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Section 1

Introduction to **Denbighshire Housing and Community Development? / Council?!**

Welcome from the Head of Service / Lead Member?

About your handbook.

Your Tenants Handbook has been developed with the involvement and support of you our customers, and the Housing **and Community Development** team; it is designed to complement your Tenancy Agreement.

Your handbook contains relevant information and advice you may find useful regarding your tenancy, living in your home and contributing to your community. If there is anything you are unclear about or you wish for further advice, please do not hesitate to contact the Housing **and Community Development** team via the contact details provided in Section 2.

Your handbook has been designed to allow for new information to be added in the future; we will send you replacement or additional pages when any changes are made. If you have any suggestions as to what could be included in the handbook, or wish to comment on its content, please complete the form at the back of the pack and return it to our team. We welcome both positive and negative feedback.

Please take the time to read your handbook and keep it in a handy, secure place for future reference.

Our Mission Statement

'The Housing **and Community Development team is committed to the development and provision of excellent housing, care, support and customer services to meet local needs and to contribute to the development of sustainable communities.'**

Our promise to you our customer.

The Housing **and Community Development** team is dedicated to providing ever improving quality of service for our tenants. Because you pay rent and other charges to us in return for your accommodation and services, we regard you as our customers, and aim to deliver an excellent customer focussed service to you. Therefore, our tenants are referred to as 'customers'

throughout this handbook except when reference is made to your Tenancy Agreement; this is because your Tenancy Agreement is a legally binding contract and we must use the term 'Tenant'.

Our Service Standards

We will provide a consistently high standard of service, treating you with fairness and equality, showing respect, courtesy and consideration in all that we do.

We aim to provide a friendly and helpful service that respects your confidentiality and privacy.

We will work to a set of service standards that clearly explains what we aim to achieve; we are committed to continually improving our standards of service through regular consultation with our customers.

We will provide professional and responsive services, developed with our customers in mind, and inform and consult in all that we do.

We will regularly review our performance so that our service is continually improved to benefit our customers.

In order to deliver our Service Promise, we will consult with you and listen to what you tell us.

We will ask our customers which areas of service matter to them, and will set service standards targets for each of these areas.

These standards will drive our future service development, delivery and ambition.

Our commitment to Customer Care

We are committed to putting the needs of our customers at the centre of all that we do, and will strive to provide consistently high standards of professional services to all our customers. To maintain these high standards, we will:

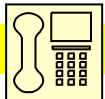
- ❖ Respond to all letters, e mails and verbal contacts promptly, politely and informatively.
- ❖ Treat every customer with respect and dignity.
- ❖ Not discriminate against any individual or group, irrespective of age, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender, religion or belief.
- ❖ Regularly consult with our customers when reviewing the services we provide.
- ❖ Treat all information we hold in the strictest confidence and adhere to the Data Protection Act when sharing information with partner agencies.
- ❖ Ensure all of our staff members are trained to a consistent high level throughout the county.

- ❖ Offer the option to communicate with our customers using the Welsh Language and actively encourage all members of our staff to attend a course in order to attain a working knowledge of the Welsh Language.

Section 2

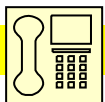
How you can contact us.

Denbighshire County Council Customer Services: For all general Council services enquiries, advice and complaints.

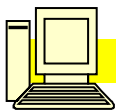


01824 706101

Housing and Community Development Team: For enquiries relating to your tenancy.



01824 708367



Online– (all Housing and Community Development teams)

housing@denbighshire.gov.uk

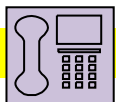


Denbighshire Housing Services



@DCC Housing

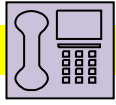
Repairs and Maintenance / Property Services Team: For all property maintenance enquiries, fault reporting and advice.



01824 706101

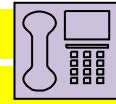
Out of hours emergency repairs: 01745 351205

Housing options: For all enquiries relating to accommodation availability.



01824 712930

Income Management Team: For all rent queries, payments and statement enquiries.



01824 712 965

01824 712 963

24hr / 7 day automated rent payment line - 0300 4562499

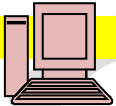
Housing benefit: For all enquiries regarding housing benefit entitlement.

Russell House, Churton Road, Rhyl



01824 706302

01824 706312



Online - benefits@denbighshire.gov.uk

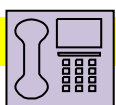
Neighbourhood Development Team: Enquiries relating to Tenants participation, resource centres and community activities.



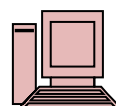
01824 712970

01824 712967

Complaints team: To log feedback or a complaint:



01824 706101 Text: 07800 140088



In writing:

Your Voice, County Hall, Wynnstay Road, Ruthin, LL15 1YN.

Section 3

Moving into your new home.

Suggest separating this section as a stand-alone doc?

When you move into your new home we will provide you with a welcome pack including:

- A copy of your tenancy Agreement
- Keys 2 x sets
- Your Tenants Handbook

Who to tell you have moved.

Moving home can be a stressful time. To make your move as stress-free as possible, we have prepared a checklist of organisations and people that you may wish to tell you have moved.

Top tip. Tick them as you go along and make notes on the notes page provided (page---).

- Removals** – shop around for quotes. Book your removals as early as possible and allow plenty of time for packing.
- Gas supply / meter readings** see page -- for information
- Electricity supply / meter readings** – see page -- for information
- Water Supply / meter readings** – see page -- for information
- Telephone / broadband and mobile phone company**
- The Post Office** – will redirect mail from your old home to your new home for a small charge. Call 0845 722 3344 for details
- Council tax** – They need to know the date of your change of address Call 01824 706468 or contact online www.denbighshire.gov.uk
- Job Centre Plus** – if you receive Income Support, a state pension or any other benefit. Call 0845 604 3719

- Housing Benefit** – if you are entitled to Housing Benefit you will need to stop any benefit being paid on your old address and claim at your new address. **Call 01824 706302 or 01824 706312** or contact online [**benefits@denbighshire.gov.uk**](mailto:benefits@denbighshire.gov.uk)
- TV licensing** – Call **0300 790 6131** or [**www.tvlicensing.co.uk**](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk) for changes of address or for new licenses.
- Satellite / cable TV company**
- TV / appliance rental**
- Home contents, vehicle and other insurance** – you will need to inform your insurers of your change of address.
- Schools** – to find out about schools in your new area, call 01824 706101 or online [**www.denbighshire.gov.uk**](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk)
- Your bank, building society, credit card, hire purchase and loan companies.**
- Your employer.**
- Doctor**
- Dentist**
- Optician**
- Hospital / clinic**
- Social worker**
- Welfare Officer**
- Probation Service**
- Vet**
- Newsagents**
- If you have a driving license you must inform **DVLA, Swansea, SA991AB** or call **080702 400 009**
- If you own a vehicle you must inform **DVLA** so that your logbook is updated.
- Library**
- Sports and social clubs**
- Friends and relatives!**

Section 4

Living in your home and your neighbourhood.

Your Tenancy Agreement

The terms and conditions of your Tenancy and the type of tenancy ('12 month Introductory' or 'Secure') you have with us are fully explained in your Tenancy Agreement and will have been discussed with you by your Neighbourhood Officer prior to you signing the Agreement.

If, at a later date, you have any queries regarding the Terms and conditions of your agreement, please do not hesitate to contact your Neighbourhood Officer.

Please keep your Tenancy Agreement in a secure place alongside this handbook for future reference; if you lose your copy of your Tenancy Agreement, you can request another copy from your Neighbourhood Officer.

SIL info now removed – provide as a separate doc once finalised?

Your rights and responsibilities. (Final design – spread over double page to view).

Your rights:

- You have the right to get your repairs carried out within a prescribed timescale; these repairs are prioritised to ensure that urgent repairs with the potential to affect your health and safety are always done first. You will be advised by our Property Services team as to when you can expect your repair to be assessed and completed.

- If we fail to carry out our responsibilities under your Tenancy Agreement you can contact our Customer Services Team (page--); if your concerns are not dealt with to your satisfaction, you can contact our Complaints Team (page --)
- **Once you are a secure Tenant, you have the right to make improvements to your home**, for example: installing central heating, a shower or a gas fire; we are keen to encourage home improvements, but prior written approval must first be granted from the Property Services Manager before you engage an appropriately qualified contractor. Any gas repair or installation work to appliances owned by you must be carried out by Gas Safe registered contractors; we also recommend your appliances be tested annually by a Gas Safe registered contractor. Once the work has been completed, you must ensure **Property Services** are given a copy of any relevant certification for the works carried out.
- You have the right to request compensation for certain improvements you have made to your home; this compensation will be paid at the end of your tenancy. Please note that you cannot claim for compensation if we have taken responsibility for the repair and maintenance of the improvement. For further information on what improvements you can make and how to apply for compensation, please contact the Property Services team (page....).
- Further Rights are detailed in your Tenancy Agreement on page...; we recommend that you make yourself familiar with them to ensure you are up to date with your rights.

Your responsibilities:

You also have certain responsibilities for your home; the Housing **and Community Development department** has responsibility for the main structure, utilities, installation and exterior decoration of the property including repairing or replacing items that were part of the premises when your tenancy started; however, you are responsible for:

- Reporting to Property Services any repair work needed as soon as it is noticed
- Keeping your property in a state of good repair
- Any damage over and above normal wear and tear
- The maintenance or replacement of anything installed or fitted by you
- The maintenance or replacement of anything installed or fitted by a previous tenant (except for gas appliances).
- The internal decoration of your home, including filling in minor cracks or holes in walls.
- Accidental damage.
- Keeping your garden in a maintainable standard as per our 'Lettable Standard'
- Maintaining any garden features not provided by Housing **and Community Development** e.g. garden sheds, fencing or greenhouses.
- Keeping shared areas (halls, landings, stairwells in blocks and flats) clean, tidy and free from obstruction.
- Electric plugs, replacing bulbs, lighting tubes or starters
- Obtaining prior written consent before carrying out any structural works
- Taking precautions against frost damage and frozen pipes
- Taking steps to prevent condensation
- Replacing keys or locks when keys are lost or you are locked out of your home
- Ensuring all appliances are fitted by qualified contractors

- Allowing Housing **and Community Development** staff into your property to carry out repairs and safety checks such as servicing or inspecting the gas boiler.
- Cleaning windows
- Cleaning and testing smoke detectors and replacing any batteries
- Immediately reporting faulty smoke detectors in communal areas to us.
- Replacing plugs and chains on baths, basins and sinks.
- Adjusting doors to accommodate carpets
- Anything that belongs to you
- Making sure that your home is your principal home
- Getting prior written permission from Housing **and Community Development** before operating a business from your home, garage or outbuilding; this is to ensure that your home is suitable for the business and that adequate insurance is in place.
- Ensuring you do not store any type of industrial equipment or large vehicle parts (wheels, engines etc.) inside your home.

Our responsibilities as your landlord

Our responsibilities and obligations are detailed in your Tenants Agreement; on **pages...**; we recommend that you make yourself familiar with them to ensure you are up to date with what we are legally obliged to **do in providing you with accommodation meeting the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.**

Paying your rent / rent arrears / other charges

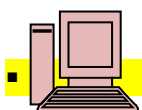
Your rent payments help Housing **and Community Development** to develop and provide a high standard of housing management and repairs service to all our customers. Those customers, who do not pay the rent due each week, affect our ability to do this.

Your rent is due weekly, in advance, every Monday.

There are many ways to pay your rent, including:



▪ - **03004562499**



▪ - **www.denbighshire.gov.uk**

- **Direct Debit:** Call 01824712965 to set up your Direct Debit Payment

- **Post Office:** You can pay your housing rent at your local post office
- **Cash Office:** Payments can be made at one of our Cash Offices in Rhyl, Ruthin or Prestatyn
- **'One Stop' Shops:** Payments can be made at one of our 'One Stop' shops in Corwen, Llangollen, Denbigh, Rhuddlan and St Asaph Libraries or at County Hall Ruthin or Ty Nant Prestatyn
- **Standing Order:** You are in control of the instructions to your bank; how much is payable, the frequency (weekly, fortnightly, 4 weekly, monthly) on a day to suit your financial circumstances. **Call 01824 712965** to obtain our bank details and your reference number

Managing your money.

Please do not wait until you are struggling before you contact us; we are here to help. This section provides advice and guidance to help you manage your money and home.

Visit www.moneysavingexpert.com for free advice about ways to save money and get better deals with all your daily costs and general expenditure

Budgeting.

It often helps to write down all of your weekly or monthly costs to get a clear picture of your financial situation; this will help you to:

- Keep track of your money
- Show where your money is going
- See where you can make savings
- Avoid debt or help you out of debt
- Save a little money each week or month.

To make a budget:

- Make a list of all your income from wages, benefits, tax credits, maintenance or any other source
- Check you are getting all of the benefits and tax credits you are entitled to
- Make a list of all your outgoings

We have provided a helpful budget planner for you to do this on [page ----](#)

Once you have made a budget you will have a better idea how much money you have coming in and how much is going out. If you have money left over, great!

If you only have only a little or no money left over and you struggle to make ends meet, you could try:

- Using your budget planner to look at ways you can make savings on things that are not essential.
- Check the annual percentage rate (APR) on any loans or credit you have; see if you can shop around to get a better deal e.g. you may be able to get 0% interest on a credit card transfer to another card.
- Often gas and electric companies will give you a discount if you pay by direct debit. If you are not paying by this method, see if you can do so. Also, you may be able to get a better deal with another supplier.

Once you have sorted your budget, it will help to keep a diary or planner that tracks your payments, when they are due and when you have paid them.

If your circumstances change, you will need to make a new budget.

You should consider saving some of your left over money, as this will give you a buffer to fall back on if you are faced with any unexpected costs. It also lets you save for something you want rather than buy it on credit.

You may find it easier to pay most of your bills on direct debit or standing order; you will need a bank account to do this.

Basic bank accounts.

Basic bank accounts are current accounts without any overdraft or credit facilities; they give you peace of mind that you can't get into debt.

You can have regular payments such as wages or benefits paid into a basic bank account; you can also make regular payments such as direct debits and standing orders from these accounts, but check with the bank before opening an account.

Some basic bank accounts provide a debit card, which means that you can pay bills, get cash back in shops and to get cash from machines.

Current accounts.

Current accounts allow you to make regular payments into and out of your account. They usually come with a cheque book and cheque guarantee card. You can usually arrange an overdraft on these types of account. You will need to check with the bank if they charge you for this facility, some will be free for a small overdraft. Larger overdrafts will mean you need to pay interest and possibly a charge. If you go overdrawn without asking, either because you write cheques or because direct debits, standing orders or cash are taken from your account, then you will be charged a fee. You may even be charged a fee if the bank refuses to make the payments for you.

Current accounts will usually offer a low rate of interest on any money you have in the account, so you should be careful not to keep too high a balance. If you find you have money left at the end of every month you may like to put this into a savings account.

Savings accounts.

Savings accounts are designed for investing money on a regular basis or for putting a lump sum of money into. You will be paid interest on the money you save. The amount you get varies depending on how much it is and how long it is in the account for. Savings accounts generally pay higher interest rates than current accounts.

You can set up a savings account at Credit Unions, banks, building societies and through National Savings and Investments. They are generally low risk investments suitable for short to medium term savings.

You can also save by buying saving stamps through supermarkets or by joining a savings club. Be careful of this type of saving as you don't earn any interest, things can go wrong and you could lose your money.

Credit Unions

Credit unions are financial cooperatives, owned and run by their members. They are a safe place to save, offer affordable credit, encourage good money management and help the local economy. For more information and to find out about your local credit union contact British Credit Unions Limited ([details on page--](#)).

Borrowing Money

Before borrowing, think about the following:

- Is borrowing money the only option?
- Do you really need the item, could you borrow the item or could you buy second hand?
- Where are you going to borrow from? Avoid expensive credit and loans such as pay day / log book lenders, loan sharks or store cards.
- Can you afford the repayments? Use the budget planner to work out if you can.
- Are you borrowing to pay off debts? Borrowing more to pay off debts often causes more problems. There is free, independent advice available to help you manage your debts. [Page ?](#)
- If you are being harassed by a loan shark or other illegal money lender; you can report them (confidentially) to the **Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit (WILMU)** ([details on page--](#)). Loan sharks typically charge interest rates hundreds of times more expensive than banks or building societies and you are likely to end up considerably further in debt.
If you report a loan shark, assistance can be given to help you with your debt problems and, any money owed to the loan shark will be written off.

Tips for borrowing money

- Always read the small print – check the agreement as there may be hidden charges you did not know about.
- Store cards – check the interest rates (APR) as they are often high.
- When you apply for a loan or credit, the company you are borrowing from will check your financial history with a credit reference agency. You usually need to be on the electoral role as lenders will check this.
- Think again – do you really need to borrow? Could you save up for what you need?

Dealing with debt

Top five tips for those in debt:

1. Do not panic!
2. Do not ignore the problems – they will not go away and the longer they are ignored the worse they will get. Help is available free of charge.
3. Check you are legally responsible for the debts – they may not be yours.
4. Check you are getting all the benefits and tax credits you are entitled to.
5. Try not to borrow more money to pay off your debts – this can make matters worse; do not use fee charging debt management companies. Free advice and assistance is available from a number of recognised organisations ([details on page--](#)).

Priority debts

Priority debts are those that could result in you losing something such as your home if you do not make the payments.

Priority debts	Result of not paying
Housing rent	Loss of home
Secured loan	Loss of home / other items
Council tax	Bailiffs / imprisonment
Income tax or VAT arrears	Bankruptcy / imprisonment
Fines	Bailiffs / imprisonment
Maintenance/child support	Bailiffs / imprisonment
Fuel – gas / electricity	Disconnection of supply
Hire purchase plans	Loss of item e.g. Car

Non-priority Debts

Non-priority debts are those unlikely to result in loss of your possessions if you do not make the payments. Non-priority debts include:

- Credit cards and store cards
- Catalogue arrears
- Overdraft and unsecured bank loans
- Overpayment of benefits
- Money owed to family and friends

You cannot be imprisoned for not paying non-priority debts and you are unlikely to lose your home or goods. However, creditors can take you to court. The court will then order you to pay. If you do not keep up with the order, the creditor can apply for another court order to send the bailiffs to collect your belongings to sell and cover the debt.

What to do if you are in debt

- Make a list of your priority debts and non-priority debts.
- Work out your weekly or monthly income and expenditure – be realistic with your costs. If you have any costs which are not essential or you could do without, try to make savings.

- Any money left over will need to be distributed amongst the creditors. You will need to pay your priority creditors first, with the biggest payment going to the biggest debt and so on.
- Do not ignore letters or phone calls from creditors – contact them and let them know you are having problems.
- Write up a financial statement about your income, your outgoings, how much you owe and how much you are offering to pay.
- You need to contact all your creditors. If you do this by telephone always follow up with a letter stating how much you will be paying and how often. Include a copy of your financial statement. Ask the creditor to freeze the interest or other charges to stop the debt increasing.
- Some creditors will try to negotiate higher payments than you can afford – you may need to provide proof of your income and outgoings with pay slips, bills etc.
- If you have any problems, seek immediate advice.

It is important that you:

- Do not promise to pay more than you can afford.
- Make sure that you stick to an arrangement that you have made with a creditor.
- Contact your creditor immediately if your circumstances change and you cannot meet the payments you first agreed.

If a creditor ignores your offer of payment, or will not accept it, make the payments anyway and seek advice.

Bailiffs and court action

If you are facing court action or the bailiffs, you need to seek immediate advice; contact details of advice organisations are [on page --](#).

Jargon buster

Creditor – the company or person you owe money to.

Debtor – the person that owes money.

Income – all the money you have coming in from work, benefits or elsewhere.

Expenditure/outgoings – how and where you spend your money.

Interest / APR % – this is a charge made by someone who lends you money or gives you credit – it is added to the amount you owe.

Credit – like a loan, it can be in the form of cash or goods.

Charges – these can be added to the amount you owe, like interest. Some charges can be added on as a penalty eg, if you miss a payment.

Financial Statement – a copy of your income and outgoings showing how much income you have spare (or not) and a list of all the other debts you have.

Budget planner.

Item description	Actual	Target	Savings
Rent, Service charges and water rates			
Council Tax			

Home contents insurance			
Electricity			
Gas			
Telephone / Mobile			
Internet connection			
Television licence			
Satellite / cable connection			
Food / groceries			
Household products			
Toiletries			
Bus fares			
Taxi fares			
Train fares			
Hire purchase / loans / credit card			
Vehicle insurance			
Vehicle road tax			
Vehicle fuel			
Vehicle servicing / repairs and MOT			
Childcare			
School meals			
Hobbies and sports			
Socialising (cinema / trips etc.)			
Presents (birthdays / Xmas / Easter egg)			
Holidays			
Health (Medicines / vitamins etc.)			
Clothing and shoes			
Pets and vets			
Pocket money for children			
Home improvements			
Newspapers, magazines and books			
CD'S and DVD'S			
Beauty and cosmetics			
Savings and investments			
Alcohol			
Cigarettes			
Lottery, scratch cards and gambling			
Other			
Other			
Other			
TOTAL			

Income Sheet.

Income	Per week	Per month
Wages / salary		
Wages / salary of partner		

Child benefit		
Child tax credit		
Working tax credit		
Income support		
Jobseekers allowance		
Attendance allowance		
Disability living allowance		
Maternity allowance		
Statutory maternity pay		
State pension		
Pension credit		
Maintenance		
Child support		
Statutory sick pay		
Incapacity benefit		
Housing benefit		
Council Tax benefit		
Other income		
Total		

Falling Behind with Your Rent

Please tell us as soon as you have any problems paying your rent or service charges. We are committed to working with you to sort the problem out. If you don't contact us, we will write to you when you miss a payment.

Our letter will ask you to get in touch. Please do not ignore us, as we will do all we can to help you. We want to keep rents as low as possible and provide a high standard of service, so we must do everything we can to collect your rent. This includes taking action in the courts if we cannot reach an agreement with you to repay any money you owe **including any associated legal costs.**

If you fail to adhere to the agreed payment plan or you ignore the problem this could result in you being evicted from your home.

If you find it difficult keeping to any payment arrangement set, you should contact your Housing Officer immediately who will be only too happy to advise you.

Upon request, Housing **and Community Development** will provide you with an up-to-date record of your rent account. **Housing and Community Development will also issue a 6 monthly rent statement by post. (CHECK THIS WITH GLYN PRIOR TO FINAL COPY)**

Housing benefit and Council Tax discount

Denbighshire County Council's Housing Benefit team will process any Housing Benefit claims and any payments due will be paid directly to your rent account. You may be entitled to full Housing Benefit or only be entitled to a portion, you can ask your Neighbourhood Officer to check with the Housing Benefits team on your behalf, but you will be required to give the housing benefit department permission. A Housing Benefit Assessor will then be able to check if you are entitled to any assistance with your rent.

Depending on your circumstances, you may also be entitled to Council Tax discount. You would need to contact the Council Tax team (details on page--) to find out if you qualify. You should also contact them if your circumstances change e.g. there are more / less people living in your home.

'Service charging' inserted here when finalised – Dave!

Insurance

Denbighshire Housing Services provides 'Buildings Insurance Cover' for all its properties; you are strongly advised to make sure you have sufficient 'Contents Insurance'. If you have received permission from us to operate a business from your home, you must ensure that your insurance covers this; particularly if the business involves customers visiting your home, as you will require Public Liability cover.

Accidents do happen and dealing with the damage can cost a lot of money.

What would happen if you had a burglary or even just a burst pipe? **Do you have glass cover?** How would you replace your precious possessions? Or, supposing you had a fire in your home, could you afford to replace your furniture out of your own pocket?

We have provided details of a home contents insurance scheme, with highly competitive rates, specifically designed for tenants in your welcome pack; this is optional and you are free to seek insurance elsewhere if you wish; the internet is a great place to start especially price comparison sites! You can save money and even earn cashback or vouchers!

Lodgers and subletting

- **If you are a secure Tenant,** you have the right to take in lodgers. A lodger is someone who lives with you, shares your facilities but cannot stop you going into any of the rooms they use. You may have a prior arrangement to provide certain services for them, such as cooking or cleaning. You do not need to get our permission but you should tell your Neighbourhood Officer if you do have a lodger.
- You have the right to sublet part of your home but you must obtain prior written permission from your Neighbourhood Officer. A sub-tenant is someone who has their own self-contained part of your home; they share your facilities but can stop you going into their part of your home. You cannot sublet your entire household.

- Taking into consideration the introduction of the 'Spare Room Subsidy', commonly known as the 'Bedroom Tax', in April 2013, any tenant will be able to exercise their right to take a lodger to offset the residual charge which has been deducted from their housing benefit payment for their excess bedroom.
- Before you consider either a lodger or subletting you must contact your Neighbourhood Officer who will discuss viable options, e.g. number of bedrooms available and any possible connection you have with your lodger.

Gardens

With the exception of shared or community green spaces which are maintained by Housing and Community Development grounds maintenance contractors, it is your responsibility to maintain your garden or area within the boundary of your property in a presentable condition.

You will be expected to keep your garden tidy by cutting the lawn and trimming hedges regularly; the maintenance of all trees and shrubs within the confines of your property is also your responsibility; consideration should be given to not planting shrubs or trees that are likely to exceed 2 metres in height; information is provided on labels of plants purchased from garden centres etc. If you are in doubt as to what plants may be appropriate, please contact your Neighbourhood Officer.

If you are considering removing trees from your property, please consult with us as we have a tree removal policy to help guide you.

The standard of gardens maintenance required to satisfy the terms and conditions of your Tenancy are outlined in your Tenancy Agreement on page----.

To reduce the risk of dispute with your neighbours (and potentially breaching the terms of your Tenancy), we request that you always consider the impact that not maintaining your garden or inappropriate planting has upon adjoining properties.

Denbighshire County Council Environment Services Department provides an opt-in chargeable green wheelie-bin service on a fortnightly basis, in which to recycle hedge cuttings, mown grass, leaves and other organic garden waste. (Refer to services on Page -)

In some areas of the County, where green wheelie bins are not in use, recycling and composting of garden waste queries can be answered by contacting Customer Services (page.....).

You may burn garden waste or leaves; but this should only be done in garden waste incinerator as no bonfires are permitted (see page Tenancy Agreement). If lighting a garden waste fire, it is good practice to notify your neighbours in order for them to clear washing lines or close windows as this will avoid potential for neighbour disputes.

Garages

There are a number of council garages for rent throughout the county. Any Denbighshire resident can apply to rent a garage from us; we operate a waiting list and give preference to those who have waited the longest.

If you wish to rent a garage, you need to request a garage application form from your Rents Officer (details on page --) or apply online.

Once you have completed the garage application form, you will join the waiting list and we will let you know when a garage becomes available; your waiting time will depend on the area you want and how many other people are on the list.

Garages are for personal/private use only and must not be used for business purposes. They are intended for the storage of a motor vehicle (notify your motor insurer if you keep your vehicle in the garage as you may qualify for a discount on your premium) and should not be used for the storage of any other goods. You must not store petrol or any other inflammable materials in your garage. You must not sublet your garage to anyone else.

The rent for a council garage will be charged weekly in advance. You can pay your garage rent via the housing services normal payment routes – see 'Paying your rent' on Page --.

We require only two weeks advance notice in writing if you want to give up your garage.

The Council does not accept any responsibility for damages to vehicles or property as a result of leaking or decaying roofs on garages.

Communal areas

In shared areas of blocks of flats, Housing and Community Development will maintain:

- Stairways, corridors and entrances
- Shared facilities, including television aerials and door entry systems, common area lighting and refuse/recycling areas
- Housing and Community Development will aim to re-decorate shared areas of flats on a regular basis.

You have a responsibility to ensure that you consider your neighbours at all times in keeping shared areas (halls, landings, stairwells in blocks and flats) clean, tidy and free from obstruction.

All communal areas are 'No Smoking' zones.

Animals

We understand that pets can be a beneficial addition to your family; you are allowed pets, however, you should always check with your Neighbourhood Officer before you get a pet. Please bear in mind that some properties may not be suitable for certain pets and you may be restricted from having a pet, or additional pets, as per the terms of your Tenancy Agreement. Your pets and livestock will be recorded on a pet / livestock register to assist us with advising you on appropriate pet ownership in the future.

Should you consider adopting or buying a pet or additional pets, we request that you consult with your Neighbourhood Officer who will be happy to advise you; this will avoid unnecessary money being spent on an unsuitable pet.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your pets are kept under control at all times; they must not cause concern or nuisance to other people and should be kept on leads in communal areas. By law, you are responsible to clear up any after your dog if it fouls shared areas or public places.

It is of the utmost importance that you keep your pet in a healthy environment in clean condition with fresh water readily available at all times.

If you have concerns regarding the welfare of a neighbour's pet, you can raise the issue in confidence with your Neighbourhood Officer or the RSPCA (DETAILS ON PAGE --)

Sheltered Housing – Pets

Large pets are discouraged from sheltered housing complexes, however, if an offer is made to an applicant with a 'veteran' pet; at no stage would Housing and Community Development expect the pet to be re-homed, although you would be discouraged from replacing it.

Section 5

Your safety and security.

Gas safety.

Housing and Community Development has a responsibility under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to ensure that the appliances in your home are serviced annually. We take these responsibilities seriously, however we need your assistance to allow us access when your annual service is due. Denbighshire County Council may enforce legal action to gain entry to your home should we experience persistent cases of non-access while attempting to service your appliances.

Housing and Community Development responsibilities.

Housing and Community Development will ensure the following:

- Each property with a gas supply will have a full Gas Safety check before it is re-let
- We will arrange an annual service of all gas appliances installed by Housing and Community Development.

- We will complete a visual inspection of all appliances purchased by you during the annual service to ensure they comply with current regulations
- We will repair any appliances (supplied by the council) which are reported as defective as quickly as possible following the annual gas service
- We will only employ the services of qualified GAS SAFE Registered Contractors to complete the annual service and additional repair and installation work.

Your responsibilities

As a responsible tenant you are contractually obliged:

- To allow our contractors access to carry out the necessary servicing and safety checks. Failure to do so may result in legal action against you. Should you miss an appointment then please contact our contractors immediately on 01492 876509 to reschedule an appointment.
- To seek prior written permission from us before you install a gas cooker, fire or any other gas appliance.
- To only allow registered GAS SAFE contractors to do any work to the gas appliances in your home.
- Ensure that your own gas appliances are brought up to standard should they be identified as defective or condemned.
- Notify Property Services when you want to arrange a gas supply and meter in order for us to arrange a check of the pipe work installation in your home.

IMPORTANT - IF YOU SMELL GAS:

Gas emergency services

0800 111 999 (This is a 24 hour emergency line).

If you smell gas, think you have a gas **leak** (having first checked that your gas appliance is turned off) or are worried that fumes containing **carbon monoxide** are escaping from a gas appliance, please **call the free Gas Emergency Services emergency line** immediately on **0800 111 999**.

Also:

- Open all doors and windows to ventilate the property.
- Do not turn on/off any electrical switches.
- Extinguish all naked flames, do not smoke, strike matches or do anything which could cause ignition.
- If there are any electrical security entry phones/locks, please open door manually.

Further guidance & advice is available from the following websites:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg238.pdf>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg285.pdf>

<http://www.wvutilities.co.uk/>

See also page --

Fire safety

To help you make your home safe, listed below is a useful checklist to help prevent unnecessary fire damage or fatal accident.

- Ensure your smoke alarm is working by testing weekly. If you are aware that alarms are faulty in communal areas, please report to us as soon as possible.
- If you wish to cook late at night, especially using a deep fat fryer, ensure that the fat has cooled and a lid placed on top and check all power sources are turned off.
- Invest in a fire blanket, preferably to be kept in the kitchen area.
- Be extra careful when using candles in the home, ensure they are extinguished before leaving your home or going to bed.
- Take care when smoking in your home; many home fires start from dropped cigarettes, especially late at night. Ensure your soft furnishings and bedding are labelled as 'fire retardant'.
- If you have an open fire in your home, ensure you damp-down your fire before going to bed and always use a fire guard. If you have an enclosed fire, ensure all doors are closed before leaving your property or going to bed.
- Ensure you have an 'exit plan' in case of fire i.e. a window for easy escape and ensure your door / window keys are easily found in an emergency.
- Seriously consider investing in a carbon monoxide emission detector unit, affixed to the wall in the room where either a gas or coal fire is positioned, as carbon monoxide is virtually odourless.

Legionella control

Legionella bacteria are found naturally in water sources. They can multiply in domestic water systems given the right conditions. Inhalation or swallowing legionella bacteria can cause a form of pneumonia called Legionnaires disease as well as other less serious illnesses.

Housing **and Community Development** carries out risk assessments to all its housing stock in line with Health and Safety Executive recommendations.

The risk of contracting Legionnaires disease is very low; however you should take the following steps to keep the risk low:

- Clean and disinfect all shower heads on a quarterly basis
- Ensure all taps and water sources which are not normally used are flushed regularly (i.e. outside taps and toilets)
- Keep your water cistern and storage tank covered, insulated, clean and free from debris. If your storage tank is not insulated or covered, ask us to do this for you.
- Run any taps and showers to remove any stagnant water when they have not been used for a while i.e. over a week. This may be when you first move in or you have been on holiday.
- Visit your GP immediately if you suspect you have Legionnaires disease.

Security

Crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour is an important consideration in the quality of life of local communities. Across Denbighshire, agencies and authorities are committed to working in partnership to reduce crime and disorder and to maintain quality of life for people who live, work and visit the area.

Cutting crime and tackling the causes of crime needs to involve a range of organisations; Denbighshire Community Safety Partnership was established to bring these bodies together to deliver local initiatives to:

- Reduce crime and its impact on the community
- Reduce re-offending
- Effectively tackle Anti-Social Behaviour and behaviour adversely affecting the environment
- Reduce harm caused by alcohol and substance misuse
- Effectively tackle domestic abuse

The Partnership recognises that crime is a top priority for communities in Denbighshire. The Partnership consults with communities to find out what they consider to be the priority issues and then develop an annual strategy to tackle priority issues.

- If you have information about crime, you call Crime stoppers anonymously on **0800 555 111**
- Find out about your local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme – www.ourwatch.org.uk
- To report non-emergency incidents or anti-social behaviour contact the Police on **101**
- To report domestic abuse to dedicated Police Domestic Abuse Officers **101**
- In an emergency always dial **999** and ask for the appropriate agency

We want you to feel safe and secure in your home and have provided you with some useful advice below. You may wish to contact your local community police officer for some individual advice.

In your home ensure that you:

- Keep all doors locked, even when you are in
- Leave a light on when you go out at night
- If you are out all day and night, use a light timer
- Consider fitting a burglar alarm and a panic alarm
- Consider fitting window locks

When you answer the door:

- If you can, switch on an outside light
- Use your door safety locks eg, chain, your peephole, or entry phone if you have one
- Ask for identification and check it is valid (call the number on ID)
- Always stay with the caller once you have let them in
- **DO NOT LET ANYONE IN IF YOU ARE UNSURE ABOUT THEM**

When you go on holiday:

- Make the house appear occupied by fitting light timers
- Ask a friend/neighbour to close the curtains at night
- Put your valuables in a secure place
- Leave a key with a trusted neighbour

Look after your possessions by:

- Getting rid of boxes that expensive possessions have been packaged in
- Mark your valuables with a security marker. They can be bought from most DIY shops.
- Asking your Crime Reduction Officer to provide you with 'post coded property' stickers for your window
- Consider photographing your valuables for insurance purposes

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

We believe that everyone has a right to the 'quiet enjoyment of their home' – free from crime, disturbance, harassment or abuse.

Anti-social behaviour is unreasonable behaviour that is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to any person, household, neighbourhood or community.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- **Neighbour** problems – these are disputes which can happen between two or more neighbours and cover complaints about noise, verbal abuse, boundary disputes, harassment and intimidation, children acting in an anti-social manner, car repairs, damage to property and barking or aggressive dogs.

- **Neighbourhood** problems – these problems affect more people living in a neighbourhood such as graffiti, dog fouling, fly tipping, young people acting in an antisocial manner, nuisance motor vehicles and abandoned vehicles.
- **Crime** problems affect the wider community – such problems include burglary of houses, criminal damage, drug dealing, car crime, arson, hate crime, public order offences and violence against people.

Nuisance is a general term to include all types of unacceptable behaviour that interferes with other people's rights, for example, noise. It can also include legal nuisances such as accumulations of rubbish, noxious smells or animals kept in such a place or manner that is harmful to health in which case, action may be taken under environmental protection laws.

Harassment is deliberate behaviour intended to intimidate, dominate or harm an individual or a certain group, such as members of minority ethnic communities.

Denbighshire County Council will not tolerate any form of harassment – whether it is:

- Verbal abuse
- Physical attacks on people or property
- Racist slogans / leaflets
- Rubbish etc put through letter boxes

Housing **and Community Development** understand the effect that Anti-Social Behaviour and nuisance can have on resident's lives and we wish to give a clear message that it is totally unacceptable at any level. We will respond to **all** complaints of ASB, however, there are a number of things which you can do before contacting us:

Talk to your neighbours

In most cases the best way of tackling a problem, is for neighbours to try to sort things out between themselves. People do not always realise that their behaviour is affecting others. By thinking how your behaviour might affect your neighbours, you can stop problems before they occur.

If the ASB problem has progressed to a more serious level, Housing Officer involvement may be required and could also involve the police and other partner agencies.

Solving serious anti-social behaviour issues takes time and commitment from you and our Officers, it is our duty to keep you advised at all stages throughout the investigation process.

There are several ways in which we can take action to deal with ASB issues; these are outlined in your Tenancy Agreement in section 'Enforcement of Tenancy Conditions' on page --.

Examples of unacceptable Behaviour that could be considered a 'breach of tenancy' and put your home at risk.

- **Loud music or loud noise** from a TV, radio, hi-fi or musical instruments
- **Loud arguing, shouting and door slamming**

- **Playing ball games**
- **Dog** barking and fouling
- **Offensive, abusive** and **threatening** behaviour
- **Dumping** of rubbish
- **Vandalism** of property
- Repeated **repairing** of vehicles etc.
- **Throwing** items from windows, balconies and walkways
- DIY at **unsociable hours**
- **Alcohol** related behaviour
- Any form of **hate crime** as outlined in your Tenancy Agreement on **page—**
- **Domestic violence**
- **Illegal or immoral activity.**

Mediation

Your Neighbourhood Officer may suggest mediation, which is a way of helping people deal with disputes enabling some form of agreement that everyone can live with. A mediator helps people discuss the problem, they do not 'take-sides' and there is no charge to people involved.

Tips on being neighbourly:

- Always consider your neighbours; a good rule of thumb is to not do anything that would annoy, upset, or distress you if done by someone else.
- Think about your neighbours when doing something noisy (e.g. playing loud music) politely let them know beforehand, especially if you are planning party. You could even invite them!
- If your dog barks when left alone, make alternative arrangements for its welfare, perhaps leave it with a relative or friend.
- Remember that noise and vibration travels easily through walls, ceilings and floors.

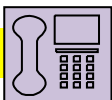
- Be co-operative if asked by a neighbour to reduce noise, or if they have told you that some of your actions are causing them distress.
- Take responsibility for the behaviour of your children and/or visitors.
- Respect the fact that other people have different lifestyles and never seek to impose your way of life upon your neighbours.

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Section 6

Repairs and maintenance.

Repairs and Maintenance Team: For all property maintenance enquiries and fault reporting:



01824 706101

Out of hours emergency repairs: 01745 351205

Housing **and Community Development** has its own in-house repairs workforce called Denbighshire Repairs and Maintenance Team; this team carries out the majority of the repairs of Housing **and Community Development** properties, however, this is also complemented by the use of approved

professional contractors. These are used when specialist skills are required, at peak times when demand exceeds the capacity of the internal team, or where it would be un-economic to deliver the repair in-house. Regardless of who provides the service to our customers, the standards of work, target times for completion and the code of conduct observed by tradesmen remains the same.

Please note: Denbighshire Council is not responsible for replacing, renewing or maintaining any fitting or improvement to the home that has been made by the resident.

Emergency repairs

Repairs are classed as an 'Emergency' if there is considered to be a potential risk to the health or safety of any persons or risk of serious damage to any building. The Repair and Maintenance team aims to respond to these within **2 hours** of the call being taken from the customer and must 'make safe' within **4 hours**. In order to 'make safe' only a temporary repair will be carried out to ensure the situation is safe and secure. Once this has been done, arrangements will be made with the customer to complete the remaining remedial repair in an appropriate timescale. In the case of heating repairs that cannot be completed in the first instance, temporary heating will be offered.

For all emergency repairs, when telephoning the Council to report the repair, customers will be asked to stay at the property if it is safe to do so, or remain available to provide access for the repairs team, or one of their approved contractors.

Examples of an Emergency Repair

- Flood / fire.
- Serious structural damage.
- Burst pipes.
- Customer locked out of property.
- Blocked and overflowing drains. No water.
- Complete loss of electricity supply. Failure of alarm/call system.
- Complete heating system failure during winter period (unless Sheltered Housing when this will be provided all year).
- Property not secured or failure of security systems such as windows or external doors.
- Blocked toilet (where there is only one WC).

Emergency out-of-hours Service

Denbighshire Council provides an emergency out-of-office hours service for emergency repairs which occur outside of office hours and cannot be left until the next working day.

The service is available **6pm - 8am, Monday - Sunday including bank holidays**. Should the repair not be considered to be an emergency, the customer will be advised to phone the repairs number during office hours.

The emergency out-of-hours service will usually involve making the situation safe and secure; the full repair will normally be completed during normal working hours.

In circumstances where a tenant has been found to have deliberately or falsely reported an out-of-hours emergency repair, i.e. they have overstated the emergency nature of the repair, they may be recharged for the full cost of the call out plus an administration fee.

Out of Hours Emergency Repairs: 01745 351205

Urgent repairs

These are repairs where the situation is causing serious discomfort, inconvenience or nuisance to the occupants or a third party, or is likely to lead to further deterioration of the building if the problem persists. There are two categories of Urgent repairs:

- **A two day urgent repair, which although not dangerous, may still present a risk to people or the property.**

Examples of a Two Day Urgent Repair

- ❖ Partial loss of electrical power – specifically in kitchens, bathrooms and landings.
- ❖ Leaking pipes (not just dripping).
- ❖ Taps which cannot be turned on or off.
- ❖ Loss of heating – total loss in summer, partial loss in winter (unless sheltered when partial loss will be dealt with all year round).
- ❖ Graffiti - Offensive/racist.
- ❖ Leaking roof.
- ❖ Windows failing to open/close which could prevent a route of escape in the case of fire.
- ❖ Sink/basin/bath – overflowing or water not going down at all.
- ❖

- **A five day urgent repair which has a lower level of risk; but it is best practice to carry out the repair quicker than a routine repair to avoid further repairs/unnecessary inconvenience to the customer.**

Examples of a Five Day Urgent Repair

- ❖ Toilet repair – where there is more than one toilet at the property (otherwise emergency repair).
- ❖ Individual electric sockets.
- ❖ Dripping or loose taps.
- ❖ Individual radiators not working.
- ❖ Loss of heating – partial loss in summer.
- ❖ Doors – sticking.
- ❖ Windows – difficult to open.
- ❖ Gutters – running over.
- ❖ Security lights.
- ❖ Partial loss of water supply.
- ❖ Sink/basin/bath – water slowly draining away.

Routine repairs

Routine repairs are carried out when the problem does not cause serious discomfort, inconvenience or nuisance to the occupants or third parties and does not detrimentally impact upon the longer term deterioration of the building.

Routine repairs will be completed within **20 working days** of being reported **and** a pre-inspection has been completed.

Examples of Routine Repairs

- ❖ Repairs to kitchen fittings.
- ❖ Repairs to tiling.
- ❖ Repair of gutters and down-pipes.
- ❖ Smaller repairs to plasterwork - less than five square meters.
- ❖ Dripping/leaking taps or shower units.
- ❖ Other minor plumbing repairs.
- ❖ Other minor 'day-to-day' repairs/replacement.
- ❖ Cleaning of gullies in communal areas.
- ❖ Maintenance of smoke detectors and alarms in communal areas.

Vulnerable customers

The Repairs and Maintenance Service team will make every effort to prioritise repairs relating to vulnerable customers, depending on the type of repair required and the issues that the problem is causing to the individual(s) concerned.

Note: A 'vulnerable' person is defined as those in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation.

Recharge Policy

The cost of completing certain works may be charged to you as per **your** Tenancy Agreement, for example:

- The repair is required as a result of damage through tenant negligence or neglect (this also applies if any member of the household, pets, or visitor to the property causes damage).
- The tenant fits any type of installation or fixed appliance requiring repair that was installed without prior written agreement from Housing **and Community Development**.
- The tenant is responsible for any alterations they make, or they agree to take on as part of the tenancy agreement.
- Works are required when the tenant moves out in order to bring the property back to an acceptable standard.
- Where damage or neglect has occurred (for which a tenant is responsible) the tenant is to repay the cost of the works to Denbighshire Council or to undertake the repairs themselves at their own cost, within a reasonable timescale and to the Council's satisfaction.
- Should the tenant carry out the works themselves, or pay someone else to do the work, but it fails to achieve the Council's standards, we may carry out the works and charge the tenant for the cost.
- Where damage is caused by vandalism, the Council will carry out works to make the property safe, however the Council will only do further works if they are provided with a Police crime report number.

Examples of Chargeable Repairs

- ❖ Damaged sink or toilets.
- ❖ Broken windows or doors.
- ❖ Replacing locks/keys and door frames (due to force of entry) as a result of lost keys
- ❖ Any damage **as a** result of vandalism from within the household.
- ❖ Any unauthorised installation which has to be made good.
- ❖ **Vandalism – unless the tenant can provide a police crime reference number.**
- ❖ Any reinstatement work following flood, fire or other similar damage where such damage was caused by the actions or neglect of the tenant or another member of their household or visitor.

In the event your tenancy is ended, you could be charged for the following:

- Costs of clearing the property
- Cleaning the property
- Repairing any damage or neglect
- Replacing any fixtures or fittings which you have removed and not replaced with Alternatives of a reasonable and similar standard
- Changing the locks
- Re-instating excavated ponds etc

If customers become liable for any recharges and are concerned about how to pay for them, the Repairs and Maintenance team will advise on any repayment options available to suit budgets.

Winter Weather Precautions

- ❖ Ensure your pipes, especially external, are insulated with lagging and if you have a water tank in the loft, check there is no loft insulation underneath it as it would prevent rising heat from reaching the tank.
- ❖ Ensure all leaking overflows and taps are reported to Customer Services.
- ❖ If water from any leak comes into contact with electrical wiring in your home, switch off the electricity at the mains. You will need to report this to Customer Services who will arrange for an operative to attend as a matter of urgency.

❖ If water is leaking into your home from a neighbour's house or flat and you are unable to contact your neighbour, phone Customer Services.

❖ Please let us know if you are going to be away from your home for any significant time during winter; we can then advise you as what precautions to take to prevent frost damage.

If you are concerned about flooding in your area should contact **Floodline** on **0345 988 1188**.

Visit Natural Resources Wales' website - naturalresourceswales.gov.uk - to find out what to do before, during and after a flood

During a flood emergency

- Try to stay calm and check on neighbours or any vulnerable members of your community.
- Listen to the local radio for up-to-date news on the flood.
- Don't throw rubbish into watercourses or leave debris on the banks – it can add to the flooding problem.
- Ensure that you wear plastic / rubber gloves when handling affected items as floodwater can contain sewage.
- Switch off the gas, water and electricity if your house gets flooded.
- If road conditions permit and it is safe to do so, remove vehicles to areas unaffected by flooding; ask friends and relatives to use their parking facilities.
- Store belongings upstairs or in a high place downstairs.
- If you live in a bungalow, caravan, prefab or any other dwelling without access to a second storey and you find yourself in difficulty, alert the emergency services so you can be evacuated. If you are able to self-evacuate and stay with family or friends, inform the emergency services so your location is known.
- If flooding traps you, stay by a window and try to attract attention.
- Obey road closures or advisory notices that are put out for your safety.
- Avoid moving water. Moving water only 6 inches deep can sweep adults off their feet.
- Don't dispose of damaged goods until your insurers have had a chance to inspect them.
- Don't use electrical circuits or equipment exposed to floodwater until checked by a qualified electrician.

Financial help to prepare your home for winter

You may be eligible for an Energy Efficiency Grant and a Warm Homes Grant is also available to any resident receiving state pension (this is one per household).

Home Improvements

We are keen to encourage our customers to carry out home improvement projects; however you must consult with us first to ensure that the 'improvement' is appropriate for the property (for instance, installing laminate flooring in first floor flats presents noise problems for those below);

you must also be able to demonstrate that the work will be carried out by a qualified / competent person. We may even be able to offer advice on alternative ideas!

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Section 7

Your community and the environment.

We all have a responsibility for our community and for minimising our impact upon the environment. This section provides some guidance, tips and advice on how you can make a positive contribution.

The best way for us all to make a contribution on a daily basis is to reduce our waste, preferably by not creating it in the first place. Here are a few tips to help you **Reduce** your waste (and

expenditure), **Re-use** items still fit for use (and possibly make money) and **Recycle** items not fit for reuse.

Reduce.

- Only buy the food you are going to eat. Statistics show that a third of all the food we buy in the UK is thrown away.
Visit www.lovefoodhatewaste.com for tasty recipe ideas and top tips that help you cut back on wasting food and can save you money.
- Think before you buy – try to buy items that are not heavily packaged or buy refills instead.
- Register with the Mailing Preference Services who help you opt out of receiving unsolicited sales and marketing messages, by mail, phone or fax.

Reuse.

- Repair broken goods, rather than replacing them; or donate to local furniture repair enterprises or community projects.
- When replacing furniture and fittings offer them to friends and family or advertise them in local papers rather than throwing them away. You could try looking at www.freecycle.org/groups/unitedkingdom (or access our Website, Facebook and Twitter on the contacts pages) then follow the links to your local group.
- Sell through newspapers and free ads, garage sales, car boots, ebay or desk top sales. You may be surprised what people will pay for your unwanted items!
- Take unwanted clothes and shoes to your local charity shop or textile bank or even offer to local drama groups for costumes! Quality, labelled and retro clothing can fetch good money on online auction sites such as ebay!
- Donate to charities
- Donate unwanted electrical items to local enterprises that can repair them and make them available to others in the community.
- When buying electrical goods, ask the shop if they have a “Take Back Scheme” for unwanted items; many will take your old item away at the same time as they deliver your new one

Recycle.

- In Denbighshire there are five recycling sites that residents can use for their domestic waste; **Lon Parcwr** - Ruthin, **Colomendy** – Denbigh, **Marsh Road** – Rhyl, **Llangollen** pavilion and the **Highways Depot** – Corwen.

- A lot of your household waste (eg, vegetable / fruit peelings, tea bags, coffee grinds, dead flowers, garden waste) could be composted at home; To help encourage composting at home, residents can purchase a compost bin for the reduced price of £15

You can arrange payment and collection by phoning 01824 706101 or by visiting any 'One Stop' shop. You can collect your composter from the following places;

- Bodelwyddan Kinmel Park Depot
- Ruthin Lon Parcwr depot
- Corwen One Stop Shop
- Llangollen One Stop Shop

Denbighshire Council provides a kerbside recycling service; you will be provided with bags and containers to enable recycling across the county:

Grey wheelie bin / pink sack - Any domestic waste that cannot be recycled should go in your grey wheelie bin or pink sack. Please do not leave other bags for collection as they will not be taken.

Green wheelie bin/Green dumpy bag - The following garden waste goes in your green wheelie bin or green dumpy bag: Grass Cuttings Garden / Prunings /Branches and Twigs /Leaves /Flowers /Bark, wood and shavings /Plants. **This is an optional service for which a small charge is made.**

Blue wheelie bin/Blue dumpy bag - If you have a blue bin or blue dumpy bag, you can use it for recycling the following items:

- Paper / Cardboard / Tetrapaks / Glass Bottles & Jars /Plastic Bottles & Containers /Tins, Cans & Aerosols.

Orange food waste caddy - Your food waste goes into the orange food waste caddy ready for its weekly collection. A smaller kitchen caddy is provided for you to collect food waste each day and transfer to the orange food waste container when convenient. The following food waste can go into the orange caddy;

- Baked products i.e. cakes, cereals, biscuits, bread crusts, mouldy bread / Vegetable waste i.e. peelings / rotten veg /Tea bags / coffee grounds /Leftovers / Fruit waste i.e skins, cores, peels / Meat waste / Dairy waste i.e. egg shells

White Sacks - Properties not suitable for wheelie bins or within rural communities are able to recycle tins, cans, tetra-paks, glass bottles and jars, cardboard and paper with the white recycling sack scheme.

Bulky item collections – Denbighshire Council offers a collection service for large items such as beds, wardrobes etc. There is a cost for using this service and you can find out which items we will collect, as well as any other query regarding re-use or recycling, by contacting Environmental Services (page--).

'Your Neighbourhood Your Space'.

The Housing **and Community Development team** has developed an environment improvement programme specifically designed to empower our customers and residents to develop projects for improving green space areas in their neighbourhood.

The programme is called 'Your Neighbourhood Your Space' and could support projects which contribute to:

Safer Communities - Improvements that reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour, improve local community safety and involve young people.

Healthier Communities – Development of food growing projects, creating community gardens / allotments and encouraging community members to undertake the work themselves.

Green & Clean communities - Clearance of litter or fly tipping, raising awareness of environmental issues or improving wildlife habitat.

Skills and expertise – Increasing understanding of sustainable development and the environment through information, education and advisory services.

If you have a project idea for your neighbourhood; you should contact your Neighbourhood Officer for information about applying to the programme.

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Section 8

Getting involved in your community.

Tenant Participation.

Denbighshire Council is committed to improving services and we believe that there is no better way than to involve you our customers and tenants, in helping assess and shape the services provided by the Housing **and Community Development team**.

There are several ways in which you can get involved in improving the Housing Services you and your neighbours receive; you could volunteer to become a “*Green Ranger*” or a “*Clean Ranger*” for instance:



“*Green Rangers*” help us in assessing the grounds maintenance service; this includes grass cutting on our estates along with the maintenance of shrubs and bushes. Feedback forms are completed monthly by the Green Ranger; recording our customer’s views of the standard of the service. The Housing **and Community Development team** will use this feedback to address issues raised with the contractors at regular contract performance reviews.



“*Clean Rangers*” volunteer their time to assess our cleaning services; if you live in one of our flats or within one of our sheltered schemes, you could be involved in providing us with feedback on the quality of the cleaning service in your communal areas. Again, forms are completed and sent back to us monthly to provide feedback which we then communicate to the contractor at contract review meetings.

If you are interested in taking part and becoming a “Ranger” please contact your Neighbourhood Officer.

Tenants and Residents Associations / Federation

We work with a number of Tenants and Residents Associations throughout the County; these have been set up by local people to represent the views of our customers and local residents regarding the services provided by Housing **and Community Development** as well as general issues concerning the wider community.

There are around a dozen such Associations who are all affiliated to the Denbighshire Tenants and Residents Federation (DTARF) who regularly meet with, and receive support from, the Housing **and Community Development team**.

Getting involved isn't just about attending meetings; we can support you or your group to develop new skills and to meet new people, we can also help Associations and the Federation in looking for funding for a community project you wish to develop.

If you would like further details, advice or support to set up a new Association, please contact a **Neighbourhood Officer**.

Newsletter Editing

The Housing and Community Development team provides volunteering opportunities for tenants who are interested in helping us improve our Newsletter and other communications.

The Editorial Panel supports us to ensure that what we send out to customers is reader friendly with appropriate layout, easy to understand and useful. With our Newsletter we also encourage suggestions of things to include and ideas for design. You could even write an article, take photographs or help with graphics!

The Newsletter - 'Housing News' is sent out twice a year, around January and July. You won't be expected to attend meetings every month but maybe 2-3 times before each edition is published; you may wish to get involved by email or post instead, where we can send you documents to comment on.

You do not need any previous experience or background, just an interest in what goes into the newsletter. Please get in touch with the Neighbourhood Development Team for more information.

Comments, complaints and compliments.

Complaints team: To log feedback or a complaint:



01824 706101 Text: 07800 140088



your.voice@denbighshire.gov.uk

In writing:

Your Voice, County Hall, Wynnstay Road, Ruthin, LL15 1YN.

Even if you do not wish to become involved in any of the above ways, your views are important to us in developing better services for our customers and we still want to hear what you have to say, good or bad!

If we are not doing something we should or could do something better, please let us know by letter, telephone, email or in person to one of our Officers (see 'Contacts' section). We will respond to any complaint or query promptly and politely. We do not ignore our customer's opinions; we consider all feedback in trying to improve what we do.

Everyone likes to hear that they are doing a good job, our team are no different! If you think we have done something well, please let us know as this inspires us to work harder for you and reassures us that you, our customers, are benefitting from our efforts.

Future changes and consultation

Occasionally, when we are proposing significant changes to services, we will consult with our customers for their opinions. We may send you information in the post or make you aware of forthcoming consultation events through your newsletter, our web site, Facebook or Twitter (details in the 'Contacts' section); please look out for these events as they are a good opportunity to have your say heard, as well as meet members of the Housing and Community Development team.

Moving on.

Buying your home.

Under the 'Right to Buy' scheme, you can buy your council home at a price lower than the full market value if you have spent sufficient qualifying time as a tenant. You will need to have rented for a 'qualifying property' for a minimum of five years and hold a secure tenancy.

If you do wish to exercise your 'Right to Buy', we recommend that you seek Independent legal and financial advice to help with the legal process of buying your home and to give advice about the different type of mortgages that could be available to you. Please contact your Neighbourhood Officer if you are interested in buying your home.

We may reject your request to buy your property on the grounds that your home is particularly suitable for occupation by elderly people (under paragraph 11 of Schedule 5 to the Housing Act 1985).

If you are unhappy with the decisions we have made, you can appeal to the National Assembly for Wales ([details on page--](#)) and they will let you know if our decision is appropriate. You must make your appeal within 56 days from the time you receive a rejection from us, but do remember, you can lose your right of appeal if you fail to do this within the time set.

Ending your Tenancy

Before leaving your home you must give at least 4 weeks' notice in writing; alternatively you must contact your Neighbourhood Officer who will arrange to come to your home in order to sign a 'Termination of Tenancy' Form.

If you hold a joint tenancy, either of you can end the tenancy by completing the required termination forms.

Full details of your responsibilities when leaving your home are outlined in your Tenancy Agreement under the section 'Ending your Tenancy and leaving your home'.

Transferring home

Existing customers who hold a secure tenancy with Denbighshire County Council can have the option to transfer to another property owned by the Council; approval of a transfer request depends on several factors:

- The size and type of property must be suitable for your needs
- The house you presently rent must be in good decorative order and free of any outstanding maintenance issues
- The rent account must be showing a NIL balance and there must be no other outstanding debts i.e. recharges.
- If Housing **and Community Development** has installed adaptations to your present home, it would be expected that you transfer to a property with the same adaptations. Housing **and Community Development** will not pay for adaptations to both properties.

Incentive Transfer

If you are an existing customer, holding a secure tenancy, and you feel that you are under-occupying your present home, you may apply for an 'incentive transfer' which means that you could be considered for a more appropriate home i.e. sheltered accommodation. In such circumstances, a grant could be available to you, dependant on factors, such as the condition of your vacated property. **Please contact your Neighbourhood Officer for more information.**

Housing **and Community Development** will also provide a local removal company to remove your entire household contents at no cost to yourself.

You could also be considered for an Incentive Payment if you are under-occupying your Council House by at least one bedroom and your property is deemed suitable for family use. You are eligible for this payment if you are moving to a smaller property owned either by Denbighshire Council or a Registered Social Landlord.

Mutual Exchange

If you have a Secure Tenancy and, having met the terms of our Mutual Exchange policy, wish to move, you can put your details on the **Home Swapper** register. This means that if another tenant has a house in your chosen area and they wish to move to the area in which you live, you can consider swapping.

Once you have found a tenant who wishes to exchange with you and before entering into any agreement, you must first approach your Neighbourhood Officer who will apply to the Landlord of the tenant you propose exchanging with.

Your Neighbourhood Officer will be able to explain the process of Mutual Exchange, our policy and how long the process takes.

Housing Options.

To complement our provision of services to you as a customer, we provide additional accommodation information by way of the Housing Options Team **(contact details on page---**).

This team can provide information on a comprehensive range of housing options throughout the Denbighshire e.g. emergency accommodation, private rental and affordable housing.

The Housing Options Team can also help in offering to make referrals to supported housing providers and recommending employment and training opportunities should it be necessary

Succession

In the event of your death your tenancy can pass to another **qualifying** member of your family. This is called 'succession' and is a legal right, however, only one succession is allowed per tenancy. **Please refer to you Tenancy Agreement.**

Where a tenancy was originally 'joint' and one of the tenants dies or surrenders their interest, this will count as a succession and no further statutory succession can be claimed. If there is no joint tenant, the tenancy can pass to the spouse or the person living with you as your partner when you died. This counts as a succession and this means that there is no further right to succession when that particular spouse or partner dies.

If you do not have a partner, then your tenancy may pass to another qualifying family member who can provide us with evidence that they have been a full time resident at the address for the previous 12 months.

If more than one member of your family wishes to succeed to your property; in the first instance, this should be decided by your family. If no agreement can be reached, the Council, as landlord, reserves the right to choose the successor; in this instance, there can be no 'joint succession'.

If you are eligible to succeed to a property which you would be significantly under occupying, the Council could request (and enforce) that you consider moving to a property more suitable for your needs. This would also be the case if the property was adapted and you had no need for the adaptations.

Confirmation of your right to succession is in your Tenancy Agreement in the section 'Your Rights / Right to Succession'.

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Section 10

Community directory.

Council Contact Details

Denbighshire County Council
www.denbighshire.gov.uk

Housing and Community Development

01824 708367
64 Brighton Road, Rhyl, LL18 3HN
or
County Hall, Wynnstay Road, Ruthin, LL15 1YN

Customer Services

All departments (and to report a repair)
English 01824 706101
Welsh 01824 706100
customer.services@denbighshire.gov.uk

Housing Benefit

01824 706302
01824 706312

Council Tax

01824 706428

Cash Office

01824 706304

Social Services

0300 456 1000

Environmental Services

www.denbighshire.gov.uk/binsandrecycling

National Assembly for Wales

0845 0105500 / 01492 523200
www.assemblywales.org

Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council

01824 702441
www.dvsc.org.uk

Floodline 0345 988 1188.

Other Useful Contacts

North Wales Police

999 (Emergency calls)

101 (Non-emergency calls)

(If you are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment Text phone is available on: 18001 101)

Citizens Advice Bureau

Rhyl 01745 334568 / **Denbigh** 01745 814336
Llangollen 01978 860983 / **Ruthin** 01824 703483

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Shelter Cymru

0845 075 5005 / 01745 361 444

www.sheltercymru.org.uk

Benefits Advice Shop

0800 0740333 / 01745 345145

www.bashop.tv info@bashop.tv

Age Concern North Wales

01745 816947 / 01745 815912

enquiries@acnwc.org

Conwy and Denbighshire Mental Health Advocacy Service

Eirianfa Community Centre, Factory Place, Denbigh, LL16 3TS
01745 813999

www.cadmhas.co.uk

North Wales Energy Advice Centre

0800 954 0658

Gingerbread (support for single parents)

01745 337996

North Wales Credit Union

01492 580028 / **0333200601**

Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Helpline

0808 8010 800

Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit

0300 123 33 11 (24 hrs)

www.direct.gov.uk/stoploansharks

RSPCA 01745 355798 / 01745 887057

CAIS (drug and alcohol support) 0845 0612112

www.cais.co.uk

Food Banks

01722 580180 www.trusselltrust.org or 01492 596783 fsnorthwales@crestcooperative.co.uk

Volunteering in the community.

There are many volunteering placements available with charities and community groups across Denbighshire providing a wide range of learning, social and personal development opportunities for people of all abilities. Volunteering could enable you to:

- Use your skills and experience to help or mentor others
- Learn new skills and further your personal development
- Meet people and making new friends
- Get valuable work experience to help find paid employment, often with the organisation you volunteer with.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer but are not sure what you would like to do, the range of opportunities can be overwhelming. There are a number of questions you can ask yourself which will help you select the right sort of voluntary opportunity to suit you:

- Why do you want to volunteer? Is it because you have time to spare, would like to make new friends, would like to learn new skills and gain experience, or have skills and experiences that you would like to put to good use?
- How much time can you spare? Can you make a regular commitment of a few hours a week, or are you looking to do something more short term?
- Do you prefer interacting with groups of people, on a one-to-one basis, or would you be happy to work alone?
- If you want to work with people, what sort of people - elderly, children, young people or disabled people?
- Do you have any specific skills that you would want to use in a voluntary capacity?
- Are you motivated to volunteer for a particular cause? If so, do you know exactly what you want to do or are you prepared to offer your services where they are most needed?
- Are you prepared to undergo training if your volunteering requires it?
- If you are on welfare benefits, do you know how volunteering may affect your entitlement?

To help you answer these questions and find your ideal volunteering placement, contact:

Denbighshire Volunteer Centre, Naylor Leyland Centre, Well Street, Ruthin, Denbighshire, LL15 1AF

Tel: 01824 702441

volunteer@dvsc.co.uk

Or, for outdoors / environmental based volunteering opportunities contact:

denbighshirecountryside.org.uk Tel: 01745 356197

Volunteering involves a degree of personal commitment and responsibility but it also brings with it a huge sense of achievement and fulfilment. Whatever your reasons for volunteering in your community, the most important advice you can be given is to enjoy what you are doing.

Section 11.

Please tell us what you think about this handbook.

Your views are important to us.

We hope that you have found this handbook and the information in it useful.

We are constantly looking to improve services and information provided for our tenants; it would be helpful if you could complete this short survey about the handbook and return it to: **Housing and Community Development, 64 Brighton Rd, Rhyl, Denbighshire, LL183HN** or your Neighbourhood Officer.

How useful do you find the handbook? (Please tick box)

Very useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partly useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not at all useful	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Additional comments.

Could you find the information you needed easily? (Please tick box)

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Additional comments.

Is there any information you think should be added to the handbook?

Is the language used in the handbook clear and easy to understand?

Please add any further comments or suggestions.

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