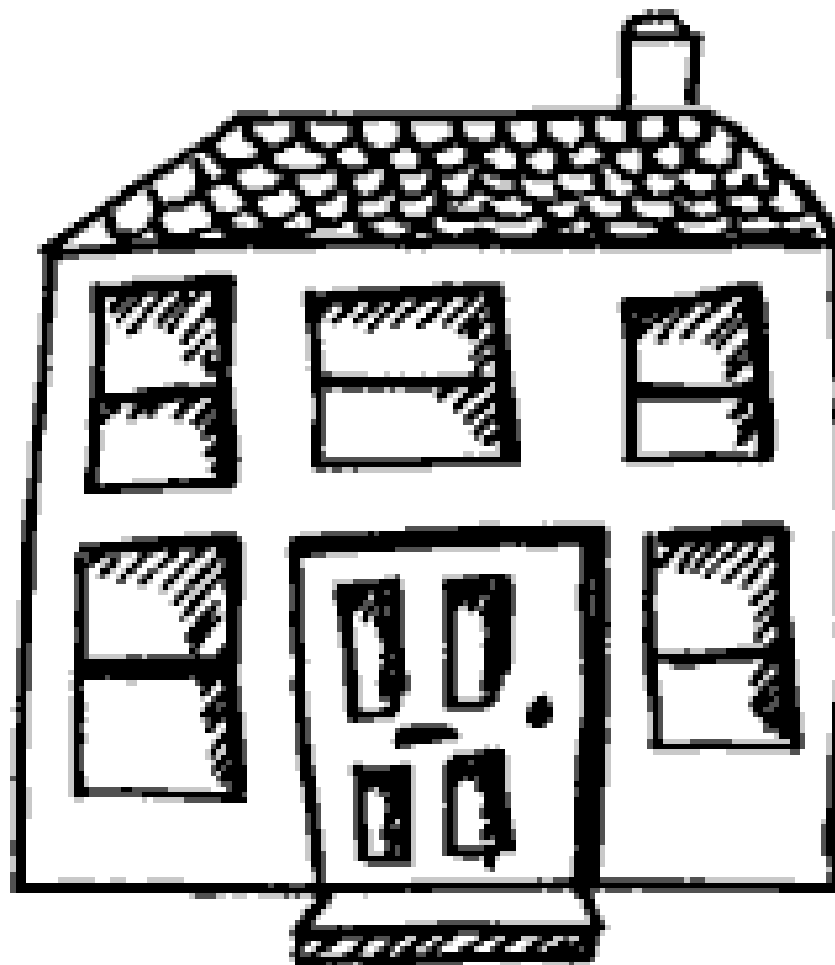


Tenants' handbook

What you need to know





Introduction



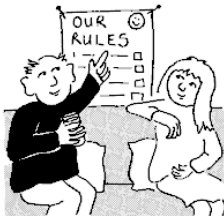
Homes for Islington wrote this easy read handbook. You may see **Homes for Islington** written as **HFI**.



Homes for Islington is the landlord for **Islington Council**. This means that you pay your **rent** to us. We will provide housing services such as repairs in return.







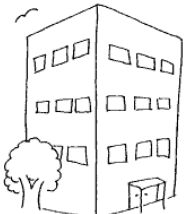


Islington Council owns your home.






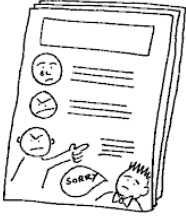
The handbook will tell you about your rights and responsibilities as a **tenant**.

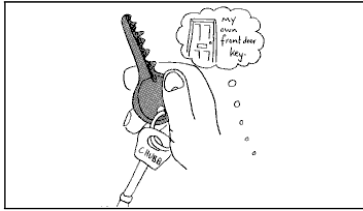


Keep this handbook in a safe place. It has a lot of useful information that will help you answer questions about your **tenancy**.

In this handbook:		
	Your tenancy	4
	How to pay your rent	8
	Repairs to your home	11
	Improvements to your home	14
	Services to your estate	16
	Safety and security in your home	17
	Antisocial behaviour, harassment and domestic violence	19

All pictures in this document are from the Change Picture Bank, Makaton and Clipart

	Moving home	21
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	Getting involved in making decisions	25
	How to make a complaint	27



Your tenancy



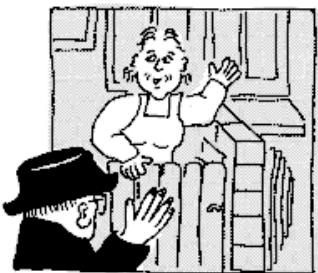
Your **tenancy** is the agreement made between you and us.



You are the **tenant**.

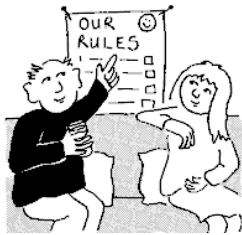


The **tenant** is the person who has signed the **tenancy agreement**. If you need help to read your **tenancy agreement**, please tell someone at your area housing office.



Secure tenancy:

Most tenants are **secure** tenants. This means that as long as the **tenant** does not break any of the rules in the **tenancy agreement** they can stay in their home. Your **tenancy agreement** will say if you are a **secure tenant**.



The **tenancy agreement** tells you about your **rights and responsibilities as a tenant**.

Your **rights** as a tenant include:

- to enjoy your home in peace
- to have repairs done
- not to be threatened because of your race, disability or anything else
- to complain if you are not happy with your home or HFI.



Your **responsibilities** as a tenant include:

- to do minor repairs to your home
- to decorate your home
- to keep your garden or balcony clean and tidy
- not to be violent or rude to other people
- not to play music or your TV too loudly
- not to cause damage to your home
- to make sure you pay your rent
- to ask for permission from HFI before you get some types of pet.



If you are a **secure** tenant you may be able to pass on your **tenancy** when you are alive or when you die. This can only happen once.



All pictures in this document are from the Change Picture Bank, Makaton and Clipart



You can pass your **tenancy** to:

- a **joint tenant**

A **joint tenant** is someone else who shares the **tenancy** with you.

- your husband or wife or civil partner

They must live together with you.

- your partner or another member of your family

They must have lived with you for at least 12 months.

Subletting and lodgers

You are not allowed to give your home to someone else without permission from HFI. This is known as **subletting**. If you sublet your flat you may lose your home.

You can allow someone to live in your home with you and charge them for a room. This person is called a lodger. You should let HFI know if you have a lodger.

Keeping pets

You must ask HFI for permission before you get a dog or any type of dangerous or noisy pet. HFI will normally give its permission but you must agree to look after your pet. If your pet causes a nuisance to other people or you are not looking after it properly HFI may ask you to find it a new home.



Running a business from home

You may be able to run your own business from home but you must ask permission from HFI first.



You can ask questions at your area office or you can call your **Tenancy Management Advisor**.



How to pay your rent



Rent is the money you pay to stay in your home. You must pay it before it is due so you do not fall behind with the rent.

Direct debit means that the money for your **rent** comes straight out of your bank account into our account.



If you need help to fill in a direct debit form, call your **Income Recovery**

Officer:





- over the **phone** using your debit or credit card

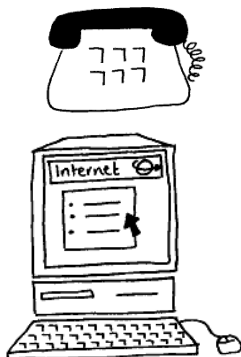
Phone:

0 2 0 7 5 2 7 8 0 0 0
from your land line

- on the internet using your debit or credit card

www.homesforislington.org.uk

You will need your **payment reference number**. This can be found on your rent payment card.



All pictures in this document are from the Change Picture Bank, Makaton and Clipart



You can pay **rent** in different ways:

- In person at any Post Office or at any PayPoint and PayZone in shops where you see the sign using your rent payment card.
- by direct debit
- **Housing benefit**

If you are on a low income you could get get money from the Council to help you pay your rent. This is called **housing benefit**.

If you think you will need money to help you pay your rent ask your Income Recovery Officer about **housing benefit**.

If you do not pay the rent:



If you do not pay your **rent** you will be in **arrears**. **Arrears** are money that you owe to us.



If you do not pay your **rent** then we may go to court. The court could tell you to move out of your home.



If you have problems paying your **rent** you should tell us straight away we may be able to help you.

Speak to your **Income Recovery Officer:**





Repairs to your home



There are some things that you are responsible for fixing such as:

- things you have broken
- replacing lightbulbs
- repairs to kitchen unit doors and drawers
- changing your door locks if you lose your keys.

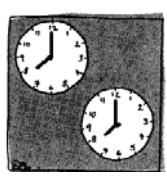


Some people may be able to get help with repairs they are responsible for fixing. If you cannot fix these things yourself, please call or come in to the office and we will help you. If something in your home needs to be repaired and HFI is responsible for repairing it you must let us know.

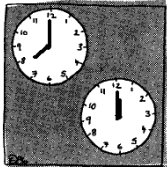


How to report a repair:

- Call **0 8 0 0 6 9 4 3 3 4 4**



Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm



Saturday 8am to 12noon



- **on-line** at www.homesforislington.org.uk



- **e-mail** repairs@homesforislington.org.uk



- **Minicom** on **0 8 0 0 7 3 0 5 3 6**

- **Text 0 7 7 8 6 2 0 2 8 9 2.**



Our staff will:

- ask you to choose when you want the repair to be done
- give your **repair a number**. We will tell you this **repair number**. Keep this **repair number** safe until the repair is completed.



Our **contractor** will come to your home at the agreed time to do the repair.

Contractors carry out repairs for Homes for Islington. You should always ask to see their **identity card**.



Out of hours emergency service:

An emergency repairs service is available outside normal office hours, during the weekends and bank holidays. If you report an emergency repair to HFI out of hours our contractor will come and make the situation safe. You should always ask to see their **identity card**. The next working day we will order any follow on works that are needed.



Gas servicing:

It is a legal requirement that we service your gas appliances every year. This is to make sure that you are safe in your home. The free appointment takes about an hour. We will contact you to make an appointment, as a condition of your tenancy you must allow us access.

Insurance:

You should buy **home contents insurance**.

Insurance means that if there is an accident your **insurance** will usually pay for what you have lost.



The **Council** has a **contents insurance scheme**.

If you want to find out more about the **Council's insurance scheme** please phone **0 2 0 7 5 2 7 2 0 0 0**.





Improvements to your home



Homes for Islington will try to keep your home in a good condition by:

- Painting the outside of your home every few years. Replacing the lift or heating system if they break down.

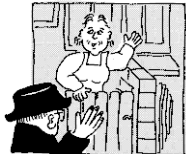
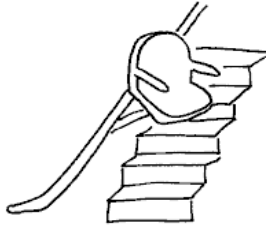


Before we start any work to your home or where you live we will ask what you think, by telephoning you or writing to you. If you want to improve your home you must ask **Homes for Islington** before you start. This includes:

- putting up a satellite dish
- changing the layout of your home
- laying wooden, laminate or tiled flooring
- fitting a security gate to your doors or windows



If you do not ask HFI before you alter anything in your home, we can tell you to take away what you have done. We may also ask you for money to repair any damage.



Aids and Adaptations for disabled people:

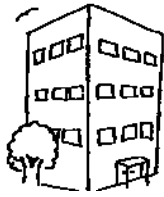
If you are disabled and need an **adaptation** please call the **Occupational Therapy Team** on:

0 2 0 7 5 2 7 5 2 0 0

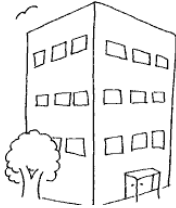
Occupational therapy is a service for disabled people who need help to carry out everyday tasks such as:

- getting in and out of bed / bath;
- getting on and off the toilet;
- climbing steps and stairs;
- turning taps on and off.

Occupational therapists will visit your home. They will look at it and see if there are things such as grip handles which can help. This service is free.



Services to your estate



Homes for Islington manages flats, houses and estates. **This section is only for tenants who live on estates.**

HFI will check that:

- your rubbish is collected
- the lighting on the estate is working
- your estate is clean



You have a **caretaker** to look after the estate and the gardens. **Caretakers** clean the **estate**. You must help keep your estate clean and tidy by not dumping rubbish. Tell your **caretaker** or your area office if you do not think the **estate** is clean.

Parking:

Most **estates** have some parking for cars. You must **rent** the parking space or garage. If you park your car where you are not allowed your car may be towed away or clamped.





Safety and security in your home



When you go out:

- Do not leave keys under the doormat



- Lock your doors



- Close all your windows



- If you are going away from your home for more than **one month** tell your **Tenancy Management Advisor:**



- Always ask anyone you do not know to show you their **identity card**.



Fire safety:

Many dangerous fires in the home can be prevented if you take care. You can help stop a fire starting in your home by:



- Do not smoke in bed



- Switch off all electrical equipment that you are not using



- Put smoke alarms in your home and check regularly that they are working



- If there is a fire get out as quickly as possible



- Do not stop to collect your things



If there is a fire call 999. Get out of your home and stay out.



Antisocial behaviour, harassment and domestic violence



Antisocial behaviour includes any type of behaviour that causes upset such as:

- Graffiti
- Too much noise

Harassment is when someone picks on someone else because of the way they look or live for example because of their race, sex or disability.

Domestic violence is when a person is violent or abusive to someone else they live with.



If you are worried or upset by how someone is treating you where you live, please tell **HFI**:

0 2 0 7 5 2 7 7 2 7 2



If the **antisocial behaviour** is very serious then you should call the police. HFI works With the police to stop antisocial behaviour, harassment and domestic violence.



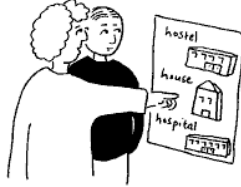
We will listen to what you say. We will try to help.



If you cause **antisocial behaviour, harassment or domestic violence** then you may lose your home. You are responsible for anyone living with you or visiting you. They must not cause **antisocial behaviour or harassment**.



Moving home



There are different ways we can help you to move to another home:

- **Transfer** to a new home.

A **transfer** is when you move to a different **HFI** home or to a home owned by another **council** or **social landlord**. A **social landlord** can provide homes to people on low income.



- **Mutual exchange**

A **mutual exchange** is when you find another **tenant** who wants to swap homes with you.



If you want to **transfer** or do a **mutual exchange** you must tell us. We will help you fill in the forms.

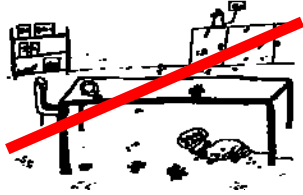


If your home becomes too big for you and your family **HFI** can help you move to a smaller home. If you move to a smaller home **HFI** will offer you a payment and help with the cost of your move.



You must tell us in writing if you are going to move out of your home.

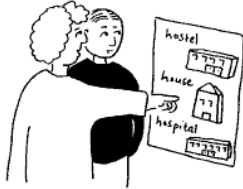
You must write to us at least 4 weeks before you move out.



You must take all your personal things with you when you move house. You must leave your home clean and tidy. If you do not do this HFI may charge you



Buying your home



We will tell you what you need to do if you decide to buy your home.



You may buy your home if you have a **secure** tenancy. You must have been a **secure** tenant for 5 years.



If you want to find out more call the **Home Ownership Team:**
0 2 0 7 5 2 7 7 7 1 5 or 7 7 2 0



Before you buy your home you will need to pay for:

- the **solicitor**
- a **survey**.

A **survey** tells you if there is any damage to your home.



- A **mortgage**.

A **mortgage** is the money you borrow to buy your home.



After you have bought your home you will pay for:

- **service charges** once you move in.

Service charges pay for all the shared



services that you may use such as lighting.

- **decorations.**

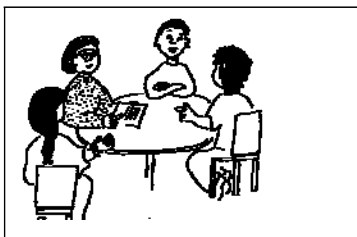
You will be responsible for decorating your home.

- **repairs.**

You will be responsible for all repairs in your home.

- **major works.**

You will need to pay your share of any major works carried out by HFI on your block or estate such as new windows or replacing the lift.



Getting involved in making decisions



You can help to make **Homes for Islington** better. You can tell us what we are doing well.

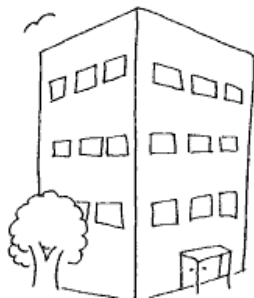


You can also tell us about things that are bad.



There are different ways that you can tell us what you think such as:

- over the phone
- completing a survey



If you live on an estate you can join your local **Tenants and Residents Association**. A **Tenants and Residents Association** is a group of people who live on an estate who meet to make services on the estate better.



You may be chosen to join the Consultative Panels. The **Consultative Panel** looks at how to make the local community better. You may be chosen to join the **Resident Involvement Register**. This is a list of people that are happy to be contacted by HFI to do surveys or attend meetings to discuss our services.

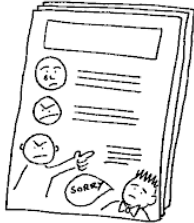
If you are disabled we can do things to help you get involved. Just let us know you are disabled. HFI also has a **Disability panel** which helps improve services for disabled people.



If you want to join any of these groups please call your area housing office



How to make a complaint



If you are unhappy with **HFI** you can make a complaint.

How to make a complaint:

- In person at one of our area housing offices.



- Write a letter.



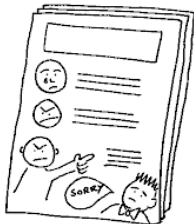
This should be sent to your area office

- Email your area office.



- Fill in the online complaints form. This can be found on

www.homesforislington.org.uk or in the area housing office.





- Phone your area office.



We will try to put it right. We will use what you say to improve our services.