



**Tenants
Handbook**



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How to contact us

You are welcome to contact us either in person, by telephone, email, or via our website.

Telephone: 01903 737500

Email: housing@arun.gov.uk

Website: www.arun.gov.uk/housing

Arun District Council, Civic Centre, Maltravers Road,
Littlehampton, West Sussex BN17 5LF

This Handbook can be produced in large print, in Braille or another language, on request.

The information in this Handbook was accurate at the time of publication.

We will update our information from time to time, so do look on the website, or contact us for a new copy of the Handbook when you need one.



1 Welcome to your home

Welcome to your home

This handbook is a guide to help you live in your Arun District Council home. It contains information about your rights and responsibilities as our Tenant, and our responsibilities as your Landlord. It gives details of the housing services, and some other services the Council provides for you.

This handbook does not replace your Tenancy Agreement, which is your legal contract with us. The aim of this handbook is to give you more information. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

As a customer of Arun District Council you have the right to expect quality and value for your rent. By making sure that your rent is paid on time and by helping to look after your home and the surrounding area, staff will be able to concentrate on providing assistance where and when it is most needed.

Useful Housing Contacts:

Arun Housing Services	01903 737500	www.arun.gov.uk/housing
Housing Officers	01903 737500	
Rent Accounts & Direct Debits	01903 737723	
Rent Arrears Team	01903 737779	
Right to Buy	01903 737724	
Housing Benefit	01903 737753	
Repairs	01903 737751	housing.repairs@arun.gov.uk
Gas Central Heating	0800 068 0566	BSW Heating (24 hours)
<i>(or if you live in one of our Sheltered Housing Schemes with a communal boiler)</i>	08000 126 256	K&T Heating (24 hours)
Electricity	08457 444 5555	
Southern Water	0845 278 0845	
Portsmouth Water Ltd	0239 249 9888	

Emergency Numbers:

Emergency Repairs (out of hours)	01903 713976
Gas Leaks	0800 111 999
Police	999 / 0845 60 70 999

Moving In

Welcome to your new home. Moving home can be a difficult and stressful time, and we hope that your move is as smooth and comfortable as possible.

The gas to your property will be capped off when you first arrive. This is because we have done a gas safety check, and any works needed, whilst the property was empty. We will arrange for the gas to be reconnected and commissioned on your tenancy start date, by putting our contractors directly in touch with you.

Moving in checklist:

- Have you set up a direct debit for your rent and/or service charge, or decided on another method of payment, and started to pay it?
- Have you changed your address details with your bank, the Benefits Agency or HMRC (Inland Revenue), your employer and other contacts?
- Have you arranged contents insurance?
- Have you redirected the post from your old address?
- Have you told utility providers? Gas, Electricity, Water?
- Have you updated your driving license and vehicle registration document? (DVLA)
- Have you updated your details with Council Tax and the Electoral Register?
- Have you told TV Licensing?
- Have you told your GP, and anyone who supports you?

Things to remember for safety:

- Make sure you know where your stopcock is for the water.
- Make sure you know where the shut off valve is for the gas.
- Make sure you know where the electrical consumer unit (fuse board) is.
- Keep your means of escape clear so that you can get out safely in case of fire. Think about your escape route and agree a safe plan with all of the family.
- Test your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms regularly.

Managing Your Home

Councillors

Overall responsibility for managing the Council's housing rests with elected Councillors who meet regularly throughout the year. They direct policy and make major decisions on housing matters.

Housing Management Services

Day-to-day running of the housing service is delegated to staff employed by the Council. We manage around 3,500 properties in all.

Housing Officers

The staff responsible for managing your home are our Housing Officers, based at the Littlehampton offices. Each Officer is responsible for looking after a particular area, and you will be told who is responsible for your area when you are signing up for your tenancy. Your Housing Officers will deal with any problems which arise for you and, if they cannot give you an immediate response, they will provide you with information about how, and when, a particular issue will be resolved.

Housing Repairs

This Handbook has a guide to repairs, and it is important that you understand which repairs and maintenance are your responsibility, and which are the Council's as your landlord. Please report repairs promptly, and give as much information as possible to help us to process your request quickly.

Housing Finance

Direct Debit is by far the easiest and most cost effective way of paying your rent, and saves you remembering how much and when to pay. Our Housing Finance staff are here to help you set this up, and can help if you have difficulty paying your rent. You can now also pay your rent over the internet, or by debit or credit card over the phone. There is more information about rent later in this handbook.



2 Your Rights

Your Tenancy Agreement with the Council

When you take up a tenancy with Arun District Council, you sign a legal contract which sets out your rights and responsibilities as a Tenant, and our responsibilities as your Landlord. It is important that you read the Tenancy Agreement and understand it. The Tenancy Agreement sometimes has to be amended and updated - when this happens all tenants will be consulted on the proposed changes. If you need another copy of your agreement, need it in any other format, such as large print, or would like any help to understand it, please contact us.

Whether you are an Introductory Tenant or a Secure Tenant, it is important that you understand that if you break any of the terms of the Tenancy Agreement, the Council may start legal proceedings which could result in you losing your home. This is always the last resort, and we will endeavour to work with you to help you to keep to your agreement and avoid the need for us to take possession action.

You are responsible for the behaviour of everyone who lives in and visits your home. You must ensure that everyone living in and visiting your home also complies with the terms and conditions of your Tenancy Agreement.

Keeping to the agreement

To do this you must:

- Not behave anti-socially, cause a nuisance or harass other people
- Pay your rent on time
- Look after the property
- Keep to the terms and conditions you are agreeing to in your contract

There are two main types of Council Tenancy: Introductory and Secure

Introductory Tenants

New tenancies with Arun District Council begin as Introductory Tenancies. An Introductory Tenancy is a 12 month trial council tenancy. It gives you most of the same rights as a secure council tenancy but you can be evicted much more easily. As long as you don't break your tenancy agreement while you are an Introductory Tenant, you will automatically become a Secure Tenant. Since April 2010 we have combined the Introductory and Secure agreements, so that you don't have to sign a new agreement after a year.

If you were already a Council or Housing Association tenant with greater security of tenure, and have transferred or exchanged from another property, you would not need to be an Introductory Tenant.

Even if you have an Introductory Tenancy you still have the same rights as other tenants to have your property repaired, and to be consulted about any matters which affect the property you live in.

Introductory Tenants do not have the right to:

- the same protection from eviction for any breach of the tenancy agreement
- buy their council property
- assign (transfer) the tenancy, carry out improvements or mutually exchange with another tenant

What will happen during the 12 month Introductory Tenancy?

The tenancy will be monitored and reports made to the tenant on their progress. Introductory Tenants causing nuisance of a minor nature or falling into rent arrears will be warned in writing, and if the problem persists, will be served a formal notice of the breach of their tenancy agreement. Minor breaches of tenancy might include:

- littering
- occasional noise
- failure to maintain gardens to a satisfactory standard
- minor damage to the property.

Incidents which are likely to be considered a serious breach and therefore leading to the Council taking action to bring the tenancy to an end may include:

- rent arrears
- violence or threat of violence
- a risk of damage to a property
- if there are a substantial number of incidents, including those of a minor nature which have continued despite warnings to the tenant

- harassment which is having a seriously detrimental effect on the victim or members of his or her family
- use of the property for illegal or immoral purposes (e.g. drug dealing).

If you do not keep to the terms and conditions of your agreement we could extend the introductory period of your Tenancy for 6 months: This means that you won't get the additional security of a Secure Tenancy, and we can evict you more easily if we need to. If we extend your Introductory Tenancy we will advise you before it happens, and you have the right to review the decision.

There are very stringent methods imposed on us to ensure fairness, and to monitor the Council's actions when dealing with an alleged breach of an Introductory Tenancy. Every Introductory Tenant has the right of appeal to an independent body if they find themselves under investigation and the Council has to show that it has done everything properly.

Secure Tenancies

You will get more rights when you become a Secure Tenant.

As a Secure Tenant you have the right, subject to meeting necessary criteria or getting the permission, to:

- live in your home for the rest of your life as long as you continue to comply with the agreement
- buy your home at a discount, after a qualifying period
- pass on your home to someone who is qualified to take over your tenancy in the event of your death, or by Court Order
- take in lodgers and sub-let part of your home
- have your home repaired (some repairs are the responsibility of the tenant while others are the responsibility of the Council).
- carry out improvements to your home, with our written permission
- be compensated for certain improvements you have made if you move home, providing you were given written approval before the work was carried out
- help to manage your estate
- exchange your property for another one, with our written permission
- be consulted on housing management matters
- be given information about how your Council runs the homes it owns.

Demoting your Secure Tenancy

When you are a Secure Tenant, the Council has the right to apply to the County Court to change your tenancy status from Secure to Demoted, which is similar to an Introductory Tenancy, if you do not comply with your tenancy terms and conditions.

Can we have a Joint Tenancy?

The Council will grant joint tenancies to the following people, providing there are no rent arrears or other breaches of the current Tenancy Agreement:

- married couples or civil partners
- partners with a child or children
- partners who have lived together for 12 months or more, and where both partners are over 18 years of age

If you have a change in circumstances and wish to change your tenancy, you should contact Housing Services.

If you do have a joint tenancy with another person you should be aware that either or both of you can be held fully responsible for the whole tenancy. For example this means that if there are rent arrears or other costs the Council could ask either tenant to pay everything owed. If one tenant leaves and does not give notice, they are still responsible.

If one tenant gives their Notice and leaves, the tenancy comes to an end for both parties. This may result in the other tenant losing their home. If you are in this situation, get advice, and talk to us. Wherever possible, we will work with you to avoid homelessness. If the Council gives Notice to one tenant, it affects both.

What if I'm not living there for a while?

You must live in the property and use it as your only or main home. If you plan to leave home for more than one month you should inform Housing Services, and get advice on the implications. This is important, because if you aren't living in the property, we might think you have abandoned it, and take action to secure it and regain possession.

Adapted properties

You may be required to move to another suitable property if your home was specially adapted for someone who no longer lives there, and it is now needed for another elderly or disabled person.

Can I have a lodger?

If you are an Introductory Tenant, you must get written agreement from the Council before taking in a lodger. Secure Tenants may take in lodgers without the consent of the Council, but must tell us.

You must remember it is illegal to make your home overcrowded. Taking in a lodger may affect any means-tested benefits you may receive, and you should get advice about this, and tell your benefit provider about the change in your circumstances immediately.

Can I sub-let?

You are not allowed to sub-let the whole of your home. If you do, you will lose all rights to the Tenancy of the home and we will take action to repossess your home with neither you, nor the people you have sub-let to, allowed to live there.

If you wish to sub-let part of your property, you must get permission in writing from the Council before you do. The Council will make a reasonable decision about whether you can sub-let, and will write to you to explain this decision.

If you do take in lodgers or sub-let part of your home you are responsible for ensuring they leave when you want to end the arrangement. Your lodger has to comply with the responsibilities in your Tenancy Agreement.

Can I exchange?

You have the right to exchange homes with another tenant as long as both landlords give their permission. This is called a mutual exchange. This has to be done following a legal procedure and using a Deed of Assignment, otherwise you might put your tenancy in jeopardy. Please see the 'Moving On' section.

Can I buy my home?

Being a council tenant doesn't automatically give you the Right to Buy. You must have been a Council, Housing Association or armed forces tenant (or a combination of these) for a total of at least:

- two years if your tenancy started before 18 January 2005
- five years if your tenancy started on or after 18 January 2005

Even if this is the case, you may be excluded if:

- the property isn't your only or main home
- your home isn't self-contained
- you live in sheltered housing where services are provided
- your home has been designed or adapted for people with special needs
- the council has demoted your tenancy or obtained a court order to suspend your Right to Buy because you have behaved antisocially
- your home is provided as part of your job (for example, if you are a caretaker).

If you buy your council house or flat you will become responsible for all maintenance costs, insuring the property and, in the case of flats and maisonettes, a proportion of all other costs relating to the upkeep of the building, e.g. caretaking, lighting, grounds maintenance and major works.

Will I be consulted?

Council tenants have a right by law to be consulted about major changes in the management of their homes. The things we will consult you about depend on the kind of issues being raised at the time, but may include the way we manage your home, or plans for a major repairs scheme which might affect you.

The Council must also consult you about any changes it makes to your Tenancy Agreement and give you a reasonable time to think about the changes and the opportunity to reply, before they can take effect. For more information on consultation see the section 'Having Your Say'.

Right to Information

You have the right of access to information the Council has about you, under the Data Protection Act 1998. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 extends this so you can access all types of information. If there is a charge for the information that you require, we will let you know. Please ring us, or visit www.arun.gov.uk for more information.

Right to Compensation for Improvements

This scheme gives tenants the right to claim compensation when they move out for some authorised improvements they have made to their home.

The amount that can be claimed depends on a number of things including the type of improvement, the original costs, and the current condition of the improvement. You will need to provide invoices to show how much the improvement costs. Any grants made towards the costs will be deducted. Only improvements begun after April 1994 qualify for compensation. Contact Housing Services before you move to check what your position is if you have carried out any alterations to your home.

Can someone take on my tenancy when I die?

Under the law, if a tenant dies, the tenancy may pass on to the spouse, joint tenant or member of the family if certain conditions are met. This is called 'Succession'. There may only be one succession granted for each tenancy. There is more information in the 'Ending the Tenancy' section.

Can I pass on my tenancy to a member of my family before I die?

This is called 'Assignment'. Secure tenancies can be assigned in limited circumstances, for example:

- by order of the Court;
- where the person would qualify to succeed to the tenancy on the death of the tenant, providing that the accommodation is appropriate to their needs.

Leaflets and more information on all of your rights are available from Housing Services, from advice agencies, and from websites such as DirectGov, Shelter or CAB.



3 Being a good neighbour

If there are problems in your neighbourhood you can ask your Housing Officer for advice. We also have a Community Safety Team who can help. They deal with issues on vandalism, graffiti, alcohol and drug misuse, noise, intimidation and harassment, youth nuisance and vehicle nuisance.

What is antisocial behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour is acting in “a manner that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more people not of the same household”. It is not “run of the mill disputes between neighbours, petty intolerance or minor one off acts”.

Antisocial behaviour ranges from low level nuisance behaviour to more serious unacceptable behaviour that negatively impacts on our community and is usually ongoing and persistent rather than a one off incident.

How do I report antisocial behaviour?

If you are suffering from anti-social behaviour in your area, we want to hear about it. Arun District Council and the police are working hard to tackle anti-social behaviour.

We have set up a dedicated anti-social behaviour reporting line on 0808 1412800 (free from UK landlines) or email on asb@arun.gov.uk. This is a 24-hour messaging service and the ASB Team aim to respond to messages within 2 working days.

If the behaviour needs a more urgent response, this should be reported to Sussex Police on 0845 60 70 999 or 999. Always call 999 if there is an emergency which requires immediate action by the police.

All calls reported to Sussex Police and the ASB Reporting Hotline will be treated confidentially.

What is Nuisance?

Under your Tenancy Agreement you must take all reasonable steps to make sure that you and all people living in your home, visitors and pets do not cause nuisance and annoyance to neighbours and the community.

What if I am disturbed by my neighbours?

If you are experiencing nuisance from your neighbours you should speak to them about it and explain how their actions are causing you problems. If you are not able to do this, or this approach fails to solve the problem, you should contact your Housing Officer for advice. If the person or persons complained about are Council tenants or leaseholders, your Housing Officer will investigate the complaint. Further warnings can be issued and in extreme cases legal action may be taken to repossess their home.

Legal action is only possible where there is clear evidence of a serious nuisance taking place. This will require good evidence and witnesses who are prepared to attend Court. In cases where two neighbours are in dispute and both complain to the Council it is very difficult to take action unless other neighbours have witnessed what has happened or there is some other evidence to support what is being said by one person or the other.

If the nuisance involves excessive noise, advice is available from the Environmental Health Department, who may be able to take action. You could also consider taking out a private legal action against the person causing you nuisance.

What is Harassment?

Harassment differs from nuisance in that it is deliberate action to cause annoyance or distress to a particular individual, family or group and is usually carried out repeatedly. In all cases of harassment we work very closely with other agencies, notably the Police, and share information in order to take action against the people causing the problem.

What should I do if I am being harassed?

If you are experiencing harassment you should report this immediately to Housing Services. If the harassment involves violence, threats, damage to your property, or other criminal acts it is important that you contact the Police immediately an incident takes place and keep a record of your complaint.

West Sussex Mediation Service

Mediation is a voluntary process, it is a free, confidential and impartial service for the user. Mediators work in pairs and help people to listen to each other, communicate concerns and work towards a solution acceptable to both parties. Ideally the mediator tries to encourage both parties to attend a face-to-face meeting but in some cases this is not advisable and 'shuttle mediation' may be used instead, whereby the mediators act as a go between for the parties. A

contract or terms of agreement is drawn up by both parties (not the mediators) and is not legally binding but demonstrates that both parties have consented. The Mediation Service will follow up all cases after 6 weeks and further mediation is possible if there is a subsequent breakdown of communication.

There are types of cases in which mediators will not get involved these include:

- Where there is legal action already being taken
- Where there is a possibility of violent confrontation
- Where there is obvious drug or alcohol misuse
- Where there is overt sexual or racial harassment

Violence towards staff?

Tenants are responsible for the behaviour of every person (including children) living in or visiting their home. The Council will not tolerate violence, threats of violence or abusive language towards any of its Staff or Contractors or Agents and will support prosecution of anyone who assaults its employees when carrying out their work. Tenants who threaten or assault Staff or Contractors or Agents of the Council could face eviction proceedings.

Graffiti/Vandalism

Graffiti is a form of vandalism, can be distressing to victims and ruin the look of public areas. We take this crime seriously and are actively working to help stop it. We would like to hear from you if you know of the location of any graffiti, please report it on 0808 141 2800 or asb@arun.gov.uk.

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is any incident of threatening or controlling behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional) that happens within an intimate or family type relationship, regardless of gender, that forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour.

Who can you contact for help (in confidence)?

Worthing Women's Aid: 01903 231 939 (Mon-Fri 9.30am-4.30pm)

Women's Aid Tel: 0808 2000 247 (for out of hours advice)

Race/Hate Crime

A hate incident is any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate. This includes racism but can also be because they are from a different religious minority or because of their sexuality or disability.

If you or someone you know, has been the victim of a hate incident, you can contact the Hate Incident Support Service, operated by Victim Support Sussex in confidence on 0845 075 1021 or email them at SussexHateIncidentReport@victimsupport.org.uk.

Bogus Callers

Some criminals trick their way into homes so they can steal. This simple guide may help you avoid this problem.

DO

- Use a door chain and spy hole if you have one
- Ask callers for their identity card
- Refuse entry to a stranger or someone you are not sure of
- Ring the police if you are not sure about the claims of someone calling at the door
- Always check that officials visiting your home are genuine. Visiting Council officers will be able to show you identification. Make sure you ask to see it before you permit entry to your property

DO NOT

- Allow anyone into your home if you are not happy about them
- Believe that someone who is claiming to be an official without the proper identification
- Part with cash on the promise that work will be done in the future
- Keep more money in the house than you need.

Remember, a genuine caller will never mind you taking precautions.

Doorstep Traders

Unscrupulous traders often target elderly, isolated householders, generally living alone, and engage them in conversation with the following pattern:

- They will normally cold call offering to carry out work for the householder at low prices and will often start work without permission, on the basis that they had been asked for a quote.
- Once work has begun, the price goes up rapidly and extra work is claimed to be required in order to complete.
- Traders maybe verbally aggressive to pressure householder into paying/ agreeing to work, but tend not to step over the line as they do not want the Police to be involved.

For more information you can call Trading Standards at West Sussex County Council on. If you know of an incident that is happening now contact Consumer Direct immediately on 08454 040506.

A guide to reporting anti-social behaviour

Problem	Contact	Details
Cleansing Needles and syringes, litter, refuse	Cleansing Team	01903 737754 cleansing@arun.gov.uk
Dogs Dangerous, nuisance, fouling	Police – Dangerous Dogs Dog wardens	999 or 0845 6070999 01903 737755
Doorstep traders Trading Standards	Consumer Direct	08454 040506
Environment crime and graffiti	Arun District Council Anti-social Behaviour Line	01903 737500 0808 141 2800
Environmental health issues Noise Bonfires and smoke Filthy premises Vermin Public Health Issues	Arun District Council Environmental Health	01903 737755
Housing Tenancy related issues	Arun District Council or the Landlord or Agency, or the CAB for advice	01903 737500 01903 730338 housing@arun.gov.uk
Neighbour dispute	West Sussex Mediation Service	01403 258900 co-ordinator@west sussexmediation.gov.uk
Vehicle Nuisance antisocial driving abandoned untaxed vehicles	Operation Crackdown	0845 60 70 999 www.operationcrackdown.org



4 Living in your home

Can I use my home for business purposes?

You must apply to Housing Services for written permission. This will not be granted if your business is illegal, or would be likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours, or would affect the use of the home as a dwelling house. You may also need to obtain Planning Permission. If you are working at home for your employer, or are self-employed but don't run a business (e.g. freelance writer), you generally would not need to apply for permission, unless again the nature of the work could cause a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours, or affect the use of the property as a home.

Who is responsible for cleaning the communal areas in my block of flats?

If you live in a flat or maisonette, you are responsible for cleaning the staircases and communal areas. It is best to agree with your neighbours who will do what on a rota basis. Obviously, some residents because of their age or physical ability may not be able to do as much as other residents. We may carry out the work and recharge residents if the area is not kept up to a reasonable standard. Please contact Housing Services for details covering your particular area. This does not apply to; sheltered housing, some bedsit blocks, and areas which have a caretaking service residents are responsible for cleaning the hall, stairs and landings.

Can I store things on the communal landing?

No. Anything left in communal areas will be removed if we are unable to establish who it belongs to.

You must not cause an obstruction in any of the communal areas by storing items there. This can be a fire risk. If you notice that someone has left anything in a communal area which is causing an obstruction you should notify your Housing Officer immediately.

Do I have to pay for Council Tax and other services?

You have to pay for Council Tax and for all other services like gas or water. You might be eligible for Council Tax Benefit. In some flats and sheltered properties, services and utilities are included in your service.

Dangerous Substances

What about storing batteries or other dangerous substances?

If you store or use batteries, fuel, gas or liquids held under compression within your home it must only be in amounts that are normal for domestic use. It is important to make sure you do this safely, and follow the manufacturer's instructions on handling, using, storing and disposing of them. It is your responsibility to ensure that you do not do anything that is likely to cause harm to other people on their property.

Portable Gas/paraffin appliances

The use of these appliances is strictly prohibited from all council flats due to the risk of explosion. The use of these appliances in other council properties is only permitted where the written consent has been sought and granted by Housing Services.

Decorating

You are responsible for decorating inside your home, and keeping it in a good order. The Council is responsible for exterior decorating.

Is there any help with decorating?

You can get help with the internal decoration of your home if you are a pensioner. The yearly budget for this scheme is limited and there is a waiting list for work to be carried out. If you wish to apply, please write to the Housing Repairs Team.

Insurance

The Council insures its buildings against perils such as fire and explosion, but it does not insure your possessions or decorations. The Council is not liable for any damage to your property.

You are strongly advised to have adequate insurance for the contents of your home which normally includes third party damage cover.

If you do suffer a burglary, fire or flood, if you have insurance you will be able to replace lost or damaged possessions and, if necessary, redecorate your home. Insurance may seem expensive at the time but the cost is minimal compared to the cost of replacing lost or damaged possessions and redecorating after a fire, flood or burglary.

Overcrowding

Every home is allocated a permitted number of occupants to the floor area of the living space (bedrooms and living rooms). If the number of people living in the home is more than the permitted number the home is legally overcrowded.

It is the tenant's responsibility to make sure the home is not overcrowded. You should speak to your Housing Officer if you need any advice.

Parking

Where am I allowed to park my car?

You must not park, or allow any person living in or visiting your home to park, vehicles in areas other than those set aside for parking. Any vehicle parked on Council land must have current tax, insurance and MoT certificate.

Please contact us for information, if you would like to rent a garage through Housing Services.

If you cause a nuisance or damage by parking in unauthorised areas such as grass verges and footpaths, the Council may take legal action against you and you will have to pay for repairing the damage.

If you live in a house you are only allowed to park in the front garden if there is a proper hard-standing or drive and a pavement crossover. You may be able to arrange, at your own expense, to have a pavement crossover and hard-standing installed in your front garden but you must get permission from Housing Services and the County Council Highways Department first, and may also need Planning Permission. If you go ahead without permission you may have to return the garden to its original condition.

What about car repairs?

You are allowed to carry out minor routine maintenance to your own vehicle in your garage or parking space, provided you do not cause a hazard or nuisance to neighbours and do not make a mess. If the Council has to clean up after you, you will be charged for this.

You are not allowed to carry out welding, spraying or major car maintenance on housing land. If you do this the Council may take legal action which could result in you losing your tenancy.

What about abandoned and unroadworthy cars?

You must not leave unsightly or unroadworthy vehicles on housing estates owned by the Council. We do not allow goods vehicles of more than 750kg unladen weight on to housing estates owned by the Council. This includes your own garden and communal parking areas. If you do the Council may arrange for the vehicle to be towed away and may take legal action against you, and recover any associated costs.

What about caravans, boats, trailers and other vehicles?

You must get written permission from Housing Services before parking a caravan, boat, trailer and other such vehicles in your garden, in communal parking areas or on any other housing land.

Pets

Can I keep pets?

You are not allowed to keep any animal if they are dangerous, or if it is unlawful to have them. Where necessary you should get your animal licensed. The Council is happy for you to keep pets as long as they are domestic pets or birds, in reasonable numbers. You must not allow your pet or pets to cause an annoyance or a nuisance to other people, which includes frightening or endangering them. It is important that you look after your pet, and clean up after it. If you are walking a dog in communal areas or outside, you must keep it on a lead at all times.

If you live in a flat, maisonette or sheltered housing you are not allowed to keep any cats or dogs without first obtaining the Council's written consent. Sometimes we have to refuse permission, and if so we will explain why.

Can I feed the birds?

You are asked not to feed birds or to encourage them onto balconies or into communal areas. In particular pigeons or seagulls can cause serious damage to the buildings, can be hazardous to health and may cause a nuisance to you and other residents.

Gardens

You are responsible for keeping your gardens (front and back) tidy and clear from rubbish. You must keep hedges and any trees within your gardens trimmed and not remove any trees without the written consent of the Council. It is important that you keep hedges to a reasonable height, so that they don't cause problems for your neighbours.

Can I put up my own fence or gate?

Yes, provided you get our permission first as there may be a height restriction. You will then be responsible for its upkeep.

Is it my responsibility to maintain my garden?

Yes, it is. If you allow it to become an eyesore or nuisance to neighbours, we may send in a contractor to clear it and charge you for this.

I am elderly/disabled is the garden still my responsibility?

Yes it is, but if you are finding difficulty with this, perhaps you might have a relative or friend who could help.

Am I allowed to plant trees and large shrubs in my garden?

Yes but you will be responsible for maintaining their growth and keeping them trimmed and pruned. You must not let them cause damage to your property or adjoining homes which includes root damage, or allow them to become a nuisance to neighbours by blocking light.

Do I need permission to put up a shed/greenhouse in my garden?

Yes. Please contact Housing Services for further information. You will be responsible for maintaining it whilst you are in your property. If you leave the property, you must either leave the shed/greenhouse or take it down and 'make good' the area.

Communal Gardens

Unless permission is granted by the Council, no alterations should be made to communal gardens. Please use communal gardens considerately.

What is Sheltered Housing?

Sheltered Housing is for vulnerable, elderly and disabled people; our tenants have their own home and independence. There is an intercom/alarm system installed in every home and it is linked to a Control Centre, thus giving 24 hour emergency contact.

Arun District Council's supported/sheltered housing stock is divided into two categories (this describes the type of building):

Category 1:

Without communal rooms + front doors usually open onto the street or communal corridor.

Category 2:

With communal facilities + front doors open onto a communal corridor.

A home may be a bedsit, flat or bungalow. Communal facilities are usually a common room and a laundry.

The Housing Support Service provided to tenants who live in the Sheltered Housing can be described as advisory and a guide to needs and services required by the individual – fostering independence and giving support without interference.

Are pets allowed in Sheltered Housing?

Yes, but you must get permission and you will not be able to replace them when they pass away.

How much does it cost to live in Sheltered Housing?

In addition to your rent, there is a service charge which covers the cost of management, the communal facilities, heating and the Careline system. If you are in receipt of Housing Benefit then your Scheme Manager charge will be covered by a West Sussex County Council grant.

Mobility Vehicle Stores

There are a limited number of mobility vehicle stores available at some Sheltered Housing sites. Mobility scooters must not be stored inside sheltered housing buildings, including corridors and under stair passageways. Please contact us if you wish to get a mobility vehicle, so that we can discuss safety issues with you and, wherever possible, agree a safe way of storing your mobility vehicle and charging the battery.

Arun Lifeline

Arun Lifeline is a 24-hour alarm system which can be installed in your home and linked through your telephone system to a Control Centre. In an emergency you use the alarm button, pendant or pull-cord and this will alert the Control centre staff who will get help to you as soon as possible. A similar system is installed in all our sheltered schemes and is available to anyone living in the Arun area who needs to summon help quickly in an emergency.

Rubbish

You must always use rubbish areas or chutes provided by the Council. All rubbish should be wrapped and you must not leave large items in or outside bin sheds. Under no circumstances should you throw rubbish or other items from balconies. If you, your family or your visitors do this you may be considered to be in breach of your Tenancy Agreement and legal action may be taken.

Fly-tipping is anti-social and strictly prohibited. It can be reported to the Council – please see the Section on Being a Good Neighbour.

Refuse and Recycling Collection

For the majority, refuse is collected weekly and your recyclables are collected fortnightly on the same day of the week.

Should you need a reminder of your collection day then please call Arun Direct on 01903 737754 or alternatively use the collection day search on our website which can be found at www.arun.gov.uk.

Missed Collections

Missed refuse and recycling should be reported within 48 hours of your collection date. This can be done either by calling 01903 737754 or online at www.arun.gov.uk.

Bank Holidays

Please leave your refuse and recycling out on your normal collection day. Your collection may be up to 24 hours late. We will let you know about Christmas arrangements in good time.

Collection Point

Both refuse and recyclables will only be collected from the front of your property adjacent to the highway. Please ensure that all refuse and recyclables are visible and accessible. Both should be put out by 7.00 am on the day of collection.

It can be collected from the inside of your gate provided it is left within 1 metre (3ft), accessible (open gate) and visible from the road.

Assisted Collection Service

An assisted collection service is available to help residents that have genuine problems in moving their refuse and recycling to the front of their property for collection, and live alone. You may apply for Assisted Collection by calling Arun Direct on 01903 737754.

Refuse Collection

Residents are responsible for ensuring their refuse is properly contained prior to collection in a dustbin, black sacks or a privately owned wheeled bin.

The maximum amount of refuse collected per household is 5 regular sized black sacks (the equivalent to a 240 litre wheeled bin). Stickers will be placed on excess refuse, which will not be collected and will be your responsibility to dispose of. Should you have a problem in meeting this then you can arrange for a visit from a council adviser who will provide tips on how to limit the amount of refuse you produce.

What about Bulky Items?

You can take your bulky items to the Household Waste Recycling Centres where they will be disposed of free of charge. These can be found at Mill Lane, Littlehampton or Shripney Road, Bognor Regis.

Our contractors, Verdant, offer a service for the removal of bulky items such as furniture or old appliances that cannot be re-used. There is a charge for the service. Please call Verdant on 01903 734520 for a quote.

Large items cannot be left out for collection with your rubbish or recycling, even if you share a communal bin store area. If your waste is not disposed of properly or is taken by unregistered waste carriers then you could be liable to a £5000 fine.

Kerbside Recycling Service

Each property in Arun has a green bin with a blue lid for recycling much of your waste. The bin remains the property of the council and must be left at the property should you move house.

Recycling Bins Containing Incorrect Materials (Contamination)

Please only place the items that are listed in your recycling bin. If incorrect material is put inside the bin it may mean that the entire load will be rejected and sent to landfill. If your bin contains the wrong materials it will not be collected and you will be responsible for removing the contamination.

Refuse and Recycling Collections in Flats

If you live in a flat block, sheltered accommodation or converted house then you may share refuse and recycling bins with other people.

This could be in a purpose built bin store area. In this case you may use a large communal refuse bin or recycling bin. All recycling bins will be labelled with what can and cannot be recycled.

It is your responsibility to keep these areas clear and tidy and place all refuse in bins provided, otherwise it will not be taken.

Green Waste Collection

You may choose to hire a brown wheeled bin from Verdant for the collection of garden waste for composting for a charge. Brown bins will be emptied once a fortnight from the front of the property and the garden waste will be taken to a local composting facility.

To subscribe to the Green Waste Club you can telephone Verdant on 01903 734520 or online at www.greenwasteclub.co.uk.

Alternatively you can take your garden waste to the Household Waste Recycling Centres at Shripney Road in Bognor Regis or Mill Lane, Littlehampton.

Garden Waste cannot be included in with your refuse. This is because the cost of collection and disposal is not included in the council tax.

What can I put in my recycling bin?

Items should be
Clean, Dry and Loose
**Not tied up in
plastic bags!**

	✓ Yes please	✗ No thanks
 Paper & card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junk mail • Cereal & egg boxes • Newspapers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone directories • Catalogues & magazines
 foil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean takeaway containers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tin foil
 glass bottles & jars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wine bottles • Beer bottles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jam jars • Sauce jars
 metal cans & aerosols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food cans • Drink cans • Pet food cans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empty hairspray & deodorant aerosols
 cartons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit juice cartons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soup cartons • Milk cartons
 plastic bottles & containers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk/drinks bottles • Bathroom/laundry bottles & tubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food, fruit & ready meal pots, tubs & trays • Plastic container lids
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shredded paper • Paper towels • Pet food pouches • Crisp packets • Pyrex[®] • Drinking glasses & crockery • Batteries • Electrical items • Plastic bags & film • Plastic toys & furniture • Plant pots & seed trays

Contact 01903 737754 for more information & advice
or visit www.arun.gov.uk/recycling





5 Your rent

Your rent is due in advance, and the Council allows you to pay it weekly, fortnightly or monthly, as long as it is paid regularly and on time.

You have signed a tenancy agreement which is a legal contract. If you do not pay your rent regularly and on time you will be in breach of contract.

Your rent account

- We will send a statement every quarter (four times a year). If you would like a statement of your rent account you can phone the Rent Arrears Team, or register for I-Housing.
- If you are a new tenant we will send you details of your rent, and information on how to pay, within two weeks of your tenancy starting.
- Your rent account will have its own rent account number, and you should include this on the back of any cheques you send in, and on any correspondence.

Rent Increases

Rents for Council housing are set annually by central government.

We will notify you of changes in your rent every year in time for the new rent year starting in April.

We will send you new information about your rent every March, with details of how to pay.

Service Charges

If you have extra services, such as heating, water, cleaning, support or care, these are charged for on top of the rent. They are collected in the same way as the rent. The charges for water, heating and amenities are calculated every year based on the actual bills from the previous year, in line with good practice guidance. You are entitled to ask for a breakdown of your service charge.

How to Pay

Direct Debit

Direct Debit remains the most cost effective and easiest method of payment. It is the cheapest way to process your payments and saves you having to remember how much and when to pay. If a mistake is made by the Council, or your bank or building society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund of the amount paid.

Direct Debits are taken weekly on Mondays, or monthly on or after the 1st or 25th of the month. To change your method of payment to Direct Debit, contact the Finance Team, who can help you to arrange this, on 01903 737723.

E-Payments

You can now pay your rent by debit or credit card over the internet, or over the telephone. To make a payment, please visit: www.arun.gov.uk/payment or call the Finance Team on 01903 737723.

I-Housing

You can manage your rent account online at www.arun.gov.uk/housing.

I-Housing enables you to:

- View your Rent Account
- Pay your rent
- Log a repair, and check the progress of repairs

If you are a new user, you will need to complete the registration form to apply for access to the secure area. Once your request has been approved you will be able to use the username and password you have chosen – please keep these safe and confidential.

You need a password to access the secure area. If you already have a password, click 'log me in': www.arun.gov.uk/ihousing/2005/ihousing/index.asp

You can use a FREE internet connection on computers in the reception areas of the Council.

What is Housing Benefit?

Housing Benefit is available to help you pay your rent if you are on a low income. Whether you qualify and how much you get depends on your income and your family circumstances. If you are in receipt of benefits or are on a very low income you may qualify for Housing Benefit to cover the full amount of rent you pay for your home. Housing Benefit does not cover garage rent or heating charges or other service charges. Housing Benefit will normally be reduced if you have children over the age of 18 or other adults (non-dependants) living with you.

There are benefits calculators available on-line to help you work out your entitlement, please see www.arun.gov.uk/benefits.

Who can claim?

You can claim Housing Benefit if you are responsible for payment of rent, have a low income and savings of less than £16,000. If you receive Housing Benefit, this will reduce the amount you have to pay to the Council.

Application forms for Housing Benefit are available from all Council Offices. If you are in any doubt as to whether to apply for Housing Benefit your Housing Officer will be pleased to advise you. They will also help you to fill in the form if you have any difficulty with this.

To get Housing Benefit you must submit a Housing Benefit application form even if you are on welfare benefits. If you are in any doubt fill out a form and send it to the address on the form.

Changes in your circumstances

If you have changes in your circumstances which affect your household finances, you should act quickly and let us know. We can offer you advice to stop you getting into arrears with your rent.

If you are claiming Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit, the law says that you must tell the Benefits Section if there are any changes to the information used to decide the amount of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit you are entitled to. It is very important to tell them straightaway. You should get in touch even if you are still waiting to hear about your Housing Benefit claim, and even if you have told someone else like the Pension Service or your landlord.

If you do not do this, it may mean that the amount of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit you get is wrong. They may be paying you too little and you could miss out on money you are entitled to. It may also mean that you get too much benefit and have to pay it back later.

Rent Arrears

We can help

It is our aim for you to remain as a tenant of Arun District Council. We are here to help, and if you get into difficulty we can work with you to make an arrangement to pay off the arrears which is affordable for you. Where possible we want to avoid taking debt recovery action because this is costly for you and for the Council.

Non payment of rent can result in serious action being taken against you, and as a last resort this can result in the loss of your home.

Not paying rent?

Where arrears are more than four weeks rent the Council can serve a Notice of Seeking Possession. This is the first step in a legal procedure which could lead to you losing your home.

Every year we have to evict tenants for rent arrears. This is a last resort and we will try to work with you to avoid it happening. In these cases the tenants will usually not be re-housed by the Council, because they are considered to be intentionally homeless – as failing to address the arrears will have led to homelessness.

If you have problems paying it is important to contact us, and to get advice. Do not bury your head, the problem will not go away on its own.

It costs more if you get into arrears

If you get into arrears you will have to pay your whole rent plus some of the arrears, meaning more money to find every week.

If the Council has to take you to Court, you may have to pay Court costs.

If you claim Housing Benefit and you do not tell them straight away of a change in your circumstances, you might have to re-pay any benefit overpayment too.

If you get into arrears we will...

- Send a letter automatically if your account is more than £10.00 in arrears.
- Offer to help you make an arrangement to pay, and help you to make a simple weekly budget.
- Ask you to come in for an interview, or visit you at home.
- Serve you with Notice of Seeking Possession if you ignore our letters or do not stick to an agreement.
- Take you to court if needed, and ask the court to evict you if necessary.

What to do now if you are in arrears...

- ✓ If you can, make a one-off payment to clear your arrears in full.
- ✓ If you can't pay, contact the Rent Arrears Team as soon as your account goes into arrears to discuss an agreement to pay the arrears off before they become unmanageable.
- ✓ Make your payments regularly, find a day that suits you and keep to it.
- ✓ If you miss a payment, lose your job, or have money problems contact the Rent Arrears Team straight away.
- ✓ Get advice about help with paying your rent or help with money problems or budgeting.
- ✓ Contact Housing Benefit and discuss making a claim, or checking your claim.

Useful Numbers

Rent arrears team	01903 737850
Rent account enquiries and Direct Debits	01903 727723
Benefit claims hotline (new claims)	01903 737699
Arun Direct (existing claims)	01903 737753
Housing benefit fraud hotline	0800 328 6340



6 Repairs and Maintenance

Landlords' responsibilities

As your landlord, the Council is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the structure and exterior of its properties and for internal repairs other than those shown under 'Tenants' Responsibilities'. The Council is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the structure and exterior of its properties and for internal repairs other than those shown under 'Tenants' Responsibilities'.

The Council are required to:

- Keep in repair the structure and exterior of the property including drains, gutters and external pipes
- Keep in repair and working order the installations in the property for the supply of water, gas and electricity and for sanitation including baths, basins, sinks, showers and sanitary conveniences
- Keep in repair and properly working order the installations in the property for space and water heating.

What is The Right to Repair?

Certain urgent repairs such as leaks, loss of heating or hot water have to be responded to within set timescales. If they are not, all tenants have the right to have the repair carried out by another contractor. If that contractor does not respond in time, tenants are then entitled to compensation. The Right to Repair Scheme does not apply if you have told us you no longer want the repair carried out or if you have failed to allow the contractor access to carry out the work.

Qualifying repairs include unsafe power or lighting sockets or electrical fittings; blocked flue to open fire or boiler; toilet not flushing; blocked sink, bath or basin; leaking water from or to heating pipes, tank or cistern; leaking roof; loose or broken banister or hand rail.

Reporting repairs

You should report any necessary repairs to the Reactive Maintenance Section as soon as possible. If you refer to your Repairs Book and give as much detail as possible, this will help us to deal with your request quickly. We will need to know:

- Your name, address and contact number
- As much information as possible about the repair
- When we can come to inspect the problem and do the work – please be as flexible as possible.

You can report your repairs by letter, email or by telephone to the Reactive Repairs section in Littlehampton (01903 737827) or in person at our offices.

What about emergency repairs?

The Council operates a standby service outside of normal working hours, at weekends and Bank Holidays. When you report an emergency outside of normal working hours your call is automatically transferred to the Duty Officer.

This service is for emergency repairs only, where there is a **risk of personal injury or severe damage to property**. In most cases where assistance is provided by the Standby Service or a Contractor, the fault will only be made safe or secure until the next working day when it can be reported to the Housing Repairs for attention.

The Standby Service is expensive and must not be misused. If you call out the Standby Service unnecessarily the full cost incurred will be recharged to you.

How long will I have to wait for the work to be done?

Target repair times - We have set target times for completing different types of repairs. Providing our contractors can gain access, we expect to meet these targets. If we do not, then please let us know.

Our promise to you

We will be polite, considerate and helpful in dealing with your repair requests and give you all possible information regarding the work to be done.

Emergency repairs To be carried out within 4 hours, or made safe and full repairs carried out at a later date.

Next Day Within 24 hours. Including repairs to make your home safe.

Urgent repairs Within 5 working days

Routine repairs Within 20 days

General To be commenced and completed within a specified time.

Our requirements of our contractors

Contractors working in your home will be required to:

Show their identification before entering your home

- Take care of your home and possessions, protecting them from damage at all times
- Keep your home secure at all times
- Make sure materials and equipment do not cause danger to you or any visitors
- Clear debris from your home at the end of the working day
- Make sure essential services are connected at the end of each day and when the repair is completed
- Operate within the hours of 8am until 5pm unless permission is obtained from the resident
- Always keep appointments they make with you
- Tell you about any delays to carrying out your repair
- Inform you about any accidental damage to your decoration, fittings or carpets as a result of the repair

Access

We will give you reasonable notice of proposed visits, usually at least 24 hours, and you must allow the Council, its authorised officers, agents and workers (our staff) to enter your home. This is particularly important for gas and electrical safety checks. The Council can take legal action to enter your home if you do not allow access and you may have to pay the costs.

You must also ensure our staff safe passage for inspections, repairs, access to roofs and loft spaces, or for any other reason. If our staff come to your property and you wish to smoke please give them due consideration.

If there is an emergency and the Council needs to enter the property immediately we are entitled to enter or, if needed, force entry to the property without giving you any notice. Emergencies may include situations such as gas or water leaks which could affect the health and safety of occupants, the property, adjoining properties and their residents. The Council may require you to pay for any damage done if it was your fault that it was necessary to force entry.

Abortive calls

Our contractors should always make an appointment to see you, they will not just turn up, unless it is an emergency. If they arrive for an appointment but you are not in, this is called an abortive call. They will leave a card to let you know they have been. You will need to contact the Contractor directly to rearrange the appointment. If you make appointments which you do not keep to, we are charged, and we may recharge you for the cost of this as appropriate.

If you have requested a repair and you subsequently repair the item yourself or find someone else to do the repair please notify the Littlehampton office so that the visit can be cancelled. If you fail to do so you may be requested to pay a charge for the contractor's wasted time.

Planned Maintenance

This is work that is scheduled to be carried out, usually before the item actually requires a repair. It is cheaper to carry out maintenance on a regular basis. This can prevent repair problems later.

Some non-urgent repairs are not carried out straightaway. Instead we group them together and get them done as a contract. This is more cost effective. Examples of this are brickwork, fencing and paths.

The Planned Maintenance Team is responsible for all the larger maintenance contracts for Council Owned Housing properties. The Planned Maintenance Surveyors are responsible for carrying out surveys, designing and the writing of specifications for any contracts for the following works;

- Making sure that our homes reach agreed standards
- Replacing window and doors
- External painting and renovations
- Grant funded disabled adaptations
- Elderly Persons Internal Re-Decoration Scheme
- Re-Roofing Programme
- Insulation
- Asbestos Sampling
- CCTV

Contact 01903 737852, or e-mail housing.plannedmaintenance@arun.gov.uk.

Your responsibilities as a tenant

You must report any repairs to us that are our responsibility as soon as possible. You could be responsible for any repairs that are worse because you haven't reported them in good time.

General

- Lubricating hinges, locks, catches, fasteners, doors and gates
- Replacing broken stays to windows
- Replacing wall and floor tiles where the damage is not due to fair wear and tear
- Repairing and replacing insulation jackets to hot water tanks
- Minor repairs to plasterwork, like filling holes

Fireplaces

- Replacing tiles to hearths and surrounds
- Replacing grates and ash pans
- Sweeping and/or clearing of chimney flues for solid fuel appliances at least annually, more regularly for materials other than smokeless coal.

Plumbing and drainage

The following apply to all tenants unless in sheltered housing:

- Clearing blocked sinks, gullies, wash hand basins and bath outlets
- Repairing or replacing broken toilet seats
- Replacing plugs to baths, wash hand basins and sinks.

Please ensure that you arrange to have your washing machine plumbed in professionally to prevent unnecessary flooding or you may be charged for any damage caused to a third party's possessions.

Windows, doors, cupboards and woodwork

- Adjusting and repairing locks and catches to internal doors
- Re-fixing handles and tightening screws to hinges and fittings and renewal of the same
- Providing barrel bolts to doors
- Repairing and replacing letter boxes, door knockers and bells
- Draught proofing windows and doors
- Re-fixing loose shelving, coat racks and similar fittings
- Replacing keys to all external doors and renewing external locks damaged by the occupier or where keys are lost
- Replacing glazing where broken by tenant, a member of the household or a visitor to the home.

Electrical fittings

- Fitting new fuses, light bulbs and fluorescent tubes

Internal decorations

- All internal decorations, including minor replastering.

External

- Repairing fences, garden gates and pathways where not due to fair wear and tear
- Replacing clothes posts except in communal areas
- Providing dustbins
- Keeping gardens and hedges in good condition

Electric or gas warm air units and extractor fans

- Periodically washing out (approximately every 4-6 weeks) the wire mesh and/or air filters, according to the heater operating instructions

Rechargeable work

You are responsible for carrying out any work necessary as a result of damage by you, members of your household or any visitors. If the Council carries out any repairs that are found not to be due to fair wear and tear, you may be charged for the work. Check if you can claim on your household insurance.

If damage is caused by vandalism, you must report it to the Police, obtain a crime reference number and THEN contact us. If damage is caused by a fault of the Council's you may be able to claim for the cost.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What do I do in an emergency?

Ring 01903 737500 and ask for Housing Repairs. If you have an urgent repair out of hours in the evenings, weekends or holidays, ring 01903 713976.

What are examples of emergencies?

Examples would be a major pipe burst, major electricity failure, no lights, no heating or blocked drains.

What repairs will you do?

We have a legal responsibility to repair the structure of your home including drains, gutters, pipes and window glass (unless broken by you or other people living in or visiting your home).

We are responsible for repairs to all the services in the property (water, gas electricity); sanitary fittings; heating and hot water systems and appliances if they are the property of the Council.

Am I responsible for any repairs?

You are expected to keep your home in good condition. This includes keeping it decorated and carrying out some minor repairs, for example, filling in decorating cracks, tightening door hinges, changing tap washers.

We will not be responsible for any repairs which are not caused by fair wear and tear or the result of damage by you or others in your home. We may not pay for your locks to be changed if you lose your keys.

Do I need permission to decorate the inside of my home?

No. You are responsible for your own internal decorations.

What if the people carrying out the work in my home are rude to me or leave things in a mess?

Our contractors have to follow a Code of Conduct. If you believe they have not kept to this tell us and we will investigate.

Can I get adaptations done to my home?

If you have a disability you can request that certain adaptations such as ramps/support rails etc can be made to your home. These requests must be made to West Sussex County Council, Social and Caring Services Disability Team. You will have to be assessed for a disabled facilities grant before any works can be arranged.

What about aerials, satellite dishes, sheds and other structures?

You must get written permission from the Council before erecting sheds, garages, greenhouses or extra fencing as well as radio masts or satellite dishes. Requests for permission should be made in writing to your Housing Services.

Can I carry out improvements to my home?

Before starting any improvements or alterations to your home, you must get written permission from Housing Services. The Council will not normally refuse permission for you to alter your home unless the work is likely to affect the safety of the building, cause a future maintenance problem for the Council or cause a nuisance to your neighbours.

What if I move?

If you move out you will be expected to leave the alterations/improvements as they are, or reinstate the property to how it was. If the Council has to do any work to put things right as a result of alterations you have carried out you will be charged for the cost of this. Your Maintenance Officer can give you advice on your Right to Compensation for improvements.

You must also fill in any ponds, and remove any structures you have added such as sheds which are not in good condition. If we have to do this work after you have moved we will recharge you for the cost of doing it.

A Guide to Frequently Reported Problems

Blockages

Avoid blockages by being careful about what you put down the sink (e.g. don't tip fats down there), and don't use the toilet as a bin.

Blockages in a sink can be cleared by using a plunger. Blockages in the toilet can be cleared by using a toilet brush or plunger to shift the waste. You can then try a suitable drain cleaning product. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Loss of power

Firstly, if you have a key meter, check if there is a key with enough credit on it. Virtually all of our homes have modern consumer units (which used to be called fuse boards). These have circuit breakers and if a fault occurs and a switch is tripped the circuit breaks for safety. Locate the consumer unit and check which switch has tripped to the OFF position. You can switch this back ON. If it trips again you will need to work out what has caused the problem, which could be an appliance such as a kettle, and make sure it is unplugged. Please be aware that the problem could be caused by a faulty appliance which can be diagnosed by testing it in a working socket. If an appliance doesn't work you may also need to check the fuse.

Storage heaters

How they work: These operate by storing heat during 'off-peak' periods when the electricity is cheaper, usually overnight. This heat is then released into the room the following day and evening. There are two controls (input/charge/ and output/boost) on the majority of storage heaters which have to be adjusted in the anticipation of the following day's weather.

'Input' or 'Charge' control: This must be set manually to ensure than an adequate amount of heat is stored during the night. In winter, the input control must be set higher as the outside temperatures are usually colder.

'Output' or 'Boost' control: The output control tells the heater how much heat to give out during the day. If this is at the maximum setting (usually 6 or 9) you will find that the stored heat is distributed fairly quickly. It is important to set the controls to reflect the temperature outside and the times that you are in the property, e.g. if you are going out, then turn the output down to the minimum setting.

You should, under no circumstances, attempt to remove, or carry out any work to Council owned gas or electric appliances.

Loft/attic storage

The Council recommends that loft/attic spaces are not used for storage because there are risks for tenants going in and out of them and carrying belongings up loft ladders. Any damage caused to the property while doing this will be rechargeable to the tenant. Lofts are also unsuitable for storage due to the potential damage to tenant's property in the damp/cold. The Council will not accept any liability for any goods stored in the loft against our recommendation.

Condensation

Condensation occurs when excess moisture in the air hits a cold surface, like an outside wall, a window or a mirror, and it condenses and turns into water. There will be more moisture in the air when you do normal activities such as cook, boil water, shower, have a bath or dry clothes indoors. Condensation is something that tenants can often control themselves.

Condensation causes mould to form on walls, window sills and inside wardrobes and cupboards, and it causes mildew on clothes.

To stop condensation you should:

- Produce less moist air by putting lids on pans, not letting pans or kettles boil for too long, dry clothes outside.
- Ventilate your room to let the moisture out by using the extractor fans or opening the windows for a while.
- Wipe down all windows and walls affected by condensation and carefully use a suitable cleaning product for any walls or cupboards.
- Keep your home warm and dry.

Damp

Common causes of damp in the home include:

- Rising damp (evident at low level on ground floors)
- Penetrating damp or rainwater ingress (coming in)
- Leaking plumbing

Damp is something you need to report to Housing Services as soon as you are aware of it because if you leave it the problem could get much worse. Contact us and tell us the location of the damp and what the symptoms are so that we can get the right repair done.

Leaks

If you have any leaks from pipes switch off the stopcock and contact Housing Services. You may be able to remove anything that might get damaged and put a bowl or a bucket there to collect any water in the meantime.

Energy saving for tenants

Lighting

- Remember to turn lights off when leaving a room.
- In most homes, lighting accounts for 10 -15% of the electricity bill. Energy efficient bulbs last around 10 times longer and save money.

Appliances

- Switch off/unplug when not in use – A mobile phone charger plugged into the wall but not your phone can still use 95% of the energy.
- A 5-min shower uses about half as much energy as a bath (except power showers: they're power hungry)
- Using a 40°C wash cycle rather than 60°C means you use 1/3 less electricity. Reduce the wash to a 30°C cycle and the amount of electricity saved (not to mention money) will be even higher. Modern washing detergents work just as effectively at lower temperatures.
- When using your dishwasher or washing machine, it's better to wait for a full load or use the economy cycle if available.
- Don't leave the fridge door open for longer than necessary and avoid putting warm food straight into the fridge - wait until it has cooled down.
- Defrost your refrigeration devices regularly to keep them running efficiently.
- Keeping your freezer full will make the appliance more efficient and help to save money on your energy bills. If necessary, fill with loaves of bread and fill gaps with rolled up newspapers in carrier bags.
- Keeping lids on saucepans shortens cooking time.
- Leaving a microwave on standby uses far more energy than actually using the appliance to cook food ever will.

Insulation and heating

- Close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping.
- Use draught excluders for doors and letterboxes.
- Turning down your heating thermostat or radiator valves down by 1°C when you are too warm can cut up to 10% off bills.
- Water needn't be heated to a scalding temperature; 60° C or 140° F is usually fine, but be sure not to turn it down any lower than this.
- Don't forget to turn the TV standby off.

Water

- Think about how water is used - can it be reduced? Water is a precious resource even in the UK and pumping and heating it also uses energy.
- Don't overfill the kettle for just one drink. Just fill up with what you need but remember that with electric kettles the element always needs to be covered.
- Report dripping taps to Housing Repairs section – they can waste enough water in one day to fill a bath.



7 Customer Service

Our aim is to provide accessible good quality public services and the highest standards of customer care to all of our residents, communities and visitors. Arun District Council has a Customer Care Charter, and has set targets to measure how successful we are in delivering the standards set out in it.

Our Customer Care Charter:

We will:

- Treat you fairly and equally
- Provide a pleasant and courteous service at all times
- Be helpful and responsive
- Provide you with good quality information about our services
- Try to deal with all enquiries at the first point of contact
- Try to put things right if we make a mistake
- Assess and review our performance

If you visit us we will:

- Welcome you on arrival
- Ensure you know our names and treat you with respect
- Keep waiting times to no longer than 10 minutes, where applicable
- Have our opening times clearly displayed at all our offices

If we visit you we will:

- Make an appointment where it is appropriate to do so
- Clearly identify ourselves and provide proof of our identity

If you telephone us we aim to:

- Greet you politely
- Clearly state our service area and our name
- Answer your call within 30 seconds
- Respond to voicemail messages by the end of the next working day
- Keep our voicemail announcement up to date

If you write, fax or email we aim to:

Reply within 10 working days; or · Advise you within 5 working days of the timescale for a full reply

Please help us by:

Keeping us informed

Providing us with accurate information, when requested. Telling us if you have any special requirements to enable you to access our services.

Helping us to do our job

Remembering that our members of staff have the right to do their jobs without fear of personal injury, abuse or discrimination.

Giving us feedback to help us improve

Suggestions for improving the service you receive are welcomed and acted on wherever possible. To make a comment on our services please complete the online form at www.arun.gov.uk, pick up a Comments, Suggestions and Compliments leaflet from one of our reception areas or call us.

How we handle complaints

We try to make sure that all enquiries or requests are dealt with quickly and right first time. Sometimes we make mistakes and the standard of service may not be what is expected. In the first place, please speak or write to the person who first dealt with your enquiry. He or she may be able to solve your problem straight away. If the matter is complicated it is a good idea to put your complaint in writing.

If you are still not satisfied you should complete an official complaints form. These are available from all Council Offices or can be posted to you on request. It may take some time to investigate your complaint but we will make sure you are kept fully informed at every stage.

Local Government Ombudsman

You also have the right to refer your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman after you have followed the above procedure but are not satisfied with the response to your complaint. Leaflets explaining the Council's Complaints Procedure and the Local Government Ombudsman service are available at all Council Offices.

The Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH
Fax: 024 7682 0001

You can make an enquiry by email to advice@lgo.org.uk, or go to www.lgo.org.uk.

There are three Local Government Ombudsmen in England. Each of them deals with complaints from different parts of the country, but all new complaints will go to the LGO Advice Team. For advice on making a complaint, or to make a complaint over the telephone, please call the LGO Advice Team on 0300 061 0614 or 0845 602 1983. You can also text 'call back' to 0762 480 4299.

Measuring & Monitoring Performance

Performance management and service improvement in Housing Services really matter to Arun District Council. The council has developed a Performance Management System and System Thinking Teams to lead on customer service and performance management, with a clear vision of what it wants to achieve in the short, medium and long term.

Housing Services aims to:

- enable vulnerable people to live independent lives
- maximise the supply of affordable housing and meet housing needs
- develop sustainable communities and promote good neighbourliness
- improve the quality and energy efficiency of housing
- promote better and fairer access to housing services.

National regulation

The Tenant Services Authority (TSA), is the regulator for affordable housing. Their goal is to work with landlords and tenants to improve services based on these standards:

Standard	Related areas
Tenant involvement and empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer service, choice and complaints • Involvement and empowerment • Understanding and responding to diverse needs of tenants
Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of accommodation • Repairs and maintenance
Tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocations • Rent • Tenure
Neighbourhood and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood management • Local area co-operation • Anti-social behaviour
Value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value for money



8 Tenant Participation

All Council tenants have a right by law to be consulted about major changes in housing management matters.

Arun District Council aims to encourage all tenants who want to, to become actively involved in all aspects of their housing service through the Arun Tenants' and Leaseholders' Organisation. The Council believes that by listening to and working in co-operation with tenants we can provide you with a better housing service.

Getting Involved

The Council will ensure that all tenants and leaseholders are offered genuine opportunities to get involved through formal and informal methods.

These could include:

- o telephone and/or postal surveys,
- o being consulted and participating in the Arun Tenants' and Leaseholders' Organisation or local residents group,
- o joining focus groups, or
- o just receiving and reading the Arun News and Views newsletter.

Tenants and Leaseholders are free to decide how they wish to be involved across a range of housing services.

What will I be consulted on?

If any work to your home is planned or new services or policies are being considered which may affect you, we will want to give tenants the opportunity to make comments and suggestions.

If we have proposals that may affect a group of tenants in one area then you may be consulted individually and/or with other tenants. For example the Council may have plans to provide a new playground on an estate and tenants will be asked for their opinions.

The Arun Tenant Participation Compact

The Arun Tenant Participation Compact is an agreement which has been drawn up by Tenant and Leaseholder representatives and the Council working in partnership to provide housing services which you want at a price you can afford.

What is a Tenant Participation Compact?

Tenant Participation Compacts are part of the Government agenda to improve local services, increase local democracy and strengthen and sustain local communities. They are intended to help Tenants and Leaseholders to decide how they wish to be involved in influencing and shaping the decisions taken by the Council on housing issues in a way which meets their individual needs and priorities.

Joint Declaration

Arun District Council and its Tenants and Leaseholders are working together to make a joint declaration to:

- actively promote an equal partnership from which all parties benefit
- improve and develop local housing services
- share in decision making
- provide the support and information needed for everyone to take part
- monitor and report on performance.

Check the website www.arun.gov.uk for more information or to request a Tenant Participation Leaflet.

What does the Arun Tenants' and Leaseholders' Organisation do?

The Arun Tenants' and Leaseholders' Organisation (ATLO) is made up of tenants and leaseholders who have volunteered to be part of the Organisation. It is open to all tenants and leaseholders living in Arun District Council's homes.

The Arun Tenants' and Leaseholders' Organisation presents the tenants and leaseholders opinions to the Council and helps to get things done. The more members that the Organisation has, the stronger it will be, to help improve the position of all tenants and leaseholders.

Resources for Tenant Participation

The Council will ensure that tenants and leaseholders get the support they need to set up new structures or arrangements and to sustain existing ones.

Support will include:

- Help and advice to get a new tenants group started
- Facilities eg, access to premises and equipment, stationery, photocopying and help in distributing newsletters
- Training to meet the needs of tenants' and leaseholders' representatives or tenants' and leaseholders' groups, including possible joint training with Council staff and Members, where appropriate. Training may also cover equal opportunity issues, including policies on race and equality and racial and sexual harassment; and
- Innovative approaches to encourage new tenants and leaseholders to get involved, so that groups remain representative and sustainable.
- Information on which Council officers are responsible for delivering specific functions
- Anything else tenants and leaseholders ask for, so long as it is available, can be funded and its disclosure does not breach confidentiality or data protection.

The Council will ensure that the information it provides to tenants and leaseholders meets their needs, in order to reach an informed view on the issues and to be able to make a constructive, timely input to decision-making.

We will deliver information to you:

- Through our website: www.arun.gov.uk/housing
- Through newsletters: currently we issue News & Views and Arun Times
- In with your quarterly Rent Statements.
- In our 'Here to Help You' leaflet which we update every year around March.
- By letter, or Notice, as appropriate.

Information will be:

- Expressed clearly, avoiding jargon
- Of good quality, timely and tailored to our tenants' needs
- Accessible, in plain language and available in other formats such as large print, audio version on request.



9 Moving on

Homemove

If you are a Council Tenant and you wish to move, you can apply for a transfer. Homemove, www.homemove.org.uk, is the Sussex-wide choice based lettings scheme which operates in Arun.

What is Choice Based Lettings?

Choice Based Lettings gives people choice about where they live. Rather than the Council allocating properties, the scheme enables tenants and new housing applicants to bid for the properties they are interested in. All available properties will be advertised on a website and in a fortnightly free magazine.

People seeking to move will be put into one of four broad bands according to their housing need.

How do I get onto the Homemove scheme?

You can apply at any time by filling in our Housing Register Application form which is available from our officers or online. Once we have all the information we need, we will write to you with your registration date and number, your banding and the reason for it.

If you do not agree with your band you should first look at the Allocation Policy which shows how we apply the bands, then write to us and tell us why you think you should be in a different band. It is helpful if you point to the criteria in the new band that you believe applies to you, and show why with some evidence.

What are the Bands?

People are placed into one of four bands that show their priority for housing. Our Allocations Policy explains in detail the criteria for each band.

How is housing allocated through Homemove?

Every two weeks we advertise all the available empty properties through the Homemove website and in the Homemove freesheet magazine. The property adverts tell you all about each property, for example how many bedrooms, what the rent is, who the landlord is and if any restrictions apply.

You can bid for the properties you are interested in and eligible for. All the bids for a property are recorded in priority order by band, local connection and time on the register. Once the time for bidding is closed the council contacts those at the top of the shortlist to offer the property. You can make bids via the website, by telephone, by text message or by posting a special coupon.

What type of property can I bid for?

You can bid for any property that is suitable for your needs and size of family. The Council will normally advertise property based on the following criteria:

- Property size – the property advert includes how many bedrooms the property has and a minimum/maximum number of people in the household that can apply
- Adapted properties and those with a mobility code may be reserved for people with a matching requirement of need
- Ground Floor accommodation may be offered only to those people who have an agreed need for such properties
- Sheltered accommodation is only available only for people who meet the age requirements

How many bids can I make?

You can bid for up to three properties in every fortnight cycle. Each cycle begins when the freesheet magazine is published and the bidding deadline will be the following Wednesday at 2pm.

Once I've made a bid can I change my mind?

Yes – you can change or withdraw your bid if you want to and you can choose to refuse the offer if you want to. You are not penalised for refusing an offer and can bid again as soon as you are ready.

How do I know if my bid is successful?

If you are offered a property, the Allocations Team will contact you to make an arrangement for you to view it as soon as possible. You can decide to accept or refuse the offer when you view the property or within 24 hours of viewing. We can make arrangements if you have any special needs or requirements. We will not write to you if your bid is not successful but we will publish feedback

about the number of bids we had for each property and what band the successful bidder was in.

Can I still bid if I am in rent arrears?

You can bid for properties you are eligible for but we will not normally make an offer of accommodation to a transfer applicant in rent arrears. If you want to move, it is important that you keep your rent payments up to date.

For more information, please call the Allocations Team on (01903) 737500 or email us on housing.allocations@arun.gov.uk.

What is a mutual exchange?

A mutual exchange is where you can swap your property and your tenancy with another council tenant or tenant of a housing association. To do this you must be a secure tenant. If you are an introductory tenant, you do not have the right to exchange, although in special circumstances you may be allowed to swap your home. Mutual exchanges are often found to be a quicker method of moving house than a transfer.

When you carry out a mutual exchange you will exchange or assign your tenancy rights with those of the tenant you exchange with. In order to exchange you will be asked to complete a Deed of Assignment and you may therefore want to seek legal advice.

Finding someone to exchange with

If you wish to exchange your property, please register your details on the Homemove Mutual Exchange website. This will ask you for details of your property and what you are looking for. You could also look at a list of local properties held at the Council's offices in Littlehampton and Bognor Regis. When you find someone to swap with, you need to get permission from your Housing Officer and make sure you have no breach of contract, such as rent arrears. The person you are exchanging with must also request permission from their landlord. You cannot exchange until both parties have received formal permission from their landlords.

Completion of the exchange process

We will inform you within 42 days from the date both applications were received, as to whether you can exchange properties. If you are told you cannot exchange your property you will be given a reason why. Arrangements to exchange your home must not be made until you have obtained written approval from us.

Reasons why we may refuse an exchange

- The property you or your exchange partner are moving to is either too large or too small.
- You have been served with a Notice Seeking Possession or a Possession Order has been made against you.
- Your home is one which is occupied as part of your job (tied accommodation).
- The property you wish to exchange with has been specially adapted for people with disabilities and you do not have a need for such adaptations.
- The property you wish to exchange with is in a sheltered scheme, unless you qualify for sheltered accommodation.
- You have outstanding rent arrears, unless paid off in full, by the time of the mutual exchange.
- It has been found that money is being offered or has been offered or exchanged in relation to the mutual exchange.
- You are an introductory tenant.

Conditions and repairs

Your property will be inspected as part of the exchange process. This inspection will assess whether there are any alterations or conditions that must be put right before the exchange is allowed to go ahead. If the property is in a neglected or damaged condition, consideration may take action against you. This is because you will have breached your tenancy conditions. The exchange will not be allowed to proceed until outstanding issues are resolved. If there are minor issues such as poor decorations this may be acceptable to the incoming tenant, and they should accept it as seen. An electric and gas test will be done on the day of exchange and you must allow access for this. This is for your own health and safety and that of your household. You will be asked to sign an undertaking to allow access for these tests to be completed.

It is important that you check the property before you move, as damage by the other tenant cannot be put right after you move in. It will become your responsibility. Any agreement with the other tenant about what is left or taken is an agreement between you and the other tenant. You may want to get legal advice before you move if you have any concerns about this.

Costs

When you have received written permission from Housing Services to carry out your mutual exchange, a date will be set for you to sign any paperwork. You must meet any costs incurred in moving. It is illegal to offer or accept any money to carry out a mutual exchange.

Moving to a smaller home

If you are living in a housing association or council property that is too big for your needs, you can apply to transfer to something smaller and more suitable, which may be easier to afford and manage. Priority for a transfer is given to those tenants who want to move to smaller properties as this frees up family homes for people in need of them. The Council, and some Housing Associations, also offer a financial incentive to encourage people to do this, subject to funding. Please contact the Allocations Team, or your Housing Association, for more information.

Moving out of the Area

If you are flexible about where you live then you might consider moving to an area of the country where demand for housing is not so high and therefore, prices and rents will probably be lower.

Some Councils and Housing Associations in the North of England often have homes more readily available to anyone that contacts them. You need to contact the relevant council to find out what is available, they often advertise on their websites. You can also check the website at www.homes.org.uk.

You may need to apply to go onto the Housing Register of the council covering that part of the country. You will need to contact the relevant council.

If you choose a low demand area for housing you may be offered a tenancy quickly and the rent may be cheaper.



10 Moving out

How can I end my tenancy?

You can end your tenancy at any time by giving at least four weeks written notice ending on a Sunday or a Monday. You can obtain a Tenancy Termination Form for this from Housing Services, or you can write a letter giving us all the details. You are advised to send any legal Notices by 'Signed for post (Recorded Delivery).

You are liable to pay full rent until the Council has proper 'vacant possession' of the property – this means the property must be clear and we must have the keys. It is important to make sure there is no-one left living in the home when the tenancy ends.

Things to remember

Please hand in all keys to the Council, at our Littlehampton Offices unless you have arranged otherwise, by 12 noon on the Monday your tenancy ends. If you fail to hand the keys in on time or don't move out you will be liable to pay extra rent, and be charged for the cost of changing the locks.

The property must be left secure, clean and free of rubbish. Don't forget your loft, garden, and any sheds or outbuildings. If the Council has to clean up, clear rubbish or do lots of repairs for which you are liable after you have left, you will be charged for this. You must leave behind any fixtures and fittings which are the property of the Council and if you have carried out any alterations or improvements in your home you should leave these in place or return it to its original condition. For more details see the section on 'Repairs and Maintenance'.

What about gas, electricity and water?

You should contact the gas, electricity and water companies before you move out and arrange for final meter readings to be made. If you do not do this you may have to pay for any electricity, gas or water which is used after you move out. Don't forget to turn off the water and leave gas cards and electricity keys.

Can the Council end my tenancy?

Is the Council able to repossess my home?

The Council can only regain possession of your home if you decide to end your tenancy or if it obtains an Order from the County Court. The Court will only grant an Order if the Council can prove that one of the grounds for possession under the 1985 Housing Act, as amended by the 1996 Housing Act applies.

The Council must usually serve you with at least four weeks notice of its intention to repossess your home before it can take a case to Court. However, there are certain circumstances where Court action can be taken immediately, after serving the Notice, for example in cases of serious nuisance. Or in exceptional circumstances the waiver of serving a notice will be accepted by the court due to the seriousness of the situation.

When would the Council try to repossess my home?

The most common grounds under which a Court will grant an Order for repossession are:

- not paying rent
- harassing or causing a serious nuisance to your neighbours
- damaging or neglecting your home
- being convicted of a serious criminal offence, for example, dealing in drugs

When the Council doesn't need grounds

If you are a Demoted or Introductory Tenant, the council will not have to prove a ground for eviction. We can only end your tenancy with a Court order. If you are an Introductory or Demoted tenant you are at higher risk of eviction. The Court just has to be satisfied that the Council has followed the right procedure.

The 'Grounds for Possession'

If the Council serves you with a 'Notice of Seeking Possession', it must state what the reason for ending the tenancy is. The reasons are known as 'grounds for possession' and are set out in law, in the Housing Act 1985, last amended.

The Council might also serve other Notices or apply to Court for Injunction Orders or Closing Orders where needed. Where possible we will do everything we can to avoid possession action and work with you to resolve breaches of the tenancy.

Different grounds for eviction

The council may have grounds for eviction if:

- you have rent arrears
- you break a term of your tenancy agreement
- you (or people who live with you or visit you) cause nuisance or annoyance in your home or in the neighbourhood
- you use your home for illegal or immoral activities (eg drug dealing)
- you are violent towards your spouse, civil partner or partner, and s/he leaves as a result
- you damage your home or any furniture the council has provided with it
- you lied about your circumstances in order to get the tenancy
- you paid money in order to exchange your home
- you have lodgers or subtenants and your home is overcrowded as a result
- the council plans to demolish your home
- the council needs to do major repairs to your home
- your home was designed or adapted for a person with special needs, and the people living in your household no longer need those special facilities.

Get Advice!

If you have received a Notice of Seeking Possession, or any court papers, or better still, as soon as you have a problem like paying your rent, family or neighbourhood problems, get advice from the Citizens Advice Bureaux, Shelter, or another agency, and talk to us.

CAB (Citizens Advice Bureau)

Bognor Regis 01243 820667

Littlehampton 01903 730338

National Debtline 0808 808 4000

Former Tenant Arrears

If there are arrears left on your account when you have left and the account is closed, these are called Former Tenant Arrears. They have to be paid in full, and you can make an arrangement to pay them in instalments if needed. There are lots of ways of paying, including by Direct Debit, or by credit or debit card over the phone. Contact the Housing Finance Team for help.

It is important that you contact us and make an arrangement to pay, because we take legal action to recover the money, and it might result in a Money Judgement. This will affect your credit rating.

You may be unable to have another council tenancy until any outstanding debts are clear.

What will happen to my tenancy if I die?

Under the law, if a tenant dies, the tenancy may pass on to the spouse, joint tenant or member of the family if certain conditions are met. This is called 'Succession'. There may only be one succession granted for each tenancy. The conditions for succession are:

- Any spouse can succeed to the tenancy as long as they live in the property as their only, or principal, home at the time of the tenant's death
- When there is a joint tenancy and one joint tenant dies the tenancy will pass to the other partner and will count as succession
- Any other member of the tenant's family can succeed to the tenancy if they lived with the tenant for 12 months before her or his death and they live in the property as their only or principal home
- If the tenant who has died had succeeded to the tenancy, there can be no further succession.

In addition to these legal rules, the Council will grant a tenancy to the partner of a tenant who dies provided he or she was living with the tenant at the time of death. If you are living with a tenant who dies then you should contact Housing Services to notify them of the death and to find out your position with regards to succession.

If you do not have a legal right of succession you may be allowed to carry on living in the home if you are a member of the deceased tenant's family and lived in the property as your only or principal home for some time prior to the tenant's death.

If you meet these conditions but are living in a home larger than you need you may be required to move to smaller accommodation provided by the Council.



A R U N
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Arun District Council,
Civic Centre,
Maltravers Road,
Littlehampton,
West Sussex BN17 5LF
Telephone: 01903 737500
Email: housing@arun.gov.uk
Website: www.arun.gov.uk/housing