

# Information for new tenants

A guide to your rights and your responsibilities in your new tenancies





When you are starting a new tenancy it is important to think about things that will affect your tenancy. You need to know what you can expect from your landlord and you need to understand your rights and responsibilities as a tenant.

## The Tenancy Agreement

Your landlord has issued you with a tenancy agreement. It is important that you read and understand this.

The tenancy agreement includes clauses telling you what you may or may not do in the property. It is important that you follow the rules, known as conditions, in your tenancy agreement. In extreme circumstances your landlord can evict you for breaching your tenancy conditions. If you are unsure whether you have permission to do something, such as keep a pet, have a party, decorate, remove or replace fittings and so on, it is best to check with your landlord or agent first.

## Paying your rent

As a tenant, you are responsible for ensuring that the rent is paid in full and on time. If you are claiming Housing Benefit, it is important that you provide all the information that is needed to process your claim. If you fail to do this, your claim may be cancelled and you will have to pay the rent yourself. If you don't claim Housing Benefit you should agree a date on which to pay your rent each month, and ensure that the payment reaches your landlord by this date. If you are unable to pay your rent for whatever reason, you should tell your landlord as soon as possible and discuss this.

## Guarantor

Some tenants may have a guarantor. If you do, it is important that you understand their responsibilities. If you do not pay the rent, or if you damage the property in any way, your guarantor will be held responsible for this amount, and can be taken to court by the landlord.

## Paying your bills

Tenants are responsible for the payment of all utility bills and other expenses within the property, unless otherwise agreed with the landlord before the tenancy starts.

If this is your first tenancy, you may not know what you need to do. Below is a guide to common bills and expenses that you will need to think about. If you leave your tenancy owing money to any suppliers, they will pursue you for this debt and this may affect your credit rating and have an affect on your ability to rent another property in the future.

# Council Tax

As a tenant, you are also responsible for the payment of your Council Tax, unless you have agreed otherwise with your landlord. You may be able to claim benefit for all or part of your Council Tax. Again, it is important that you provide any relevant information if you are claiming Council Tax Benefit. You will normally be sent a Council Tax demand soon after moving in. If you need to talk to someone about your Council Tax, you can contact one of the agencies listed at the back of this leaflet.

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# Gas

You will need to contact your gas supplier to tell them that you have moved in. You should take a meter reading on the day you move in, and give this to your supplier. If you don't know who your supplier is, you can call Transco on 0870 608 1524 to find out. Once you know who your supplier is, you can contact them to arrange ways to pay that are convenient for you. Your landlord should give you a copy of your gas safety certificate each year. This ensures that any gas appliances in your property are working and are safe to use. It is a legal requirement that your landlord provides a gas safety certificate. If your landlord does not provide a certificate, you should ask them for a copy.

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# Electricity

Your landlord should be able to tell you who your electricity supplier is. You need to contact them to tell them you have moved in and arrange ways to pay that are convenient for you. If you don't know who your supplier is, you can contact the Central Networks Enquiry Line on 0800 096 3080. You will need to provide the MPAN number, which you will find on your meter.

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Electricity and gas can both be pre-paid by meter, so you can monitor your usage more closely. If you wish to change from a quarterly meter to a pre-pay meter, you should get the permission of your landlord. You can also have a water meter fitted, which may be of benefit if you use a small amount of water. Again, you will need your landlord's permission to do this.

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## Water

You need to let your water supplier know that you have moved into the property. Water rates are charged annually, although there are many ways to pay. United Utilities is the supplier for Knowsley. They can be contacted on 0845 746 2233.

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## TV Licence

You need a television licence if you use any television receiving equipment, such as a television set or a digital box. There are many ways to pay for your licence, contact the TV licensing office on 0844 800 6790 or visit [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk)

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## Contents Insurance

Your landlord may insure your property. Usually however, this insurance will only cover the structure of the building and not the contents. You may wish to consider insuring the contents of your property with an insurance company. This will cover you in the event of theft or, damage. You will be able to find many providers in the Yellow Pages or similar directory.

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## Tenancy Bond Scheme

If you have been accepted for a tenancy Bond, we will issue you and your landlord with a copy of the Bond agreement covering your deposit. You should read this carefully. When you leave the property, this Bond will be used to cover any rent arrears or damage you are liable for. We will then get this money back from you. Leaving unpaid rent or damaging a property may affect your ability to get accommodation in the future.

## Landlord Accreditation Scheme

Knowsley Council has launched a new landlord accreditation scheme. If your landlord is a member of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme, you can find out what property and management standards you can expect. More information about the Landlord Accreditation Scheme can be found at our website on [www.knowsley.co.uk](http://www.knowsley.co.uk).

## Getting Help

If you are having problems with your landlord, you should contact the Housing Options Team in the first instance. If you want to seek independent advice, you can contact your local Citizen's Advice Bureau or the charity Shelter. Contact details are given at the back of this leaflet.

## Ending tenancies

You should have been served with an assured short-hold tenancy. This guarantees that you can live in the property for the period of your tenancy. Your landlord cannot end your tenancy before the date that your tenancy period ends, except in exceptional circumstances.

Your tenancy does not end once the initial period of your tenancy is over. Your landlord is required to issue you with a Notice to Quit, giving you at least eight weeks to find a new home. If you are issued with a notice, you should take it to the Housing Options Service. They will be able to advise you if the notice is valid and what happens next. If you wish to leave the property, you should give the landlord at least one month's notice of your intentions.

## Community Care Grant

You may be able to apply for a Community Care Grant for help towards buying essential household items. The Housing Options Service will be able to advise you if you qualify and how to apply.

## Council Services

If you have any queries about council services, you can call the switchboard on **0151 489 6000** or visit **[www.knowsley.gov.uk](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk)**

# Useful Contacts

## General support and advice

Citizen's Advice Bureau

[www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)  
CAB Knowsley: 0845 1221 300  
Email: [advice@knowsleycab.org.uk](mailto:advice@knowsleycab.org.uk)  
[www.knowsleycab.org.uk](http://www.knowsleycab.org.uk)

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Shelter

Tel: 0808 800 4444  
[www.england.shelter.org.uk](http://www.england.shelter.org.uk)

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Knowsley MBC

Council Tax, Benefits, other council services

Tel: 0151 489 6000  
[www.knowsley.gov.uk](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk)

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## Utilities and essential bills

Gas - Transco

Tel: 0800 608 1524  
[www.nationalgrid.com](http://www.nationalgrid.com)

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Electricity

Central Networks Enquiry Line: 0800 096 3080

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Water – United Utilities

Tel: 0845 746 2233  
[www.unitedutilities.co.uk](http://www.unitedutilities.co.uk)

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TV Licence

Tel: 0844 800 6790  
[www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk)

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## Health Related Services

NHS Direct

Tel: 0845 46 47  
[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

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Knowsley PCT Options – GP Access

Tel: 0800 917 3683  
GP Led Health Centre,  
St Chad's Clinic, St Chad's Drive,  
Kirkby, L32 8RE  
[www.knowsley.nhs.uk](http://www.knowsley.nhs.uk)

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## Support for those experiencing domestic abuse or hate crime

National Domestic Violence Helpline

Tel: 0808 2000 247

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Knowsley Domestic

Violence Support Services

Tel: 0151 548 3333  
Fax: 0151 632 8865  
First Step Centre, Peatwood Avenue,  
Kirkby, L32 7PR  
[www.kvss.org.uk](http://www.kvss.org.uk)

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Safer Knowsley Partnership

Tel: 0800 953 4433  
(8am – 6pm Mon – Fri)  
Calls made to this number will  
not show on your itemised bill



## Contact Us

### Housing Options Service

**Tel: 0800 694 0280**

9am – 5pm Mon – Fri (9am – 4pm Wednesday)

(An out of hours service is available on this number in an emergency)

You can also get this information in other languages and formats.  
Please phone Customer Services on 0151 443 4031  
or email [customerservices@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@knowsley.gov.uk)

[www.knowsley.gov.uk](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk)