting through conducting tenancy visits including new tenancy visits, introductory tenancy reviews and regular tenancy audits
- Where tenancy fraud is identified, the Council is prepared to take the appropriate legal action such as ending a tenancy or criminal action where there is deemed to be sufficient evidence

5.2 Paying your Rent and other charges

The amount of rent and other charges you pay depends on the type of home you live in. Other charges within your rental liability can be service charges (based on the type of property you live in), a heating charge, if you are on the heating scheme and a charge for a furniture package, if you have one.



The rent you are charged will be shown on your annual rent notification letter that we send to you every March. This letter will include the full charge for your rental liability which is reviewed every year.

Your tenancy agreement states your rent is due weekly. If you prefer to pay weekly, you will be asked for one weeks rent payment in advance before your tenancy starts and then your rent and charges are due in advance on Monday of each week. If you wish to pay your rent over longer periods – for example, monthly - you will be asked for a monthly rent payment in advance before your tenancy starts and then your rent and charges are due in advance each month.

In most financial years, there are 52 rent charging weeks with 48 rent collection weeks. For tenants not in rent arrears there are four non-collection weeks.

You can pay your rent by:

- Direct Debit – please call the income team on 01695 585252 to set up your direct debit
- Standing Order – please click on the QR code to download the form or call our income team on 01695 585252 for more information

- Online banking
- Payment card
- By phone
 - By debit/credit card using the 24-hour automated payment line on 01695 585150
 - By debit/credit card by calling Customer Services on 01695 577177. Monday – Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm

Rent Refunds

Your rent account must always be in advance by the frequency you pay by i.e. if you pay monthly, your rent account should be 1 month in advance. For more information on this please contact the income team on 01695 585252.

Budgeting and Money Advice

If you are concerned about your finances, there is a range of help and advice available. Visit our dealing with debt page to access further information and useful links or read below to make an appointment with our Money Advice Team.



What We Can Do

Our Money Advice Team can offer the following free services to council tenants:

- Budgeting support along with financial health checks
- Assist with benefit claims
- Assist with universal credit
- Benefit health checks
- Debt advice and referrals to the Citizens Advice Bureau
- Food bank vouchers
- Applications for funding (i.e. white goods/utilities)

Universal Credit (UC)

UC is a benefit which is replacing:

- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based)
- Tax Credits
- Employment & Support Allowance (Income Related)



If you are just about to claim, or are already on UC and need support, you can contact the Money Advice Team for support. Email the team on moneyadvice@westlancs.gov.uk, click on the above QR code or call 01695 585252.

5.3 Looking after your property

As your landlord, we are committed to providing you with an excellent repairs and maintenance service. You share responsibility with us for looking after your home. We

are responsible for certain repairs and maintenance, but you are responsible for decorating the inside of your home and for some repairs.

5.3a Repairs we are responsible for

We are responsible for:

- Keeping the structure of your home safe and secure
- Keeping the essential services to your home safe and in working order
- Keeping your home free from hazards
- Keeping communal amenities safe
- Taking care to prevent or repair faults
- Making good plasterwork after carrying out any repair
- Drains, gutters, outside pipes
- Kitchen and bathroom fixtures – basins, sinks, toilets, baths
- Electrical wiring and gas and water pipes and carbon monoxide and Smoke detection
- Property defects such as damp and mould
- Heating equipment and water-heating equipment.

We will not pay for repairs that are necessary if you, or anyone living with or visiting you, have neglected or not taken care of your home. If the problem that needs repairing poses a risk to you or your home, we may carry out the repair, but you will have to pay for this work. If we need to complete a repair that is your responsibility, then you will need to pay for, or agree a payment plan with us before the work can be completed.

We want to maintain your home as best we can and rely on you to help us by reporting repairs promptly and allowing us reasonable access to carry out work. We may also take legal action against you if you fail to let us in when it is reasonable to do so.

Repairs You Are Responsible For

- Decorating the inside of your home and floor coverings
- Replacing keys or the fitting of additional locks
- Repairing any equipment, fixtures, or fittings you provided or fitted yourself (unless we have agreed to take responsibility for them)
- Unblocking plug holes on baths, sinks and wash hand basins
- Repairing any damage caused by you or anyone living with or visiting you
- Replacing fuses and plugs
- Maintaining your garden, including lawns, plants, bushes, and trees
- Replacing television aerials and satellite dishes
- Replacing toilet seats, plugs and chains on baths, sinks and wash hand basins
- Any damage caused by someone gaining access to your home with a warrant
- Replacing light bulbs
- Fencing
- Replacing toilet seats
- Repairing and maintaining your own equipment such as cookers or washing machines

- Driveways which you have altered or installed
- Replacement batteries in battery powered Smoke/Co detectors and Remote frequency room

When we carry out repairs, you are responsible for clearing the area of work, which includes removing furniture, carpets, and personal belongings, before we arrive. If you have a vulnerability and would have difficulty doing this, please tell us this when you report a repair.

If your home is furnished by us, you are responsible for maintaining the furniture package to an acceptable standard. Over the duration of your furnished tenancy, items of furniture or white goods may need repairing or replacing due to genuine wear and tear, if this happens, please contact us. You must pay for any damaged caused by failing to properly use fixtures or appliances.

5.3b How To Report A Repair

A quick and easy way for you to report a repair is via the [online repairs facility](#) on our website. This is for non-emergency repairs only.

You can telephone the Council's Customer Services Team on 01695 577177. Calls are answered Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.30pm, with a 24-hour emergency service for out of office hours.

You may also visit our Customer Service Point at 52 Derby Street Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2DF. Opening hours are Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm Fridays, 9am to 4.45pm

When reporting a repair, please provide us with as much information about the problem as you can, as this helps us to ensure the correct repair work is ordered for you.

Please also let us know of any vulnerabilities or additional requirements that you may have which may affect how quickly you will require a repair to be carried out.

Out of Hours Repair Service

We provide an out of hours repairs service for emergency repairs that cannot wait until the next working day.

Some emergency repairs carried out outside of normal working hours may be temporary ones carried out to make your home safe. We would then carry out a permanent repair at a later date.

Please don't report a repair that is not an emergency at night or at weekends. These calls will delay us going out to genuine emergencies. If you call us out and your repair is not an emergency, we may not carry out the work. If your emergency is life-threatening, call the emergency services on 999.

How Soon Will The Repair Be Carried Out?

Priority 1: Emergency repairs (as soon as reasonably practicable and within four hours)

These repairs are an immediate health and safety concern or an emergency hazard.

Examples include,

- Uncontrollable leaks that are unable to be isolated
- Kitchen units if falling/danger of falling off wall
- Full broken or missing glazing
- Unsafe ceilings

Priority 2: Emergency repairs (as soon as reasonably practicable and within 24 hours)

These are repairs required to fix any defect or emergency hazard which puts the health or security of you or third party at immediate risk, or which affects the structure of the building. Examples include,

- Lack of a water supply
- Broken boilers
- Electrical hazards such as exposed wiring
- Significant leaks
- Broken external doors or windows that present a risk to home security
- Prevalent damp and mould that is impacting a tenant's ability to breathe
- Collapsed floors or ceilings
- Widespread mould in all rooms, including a risk room, with an occupant with a respiratory vulnerability.

Priority 3: Urgent Repairs (as soon as reasonably practicable and within 5 working days)

These are not an immediate emergency but require urgent action. Examples include:

- Leaks causing damp and mould to your home
- Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working.
- Loose or detached banister or handrail if not a health & safety concern
- Loose timber flooring or stair tread
- An isolated controllable leak.
- Blocked sink, bath, or basin
- Significant mould growth in risk room with a vulnerable occupant.

Priority 4: Routine repairs (as soon as reasonably practicable and within 20 working days)

These are routine repairs that do not affect health and safety but do affect comfort and convenience. Examples include:

- Replacing a radiator
- Repairs to kitchen or bathroom units
- Reglazing of doors and windows
- Fence repairs
- Repair leaking gutters and fall pipes where not leaking into a home

- Roof repairs not leaking into a home
- Ridge and hip tiles not causing a leak into a home
- Missing loft hatches
- Small mould patches

Priority 5: Larger Routine Repairs (as soon as reasonably practicable and within 45 days)

These are larger works that are unable to go into a program of repairs. Examples include,

- Renewing guttering
- Misted glazing (if no window programme available)
- Full work top replacements
- External doors
- Garage doors
- Renew timber flooring
- Drainage replacements

Some repairs may take longer due to specific circumstances, and these will be discussed on a case-by-case basis with you.

If delays occur due to shortages of labour or materials, we will inform you of delays and will take measures to ensure your home remains safe, providing alternative accommodation if necessary.

What Happens When You Report a Repair?

We will offer you an appointment for work that needs to be carried out on the inside of your property. You can choose from three appointment slots – morning (8am -12 noon), afternoon (12noon -5pm), or avoiding school runs (10am to 2pm)

If we agree an appointment with you and you do not keep it, we may charge you the cost of us coming out to you and you would need to make another appointment. In some cases, we may need to inspect a fault you have reported. If this is the case, we will make an appointment with you for either a trades person or a surveyor to call and inspect the problem and if any work is required, we will notify you when this work will be carried out. All our staff and contractors carry photo ID. Please ask to see ID if you are not sure who the caller is.

Gas, Water and Electricity Supplies

You are responsible for arranging and paying for gas, electricity, and water supplies. If you have a prepayment meter and you run out of credit, we cannot provide an emergency supply.

Housing Conditions Claims

Each year the Council spends a proportion of its housing budget on housing conditions claims which reduces the amount of money that we have available to improve the area in which you live.

If you do require repairs to your home, then we would like the opportunity to put things right. Please refer to 'how to report a repair' for information on the different ways you can contact us.

Remember to report any issues as soon as you notice them and allow prompt access for us to inspect and carry out any necessary works. This will enable you to get your repairs carried out quicker and enable us to invest more money back into local communities.

5.3 Damp and Mould

If you suspect your home is suffering from damp or mould it is important that you report this to us straightaway so we can arrange an inspection and/or carry out any works needed.



We have produced a video that can be accessed by this QR code. It helps to inform you on what damp and mould is, why it occurs, how to detect it, the impact it can have, and what to do if you find damp and mould in your home.

There are simple steps that you can take to help keep your home free from condensation and mould, especially during winter months.

Condensation – This is caused by moisture from inside your home coming into contact with a cold surface in your home, such as a window or wall. The water drops (condensation) may then soak into wallpaper, plaster, or paintwork and in time the damp areas will grow mould.

Produce less moisture – Dry clothes outdoors, don't dry clothes indoors, or if you must dry them indoors, if possible, use a dehumidifier, vent your tumble drier outside, or use a condensing type.

Ventilate to assist in removing moisture – It is important to ventilate your home, by opening windows slightly or opening trickle vents that can be often found on UPVC windows. Try to open windows when using the kitchen and bathroom and try to close the doors to prevent moisture in the air from spreading to other parts of your home. Open windows or put a fan on when cooking or washing to allow steam to escape. Cover pans when cooking and do not boil them for any longer than necessary.

Remove excess moisture – Try to wipe down windows and sills of your home.

Allow air to circulate – Try to keep furniture away from direct contact with external walls to prevent dampness occurring.

How To Remove Mould

Walls and surfaces

Wipe down or spray affected surfaces with a fungicidal wash that has a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) approval number. Make sure that you follow the instructions for its safe use. Fungicidal washes are available in most supermarkets or D.I.Y. stores.

After treating mould, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint and a fungicidal wallpaper paste to help prevent mould recurring. Do not cover fungicidal or anti-condensation paint with ordinary paint or wallpaper as it will stop it working.

Clothes and Carpets

Dry clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets and soft furnishings. Do not try to remove mould by using a brush or vacuum as this may help mould growth spread.

Use of PIV Units and Extract Fans

To help maintain good indoor air quality and prevent issues such as condensation and mould, your home may be fitted with a Positive Input Ventilation (PIV) unit and/or extract fans. These systems work by improving airflow and reducing humidity levels. PIV units gently introduce filtered air into your home, while extract fans remove moist air from areas like kitchens and bathrooms. Both systems are designed to run efficiently and cost-effectively. On average, a PIV unit costs around £10–£20 per year to run, depending on your energy tariff, and extract fans typically cost less than £5 per year. To ensure they work effectively, please do not switch them off or block vents, and report any faults promptly.

5.3p Decants

West Lancashire Borough Council supports tenants who need to move out of their homes on a temporary or permanent basis, due to an emergency or, where planned major works cannot be undertaken with you in residence, or as the result of redevelopment/demolition. In all cases of decant, whether on a temporary or permanent basis we will:

- If required provide and where appropriate pay for emergency accommodation
- Provide the customer with the expected timescales for work to be completed and where appropriate expected return date
- Consult and involve you in any decision in relation to decant arrangements and any offer of alternative accommodation
- Work closely with you concerned to ensure we assess your individual needs and requirements to provide the necessary support throughout
- Pay the cost for storage of any of your furniture or goods as required during the process.
- The Council accepts no responsibility for any loss, theft, damage, or deterioration of the items while in storage
- Ensure any temporary decant period is kept to a minimum
- Work with the customer tenant to ensure any benefits continue to be received
- Cover the costs of any standing charges for utilities in your main property
- Offer rehousing advice and support to occupants of leasehold properties who are not the leaseholder
- Offer priority rehousing status to any customer whose home is due to be demolished

Emergency Decants – when a property becomes uninhabitable due to an immediate health and safety risk for e.g. fire or flood. If you and your household cannot stay with family or friends, we will offer temporary accommodation. Given the urgent nature of these situations the temporary accommodation may be in hotels or B&B. You need to continue to pay rent (including claiming Housing Benefit/UC) for your home and we will cover the cost of the

temporary accommodation. You will be expected to return to the property as soon as it is safe to do so.

Temporary Decant – A temporary decant occurs when major repairs mean that it is not possible for the household to remain in the property whilst the work is carried out. The repair work would be extensive in nature and render the property uninhabitable, it would not normally include programmes of work such as kitchen, bathroom and heating upgrades

If you and your family cannot stay temporarily with family or friends, you will be offered temporary accommodation and return to the property as soon as the work is completed.

We will try to provide you with choice about the temporary accommodation offered but cannot guarantee choice will be provided. You will usually only be made one offer of temporary suitable alternative accommodation. Where a tenant refuses a reasonable offer of accommodation, we may use appropriate legal remedies to ensure that it is able to complete the work needed.

A permanent decant may be considered in the following situations

- The property is to be demolished
- The property does not meet the households long term needs and they wish to move permanently.
- Where remedial works may take over 6 months, meaning that temporary accommodation would not be a reasonable option

Resident Refusing Access

- If a resident refuses access, or declines to move out of their home, we will discuss the reasons with them with a view to understanding and resolving the situation.
- We will need to consider the risk this poses to neighbouring properties and other residents well-being and health & safety.
- If we continue to be refused access or the resident still refuses to move out,
- where the work required represents a significant Health & Safety risk, we can take
- legal action to be able to undertake the work. Recharges may also be considered
- where appropriate.
- Where the work is necessary but not a “risk,” the work will not be conducted until the property becomes vacant. You will be expected to sign a waiver form to confirm acknowledgement of hazard/s

We will clearly inform you that you have the right to accept or decline an offer of alternative accommodation. However, we will ensure that you are made aware of any risks associated with remaining in the property, particularly before the end of the initial remediation period or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter.

Offers of Accommodation

We will work with you to establish your housing needs and will make reasonable efforts to accommodate any preferences for location within our available housing stock, taking into account any support needs. In the case of an emergency decant, temporary accommodation may be arranged, which could be less suitable than your original property

Refusal to Move

We aim to work constructively with our tenants when a decant (temporary relocation) becomes necessary. In emergency situations we will support you to find alternative temporary accommodation if you are unable to stay with family/friends, until it is safe to move back in.

Only one suitable offer of temporary accommodation will be made. If this offer is declined, it will be your responsibility to make their own alternative arrangements. Efforts will be made to match the offer as closely as possible to yours needs to be close to schools etc however this will depend on the options we have available at the time.

If you refuse to leave your home to be decanted or refuse to return to the original home once work has been completed and it is safe to do so, then we will take legal action to resolve this.

In situations where you are asked to leave the temporary accommodation due to anti-social behaviour, no alternative accommodation will be offered and you will not be allowed to return to your home until the work is complete.

Pets

Where the decant property can accommodate pets you will be able to take your pets. In emergency situations where hotel and B&B accommodation with pet restrictions is utilised, you are expected to make your own arrangements for pets during the decant period, the Council will not reimburse the cost of any kennel/cattery fees or vaccinations required by kennels / catteries.

Home Loss Payments

Where you are obliged to move permanently, as a result of demolition, or major planned redevelopment works, and cannot return to your former home, you would be entitled to a statutory home loss payment. Payment will be made if you meet the statutory criteria under s.29 (2) Land Compensation Act 1973. You will need to have been residing in the home for a minimum of one year.

To ensure best use of our financial resources, any housing related debts for e.g. rent arrears, owed to the Council will be deducted and offset from the home loss payment.

Home loss payments are made per household. Where there are joint tenants, one home loss payment will be shared between both.

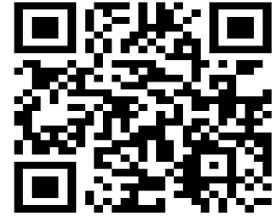
In situations where you make a voluntary decision to move permanently and not return to your home once work is complete you will not be entitled to a home loss payment.

Disturbance Payments

Disturbance payments are intended to compensate you financially for the actual expenses associated with the need to move. The amount of disturbance payment will vary according to the individual case and are assessed as “reasonable expenses” associated with the move.

Safety In Your Home

The guidance below is designed to inform you of how we aim to keep you safe in your home. It focuses on a few key areas which we want to remind you about.



For more information, please scan the QR code below to watch our short video about safety in your home. The video contains important information on gas, electrical, and fire safety. It also gives clear information on what action you can take to keep yourself and your family safe and what to do if you have any safety concerns.

Home Safety QR Code Sticker

To help ensure your home remains safe and compliant with legal standards, we have provided a home safety QR Code sticker to be placed in your property. Scanning this QR code gives you instant access to key safety and compliance documents, including:

- Gas Safety Certificate
- Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR)
- Asbestos Survey (where applicable)
- Fire Risk Assessment (where applicable)
- LOLER (Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations) Reports (where applicable) and for communal areas

These documents are important for understanding any safety considerations before carrying out works or alterations in your home.

If your home is within a block of flats or independent living scheme, in addition to having a QR code in your home there will be a QR code located on the back of the communal entrance door.

Please ensure you:

- Do not remove, cover, or tamper with the QR code sticker.
- Check the information via the QR code before undertaking any works (e.g. installing fixtures, decorating, or making changes).
- Report any issues immediately if the QR code is damaged or no longer scans properly.

This system is designed to protect you, your neighbours and your home.

If your property was built before the Year 2000 no intrusive works (e.g. installing fixtures and fittings, removing flooring and tiles) should be carried out until you have confirmed that no asbestos is present in your property.

We are currently in the process of obtaining full asbestos reports for all our properties, if there is not yet a report on your property portal then please contact us before carrying out any works so that we can make sure you are advised of any asbestos in your home. Lack of a report does not mean that your property does not have asbestos.

By following these guidelines, you help maintain safety and ensure compliance with housing regulations.

If you are unable to access your home system information via QR code, then please contact our customer services centre and we will arrange to send this to you in an alternative format.

Please note that if you purchase your property under the right to buy scheme then no further safety information will be uploaded once the purchase is completed.

Gas Safety

If you smell gas or think that there may be a gas leak, you should:

- Call the National Gas Emergency Service immediately on 0800 111 999
- Turn off the gas supply at the meter
- Don't use electrical switches or appliances
- Turn off all gas appliances
- Open doors and windows
- Leave the house

Installation of Gas Appliances

You must always use a 'Gas Safe' registered gas engineer when installing any gas appliance, including gas cookers. To check if a gas engineer is registered call Gas Safe on 0800 408 5500. You need our written permission to fit any gas appliance, except gas cookers.

Annual Gas Safety Inspections

We are required by law to carry out a gas safety inspection every year. This inspection will help us to identify any potential faults which will reduce the risk of your appliances breaking in the future.

A typical gas safety inspection takes 30 to 60 minutes however, if the need arises for repairs, it may take longer.

During the inspection, the certified engineer will carry out the following:

- Visual examination of all the gas appliances, heating system (radiators, hot water cylinders), and boiler flue system
- Check and record the burner pressure and gas rate
- Tightness test at the gas meter to dismiss any leaks
- Test flue gases of the appliances

- Check the condense trap (and clean it if required)
- Check the air supply and ventilation
- Check the pressure vessel inside the boiler
- Make sure safety devices are functioning properly

Our contractor, Liberty, will write to you before your certificate is due to expire providing you with an appointment. If you are unable to make the appointment, please call Liberty on 03303 335 782 and they will offer you a more convenient appointment.

You must allow us access to carry out this inspection or legal action will be taken against you.

Portable Heaters

You must not use an oil, paraffin, or gas cylinder heater in your home.

Electrical Safety

For your safety:

- Do not remove, install or repair any electrical fixtures or fittings, unless completed by a qualified electrician, you must also get our permission first
- Make sure your electrical appliance contains the correct fuses
- Check flexes and plugs regularly to make sure there are no loose or bare wires
- Do not overload electrical sockets
- Do not touch fittings or exposed wires with anything wet
- Make sure you know how to turn off the supply at the main

Electric Safety Checks

We are required by law to carry out an Electrical inspection when we let a property and then at least every five years.

An electrical safety check takes between 2-4 hours to complete. But this does depend on the size of your home and the number of circuits that need testing. During the inspection, the certified engineer will carry out the following:

- A visual and functional inspection of installations, including sockets, switches, and lighting points.
- Test the wiring and repair or replace if necessary.
- Inspect the consumer unit (electric box).
- Complete an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) and a certificate will be produced by the engineer.

It is important that when you receive your electrical safety appointment from our contractor Liberty, that you keep your appointment. If you are unavailable, please contact Liberty on 0330 333 5782 immediately to make a more convenient appointment. Telephone lines are open Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm.

You must allow us access to carry out this electrical inspection or legal action will be taken against you.

Fire Safety

We are required to complete a fire-risk assessment for any council homes that have communal areas. The assessments identify any risks and set out any actions that need to be taken to reduce and manage fire risk. You can help reduce fire risks by keeping exits clear and making sure fire doors are closed.

To Prevent Starting a Fire

- Make sure all fires are guarded
- Do not smoke in bed
- Never leave matches or lighters lying around
- Do not leave chip pans unattended. If a chip pan catches fire, turn off the heat and cover with a damp cloth
- Do not leave candles unattended or left to burn - if you use candles around your home, always ensure they are in a suitable holder, on a safe surface and never leave to burn unattended.

Stay Put Fire Strategy

Our blocks of flats follow a “stay put” fire strategy. This means that if there is a fire somewhere else in the building, and your flat is not affected by smoke or heat, you should remain inside your home with the front door closed. Your flat is designed to resist the spread of fire and smoke, giving you protection while the fire service responds.

However, "stay put" does not mean you must stay if you feel unsafe. If at any point you feel that remaining in your flat places you at risk, you should leave the building by the nearest safe exit and call 999.

Fire In Your Flat:

- Alert everyone in your flat. Close the door to the room where the fire is located.
- Ensure everyone in the flat leaves as quickly as possible. Close the front door to your flat. Make your way out of the building, using the common escape route.
- Once you are outside the building, call the fire and rescue service and await their arrival in a safe place

To Call the Fire and Rescue Service:

Dial 999 (or 112). When the operator answers, give your telephone number and ask for FIRE. When the fire and rescue service answers, give them your address and the location of the fire. Do not end the call until the fire and rescue service have confirmed the address.

Fire doors/Flat Entrance Doors

Your flat entrance door is a fire door, designed to resist the spread of fire and smoke. It plays a vital role in protecting escape routes and providing time for emergency services to respond.

What You Need to Know

Please help us keep the building safe by following these simple rules:

- Keep your door in good condition – report any damage to the door, frame or seals.
- Don't remove or disable the self-closing device – this ensures the door shuts behind you.
- Never wedge the door open, even for short periods.
- Let us know if you're concerned about the condition of your door.

E-Bikes, E-Scooters and Mobility Scooters

These must not be charged or stored in communal areas. If you are thinking of purchasing an e-bike or e-scooter the Office for Product Safety and Standards advise:

Step 1: RESEARCH – only buy an e-bike, e-scooter, charger, or battery from a known seller and check any product reviews.

Step 2: READ – always read and follow the manufacturer's instructions for charging and using e-bikes or e-scooters.

Step 3: CHECK – not all e-bike or e-scooter batteries and chargers are compatible or safe when used together. Check and only use the manufacturer's recommended battery or charger.

Step 4: CHARGE – always charge in a safe place without blocking exits and always unplug your charger when you have finished charging.

Step 5: NEVER – attempt to modify or tamper with your battery.

Additional advice:

- Do not leave e-bikes or e-scooters charging overnight or when unattended.
- Only use chargers with CE or UKCA markings and avoid second-hand or unbranded chargers.
- Store and charge your device on a hard, flat surface away from combustible materials.
- If a battery is damaged, swollen or overheating, stop using it immediately and seek professional advice.

More information regarding fire safety measures can be found on our website and in communal areas.

Asbestos

Asbestos was a commonly used building material used from the 1950s. It is around us much of the time and is harmless if undisturbed. However, using asbestos in new buildings was banned in 1999. There is no requirement to complete asbestos surveys in buildings built from 2000 onwards.

We are currently in the process of obtaining full asbestos reports for all our properties, if there is not yet a report on your property portal then please contact us before

carrying out any works so that we can make sure you are advised of any asbestos in your home.

Damaged Asbestos

If you suspect asbestos has been damaged in your home, please contact our customer services centre immediately.

Keep people away from the damaged material until we can assess and repair the damage. Do not attempt to repair damaged asbestos yourself, sweep up, or use a vacuum cleaner to remove the debris.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advises that asbestos is only a risk when disturbed or damaged. If the fibres are inhaled and remain in the lungs, they can lead to an asbestos-related disease developing.

Decorating

Painting using a brush or roller won't damage asbestos or release any fibres from materials in a good condition. You shouldn't sand or scrape materials containing asbestos, or anything that you don't know what it is made of.

Water Hygiene

Water safety is important to avoid illness from Legionella and damage to your home. We must ensure that all communal water tanks have a Legionella Risk Assessment and the equipment supplying water is tested and inspected often.

To keep your water safe:

- Run all unused taps (inside and outdoor) for at least two minutes weekly.
- Keep all shower heads and taps clean and free from a build-up of lime scale, mould, or algae growth. Descale taps and shower heads at least every three months. Please note that shower heads are your responsibility, and we will not clean or replace these for you.
- Report any deposits such as rust or any unusual matter flowing from your water outlets. Report any concerns about low hot water temperatures, low water flow, defective taps, boiler issues.
- Flush through showers and taps for 10 minutes following a period of non-use (i.e. After you have been on holiday or if a room is not in regular use or you have just moved into a new home).
- Flush toilet/s with the lid down following a period of non-use.
- Drain hosepipes after use and keep out of direct sunlight. Flush through for a couple of minutes before filling paddling pools etc.

Lifts

We have a duty under LOLER (Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998) regulations to ensure passenger lifts in our properties are operating safely. To ensure we are fully compliant with regulatory requirements, they must be thoroughly examined by professionally qualified engineer surveyors every 6 months and any defects found must be reported to us and dealt with. In addition, our lifts are serviced often by our specialist lift contractor.

Help us to help you by using the lifts responsibly and reporting any lifts that aren't working. If the lift breaks down when you are in it, press the alarm button and you will be connected to a responder.

Your Responsibilities as a Tenant

In your tenancy agreement there is information on your role in maintaining and reporting fire and structural safety issues. This includes:

- Not leaving obstructions in corridors, walkways, or an entrance/exit to a building, or in front of fire doors
- Not blocking lifts or staircases
- Removing rubbish promptly
- Not putting flammable items in bin chutes or internal bin storage areas
- Not keeping fire doors open
- Not keeping or charging mobility scooters in common areas
- Not placing furniture or electrical equipment in corridors and common areas
- Not smoking in common areas
- Knowing the fire evacuation arrangements for your property (Sheltered Accommodation)
- Not storing or charging motorbikes, mopeds, or their batteries in your home

Evacuation

We recommend you plan an escape route in advance should fire break out in your home and that all household members know what to do. In Independent living the Scheme Manager will discuss this with you. Close all the doors on your way out to prevent the fire spreading.

It is also good practice to keep internal doors closed at night where possible, as this helps slow the spread of smoke in the early stages of a fire.

Home Security

Most burglaries happen during the daytime when people are out, and the house looks empty. Potential burglars look for signs that tell them that you are out and there is something worth stealing. You can take some simple, but effective, measures to prevent your home being an easy target for burglars.

- Leave a light on at night when you go out and draw the curtains, so it looks like someone is still at home.
- Do not leave windows and doors unlocked or leave keys in doors even when you are at home.
- Do not leave valuables visible through windows.
- If you have a door chain, peep hole or entry phone, make sure you use it when answering the door. Ask unknown callers for identification and check it carefully, for your safety all our staff carry photo ID. If you are going away, cancel milk and newspapers etc., and ask a trusted neighbour to keep an eye on your home whilst you're away.

- It is advised that if you are away from home during the cold weather, to leave your heating on low to reduce the risk of frozen pipes.
- Do not leave empty boxes outside your home that advertise you have just bought an expensive piece of equipment.
- If you live in a block of flats, do not let people into the block unless you know them. See section 5.7 on Home Insurance

Gardens

If you have a garden, you must keep it tidy and clear of any rubbish, scrap or other unsightly objects. You should not plant trees and large shrubs close to homes because the roots might cause damage.

Also, keep hedges and other plants cut to a reasonable height and maintain vegetation so that they do not block footpaths. If you do not keep your garden tidy, we may clear it and charge you for the work.

When tenants have health problems or disabilities and have no family or friends to help them look after their garden, WLBC may be able to support by carrying out regular maintenance, this is a chargeable service and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

You are responsible for maintaining trees and shrubs you planted and your gardens within the boundary of your home. The Council will work on a tree in a Council property in exceptional circumstances only if it is dangerous.

Help For People with Disabilities

Often, simple aids and adaptations to an existing house or flat will enable a person who has a disability to carry on living in their own home. Adaptations could be installing showers, ramps, making parking easier and so on.

As a tenant of West Lancashire Borough Council, you will not need to apply for a DFG (Disabled Facilities Grant) as the Council currently funds adaptations for its own tenants through its Public Sector Disabled Adaptations Service (subject to a means test).

How Do I Arrange For The Work To Be Carried Out?

The first thing you must do is contact Lancashire County Council Social Services (external link) (Tel 0300 123 6720) and tell them you need adaptations in your home. An assessment of your needs will be carried out generally within one month.

If you need minor aids such as grab rails, these will be provided by Lancashire County Council. If you need major adaptations, a referral will be sent to our Property Services Team, who will arrange for the works to be carried out.

Pest Control Responsibilities

Maintaining a safe and comfortable home environment is a shared responsibility. This section outlines who is responsible for pest control.

You are expected to take reasonable steps to prevent pest infestations. You may be responsible for pest control if the issue arises due to:

- Poor hygiene (e.g. leaving food out, not disposing of rubbish properly)
- Failing to report maintenance issues promptly
- Introducing pests into the home (e.g. bedbugs via luggage or second-hand furniture)

In such cases, you will need to arrange and pay for pest control services.

The council is responsible for pest control when infestations are caused by property-related issues, such as:

- Structural defects (e.g. holes in walls, broken drains)
- Inadequate refuse storage
- Infestations present before you moved in

To arrange a pest control appointment please visit our website or contact our customer contact centre on 01695 57717.

Recharges

Damage, Misuse of Your Home or Neglect

In some cases, you may be asked to contribute to the cost of the following, depending on the circumstances:

- Damage beyond fair wear and tear (e.g., broken windows, stained carpets, holes in walls).
- Negligence or misuse (e.g., damage caused by pets, unauthorised alterations, leaving a tap running or overfilling a bath).
- Failure to maintain the property as outlined in the tenancy agreement
- If a repair is needed due to damage, misuse or neglect, we may discuss with you whether the Council or you are responsible for the cost. We always take into account individual circumstances, including vulnerability, and normal wear and tear is not recharged.
- Failure to use fixtures or fittings correctly.
- Legal and associated costs for obtaining warrants or injunctions to access your home

Replacement or Additional Keys and Key Fobs

Keys are your responsibility and so you will be charged for replacement keys and locks. If you take out home contents insurance some policies will cover this cost.

No Access Attempts

Gas and Electric Safety Checks - It is a term of your tenancy agreement that you must allow the Council and its contractors access to carry out gas, electric and other safety checks.

Unless there are extenuating circumstances you will be recharged where there are failed responses/no access and for having to undertake additional legal works to obtain access. Failure to cooperate in granting access will lead to legal proceedings being taken to ensure that access can be obtained.

Contractor Health & Safety Guidelines

To help ensure a safe and respectful environment for contractors working in your home, please follow these important guidelines:

- Secure pets in a separate room or area before the contractor arrives to prevent accidents or distractions.
- Do not smoke or vape in the property while contractors are present, including near entrances or open windows.
- Do not lock internal doors behind contractors, as this may restrict access or delay emergency exits.
- Ensure clear access to the work area by moving furniture, personal items, or obstacles in advance.
- Keep children supervised and away from the work area to avoid injury or disruption.
- Inform contractors of any known hazards in the property, such as loose floorboards, faulty wiring, or leaks.
- Do not leave contractors alone in the property unless previously agreed with the repairs team.
- Avoid engaging contractors in lengthy conversations that may distract them from their work.
- Report any concerns about contractor behaviour or safety to our customer contract centre.
- Allow adequate ventilation if work involves fumes, dust, or strong odours, by opening windows where possible.

5.4 Making Improvements to your home

Can I carry out my own improvements?

As a tenant, you are allowed to make improvements to your home. We do however expect that you scan the QR code on your boiler to ensure that any contractor coming into your home has an asbestos survey report. Intrusive works should not take place without an asbestos survey.

You do not need our permission to decorate the inside of your home, lay carpet, or carry out minor improvements but you must get written permission from us before starting work such as:

- Structural changes such as removing internal walls and doors
- Erecting a porch, garage, or carport
- Installing any flooring that cannot easily be lifted i.e. carpet/lino
- Installing wall panelling
- Greenhouse, shed, summer room or other garden buildings or fence
- Creating off road parking
- Solar panels
- Kitchens, bathrooms, and showers
- Alterations or additions to the existing electrical system
- Alterations or additions to the existing gas supply, boiler, flues or any gas fired appliance supplied and maintained by the Council
- Alterations or additions to the existing mains water supply
- Installation of an electric vehicle charging point
- Creation of patio or decked areas and pathways within the garden

- Alterations or additions to the existing gas supply, boiler or heating system including but not limited to, the changing of radiator types or design, adding additional radiators/pipework to the system, removal of radiators for decorating, or any flues or any gas fired appliance supplied and maintained by the Council.
- Installing any device which allows heating or other services within your home to be controlled remotely.

There may be health and safety issues concerning the area you plan to work on, so it is important that you get our permission. If permission is granted, we may also attach conditions to the permission and may need to inspect the work that you have carried out.

Some alterations and improvements may require planning permission or building regulation permission. You should get this in advance of starting any works, as any unauthorised or unplanned works may have to be taken down or started again which would be at your own cost, or rectified/undertaken by the Council with us then re-charging you for all costs incurred.

You can make your alteration request by filling in the tenant alterations request form that is available from our website or by telephoning our customer contact centre. Part of this procedure will involve us checking to see if we have any information about asbestos in your home. If we do, we will tell you where the asbestos is located. It's your responsibility to pass the information on to anyone in your home who might come into contact with asbestos.

If we have no information, you must tell the builder this – it is then their responsibility to check for asbestos.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging

You must request permission to install electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

If permission is granted then you will be able to install an EV charge point at your own cost if you have a private, dedicated parking space on the property.

The charge point must be installed on the exterior of the property, and not within an open exterior cover (e.g. porch) or inside the property.

If only public parking is available within a reasonable distance, you must seek permission from the Council; and Lancashire County Council to install an EV cable tray across the pavement.

You must not park on green spaces to access the charge point or connector.

Dedicated parking spaces will not be authorised solely for the purpose of EV charging.

- If permission is granted you will then be fully responsible for
- All ongoing maintenance, repairs, and servicing of the EV charge point and any associated infrastructure.
- The safe removal of the charge points and restoration of the property to its original condition upon tenancy termination or if requested by the Authority.

- Any remedial works required due to damage, deterioration, or safety concerns arising from the installation or use of the EV charge point.
- All associated costs related to the above responsibilities.

5.5 Communal Areas

Keeping dangerous materials

You must not keep or use paraffin, petrol or any other dangerous material in your home or in communal areas, including empty fuel containers.

Motorbikes and mopeds

Motorbikes and mopeds can be very dangerous if kept inside your home or inside communal areas of blocks of flats such as in entrance halls and landings. Not only are they a hazard in any instances where you may need to leave your property in an emergency such as a fire, but they are also extremely dangerous as they are usually filled with petrol. You must not therefore keep mopeds or motorbikes in such areas.

Living in flats

If you live in a flat, there are certain things which you should not do as they could be very dangerous. Some examples are:

- Do not store any flammable materials in your flat such as paraffin or petrol. Do not tamper with security and safety equipment – doors should not be jammed open and strangers should not be let in without identification badges
- Do not place any dangerous or offensive goods or materials in the service stores or bin areas, or communal parts of the building
- Do not place any obstruction, such as a bicycle or boxes, in the communal areas of the building including the stairs

Communal Areas

Our District caretaker and Members of the Housing Environmental Works Team carry out services in communal areas and their duties include:

Enclosed Blocks of flats:

Twice monthly – Sweeping and washing floors, staircases, landings, skirting boards, and handrails, removing waste and obstructions, and cleaning some windows.

Open blocks of flats:

Once monthly – Sweeping floors, staircases, landings, removing waste and obstructions

The team also keep external communal areas well maintained by:

- Painting out graffiti from housing related areas including house and garden walls, fences, walkways, and garages.
- Carrying out minor repair works.
- Strimming weeds
- Removal of invasive Ivy

Communal areas are inspected regularly by members of the Housing Team to ensure that they are safe and enjoyable environments for people to live. To support us we encourage

anyone who occupies a block to report any problems that would cause issues within the block.

Independent Living

Communal Hallways

If you live in an Independent Living Scheme please keep all hallways and communal areas free from obstructions this includes, plants, picture frames and doormats

Shared Laundries

Shared laundries are only for use by tenants of the Independent Living Scheme where the laundry is situated. You must not allow other people to use your laundry or undertake washing for people who do not live in your scheme.

Use of the laundry

- You must leave the laundry clean and tidy
- Do not prop the door open - it is a fire risk and a breach of your tenancy conditions.
- Do not load the machines with rugs or mats as it will cause them to break down.
- The Council will not accept responsibility for any loss or damage to any item of laundry or personal belongings, no matter how it is caused.
- Permission to use the laundry can be withdrawn if you abuse the facilities

Guest Bedrooms

Some of the Independent Living Schemes include a guest bedroom to enable family or friends of Independent Living tenants to visit them.

Guest bedrooms accommodate one or two people and include basic furnishings and bed linen. Each room has access to toilet facilities, and many come with an en-suite bathroom. Each room has tea/coffee making but no cooking facilities.

For a small charge rooms can be booked via the Scheme Manager, a minimum of 24 hours' notice is usually required.

Communal lounges

Mobility Scooters

As with mopeds or bikes, please store these safely so that they do not present a risk to others. If you have a mobility scooter and live in a building with shared facilities, please agree with us how you will store it, and re-charge its batteries, safely

5.6 Vehicles

Car parking

Please make sure that you park your car with due consideration for pedestrians, disabled people in wheelchairs, other drivers, and your neighbours. Most importantly, make sure that you do not block any emergency access ways, footpaths, garages, driveways, pavements or lay-bys or park on grassed areas.

Parking enforcement on the roads and streets within the Borough is the responsibility of Lancashire County Council/ To report a parking problem, please follow the link: [Lancashire Parking Enforcement - Lancashire County Council](#)

If a vehicle is causing an obstruction where no parking restrictions exist, contact the Police for further information.

Large vehicles such as caravans, motor homes, boats, trailers and some types of vans, must not be parked anywhere within the boundaries of your home or on any communal areas without our permission in writing.

Also, illegal or unroadworthy vehicles must not be parked on the land around your home or the road outside. When vehicles like this are found, the Council will take prompt action to get the vehicle moved.

Car Repairs

Car repairs are a major cause of nuisance and annoyance to neighbours. Do not carry out major car repairs on estate roads, garage areas or outside your house. It is alright to carry out minor repairs on your own vehicle such as changing the plugs or replacing tyres. Any oil spills must be cleared up and floors made safe immediately. You must not repair vehicles that belong to anyone who doesn't live in your home unless you have our written permission first. If we do give you permission, you must ensure that you do not cause a nuisance or annoyance to your neighbours in doing the repairs.

Furnished Tenancies

If you have a Furnished Tenancy, you will be required to pay a weekly service charge. If an item provided to you under the Furnished tenancy scheme is not working or needs to be replaced, you must let us know by contacting Customer Services or the Furnished Tenancy Team on Tel: 01695 577177.

Any furniture, carpets and white goods remain the property of the Council for the duration of the tenancy. If you transfer from one Council home to another you may be able to take the furniture package with you.

If you no longer require the items, you will be required to return all the items in full. The items can only be returned after an initial 12-month period of your Tenancy or earlier if your tenancy is terminated. The service charge will remain until all the items have been returned to the Council.

You must take good care of the Furnished Tenancy items and keep them in a clean and serviceable condition. You must not remove them from your home, sell or exchange with anyone else; and they must be left in good, clean condition when you leave, (allowing for fair, wear and tear).

If any Furnished tenancy items are damaged (other than through fair wear and tear) or missing, you will be Recharged for the cost of replacement without the obligation to provide a replacement.

You must allow Housing Staff into your home every 5 years, to carry out Electrical Safety Tests on all council electrical appliances, and more frequently to allow us to inspect any

other goods provided through the Furnished Tenancy scheme. This is to ensure your safety and that the goods provided are in good condition.

5.7 Insurance

Contents insurance

West Lancashire Borough Council does not cover your contents as part of the tenancy agreement.

It is your responsibility to insure your furniture, floor coverings, belongings, and decorations against a wide range of insurable perils including theft, fire, vandalism, and water damage.

We offer our tenants a home contents insurance policy administered by the Council. For more information on the cover provided, the cost of cover, and how to apply please contact insurance_services@westlancs.gov.uk or apply online via our website. You can also contact our customer contact centre.

Contents insurance products are available through other providers. You are able to choose a provider you would like to use and pick a policy that best suits your needs.

Mobility Scooter Insurance

While mobility scooter insurance isn't legally mandatory in the UK, it's strongly recommended. It provides peace of mind and protection against various scenarios, including theft, accidents, and damage. Policies can cover your personal safety, the safety of others, and the value of the scooter itself.

5.8 Keeping Your Property Clean

Pest control

You are responsible for arranging and paying for any pest control treatments needed in your home or garden, this includes treatment of infestation of mice, rats, wasps, fleas, cockroaches and other insects.

The Council offers a chargeable Pest Control Service, which is discounted for those in receipt of either housing or council tax benefit.

In apartment blocks with communal areas the Council will be responsible for treatment of any pest control issues these can be reported on Tel: 01695 577177.

Household rubbish

Please use the correct bins and waste containers, in line with the local arrangements for your area. You are responsible for managing waste correctly, including recycling any waste in the correct bin.

Bin stores should be kept tidy, with all waste placed inside the bins with the lids closed, and no extra waste left in the bin store.

You must make sure that your household waste, including recyclable or garden waste, is put out for collection regularly in line with the local arrangements for your area. No additional waste should be left out without our prior agreement.

You can find your collection day by entering your postcode into the 'Your West Lancashire' area of the Councils webpage.

You can help avoid delays and missed bins by not parking in front of bin stores or in any areas that may block access to the bins. Where we cannot access bins eg parked cars or locked bin store gates, this can stop us emptying the bins.

There are 2 recycling centres located in Skelmersdale and Burscough to find out what items can be taken to the recycling centre go to: [westlancs.gov.uk](https://www.westlancs.gov.uk)

Bulky Rubbish

If you've got some household rubbish that's too big for your bin - like an old fridge, television, a mattress or a chair - we can collect it. You will need to book a collection by visiting [westlancs.gov.uk](https://www.westlancs.gov.uk). Charges will apply. Remember as a tenant you can be fined/ prosecuted for fly-tipping.

5.9 Access to your home

You are required, under the terms of your tenancy agreement, to allow reasonable access to your home for the following:

- Annual Gas and Heating Safety Inspection - To ensure your boiler and gas appliances are safe and functioning correctly.
- Electrical Safety Inspection (EICR) - Carried out every five years to check the safety of your electrical installations
- Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) – If you have any electrical equipment as part of a furnished tenancy
- Fire Safety Checks in communal areas - Including smoke alarm testing, fire door inspections, and fire risk assessments
- Asbestos Surveys - Common areas only, to identify and manage any asbestos-containing materials
- Legionella Risk Assessments – Where applicable, to ensure water systems are safe and free from harmful bacteria
- Damp and Mould Inspections - To identify and address any health risks or structural concerns
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Inspections - Used to assess potential hazards in the home
- Routine Repairs and Servicing - Including boiler servicing, lift maintenance,
- Tenancy Audits - To confirm occupancy and ensure tenancy conditions are being met.
- Capital Works and Refurbishment Surveys - Where major works are planned, access may be required for assessments
- Stock Condition Surveys – To assist us in understanding the condition of your property and what is required
- Pre Termination or Pre Transfer Inspections

- In independent living accommodation - Routine testing of door entry systems, speech alarm and fire detection equipment

Notice and Access

We will always provide at least 24 hours' notice before attending, unless access is required urgently (e.g. in an emergency). You are expected to cooperate and allow access at the agreed time. Failure to do so may be considered a breach of your tenancy agreement. In cases of repeated refusal, we may need to escalate the matter, which could include seeking a court order to gain access.

5.10 Our Staff

WLBC does not tolerate verbal, physical abuse or threats of any nature towards its employees or contractors.

This includes threatening behaviour including bullying, intimidation, psychological abuse, harassment, inappropriate use of social media and/or telecommunication and threats with weapons.

Verbal abuse: the use of inappropriate words or behaviour causing distress including shouting, swearing or insults with racial or sexual intent and intimidation.

Physical violence: the intentional application of force to another person without lawful justification, resulting in physical injury or personal emotional discomfort.

The Council adopt a zero-tolerance approach, requiring the reporting of all such incidents. Any abusive or threatening behaviour toward our staff and contractors is completely unacceptable and is a breach of your tenancy agreement. We will consider placing a risk alert on your tenancy records, this means that future visits to your home will be carried out by two representatives, or you may be asked to speak to us by phone or in person at the Council offices rather than a home visit, this will be dependent on the nature of the contact.

The alert will be reviewed annually and if there have been no further incidents, we will consider whether it is appropriate for the marker to be removed.

Dependent on the seriousness of the incident, we may also take enforcement action will include but not be limited to:

- A formal Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC)
- Legal action including serving a Notice of Seeking Possession referral to police

5.11 You and your neighbours

Everyone in West Lancashire has the right to peaceful enjoyment of their home. From time to time however the way in which some people live their lives upsets their neighbours.

A good neighbour will tolerate and understand the different lifestyles of others, but there be occasions where the issue needs to be addressed.

If possible, the best way to sort out a problem is for you and your neighbour to talk it over, in a reasonable way. They may not be aware that they are causing you problems. Talk to them and explain that they are disturbing you and try to agree a way of dealing with it. If you're worried about approaching them, write a letter, explaining the problem clearly and sticking to the facts.

If the problem affects other neighbours, involve them as well. It can be easier to settle a dispute if the complaint comes from a number of people.

It is important that you try and stay on speaking terms with your neighbours, as you still have to live next door or close to each other. In almost all cases, the solution will be brought about by co-operation between yourselves.

5.12 Anti-Social Behaviour

We want you to be able to enjoy your home and the neighbourhood safely and peacefully. We understand that anti-social behaviour can affect your quality of life and we treat it very seriously. If you are affected by anti-social behaviour, in or in the locality of your home don't suffer alone - let us know and we can work together to resolve it.

The Council now has a dedicated team that deals with incidents of anti-social behaviour including:

- Verbal abuse, harassment, intimidation, or threatening behaviour
- Hate crimes/Hate incidents.
- Vandalism and damage to property
- Domestic abuse
- Noise nuisance (some noise nuisance may not meet the statutory threshold, but may still be a breach of tenancy and/or be an annoyance (a lower threshold).
- Neighbour Disputes
- Drug activity
- Nuisance that could cause nuisance or annoyance.

What we DON'T class as Anti-Social Behaviour

- Household noise due to everyday living (such as babies crying, doors slamming, toilets flushing or vacuuming)
- Children playing
- One-off parties, barbecues, or celebrations at reasonable times.
- Cooking smells
- DIY in reasonable hours
- Someone parked unlawfully.
- Minor personal differences such as dirty looks or fall outs between children.
- Normal behaviour occurring at unusual times because of different working patterns provided the resident is attempting to keep disturbance to a minimum.

How to report an incident

You can report anti-social behaviour by:

Calling Customer Services on 01695 577177

Email: ASB@westlancs.gov.uk

Anti-social behaviour that involves crime, violence or threatened violence should be reported first to the police. If it is an emergency phone 999 but if it is a non-emergency phone 101

Domestic Abuse

West Lancashire Borough Council believes that none of its customers or their households should live in fear of violence from a current or former spouse or partner or any other member of their household.

If you are suffering from domestic abuse, we can offer confidential advice and support. We can help by installing security equipment to keep you safe in your home or in extreme cases arrange emergency temporary accommodation.

By signing the tenancy agreement our customers agree not to commit acts of domestic abuse. Whilst not every victim/survivor will want to end their relationship or want us to take action; where relevant we will make use of appropriate tools and powers, including injunctions, Notice of Seeking Possession and possession proceedings. The actions we can take will be determined by the tenancy status of the victim and perpetrator.

5.15 Animals

Keeping pets

We understand that people often enjoy the companionship of a pet, and recognise the health and well-being benefits that pet ownership can bring. Where possible we aim to accommodate request to keep pets when people are moving into council housing. The Council's Pet Policy outlines our approach to pet ownership.

What type of pets can be kept and in what circumstances.

This list provides a guide to the numbers and types of pets that may be considered, it is not exhaustive.

Caged Pets

- Birds

Are permitted to be kept in any property type

Tanks

- Coldwater fish
- Tropical fish
- Reptiles

Are permitted to be kept in any property type

Un-caged Pets

- One dog
- One or two cats

Are permitted in:

- All houses
- All sheltered flats and bungalows

- Flats that do not have enclosed communal areas

Assistance dogs – such as guide dogs, hearing dogs or dogs for the disabled will always be permitted.

Responsibilities include ensuring that

- Faeces are picked up and disposed of correctly, in an appropriate bin suitable for animal faeces
- Litter trays and cages should be cleaned out regularly and disposed of in an appropriate manner
- Excessive noise (such as dog barking constantly) will not be tolerated. If the owner is unwilling to cooperate, then he/she will be given the option of either rehoming the pet or giving up their tenancy.
- For the consideration of other tenants, pets must not be left on their own for any long periods of time for example overnight as this can cause excessive behaviour problems.
- Pets are not left in a property when you are away. The pet should be taken with you or boarded elsewhere. Pet owners are responsible for making arrangement to have their pet cared for in the event of ill health, hospitalisation, holidays or emergencies.

Additional responsibilities for pet owners in Independent Living

- There must be a named responsible person who will take responsibility for the pet in an emergency or should you be incapacitated in any way. In the event of you becoming incapacitated and the responsible named person is not able to take responsibility for the pet then the Council will arrange for the pet to be taken care of in an appropriate manner, any costs incurred will be recharged to you.
- You will be responsible for notifying the Independent Living Team of any changes to these details.
- Pets are not allowed to roam in internal or external communal areas. Dogs must be kept on a lead when outside your home and in communal areas
- Communal rooms such as lounges (residents lounges would be used for access to gardens / footpaths only where applicable), communal kitchen, laundry and other residents' apartments are out of bounds and pets are not allowed

5.16 Additional Structures

Changes to Sheds, Garages, and Outdoor Buildings

Sometimes the Council may need to remove or demolish outdoor buildings like sheds, garages, or other structures (we call these “outhouses”) that are part of your home. This could be for safety reasons, if they are detrimental to your health, repairs, due to them being uneconomical to repair, or future improvements to the area.

We may also remove any fittings inside these outhouses, such as:

- Toilets or sinks
- Baths or showers
- Plumbing or electrical fixtures
- Shelving or storage units

We'll always try to give you at least 28 days' notice before we do this unless it's an emergency. In urgent cases, we may need to act quickly and will let you know as soon as we can.

Please note that we won't usually offer compensation for any structures or fittings we remove, even if you installed them yourself, unless required by the law.

If we do need to carry out this kind of work, we'll ask you to move any personal belongings from the area and allow us access to do the job safely.

5.17 Additional Responsibilities for those living in Independent Living homes.

If you live in one of our Independent Living Schemes our Scheme Managers provide other services, such as regular visits and calls to ensure your safety and wellbeing. You are expected to co-operate in this process.

It is important that you provide us with up-to-date emergency contact details and notify us of any changes. These details will only be used in the event of an emergency or where we have serious concerns about your welfare

To ensure the security and safety of our schemes and other residents you must not allow access to the scheme to anyone other than your own visitors. Any children (under the age of 16) who are visiting you must be accompanied by a responsible adult whilst in communal areas.

Our Independent Living Schemes are designated for residents over 55 years of age, it is therefore, important that you do not allow anyone under 55 to reside in your home without our prior written permission.

6. Ending your tenancy

We hope you will be very happy as a tenant of West Lancashire Borough Council. However, we also recognise that as life changes you may wish to move on.

How To End Your Council Tenancy

If you wish to end your tenancy you must give four full weeks' written notice.

This can be done by visiting one of our Customer Service Points or by telephoning 01695 577177.

Before you leave:

- Any alterations or improvements made without our written permission must be reinstated to the original condition unless approved by a Council officer during their inspection
- Ensure the property is clean
- Remove all your belongings from the property, garden and any communal areas
- Clear your loft and any outbuildings

- Return two sets of keys including any communal door keys. These should be returned to our Customer Service Point no later than 10 am on the day your notice expires
- Replace any fixtures damaged during the term of your tenancy for example doors and kitchen units
- **Continue to pay rent and any arrears during the four weeks' notice period**

Pre-Termination Inspection and Asbestos Survey

When we receive notice from you, we will arrange for an officer to inspect your property. During this inspection, you will be advised of any repairs that are your responsibility. You will have the opportunity to complete these repairs before you leave.

As part of our standard procedures, we may also request our contractor to carry out an asbestos survey in your home. This is routine and nothing to worry about. The survey ensures safety before any intrusive work begins on an empty property.

You are required to allow the Council access to carry out both the pre-termination inspection and the asbestos survey. If you allow both inspections to be completed, a £25 credit will be applied to your rent account.

Recharge costs

If you leave any items in the property or garden, or leave the property in poor condition, you will be charged for the cost of us putting things right. Costs will vary, but here are some examples for guidance.

Replacing an internal door - approximately £52.00

Leaving a small amount of rubbish in the property or externally - approximately £102.00

Leaving large items in the property or garden - approximately £206.00

Leaving carpets, vinyl flooring - approximately £206.00

Leaving a fridge/freezer in the property or garden - approximately - Disposal cost- £96.00

As you can see from the above charges, it is very important that you leave your property and garden completely free from rubbish and belongings when you hand in your keys.

If you leave with any money owing for rent on your rent account, we will raise a charge and continue to request payments from you until fully paid. If you owe us money when you leave this may affect your chances of finding accommodation with us or other providers.

8. What Happens If We Do Not Keep To This Agreement

Our customer feedback policy sets out our approach to dealing with comments, compliments and complaints. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service, or lack of actions by the Council or those acting on our behalf you can make a complaint. You can do this in writing, online or when talking to the team. There are two stages to our complaints and you can find out more about this at westlancs.gov.uk

9. How we handle your data

West Lancashire Borough Council (WLBC) collects personal information in many ways. This can be by paper, online forms, telephone, face to face and email. We also record images of people with CCTV.

Any information will have been provided directly by you or your representative, a member of staff or organisation where there is a legal reason for them to share your information.

For more information on how we manage and store information, our privacy policy is available at westlancls.gov.uk

10. Contact Information

We can provide this information in alternative formats e.g. coloured paper, large print or in a different language.

Please contact your Housing Officer, visit westlancls.gov.uk
Or telephone Customer Services on 01695 577177.

For contact details for the housing teams visit westlancls.gov.uk

For all other enquiries please contact Customer Services on 01695 577177

Additional Information

Can You Go Away and Still Keep The Tenancy?

Yes, provided the property is still used as your only or main home and your intention is to return. There are some things which you need to do before you go away.

Leave a forwarding address. If you are going away for longer than six weeks you must let us know how long you intend to be away. You will remain responsible for the security of your home while you are away. You should also let us have an address or a telephone number of where you will be in case we need to get in touch with you quickly.

Paying your rent. You should also arrange for your rent to be paid whilst you are away to prevent your rent account going into arrears as this would result in us taking action against you.

It is important that you make your intentions clear to us or we may think that you have abandoned the property or rented out the property to someone else in which case we can commence action to repossess the property and may obtain a court order to evict anyone living there.

Renting A Garage

We have garages to rent. If you would like to rent a garage, please complete a garage application. When allocating a garage, priority for letting garages will be in the following order:

Priority 1: Local Residents (within 0.5km radius of the garage site)

Priority 2: Applicants who live outside a 0.5km radius of the garage site who are applying for first garage

Priority 3: Those applicants who already have a garage (regardless of where they live)

We will not normally end a garage tenancy without your agreement unless there is a breach of tenancy conditions for e.g. non-payment of rent, the tenant is deceased or the garage/site is required to meet the Council's strategic aims or for the efficient management of the Council's housing stock.

The Council can end the tenancy by serving one week's notice to quit on you. You can terminate your garage tenancy by giving one week's written notice ending on a Sunday. This can be done by contacting the Council's Customer Services Team. Garage areas are dangerous places for children to play and so we ask all parents to keep their children away, for example by ensuring they do not play football around these areas.

For further information please email comms.team@westlancs.gov.uk
or telephone **01695 577177**

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