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Tenant handbook

A guide to your tenancy and home



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This document has been prepared as a guide to your tenancy and supports your tenancy agreement. If you wish to receive a hard copy please email **generaltenancyenquiries@canterbury.gov.uk** with your name and address and we will post one to you.

If you have any other accessibility needs such as language, reading ability or font size please let us know and we will support you.

We hope that this handbook helps you understand the services provided to you and your rights and responsibilities as a tenant.



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Your tenancy agreement

The tenancy agreement is the legal agreement between you and Canterbury City Council and sets out both parties' rights and responsibilities.

Please keep your signed copy of your tenancy agreement safe.

A copy of a tenancy agreement can be viewed at canterbury.gov.uk/tenancyagreement

Our tenancy policy sets out the types of tenancies available and the circumstances in which each will be offered. Please see your tenancy agreement to check which type of tenancy you have. You can read more about our tenancy policy at canterbury.gov.uk/tenancypolicy

There are two main types of tenancy

Introductory tenancy

All new tenants of ours are granted an introductory tenancy for a period of 12 months, which can be extended by up to another six months.

Introductory tenants do not have the same rights as secure or flexible tenants and cannot:

- apply for the Right to Buy their home; or
- carry out a mutual exchange with other tenants

Secure tenancy

Secure tenancies are granted after satisfactory completion of the introductory tenancy. These tenancies are sometimes known as secure lifetime tenancies.

They can also be referred to as secure periodic tenancies. If you have a secure flexible tenancy, this tenancy will default to a secure periodic tenancy after the completion of the fixed term of that tenancy.

Alternatively, you may be 'signed up' to a secure lifetime tenancy before the end of the fixed term provided you have kept to the terms of your tenancy agreement.

Lodgers, subletting and 'holiday letting'

You may take in lodgers if you have a secure or secure flexible tenancy and the property does not become overcrowded. You will need written permission if your lodgers are intending to stay for six weeks or more. You must give us



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the names of any lodgers. Introductory tenants cannot take lodgers under any circumstances. You must not sublet the whole of your home at any time.

This includes letting your property out for short periods through websites such as Airbnb. If you do, we will take legal action against you to repossess your home. You will be in breach of the tenancy agreement and may be committing fraud.

You can also be prosecuted and fined. If you are a secure or secure flexible tenant, you may be able to sublet part of your home with our written permission.

You are responsible for the behaviour of anyone who lives in your home. If you give up your tenancy, it is your responsibility to make sure that your lodger or subtenant leaves when you do.

If you receive Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, you must tell the Housing Benefit department and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) about any rental income you receive.

Periods away from your property

You must tell us if you are going to be away from the property for more than four weeks and give us a contact address in the event of

any emergency. If you are claiming help to pay your rent you must ensure that you comply with benefit rules during the period you are away. We may take action to end the tenancy if we believe a property has been abandoned.

If you are claiming Universal Credit or Housing Benefit and plan to be away from your property for an extended period, you must inform us and the DWP as your payments could be stopped.

There are certain circumstances where you can still claim help with housing costs. Please contact DWP Universal Credit or the Housing Benefit department to confirm if this applies to you.

Running a business from home

You must get written permission before starting to run a business from home. Before we consider granting or refusing permission to run a business, we consider factors such as the amount of noise generated, any nuisance that may be caused to your neighbours or whether damage will occur to the property.

Even if our consent is given, in the capacity as landlord, you may also still need to obtain planning permission for a change of use. You must not use your home for illegal or immoral purposes.



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Rent and other charges

Rent and other charges must be paid on Monday every week. You must pay in advance if you choose to pay fortnightly or monthly.

It is important that you pay rent regularly to prevent rent arrears. Your tenancy may be at risk if you get into rent arrears.

You can contact us to ask for a rent statement at any time.

The amount of rent you need to pay is usually reviewed at the beginning of each year with any change starting in April. We will give you four weeks' notice if your rent is going to change. We will give you at least seven days' notice if other charges change.

Contact details

If you have any questions about your rent please contact our rents team at **rents@canterbury.gov.uk** or by calling **01227 862 142**

Paying your rent

Our full range of payment options are as follows

- **Direct Debit** – Direct Debit is a very convenient way to pay. Your rent account must be up to date with payments and the bank account you want to set up the Direct Debit from must be a personal account belonging to a tenant, not a business account. You can choose for your Direct Debit to come out of your bank account on the first or 15th day of each month. To set one up please visit **canterbury.gov.uk/housingrent**
- **Standing order** – payments are paid automatically from your bank. Please tell your bank how much you need to pay, how often and if there are any changes. You'll need to remember to change this every April when your rent increases.
- **Online payments** – you can make a debit or credit card payment via our website at canterbury.gov.uk/housingrent. This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- **Payment card** – at any post office by cash, cheque or debit card. You'll need to contact our rent team to set this up by emailing **rents@canterbury.gov.uk**
- **Telephone payments** on **01227 862 427** – this automated voice response service takes debit or credit card payments. Calls to this service are charged at the local rate.



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Problems paying your rent

Rent arrears

It is important that we receive the rent before or when it is due. You may lose your home if you get behind with payments and fall into arrears. If you are having difficulty paying your rent please contact us immediately as we may be able to help.

If you do nothing about overdue rent that you owe, or break an agreement to clear rent arrears, we will start taking legal action to take possession of your home. Our income recovery process has several opportunities to engage with the rents team and benefits and money advice team. Please ensure you look out for correspondence and keep your contact details updated with the landlord service.

Legal advice can be obtained from a solicitor, Citizens' Advice Bureau or Canterbury Housing Advice Centre on **01227 762 605** or visit chac.co.uk

How we calculate your rent

Government rules say that all social landlords must use the same system for working out how much to charge for housing rents.



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This is to make sure that the costs:

- remain affordable
- should generally be well below those charged by private landlords
- be linked to the size, location and condition of the home; and are similar to rents for other council and housing association properties of a similar size, location and condition

Social rents are set using a government formula which means that rents are based on the value of the property, the number of bedrooms and local earnings.

How we calculate your service charges

You may also pay service charges for services provided such as cleaning and grounds maintenance (gardening).

We have separated the following services from the rent and these could include

- grounds maintenance
- caretaking
- cleaning
- CCTV
- communal lighting

You will only be charged for the services that you receive. The level of your service charges is based on the actual cost of providing the service.

Help with your housing costs

Universal Credit and Housing Benefit

If you receive Universal Credit or Housing Benefit to help pay your rent this is called 'Help with Housing Costs'.

It is best to inform the relevant benefit office (either the Department for Work and Pensions for Universal Credit or us for Housing Benefit) by your tenancy start date.

This should also be the date that you have moved in by to claim for help with housing costs.

If you move in before your tenancy start date, for example if receiving keys the previous week, please remember to wait until your tenancy start date to claim help with housing costs.

If you are claiming help with housing costs

Universal Credit: If you have internet access you can report your change of address using your online Universal Credit Journal. If you cannot use the internet, you can call Universal Credit on **0800 328 5644**.

If you have not claimed Universal Credit before then start your claim on your tenancy start date to maximise the help with the housing costs you can receive.



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But please remember that you must move in by this date to be able to claim. If you already claim Universal Credit then update your new address and rent on the first date of your tenancy.

Housing Benefit: For queries or to report changes please call **01227 862 300**.

Changes in circumstances

Changes in your personal or household circumstances may affect the amount of benefit you receive and what you pay towards your rent. This includes

- changes in income, wages or savings
- someone moving in or out of your household
- changes to your family or employment status

For more information visit
canterbury.gov.uk/benefits

If your circumstances change, you must do the following:

Inform Universal Credit or Housing Benefit immediately. If you don't, and they later discover the change, they will reclaim overpaid benefits. Contact your Rent Officer at
rents@canterbury.gov.uk.

They may be able to help you assess how the change affects your rent payments and ensure you are paying the correct amount.

You can use the benefits calculator by visiting **canterbury.gov.uk/benefits** to check your entitlement or visit **entitledto.co.uk**

If you owe rent

You may not be approved for mutual exchanges, transfers or moves until your account is up to date.

Benefits and money advice

Our Benefits and Money Advisors can help check that your income is maximised. They offer advice on

- applying for grants (e.g. for white goods, carpets)
- accessing specialist debt advice
- understanding benefits
- budgeting and money management

Contact details

We have a dedicated benefits advice team you can call on **01227 862 142** or by emailing **bandm@canterbury.gov.uk**



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Living with your neighbours

We are committed to tackling nuisance and anti-social behaviour (ASB).

We expect our residents to accept a certain level of noise from day to day living and be tolerant of other people's lifestyles, but we also expect our residents to always behave in an acceptable manner.

We actively promote ways to prevent ASB but will use our enforcement powers in appropriate circumstances. You can access a copy of our anti-social behaviour policy at canterbury.gov.uk/housingplans and report cases at canterbury.gov.uk/antisocial

How we deal with nuisance and anti-social behaviour

The tenancy conditions make it very clear that nuisance and ASB will not be tolerated.

Problems often arise when people act without thinking about their neighbours and other residents living nearby.

In addition to keeping to the formal rules of your tenancy conditions, we encourage you to be a good neighbour and follow these guidelines.



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- Do not slam the doors or put the television on too loudly late at night
- Please advise your neighbours beforehand if you're planning to carry out any noisy DIY work and ensure it is completed within reasonable times. DIY noise includes drilling, hammering, decorating and associated activities such as moving around furniture
- We ask tenants to please try to keep DIY, washing and tumble drying to reasonable times
- Make sure your children do not disturb other people. Remember that you are responsible for all members of your household, including your visitors, both in your home and the surrounding area
- Laminate or wooden flooring can increase the amount of noise that your neighbours can hear from your property. If you live in a flat or maisonette above the ground floor you must not have any laminate, or flooring of a similar type, fitted without first obtaining our written permission. Flooring of any type is the tenant's responsibility
- Dispose of your rubbish properly
- If you have permission to keep a pet please look after it properly and don't let it foul public areas or cause a nuisance in any other way. We will ask you to remove any animal that you do not have our permission to keep, or any animal that is unsuitable or causes a nuisance, or that causes damage to our property

Our responsibilities with ASB

We work closely with our partners in the council and police to use our collective resources and enforcement powers to help tackle anti-social behaviour. The council and police have additional powers that can be very effective tools to tackle certain types of behaviour.

These powers include Community Protection Notices (CPNs). CPNs are aimed at dealing with unreasonable behaviour which has a detrimental impact on the community. A CPN can be issued to anyone over the age of 16. The council and the police also have powers to close premises that are being used, or are likely to be used, to commit serious nuisance or disorder. These powers are known as Closure Orders. By working in partnership, we can help protect the most vulnerable within our communities.

We will:

- not interfere in how you use your home if you keep to the terms of your agreement
- always investigate complaints of ASB affecting those living in properties owned and managed by us and respond to each reported incident

Legal action is normally only considered when all other options have been exhausted.



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Options for legal action include:

Civil injunctions – an injunction is a civil order which can be granted against anyone aged over 10 years, either prohibiting certain behaviour or requiring them to do something positive.

Demotion orders – these are court orders that reduce the tenancy to a less secure form of tenancy, initially for 12 months.

Possession proceedings – eviction proceedings in court are usually a last resort, when other ways of trying to stop the behaviour have either failed or been exhausted.

There are five new grounds for possession that could allow for mandatory possession. This is also known as the 'absolute ground for possession for anti-social behaviour' and may arise in certain circumstances where anti-social behaviour has already been proved in another court.

For example, the tenant, a member of the tenant's household or a person visiting the property has met one of the following conditions:

- convicted of a serious offence
- found by a court to have breached a civil injunction
- convicted for breaching a Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO)

- convicted for breaching a noise abatement notice
- the tenant's property has been closed for more than 48 hours under a closure order for anti-social behaviour

Your responsibilities – you and your household

As a tenant you are responsible for the behaviour of every member of your household.

This includes your children, any visitors and all household members while they are in your home, any shared area around your home or the surrounding area. We will take action against you if you or they cause a nuisance.

Below are some of the responsibilities included in your tenancy agreement. "You" means they apply to you, all members of your household and your visitors.

Harassment

You must not harass or threaten any other person because of race, colour, nationality, religion, age, mental illness, disability, sexuality or any other reason. The types of behaviour that would include harassment are violence or threats of violence, verbal abuse, graffiti, vandalism and stalking.



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We view harassment very seriously. We will take action against you if you or members of your household or visitors harass or abuse any other person. This may include legal action that could result in you losing your home.

If you are the victim of harassment you should call the police and contact us as soon as possible. We will keep all the information you give us confidential if you want us to.

We will investigate the case, take action where appropriate and offer you help and support.

Employees

You must not assault or threaten any of our staff or those working for us or anyone else on the estate or surrounding area.

Damaging or defacing our property

You must not damage or deface our property. If you do you will be asked to pay to repair or replace damaged items and tenancy action may be sought.

Security equipment

You must not interfere with any security equipment on our property. This includes any CCTV equipment and door entry systems. This equipment is there to increase residents' security

and this could be threatened if, for example, you wedge open security doors or allow people to enter a block without identification.

Shared areas

You must not obstruct any shared areas in your block, such as leaving bicycles or bulky items in shared passageways. This could inconvenience other residents, be dangerous or a fire hazard. We will recharge the cost of removal for any items left in shared areas.

Parking

Please be considerate of your neighbours when parking. You, your visitors and those who live with you must not park any vehicle anywhere on or near your property other than a hard standing or area intended for parking. You and your visitors must not drive across a kerb to access your property unless it has a dropped in accordance with the regulations of the Highway Authority.

Please be considerate of your neighbours. Consider parking slightly further away if your home has multiple vehicles to allow neighbours to use the car park.



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Pets

If you would like to keep a pet you must first get our written permission.

We will look at each case on its own merits but please note that you will only be given permission if you live in a suitable property.

You will need our written permission to keep a pet if you live in a property that does not have its own private garden as the pet may need outdoor exercise. When considering whether to grant permission we will consider among other things:

- the type and size of your pet
- the type and size of your home
- the number of people living in your home
- access to the road and open space

Permission will not be granted for any animals listed under the Dangerous Wild Animal Act 1976 or for any dog listed under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

If you do have a pet, you are responsible by law for the pet's welfare, as defined by the Animal Welfare Act 2006. It is an offence for anyone responsible for a pet not to look after it properly.

You must ensure that your pet has a suitable environment to live in, a suitable diet and is safe from harm.

If your pet dies you will need permission to replace it with another one.

The breeding and sale of animals is prohibited.

If you would like more information on pets, including the type of pets you are allowed to keep, please check your tenancy agreement at canterbury.gov.uk/tenancyagreement

If your pet causes a nuisance

We work closely with the police to ensure that any nuisance caused by pets is addressed quickly.

If it comes to our attention that an animal is causing a nuisance, we will withdraw our permission for you to keep a pet and take enforcement action. This may include requiring the pet to be re-homed and possible legal action.

Dogs

In addition to the conditions stated above, there are further rules relating to the keeping of dogs

- all dogs and cats must be microchipped
- you must clean up after your dog if it fouls your garden or shared areas of the estate
- you must keep the dog on a lead with a name tag and not allow it out without a responsible adult



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- have identification in public areas bearing the owner's name, address and/or telephone number. Please note that this is a legal requirement. Failure to comply could result in a heavy fine
- be always kept under control and not cause a nuisance or a danger to anyone. They must be kept on a lead when outside in shared areas of the council's estates
- not foul in your home, garden or any communal areas. Dog faeces can carry diseases which can be harmful to people. It is an offence for a dog owner not to clean up after their dog in public places such as roads, estates, footpaths and parks. Failure to clean up can result in a fixed penalty on the spot fine or prosecution and substantial fine
- not cause any other nuisance to other people such as barking

Concerned about cruelty or dangerous dogs?

If you have a complaint about a dangerous dog or a banned dog, please contact the police on **101**. In an emergency always dial **999**.

If you wish to report any welfare concerns about pets you can call the RSPCA 24-hour National Cruelty and Advice line on **0300 1234 999**.

Flammable substances

You must not keep liquid petroleum gas or other flammable or explosive substances in the home or shared areas or balcony.

Gardens, patios or balconies

If you have a garden, patio or balcony you must keep it tidy. You must not obstruct any emergency exits in your property.

Fireworks

It is important that during those seasons where fireworks are popular that you, and anyone in your household, including your visitors, follow these rules:

- do not store or use fireworks either in communal areas or in your home
- do not have bonfires anywhere, either in your home or in communal areas
- do not let fireworks off in the street or a public place

Please help us to keep your neighbourhood safe at these times of the year.



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What to do if you are having problems with your neighbours

Everyone has the right to enjoy their home in their own way if they don't disturb others living nearby.

A good neighbour tolerates other people's lifestyles. However, sometimes, problems do occur. If you are having problems with a neighbour, try and talk to them about it if you can. Of course, we appreciate that may not always be considered appropriate, so you should be confident that it is a safe course of action.

If you prefer not to raise the issue yourself or if the problem persists, please contact us to report it by emailing tenancyenforcement@canterbury.gov.uk

We will aim to respond to all reports within 48 hours.

What will happen?

We will fully investigate the report. We will ask questions to find out the cause, what has happened, for how long and how often the nuisance happens. We will go through the various options available and agree with you the best way to deal with the problem.

We will keep your reports strictly confidential. In most cases, we will be able to resolve the matter without having to take any legal action. This is normally only considered when all other options have been exhausted.

If we do start legal action we will need your support and evidence. You may be asked to keep a record of the nuisance, and you may need to be a witness at court.

What if the problem is outside office hours?

We don't provide an out-of-hours service for one-off problems, such as loud parties. You can report problems at canterbury.gov.uk/antisocial. In an emergency always dial 999.

Noise nuisance

You can report noise nuisance online at canterbury.gov.uk/noise but please read the guidance first.

Contact details

If you'd like to contact our antisocial behaviour team, please call **01227 862 142** or email tenancyenforcement@canterbury.gov.uk



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Get involved and make sure your voice is heard!

There are lots of different ways you can get involved, each giving you the opportunity to make a difference in the housing service.

Resident Engagement Panel

A formal panel where tenants and leaseholders give direct feedback, influence decision-making and help shape housing policies.

- Members are selected through an application process to make sure the group includes people from different backgrounds, areas and experiences
- The panel meets every three months
- Each meeting lasts about two hours
- Before each meeting, you'll need to spend around one hour reviewing documents and reports
- You'll look at our performance, share your views, challenge what isn't working and help develop improvements
- This panel plays a big role in holding us to account and feeds into important housing decisions

Independent Living Forum

A platform for tenants living in independent living schemes to speak about what matters to them.

- Forum representatives attend meetings on behalf of residents in their specific scheme, sharing collective feedback
- The group focuses on wider service issues (not individual complaints) to improve quality of life for older and more vulnerable tenants
- Meetings are every three months and last about two hours
- Before each meeting, you'll need to read through background documents (approximately one hour prep)
- You'll also need to speak to fellow residents in your scheme, get their views and share them during the meeting

Contact details

If you'd like to get involved, please call **01227 862 142** or email **getinvolved@canterbury.gov.uk**



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Disability Forum

A dedicated space for tenants and leaseholders with disabilities to help shape a more inclusive housing service.

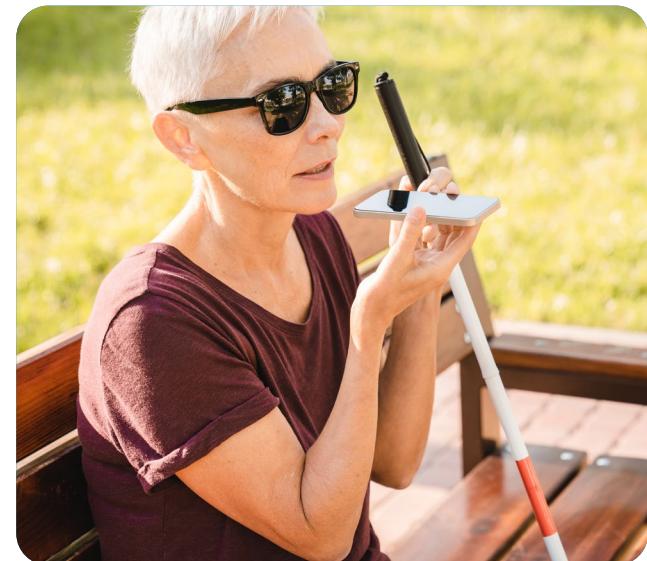
- Members share lived experiences, highlight barriers and suggest ways to improve accessibility
- The forum also advises us on the impact of our policies and helps make sure all services are inclusive
- Meetings happen every three months and last around two hours
- You're encouraged to speak with other disabled tenants to bring collective feedback
- Your insight helps make sure our services work for everyone



Communications Group

A group focused on improving how we communicate with tenants.

- You'll help review and shape the design and content of our tenant newsletters
- You'll help review written communication to make sure it's all clear, accessible and useful
- Meetings are held when they're needed, with options to give feedback online or in person
- The group is open to all tenants who want to help us get our messages right





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Tenant newsletters

Stay informed about housing service updates, events and opportunities to get involved. Our newsletters are posted to every household in May and October each year.

Annual tenant survey

Every year, you'll be invited to complete our Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey, which helps us understand what's working and what needs to improve.

The questions are set by the Regulator of Social Housing and your answers help measure how well we're doing.

- Your feedback helps us take real action - from improving repairs to making communication clearer
- We share what we've heard and what we're doing about it through 'You said, we did' reports

Community listening events

We're bringing the conversation to you.

Each year, we host community listening days in neighbourhoods across the district. These combine large-scale door knocks with local

drop-ins, giving you a chance to talk to housing teams face-to-face. You can also play some games, enter competitions and take home freebies.

We work alongside local partners and community groups to hear what matters to you, build stronger relationships and tackle local concerns.

One-off surveys and consultations

We regularly run quick surveys, focus groups and consultations to get your input on specific policies, service changes or local issues.

Ready to get involved?

However much or little time you have, there's a way to get involved that works for you. Your voice matters and helps us build better, safer and fairer housing services for everyone. You can view more information on our website canterbury.gov.uk/getinvolved

Contact details

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A yellow-tinted photograph of a woman with long blonde hair smiling broadly, with a young child visible behind her. The image is partially obscured by a large yellow rectangular overlay.

Health, safety and security in the home



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Most accidents happen in the home. We want to help you make your home a safer place. Taking simple precautions can help you avoid potentially dangerous situations.

Fire safety

All homes are fitted with smoke and heat detection. You should test your alarm weekly by pressing the test button and gently run your vacuum cleaner nozzle over the alarm every month to remove dust. If your alarm(s) do not work when you press the test button or it starts to beep, this means there is a fault. Please contact us to report any faults immediately.

Dry risers

Some of our blocks have dry risers which are found in the communal areas. In the event of a fire, they allow Kent Fire and Rescue Service to access a water supply on the floor they need it. It can be very dangerous if these are vandalised. We will check these on a regular basis but if you see that a dry riser in your block has been vandalised, please contact us. We will take legal action against those responsible for vandalism.

Using convector heaters

This is the type of heater that blows out warm air. These are safe if they are used carefully. They must not be covered or placed next to curtains or fabric furniture in an area where something can accidentally fall onto them. This blocks the warm air outlets causing the heater to overheat and potentially catch fire.

Security grilles and gates

You must not fit security grilles or gates to your front or back doors. Kent Fire and Rescue Service advise that grilles can put you in danger as they make it very difficult for them to gain access in an emergency. If you are worried about security issues please contact us.

Storage of items in communal areas

Items stored in communal areas can cause obstructions and become a source of fuel for fire. No items should be stored in communal areas without our consent. We reserve the right to remove any item that poses a fire risk.

For any issues with smoke detectors or alarms you can report them directly to our contractor Cardo on **01227 202 321** or report a repair online at canterbury.gov.uk/repairs



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What to do if a fire breaks out in your home

Fire action notices are on the notice boards of communal blocks. Please make sure that you read and understand this information regarding what to do if there is a fire in your property or building.

Please contact us if you have any questions or think that you may have difficulty in following the instructions on the notice.

In the event of a fire call 999.

Fire safety door

- fire doors are important as they stop a fire from spreading when closed
- self-closing doors must be kept closed – don't wedge them open
- contact us to report any problems with fire doors
- keep all escape routes in your home and the communal areas clear of storage or rubbish
- don't fit locks or obstruct escape routes as these can include secondary means of escape routes or linked balconies

Gas leaks

If you think there is a gas leak, turn off the supply at the meter and call National Grid on **0800 111 999**. Contact us if you are not sure where your meter is.

Do

- put out cigarettes
- open all doors and windows and keep them open until the leak has been dealt with
- check if a gas tap has been left on by accident

Don't

- use matches or other naked flame
- touch electrical switches including lights and doorbells
- use a mobile phone or device

Gas servicing

Gas appliances must be serviced regularly. If they are in poor condition, they can produce carbon monoxide gas which doesn't smell, can't be seen but can kill.

If you have a gas appliance, make sure air vents are not blocked up. Make sure you switch off gas fires in rooms where people will be sleeping as they pose a risk if they are left on overnight.



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Where we have fitted a gas fire or gas heating/hot water system we will arrange to inspect and service each item every year and provide you with a copy of the landlord gas safety record. It is very important that this is carried out.

We will tell you when your inspection is due and will make an appointment with you. We will take legal action against tenants who do not let us in to do this check.

Contact us if you think that a gas appliance in your home is unsafe.

Do

- use only a Gas Safe Registered contractor to fit your gas cooker

Don't

- carry out any works to gas appliances or installations in your home without written permission from your housing manager
- fit any appliance other than a gas cooker

Dangerous substances

Residents are not permitted to store the following inside their flat or on any balcony:

- contained gases**, other than oxygen for medical gases. This includes BBQ gas such as Calor Gas

- chemicals** – apart from domestic cleaning products
- petrol vehicles** – mopeds, scooters, or any other fuelled vehicles
- fireworks** – or any large number of combustible materials (for example, bamboo screening)

Burst pipes and flooding

Make sure you know where the stopcock is in your property in case you need to turn off the water in an emergency. You can contact us if you need help finding this.

If your water supply goes off for any reason, make sure all the taps are turned off and that you have not left plugs in any sinks or the bath. This prevents flooding when the water comes back on.

If you get a burst pipe

- turn off the main stop cock
- turn on the taps until the water stops running
- flush the toilet
- turn off the electricity at the mains

Contact us to report the problem. We may have to force entry into your home if we are unable to make contact in the event of an emergency.



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Security

We want you to feel safe on our estates and we carry out regular security improvements. Please report any faulty door entry systems or broken lights in your area or tell us if you have any other suggestions.

Bogus callers

Don't let strangers in unless they can prove their identity. Bogus callers will try many ways of getting into your home – they may say they are workmen or from other organisations.

All our employees and contractors have identification cards so make sure you know who they are before you let them in. If you are unsure, contact us, the agency they claim to work for or the police.

If you live in a high-rise building

If you live in either Margaret Court, Elizabeth Court or Windsor House then you are classed as living in a high-rise building.

All our buildings, including high-rise ones, are covered under the Building Safety Act 2022 and we have a legal duty to make sure all requirements are met to keep you safe in your home.

These include fire risk strategies, assessments of each building and what to do if you have any concerns.

You can view documents related to your building and report any issues on our website canterbury.gov.uk/council-home-safety

Contact details

If you have any questions regarding the safety of your home, please contact the team on **01227 862 142** or email compliance-and-building-safety@canterbury.gov.uk



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Personal alarms

Lifeline is an emergency alarm service that can help you or someone you know to feel safe and independent in the home, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Our professional and experienced emergency team are located in our CCTV control room.

There is different Lifeline equipment available depending on your needs.

It can help support

- people at risk of falling
- vulnerable or anxious people living alone
- people with medical conditions or a disability
- people being discharged from hospital
- those caring for others

Asbestos

Asbestos is a hazardous material that only poses a risk to health if the asbestos fibres are disturbed in some way that allows the fibres to become airborne. The fibres can be inhaled deep into the lungs causing damage.

Asbestos-containing materials are only dangerous if damaged or disturbed.

Where you have asbestos-containing materials in your home you must make sure you do not disturb it or damage it in any way.

Please contact us if any part of your property which may have asbestos-containing material is damaged. We will arrange for the damage to be repaired or advise you how to do any DIY or decorating work safely.

Don't

- carry out DIY or decoration work to any asbestos containing material without contacting the council first
- disturb it by banging nails into it
- cut or break it
- drill it with either hand or power tools
- sand it by either hand or power tools
- scrape it or use a steam stripper
- attempt to remove it

Window safety

If you have windows fitted with safety restrictors, please make sure that the restrictors are only released for cleaning purposes and that after cleaning they are re-engaged immediately. While a restrictor is removed the window must not be left unattended.



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Restrictors are fitted for safety reasons to limit how far the windows can open. If restrictors are left off this can cause a serious accident.

If you need advice on how to use your windows or think your window restrictor is broken or defective please contact us.

Common parts safety

Please contact us to report any defects such as broken windows, uneven steps or other hazards within communal areas of your building. Regular inspections are carried out to these areas in all our buildings but please contact us if you have a concern.

Balcony safety

If your home has a private balcony please ensure you report any damage or defects to the balcony balustrading, railings or glazed or non-glazed panels immediately to us.

Contact details

For any issues with window restrictors you can report them directly to our contractor Cardo on **01227 202 321** or report a repair online at canterbury.gov.uk/repairs



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Estate services

Cleaning

We are responsible for making sure that the internal common parts of buildings are kept clean. We employ Town and Country to do this for us.

The service comprises of

- regular cleaning of internal areas
- annual cleaning of windows in common parts, although the regularity may vary from block to block

Grounds maintenance

We are responsible for making sure that the estate's grounds are well maintained. We employ Canenco to do this for us.

This includes

- regular maintenance of grass, planted areas and hedges
- routine maintenance tasks such as leaf clearing and pruning

Residents are required to maintain their own individual garden to ensure it looks acceptable and does not cause a nuisance to their neighbours.

Rubbish disposal

We employ Canenco to get rid of household waste within our district.

They will empty your bins each week, rotating between recycling and general waste depending on your area.

It's important you put the correct waste in the correct bin.

You can find out more information on our website, including how to request an assisted collection and find your collection day.

Pest control

If you live in general needs housing, it's your responsibility to monitor and manage pest control.

If you are having issues with pests, you can search our website for accredited pest controllers.

If you believe pests are getting into your property through a hole or disrepair, please email [**repairs@canterbury.gov.uk**](mailto:repairs@canterbury.gov.uk)

If you live in Independent Living and are experiencing issues with pests, please contact your Independent Living Manager and they can ask someone to attend.



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Contact details

If you wish to contact Canenco to raise any issues or find more information, please visit our website canterbury.gov.uk/waste or call 01227 947 860



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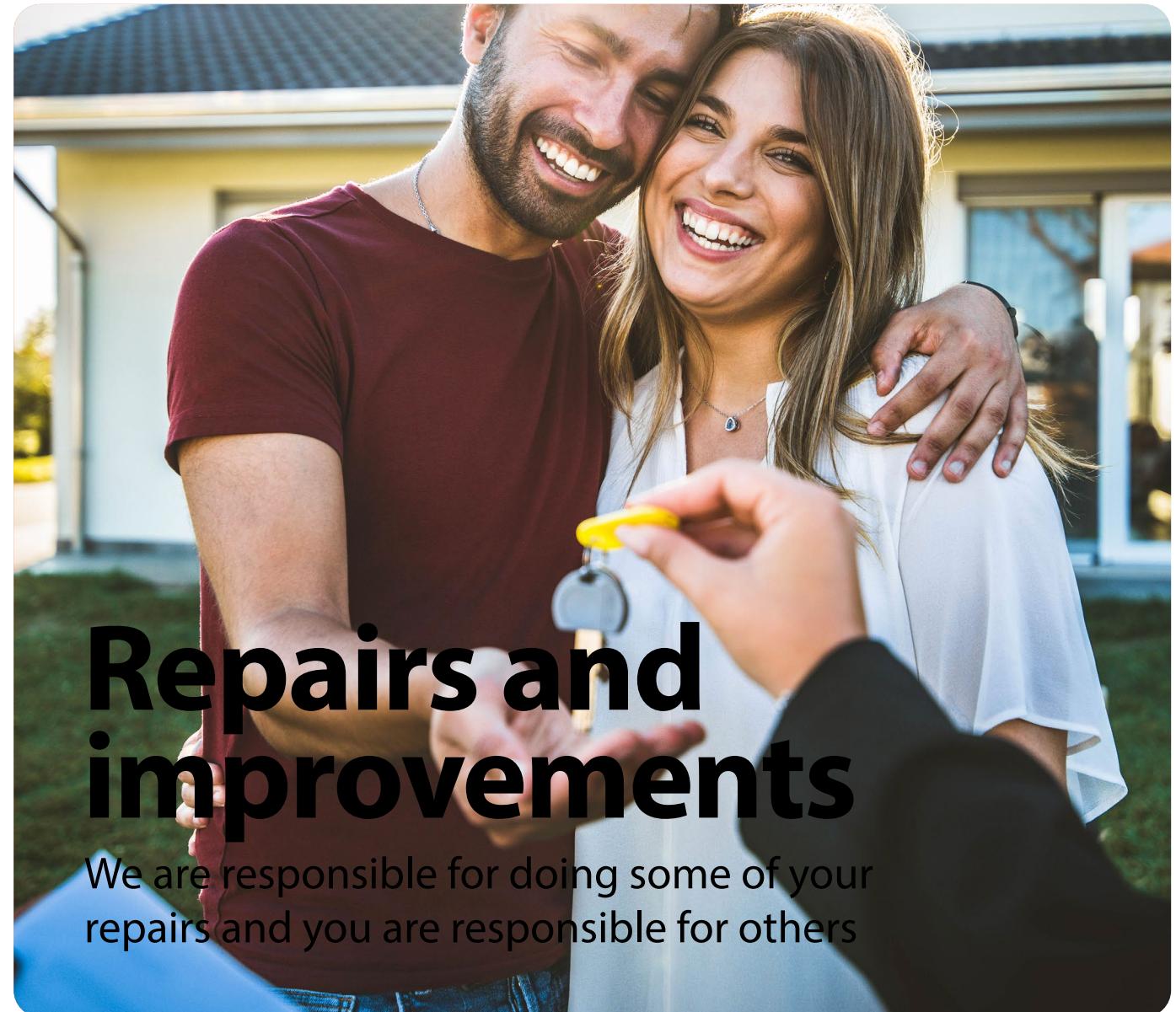
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Repairs and improvements

Who is responsible

Repair type	Landlord	Tenant
Bathroom		
Internal pipe work boxing	●	
Bath panels	●	
Toilet seats and lids		●
Bath and sink plugs and chains		●
Taps to sink and bath (if the responsibility of CCC)	●	
Shower (if the responsibility of CCC)	●	
Tiles	●	
Basin, bath and WC	●	
Ceilings		
Plaster ceilings	●	
Minor repairs to plaster work such as cracks and small holes		●
Artex – patching ceiling following any repairs	●	
Decoration		
Internal decoration		●
Curtain battens		●

Repairs and improvements

Who is responsible

Repair type	Landlord	Tenant
Doors		
Doorbell		●
Internal doors adjustment when new flooring fitted		●
External structures including doors and gates (fitted by you or previous tenants)		●
Internal door glazing		●
External door glazing	●	
Door entry systems	●	
Door vents	●	
External doors – including ironmongery	●	
Gaining entry to the property (i.e. locked in, locked out, lost keys)		●
Internal doors (non-fire doors) - including ironmongery		●
Internal doors (fire doors) - including ironmongery	●	
Maintenance of catches		●
*Maintenance of locks	●	

*Unless the product of a tenant improvement request in which case the tenant is responsible

Repairs and improvements

Who is responsible

Repair type	Landlord	Tenant
Drains and gutters		
Drain blockage (within the boundary of the property)	●	
Blocked sinks, washing machine wastes, dishwashers and basins (we will recharge if tenant has caused damage)		●
Blocked toilets (we will recharge if tenant has caused damage)	●	
Clearing and upkeep of ground level gulleys and grates		●
Clearing and upkeep of gutters	●	
Drains and gully surrounds /gully grids	●	
Inspection chambers	●	
Soil vent pipes, including clips	●	
Electrical items		
Consumer unit (fuse box)	●	
Smoke alarms	●	
Carbon monoxide alarms	●	
Cookers, ovens, and hobs owned by the tenant (if not supplied by CCC)		●
Disconnecting and reconnecting your cooker (if not supplied CCC)		●

Repairs and improvements

Who is responsible

Repair type	Landlord	Tenant
Electric fires (if the responsibility of CCC)	●	
Electric storage heaters (only if supplied by CCC)	●	
Electric meter and supply (contact your utility supplier)		●
Extractor fans	●	
Immersion heater	●	
Internal light bulbs, fuses, and fluorescent tubes (unless in a bathroom or communal areas)		●
Wiring – sockets, light fittings and switches	●	
Electric plugs fitted to tenant's appliances (not sockets)		●
External items		
Maintenance of garden area (grass/paved areas/concrete)		●
Clothes posts and/or hooks		●
General upkeep of gardens, including trees and surrounding areas (including paving and concrete)		●
Paths – path to front door	●	
Boundary walls (if the responsibility of CCC)	●	

Repairs and improvements

Repair type

	Who is responsible	
Repair type	Landlord	Tenant
Boundary fences (if the responsibility of CCC)	●	
Maintenance and replacement of most fences		●
Gates on a highway or public right of way	●	
Gates not on a highway or public right of way		●
Hardstandings and gates (if the responsibility of CCC)	●	
Outbuildings (as storage only)	●	
Sheds, including clearance and moving for repairs to take place		●
Communal areas – basic maintenance	●	
Communal areas – lifts and stairs	●	
Keeping air vents clear and tidy		●

Floors

Laminate floors (lifting and relaying for repairs)		●
Loose floor coverings and carpets (including ceramic floor tiles)		●
Concrete floors	●	

Repairs and improvements

Who is responsible

Repair type	Landlord	Tenant
Floorboards and joists	●	
Floor, wall and fireplace tiles		●
Heating		
Bleeding radiators		●
Gas meter and supply (excluding gas meter box doors)		●
Pipework	●	
Radiators, valves, time clocks and thermostats	●	
Kitchen items		
Cooker point change – following change of cooker		●
Cooker point – either gas or electric	●	
Maintenance of kitchen cupboards and drawers		●
Repairs to cupboard door catches, handles and hinges		●

Repairs and improvements

Who is responsible

Repair type	Landlord	Tenant
Plugs and bulbs		
Energy efficiency		●
Low energy light bulbs		●
Plumbing		
Removing and replacing radiators for decoration		●
Repairing plumbing after decoration		●
Washing machine plumbing and fitting (if not supplied by CCC)		●
Roofs		
Aerials, satellite dishes, telephones and removing cables before and after maintenance work		●
Security		
Extra door or window locks (not to be fitted to PVC doors)		●
Walls		
Regrouting when discoloured		●
Minor repairs to plaster work such as cracks and small holes (general redecoration repairs)		●

Repairs and improvements

Who is responsible

Repair type	Landlord	Tenant
Windows		
Fitting, removing and adjusting blinds		•
Releasing windows stuck after internal painting		•
Window handles and catches	•	



Qualifying repairs

Qualifying repairs and associated timescales are detailed below. This is only where the repair is the council's responsibility. The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations SI. 1994 No133, sets out that qualifying repairs should be completed within mandated timescales.

Description of repair	Response times (working days)
Total loss of electrical power	1
An unsafe electrical fitting	1
Total loss of water supply	1
Total or partial loss of gas supply	1
Blocked flue to an open fire or boiler	1
No heating or hot water (between 1 November and 30 April)	1
Leak from a water pipe, tank or cistern	1
Blocked or leaking foul drain, soil stack or toilet	1
Toilet not flushing (if there is only one toilet in the property)	1
Insecure external window, door or lock	1
No heating or hot water (between 1 May and 31 October)	3

Qualifying repairs

Qualifying repairs and associated timescales are detailed below. This is only where the repair is the council's responsibility. The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations Sl. 1994 No133, sets out that qualifying repairs should be completed within mandated timescales.

Description of repair	Response times (working days)
Partial loss of electrical supply	3
Partial loss of water supply	3
Blocked sink, basin or bath	3
A tap that cannot be turned	3
Loose or detached banister or handrail	3
Rotten timber flooring or stair treads	3
Leaking roof	7
Door-entry phone not working	7
Mechanical extractor fan not working	7



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Disabled adaptations

If you have a disability, we can provide qualifying tenants certain adaptations to help you remain independent in your home and enjoy a good quality of life.

Firstly, you will need to contact the Occupational Therapists at Kent County Council who will assess your medical needs during a home visit which will be used to make a referral to us for adaptation work to happen.

How to contact Occupational Therapists

- For adult services (over 18s) call **03000 416 161**
- For children services (under 18s) call **03000 411 111**. For minor adaptations (hand or grab rails) email **social.services@kent.gov.uk**

For further information please visit
kent.gov.uk/careandsupport

Once we receive a recommendation from your Occupational Therapist, we will consider the request. It's important to get in contact with the Occupational Therapists as soon as possible so you can be visited and a referral can be made.

What happens next?

If we approve the adaptations they fall into two categories:

1. Minor works such as grabrails, handrails and lever taps.

These works are generally straightforward and will be dealt with immediately.

2. Major works such as bathroom adaptations, flush floor showers, ramps and stairlifts.

These major works need to be inspected, planned and placed on the waiting list to be carried out. We have a waiting list due to the increasing number of tenants who need major adaptations in their home.

We will provide our written decision and where works have been approved. We will explain the next steps to the tenant including when the works are expected to be carried out and who will be carrying out the works.

If we refuse a request for adaptations we will advise you of the reasons and suggest alternative solutions.



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We aim to support you wherever we can but adaptations are not always possible. For example, some of our properties cannot be adapted to meet accessibility standards such as level access. In other cases, proposed adaptations might be too expensive and would not be the best use of our housing stock.

Where adaptations can't be made our Adaptations team will work closely with the Housing Needs and Resources team to help you move to a more suitable home. We will only move you to a home that is fully adaptable or already meets your needs. We won't move you somewhere that can only be partially adapted.

We also work with Kent County Council's Occupational Therapists to quickly rule out unsuitable properties.

To contact our Adaptations team please email adaptations@canterbury.gov.uk or call **01227 862 142**. Alternatively, you can write to Aids and Adaptations, Canterbury City Council, 14 Rose Lane, Canterbury, CT1 2UR.

How to report a repair and reporting out of hours

Gas or central heating repairs



For problems with your gas or central heating you can call Sure Serve on **0800 987 4033**.

If the problem is in a communal boiler room you can report it to Robert Heath Heating Limited using our online repair form below or call them directly on **0203 7643 959**.

Water, electricity or general household repairs



For any general household or shared area repairs, water or electricity problems, you can report them directly to our contractor Cardo on **01227 202 321** or use our online form below.

Report a repair

You can report a repair online at canterbury.gov.uk/repairs

Please make sure you tell us anything we need to know for when our repair staff visit - for example, if you can't hear very well or need extra time to answer the door.

Anyone that carries out a repair at your home will have an ID card so ask them for it if you're not sure who they are.



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Right to repair scheme

The government introduced a 'right to repair' scheme to make sure council tenants can get some repairs completed quickly and easily.

It sets time limits which we must stick to. If our contractors don't do the work in the times given, you can ask us to hire someone else.

If the repairs still aren't done after that, you might be able to claim compensation. This is £10 plus £2 for each day the work is over the time limit, up to a maximum of £50.

How we deal with your repairs

Dealing with your repairs quickly is important to make sure you have a safe and well-maintained home.

Our contractors have targets on responding to repairs which vary depending on the type of repair.

An emergency repair is one that puts the health, safety or security of a tenant or third party at immediate risk or that affects the structure of the building.

CARDO

Cardo – repairs and maintenance contractor

Emergency – started immediately or no longer than two hours. To be made safe or completed within 24 hours.

Urgent – To be started and completed within three working days.

Routine – To be started and completed within 10 working days or 20 working days depending on the repair.



Sure Serve – Gas, hot water and heating contractor

Emergency – complete within four hours

Vital – complete within one day

Urgent – complete within three days

Routine – complete within seven days

If you'd like more information on our contractor response times and appointment hours, please view our Repairs and Maintenance policy on our website at canterbury.gov.uk/ramp or call 01227 862 000.



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Decoration

You are responsible for all decoration inside your home. Please check the asbestos guidance before decorating.

If damage to your decoration has been caused by a flood from a neighbour, you are responsible for the repairs. Furniture and/or belongings are not covered by our building insurance. Please ensure you have home contents insurance in case this happens to you.

Health and safety advice

Some items are fitted to your home for your safety and must not be removed.

This includes doors, door closers fitted for fire safety, special locks fitted on secondary means of escape doors, windows and window restrictors, vents, smoke detectors, back-up batteries and safety signs.

Some items must be replaced to current safety standards. For example, replacement internal doors must meet the relevant British Standard (BS476).

Residents must not replace their flat entrance door.





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Satellite dishes and TV aerials

Satellite dishes

If you live in a flat or maisonette, you must not put up a satellite dish, CB aerial or any other transmitter without first obtaining written permission from us.

Communal heating and hot water

Some of our blocks have communal systems that provide heating and hot water. This is paid with the weekly rent.

Hot water is provided with these systems all year and heating usually between October and the end of May.

This is flexible if the weather is very cold. Heating is supplied for about 16 hours each day.

Energy efficiency

The Energy Saving Trust will give you free, independent and impartial advice on saving energy and money.

You can call them on **0300 123 1234** or email energy-advice@est.org.uk

You can also visit their website at energysavingtrust.org.uk

Please also contact us if you need further advice on

- saving energy and money on your fuel bills
- buying and installing energy efficient products such as smart meters, lighting and white goods
- energy performance certificates

Contact details

If you have any questions about right to buy or swapping your home, please contact the team on **01227 862 142** or email generaltenancyenquiries@canterbury.gov.uk



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Home contents insurance

We strongly advise you to get cover for your personal belongings against risks such as fire, flood and theft. Many people who do not have home contents insurance find it difficult to replace their belongings if they are lost or damaged.

Please note that you may not be able to claim on our insurance as damage is not always caused by negligence.

We cannot cover your personal belongings, carpet or other flooring so you need to get your own insurance to cover these.

Building insurance

In most cases, we own the building you live in and are responsible for insuring it. This is called building insurance and does not cover your personal possessions. You need to take out your own home contents insurance.

This insurance allows us to put right damage to the building caused by fires or storms for example.

Public liability insurance

If loss, damage or injury is caused by our negligence, the law says we must put it right and have public liability insurance for that reason.

Claims against this insurance must show that:

- we had a responsibility
- we failed to meet that responsibility and/or was negligent and
- loss or damage was caused as a result

Making a claim on the building or public liability insurance

If something happens and you think you might have a claim, you need to contact us as soon after the incident as possible. You must give as much detail as possible and if you are claiming for damage to personal belongings you must keep them for inspection.

Contractors' insurance

All contractors who work for us, such as builders and cleaners, are fully insured. This covers any damage they cause by being careless while carrying out work. Under this insurance, it covers damage to your personal belongings.

If you need to make a claim the contractor will liaise with you directly. If it is not dealt with properly please contact us.



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Domestic violence and abuse

The UK government's definition of domestic violence is 'any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners, family members or carers regardless of gender or sexuality'.

Domestic abuse can take different forms including

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- financial abuse
- coercive and controlling behaviour
- digital/online abuse
- 'honour'-based abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- forced marriage

Domestic abuse is a hidden crime that can affect anyone.

If you are in immediate danger call 999

If you cannot speak press 55 when you are prompted and listen for more instructions to complete a silent emergency call. You'll be able to conduct your whole call in silence if needed.

We would also encourage you to report any concerns to the police. They have specialist workers to help victims of domestic violence and abuse. If you are suffering because of domestic abuse you are encouraged to get advice from the following:

24-hour National Domestic Violence freephone helpline on 0808 2000 247

Should you wish to seek advice face to face you can attend a Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop. At this service you can speak to supportive professionals all in one place at the same time. You can receive free advice, information and support around your experiences in a welcoming, safe and confidential space.

These take place within Canterbury district every Thursday at Riverside Children's Centre, Kingsmead, Canterbury, CT2 7PH between 9.30am to 12.30pm.

Also at the Herne Bay Family Hub, Herne Bay, CT6 5RG on the last Tuesday of the month between 9.30am to 12.30pm.

Rising Sun supports women and children affected by domestic abuse in Canterbury and they are act as Canterbury's Independent Domestic Violence Advocate service (IDVAs).



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They aim to prevent domestic abuse and provide specialist services which are survivor-centred, trauma-informed and gender-responsive.

Rising Sun can be contacted on **01227 452 852** (Mon to Fri from 9.30am to 12.30pm and 2pm to 4pm) or by visiting risingsunkent.com

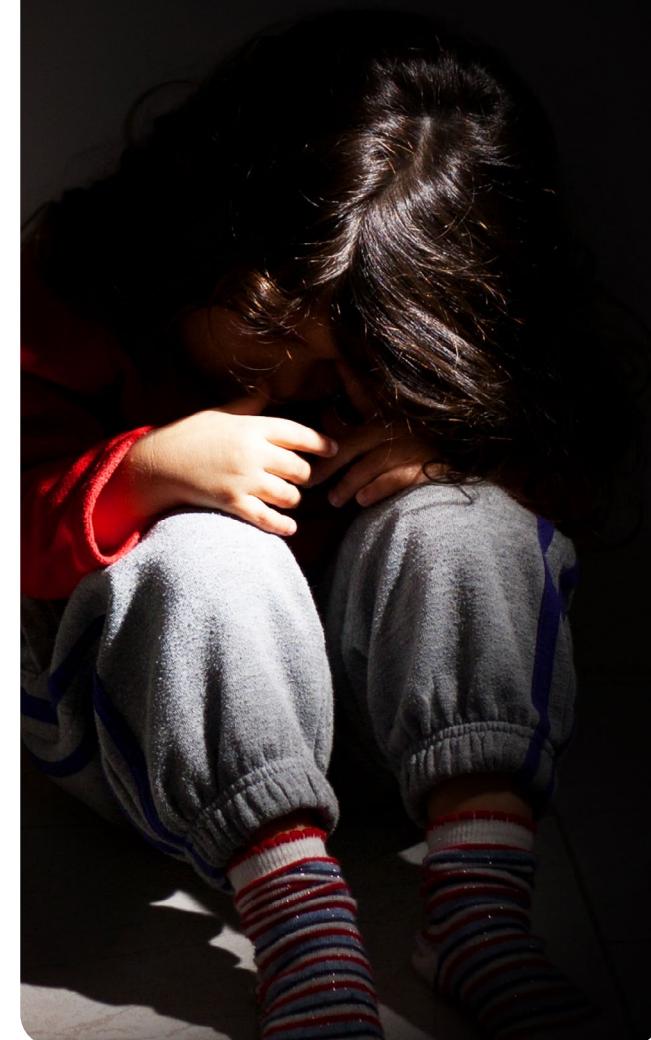
For more information on other local domestic abuse support services please visit Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Partnership at domesticabuseservices.org.uk

If you are a male experiencing domestic abuse contact Victim Support on freephone **0808 16 89 111** or Respect Men's Advice Line on **0808 8010 327**.

If you identify as LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual) and are experiencing domestic abuse contact **GALOP** on **0800 999 5428** National LGBTQIA+ Helpline.

You can also contact us so we can offer you support and advice tailored to your needs. We also recommend that you get independent general advice from a solicitor, law centre or Citizens' Advice Bureau. We would also encourage you to report any concerns to the police. They have specialist workers to help victims of domestic violence and abuse.

If you are in immediate danger call 999





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A yellow-tinted photograph of an older couple. The man, on the left, is wearing a dark shirt and has his arm around the woman. The woman, on the right, is wearing a light-colored top and is laughing heartily, her head tilted back. The background is slightly blurred, showing what might be a garden or outdoor setting.

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What is Independent Living?

Independent Living is purpose-built accommodation designed to make your home and life easier to manage as you get older.

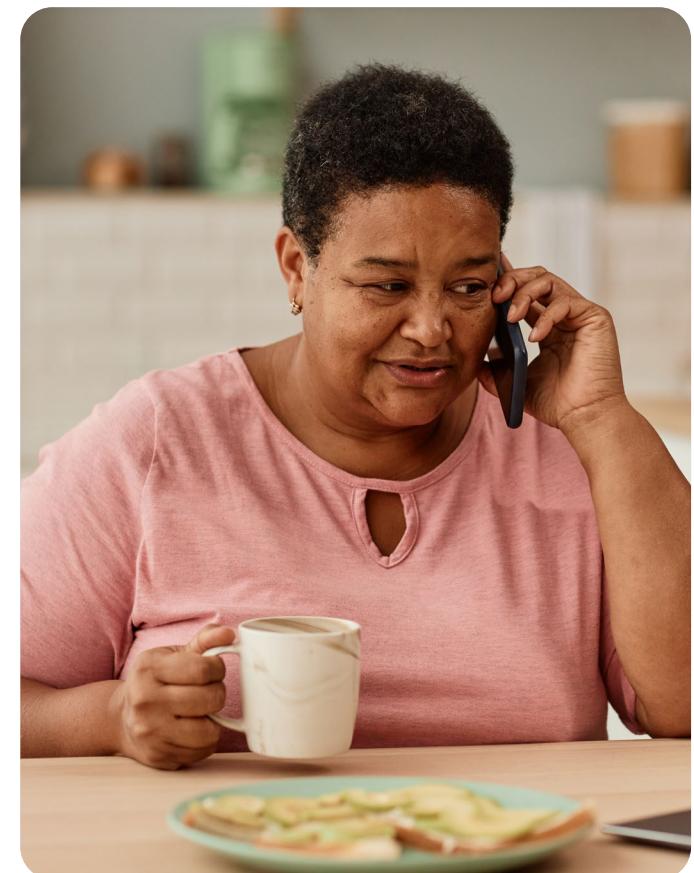
All accommodation (which can range from bungalows and flats to studios) has its own front door and front door key. All residents have their own private facilities, including living area, bedroom, bathroom and kitchen.

Some schemes include a laundry room, kitchen and communal lounge where tenants can meet with friends and neighbours. All schemes are built with safety and convenience in mind and have door entry systems, fire alarms and smoke detectors. Most properties are fitted with alarm cords which put you in contact with a member of staff in an emergency.

The schemes are staffed by a team of Independent Living Managers. Information on contacting your Independent Living Manager is published on all notice boards throughout the schemes.

If you live in Independent Living and want to speak to us please call **01227 862 142** or email [**generaltenancyenquiries@canterbury.gov.uk**](mailto:generaltenancyenquiries@canterbury.gov.uk).

If you are a general needs tenants and are interesting in moving to independent living you can apply via our website [**canterbury.gov.uk/shelteredhousing**](http://canterbury.gov.uk/shelteredhousing)





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If you want to end your tenancy

If you want to end your tenancy you must give at least four weeks' notice in writing and provide us with your forwarding address.

Simply passing keys back does not end your tenancy and you will continue to be charged rent. All tenancies end on a Sunday.

Please note that

- when your tenancy ends you must give us vacant possession. Vacant possession is leaving the property clean and clear and with no other person still living in the property
- the property must be left clean and clear of any rubbish and all personal belongings, including white goods and furniture

Give notice to end a tenancy

You can give notice to end your tenancy by filling in our online form at
canterbury.gov.uk/endtenancy

Alternatively, you can give notice by writing to 14 Rose Lane, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2UR or emailing our Voids and Lettings team at
voidsandlettings@canterbury.gov.uk

Notice must include your full name, address and include a statement that you intend to end your tenancy.

If you are:

- moving out of a Canterbury City Council property, you need to give four weeks' notice. This must start on a Monday; for example, if you give notice on Monday 1 January, your tenancy will end on Sunday 28 January provided your keys were back by Monday 29 January at midday
- a council tenant moving into a council property nominated by us, you will also need to complete a surrender form with your neighbourhood management officer or independent living manager, who will also agree your last day of tenancy. This is normally completed alongside your sign up to your new tenancy with us. Your tenancy will end on the following Sunday that you return your keys. If you return your keys by midday on the Monday that your new tenancy starts, your former tenancy will end on the day before
- transferring to another council property, you do not need to give us 28 days' notice
- transferring from a council property that you have been allocated temporarily while a homeless application has been completed, you do not need to give us 28 days' notice



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- moving into residential care or sheltered housing that is not council owned or managed, you will need to give us 28 days' notice

Please note that:

- notice to end your tenancy can be given on a Monday. If notice is received on a different day, the notice period of four weeks will begin from the following Monday. Your keys must be returned by noon on the Monday your tenancy ends
- keys need to be returned to our council office at 14 Rose Lane, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2UR. When returning keys please ensure that they are in a clearly labelled envelope and posted through the council's letterbox. Should keys be returned late, additional rent will be charged
- you must tell your electricity, gas, water, telephone and internet service providers that you are moving home so that they can close or move your accounts
- you must leave all gas and electricity meter keys in the meter. Meter keys are not transferrable so there will be no need to take these to your new accommodation
- you must close all windows and doors and make sure that the property is securely locked

We will charge you if:

- you do not leave the property clean and empty and we have to clear your possessions
- repairs that are your responsibility have not been carried out or if you have caused damage to the property
- you have carried out alterations without our permission or
- you leave anyone living in the property after you leave, and we have to take court action to evict them

If we need to end your tenancy

There may be circumstances when it is reasonable for us to end your tenancy. The rules we follow are different for secure and introductory tenancies.

Ending introductory tenancies

If we take possession action against you to seek to end your introductory tenancy, we must serve you with a 'notice of possession proceedings' explaining why we are taking this action.

You will have the opportunity to request a review of the decision to serve this Notice and in all cases we will need to go to court to obtain a possession order.



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Ending secure tenancies

We can only end a secure tenancy if the court gives us a possession order. The court can only do this if we show that there are good reasons in law called 'grounds for possession'.

The first step we must take is to serve a 'notice of seeking possession' which tells you why we want to end your tenancy. This is usually because you have broken the rules of the tenancy agreement for example by not paying the rent or for anti-social behaviour. After a month, if the reason given in the notice remains a problem, we may apply to the court for a possession order to end your tenancy.

What will happen at the court hearing?

You can attend the hearing to defend your case or hire a legal representative to act on your behalf.

At the hearing we will present details of your case to the judge. The judge may grant a possession order if one of the grounds for seeking possession is proved. The order may be suspended if you meet certain conditions such as paying your rent and an agreed amount off your arrears each week, or it may take effect immediately.

In cases where the court awards a suspended possession order, if you do not keep to the terms of the possession order we can apply for a warrant to

evict you. Even if we are taking possession action against you, your tenancy continues up until you are evicted or you give up your tenancy voluntarily.

What happens to a tenancy when a tenant dies?

Coping with the death of a friend or relative can be a difficult time. We should always be notified so we can help and give you advice on what needs to be done.

Who can end the tenancy

If you want to legally end the tenancy, you'll need to be either:

- the executor of the tenant's estate — this means you've been named in the will as the person who'll deal with the tenant's estate after they've died; or
- an administrator — this means that you've applied to the Probate Registry and have a Letter of Administration (Grant of Probate).

You'll need to give four weeks' notice to end the tenancy via our online form at canterbury.gov.uk/endtenancy

The notice always starts on a Monday. If you give notice on a Monday before 12 noon, the notice period will start on that day. If it's after 12 noon, the notice period will start the following Monday.



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If you're not the executor

If you're not the executor of the estate, it doesn't matter. We'll end the tenancy for you. You just need to fill in the form and let us do the rest.

We'll serve a Notice to Quit on the Public Trustee to end the tenancy. This will bring the tenancy to an end four weeks after it's served. We will require a copy of the death certificate to allow us to legally terminate the tenancy.

We will need to know:

- the details of the tenant's next of kin (closest relative), this can usually be found in the tenants will
- the address of the person dealing with the tenant's affairs
- the date the keys will be handed in

If the keys are not returned we will continue to charge rent. Any rent due and charges for repairs will be charged to the tenant's estate.

Before handing back the keys to the property, the person dealing with the tenant's affairs will need to:

- move all the belongings out of the home
- redirect the post
- read the gas and electricity meters and give the readings to the utility companies so they can send the final bills

- lock the doors to the property and make sure all windows are shut
- tell the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) if the tenant received any benefits
- tell us if the tenant received any housing or council tax benefit by emailing benefits@canterbury.gov.uk or calling 01227 862 300

You can use the Government's 'Tell Us Once' service online at gov.uk/tellusonce. This means that you are providing a number of services with the information in one go.

If there are household items left in the property, any clearance costs will be charged back to the tenant's estate.

If the tenant has no will we will have to legally bring the tenancy to an end by serving a 'Notice to Quit'. This will be served to the property and on the public trustee.

An end date for the tenancy will be provided. The keys will need to be returned by this date. If no-one comes forward and the items are left after the notice to quit has expired, we will then serve a Section 41 notice on the items, and the items will be disposed of if not collected following this.



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Who can take on your tenancy if you die?

Where there is a joint tenancy and one joint tenant dies, the remaining joint tenant will automatically succeed to the tenancy through 'survivorship'. There will be no requirement to move to a smaller property if there are more bedrooms than needed.

In certain other circumstances a tenancy may pass to another person. This depends on the type of tenancy and the situation.

When a tenancy is taken over by someone after a tenant's death, this is known as 'succession'. In all situations there is only one right of succession. So, if a tenant obtained their tenancy by succeeding to it from someone else, there is no further right of succession.

To apply for a succession the applicant/family member must provide proof of relationship to the tenant, proof of their identity and proof of residency.

They would need to provide at least three of these documents for the required residency period as part of the succession enquiry.

Succession rights for tenants vary, depending on the type and date of tenancy.

Can you pass your tenancy to someone else?

The conditions of your tenancy allow you to transfer your secure tenancy to someone else. This is called assignment. To apply for an assignment please contact us.

You are only allowed to do this in the following circumstances:

- if you find another tenant with whom you want to swap homes. This is known as a mutual exchange. A move cannot take place without our written permission;
- by a court order following relationship breakdown or orders relating to children; or
- we give you written permission to transfer the tenancy to someone who would be able to take over your tenancy by succession after your death. We will not give permission where it would result in under-occupation.

If we are aware of a property being abandoned, we can end a secure tenancy with a 'Notice to Quit' without going to court if the property is not occupied after four weeks from serving the notice.



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Online

It's easy to contact us through our website canterbury.gov.uk

On here you can report a repair, make a complaint or compliment and raise service issues.

Face-to-face and accessibility

Please let us know if you need to access our service in a particular way. If you ask us, we can provide documents in large print or audio format.

Home visits are also available by request. We are always open to feedback. You can provide feedback by contacting us.

Our phone lines are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. Or you can visit our office from Monday to Friday 10am to 2pm.

Feel free to pop in if you have an enquiry. If you would like to have a meeting with a specific officer please call in advance to arrange an appointment on **01227 862 000**.

Contact us

Phone: **01227 862 142**

Phone out of hours: **01227 781 879**

Email: generaltenancyenquiries@canterbury.gov.uk

Website: canterbury.gov.uk

Address: **Canterbury City Council,
14 Rose Lane, Canterbury, CT1 2UR**

If you would like to contact the council for non-housing related queries such as council tax, planning or parking please call **01227 862 000** or visit canterbury.gov.uk

Report a repair

Some repairs and maintenance jobs are your responsibility. Before reporting anything, it's best to check who's responsible for the repair. You can find this information at canterbury.gov.uk/repairs

If you're still unsure, contact us on **01227 862 142**.

Gas or central heating repairs

For problems with your gas supply or central heating, you can:

- Call Sure Serve directly on **0800 987 4033**
- If the issue is with a communal boiler room, report it to Robert Heath Heating Limited by calling them on **0203 7643 959**.



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General household repairs

For any general household or shared area repairs, water or electricity problems, you can report them directly to our contractor Cardo on **01227 202 321** or use our online form at canterbury.gov.uk/repairs

You can report issues including

- water leaks
- electrical faults
- problems in shared areas (for example, broken lights or doors)

When you report a repair, please tell us if there's anything we should know.

For example, if you

- need more time to answer the door
- have a hearing or mobility difficulty
- need an interpreter.

All repair staff will carry official ID cards. Always ask to see ID before letting anyone into your home.

Right to repair scheme

As a council tenant, you're protected by the 'right to repair' scheme. This means we must complete certain urgent repairs within set time limits.

You can ask us to get another contractor if the work isn't done on time. If the repair still isn't completed, you may be able to claim compensation. Compensation starts at £10, with an extra £2 for each day the work is delayed - up to a maximum of £50.





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Swap your council house with someone

You can swap homes with council or housing association tenants in the UK if they have the right to swap. To swap homes (sometimes called a mutual exchange) you need to register your details on the national home exchange website homeswapper.me

If you're approved, you will be given a unique reference number to start searching for a house.

Once you've found someone to swap homes with, both of you need to apply to us for permission. It's important you see the new house in person before you apply, as you must accept it in the state offered.

You and the tenant you're swapping with must submit application forms. When we get both application forms, we'll check you haven't breached your tenancy.

We'll then arrange an inspection of your house, and once we've given written permission for you to swap homes, you'll need to arrange a moving date with the other person.

You can submit an application form to swap your home by visiting canterbury.gov.uk/swappyourhome.

Right to Buy

Right to Buy allows most council tenants to buy their council house. You can find more information on canterbury.gov.uk/righttobuy.

You can normally buy your house if:

- it's your only or main home
- it's self-contained
- you're a secure tenant and
- you've had a public sector landlord (for example, a council or housing association) for three years - this does not have to be three years in a row

Once you've applied to buy your house, we'll only carry out repairs that we have a legal duty to do, for example gas or water problems.

No more improvements will be made to your home while your application is ongoing. For example, if you are due a new boiler or kitchen your house will be removed from the planned maintenance programme.

If you are removed you may not be added again if your application to buy is not successful or if you decide not to go ahead.



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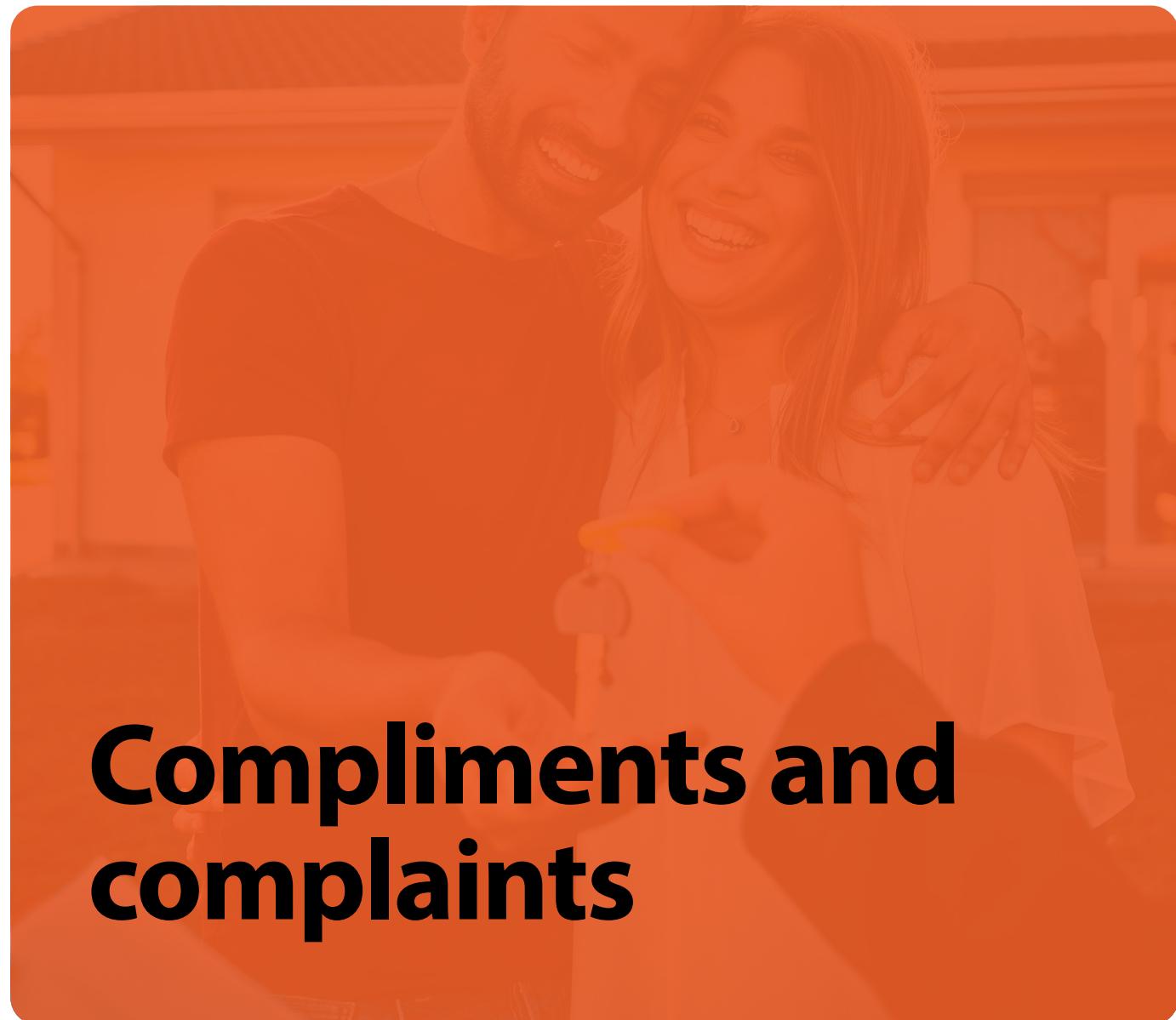
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Complimenting us

We're always wanting to hear when we're doing well, especially if it's related to a particular member of staff that's done a great job.

You can submit a comment or compliment to us on our website canterbury.gov.uk/compliment or phone **01227 862 000**

Making a complaint

Our complaints procedure

Any dissatisfaction with a council service is a complaint.

You can make a complaint online at canterbury.gov.uk/complaints, call **01227 862 000**, or write to us at:

Canterbury City Council, 14 Rose Lane,
Canterbury CT1 2UR.

Your complaint may be directed straight to the service area, or through the customer contact centre.

Complaints are different from a request for service. For example, a one-off message to say that a bin has been missed could be a request for service, whereas an ongoing situation with repeated missed bins is likely to be a complaint.

What happens after I make a complaint?

Stage one

We aim to acknowledge your complaint within five working days and provide a reply within 10 working days of the acknowledgment.

If the complaint is very complex and needs an extension to this timescale, then we will tell you when you can expect a reply. Any extension will be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and we will clearly explain the reasons for the extension to you.

If you're unhappy with the response, please contact the department or individual who dealt with it. Most queries are usually resolved at this stage.

Stage two

If you're still not satisfied with our response, you can ask for another officer to review your case. We aim to acknowledge your request for a review within five working days and provide a reply within 20 working days of the acknowledgement.



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If the complaint is very complex and needs an extension to this timescale, then we will tell you when you can expect a reply. Any extension will be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and we will clearly explain the reasons for the extension to you.

Referring a complaint to the Ombudsman

If you are still not satisfied with the reply you can then refer your complaint to the relevant Ombudsman.

If your complaint is about the council as a landlord, you should contact the Housing Ombudsman at housing-ombudsman.org.uk

For any other complaints, contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman at igo.org.uk

Both Ombudsman are independent of Canterbury City Council.

Their role is to investigate specific complaints about local authorities. The Ombudsman will usually only consider a complaint after it has been through both stages of our complaints procedure, so please make sure you have exhausted our complaints process before contacting them.

Version Number	Release Date	Reviewer	Summary of Changes
		Resident Engagement Panel through a workshop on 7th October 2025. Multiple CCC Officers.	Version 1

This document is not controlled when printed. Please refer to the relevant webpage by searching 'tenant handbook' on our website.

