



Rugby Borough Council Tenant Handbook

Contents

Introduction	3
Section 1 – Your Responsibilities as a Tenant	3
Section 2 – Your Rights as a Tenant	9
Section 3 – The Council’s responsibilities as your landlord	12
Section 4 – Repairs	14
Section 5 – Ensuring your Safety	16
Section 6 – Mutual Exchange.....	17
Section 7 – Help Available to Support you in Maintaining your Tenancy	17
Section 8 – Garages	18
Section 9 – Getting Involved in Improving your Homes and Communities	18

Introduction

When you become a tenant of the Council, you sign up to a formal legal contract. Under this contract:

- the Council, as your landlord, has responsibilities for managing your home and tenancy.
- you have responsibilities for looking after your home, paying your rent and not causing a nuisance or annoyance to other residents

In addition to these responsibilities, you also have several rights, which are explained in this handbook.

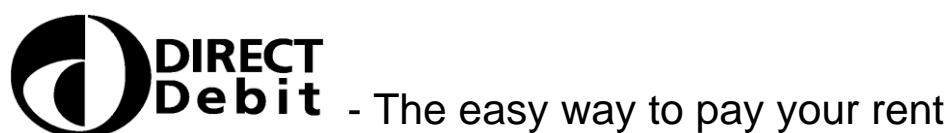
By setting out these rights and responsibilities from the outset, there should be less room for misunderstandings arising between yourself and your landlord.

Section 1 – Your Responsibilities as a Tenant

Paying Your Rent

Paying your rent matters - if you don't pay, you can't stay

You have responsibility for paying your rent, whether you pay the rent yourself or have payments made on your behalf via Universal Credit or Housing Benefit.



Direct Debit takes the hassle out of paying your rent - you'll never have to wait and never pay late.

With Direct Debit, your rent payment automatically comes out of your bank or building society account. It's flexible too - you can choose from weekly or fortnightly payments, or monthly on the 1st, 12th, 19th or 26th of the month.

Other ways to pay your rent



Online via the council's website www.rugby.gov.uk



By debit card over the phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week on (01788) 533463

By debit card over the phone between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, on (01788) 533777



At the Post Office or Pay Zone with your rent payment card



By cheque at the Town Hall or by post (remember to write your name, address and 16 digit rent account reference on the back)



Arrange a standing order payment with your bank

If you are having problems paying your rent or if you are struggling to pay please contact us for advice, without delay. The sooner we know there is a problem the sooner we can offer you the advice you need before things potentially start to feel overwhelming

Taking care of your Council home

You are responsible for looking after the property and garden, keeping them in good condition and reporting any repairs promptly. You will be asked to pay the cost of making good or replacing any damage to the property not caused by fair wear and tear.

Nuisance & Anti-Social Behaviour

You are responsible for your actions and the actions of your family, anyone living with you as well as any visitors to your home. This includes issues of nuisance, annoyance and anti-social behaviour.

Many neighbours will naturally have different values or opinions and sometimes this can cause problems. You need to remember though, we all have a right to live our lives and part of being a good neighbour is about allowing some give and take.

Noise from neighbours is a common source of disturbance. The most frequent reports are about loud music, dogs barking, banging doors and DIY activities. Remember that no house or flat is totally soundproof, noise will happen, dogs will bark from time to time, there is a big difference between occasional, day-to-day noise and nuisance. Gardens tend to offer minimal sound insulation so your activities can have a greater effect on neighbours.

Everyone can expect some noise from the people who live around them and we ask that you are tolerant of this.

Ending your tenancy

If you want to end your tenancy you are required to give four full weeks' notice, detailed on a termination form which can be obtained by calling the Contact Centre or from our website. You must allow us access to carry out an inspection of your home during your notice period.

Please ensure that you advise us of the date you intend to move out and provide a forwarding address (as your rent account must be up-to-date).

Pets

You are unable to keep pets in some of our properties so you must request permission to keep pets. You must keep all pets under control and always look after their welfare.

Inspection of home/tenancy visits

We will arrange to visit you within the first six weeks of your tenancy starting to carry out a settling in visit. However, we may request to visit you at any point during your tenancy to check on the condition of the property (including garden) and to offer any help you may need to ensure that you can successfully sustain your tenancy.

Co-operating with Repairs / Gas Servicing

The council is your landlord and we are obliged to keep our properties in a safe and well-maintained condition. It is your responsibility to report repairs promptly to prevent further deterioration and damage. You must allow the council access to carry out repairs and sometimes it may be necessary to gain access to your property even if the repair is not directly linked to it.

If you have a gas heating system, you must allow us access to service it annually. Failure to do so will result in us applying to court to obtain a warrant to force access to do this vital work. Should this be necessary, you will be charged for the full costs of going down this route.

Reporting Repairs

If your home is in need of a repair, you can telephone the council on (01788) 533888 and select the appropriate option depending on the type of repair. You can also e-mail to repairs@rugby.gov.uk.

Preventing Mould

You are responsible for the prevention and removal of mould caused by condensation in your home. Condensation can be prevented by a combination of ventilation, heating, insulating and wiping damp surfaces such as windows. You should also avoid hanging washing up indoors to dry as this is a key contributor to mould in the home. For advice on preventing condensation please phone (01788) 533888 and select the appropriate option

Minor Repairs

Your rent includes payment towards the cost of most repairs and maintenance work. However, you too have responsibilities for keeping your home maintained to a reasonable standard. These include being responsible for some minor repairs, examples of which are listed in the tables below.

Please note that you are also responsible for repairing anything damaged through unfair wear and tear, misuse or neglect by you, your family or visitors. Where you are unable to carry out the repairs yourself you can ask someone else with the suitable ability, skill, knowledge and experience to properly carry out the repair to do the work.

You are responsible for ensuring the work is carried out safely and to a good standard. If the work is not carried out to a good standard then you could be liable to pay the cost of any subsequent work that the Council has to carry out.

The following table is a guide of who is responsible for what, this is not an exhaustive list and if you are unsure please contact the council.

INTERNAL WORK	COUNCIL	TENANT	INTERNAL WORK	COUNCIL	TENANT
Windows			Kitchens		
Sills	X		Kitchen cupboards	X	
Doors			Cupboard drawers	X	
Doors and ironmongery		X	Cupboard door catches handles and hinges		X
Walls			Worktops (worktops beyond repair will be replaced, but not necessarily to match the existing)	X	
Major plastering and plastic vents	X		Halls		
Minor plastering (cracks and small holes)		X	Hat and coat hooks		X
Wall tiles (if fitted by council)	X		Electrical fixtures and fittings		
Decorating		X	Wiring, sockets and light fittings (only if fitted by the council)	X	
Floors			Wired in smoke alarms	X	
Concrete floors	X		Independent smoke alarms (battery operated)		X
Floor tiles (if fitted by the council)	X		Pull cord strings	X	
Loose floor coverings and fitted carpets		X	Consumer unit (fuse box)	X	
Floorboards and joists	X		Storage heater (only if owned by the council)	X	
Skirting boards and architraves	X		Fires (only if owned by the council)	X	
Ceilings			Electric meter and supply		X
Decoration (including patching artex)		X	Cookers		X
Fireplaces			Disconnection and re-connection of cooker not owned by council		X
Fireplace	X		Extractor fans	X	
Sweeping chimney	X		Immersion heater	X	
Staircase					
Staircase, banisters, handrails	X				
Bathroom					
Bath panels	X				
Boxing of pipe work (unless fitted as part of an improvement/upgrade)		X			
Slatted shelves in airing cupboard or drying cupboard	X				

INTERNAL WORK	COUNCIL	TENANT
Plumbing		
Hot and cold services, tanks and overflows	X	
Wash hand basins (WHBs)	X	
Blocked WC	X	
WC cisterns	X	
WC pans	X	
WC seats		X
All taps, stop taps and valves	X	
Baths	X	
Showers and trays (if fitted by council)	X	
Blocked sinks, WHBs and baths		X
Plugs and chains to sinks and WHBs		X
Tap washers	X	
Lagging of tanks and pipe work	X	
Sealant around baths, WHBs and sinks	X	
Gas		
Pipe work	X	
Gas meter and supply		X
Gas fire (only if owned by the council)	X	
Radiators, valves, time clocks and thermostats	X	
Boilers	X	
Cooker		X
Disconnection and reconnection of cookers not owned by council		X
Adaptations for disabled people		
Social inclusion and health request for an adaptation	X	
Repair to already installed adaptation	X	
Home security		
Extra door or window locks (not key locking)		X

INTERNAL WORK	COUNCIL	TENANT
Home security		
Security doors and chains and spy holes	X	
Security lights (unless fitted by the council)		X
Roof		
Chimneys	X	
Roof structures including tiles/ slates etc	X	
Guttering and rainwater pipes	X	
Fascia boards, soffits and barge boards	X	
Walls and canopies		
External walls and rendering	X	
Foundations	X	
Canopies over doors (if fitted by council)	X	
Windows		
Window frames	X	
Window catches and furniture to wooden frames	X	
Glazing		
Broken glazing in windows or doors where non fair wear and tear		X
Glazing all other reasons		X
Doors		
Entrance door and frames	X	
Entrance door locks and ironmongery (wear and tear only)	X	
Door entry system	X	
Draught excluders	X	
Drains and pipes		
Soil pipes and fittings	X	
Drain pipes and gulleys	X	
Blocked drains	X	
Inspection chambers	X	

INTERNAL WORK	COUNCIL	TENANT
Gardens and boundaries		
Gardens		X
Fencing (only if fitted by council and to match existing)	X	
Fencing (all other) unless adjacent to a public path	X	
Front side or rear gates (only if fitted by council)		X
Line posts/dryers (only if fitted by council)	X	
Gardens and boundaries		
Car hardstandings and driveways		X
Garages and outbuildings		
Garage or outbuilding if owned by council	X	
Replacement padlocks to garage doors		X
Gaining entry		
Gaining entry to your home if you have locked yourself out (we can do this on your behalf, but a charge will apply). Lost keys and replacement locks (we can do this on your behalf, but a charge will apply).		X
Communal areas		
Areas such as lifts, stairs, foyers etc.	X	

Section 2 – Your Rights as a Tenant

The below section sets out your rights as a Council Tenant;

Rights as an Introductory Tenant

An introductory tenant does not enjoy the same rights as a secure tenant, for example you do not have automatic legal right to:

- take in lodgers
- buy your council home
- make improvements to your home - other than decorating the interior

- exchange your home
- transfer to another landlord

All of the above rights become available to tenants after the initial 12 months when the introductory tenancy becomes a secure tenancy.

Rights as a Secure Tenant

As a secure tenant you will have certain legal rights, these are outlined below;

Right to Consultation

On any changes affecting your tenancy.

Right to Mutual Exchange

Swap your home with another willing party who is also a secure tenant.

Right to Buy Your Home

You may have the Right to Buy your council house if, continuously for two years or more prior to **18 January 2005**, you have either:

- been a secure tenant of the council
- been a tenant of another public sector landlord (for example; another council or housing association)

or

- live in armed forces accommodation.

For anyone else, you will not have the Right to Buy until you have spent at least five years as a public sector tenant.

For further information and to apply, please contact the Town Hall.

Right to Access Personal Information

You are entitled to view personal information that we hold about you on file or computer. (A fee may be charged for this service).

Right to Take Over a Tenancy

If the tenant dies, certain people have the right to take over the tenancy, as long as the deceased tenant did not take over the tenancy in the same way. These people are: **a joint tenant, the tenant's husband, wife or partner, or a member of the family who has lived with the tenant for at least 12 months prior to his or her death.** This will depend on if you signed your Tenancy Agreement before, on or after 01 April 2012.

Right to Repair

Tenants may carry out some minor repairs themselves and then recover part of the cost from the council. There are procedures which need to be followed in order to qualify for the Right to Repair and a Government booklet is available for more information.

Right to Make Improvements

You may make improvements, alterations and additions to your home if you have first obtained our previous written consent and all other necessary approvals (for example, planning permission or Building Regulations approval).

Right to Repair Compensation

You can claim compensation from us if we take an unreasonable amount of time to complete a repair which is defined as a qualifying repair by the government. If your repair is not carried out within the target time, you should contact the customer service centre. If the work is not carried out within the second target time, you may qualify for compensation.

Right to take in lodgers

Only secure tenants have the right to take in lodgers. But:

- It is advisable for you to have a written agreement with them including notice periods
- this must not create overcrowding (defined by the number of people who stay in a room and the amount of space they have there)
- it may affect the housing benefit or Universal Credit you get so you must inform the housing benefit team or DWP of the rent being charged and what services are being provided
- your lodger will not have security of tenure
- you will be responsible for legally evicting your lodger if you want him or her to leave
- you must advise the Housing Service of this arrangement

Right to the Peaceful Enjoyment of your Home

All tenants have the right to the peaceful and quiet enjoyment of their property without suffering any unnecessary interruptions from the Landlord

Section 3 – The Council’s responsibilities as your landlord

Our responsibilities to you regarding the maintenance of your home are outlined in your tenancy agreement. These are to:

- Keep in good repair the structure and exterior of the dwelling, including roofs, walls, drains, gutters and external pipes.
- Keep in repair and proper working order installations for the supply of water, gas, electricity and sanitation, including basins, sinks and sanitary appliances for space and water heating.

Electrical Testing

The council will carry out an electrical inspection at your property every five years and the council’s electrical contractor will contact you when this is due.

Grass Cutting

We cut the public areas of grass approximately 13 times a year between the end of March to the beginning of October. However, this is depending on the weather and machinery breakdowns.

Bin Collection

Residents will get their bins emptied fortnightly

There is a cost for additional bins to be emptied and if residents would like an additional recycling bin or if a resident wishes to purchase an additional green bin the costs are set out on our website at the following link;









https://www.rugby.gov.uk/info/20006/household_waste

What can be recycled?

Recycle Right for Rugby



What goes in your recycling bin

			
Cans: Food, Drink & Aerosol	Glass Bottles & Jars	Drink Cartons	Card Packaging & Boxes
			
Newspapers, Mail & Directories	Clean Foil & Foil Trays	Plastic Bottles*, Pots & Tubs	Tin Containers

No Thanks

- ✗ Household waste
- ✗ Food waste
- ✗ Plastic bags
- ✗ Nappies
- ✗ Garden waste
- ✗ Crisp packets
- ✗ Electrical items
- ✗ Children's toys
- ✗ Polystyrene
- ✗ Textiles, clothes and shoes
- ✗ Black plastic food trays

* Please remove all bottle tops / lids.

PLEASE NOTE

All materials must be clean and put in your bin loose. Please do not put them in plastic bags.

For more information please visit www.rugby.gov.uk/recycling

 Rugby Recycles



Section 4 – Repairs

You should tell us as soon as possible when you think your home needs a repair.

There are several ways you can report a repair to your home. You can:

- Phone us on (01788) 533888 during office hours (usually 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)
- Call in at the Town Hall reception
- Visit the council's website at www.rugby.gov.uk and complete the online form
- By emailing repairs@rugby.gov.uk

Recharge Policy

The council has introduced a recharge policy of which a copy can be obtained on request.

The internal works tables in the above section identify areas where you are likely to be recharged. Please note that this is not a full list and other repairs may be recharged.

Rechargeable repairs

Tenants will be recharged for any damage to their home or communal areas. Tenants **MUST** pay for repair or replacement if the damage is caused deliberately through neglect, misuse, abuse or carelessness, either by themselves, members of their household, visitors or friends. This also includes damage caused by criminals, or costs relating to the emergency services gaining access to a property for criminal behaviour.

Tenants can choose to carry out the work themselves, but this work must then be inspected by a council representative and completed to their satisfaction.

For more information please contact the Housing Maintenance Team on (01788) 533533.

Prioritising Repairs

When you report a repair, the urgency of your repair will be assessed by our advisor. Repair requests are put into two categories. Each one has a timescale in which the work must be carried out. These are:

- Emergency repairs: within six hours
- Routine repairs: within 14 calendar days

Emergency Repairs

Emergencies are problems that present immediate risks to your safety, security or health, or could lead to serious damage to the property. These risks could also affect your family, your visitors or anyone else in your building.

Examples include:

- Serious water leaks
- Electrical faults
- Major structural damage
- No heating in winter

We will attend and make sure your home is safe within six hours. It may take longer to fully repair the problem.

Routine repairs

Routine repairs include less serious repairs which do not affect health, safety or welfare, and will not cause any more problems to the property. Examples of routine repairs include:

- Guttering
- Kitchen cupboard repairs
- Non-urgent glazing

Adaptations

Adaptations are changes you can make to your home that make it safer and easier to move around and do everyday tasks.

We will install minor adaptations (grab rails, second stair rails and half steps) without the need to involve an occupational therapist, where there is a clear and pressing need for such work. We aim to install all minor adaptations within seven working days.

For Major adaptations, you'll need to book an assessment with an occupational therapist before major adaptations can be carried out to your home.

The therapist carries out a home visit before making recommendations for adaptations to the council.

You can book an assessment by contacting Warwickshire County Council's social services team on 01926 410410.

Section 5 – Ensuring your Safety

Gas Servicing

The council will carry out an annual safety check on your gas boiler and fire and the gas contractor will contact you around two months before the due date, to allow plenty of time to complete the checks. This is a legal requirement so it is particularly important that you ensure that we can get into your home at the time of your appointment. If you fail to let us in, the council will take legal action to gain access with Court and locksmith costs being recharged to you.

Electrical Inspections

In accordance with the Electricity at Works Act 1989 & in line with the Electrical Regulations BS7671, The Council are required to attend your Property to complete an Electrical Inspection up to a period of 5 years between inspections. The Electrical Contractor will contact you prior to the appointment, allowing plenty of time before they attend. This is a legal requirement & imperative to your safety, so it is important that you ensure that we can get into your home at the time of your appointment. If you fail to let us in, the council may take legal action, which may incur additional costs being recharged to you.

Asbestos

Asbestos is a naturally occurring material. Asbestos fibres are strong and resistant to heat and chemicals, this has led to its use in a wide range of building materials and products and is in nearly all buildings built before 1990.

Asbestos containing materials, if maintained in a good condition, are not dangerous. There are low levels of asbestos fibres in the air everywhere because it has been so widely used. Exposure at this low level is unlikely to harm people's health. However, when it is damaged, sanded, scrubbed, drilled or sawn it can become dangerous.

If damaged or disturbed, asbestos containing materials have the potential to release fibres into the air which can be breathed in and can lead to a number of harmful diseases. The council will have carried out a survey of your property to identify the location and type of asbestos (if any) within your home. This information will be given to you so that you or any council contractor does not accidentally disturb it.

Smoke Detectors

With the increasing amount of equipment used in our homes today that may cause a fire hazard, it is imperative that you ensure you have working Smoke Detectors within your property. It is advised that you test the detectors every month by pressing the test button on the detector. If the Detector doesn't activate or is faulty, or you need further assistance, please call the Council's repairs number 01788 533888

Fire Risk Assessments (Flats)

The council will carry out regular fire risk assessments to any communal area that is linked to your property. Any actions resulting from these assessments will be carried out to reduce the potential risk and spread of fire.

The council operates a sterile approach to its communal areas, meaning that nothing should be stored in them. Do not store any items in the communal area as they may be removed and you may be recharged for the cost of this.

Your properties front door is a fire door– this is to prevent the spread of fire from your flat into any communal area that may be an escape route for others. It is very important that this door is un-damaged in any way. It is therefore very important that any broken glass is reported to the council without delay so it can be replaced.

Section 6 – Mutual Exchange

Mutual Exchanging is a popular way for tenants to move home and is likely mean you can move sooner than being on the housing waiting list. If you find someone whose home you would like and they have agreed to swap homes a mutual exchange might be the solution for you.

The first steps to this would be to agree to the swap with the other party, once agreed, Housing Services should be contacted to begin the process.

Section 7 – Help Available to Support you in Maintaining your Tenancy

Our Tenancy Sustainment Officers are committed to working with all our tenants to help them sustain tenancies. They help tenants to access other support within the community and resolve issues.

If you feel you are or know someone who is struggling please contact us.

Section 8 – Garages

The council rents out garages at a number of sites around the borough.

Council garages can only be rented for the storage of cars or motorbikes. The garage or carport must be within walking distance of your home address and only one garage or carport can be rented per household.

To apply, you must download the application form from our website. All applications must be accompanied by a copy of either a vehicle registration document or a vehicle lease agreement.

Section 9 – Getting Involved in Improving your Homes and Communities

By working with us you can help raise the standard of our services and deliver value-for-money.

We have several ways for you to get involved.

You can:

- complete surveys
- join a resident's group
- Join our readers panel
- take part in our estate walkabouts to review where you live
- review the council's website content
- become a tenant inspector
- attend meetings of our service review group, which helps improve key aspects of our services

Our tenant representative panel has recently looked at:

- housing regulations
- health and wellbeing
- Digitalisation
- Review of our Independent Living Co-ordinator's service
- voids and lettable standards
- tenant involvement and empowerment

Your views matter and your feedback can make a difference

To find out more about getting involved and helping us make our housing services better, E mail: Contact.centre@rugby.gov.uk or contact the Independent Living Projects Officer on 01788 533844.