

Tenant Handbook.



CENTAUR
HOUSING



Contents

SECTION 1

Useful contact details

SECTION 2

Important information about your home

SECTION 3

Moving into your new home

What can I expect
Moving home - useful checklist
Your keys

SECTION 4

Your tenancy

Your tenancy agreement
Your rights
Your rent and charges
Support to help you manage your tenancy
Permissions for home improvements
Subletting/lodgers
Ending your tenancy
How we use your information
Providing feedback

SECTION 5

Repairs and maintenance

Repair responsibilities
Reporting repairs
Chargeable repairs
Asking for identification
Mould, damp and condensation
Pests
Gas
Carbon monoxide
Fire
Electrical
Asbestos
Water hygiene
Blocked pipes
Home improvements

SECTION 6

Living in your home

Security
Pets
TVs/Satellite dishes
Communal space
Sheds
Garden
Rubbish
Parking
Antisocial behaviour

Welcome to your new home!

As your Landlord, **CHA** is responsible for managing your property and we work closely with our partners to make sure that our services are of a high quality. Any surplus we make is used to improve our homes and services.

This handbook has been designed to give you as much information as possible to set-up and maintain your tenancy. It contains useful information about the services we provide and your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. If you don't find what you are looking for, you may find it at www.centaurhousing.com or by speaking to your Housing Manager.

We wish you every happiness in your new home!

The Centaur Housing Team.



Useful contact details

Housing Manager

Landlord

Centaur Housing Association
80 Market Street
PR7 2SF
T: 01254 958950
E: Admin@Centaurhousing.com

Repairs and Maintenance

Out of Hours Emergency Repairs

Gas Supplier

Electricity Supplier

Water Supplier

Fire Department

Police

Ambulance

SECTION 2



Important information about your home

Address:	
Gas supplier:	
Location of gas meter:	
Gas Meter reading at the start of the tenancy:	
Electricity Supplier:	
Location of electric meter:	
Electricity Meter reading at the start of the tenancy:	
Water Supplier:	
Location of water meter:	
Location of water stop tap:	
Heating/type:	
Boiler make/model:	
Location of boiler:	
Location of electric consumer unit:	
Location of district heating meter:	

SECTION 3

Moving into your new home

In this section you will find information relating to:

- What can I expect?
- Your keys
- Moving home – useful checklist

What can I expect?

On the day that you move into your new home, or shortly after, your Housing Manager will meet with you and will explain the details of your tenancy agreement. Once you have signed the tenancy agreement (or someone who is legally able to has signed on your behalf), your Housing Manager will give you your keys/fobs.

Your Housing Manager will then submit a claim to Housing Benefit on your behalf to pay your rent to **CHA**.

If you are paying your rent yourself, your Housing Manager will complete a Direct Debit Instruction to ensure your rent is paid to **CHA** on time. If at any time you cannot pay your rent, you must speak to your Housing Manager immediately.

Your Housing Manager will visit the property on a regular basis to see how you are getting on and you can contact them at any time for advice, information or support to manage your home and tenancy.

Your keys

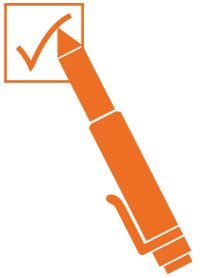
When you move in, you will be given your keys and fobs (if fob systems are fitted in your building). We recommend that you give a spare key to a trusted family member or friend and let us know who they are so we can contact them in an emergency as **CHA** do not keep copies of the keys or fobs. You may be charged if you lose or damage the keys or fobs.

Please look after both your house keys and communal keys/fobs. You may be charged if you lose or damage them.



Moving in - useful checklist

There are a few things to think about when moving into your new home. We have provided a checklist below of things to remember to help you get set-up. Some of these things may not be applicable to you but if you are unsure, your Housing Officer and/or Care Provider can support you:



- Go online or visit your local Post Office to redirect your post.
- Arrange for new phone connection in your new home.
- Contact your internet provider to arrange for a new service to be set-up in your new home.
- Contact the energy supplier(s) in your new home to provide meter readings and set-up payments/change energy supplier if preferred.
- Notify your employer, doctor, credit/loan companies, bank, insurance companies, TV licensing and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) of your change of address.
- Switch your Council Tax payment.
- Update your address on your car insurance (if appropriate) and contact the DVLA to update your driving licence and vehicle registration.
- Update the Electoral Register.
- Set-up home contents insurance.
- Locate your water meter, water stop tap, electricity meter, gas meter and boiler – details can be found in Section 2.

SECTION 4

Your tenancy

In this section you will find information relating to:

- Your tenancy agreement
- Your rights
- Your rent and charges
- Support to help you manage your tenancy
- Permissions for home improvements
- Subletting/lodgers
- Ending your tenancy
- How we use your information
- Providing feedback

Your tenancy agreement

You will be issued with an Assured Shorthold Tenancy with **CHA**. Your Tenancy Agreement is a legal document which sets out your rights and responsibilities. At your sign-up meeting you (or someone legally able to act on your behalf) will sign your Tenancy Agreement and you will be bound by the agreement to keep to your responsibilities. It is important you read your tenancy agreement carefully and understand what it says.

There are certain basic rights that a you have in an assured shorthold tenancy:

- The right to live in the accommodation undisturbed
- The right to live in a property in good repair
- The right to information about the tenancy
- Protection from eviction

Generally, you have the right to remain in your home as long as you keep the conditions set out in your tenancy agreement. If you no longer use the dwelling as your main residence, you will no longer have security of tenure. As long as you use the property as your main residence, the only way **CHA** can end your tenancy is by going to court.

There are grounds on which **CHA** can obtain possession, but the main reasons why we go to court to end tenancies are where tenants:

- Fail to pay, or are consistently late in paying rent
- Cause a nuisance or annoyance (this includes nuisance or annoyance caused by people living with you or visiting you)

- Commit anti-social behaviour, violence, threats, racial intimidation or harassment
- Obtain a tenancy by making a false statement
- Fail to move in or abandon the tenancy
- Break any of the terms of the tenancy agreement
- Fail to keep their home in a clean and tidy condition
- Failure to provide reasonable access to the property to carry out repairs or other work

We may also apply to the court for an order that requires you to keep to the terms of the Tenancy Agreement, either through an injunction or an anti-social behaviour order. A full list of the grounds under which you can be evicted can be obtained from us directly.

Your rent and service charge

The weekly rent you pay is made up of rent and service charge, and it is set by **CHA**. Your rent will be reviewed each year and we will give you at least four weeks' notice in writing of the proposed increase. If you wish to discuss the proposal, your Housing Manager can arrange for a meeting to be held. If you would like to know more about how we set the rent and service charges, you can ask us for a copy of our Rent Setting Policy.

The service charge covers the cost of providing services such as cleaning, gardening and housing support services. Every tenant contributes towards the cost of the services. Most elements of the service charge are eligible for Housing Benefit purposes. Any ineligible costs will be collected

Support to help you manage your tenancy

Your Housing Manager can support you with the following:

- Advice and assistance to understand and comply with the conditions of your tenancy
- Assistance in claiming/managing housing benefit applications
- Advice and assistance on using equipment within the property
- Advice and assistance regarding the security of your home
- Arranging repairs

Your Housing Manager will keep in touch with you during your tenancy. Below are the meetings and visits that you can expect from your Housing Manager during your tenancy:

- Sign-up meeting – at the sign-up meeting you will sign a Tenancy Agreement and agree to keep to the terms of your tenancy. This is the opportunity for you to meet your Housing Manager and ask any questions or seek advice about your tenancy, the property or the services available to you.
- Welcome visit - your Housing Manager will visit you within the first 4 weeks of your tenancy start date to make sure you have settled in to your new home.
- Regular visits - The Housing Manager will make regular visits to your home throughout your tenancy. This is to get to know you better and provide support to help you sustain a successful tenancy with us.

Did you know?

You can contact your Housing Manager at any time for support and advice.



Subletting and lodgers

You may not sub-let your home or allow lodgers to reside in your home.

Ending your tenancy

You must not move out of your home without telling us first. If you want to end your tenancy you must give us at least four weeks' written notice. This gives us time to find a new tenant for the property. Either tenant of a joint tenancy can end the tenancy; such notice will terminate the full tenancy.

On leaving you must:

- Leave the property clean, empty and in a lettable condition
- Repair or replace any broken fixtures and fittings you are responsible for before you leave the property
- Allow an inspection of your home by **CHA** and/or the Managing Agent before you return the keys for the property to us
- Return the property to us with vacant possession
- Tell your gas and electricity suppliers you are leaving the property so they can read your meters
- If we have to carry out repairs which you are responsible for, clean the property, or arrange for items to be moved, we may charge you.

You will also need to arrange for your post to be redirected. You can fill in a change of address form which you can get from a Post Office (there is a small charge payable for this redirection service).

How we use your information

We take the privacy of your information very seriously and we are committed to taking all reasonable steps to process and protect any personal information that you provide to us. This is in accordance with the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). **CHA** will use the information you provide to enable us to meet our responsibilities and perform our duties in the allocation and management of housing accommodation. We may be required to share some information with third parties in order to fulfil these duties. The information you provide to us will be held on computer and paper-based systems, which may be used for the prevention and detection of fraud or any other crime. Appropriate measures are in place to ensure the information you share with us is secure and only available to authorised staff.

We typically only collect personal information about you in order to set up your tenancy and provide our Housing Management services. We will ask for your permission to use your personal information for anything outside of this. You have the right to be informed of what information we hold about you and what we will be doing with your information, as well as to ask us to remove your information if there are no legal grounds for us to continue to hold and use your information.

You can contact the Information Commissioner's Office directly at www.ico.org.uk or 0303 123 1113 should you wish to.

Providing feedback

CHA aims to provide an outstanding service to our tenants at all times and we welcome feedback as a way to monitor and improve our services. When things go wrong, we would like to be given the opportunity to fully investigate and put this right where we can.

If you would like to make a complaint, general comment or send us a compliment you can contact **CHA** using the following methods:

- Visit our website: www.Centaurhousing.com
- Call us on **01254 958950**
- Email us at Admin@Centaurhousing.com
- Write to us at **80 Market Street, Chorley, Lancashire, PR7 2SF.**

Complaints will be dealt with in accordance with **CHAs** complaints policy -this is available on request - please ensure you provide as much information as possible to allow us to fully investigate your complaint fully. You can have someone act on your behalf however we will need your permission to liaise with them regarding your complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint following **CHA's** complaints procedure, the matter can be raised with the Housing Ombudsman:

Housing Ombudsman Service
81 Aldwych, London WC2B 4HN

Tel: 020 7241 3800

Fax: 020 7831 1942

Lo-Call: 0845 7125 973

Minicom: 020 7404 7092

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

SECTION 5

Repairs & maintenance

In this section you will find information relating to:

- Repair responsibilities
- Reporting repairs
- Chargeable repairs
- Asking for identification
- Mould, damp and condensation
- Pests
- Gas
- Carbon monoxide
- Fire
- Electrical
- Asbestos
- Water hygiene
- Blocked pipes
- Home improvements



Repair responsibilities

The summary on the next page provides a general overview of whose responsibility it is to carry out repairs and maintenance. If you are unsure, please contact your Housing Manager for advice.

Reporting repairs

To report a repair or damage to your home, you can email:

Repairs@Centaurhousing.com

or call:

01254 958950

to log the repair.

Chargeable repairs

We may seek to recharge the cost of a repair to you where:

- You have failed to or refuse to undertake a repair which is your responsibility and **CHA** has decided it is necessary to carry out the repair
- It is the opinion of **CHA**, that you have undertaken a repair but failed to carry out the work to an acceptable standard or the work is unsafe
- You have made an alteration to your home and **CHA** deems it necessary to undertake remedial work to bring the property back to a satisfactory or safe standard/ return it to its original condition
- You, someone living with you or a visitor invited by you has willfully or accidentally caused damage (e.g. fist put through a door or wall), or negligence (e.g. a blocked sink due to the build-up of food or cooking fat)

- You have lost your keys and/or fob
- You have asked us to undertake the repairs on your behalf.
- You, someone living with you or a visitor invited by you caused damage to the communal areas.
- You have left refuse, furniture or personal belongings in the property after your tenancy has ended and **CHA** needs to arrange for the removal of such items.
- You have left the property in an un-lettable state after your tenancy ended and works need to be undertaken to bring the property back to a lettable standard.

Asking for identification

You should always ask for the identification of anyone who calls to your home. Anyone acting on our behalf will carry photographic ID and will not mind if you ask to see it. If anyone refuses to show you their ID or you have concerns, close the door and contact the police immediately on 999.

Statutory checks

As a landlord we also have a legal responsibility to carry out certain checks in our properties and buildings e.g. annual gas safety checks, electrical safety checks or water hygiene tests. It is your responsibility to allow us access to your home to carry out these important checks. Failure to allow us access for these checks is a breach of your Tenancy Agreement and may result in legal action being taken against you.

CHA responsibilities

As the landlord, CHA is responsible for maintenance and compliance of the property, which includes activities such as:

- Statutory checks for Gas & Electric
- Drains, gutters and outside pipes
- Roofs and chimneys
- Door, windows and outside walls
- Paths and steps
- Boundary walls, fencing and gates
- Outhouses, garages & parking areas.
- Water heaters, fitted fires, central heating systems and electric storage heaters
- Electrical wiring, sockets & switches
- Internal pipes, baths, sinks, basins, toilets and showers
- Other appliances, e.g. T.V. aerials (where these are installed & owned by CHA)
- Common entrances, halls and passageways
- Play, parking, storage and any other external common areas
- Lifts, rubbish chutes and entry-phone systems.
- External paintwork
- Internal paintwork in common areas.
- Communal Furniture

Your responsibilities

As a tenant you are responsible for 'general good housekeeping', which includes such activities as:

- Replacing lamp skirts and pull-cords
- Replacing electrical fuses, light bulbs, fluorescent tubes & starters
- Replacing lost keys and locks when locked out
- Clearing blocked waste pipes and toilets where the blockage is caused by lack of care, e.g. cooking oil/fat and hair
- Minor damage to plaster and decorative defects
- Draught exclusion, unless draughts are caused by ill-fitting doors or windows
- Replacing plugs and chains to baths, basins and sinks
- Replacing or re-securing toilet seats
- Replacing glass, unless the glass has been broken as a result of crime or vandalism and you are able to provide a crime reference number
- Bleeding radiators and relighting pilot lights
- Replacing batteries in battery operated smoke detectors.

How we deal with repairs

The repair will then be prioritised based on the impact the defect has on the health, safety and wellbeing of tenants.

- Emergency repairs - resolved within 24 hours - this includes anything that presents an immediate risk to your health and safety or the fabric of your property.
- Urgent repairs - resolved within 48 hours - this includes work that needs to be completed to prevent damage to your property, help overcome serious inconvenience and prevent possible health and safety risks.
- Routine repairs - resolved within 28 calendar days - this includes repairs that need attention but does not pose a threat to your health, safety or risk to the fabric of your home.

Statutory checks

As a landlord we also have a legal responsibility to carry out certain checks in our properties and buildings e.g. annual gas safety checks, electrical safety checks or water hygiene tests. It is your responsibility to allow us access to your home to carry out these important checks. Failure to allow us access for these checks is a breach of your Tenancy Agreement and may result in legal action being taken against you.

Asking for identification

You should always ask for the identification of anyone who calls to your home. Anyone acting on our behalf will carry photographic ID and will not mind if you ask to see it. If anyone refuses to show you their ID or you have concerns, close the door and contact the police immediately on 999.

Mould, damp and condensation

It is your responsibility to take steps to deal with condensation. You can reduce the problems by following the advice below:

- Wipe down the windows and sills every morning
- Never block air bricks or vents in your walls, doors and windows
- When taking a bath or shower opening a window or make use of an extractor fan if fitted for ventilation
- When cooking in the kitchen keep the door closed but open a window for the steam to escape. If you have no windows the extractor fan should be left to run for a while
- Ensure radiators are free from obstructions such as beds and other furniture
- Reduce the amount of moisture in the air by not drying clothes directly on radiators or storage heaters

If you have any problems with mould or damp, please contact your Housing Manager who will arrange for an inspection and remedial works.

Pests

If you have problems with mice, insects or other pests, you must contact your Housing Manager who will advise on the necessary action to be taken. Please note that where the infestation is deemed to be as a result of you failing to maintain the level of hygiene in your home, we may charge you the cost to resolve the issue.

Gas

If you smell gas, you should do the following immediately:

- Open all the doors and windows in your home
- Tell your Service Manager or a member of your support staff.
- Turn off the gas at the meter and call:

Telephone Number:

- Put out all naked flames, including cigarettes
- Do not use electric switches or mobile phones, as any sparks may start a fire
- If you smell gas outside your home, you should shut all your doors and windows to stop the fumes getting inside
- If the gas smells very strong, you should leave the property straightaway

Fire

We will fit a smoke alarm in your home and will service this on an annual basis. It is your responsibility to check your smoke alarm weekly - never remove batteries. Make sure all exits are clear.

Please familiarise yourself with the evacuation plans and fire assembly point for your property. If you are unsure about where to find this, or need support to understand the information, please speak to a member of staff or your Housing Manager.

Carbon monoxide

Signs of carbon monoxide poisoning include:

- Feeling tired and weak
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Sickness
- Pains in the chest and stomach
- Being out of breath
- Loss of consciousness

If you think carbon monoxide is being released in your home, please let your staff and your housing manager know immediately.

Electrical

We will test your electrical installation e.g. wiring before you move into your home to make sure it is safe. It is your responsibility to make sure that your own electrical equipment is safe and in good working order.

We have a legal responsibility to periodically test the electrical installation in your home to make sure you and your household are safe from electrical hazards. We will notify you when we need to do this inspection.

Failure to allow access to your home to carry out electrical testing may result in legal action being taken against you.

Please ensure safe use of electrical items in your home at all times, e.g. do not overload extension leads or use electrical equipment near water.

Asbestos

If there is any asbestos within your home, you will be provided with a copy of the survey. Your support staff will also be provided with a copy.

You must not do any DIY improvements until you understand the details of the survey and management report and must not tamper with any asbestos material. If you become aware of any damage to any asbestos in your home, you must notify your support staff and your housing manager immediately.

Water hygiene

There is a very low risk that Legionella and other bacteria can grow in stored or stagnant water to levels which may cause infection.

We will carry out assessments of the systems periodically to ensure they are satisfactory. However, you have a key part to play in the control of the bacteria in the systems and looking after your own health.

Tips to reduce risk

We advise that you follow these simple steps to keep your home's water supply clean and healthy. Each week:

- Run all your taps for three to five minutes
- Run your shower for three to five minutes
- Flush the toilet twice with the lid down to ensure fresh water is circulated through the system and that the cistern is regularly emptied

Blocked pipes

Blocked waste pipes occur most commonly in kitchens and bathrooms when either food particles or hair has blocked the 'S' bend. It is wise to clean drainage pipes from sinks, basins and baths occasionally with household washing soda crystals.

If you have a blocked water pipe, please report it to your Housing Manager. If we have to clear a blockage that you have caused, you will be charged for the work involved.

Tips to avoid blocked pipes:

- Do not pour cooking fat or oil down the sink.
- Do not flush incontinence products, sanitary products or wipes down the toilet.
- Clean out the plugholes of showers and baths each week to avoid a build-up of hair.



Home improvements

It is important that you ask for permission before you carry out any type of improvement work to your home and permission is dealt with on an individual basis, so speak to your Housing Manager before making any changes. Permission requests could be refused where work is deemed unsafe, difficult to maintain or will reduce the value of the property.

Approval for improvements

Before carrying out any improvements you must tell us in writing:

- Details of the work that you want to carry out.
- Who will be doing the work.
- Whether any planning/building control approval has been obtained.
- When the work will be completed (as we need to inspect any completed works).

If you make alterations or improvements to your home - whether approved by CHA or not - we may seek to recharge you the cost to reinstate the property to its original condition.

SECTION 6

Living in your home

In this section you will find information relating to:

- Security
- Pets
- TVs/satellite dishes
- Communal space
- Sheds
- Garden
- Rubbish
- Parking
- Antisocial behaviour

Security

You can help to maintain the security of your home by taking a few simple precautions:

- Close all your windows when you go out, make sure your entrance door is locked and leave a light on.
- Never leave your key under a doormat or hanging on a string behind the letterbox, and avoid leaving your key where it can be seen from the front door.
- Always check the identity of callers to your home - genuine callers should be able to produce some form of identification.
- Remember to cancel your newspapers and milk if you are going away.
- Don't prop doors open.
- Don't allow anybody you don't know or aren't expecting into the block.
- Don't give a key or fob to anybody else.

Pets

It may be possible for you to have pets however you will need to have written permission from us to do so. We therefore request that you speak to your Housing Manager before getting a pet so that we can assess whether this is possible or not.

TVs/satellite dishes

You may require planning permission to install satellite dishes. Please speak to your Housing Manager in the first instance.

Communal space

You, your visitors and other tenants must treat the communal areas with respect and keep the space clean and tidy. We may seek the recharge the cost of repairing any damage caused by tenants and their visitors.

Sheds

You must get written permission beforehand if you want to put up a shed or outbuildings at the property - please speak to your Housing Manager in the first instance.



Garden

If you have your own garden you must look after it. We will maintain any communal gardens but you must treat the area with respect and behave with consideration for other tenants whilst using the space.

Rubbish

You must ensure you put all rubbish in the correct bins and leave it out for collection on the appropriate day.

Rubbish is collected on a:

You will need to put your rubbish at/in:

Parking

Parking for the property is located at:

If a permit is required, you can get one from:

Antisocial behaviour

Everyone is entitled to live in peace and quiet in their own home, and not be disturbed by the behaviour of neighbours. We expect our tenants to be considerate to their neighbours and not to cause nuisance or harassment. If it does occur, the person causing it is in breach of their tenancy conditions and we will take action to prevent further problems.

You can be a good neighbour by:

- Thinking about neighbours when you are doing something noisy and let them know first
- Turning TV or music down if your neighbour asks you to - remember that noise travels through walls and floors
- Being tolerant when neighbours and their children are engaged in the ordinary activity of daily living
- Letting your neighbours know if you are planning a party
- Remember: that you are responsible for the behaviour of your children, pets and visitors.

What can you do if your neighbour is causing you a problem?

Your neighbours may not be aware that their behaviour is causing you a problem. The best thing to do is to speak to your staff in the first instance who will be able to assist you to try and resolve the problems informally. If the problems continue, speak to your Housing Manager who can assist further.

Visit our website: www.Centaurhousing.com

Call us on: 01254 958950

Email us at: Admin@Centaurhousing.com

Write to us at: Centaur Housing Association
80 Market Street
Chorley
Lancashire
PR7 2SF