

North West Leicestershire District Council **Tenants Handbook**





TENANTS HANDBOOK

The tenants' handbook gives information that will help you as a tenant. It is designed to be read alongside your tenancy agreement and gives you additional information about the services you can expect as a tenant of North West Leicestershire District Council.

We want you to be happy in your home and provide you with a high quality service. We have worked with our tenants and leaseholders in working groups, such as the Landlord Services Working Group, to set the standards of service you can expect from us. This tenants handbook contains information on:

- Welcome to your new home!
- Your tenancy agreement
- Being a good neighbour
- Paying your rent and registration for “My Rent Account”
- Repairs and Asset Management
- Living in a flat or maisonette
- Supported services
- Changing your home
- Your opportunity to get involved
- Customer Care

Welcome to your new home!

We are delighted that you have chosen to have a tenancy with North West Leicestershire District Council. We aim to be open and transparent, delivering you the quality services that you deserve.

Now that you have your keys, there are a few essentials that need to be done:

- Call and find out your new gas (Transco) 0870 608 1524
- Call and find out your new electricity (Mpas) 0345 601 5972
- Register with your new supplier and give them your current meter readings
- Call our in house repairs team to uncap the gas so it is ready to use
- Enjoy your new home!

If you have any queries about your tenancy please contact the Housing Management team on 01530 454660 or by e-mailing us at housing.mgt@nwleicestershire.gov.uk.

You will receive a settling in visit within six weeks of your tenancy start date.



Your Tenancy Agreement

When you become a tenant you will be asked to sign a Tenancy Agreement. This is a legal document that sets out the rules of the tenancy. The rules are terms and conditions about the things you must do and things you must not do. It tells you about your responsibilities and how you can end the tenancy. It also explains what your rights are and what you can expect from us as your landlord, including the different types of tenancy we offer and what the differences are between them.

Being a Good Neighbour

Our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy lays down the guidelines for tenants to adhere to whilst they are tenants of North West Leicestershire District Council and shows the work that we would do to manage and monitor cases. This policy can be found at www.nwleics.gov.uk/ASB and includes what we do and don't consider as ASB.

When you sign your tenancy agreement, you may also be asked to sign a Good Neighbour Agreement. This is reminding you that you are responsible for your behaviour and that of your family and visitors. We aim to reduce anti-social behaviour and we rely on you to help us achieve this. These agreements are a way of us helping new tenants settle into a neighbourhood as well as ensuring estate specific issues are addressed.

Paying your Rent

Your rent is charged over 50 weeks each year. You have 2 weeks where your rent account is not charged (usually over the Christmas period). If you have missed any payments during the year, you will need to keep paying over these weeks.

Your rent is due on Monday each week and must be paid in advance.

There are several different ways in which you can pay your rent:

- Direct Debit – A mandate can be downloaded at www.nwleics.gov.uk/paybydirectdebit or requested via Rent Accounting on 01530 454798
- Standing Order
- Online – www.nwleics.gov.uk/pay or through 'My Rent Account'
- Pay Point
- Post Office (using your PayPoint card)
- Over the phone. 01530 454730 (24 hours a day, 365 days a year)
- Directly from your wages if you work for North West Leicestershire District Council

See our website www.nwleics.gov.uk/councilhousingrents for further information.

Register on 'My Rent Account'

If you are a tenant, have access to the internet and an email address, you can now set yourself up online with your own personal account on North West Leicestershire District Council's website. You will be able to view your rent account and pay your rent online. We will also be adding new features in the future, including opportunities to report repairs, Anti-Social Behaviour and many other issues.

Visit www.nwleics.gov.uk/myrentaccount

Problems paying your rent

If you are having problems paying your rent please contact the Housing Management team as soon as possible. Our website gives information on how we can help, advice on housing benefit, money advice and other support. Remember, if you do not pay your rent, you could lose your home.

Help with your Housing Costs

If you are on a low income, you may be able to get help with your housing costs through either Housing Benefit or if you are in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) your award could include your housing costs. You need to apply for help with your housing costs by completing an application:

- Universal Credit – you need to apply to the Department of Work and Pension (DWP)
- Housing Benefit – you need to apply to the Council (NWLDC)

To apply for Housing Benefit you will need to fill in a form and hand it in at the Council Office. You will need to provide proof of your income during the application process.

If you are in receipt of Universal Credit and receive help with your housing costs, you will receive the money direct from DWP which you will need to use to pay your rent to us. You will need to speak with your Housing Officer to arrange how you are going to ensure your rent is paid.

Our website gives you details on Housing Benefit and Universal Credit at www.nwleics.gov.uk/housingbenefit

The Housing service also offer a dedicated Tenancy Support team which includes a Personal Budgeting Support Officer who links in with the Job Centre and offers support and guidance to those who require it with Universal Credit.



Repairs and Asset Management

If you want to request a repair, you can contact us by:

- Telephone on 01530 454635 (Monday to Friday 8:45am to 5pm). If you call outside of these hours, there will be an answerphone message giving you an emergency phone number.
- Email repairs@nwleicestershire.gov.uk
- In person at the Council Office in Coalville (see our website for opening hours)

We have more details about repairs and maintenance, improvements and alterations, our contractors, health and safety on our website as well as separate publications being made available.



Living in a Flat or Maisonette

Living in flats and maisonettes brings special responsibilities to all who live there. Our website has information on

- Communal areas and door entry
- Mobility scooters
- Noise nuisance
- Pets
- Service Charges

We also have a specific leaseholder handbook which is available on our website at www.nwleics.gov.uk/righttobuy

Supported Services

We can provide a number of services to help you keep your independence and stay in your own home. For more details on all of these services, please see our website.

Safe and Well - An emergency response lifeline service that provides reassurance or assistance in an emergency at home. Safe and Well operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, ensuring help is always at hand at the touch of a button.

The Safe and Well service is available for anyone living within North West Leicestershire who would like to feel safer, more protected and more independent in their own home. It is especially beneficial for:

- Older or disabled people
- People with poor health
- People who have been discharged from hospital and need extra support and assistance to live independently
- People at risk of bogus callers.

More information on The Safe and Well service can be found at www.nwleics.gov.uk/safeandwell or on phone 01530 454545.

The Tenancy Support service - working with vulnerable people to help them keep and run their home. This service is run through a referral process via your Housing or Support Officer and offers support to the following groups:

- Young people aged between 16 and 25
- Ex-offenders
- People at risk of offending
- People suffering with mental health concerns
- Support for those who require budgeting and initial financial advice
- Survivors of domestic abuse
- People who have recently moved into a new home following a period of homelessness.

We also offer a **Garden Tidy Scheme** for tenants aged over 60 or registered disabled (proof of this will be required). This currently entitles the recipient to an annual cut of their garden and surrounding hedges, free of charge. See our website for more detail at www.nwleics.gov.uk/gardens

Changing your home

North West Leicestershire District Council work within the Leicestershire sub regional Allocations scheme and operate our own Allocations Policy. You only have to fill in one application form to be registered on the Housing Register across the region (excluding Leicester City and Rutland).

We advertise properties for rent through the Choice Based Lettings site which you can view and register for at www.nwleics-homes.org.uk

When you are registered you will be able to look for properties using this site.

You can find more information about this on our website. You can also contact the Housing Choices team on housing.choices@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

We also work with Housing Partners to operate an online Mutual Exchange service via www.homeswapper.co.uk

Homeswapper is free of charge for tenants and is a swift way of changing your home to an area that you want to live. There is also a cash incentive of £250 for those looking to exchange with details on the conditions available at www.nwleics.gov.uk/exchange

Customer Care

Customer Care Charter

North West Leicestershire District Council has customer care standards which can be located on our website. The Housing Service is committed to achieving these standards whenever it has any contact with you. In addition to our customer care standards, all of our documents referred to online, are available in print format upon request as well as large print, braille and other languages. For more information visit

www.nwleics.gov.uk/customer_service_standards

Satisfaction Surveys

We regularly send out satisfaction surveys, online, via text messages or using paper forms. This helps us find out what tenants think about the service. We can then make the improvements to our services so they better meet your needs. Getting feedback from you is vital to us, so if you receive a survey, please take a few moments to fill it out.

Have Your Say

Have Your Say forms are available at the Council Offices and on our website. You can use these to give us your views about our services. This can include suggestions, questions, general comments and compliments. You can post the forms back to us free of charge or hand them in at the Council Office. Whatever your views, we will investigate and reply to every comment you send us, including those we have looked into through our complaints process.

Complaints

We always try to get things right first time but we know this doesn't always happen. We take all complaints seriously and try to learn from our mistakes.

Please talk to us if you are not happy with any of our services. You should first contact the staff member who provided the service. If you are still unhappy you can speak to their manager. If you still feel that the situation has not been resolved, you can make a formal complaint. There are details of our complaints procedure on our website at

www.nwleics.gov.uk/atoz/353

If North West Leicestershire District Council has made a mistake, there are various things that we can do to put it right. Our website has details of what we can do, and details of any compensation that you may be entitled to, via our compensation policy.

Your opportunity to get involved

We value your views and want to work with you to ensure that we offer the right service that meets your needs.

There are many different ways for you to get involved and have your say, including:

- The Tenants and Leaseholders Consultation Forum
- Housing Working Groups
- Tenant Scrutiny Panel
- Empty Homes Inspectors
- Estate Evaluators
- Local Tenant and Resident Associations

To find out more about making your views heard, contact the Resident Involvement team on 01530 454795 or e-mail on resident.involvement@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

Contact us



Visit us at www.nwleics.gov.uk



Customer Services 01530 454545

Report a repair 01530 454635



Email us housing@nwleicestershire.gov.uk



Write to us at

NWLDC, PO Box 11051, Coalville, LE67 0FW

To visit to discuss your tenancy please call 01530 454660 to book an appointment at our Customer centre, North West Leicestershire District Council, Customer Centre, 63-65 Belvoir Road, Coalville. LE67 3PD



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