



Worthing Homes

Your home – the residents' handbook



Welcome to your new home!

We have produced this handbook as a guide to help you live in your home and answer any questions you may have. While we have tried to include as much information as possible, if there is anything further you would like to know then please take a look on our website www.worthing-homes.org.uk; if you still can't find what you are looking for then please get in touch with us.

All of the forms you might need are downloadable from our website, however, if you don't have access to a computer at home then you can pop into Davison House and use the customer hub, a suite of computers in our reception area for your use.

This handbook is intended for guidance only and does not form part of your tenancy agreement, which is the legal document covering the terms and conditions of your tenancy.

Tenancies

There are a number of different tenancies types that we offer but the following are the main types of tenancies available to our residents. In all cases the type of tenancy we offer you will be clearly stated on the agreement, with the main terms of the agreement discussed with you. The tenancy agreement is the document you sign at the start of your tenancy, or if changes are made to the conditions of the agreement during your tenancy.

It is a legal contract between Worthing Homes and you the tenant(s), which also sets out your rights and responsibilities as well as our obligations.

New residents

Most new residents will sign a starter tenancy for the first 12 months. It is very important that you make sure you comply with all the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement, as failure to do so may mean that we end your tenancy with us.

If at the end of the 12 month starter tenancy, or any extension to it, we are satisfied the accommodation and your needs are well suited, and you have kept to the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement we will offer you an assured tenancy or a fixed term assured shorthold tenancy.

However, if we feel your needs are not well suited to the property e.g. the size of your household has changed, or you have not kept to the conditions of your tenancy agreement we may ask you to leave the property.

Existing residents

Most of our residents hold assured tenancies. This is the most secure type of tenancy we are able to offer and provides you with many rights. As an assured resident you can stay in your home as long as you wish if you keep to the terms of the agreement. If your needs change and your home becomes larger than you need we may ask you to consider moving to smaller accommodation. You may qualify for an incentive payment to help you downsize.

ONE TEAM - OUR FUTURE

Helping people create sustainable futures

Enabling people to live in quality homes and thriving communities

It's much more than bricks and mortar it's about people, communities and opportunities

OUR VALUES UNDERPINNED BY Trust & Pride

- Customer focus**
People are at the heart of everything we do, and we remain focused on ensuring all customers are given excellent service.
- Innovation**
As an organisation we are forward thinking and continually looking for ways to improve, and new services to provide.
- Respect**
Everyone will be treated in a fair and considerate manner, with individual's views acknowledged.
- Clear**
We will ensure that we are open and honest in all that we do; and that all of our communications are understandable.
- Accountability**
We are dedicated to delivering on the promises that we make.

"We touch so many people's lives in so many different ways"

BOARD OUR TEAM CUSTOMERS PEOPLE PARTNERS

Worthing Homes
people communities opportunities

Joint tenancy

You can be a joint tenant of all of the above tenancies. A joint tenant is where two people sign the tenancy agreement and are both equally responsible for all of the tenancy conditions, even if one person moves out. However, either joint tenant can serve the notice to quit to bring the tenancy to an end for both residents.

Pearson's and St Elizabeth's Cottage Homes Charity

Worthing Homes has been appointed as trustee of the Pearson's and St Elizabeth's Cottage Homes Charity and manages the properties. If you are a resident of a Pearson's and St Elizabeth's Cottage Homes you will have a different agreement called a letter of appointment but many of the services we offer you will be the same. The type of agreement you hold is called a licence (not a tenancy). Please see your letter of appointment or speak to a housing officer for further details.

Alterations to the tenancy agreement

The only changes we can make to your tenancy agreement without your consent relate to the rent and service charge levels.

For all other alterations, unless they are made as a result of new government legislation, we will consult you.



Right to succession – inheriting a tenancy

On the death of a tenant there may be the right of succession to the tenancy. This can depend on the type of tenancy agreement, size of property and whether there has previously been a succession to the tenancy.

Assignment – passing on your tenancy

There are some instances where you may have the right to pass on your tenancy to somebody else. This is known as assignment. You have the right to assign your tenancy:

- as a result of a Court Order (made under section 24 of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973) that the property should be passed from one married partner to another (usually in the event of a relationship breakdown).
- by way of mutual exchange with another resident, where you swap your home and tenancy agreement with another resident.
- to a person who would qualify to succeed to your tenancy in the event of your death

Main terms of your tenancy

We have several different types of tenancy, so we advise you to read your tenancy agreement carefully and keep it safe. It is your responsibility to ensure you keep to the terms of the agreement which you have agreed to do by signing it.

Under the tenancy you have the right:

- to live in your home for the length of the tenancy as long as you keep to the agreement
- of occupation not to be unlawfully interfered with by Worthing Homes

Your responsibilities under the tenancy are:

- to pay your rent and service charges when due
- to use your property as your main home only
- to keep the interior of your home and garden in good condition
- to allow access for any inspections, repairs or work required to the property or adjoining property upon reasonable notice
- not to cause a nuisance or annoyance to your neighbours or let members of your household or visitors do so

Under the tenancy we have the right to:

- access your home, for example to check its condition or carry out repairs, servicing or other work to the property (or neighbouring property) or to investigate a breach of tenancy agreement

Unless it is an emergency, we will inform you at least 24 hours before access is required. Immediate access will be required in an emergency and in such cases, we reserve the right to access your home in your absence.

Our responsibilities under the tenancy are:

- to insure the property (building not contents)
- to maintain any common areas of your building and carry out certain repairs to your home
- to maintain the pipework and wiring that provides services to your home such as gas, electricity and water



Running a Business

You must get our permission to run a business from your home as most domestic properties are not suitable for this purpose. When making a decision about your planned business, we will look at things like:

- disturbance to your neighbours
- traffic problems
- possible damage to your home

Losing your tenancy – eviction

Your tenancy may be ended if you do not keep to the terms of your tenancy as set out in the agreement. For example, if:

- you are not paying your rent
- you or members of your household or visitors are causing anti-social behaviour, committing crime or are harassing other people
- you are using your home for illegal or immoral purposes, including the use of any illegal drugs. This includes cannabis
- you are not living at the property
- you are running a business from your home without our consent
- you are damaging your home

We will always try hard to reach an agreed solution before taking action to end your tenancy but if the problem continues we may go to court to resolve the issue.

Our aim is to provide homes not take them away and we will only take steps to repossess your home where we believe there are reasonable and proportionate grounds to do so.

Ending your tenancy

You must give us four weeks' notice in writing if you want to leave your home and end your tenancy.

A joint tenancy can be ended by just one of the residents giving notice, so if you know your joint resident is going to give us notice please contact us as soon as possible.

If you move out without giving notice then you have not legally ended your tenancy, and as a result you are still responsible for paying the rent and any legal costs incurred to end your tenancy.

You can find the form to terminate your tenancy on our website www.worthing-homes.org.uk. Please note that the property must be left in a clean and clear condition when it is handed back to us.

Your rent and service charges

We rely on your rent to help us to provide a full range of high quality services to you, these include day to day repairs and improvements, building new homes, improving neighbourhoods and open spaces and community development work.

You are responsible for paying your rent and service charge, it is one of the conditions in your tenancy agreement.

How do we decide how much rent you pay?

How much rent you pay is worked out using a method set in accordance with regulatory guidance.

We set and maintain our rents below market rent levels. Most of our rents are charged at what is known as 'target rents'. Target rents are set using a Government rent convergence formula which takes into account the size and value of the property and average income of the people living in your area.

Some tenancies such as our intermediate and affordable rent tenancies are not subject to target rents and are set at approximately 80% of market rent levels.

Service charges

You may have to pay service charges on your home along with your rent. Service charges are calculated separately from the rent and depend on how much it costs us to provide the services to areas you share with other people such as:

- maintaining and cleaning shared areas
- lighting and heating shared areas
- looking after shared gardens
- door entry and lift maintenance

These charges currently qualify for Housing Benefit.

Heating and water charges

Heating and water charges are calculated separately from the rent and depend on how much it costs to provide you with heating and water at your own home. Please note these charges do not qualify for housing benefit. Heating charges are shown on your rent account statement as gas and electric charges, water charges are shown separately.

Paying your rent

You are responsible for paying your rent and related charges, which are due in advance. To keep a check on how much rent and service charge you have paid, make sure you read your rent statement. We will send you a statement twice a year but you can check your balance at any time by texting BAL to 07425 428 428 and it will be text back to you. Please note for this to work you must ensure we have the correct mobile phone number for you on our systems.

There are a number of ways in which you can pay your rent or any other related charges to us.

Direct debit is our preferred method of payment, and it is the quickest and simplest way for you to pay your rent. It is also secure, convenient and gives you peace of mind.

To pay by Direct Debit all you need to do is download and complete a Direct Debit Form and return it to us – please make a note of your address on the form.





Direct debits are taken on either a monthly or a weekly basis, and to make life easier you can choose which date or day of the week is the most convenient for you. It's your choice.

Once the direct debit is set up you don't need to do anything else except let us know if you are changing bank details. Any changes to your rent account will automatically be updated on your direct debit, which is protected by the Direct Debit Guarantee.

For more information on Direct Debit, please visit www.directdebit.co.uk

Standing order is similar to Direct Debit except you will need to set this up with your bank and ensure you remember to inform them of any changes to the standing order (such as an increase to the amount payable). You can download the form from our website.

An Allpay payment card enables you to pay your rent to us in the following ways:

- The Allpay App is a mobile application (App) available to download for free from all app stores enabling you to make payments quickly and easily. Once it is set up, you can make a payment no matter where you are at the touch of a button.
- Textpay is a secure system which gives you a record of what you have paid and when you paid it. All you need is a UK registered mobile phone, a debit card and an Allpay card to pay your rent by text. This is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- If you wish to pay your rent by text you will need to complete a short application at allpayments.co.uk/textpay. Full instructions for this service are provided on the Allpay website.

- Online through the Allpay website, which is available 24 hours a day 365 days a year. You will need to have your Allpay card number and debit card ready. Please note we do not accept credit card payments.
- You can also call into any Post Office or outlet displaying the Paypoint symbol to pay your rent or any other related charges with your Allpay card.

If you would like to request an Allpay card, or need to replace a lost card, you can do this by speaking to our customer services team on 01903 703 100.

You can send a cheque (made payable to Worthing Homes Limited) to our office. To ensure the process runs smoothly please be sure to put your name and the address of the property you are paying for on the back of the cheque.

If none of these payment options are suitable for you, then you can make payment by debit card in person at our offices.

Please note we do not accept credit card payments and cannot take cash in our offices.

Housing Benefit – this will normally be paid into your rent account every 4 weeks. If you believe the amount of housing benefit shown on your statement is incorrect please contact us. Your local council regularly reviews housing benefit payments and has the right to reclaim any overpayments from us. Worthing Homes will in turn reclaim these monies from you.





Universal credit

When you claim universal credit your housing benefit payments to Worthing Homes will stop. Instead your housing costs will be included in your monthly universal credit payment which is paid directly to you. You will then be responsible for paying your full rent to Worthing Homes. Please see our website for further details www.worthing-homes.org.uk

What should I do if I am having difficulties paying my rent or other charges?

If you know you are going to have difficulty paying you must contact us immediately. We will always treat you sympathetically, support you and give you advice in confidence. You can speak to our customer service team or your income recovery officer between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

We can often come to an agreement to clear the outstanding amount by working out a fair payment plan at a rate you can afford. We will also help you find the best way to pay your rent for example by direct debit, standing order or payment card.

What will happen if you do not pay?

You must pay your rent on time as a condition of your tenancy. If you do not pay on time we will:

- contact you and ask you to pay the money you owe
- try to find out the reason why you have missed a payment and offer advice
- assist you with any claims for benefits
- refer you to specialist financial debt management agencies
- make an arrangement for you to pay, taking account of your circumstances and how much you can afford

If we have contacted you and you do not pay your rent, agree a payment plan or keep to the payment plan, we will:

- make contact to provide support and understand why the agreement hasn't been met
- consider taking legal action against you. This means going to court to get the money you owe us (we will also ask the court to make a money judgement against you to pay our legal costs as well as the money you owe)

- evict you, but only as a last resort if you do not make the payments that have been agreed in court

The following things may be affected if you owe us money:

- applying for a transfer or mutual exchange
- applying for credit/getting a loan
- getting a mortgage
- If you are evicted due to non-payment of rent you may be deemed to be intentionally homeless and therefore unable to access social/affordable housing

If you have any special needs, we will do everything we practically can to help you, this may include:

- referring you to a floating support provider
- assistance from another agency
- providing written information in larger text or audio
- using language line or translation services
- the appointment of a litigation friend



Benefits

For information on housing benefit please contact your local council, for other benefits please contact the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) www.dwp.gov.uk.

www.Turn2us.org.uk offers useful advice on a range of benefits, as well as an online benefits calculator.

Alternatively, information can be found on our website www.worthing-homes.org.uk, or you can make an appointment to see one of our financial inclusion co-ordinators

Changes to your rent and service charge

We will give you at least one month's notice in writing when we are going to change your rent or service charge. The notice will also give you details of any gas and electric charges you need to pay.

Please remember we are here to help you. We can help you to solve your problems, and if we can't then we can put you in touch with people who can!

Anti-social behaviour

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 defines anti-social behaviour as: 'acting in an anti-social manner that is to say, in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as himself'.

Together we can help to create safer, more pleasant communities for everyone, so that we can all enjoy living in our homes and be proud of the neighbourhoods we live in.

It is not just the job of the police - we all need to play a part in making our communities safer. Cutting crime and its causes and the fear of crime should involve everyone in the community.

We expect all residents and leaseholders to treat other people with respect and to keep to the conditions of the tenancy or lease. You are responsible for your own behaviour and the behaviour of people and pets that live with you or visit you.

We expect you to behave in a way that does not cause nuisance or annoyance to neighbours, which does not cause harassment, alarm or distress in the community or interfere in any way with our housing management functions.

Anti-social behaviour comes in lots of forms. It can range from everyday incidents such as noise nuisance to serious criminal acts. The types of behaviour we consider anti-social include (but aren't limited to):

- Intimidation and harassment
- Dealing or taking drugs
- Domestic abuse
- Violence or threats of violence
- Harassment because of your race, nationality, religion, sex, sexual identity or disability
- Rowdy behaviour and drunkenness
- Pet nuisance/uncontrolled animals
- Graffiti
- Damage to property
- Dumping rubbish (fly tipping)
- Abandoned vehicles
- Noise nuisance: e.g. continual loud music

What isn't anti-social behaviour?

- One off parties/BBQ where there's no evidence problems will occur
- Normal behaviour occurring at unusual times because of different working patterns provided the resident is attempting to keep disturbance to a minimum
- Clash of lifestyles including cultural differences
- Children playing or babies crying
- Noise transference due to poor sound insulation
- DIY in reasonable hours
- Minor car repairs
- Young people gathering socially
- Civic disputes between neighbours (e.g. parking or boundary issues)
- Disputes over social media

In most cases incidences of the above will not be investigated by us.

What should I do if I experience anti-social behaviour?

You may be asked to resolve the situation by talking to the person causing the problem, which will often be a neighbour. The person may not be aware that their behaviour is affecting you. A friendly, calm and reasonable approach is best, being aggressive or losing your temper is not going to help.

If after speaking to the person the issue is not resolved, or if you feel unable to speak to them, then you can contact the West Sussex Mediation Service on 0300 200 0025 or visit their website for their assistance. Mediation is the first course of action your housing officer would recommend.



If you have been through mediation and the issue still isn't resolved then you can report incidents of anti-social behavior to us:

- by visiting our website and completing the ASB reporting form
- by email
- by phone
- in writing

Your housing officer will confirm details of any mediation with you and then discuss next steps. Sometimes we may need to take legal action but this is usually as a last resort as we try to stop the anti-social behaviour without the need for legal proceedings.

For those residents that are suffering noise nuisance we now have an app you can download, this will allow you to record the noise as it is happening and send it straight through to us. The Noise App is available from all app stores and is free.

No matter where you live you will need to select "Adur and Worthing Councils" as your service provider (as we offer this in association with them); you will then be able to submit evidence to us through the app. If you wish to find out more please see www.thenoiseapp.com

What powers do other agencies have?

Environmental Services at your local council are able to prosecute against:

- noise nuisance
- dog fouling
- dogs barking continuously
- pollution risks, such as overgrown gardens
- vermin infestation

For more information, please contact your local council.

If you have concerns that a young person is being neglected or abused please contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub on 01403 220 099 or email them at mash@westsussex.gcsx.gov.uk. If you believe that a child is in immediate danger then please call the police on 999.

Please contact Adults carepoint on 01243 642 121 or go to www.westsussex.gov.uk if you feel that an adult or elderly person is being abused or neglected

Where the issues relate to criminal activity such as drug dealing, prostitution, assault or criminal damage including arson, then you must contact the police on either 999 or 101 depending on the severity of the situation.

What if the problems are more serious or the person is still causing problems?

If the case is serious, and/or criminal, or if other types of intervention have failed to stop or prevent the anti-social behaviour continuing, we may take legal action if we have the necessary evidence. There are a number of different legal remedies that we can use. For this reason it is important that where a crime has been committed you report this to the Police.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is where someone living with you threatens, commits acts of harassment, assaults or is violent towards you and/or other members of your household. This can come in many forms such as mental, physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Domestic violence is a crime.

If a person's behaviour at home makes you, another member of your household or your children feel afraid that is domestic violence. If you are a victim of domestic violence, don't suffer in silence please contact us straight away.

We will support you and we have procedures to deal with reports promptly and effectively. Domestic abuse is a serious issue, your report will be dealt with sympathetically. We will ensure that you are fully supported with the help of specialist agencies

Multi-agency working

We work in partnership with other agencies to investigate and tackle anti-social behaviour, and with your permission will share information with other organisations to ensure you receive the support you need.



Pets

You need our permission to keep a pet or pets, livestock or any non-domestic pet(s) at your home. Cats or dogs are normally not permitted in flats unless you have a separate enclosed garden.

If we give you our permission to keep a pet or pets, you must make sure your pet(s) is kept under control and does not cause a nuisance or disturbance to other people living in the neighbourhood.

If you have a dog, please ensure that:

- when our staff and contractors visit it is secured away safely
- you do not allow it to roam around on its own or go out without a lead
- you always clear up after your dog.

Please note that as per the Dangerous Dogs Act it is against the law to let a dog be dangerously out of control anywhere including in the owners home. Your dog is considered dangerously out of control if it:

- Injures someone
- Makes someone worried that it might injure them

A court could also decide that your dog is dangerously out of control if:

- it injures someone's animal
- the owner of the animal thinks they could be injured if they tried to stop your dog attacking their animal

Please note the law applies to all dogs. For more information on the law and the penalties an owner faces if their dog is found to be dangerously out of control go to www.gov.uk/control-dog-public



Maintenance of your home

We all need a little TLC at times and this includes our homes. Below you can find sections on the different types and responsibilities.

Repairs - Your responsibilities

As per the tenancy agreement you are responsible for:

- Supply and replacement of light bulbs, electric plugs and fluorescent tubes
- Repair and maintenance of non-mains operated smoke alarms
- Keeping the inside of your home clean and in good condition
- Internal decoration
- Provision of and repairs to boundary fencing between properties
- Repair and replacement of door furniture i.e. additional keys, locks, bolts, handles and latches including the replacement of lost keys and any subsequent lock change resulting from this
- Sweeping of chimneys and flues to open fires in use at least once every 12 months
- Repairing things that have been damaged through neglect or misuse
- Minor repairs and replacements
- Your own appliances, fittings and any DIY
- Keeping your garden tidy and free of rubbish
- Repairs and maintenance of all garden features including paths and patios
- Repair/replacement of toilet seats
- Pest control

We can arrange for a contractor to be sent out to deal with these issues but you will be responsible for the payment of the works .

For some minor repairs we have a set of hints and tips on our website www.worthing-homes.org.uk, however the following websites will be able to offer you more guidance:

B&Q how to guides - www.diy.com/video

Wickes how to guides - www.wickes.co.uk/how-to-guides

Homebase how to guides - www.homebase.co.uk/en/static/how-to-guides

WikiHow - www.wikihow.com

There are also plenty of tutorial films on Youtube – www.youtube.com

Our responsibilities

As per the tenancy agreement we are responsible for:

- Drains, gutters, sewers and external pipes (except where the drains and sewers are the responsibility of the water authority)
- The roof
- Outside walls, outside doors windowsills, window catches, sash cords and window frames including necessary external painting and decorating
- Internal walls, floors (not flooring – vinyl, carpet etc) and ceilings, doors and door frames, door hinges and skirting boards
- Chimneys, chimney stacks and flues but not including sweeping
- Balconies, pathways, steps or other means of access
- External plaster work
- Basins, sinks, baths, toilets, flushing systems and water pipes
- Electric wiring, including sockets and switches, gas pipes and water pipes
- Water heaters, fireplaces, fitted fires and central heating installations

Please note repairs we undertake that are caused from misuse or negligence will be recharged

Reporting your repair

If your repair is related to any of the gas appliances, including heating or hot water in your home then please call our contractors, BSW direct for free on 0800 158 5690. This number should be used day and night, 365 days a year.

BSW will also carry out the *annual gas safety checks on gas appliances and the gas pipework in your home. They will also service the appliances owned by Worthing Homes, and any smoke alarms at this time.

NB: *All of these checks are to protect your health and safety, therefore if you receive a letter from BSW with an appointment for your annual gas safety check it is important that you let them in on the appointed date.

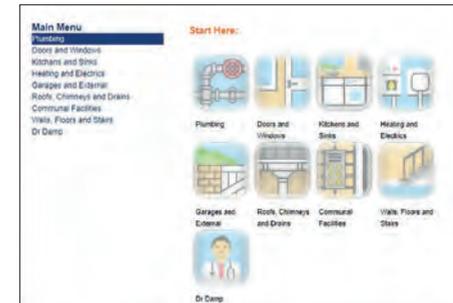
If you need to rearrange the appointment this can be done by contacting them using the details above.

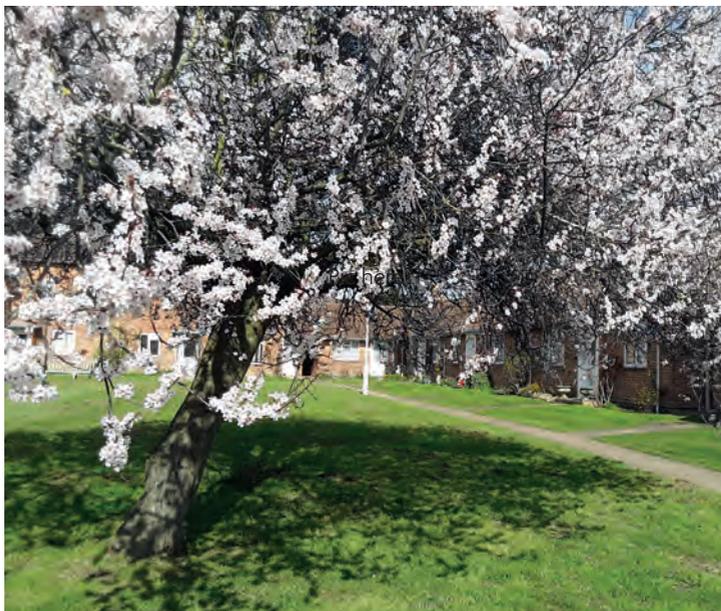
For the repair of anything else, including in communal areas, please use our online repairs reporting form on our website at www.worthing-homes.org.uk. If you don't have access to a computer, tablet or smartphone then please contact us on 01903 703 100

Alterations

Should you wish to alter or add to your home in any way you must obtain permission from Worthing Homes first.

You will need to send in details of the planned change including photos and a drawing of the area to be changed.





Gardens

If you have your own garden, we expect you to keep it clean and tidy and free of rubbish as a condition of your tenancy; you are also responsible for the provision of and repairs to boundary fencing between properties. It is the responsibility of residents to maintain all of the plants within their garden, including the trees. It is important that any work carried out is by qualified tree surgeons with safety equipment and insurance.

If you are concerned about the safety of a tree please contact us on 01903 703 100.

You must ask our permission if you want to cut down or remove trees or hedges.

Your community

At Worthing Homes we take pride in maintaining high standards for your homes and communal areas. But we can only do this by working with you!

When residents look after their homes and communal areas we can achieve a clean, well maintained and enjoyable living environment.

Communal areas include shared landings, hallways, paths, gardens, garage areas and open spaces.

There are different things which can make an area less attractive, such as fly tipping, rubbish, dog fouling, graffiti, untidy gardens and unreported repairs. We ask that all residents and visitors to our communal areas, including open spaces and play areas, take all of their rubbish with them and leave the environment clean and tidy.

If large items of rubbish are left in communal areas this makes things unsightly and can cause safety problems – such as blocking exits. It is the responsibility of all residents to make sure they take large items of rubbish to the Household Waste Recycling Sites (HWRS). These can be found at:

Brighton Road, Shoreham, BN43 6RJ	T: 01273 454 081
Willowbrook Road, Worthing, BN14 8NA	T: 01903 210 288
Mill Lane, Littlehampton, BN17 7PH	T: 01903 713 269

Alternatively for bulky items you can contact your local council's bulky waste collection service:

www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/bulky-waste	01903 851 729
www.arun.gov.uk/bulky-large-collections	01903 734 520

To report any problems in public parks, or on pavements and highways please contact West Sussex County Council on 01243 777 100 or Tynetalk 01243 642 077

The council provide a FREE graffiti cleaning service. To report graffiti please contact your local council, details below:

Adur and Worthing Council	01903 221 090
www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/streets-and-travel/report-a-problem	

Arun District Council	0808 141 2800
www1.arun.gov.uk/officeforms/GraffitiReporting	

Please report any acts of vandalism in our communal areas on our website www.worthing-homes.org.uk; if you don't have access to the internet then please call our customer service team on 01903 703 100.

You can report issues in your area (that aren't in our communal spaces) to the safer community teams. For more information on the work they do please go to:

www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/safer-communities/safer-communities-partnership

www.arun.gov.uk/community-safety

www.safeinthecity.info

Fancy a change

How do I swap my home with another resident?

Worthing Homes residents who have an assured or fixed term tenancy have the right to exchange their homes with another Worthing Homes resident, or the resident of a local Council or another registered provider of social housing.

A mutual exchange can be a very quick and easy method of moving. There are various ways of finding someone to exchange with, however the quickest and easiest way is through the Homeswapper website www.homeswapper.co.uk. It is free for Worthing Homes residents to register and use.

Mutual exchange means swapping your tenancy agreement as well as your home, so it is important to check the tenancy agreement of the person you are exchanging with, for example you may lose some rights such as the right to buy, if the person you are exchanging with does not have this right in their tenancy.

Take care to view the property in detail as if you decide to swap you will have to accept the property in the condition it is in, repairs for fair wear and tear will be carried out by the landlord but you may become responsible for any improvements, alterations or damage by the last occupier.

When I have found someone to swap with, what should I do?

Once you have found someone you want to exchange with (this could even be a 3 way exchange or more) contact us for an application form or download one from our website www.worthing-homes.org.uk. Complete the form giving us the name and address of the person you want to swap with and the name and address of their landlord. We will carry out checks to make sure you qualify, these include:

- Your rent account
- The condition of your property
- The suitability of the household moving into the property.

We will pass this information on to the other landlord and ask them to provide the same information. Both parties must have approval from their landlords before the exchange can go ahead. Worthing Homes will give you an answer on whether your exchange can proceed within 6 weeks of receiving all applications forms.

Worthing Homes do not usually withhold permission without good reason. Your application may be refused if:

- you, or the person you want to swap with owes rent
- you, or the person you want to swap with is under Notice of Seeking Possession, Possession Order, Injunction or other legal proceedings are pending following the service of a notice
- the home of you, or the person you want to swap with has been specifically designed and adapted to help someone with disabilities or has other special features and the person/household swapping does not need this assistance
- the home of you, or the person you want to swap with is too large or too small for their needs
- you own a cat or a dog and wish to move to a home where cat or dogs are not allowed
- you still have a starter tenancy and do not have a right to swap your home

**Please note this list does not detail all of the reasons why a mutual exchange may be refused*

Before the swap can go ahead, a date for the exchange will be agreed by all parties and an appointment made for you to complete the mutual exchange by signing a deed of assignment.

You must not move home until the paperwork is complete.

Transfers

If your home is no longer suitable for your needs because it is too big, small or due to medical reasons, you can apply to transfer to another property by joining your local council's housing register. You are then able to bid for properties that become available through the council's choice based lettings schemes.

Worthing Homes operates an incentive scheme for residents who would like to move to smaller accommodation and free-up family sized homes. If you have one or more bedrooms spare and would like to move to a smaller property, which you may find more manageable and cost effective, you could qualify for financial assistance.

An inclusive fixed payment will be made upon completion of a transfer to alternative suitable accommodation and following inspection of the vacated property.

This payment is to help you with the reasonable costs of moving home, which includes:

- removals
- disconnection and connection charges
- replacement carpets, curtains and redecorations

Please note that any debts owed to Worthing Homes for rent or damage will be deducted from this payment



We hope you found this information useful but if you have any other questions or wish to know more about a subject then please take a look at our website www.worthing-homes.org.uk, if you can't find the information you require there then please call our customer service team on 01903 703 100





Worthing Homes

Please contact customer services if you would like this report in Braille, large print, audio version or in another language.

Telephone 01903 703 100 or
email CSOTeam@worthing-homes.org.uk

Calls may be recorded for training and monitoring purposes and to improve our services.

This document is also available to download from our website, www.worthing-homes.org.uk

Worthing Homes

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