

# Housing support information pack

## Welcome to your Housing Support Team

This pack, together with your occupancy agreement, provides details about what you can expect while you are homeless, and what rights and responsibilities you have during your time in temporary accommodation. It also explains your rights and responsibilities when you move into a secure tenancy and what support will be available for you.

Within Housing Support there is:

- 1 Housing Support Manager
- 2 x Housing Support Co-ordinators
- 20 x Housing Support Workers
- 1 Administration Assistant
- 1 Clerical Officer

The team provides advice, assistance and support to people living in temporary accommodation, and this support continues to be available while in mainstream tenancies. Housing Support is also available to people in their own tenancies who may be at risk of becoming homeless and require assistance and advice. Your Support Worker will focus on helping you take control of any issues which may at first appear overwhelming. They will also direct you to other agencies if necessary. Their aim is to work towards helping you sustain your tenancy and avoid the threat of becoming homeless in the future.

Your Housing Support Worker will meet you at the book-in to your accommodation and will be your key worker throughout your journey until you are settled in secure accommodation. If you have any worries, concerns, or issues during your stay you should contact your Support Worker for advice and assistance. It is important that you keep in regular contact to successfully move on to your secure accommodation.

Whilst in temporary accommodation your Support Worker will arrange your gas and electricity supplier, advise you how to manage your gas and electric meters, assist you to budget, arrange any repairs required, and make sure the property always meets the national temporary accommodation standards.

Your Support Worker will check the property a minimum of every two weeks. You are asked to provide access for these visits, which are necessary to ensure you are receiving the best possible service, as well as to check on your wellbeing. If you are not in, your Support Worker will leave a

card to tell you that they called. It is important to engage with your Support Worker so that they can provide the best support. Keys are available to Support Workers to enter the property if you are not available, and in any such instances there will always be two workers present.

You must report any repairs or problems with your tenancy to your Support Worker as soon as possible. You may be charged if you have deliberately damaged the property or furnishings. Please remember you are also responsible for the behaviour of any visitors to your property.

You must keep your property and shared areas of the building clean, tidy, and free from anything that may put people at risk. You must let us know as soon as possible of any changes in your circumstances. While living in temporary accommodation you must keep to our policies relating to visitors, pets, overnight stays, and your behaviour. You will also have to let us know if you no longer need your accommodation.

Housing Support will be provided for as long as it is needed in all North Ayrshire Council tenancies.

## **Home visits**

Your Housing Support Worker will visit you depending on your circumstances to ensure your housing support needs are being met. They will treat any information given by you confidentially. Information will only be shared where there is a significant risk factor within the house, for example, protecting children or vulnerable adults. Your Support Worker will always advise you if they are contacting another partner agency or service.

## **Left belongings**

Your Housing Support Worker will explain the procedure for dealing with left belongings and fill in any relevant paperwork should you leave anything behind when you leave temporary accommodation. Your belongings will be stored for 28 days after you have left the property and may be disposed of after this time.

## **Your support plan**

Your Housing Support Worker will discuss and plan your support needs and work with you to develop a support plan based on your requirements. Your support plan will be reviewed regularly. The plan may include advice and information on the following:

- Homelessness
- Housing Options
- Understanding and managing your tenancy and rights and responsibilities

- Welfare Benefits/Housing Benefits
- Budgeting
- How to manage your rent arrears
- Debt Advice
- Filling in forms
- Independent Living Skills
- Accessing Health advice; GP's, Dentist
- Education, training, and employment
- Resettlement
- Engaging with other support services with an interest in your welfare
- Acting on your behalf

## **Your responsibilities**

### **Tenancy condition**

It is your responsibility to keep your property in good condition, keeping it clean, ventilated, and tidy. Whilst in temporary accommodation you must report any repairs to your Support Worker in the first instance to avoid deterioration of the property.

### **Neighbours**

It is your responsibility to be a good neighbour while living in temporary accommodation as well as in your own tenancy. This can mean things as simple as ensuring you use your bins appropriately and put them out for collection, to keeping noise levels down and being considerate of others.

### **Rent and Council Tax**

During your stay you are responsible for paying rent and council tax. The rent charge is shown on your tenancy agreement and how much you pay depends on your income. Your Support Worker will help with housing and council tax application forms. It is very important to provide proof of ID and income as soon as possible as this can affect your rent account. Any arrears accrued during your stay in temporary accommodation will remain your responsibility once you have moved on.

### **Utility charges**

You will be responsible for the cost of any gas, electricity and standing charges for your temporary/secure property, and your supplier will be provided with your forwarding address when you move on. When you are leaving temporary accommodation, it is important you leave both gas and electricity cards/keys in the property in credit.

## **TV Licence**

If you have a television while in temporary accommodation you will require a TV licence, and it is your responsibility to purchase this. North Ayrshire Council does not provide TV licences or aerial connections for their properties.

## **Mail**

You may receive mail for previous tenants during your stay, if you do, you should give it to your Support Worker so that they can send it back to the Post Office. Likewise, if your mail is sent to the accommodation after you have left, we will return it to the Post Office.

## **Keys**

You are responsible for your keys to the property, and if you lose them, please contact the Housing Support Team as soon as possible as we may need to change the locks. Depending on the circumstances you may be charged for a lock change. You must return all keys to us at the end of your stay, or you may be charged for a lock change and replacement keys.

## **Belongings**

We will store left belongings for 28 days after you have left your temporary accommodation, after this time they may be disposed of. Your Support Worker will explain our procedure at your book in.

## **Moving on**

You may be required to move to alternative accommodation due to the needs of the Service, or you may be required to move into your own tenancy at short notice. Housing Support staff will provide you with as much notice as possible and try to assist you in moving. Please remember anything you take into temporary accommodation you will also have to transport back out when you leave.

We do not have scope to assist with moving or storing belongings.

## **Responsibilities towards Support Workers**

You must treat staff with dignity and respect.

You must not display violence/aggression, or make threats of violence, or physical or verbal abuse. We will report any incidents of violence and aggression as set out in our Health and Safety Policy. If you behave in this way, it may affect the support service that we offer you. You should keep appointments with your Support Worker as this will make sure that we are meeting your support needs. If you are unable to keep an appointment, please contact us as soon as possible and let us know so that an alternative suitable time can be arranged.

## Sharing your information

We will only share your personal information with other agencies if you have given us your permission, or if there is significant risk to you or those around you, or if there is a child or vulnerable adult protection concern. As with other agencies we have responsibilities to protect children and vulnerable adults to make sure they are both safe, well and treated equally.

We will always try to discuss these concerns with you before we contact another agency.

## Agency partnerships

North Ayrshire Council work in partnership with many other support services. While discussing and reviewing your support plan we can refer you for further support if required. Some of our partners are listed below.

- Home Security
- Citrus Energy
- Local Housing Offices
- Anti-Social Behaviour Team
- Money Matters
- Welfare Reform Advice Team
- NAC/NHS Addictions
- Social Services
- NHS

## Housing Support Regulations

It is important that you are aware of your rights and responsibilities. The Council must advise and assist you, and members of your household, to help you manage and sustain your tenancy or temporary accommodation by:

- Advising or assisting you with personal budgeting, debt counselling or in dealing with welfare benefit claims.
- Assisting you to engage with individuals, professionals, or other bodies with an interest in your welfare.
- Advising or assisting you in understanding and managing your tenancy rights and responsibilities, including assisting you in disputes about those rights and responsibilities.
- Advising or assisting you in settling into a new tenancy.

## Referral process

If you feel you require some support in your tenancy, you can access our service in the following ways.

- Self-refer call 01294 317370 or email [tenancysupport@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:tenancysupport@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)
- Contact your local housing office and ask for assistance to make a referral.
- If you already have support from another agency, e.g., Social Work, ask them to refer you.

All tenants in temporary accommodation and secure tenancies are welcome to participate.

## Comments and suggestions

We welcome any comments or suggestions that can help us improve the service we provide. During your time in temporary accommodation or when receiving housing support in your own tenancy, we may contact you to complete a satisfaction survey about your views on the service provided by the Housing Support Team.

If you wish to provide any comments or suggestions, please contact us at [tenancysupport@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:tenancysupport@north-ayrshire.gov.uk) or telephone 01294 317370.

## Care Inspectorate

The Care Inspectorate is the independent scrutiny and improvement body for Housing Support providers. They regulate and inspect care services on a regular basis to make sure that people receive the highest quality of care and that their rights are promoted and protected.

Services registered with the Care Inspectorate are required to work within National Care Standards. The Housing Support Team has been registered with the Care Inspectorate since 2004.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/health-social-care-standards-support-life-easy-read-version/>

If you have a complaint about the standard of care or support being provided, you can contact the Care Inspectorate at:

**Care Inspectorate, Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee, DD1 4NY**

**Telephone: 0345 600 9527**

You can also check their website on [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)

All Housing Support staff are trained in Health and Social Care and have a requirement to be registered with the SSSC. The SSSC protect the public by registering Housing Support service

and workers, setting standards for their practice, conduct, training, and education and by supporting their professional development.

Where people fall below the standards of practice and conduct, they can investigate and take action. All staff must work to the SSSC standards.

<https://www.sssc.uk.com/the-scottish-social-services-council/sssc-codes-of-practice/>

## Complaints procedure

If you are not happy with any part of the service and would like to make a complaint, you can discuss this with your Support Worker or the Housing Support Manager at any time. You can complain in person at any of our public facing offices or by the following:

- Call the Housing Support Team on 01294 317370
- submit a complaint on the North Ayrshire Council website
- Call the Contact Centre on 01294 310000
- Call the Complaint Line on 01294 310002

## Contact numbers

- Housing Support Team 01294 317370 or email [tenancysupport@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:tenancysupport@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)
- Housing Advice Team 01294 314600 or email [housing-info-advice@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:housing-info-advice@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)
- Anti-Social Behaviour & Community Safety Team 01294 314640  
or email [ASBIT@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:ASBIT@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)

Area Housing Offices:

- Beith/Dalry Area Housing Office 01294 836710  
or email [dalryhousing@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:dalryhousing@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)
- Irvine Area Housing Office 01294 310150 or email [Irvinehousing@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:Irvinehousing@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)
- Kilbirnie Area Housing Office 01505 685177  
or email [kilbirniehousing@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:kilbirniehousing@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)
- Kilwinning Area Housing Office 01294 552261  
or email [kilwinninghousing@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:kilwinninghousing@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)
- Largs Area Housing Office 01475 687590 or email [largshousing@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:largshousing@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)
- Three Towns Housing Office 01294 310005 or email [3townshousing@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:3townshousing@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)