TENANT HANDBOOK

HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

HARBOUR HOMES

“HELLO THERE NEIGHBOUR”

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WELCOME

Thank you for choosing Harbour Homes. We hope you will enjoy living in your new home!

Please keep this handbook somewhere safe as it contains useful information about our services and will help you make the most of your tenancy.

We can arrange for this handbook to be produced into another format if required. Please contact us on 0131 554 0403 to discuss this.

WHERE TO FIND US

How to contact us	
Address	108 Constitution Street, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6AZ
Customer advice	0131 554 0403
Repairs	0131 554 0403
Emergency repairs (out of office)	0800 783 7937 (Bield 24)
Email	hello@harbour.scot
Website	www.harbour.scot

	Main office	Main phone	Lunch closure
Monday	9am - 4pm	9am - 5pm	12.30pm - 1.30pm
Tuesday	10am - 4pm	10am - 5pm	
Wednesday	9am - 4pm	9am - 5pm	
Thursday	9am - 4pm	9am - 5pm	
Friday	9am - 3pm	9am - 3.45pm	
Saturday	Closed	Closed	Closed
Sunday	Closed	Closed	Closed

MOVING INTO YOUR HOME

To help your move go smoothly, use this checklist when you arrive to make sure you don't forget anything important.

Checklist	
Tenancy Agreement Keep this in a safe place as you will need this if you apply to get help with your rent or if you ever need proof of address. **Paying your rent** Make sure you have an arrangement in place to pay your rent. You can choose from a range of payment methods. If you'd like assistance, please get in touch. **Keys** Check that you have two sets of keys or fobs. We don't keep spare keys, so be careful not to lose these! There is a charge for replacing lost keys and fobs. **Home Contents Insurance** Replacing items lost, damaged or stolen can be very expensive. We are not responsible for reimbursing you for loss or damage to your belongings. **Forwarding mail** You can contact your local post office branch for information on redirecting your mail to your new address. T**V license** Let the television licence company know your change of address or apply for a new one if you need it.	**Lettable Standards** Your new home will meet our Lettable Standards ensuring it is clean, safe and secure when you move in. Contact us if you have any questions about the standard of your home. **Heating and water** If you need help with your heating system, or locating the water stop valve, let us know. **Windows** Make sure you can open and close the windows for your own safety and security. **Smoke detector** Test these regularly for your safety. **Internet and phone** Contact your chosen providers to let them know you are the new occupier and arrange set up. **Gas and electricity meters** As a new tenant it is your responsibility to change the energy supply to your name at the start of your tenancy. • Note down your meter readings as soon as you move in • Arrange the switch to your chosen supplier if you'd to make a change • If your home has pre-payment meters, your supplier will give new a new card/key for your account • Ask your supplier about social tariffs if you're on a low income.

LETTABLE STANDARDS

Lettable Standards	
General cleanliness The property will be cleaned and cleared of all furniture, white goods, flooring, window dressings and any belongings left behind by a previous tenant. If flooring or curtains are in excellent condition, we may agree to leave these in the property. **Bathroom / kitchen** Toilet seats and shower curtains will be replaced in bathrooms and any damaged items will be fixed. **Garden areas** We will tidy private garden areas. **Electrics** An electrician will do a full check and a copy of the certificate will be provided to you. **Gas** A Gas Safe registered engineer will carry out a check and you will receive a copy of the certificate. We will install carbon monoxide detectors where there are gas appliances. **Smoke alarms** We will check all smoke alarms to ensure they are working correctly. **Energy efficiency** We will give you an Energy Performance Certificate for the property.	**Water supply** We will inform you of the stopcock location when you move in. **Drainage** We will inspect all fitments, check water pressure and flow. **Dampness** We will carry out any necessary repairs before reletting. **Windows** We will check that all windows work properly and will fit child-proof safety locks if necessary. **Doors** We will fit toilet doors with a lock and will add door stops where required. We fit front doors with either a three-point locking mechanism or one mortise lock or one Yale lock (or both). You will be given two sets of keys. **Decoration** We may offer decoration vouchers to new tenants if walls are stained excessively or decorated in non-neutral colours. Floor surfaces will be ready for carpeting and damaged skirting boards will be replaced or repaired.

PAYING RENT

Your rent is due on the first day of the month, for that month. We review our rents every year and any increase will apply from April.

Ways to pay	
Direct Debit (preferred method)	Speak to us about setting up a Direct Debit. This can take up to five days to set up.
allpay card at a PayPoint	Use your allpay card over the counter at outlets with the PayPoint sign or at the post office.
allpay card online or by phone	Pay with your allpay card online via the all-pay website or by using their app. You can also call 0330 041 6497 with your payment card ready.
Visit our office	Pay by debit card in person at our office on Constitution Street in Leith.

You may also pay a service charge on top of your rent. This covers services such as cleaning shared areas and stairs.

Help with paying your rent

Dependent on your income or benefits, you may get help with your rent. You are responsible for making sure that your rent is paid to us on time. If you make a claim, you must provide all the necessary information quickly so that your claim can be processed as early as possible.

What do I do if I can't pay my rent?

Contact your Housing Officer immediately to discuss your options and what support or advice is available. The sooner we can help you find a solution the better.

Delaying or ignoring the problem

If you choose not to accept our or another organisation's help and you fail to pay your rent or stick to an agreed solution, we may be required to take legal action against you. You can be evicted and will liable for any court costs. This may affect you when looking for a new home in the future.

TENANT ADVICE

We're here to help if you have questions or need help with welfare benefits, money and debt, or could use some tenancy sustainment advice.

Welfare benefits

Contact our Welfare Rights Officers for help with:

- Claiming benefits
- New Scottish benefits
- Representation at appeals and tribunals
- Benefit entitlement checks

Money and debt

Speak to us for free and confidential advice on:

- Debt management
- Finding cheaper or alternative financial products
- Budgeting
- Negotiations with creditors on your behalf

Tenancy sustainment

Our Tenancy Sustainment Officers can help with the following:

- Help with tenancy start up and sustainment advice
- Help to register for council tax and apply for reductions
- Accessing befriending and community groups
- Referral to specialist support services eg mental health or addiction support
- Help to access grant funds for furnishings and white goods

RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Your tenancy

Your tenancy is a legal contract between you and Harbour Homes. It sets out your rights and responsibilities and our obligations as a landlord. It cannot be changed without both parties agreeing. The summary of your tenancy is set out overleaf. Please take the time to read this carefully as it contains important information.

Making changes to your tenancy

If you wish to make any changes to your household, for example adding someone to your tenancy, please contact your Housing Officer to discuss.

SUMMARY

The following is a summary of your Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement. The Tenancy Agreement which is signed by you is the legal document that lays out all your legal rights and obligations. This summary does not alter that agreement in any way.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document is a summary of the Tenancy Agreement between us, Harbour Homes Scotland Limited and you. It is not intended to change or add to the Tenancy Agreement. This summary tells you the most important things about your tenancy with us. If you want to know more, refer to your Tenancy Agreement which is the legally binding agreement between us. Alternatively, you can ask us or an independent advisor, such as a solicitor or advice worker, for help.

1.2 You must take all reasonable steps to make sure you and anyone living with you or visiting you keeps to the terms and conditions of the Tenancy Agreement. If you break any term of the Tenancy Agreement, we may take legal action against you. This may include claiming money from you as well as eviction proceedings. If you are a joint tenant, you are both responsible equally for paying rent and keeping to the Tenancy Agreement.

2. USE OF THE PROPERTY AND COMMON AREAS

2.1 You must occupy the house and use it as your main home.

2.2 You must take reasonable care to avoid damage to your property and your neighbours' houses.

2.3 **Pets Policy**

You may only keep pets in your flat with the prior written permission of Harbour Homes and under the following conditions:

- You must apply for permission in writing and you cannot keep a pet until written permission is granted to you.
- We only allow a maximum of two domestic pets. Keeping your pet must not be prohibited by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, or by any other law.
- You are responsible for the behaviour of any pets owned by you or anyone living with you.
- You must take all reasonable steps to supervise and keep such pets under control.
- You must take all reasonable steps to prevent such pets causing nuisance, annoyance or danger to your neighbours. This includes fouling or noise or smell from your domestic pet.
- Dogs must be kept on a lead at all times in the communal areas such as the stairs or the lifts.
- Harbour Homes is entitled to require the removal of the pet if it is causing nuisance or damage.
- You are responsible for cleaning up any fouling, caused by your pet.

2.4 **Recycling**
Everyone should contribute to keeping the common areas and garden tidy. You should recycle your rubbish appropriately.

2.5 **Common garden use**
Garden areas shared by all residents are available for equal enjoyment. We do not permit the use of BBQs, trampolines, fixed play equipment, personal use sheds or private growing patches.

2.6 **Communal area parking**
Parking on Harbour Homes land is via a first come, first served basis with no charge applied. We are not authorised to enforce parking rules, however, we may employ private parking companies to manage these areas with costs incurred service charged back to residents.

2.7 **E-scooters** are classified under Department of Transport guidance as 'powered transporters' and fall within the same legal definition and laws as motor vehicles. We therefore does not allow the use of e-scooters in any of its common areas.

2.8 **Mobility scooters / electric vehicles**
There are Health and Safety risks with storage and power supply for mobility scooters and electric vehicles – please contact us, in advance, to request a risk assessment and permission review if

SUMMARY

you are considering purchasing either.

3. RESPECT FOR OTHERS

3.1 You, and those living with you, and your visitors, must not harass or behave in an antisocial manner towards others. This includes your neighbours and our employees.

3.2 If you have a complaint about other people's antisocial behaviour, tell us. We will investigate and take action if appropriate.

3.3 We will not discriminate unfairly against you in any way. We have a complaints procedure if you think we have acted wrongly or unfairly.

4. SUB-LETTING, ASSIGNATION AND EXCHANGE OF YOUR TENANCY

If you want to sub-let or assign or exchange your house or take in lodgers or add or change the joint tenant, then you must first get our written permission.

5. REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE, IMPROVEMENTS AND ALTERATIONS

5.1 Before the tenancy begins, we will inspect the house and carry out necessary repairs to put the house in a lettable condition. After you move in, we will carry out repairs to the house, to make the house tenantable within a reasonable period. Please report any repairs that need to be done to us.

5.2 In particular, we will keep in repair the structure and exterior of the house and installations for water, gas, electricity, sanitation, heating and hot water.

5.3 We will take responsibility for doing work to deal with condensation dampness if the dampness is being caused to some extent by some feature of the house, such as ventilation, heating or insulation.

We are not responsible for repairing damage caused by you, anyone living with you or your visitors. If we do repair such damage, we will charge you. This does not apply to wear and tear.

5.4 If we need access to your house to carry out repairs or to inspect it, we will give you at least 24 hours' notice. You must allow us access. We may have to decant you to another house to do repairs. If we do, we will compensate you for any extra expenses you have as a result.

5.5 We will also compensate you if we cause damage to your property when doing the repairs. We will not compensate you for damage to your personal property where we have not been at fault. Therefore, you are strongly advised to get insurance.

5.6 Before carrying out improvements or alterations to your house, you must get our written permission. We may pay you compensation at the end of your tenancy for these. If you don't get our permission, we can charge you for restoring the house.

5.7 You, and the others living in the house, must take reasonable care of it. You are responsible for minor maintenance.

6. ENDING THE TENANCY

6.1 The Tenancy Agreement can be terminated in the following ways:

- by you giving us 28 days' written notice;
- by written agreement between you and us;
- by us getting a court order for eviction after having first given you warning;
- by you abandoning the property;
- by your death if there is no-one to inherit the house;
- by conversion to a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy

6.2 In the event of a tenant's death, the tenancy may be inherited by:

- your partner; OR
- the other joint tenant; OR
- your co-habitee; OR
- another member of your family who was living with you; OR
- a live-in carer.

The house can be inherited only twice.

7.	INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION	8.	COMPLAINTS
7.1	We have policies dealing with many areas of housing management such as, rent arrears, how we set our rents, eviction, allocations and transfers. Ask us for a copy.	8.1	If you think we have broken your Tenancy Agreement, you can complain using our complaints procedure. You can also complain to the Ombudsman and take legal advice.
7.2	We will consult with you before making or changing housing management policies which are likely to significantly affect you.	8.2	You may be entitled to withhold your rent if you think we have broken the Tenancy Agreement. You must use our complaints procedure first. You are strongly recommended to take legal advice first.
7.3	We will provide you with a variety of information about our policies and the information we hold on you if you ask.		

If you'd like more detail about your rights and responsibilities, you should read the Tenancy Agreement. Alternatively, you can ask us or get help from an independent source such as a Law Centre, Solicitor, Housing Advice Centre, Citizens Advice Bureau, Tenants Association, the Commission for Racial Equality or the Equal Opportunities Commission. We can provide these addresses and telephone numbers on request.

LIVING IN YOUR HOME

We appreciate most of our tenants are considerate and respectful towards their neighbours but sometimes differences in lifestyles can cause problems.

Here are a few helpful tips for making life in your home more enjoyable for you and your neighbours:

Please do	Please don't
Look after the property • Take your turn to clean the stairs and common areas where applicable • Put recycling in the bins provided **Respect your neighbours** • Keep noise levels acceptable in your home and in common areas • Be tolerant of some noise from neighbouring flats • Keep an eye on the behaviour of your children in any common areas • Keep pets under control at all times **Be vigilant** • Close doors and gates behind you	**Be disruptive** • Slam doors in the building • Play music or TVs loudly, especially late at night • Use noisy household appliances such as hoovers or washing machines late at night • Allow pets to cause a nuisance or foul in common areas **Clutter shared spaces** • Leave rubbish in stairwells or common areas • Store prams, bikes or other items in stairwells or common areas **Be careless** • Let anyone into the block if you don't know who they are

We ask that all tenants to keep to the terms of the 'Good Neighbour Contract' set out on the following page which you signed along with your tenancy agreement.

GOOD NEIGHBOUR CONTRACT

HARBOUR
HOMES

GOOD NEIGHBOUR CONTRACT
between
Harbour Homes Scotland Ltd
108 Constitution Street, Edinburgh EH6 6AZ
and
(Tenant name(s))

1. Harbour Homes staff and tenants expect all new (and existing) tenants to observe the terms of this Good Neighbour Contract.
2. I/we will look after the property at the above address including the common areas, stairways, lifts etc.
3. I/we will not leave rubbish or personal household items (prams, bikes etc.) in common stairways, passages or any common areas
4. I/we will keep noise from any source at an acceptable level in my/our home and common areas
5. I/we will avoid causing nuisance to neighbours by banging stair or flat doors
6. I/we will take my/our turn to clean the stair and common areas, where applicable
7. I/we will not allow my pet/s or visitors' pet/s to cause a nuisance or foul in the stairways or common areas
8. I/we will be responsible for the behaviour of my children (if applicable)and my visitors' children in the property and in common areas
9. I/we will respect my/our neighbours at all times

Signed (tenant) _____
(Joint tenant) _____

Date _____

Recycling

The City of Edinburgh Council's Waste Services department is responsible for rubbish collection. Please make use of recycling bins provided. If you notice rubbish has not been uplifted or bins are overflowing, contact the Council by calling 0131 529 3030.

A bulky item is any item that will not fit inside a household waste bin eg mattresses, carpets, bikes etc. Exceptions include car tyres, car batteries, cast iron baths and other items as outlined by the City of Edinburgh Council.

How to dispose of bulky items

- Refuse collectors will not remove bulky items when emptying standard bins Do not use the bin area as a dumping ground for bulky items
- Contact the Edinburgh Council uplift service to arrange for removal of domestic items. There will be a small fee for this service
- Keep any items for uplift inside your home until the collection day
- On the collection day, attach a note to your items informing others that a special uplift has been arranged

You can dispose of bulky items yourself for free by taking them to Seafield Community Recycling Centre.

Alternatively, if items are in good condition, you can call the national re-use phone line on 0800 0665 820. Items will be collected by a local organisation and re-used.

ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

What is antisocial behaviour (ASB)?

“Antisocial behaviour is actions or conduct, causing or likely to cause alarm, distress, nuisance, annoyance or harassment.”

Under the terms of your Tenancy Agreement: “You, those living with you, and your visitors, must not harass or do anything antisocial to other people in the neighbourhood. This includes your neighbours and our employees”.

Any form of antisocial behaviour in and around your home caused by you or members of your household is a breach of your Tenancy Agreement. In serious cases we will take legal action which could include evicting you from your home.

The most common examples of antisocial behaviour include:

- Excessive noise
- Threatening behaviour/assaults
- Verbal or physical abuse
- Harassment
- Drug dealing
- Damage to property/vandalism

There are some neighbour issues which we can’t resolve and there are some situations and behaviours which aren’t classed as antisocial behaviour.

Harassment and discrimination

If you believe that the antisocial behaviour you are experiencing is putting you or your family in immediate danger or you feel you are a victim of harassment, for example, racial or sexual harassment or hate crime, then you should contact us and report any incidents to the police immediately.

- Police (emergency) 999
- Police (non-emergency) 101
- Crimestoppers (anonymously) 0800 555 111

NEIGHBOUR DISPUTES

What you can do	What we can do
Speak to your neighbour Talk to your neighbour at an early stage as they may not be aware they are causing a problem.	**Encourage conversation** We encourage tenants to try to resolve any issues between themselves in the first instance and would not normally get involved at this point.
When speaking to your neighbour: • Stay calm and polite and explain why their behaviour is causing a problem • Do not threaten or behave in a threatening manner • Be prepared to compromise • Walk away if your neighbour is being unreasonable	
Keep a record of any incidents If the problems continue, tell us and record incidents that are causing a nuisance. We require this information if further action is necessary.	**Provide you with an incident diary** To help tackle antisocial behaviour, we need independent witnesses along with a record of all incidents. Without this, it is difficult for us to take any action.
Remember to record: • Times, dates and details of incidents including who was affected or involved • Photographs of damage eg damage to cars, rubbish in the garden • Supporting evidence from other affected neighbours. They may not wish to keep their own diary but might be willing to support you.	
Independent mediation If you are having a problem with your neighbour that you cannot resolve then mediation is an option. Sometimes, it is helpful for an independent third party to act as a mediator between the parties involved.	
Taking further action Depending on how serious the antisocial behaviour is, there are a number of follow-up actions we can take: • Interviews with all those involved • Verbal and written warnings • Antisocial Behaviour Order (ASBO) If the antisocial behaviour continues this will be applied for through the courts • Notice of Proceedings for Repossession of Property on the grounds of antisocial behaviour • Court action for the recovery of the property and eviction We can only take legal action where we have enough evidence of persistent and serious ASB.	

We will act in a confidential manner when dealing with all incidents of antisocial behaviour. However if the matter goes to court, your identity will be made known by the court.

REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

Report a repair	
Phone (during office hours)	0131 554 0403
Emergencies (out of hours)	0800 783 7937 (Bield 24)
Email	hello@harbour.scot
Website	www.harbour.scot
By visiting or writing to our office	108 Constitution Street, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6AZ

Emergencies

Emergency repairs should be reported over the phone. In certain out-of-hours emergencies, the following numbers may be more suitable:

Useful numbers	
Gas leaks	0800 111 999 (Transco)
Burst pipes	0845 600 8855 (Scottish Water)
Electrical supply	0845 2727 999 (Scottish Power)
Leith Police Station	0131 554 9350

If using these, you should let us know what has happened as soon as possible so that we can arrange any follow up work which is needed.

Examples of emergencies

- No heating (winter time only)
- Gas leak
- Water leak
- Blocked toilet (where there is only one toilet)
- Broken ground floor window
- Roof leak

Home Contents Insurance

We would strongly recommend that you arrange contents insurance for your home. We have insured the structure of your home, but this does not cover your personal belongings against risk of burglary, fire, water or accidental damages, or lost/stolen keys for your property.

When will a repair be fixed?

When you report a repair it will fall under one of the following four categories:

Repair priorities	
1. Routine Attended within 15 working days	Broken or faulty parts which need maintenance eg dripping tap, loose door handle.
2. Urgent Attended within five working days	Repairs which cause discomfort or inconvenience but no serious danger to health and safety eg blocked sink, minor leak.
3. Immediate Attended to within 24 hours	Repairs causing very serious discomfort or inconvenience eg door lock failure, broken windows. If it is impossible to complete the repair in this time, a temporary repair to remove the risk will be completed.
4. Emergency Attended to within two hours	If there is a danger to health or personal safety, we aim to respond to repairs within four hours of you reporting them to us eg major leaks, no electricity, loose masonry. If it is impossible to complete the repair immediately, a temporary repair to remove the risk will be completed by the target time.

Providing access

It is important that you give access to contractors. We will always do our best to arrange a time suitable to you. With gas servicing we have a legal requirement to make sure the work is carried out. If we cannot gain access then we may have no choice other than to force entry into your home. If you are unable to keep an appointment, please let us know so that we can make other arrangements.

After completing a repair we will send you a letter to confirm the details of any work that has been carried out along with a feedback slip to fill in and send back to us via freepost. It is important that you tell us if the repair has been carried out properly or if you're unhappy with the service received.

—> For your own safety please remember to check the identity of anyone you allow into your home. Our staff and contractors will be able to provide you with identification cards.

TYPES OF REPAIR

Joinery repairs	
Repair	**Responsibility and priority**
Kitchen unit cupboard door has come away from hinges	Harbour Homes Routine repair
Loose door handle	Harbour Homes Routine repair
Sliding doors come off rail	Harbour Homes Routine repair
Flat entrance door, tenant unable to secure	Harbour Homes Emergency repair
Plaster has fallen from ceiling	Harbour Homes Emergency repair

Plumbing repairs	
Repair	**Responsibility and priority**
Blocked kitchen sink	Harbour Homes (urgent repair) You should always try and unblock sink first before reporting as you may be charged.
Minor leak within property not coming from tenant's appliance	Harbour Homes (urgent repair) If leak is coming from your own appliance, there will be a charge for the repair.
Major leak	Harbour Homes (emergency repair) If leak is found to be coming from tenant's appliance, tenant will be charged
Unable to turn on or off tap	Harbour Homes (routine repair)
Overflow running at back of building	Harbour Homes (urgent repair)

Gas/electric repairs	
Repair	**Responsibility and priority**
Gas leak	Gas Emergency Services
Gas meter issue	Gas supplier
Beeping smoke detector	Harbour Homes (Immediate repair)
Light bulb has blown	Tenant to replace bulb (if LED fitting Harbour Homes will repair)
Partial power loss in property	Tenant to check trip switches
Full loss of power in building	Scottish Power
Electric shower not working	Harbour Homes (Urgent repair)

How to check trip switches

- If there has been a trip, unplug all appliances in the affected area
- Push the trip switch back on and plug your appliances in one at a time
- If you plug in an appliance and the electrics trip again, you will know there is an issue with that appliance
- If you're still having problems tell us and we will send an electrician. If the fault is coming from one of your appliances we have to charge you for the call-out

Chargeable repairs

In certain circumstances we may have to recharge you for repairs. This would happen if work is carried out by us but it is deemed your responsibility under the terms of your tenancy.

If a leak is found to be coming from one of your own appliances, we will charge for the repair. Always try to unblock sinks or toilets yourself before reporting it to us as you may also be charge for this type of repair.

Changes to locks are your responsibility. In extreme circumstances, we may change locks, but this would be rechargeable.

Right to Repair: Your rights

If a contractor does not start the repair within the maximum time limit, you can ask another Port of Leith Housing Association approved contractor to carry out the repair. We will then pay you £15 compensation and a further £3 per working day until the repair is complete up to a maximum of £100 providing there are no exceptional circumstances.

If our contractor has started a qualifying repair, but doesn't complete it within the maximum time and you are not advised, you will be entitled to £15 compensation. The Right to Repair Scheme is subject to you providing access for the contractor and compensation may be offset against any rent arrears owed. For further information a leaflet is available from the Scottish Government website at www.gov.scot/publications/right-repair.

DAMP & MOULD

Our aim is to help ensure that we proactively manage the potential risks and promptly diagnose and prevent issues which may arise from damp, mould and condensation within your home. We are committed to meeting the needs of our customers and providing you with a home that is safe, warm and dry.

Damp and mould: The facts

It's something we're all likely to face at some point, and the colder months can make it more challenging to tackle damp and mould in our homes. There are steps we can take to prevent it.

What causes damp and mould?

Too much moisture in your home is one of the main causes of damp and mould indoors. Moisture sources include condensation from cooking, drying clothes, or using the bath or shower. These activities are unavoidable, but we can take steps to remove excess moisture from inside our home.

Other causes of damp may be more serious, including building defects or rising damp from the ground (more common in older buildings). Floods or leaking pipes can also lead to damp. In new-build flats, it's sometimes possible for damp to appear while the building is still drying out. Regardless of the source, we recognise that this can cause health problems and so take appropriate action to address issues when these are reported or identified.

Where is it found?

Mould and damp can appear anywhere in your home. Common places are around windowsills, in bathrooms and kitchens, or in cupboards where damp coats and shoes may be stored. Mould can grow on all surfaces, not just walls and ceilings.

Is mould dangerous?

Mould and can trigger allergic reactions and irritation if you touch or inhale its spores. Common reactions include sneezing, eye irritation or a rash.

How to prevent damp and mould

The first step in preventing damp and mould is to identify where excess moisture is coming from. Once you know the source, you can take steps to reduce moisture in the air or request a repair if the source is coming from a leak.

Ways to remove excess moisture from the air:

- Leave space between furniture and outer walls
- Use extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms and wait until all visible moisture has cleared before turning these off
- Close doors when cooking or showering
- Cover pans when cooking
- If drying clothes indoors, open windows from time to time to release excess moisture. Keep the room door closed to keep the rest of your home warm when doing this
- Keep trickle vents open on windows as much as possible, particularly if you notice lots of condensation on your windows in the morning

Tackling mould

Small occurrences of mould, such as around your bath, sink or on window frames, can be removed safely at home. Wear protective gloves and consider using a face mask and goggles when using mould and mildew remover. If you have lots of mould growth in your home, this is more serious, and you should let us know immediately.

If you encounter any problems related to dampness, mould, or condensation, please report them to our maintenance team as soon as possible. We will, where appropriate arrange to inspect your property and undertake any necessary repairs and offer advice to minimise the risks. Quick action can prevent minor issues from escalating into more significant problems.

If you think you have a serious damp or mould issue in your home, please call **0131 554 0403** or email **hello@harbour.scot** so that we may arrange to inspect your home and take the appropriate measures to rectify the situation.

PLANNED WORKS

Major repairs and planned works

Major repairs take place when components of your home have reached the end of their lifetime. They are not always ‘major’ as the name suggests, and they could be small replacements that are needed to improve the condition of your home over time.

Please note that if you are in debt to Harbour Homes, including rent arrears, we may consider not carrying out these internal refurbishment works until the debt has been cleared. Contact us on 0131 554 0401 to discuss putting a payment arrangement in place.

Internal refurbishments	Typically every 15 years, we will carry out whole house upgrades including new kitchens, bathrooms and heating systems. We will also upgrade extractor fans and fuse boards, and carry out full electrical testing.
Window replacement	Typically every 30 years to install double-glazed windows. This helps to reduce heat loss and make our properties more energy efficient. Where we fully own the block, we will also renew the communal stair windows, back doors and main entrance door.
Mechanical and electrical replacement	This includes upgrades to lifts, fire alarms, door entries, TV and satellite systems, CCTV systems, communal lighting, water pumps and more.
Structural repairs	Our traditional pre-1919 tenement stairs are now of a considerable age and many require roofing and stonework repairs. As properties built since the 1980s begin to age they also need planned structural repairs eg repairs to render or brick finishes, replacement of roof coverings and rainwater goods. Our projects are prioritised based on condition and any responsive repairs reported. These works are carried out only after significant consultation and full agreement with the other owners within the blocks to ensure they meet their legal obligations and pay their share of any costs.
Estate improvements	Upgrading communal areas to sites eg removal of overgrown shrubs and trees, improvements to lighting, relaying paving and paths.

Cyclical maintenance (work carried out on a regular basis to prolong the life of the building and avoid costly repairs) can include:

- Gas safety checks including servicing gas appliances we have fitted
- Electrical testing
- Inspection of lifts, fire alarms, water storage / pumping systems

We also carry out a five-yearly cycle of external works including:

- Stair repairs and painting
- Window and door painting
- Roof guttering, fencing and slabbing repairs

We will write to tell you in advance when any work is scheduled to take place in your home and communal areas. For a year after the works have been completed, we ask the contractor to return to carry out repairs to any defects which may arise. After this year, we will revisit as many properties as possible to ensure we are happy with the refurbishment before handing the properties back to the Maintenance Team for normal responsive repair management.

Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH)

The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH) sets the minimum energy efficiency of all social housing in Scotland. It was developed to help improve energy efficiency and to help address fuel poverty levels in the social housing sector.

Improvements to items such as heating and lighting systems, windows and roofs contribute to improving the energy efficiency of your home. Improvements to the structure, such as internal wall insulation or cavity insulation, are made to certain properties where possible to further improve the energy performance of older buildings.

KEEPING YOUR HOME SAFE

Gas servicing

Homes are inspected annually for gas safety. We will contact you to arrange access to carry out the inspection. Please do not ignore this request, as it is a legal requirement to ensure the safety of everyone in the building.

If access is not provided, our only option will be to use a locksmith to gain access to your home. This is called a 'forced entry' and you will be required to pay for any costs associated with this.

Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR)

An Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) is a certificate which details the safety and overall condition of all electrical installations and fittings in a property.

It identifies defects, deterioration or damage which may indicate potential danger in things like light fittings, plug sockets, fuse boxes and wiring. This ensures they are safe and that there are no risks of electric shocks or fire hazards.

Why is an EICR required?

An EICR is a legal requirement. All rental properties in Scotland must have an EICR carried out every five years (three in some cases). It is for your safety as well as that of others in the building.

How long does it take?

This really depends on the condition of the electrics in your home, but usually between 2-4 hours. The electrician will do their best to finish in that time, but sometimes follow-up work will be required.

Do I need to do anything beforehand or on the day?

In many properties the fuseboard is located within a cupboard, probably the one where you keep amongst other things your vacuum cleaner.

The electrician does need clear access to this, so we do ask that this cupboard be clear before they arrive. They also need to test a selection of sockets and switches so, if you can, please ensure that any furniture which may be in front of these are pulled out to allow access.

What happens if I don't provide access?

Whilst we understand the inconvenience sometimes caused, we also hope you understand the importance of having safety checks carried out in your home. It is for your safety and is a legal requirement for all housing associations in Scotland. If access is not given, we are required to arrange a 'forced entry' and any associated costs, such as the services of a locksmith/joiner, will be charged back to you. We'd prefer not to gain access this way, but the safety of our tenants is our priority and we must also meet our legal requirements.

If you'd like to chat about EICRs or have any questions, please call 0131 554 0403 or email assetcompliance@harbour.scot.

HOME IMPROVEMENTS

Before carrying out any changes to the property you must contact us for permission. When we receive a written request for permission, we will reply with a letter to confirm whether or not the works can go ahead. However, if you owe us money eg rent arrears or recharges, we may not grant permission.

Satellite dish installations

If we haven't given written permission for you to install a satellite dish we will ask that you remove the dish from the building or we may remove it and charge you for doing so. Your property might be in a conservation area so you may also need planning permission from the Council before going ahead.

If you are in a recently built property we will not give permission to install an individual dish as there will already be a Virgin Media and / or Sky connection available. If you are having connection issues please contact our Customer Advice Team who will pass this on to our engineers to investigate.

Laminate flooring

We will only give permission for laminate flooring if you are on the ground floor within a stair. As with any flooring within your property, it is your responsibility to uplift the laminate if we need to get beneath the flooring to carry out a repair.

Property alterations or kitchen / bathroom replacement

If you would like to make any changes to the property please write to us or complete the permission form with any quotations and drawings you have for the works. Depending on the type of works you may also need permission from the planning department at the Council.

We will make an appointment to visit you and discuss what works you would like to have done. Any installation should be in line with our design guide and carried out by a qualified/competent tradesperson. Please note any installation you put into the property is your responsibility to maintain and repair.

Medical adaptations

If you have difficulty managing everyday activities such as climbing stairs, getting in and out of the bath or turning on taps, you may be eligible to apply for a medical adaptation to your home. The adaptations we can provide include:

- wet-floor shower
- wheelchair accessible ramps
- stair-lifts
- handrails and grabrails
- lever taps
- adapted smoke alarms for hearing impaired people

To be eligible for an adaptation you must be a Harbour Homes customer and be referred to us by your Occupational Therapist (OT). It's important to arrange a medical assessment to be given a priority level based on how urgent your adaptation required is.

Funding for medical adaptations comes from the City of Edinburgh Council. We apply for funding every year, however sometimes the funding awarded isn't enough to carry out every request for medical adaptations made throughout the year.

If funding isn't available at the time you apply, you will be placed on our waiting list for the following financial year. As soon as funding is available we will review every application on our waiting list.

For more information, please contact us on 0131 554 0403 or email us at hello@harbour.scot.

PESTS & VERMIN

Your responsibility	Our responsibility
Treating and paying for infestations by common household pests in your property including mice, ants, hide beetles and fleas.	Treatment or rats, bedbugs and cockroaches in individual properties and communal areas.
Advising us of infestations so that we can assess the cause and determine responsibility for the solution.	Treatment of any infestations or pest problems in communal areas or where the fabric of the building may be affected.
	Blocking holes in properties where mice are gaining access.

Do you have a mouse problem?

- Scratching noises in walls or ceilings
- Shredded materials
- Damage to wood, plastic or cables from gnawing
- Distinctive, ammonia-like smell
- Droppings that are 3-7mm, spindle shaped, found along skirting boards or in cupboards

How to treat a mouse infestation

- Poison placed behind kickboards, pipe-boxes and other locations
- inaccessible to pets or children
- Traps or humane traps beside walls or in cupboards
- Sound repellent device
- Store food in strong, airtight containers and regularly clean under
- cupboards and appliances
- These items can be purchased from a DIY store or supermarket

Further advice on treating household pests can be obtained from the City of Edinburgh Council website.

TENANT PARTICIPATION

We would really like you to get involved with us and to exercise your right to have a say on the issues that affect your home and our service. We keep you informed and invite you to share your views with us through:

Our newsletter
Each new issue is delivered to your home. If you would like to receive it in an alternative format eg Braille or large print, please let us know.

Consultation register
Please join our consultation register for invitations to meetings and events, and to participate in surveys and other consultation activities.

Surveys and questionnaires
Completing our satisfaction surveys is a quick and easy way to give us feedback which helps to improve our services. We will share the results with you and let you know how we will address any issues.

Meetings
We invite you to meet with us to share your views when we are reviewing policies or considering changes to our services which could significantly affect our customers.

Resident Tenants' Organisations (RTOs)
We support tenants and residents to set up, develop and run registered tenants' organisations (RTOs) and tenants/residents' groups.

Membership of Harbour Homes
You can become a member of the Association by purchasing a £1 share. Membership is open to anyone aged 16 years or over. Members are invited to the Annual General Meeting where they can vote or stand for election onto the Board of Management. You can apply to become a member by filling in the membership application form available from our office or on our website.

If you are interested in getting involved, please contact our Tenant Participation Coordinator by emailing hello@harbour.scot.

CUSTOMER CHARTER

Below is a summary of our Customer Charter which sets out the level of service and standards that you can expect from us and helps us measure the success of the services we deliver.

We will:

- Use plain English in our communication so that it is clear, easy to understand and provided in an accessible format
- Ensure that we keep you updated where we can't resolve a problem immediately, giving you regular feedback
- Listen to what you have to say, treat you as an individual and with respect
- Do what we say we will do and let you know if we have to change our commitment
- Treat everyone equally and will not unfairly discriminate for any reason
- Provide a variety of opportunities for you to engage with us and give us feedback on how we are performing and on the services we provide

As our customers, we will ask you to:

- Comply with the terms of your tenancy agreement including paying your rent on time
- Be polite to our staff and treat them with respect
- Let us know when you are not happy with our service, so that we can try to put things right and improve our service
- Provide us with the information we ask for and respond to requests to contact us so that we can do our best to help you
- Give access to our tradesmen and staff when you have said you are available

COMPLAINTS

We try to get things right first time but if an issue arises and you are unhappy with the service you have received, you may wish to make a complaint. You can make a complaint in person at our office, by phone, in writing, by email or by using the complaint form available on our website.

Our complaints process has two stages:	
Stage 1	We will try to resolve your complaint at this stage within five working days
Stage 2	This stage deals with complaints that have not been resolved at Stage 1 or if they are complex and require detailed investigation. We aim to respond within 20 working days for Stage 2 complaints.

Complain to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman	
If, after you have followed Harbour Homes' complaints procedure and you are still unhappy with the result, you may pass the complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. This is a free and impartial service available to anyone who receives a service from a housing association or has applied to one for housing.	Scottish Public Services Ombudsman 4 Melville Street Edinburgh EH3 7NS **FREEPOST:** EH641, Edinburgh, EH3 0BR 0800 377 7330 www.spso.org.uk

Complain to the Care Inspectorate	
Tenants who receive a support service living in Sheltered Housing can also make a complaint about the housing support service they are unhappy with to the Care Inspectorate at any stage by contacting them at:	Care Inspectorate Compass House 11 Riverside Drive Dundee DD1 4NY 0845 600 9527 enquiries@careinspectorate.com

You may also complain to the Scottish Housing Regulator who will consider issues raised about 'significant performance failures'. Call 0141 242 5642 or visit their website.

MOVING HOME

Ending your Tenancy

If you are thinking about moving house, please give us 28 days' notice in writing. You can write to us by letter or email, or ask for our 'Ending your Tenancy' form.

What happens next?

When you tell us you want to end your tenancy, we will write to you and make an appointment to visit you before you leave. We will inspect your property and note anything you may need to address before leaving.

To help you with your move, here is a checklist of the important things to think about before you leave:

Checklist	
Pay any rent or other monies that you owe Let the Council know you are moving so they can update your Council Tax record and any housing benefit claim Let us know the name of your electricity supplier Reinstate any alterations you have made unless it has been agreed in writing that these may be left Put back original lights, sockets, switches (if applicable) Remove all your furniture and personal belongings including those in communal areas	Lift and remove floor coverings throughout Fill all holes from shelves or picture hooks and sand down Leave decoration in good order / neutral colours Leave the garden area tidy Repair any damage to a condition acceptable to us Make arrangements to redirect your mail Take final meter readings Return all keys and fobs to the office on or before the day your tenancy ends

Moving home

If you wish to move to another housing association or council property, complete an EdIndex form to allow you to bid for advertised properties. We advertise 10% of our properties with priority for our tenants interested in moving to another Harbour Homes property. You can also bid for any suitable property advertised for a 'mover'. Speak to your housing officer for more information or visit The City of Edinburgh Council's website.

Mutual exchange

A mutual exchange with another council or housing association tenant can sometimes be a quicker way of finding a new home. When you find a suitable swap, ask us for an application form for a mutual exchange for both you and your exchange partner to complete. Mutual exchanges can only happen with our permission.

We will normally only agree to the exchange if:

- You have a clear rent account and owe us no other monies
- The exchange will not result in overcrowding or under occupying our property
- We get a satisfactory reference from the landlord of the person you are exchanging with

How to find a possible swap:

House Exchange
Register on the House Exchange website on the website www.houseexchange.org.uk to search for properties.

The Edinburgh House Exchange
This service brings together tenants who are looking to swap their homes within the Edinburgh area only. The council and 20 Edinburgh based housing associations are all part of the Edinburgh House Exchange. To be able to swap you must have a Scottish Secure Tenancy. Register for free at www.edinburgh.houseexchange.org.uk. If you can't get online, you can register at the library or contact the EdIndex team for a house exchange application form.

Abandoned Property

Sometimes tenants will leave their properties or live somewhere else without telling us. If we think you have abandoned your property we can take the property back without taking you to court. We will begin by delivering a 'Notice of Abandonment' to your home which informs you that we think you have moved out without telling us. This gives you 28 days notice to contact us. If after 28 days we haven't heard from you, we will serve you with a second notice which marks the end of your tenancy.

The next stage usually involves forcing entry into the property and changing the locks. We will have the right to dispose of anything left behind that is of no or little value. We may store items of value but you will be charged for any storage costs as well as rent up to the date that the tenancy ended.

We will take action to trace all tenants who have left with rent arrears outstanding and pursue them for money owed to us due to the abandonment.

Going to be away from your home?

If you are going to be away from your home for longer than 28 days, it is very important that you contact us before you go or we may think you have abandoned your property and take action to repossess your home.

Eviction

There are some occasions where we have no choice other than to seek a court order granting an eviction. We will only evict a tenant as a last resort. Evictions can take place when a sheriff is satisfied with the evidence that the action is reasonable and grants the decree for eviction in cases of rent arrears and antisocial behaviour.

If you are experiencing problems with paying your rent or have issues relating to your tenancy, don't ignore the problem, contact your housing officer and seek professional advice.

Death of a tenant

In this situation, the tenancy will end on the date of death and no rent will be charged from this date. If the tenant was receiving help with rent, this will also stop from this date. We will try our best to contact the tenant's next of kin for the clearing of the property and handing back of keys. If there is an estate, we may recover any arrears or costs outstanding.

On the death of a tenant another member of the household may be allowed to succeed to the tenancy. See the summary of your tenancy agreement for details or speak with your housing officer.

This handbook was last updated May 2025.

HARBOUR
HOMES

Harbour Homes Scotland Ltd
Registered Scottish Charity: SC027945
Financial Conduct Authority Registration: FRN772734
Letting Agent Registration: LARN1811003