



Your home,  
safe in our hands

# Southway

**Southway Housing Trust  
(Manchester) Limited  
Tenants' Handbook 2020**



**CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE**



**Tenant  
approved**



To view updates of sections in this handbook please  
go to our website at [www.southwayhousing.co.uk](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk)

**tenants' handbook 2020**

# Dear Tenant,

## Welcome to Southway Housing Trust!

We're a not-for-profit organisation, responsible for the ownership, maintenance and improvement of nearly 6,000 homes in South Manchester. It is my pleasure to send you this Tenants' Handbook, which I hope you will find useful and informative.

The information in this handbook should help you to know what to expect from us and where to go if you have an enquiry or wish to ask for one of the services we offer.

We're always keen to hear from our customers about how we're doing. You can help us with this by telling us when we do things well, and when you think we could do better.

We promise to work with you, and our partners, to make South Manchester a place that people are proud of – a safe place where people choose to live, work and play.

Yours faithfully,

**Karen Mitchell**  
Chief Executive

*K. Mitchell*



# Finding your way around this handbook

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## Our vision

We will work in partnership with others to make South Manchester a place that **people are proud of** - a safe place where people choose to live, work and play.

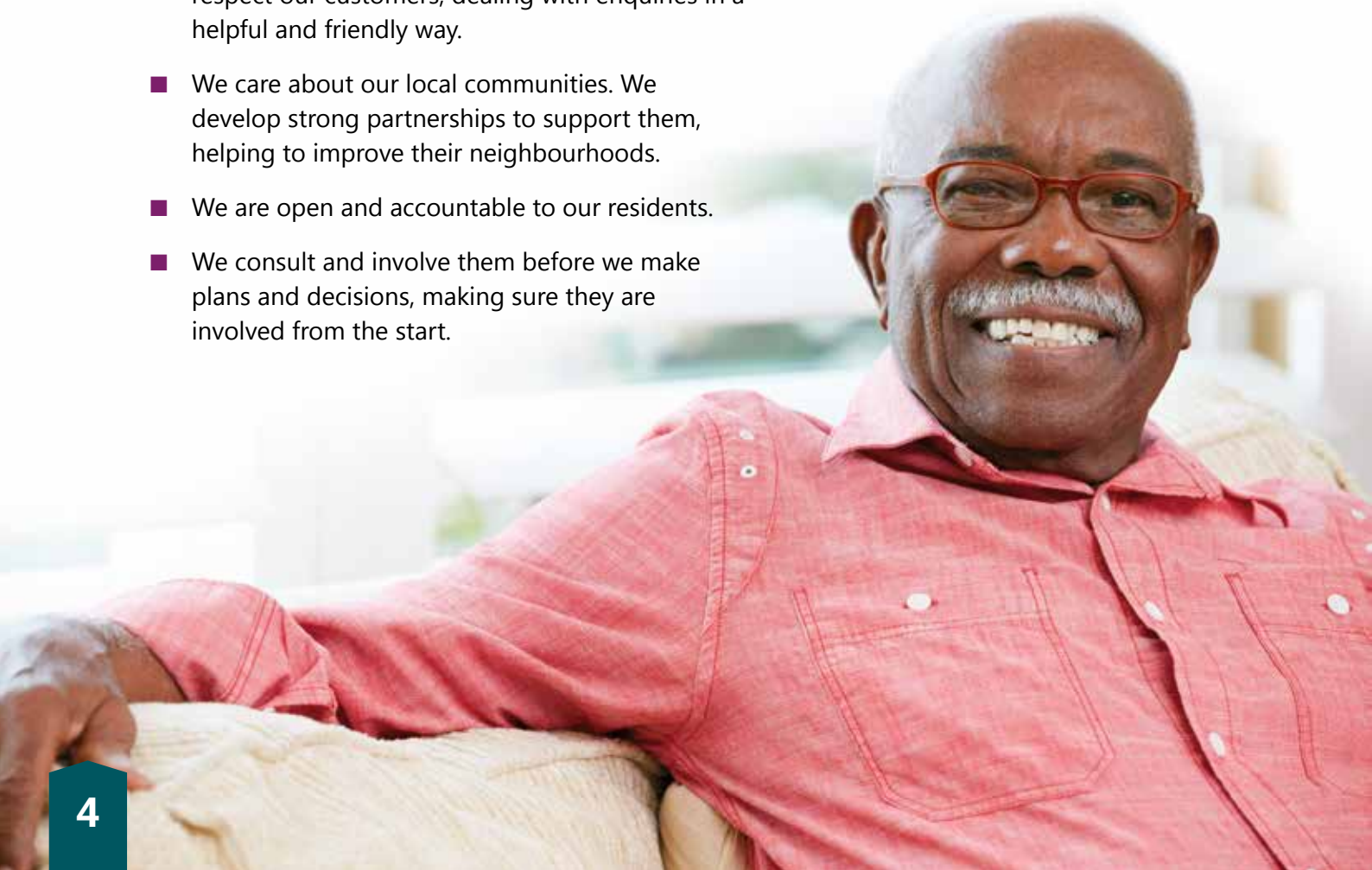
### We will:

- Be warm, welcoming and accessible to every customer;
- Provide excellent services;
- Provide affordable, high-quality, secure homes; and
- Help to create a cleaner and greener environment

## Our objective

### We aim to create an environment where:

- People are confident and proud of the community they live in. They respect one another and are encouraged to realise their potential.
- Our staff are trusted to do the right thing - they are enthusiastic, skilled and willing to go the extra mile for customers.
- Our customer services are excellent, and meet our customers' needs and expectations. We listen to and respect our customers, dealing with enquiries in a helpful and friendly way.
- We care about our local communities. We develop strong partnerships to support them, helping to improve their neighbourhoods.
- We are open and accountable to our residents.
- We consult and involve them before we make plans and decisions, making sure they are involved from the start.



## Equality and diversity statement

Put simply, **'equality and diversity'** is all about respect for people.

For us, it's about serving and meeting the needs of individuals in a fair and consistent way - whatever their gender, age, race, sexuality, faith or abilities. We are dedicated to doing this in every area of the business and in every service we offer our customers.

Our staff are as diverse as our customers - and that's the way it should be. They are people with different backgrounds, from all walks of life - equally helping to shape our services and the way we offer them to you.

That means every time we deal with you we promise to be fair and respectful, and give the best service to you as an individual. And every time we create a policy or provide a service we promise to make it open and accessible to you and all Southway tenants.





### 3 How to access our service

We want every one of our residents to be able to access our services in the way that suits them best.

#### Contacting us

**There's a wide choice of ways to contact us. Simply choose the one that suits you.**

<b>Call us</b>	0161 448 4200 (8.00am - 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. (Emergencies only outside these hours)
<b>Email us</b>	connect@southwayhousing.co.uk
<b>Visit our website</b>	www.southwayhousing.co.uk
<b>Text us</b>	07554 400781(include first line of address and postcode)
<b>Visit us or write to us at:</b>	Southern Gate, 729 Princess Road, Manchester M20 2LT

#### Finding information about our services

As well as this handbook you can get leaflets on our main services by calling 0161 448 4200. You can also find all the information at [www.southwayhousing.co.uk](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk)

We use plain language to make the information we provide easy to follow. We can also use pictures and symbols to help you, if you have trouble reading.

We're happy to help you read and understand written information and fill in forms, and we will treat these requests with sensitivity. You can also get important information from us on CD, if you find it easier to listen to it than to read it.

#### Extra help for disabled customers

Some of our residents have extra needs, so we provide information in a variety of formats.

#### Easy-to-read forms and leaflets

If you have, or someone you know has, reduced or no vision, you can ask for large print, Braille or CD versions of documents such as statements and leaflets. If you need any of these, contact us on the details above.

#### Lending an ear...

If you have reduced or no hearing, you can talk to us by textphone on 0161 448 4349. We provide signers, lip speakers and a fax service. The counter and meeting rooms at our office have loops available – just ask when you arrive.

### www.southwayhousing.co.uk - AAA Absolutely the best!

We have done our best to make sure that nobody misses the benefits of using the Southway website because of a visual impairment or another disability, or because he or she is older, or is not a strong reader.

Our website has the "triple-A" logo – the top mark a website can get for accessibility. This rating means you're sure to understand our site, find your way around it, have your say and do all the things that used to mean visiting an office personally, or writing out and posting long paper forms.

You can even listen to the pages instead of reading them, using the "Browsealoud" system on our website. You can also make the writing bigger or smaller to suit your eyesight.

#### Access all areas...

Our building has an access ramp, an automatic door, wide doorways and toilets for disabled people. If it's easier for you, we are happy to visit you at home to deal with any housing query, including rehousing and medical assessment.

You could also take advantage of our interactive online web services, so you can keep in contact from the comfort of your own home.

#### Staff who know your needs

All Southway staff who talk to tenants as part of their job have been trained in disability awareness, so don't hesitate to ask for any help you need.



## What's In store online?

Welcome to Southway online! Our website is always live, 24 hours a day – and you'd be surprised what you can do there.

In fact, when you really start to discover us at [www.southwayhousing.co.uk](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk), you might find that you hardly ever need to telephone or visit us in future. Visit our website today and see how we can serve you online.

### What can I do on the Southway website?

#### Repairs

Order repairs directly on our website, anytime you want. Fill in the simple form, and choose your ideal appointment timeslot. You can also check out our service standards and deadlines, see information on 'emergency' repairs and report any problems.

#### Rents

Pay your rent without even leaving the house. It's safe and easy to pay using your credit or debit card, and it goes straight into your rent account. You can also check your rent statements online to make sure you're up-to-date with payments. And if you need to order a new rent card, you can do that here too.

#### Benefits

Claim Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit online, and see how much you are entitled to. And if you already claim any of these benefits, you can see exactly how they might be affected if your current situation ever changes – like moving home, starting a new job or having children.

#### Rehousing

If you're looking for a new home, look no further... use 'Homefinder' to register for rehousing online, check out homes that are available right now with maps and area guides, and exchange your home through 'Homeswap'.

There's also useful information for older people who are looking to move into retirement housing.

#### Home and garden

If you're sick, elderly or disabled, you can apply online for help with decorating and gardening. You can also report problems with your garden or your neighbour's garden. And, depending on your circumstances, you could even apply to put in a driveway.

#### News

Our website will always be the first to put you in the picture on all things Southway. Be the first to find out about local events, groups and meetings, housing updates, jobs with Southway, Southway Stories and much more.

#### Your neighbourhood

You can keep us clued-up on your neighbourhood at the click of a button. Report environmental problems on your estate, ask for graffiti to be removed, report a tree problem and tell us about empty homes in your area. And while you're there, check out the dates and times of our estate walkabouts.

#### Your tenancy

You can virtually run your tenancy on our website! Give official notice to end your tenancy, ask to take over someone else's tenancy, and apply to create a joint tenancy. Depending on your circumstances, you can also apply to sub-let part of your home to someone else.

### Antisocial behaviour

You can safely report any kind of antisocial behaviour online, in the privacy of your own home. We'll respond quickly to your enquiries and comments.

### Comments and complaints

Tell us what you think, at the click of a mouse. Make a complaint and suggest how we can improve, or tell us what you think we do well. All your comments and questions are welcome online, and we'll respond to them within ten working days at the latest.



### But I haven't got the internet!

Chances are, you'll probably live within a mile of free internet access and free advice on how to use it – look no further than your **local library**.

Please call each library for their opening times.

**Barlow Moor Library,**  
40 Merseybank Avenue, M21 7NN  
0161 446 2061

**Burnage Library,**  
Burnage Lane, M19 1EW  
0161 442 9036

**Chorlton Library,**  
Manchester Road, M21 9PN  
0161 881 3179

**Didsbury Library,**  
692 Wilmslow Road, M20 2DN  
0161 445 3220

**Fallowfield Library,**  
Platt Lane, M14 7FB  
0161 224 4153

**Withington Library,**  
410 Wilmslow Road, M20 3BN  
0161 445 1991

### Scared of a mouse...

If you've never used the internet before, or even turned on a computer, you might feel as though there's no point starting now.

### But that's where you're wrong!

It might look difficult, but it's actually really easy – and there are plenty of places in your local area that are willing to show you how.

All the libraries listed above will point you in the right direction for free computer training for beginners – ready to help you learn, at your own pace.



## Rent and benefits

We want to make it even easier and more convenient for you to pay.

### Ways to pay your rent

We want to make it really easy for you to keep up-to-date with your rent payments, even when you're away from home. Always remember, whichever way you pay, you should keep the receipt or payment reference number that you are given at the time.

#### Pay Online

You can manage (and pay) your entire rent account online with Southway. Use your bank debit card or credit card to pay online (through secure 'allpay' Internet Payments). All you need is your 19 digit payment number (on your rent card or through your online account) and a credit or debit card.

For smartphone payments follow the link below and download the allpay App from the iPhone App Store or Google Play for Android devices, this way you can pay via your smartphone!



#### Housing Benefit

If you claim Housing Benefit to pay your rent, you can choose to have it paid direct to us (though this will change with Universal Credit for working age tenants). If your Housing Benefit covers your full rent, you will need to use a different payment method to pay the rest.

#### Direct Debit

One of the easiest and best ways to pay. No queuing and no need for using debit or credit cards. You won't even need your rent card. Just call us on 0161 448 4200 and we can set up the direct debit over the phone (or send us your completed direct debit form). Once your direct debit is set up, it will automatically pay your rent (weekly, every two weeks, every four weeks or monthly – it's up to you). So you can forget about it and get on with your life!

#### Text Message

All you need is a UK registered mobile phone and you can pay your rent any time, anywhere. To set this up, visit our online payments provider ('allpay') and register your credit or debit card. You can then pick a text code and will be sent your text password. Once this is all set up, you can make your rent payment by texting 'pay' to 81025, along with your text code, password, and amount that you want to pay.

#### Standing Order

This is similar to a Direct Debit. The money goes in straightaway, and there's no danger you'll forget to pay! However, this is a financial instruction between you and your bank (rather than between you and ourselves). We have a simple form for you to print out, fill in and send to your bank.

You'll need to put your tenancy reference number on the form (it's on your rent card and also in your online account.) If you can't print out the form, or need advice, please contact us.

#### Phone Call

You can still use the 24 hour automated payment service provided by 'Allpay' - just phone the Customer Hub and select the RENT option, and then you will be prompted to PRESS 1 to make a payment. You'll need the 19 digit reference from your rent card.

#### Post Office

Use your rent card to pay at any post office. Pay by cash, cheque or debit/credit card. It's a free service. You can find your nearest Post Office at [www.postoffice.co.uk](http://www.postoffice.co.uk)



#### Pay Point

Paypoint has 26 outlets throughout the Southway area. You can now pay your rent or service charge at a Paypoint, using your Southway rent card and cash or your debit/credit card.

Whichever way you pay, please keep the receipt they give you.



#### Pay Zone

Use your rent card to pay at any outlets displaying the Payzone logo in the UK. If you want to know where your nearest outlet is, you can search online at [www.payzone.co.uk](http://www.payzone.co.uk)

#### By Post

Send a cheque (made out to Southway Housing Trust) to the following address:

##### Southway Housing Trust

Southern Gate  
729 Princess Road  
Manchester  
M20 2LT

Write your name, address and tenancy reference number (from your rent card or online rent account) on the back of the cheque. Don't send cash through the post!

### How we calculate your rent (and other charges)

Until recently housing associations and housing trusts like Southway have all used slightly 5 different ways of setting rents. This means that it has been difficult to compare the rents charged by not-for-profit landlords in different areas, as well as those in neighbouring areas.

#### The Government wants housing association rents to:

- Remain affordable;
- Generally be well below those charged by private landlords;
- Be linked to the size, location and condition of the home; and
- Be similar to rents for other council and housing association homes of a similar size, location and condition.

Following consultation with councils and housing associations, the Government produced a formula for setting rents which takes into account:

- The value of the property;
- The number of bedrooms in the property; and
- Local earnings.



In addition to rent, you may have to pay other charges to Southway, including:

- Fixed weekly heating charges if your home is part of a communal heating scheme - please note that these are not covered by housing benefit;
- A furnished tenancy charge, where we have furnished or part furnished your home for you.

Your Neighbourhood Officer will have explained exactly what you have to pay, when you first signed for your Southway tenancy. If you are not sure what you should be paying, or there has been a change in your circumstances that affects your income or benefits, contact us straight away for advice.

## Rent-free weeks

The rent you have to pay is worked out over 50 pay weeks each year. That means there are two rent-free weeks. These include Christmas Day (or the week after, if Christmas Day falls on a weekend), and the week starting the first Monday in April.

## How do the rent-free weeks affect you?

*If you pay your rent **every month** through your bank/building society*

If you pay rent every month through your bank or building society, you don't need to do anything on the above dates, because your monthly payment will have already been calculated to take the rent-free weeks into account.

*If you pay your rent **every week** through your bank/building society*

If you pay rent every week through your bank, you can set the standing order to pay for just 50 weeks of the year, and tell your bank not to make payments on the rent-free weeks.

Or, if you want to, you can pay your rent over 52 weeks but still get the benefit of the two rent-free weeks in a different way. To do this:

1. Take your weekly rent
2. Multiply it by 50 to get your yearly rent
3. Divide your annual rent by 52 to get your new weekly rent
4. Ask your bank to pay that amount to us every week.

So, if Mr Smith pays £100 per week but wants to spread his rent over 52 weeks rather than 50, his calculation would look like this:

- |                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Weekly rent      | = £100                    |
| 2 Multiplied by 50 | = £5,000 yearly rent      |
| 3 Divided by 52    | = £96.15 new weekly rent. |

## If you pay any other way

Just make a note of the rent free weeks, and don't make a payment in those weeks. If you do have any problems, call us on 0161 448 4200 and we'll be happy to help.

No rent-free weeks for tenants in arrears.

If you owe rent on your account, you won't get these rent-free weeks – you will have to pay every week of the year until the account is clear. So it's worth sorting out any arrears right away.

## If you owe rent

We understand the problems of getting by on a limited budget, so we're ready and willing to help you as much as we can to sort things out. You don't have to pay off what you owe all at once – we can work out a plan for you to pay it off in small, regular amounts that you can more easily afford. Just call us on 0161 448 4200 to make an arrangement, or make an appointment to see someone from our Income Management team. You can also fill in the form at [www.southwayhousing.co.uk](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk), by clicking on the "At Your Service" tab.

## Money worries?

There's no need to worry, because we can help you get back on track for a debt-free future - and our expert advisers won't charge you a penny for it. They can deal with all kinds of debts - including credit cards, catalogues, overdrafts, loans, store cards, doorstep collectors, council tax and hire purchase.

And they are there to help -- never to judge on how much you owe, or why you owe it. They can:

- Give you completely free, confidential help from start to finish;
- Meet you at home or in our office;
- Contact people to whom you owe money;
- Negotiate with them, so you can make smaller repayments;
- Work on higher-level bankruptcies and other debt solutions;
- Make sure you're getting the right benefits;
- Help you organise your money for a debt-free future.

*Just call us on **0161 448 4200** and we will be able to assist.*

## Are you getting the full benefit?

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit can often be paid to people on lower incomes. It can pay some, or all, of your rent and Council Tax, depending on your circumstances - how much you earn, how many children you've got and so on. The Government says how much benefit people get. This system is run by Manchester City Council.

## How is it worked out?

*The Council looks at the rent you pay and checks:*

- How much you and your partner have coming in – including wages, pensions, some benefits and tax credits;
- How much you need to spend on things like childcare;
- Your savings and your partner's savings;
- Your circumstances – your age, the ages and size of your family, if you or any member of your family is disabled, and if anyone living with you could be expected to help with the rent.

## Your circumstances

The government works out the amount of money that someone in your circumstances needs to live on. If your income is less than this amount, and there's no-one else living with you who could help out with the rent, you'll probably get full benefit – which means you wouldn't have to pay any rent yourself. If your income is more than this amount you will have to pay some, or all, of the rent yourself. The higher your income, the more you will have to pay towards your rent.

Housing Benefit is paid directly into your rent account. So, for example, if your rent is £100 each week, and you're entitled to £70 housing benefit, you will only have to pay £30 a week yourself.



## Find out how much you could claim

Our easy-to-use online rent and benefit calculator tells you how much you should pay, and the benefits you might be able to get. If you don't have access to the Internet, contact the Benefits Service on:

**Phone:** 0161 219 6100  
(Mon to Fri 8.45am - 5pm)

**Textphone:** 0161 953 8301

**Email:** benefit.enquiries@manchester.gov.uk

### How to claim

Did you know it could take up to 13 weeks before your claim is processed? Make your claim as soon as you can, or you'll risk losing the benefit to which you're entitled! Are you moving home? Have you got new people living in your home, or are you retiring from work? Make a claim now if you know your circumstances are going to change.

### To make a claim:

- Fill in a claim form online - it's the quickest way to claim. You can also print off and fill in the claim form; or
- Contact the Benefits Service – the details are just above.

### NEVER DELAY MAKING A CLAIM

### Having problems paying rent?

If you are having trouble making your rent payments, you must contact our Income Management team immediately to discuss your difficulties. Call us on 0161 448 4200. Do not delay – there may be benefits you can claim.

Our friendly and highly experienced staff will talk to you sympathetically about the situation and, in most cases, will be able to help you in a number of ways. We will:

- Make an arrangement with you to pay off your arrears in an affordable way;

- Check to see if you are entitled to Housing Benefit, and advise you on how to claim;
- Offer advice on more suitable and convenient ways to pay your rent;
- Help you to obtain debt counselling or advice on money management by arranging an appointment with our Debt Advisor;
- Help you to obtain welfare benefits advice by arranging an appointment with a welfare benefits adviser.

### Recovering rent arrears

We operate a very robust arrears recovery process. This includes telephoning and writing to tenants in arrears, visiting them at home and arranging for them to attend interviews in the office.

In more severe cases, where we are unable to recover money you owe to us, we may take further action. This could include serving a Notice telling you that we will be asking the Court to give us possession of your home, and getting

a Court Order to do this and recover your rent arrears. If we cannot contain and reduce the debt, we may ultimately have to evict you from your home.

If your case goes to Court you may be liable for the Court costs and, in most cases, will be ordered by the Court, to pay your rent plus any additional costs the Court sees fit.

We will always ensure that we do everything in our power to keep you in your home. But if you won't pay what you owe we may have no option but to evict you.



## Universal Credit

Universal Credit (UC), is the online benefit combining working age benefits and tax credits into a single monthly payment.

We know some tenants are worried about moving on to Universal Credit, but you don't need to be. The process is simple when you have taken the steps to prepare, and we have lots of support available to you to help you get ready and make your claim.

### Universal Credit: what's different?

- It is claimed online
- It is paid in one monthly lump sum
- Unlike Housing Benefit, Universal Credit does not pay for your rent separately
- It is paid directly to you; you are responsible for paying your rent out of this money

### What does it replace?

- Income-Based Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

Universal Credit does not include help with your Council Tax. You must make a separate claim for Council Tax support here via Manchester City Council.

### Should I make a claim?

You won't need to claim until you are told to. However, it's good to be prepared. To ensure you're ready to claim when you need to, make sure you have:

1. Access to the internet
2. A Bank Account
3. Proof of ID & National Insurance
4. Your tenancy agreement & proof of service charges
5. Proof of address
6. Details of your income, savings and/or benefits

If you need assistance, Southway can help with any of the following steps.



### I've been told to claim; where do I start?

#### To apply, you'll need:

1. Your bank, building society or credit union account details (contact Southway Universal Credit Universal Credit officer if you do not have one)
2. an email address
3. information about your housing, for example how much rent you pay
4. details of your income, for example payslips
5. details of savings and any investments, like shares or a property that you rent out
6. details of how much you pay for childcare if you're applying for help with childcare costs

If you do not provide the right information when you apply it might affect when you get paid or how much you get.

#### You also have to verify your identity online

You'll need some proof of identity for this, for example:

1. Driving licence
2. Passport
3. Debit or credit card

#### If you cannot verify your identity online

You can take 3 forms of proof of identity to your first interview at your local Jobcentre Plus:

1. Permanent residence card
2. UK registration or naturalisation certificate
3. Council tax documents

#### Help with your application

If you need help with your application, ask straight away the sooner you apply for Universal Credit, the sooner you get your first payment. Southway has a dedicated Universal Credit officer Nadine. Contact her on 0161 448 4200.



## 7 Tenancy rights and obligations

As your landlord, Southway has certain obligations to you as a tenant and, in return, you have obligations to the Trust. In addition you have a 6 number of rights. All of these are set out in full in your Tenancy Agreement. Below are the Trust's key obligations, and your key obligations as Tenant. Your main rights are also listed below:

### The Trust's key obligations

#### Possession

The Trust will give you possession of the premises at the start of the tenancy.

#### Repair of structure and exterior

The Trust will keep the structure and exterior of the premises in repair including:

- The roof;
- Drains, gutters and external pipes;
- Outside walls, outside doors, window sills and window frames, including any necessary painting or decoration;
- Internal walls, skirting boards, doors and door frames, door jambs, thresholds, floors and ceilings (but not painting and decoration);
- Major internal plasterwork (but not minor faults or hairline cracks);
- Chimneys and chimney stacks (but not sweeping the chimneys where solid fuel open fires are in use);
- Fences and gates (where provided by the Trust), pathways, steps, ramps and stairlifts;
- Garages and outbuildings (where provided by the Trust).

The Trust is not responsible for any repair or replacement needed because of damage to, or neglect of, the premises that has been caused by you, anyone living with you or by your visitors.

#### Repair of installations

The Trust will keep in repair, and proper working order, any installations provided or adopted by the Trust for space heating, water heating and sanitation and for the supply of water, gas and electricity, including:

- Water pipes and tanks, gas pipes and electrical wiring;
- Electrical sockets and light fittings (but not plugs, fuses, light bulbs or your own appliances);
- Basins, sinks, baths, toilets, flushing systems, waste pipes and tap washers;
- Water heaters, boilers, fireplaces, fitted fires and radiators.

#### Repairs – generally

The Trust will carry out all repairs in what it considers to be a reasonable timescale. And from time to time, review them in consultation with you.

#### Consents (permissions)

It is implied that the Trust will not unreasonably refuse its consent. This means that, wherever possible, we will grant you permission if you request it. In some circumstances, consent may only be given subject to certain reasonable conditions, with which you must comply.

Failure to keep to these conditions would then be a breach of your tenancy, and might entitle the Trust to take Court action.

## Your key obligations

### Possession

You agree that: You will take possession of the premises at the start of the tenancy, and not part with possession of the premises or sublet the whole of it. This means that you must occupy the property as your home. If you move out, we would expect you to end your tenancy. If you allow others to live there, you cannot move out and allow them to occupy it separately from you – you must continue to live in the property yourself.

### Rent

You will pay the rent and any applicable service charge, (for example, charges for heating), weekly in advance, (including at the start of the tenancy), on Monday in each relevant week apart from in any week or weeks which the Trust determines to be "rent free weeks".

### Nuisance and antisocial behaviour

You are responsible for the behaviour of every person (including children) living in or visiting your home. You are responsible in your home, or on surrounding land, in communal areas (stairs, lifts, landings, entrance halls, paving, sheds, gardens, parking areas), and in the locality around your home.

You (or anyone living with you or visiting your home) must not cause or commit any form of antisocial behaviour at, or within the locality of, your home. Antisocial behaviour means any act or omission which interferes with the peace and comfort of others, or which may cause nuisance, annoyance, injury or offence to any other tenants, members of their household, visitors, neighbours, the Trust (including its employees and contractors and representatives), or any other member of the general public.

### Racial and other harassment

You (or anyone living with you or visiting your home) must not commit any form of harassment at or within the locality of your

home (including harassment on the grounds of age, gender, race, culture, ability or lifestyle) which may interfere with the peace and comfort of, or cause offence to, any other tenant, member of their household, visitor, neighbour or employee or representative of the Trust. This includes, but is not limited to, racist or sexist behaviour or language, abuse, threatened or actual violence, threats of damage, abusive or insulting graffiti, mail, telephone calls, email or text messages.

### Domestic violence

You (or anyone living with you or visiting your home) must not inflict domestic violence on any person. You must not threaten violence, or use mental, emotional, physical or sexual abuse against your partner, your ex-partner, or any member of your family or household.

### Noise

You (or anyone living with you or visiting your home) must not cause noise nuisance to any other person at or within the locality of your home.

### Breach of the peace

You (or anyone living with you or visiting your home) must not act in any way that is likely to lead to a breach of the peace at, or within, the locality of your home, or at any premises owned by the Trust.

### Pets

You (or anyone living with you) can only keep small domestic animals as pets. This includes dogs and cats, small animals or birds kept in an indoor cage (external fixed cages or aviaries are not permitted), or fish or reptiles (kept in an indoor tank) on the premises. Pets must be kept under proper control and not be allowed to cause nuisance – such as noise, or fouling of garden and communal areas. If there are complaints which are found to be justified, this could be considered a breach of your Tenancy Agreement.



## Improvements

You must not make any improvements, alterations or additions to the premises without first obtaining both the written consent of the Trust and all other necessary approvals. Such improvements include (but are not limited to):

- removal of any internal walls or integral fixtures or fittings;
- erecting any structure in the garden of the premises;
- cutting down any tree, or removing any hedge or other boundary line or making a vehicular access from the highway into the premises.

## Maintenance and redecoration inside the property

You must keep the interior of the premises in good repair and in a clean and good decorative condition. You must decorate all internal parts of the premises as frequently as is necessary to keep them in reasonable decorative order.

## Gardens

You must keep your garden areas neat and tidy and free from rubbish. Lawns must be cut and hedges trimmed.

## Minor repairs

You will be expected to carry out certain minor repairs, which are classed as "Tenants' responsibility", to the premises yourself. These

- easing internal doors;
- the maintenance of non-standard appliances, fixtures, fittings, extensions and additions – where they have been installed by you with or without permission unless formally adopted by the Trust;
- the replacement of lost or damaged keys, and the replacement of locks caused by the losing of keys (where the Trust so decides);
- TV aerials or satellite dishes (unless communal), and any damage to property

or neighbouring property that has been caused by their installation;

- Clothes posts and lines (unless communal).

## Damage

You must pay the Trust for the cost of repairing any damage to the premises, fixtures or the Trust's fittings, if this was caused by your neglect, by a deliberate act, or by default. You are held responsible for such damage if it was caused by you, your family, friends or visitors.

## Reporting disrepair

You must report to the Trust promptly any disrepair or defect of which you are aware, and which is the Trust's responsibility to repair.

## Access

You must give the duly authorised officers, agents and operatives of the Trust, and the gas, water and electricity supply companies access to the premises if this is required. This would normally be for the purposes of inspection safety checks, and for carrying out work to the property or to any adjoining properties as may be necessary.

The Trust will normally give you 24 hours notice when it requires access, unless it believes entry is necessary immediately because of an emergency that could cause personal injury, or damage to the premises or to neighbouring property.

## Ending the tenancy

You must give the Trust at least 4 weeks' notice in writing (expiring at 12 noon on a Monday) when you wish to end the Tenancy.

## Your rights

### Right to occupy

You have the right to occupy the premises, without interruption or interference from the Trust, for the duration of your tenancy so long as you comply with the terms of the Tenancy Agreement and have the proper respect for the rights of other tenants and neighbours.

### Security of tenure

You have security of tenure so long as you keep to your Tenancy Agreement and occupy the premises as your "only or principal home". The Trust can only end the tenancy by obtaining a Court Order for possession of the premises on one of the grounds listed in Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1988. Please see your Tenancy Agreement for full details about security of tenure. If there is anything you do not understand, please contact us.

### Right to repairs

You have a right to have qualifying repairs done in set timescales.

## Right to consultation

The Trust will consult you before making changes in matters of housing management or maintenance that are likely to have a substantial effect on you.

## Rights of succession / assignment

Please see your Tenancy Agreement for the full details of this right.

## Right to your exchange

Please see your Tenancy Agreement for full details of this right.

## Right to buy

If you were a tenant of Manchester City Council immediately prior to the transfer to Southway Housing Trust and have continued to be a tenant of the premises you will still have the right to buy your home. Please see your Tenancy Agreement for the full details of this right.

**IF YOU ARE NOT CLEAR ABOUT ANY OF THE TENANCY RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS, PLEASE CONTACT US FOR AN EXPLANATION**





## Your right to repair

Southway Housing offers a repairs service to strict standards and timescales. Although we offer appointments to suit you, you may find it suits you even better to make simple repairs yourself. Take a look at our Easy DIY guide (Section 9 on page 22), for advice on common household repairs you could tackle.

### Right to repair compensation

We work hard to make sure that repairs are done properly, on time, and at your convenience.

Our appointment system lets you choose the time your repair is done, and our website [www.southwayhousing.co.uk](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk) allows you to report a repair.

Because of the nature of repairs work, delays can sometimes happen. But you have the legal right to cash compensation if an unreasonable delay puts your health, safety or security at risk. Certain conditions apply.

### How it works

The 'right to repair' scheme covers smaller urgent jobs. These would cost us less than £250 to put right and would normally be done within a few days.

We have to do repairs within a certain time – the more urgent the job, the shorter the deadline. When you order a repair, we will tell you the deadline for doing it. If it qualifies for the Right to Repair, and we have not done it by the agreed time, you can ask us to order the work from a different company.

The second company is given the same length of time as we were given ourselves to do the repair. If they fail to do it in time, you can get compensation.

The longer you have to wait for the repair to be done, the more cash you will get back. But we may use the compensation to pay off anything you might owe us, like rent arrears, first, before we pay you the balance.

### To get compensation you must have:

- Told us when it's convenient for us to call;
- Let the workers into your home at the arranged time;
- Told us when the deadline passed; Asked us to order the work from another company;
- Told them that their deadline has also passed.

You **can't** get compensation under the Right to Repair if:

- We have inspected and attended to the repair, and advised you that the parts we need are on order; or
- We have told you the repair is one you must pay for first.

If the work is still not done after the second deadline, you can claim £10 compensation, and another £2 for every day that goes by without the job being done - up to a maximum of £50.

You can apply for compensation by contacting us on **0161 448 4200**.

## You could get compensation on these repairs:

### Electrics

- Loss of some or all power
- Dangerous sockets or fittings

### Water and gas

- Loss of some or all water supply
- Loss of some or all hot water
- Loss of some or all gas supply

### Heating

- Loss of some or all heating
- Blocked flue on an open fire or boiler

### Floors and stairs

- Rotting timber
- Faulty banister or handrail

### Plumbing

- Blocked or leaking foul drain or soil stack
- Blocked or leaking toilet pan or (only) toilet not flushing
- Blocked sink, bath or basin
- Taps that will not turn
- Leaking pipe, tank or cistern

### Roofs, windows and doors

- Leaking roof
- Insecure window or outside door
- Broken door entry phone

### Extractor fans

- Broken kitchen or bathroom fan



## 9 Water, gas and electricity in your home

Before things go wrong and you need to get them fixed in a hurry, it's worth finding out where certain things are in your home, like your stop-tap and fuse box.

So please take some time to find the location of a few key items, and make a note of where they are in the boxes below. If you need any help, just call us on 0161 448 4200.

### Key item

### Where it is

#### The mains water stop-tap

This is likely to be very close to the kitchen sink. It's a special tap on the main pipe that supplies water into your home.

#### Electricity fuse box

This will be near an external wall and near to your electricity meter.

#### Gas tap / meter

You should see a small upright pipe running up the outside of your home and through the external wall. Your gas tap and meter should be in the room on the other side of that wall.

#### Central heating boiler

It's usually a rectangular box inside your home. If you can't find it, follow the gas pipe from your gas meter.

#### Hot water cylinder

A large round cylinder, usually in the kitchen, bathroom or loft.

#### Water tank

This is always higher up than the hot water cylinder, usually in the loft.

## 10 Easy DIY: Do you need to order a repair?

Before you call us out to fix a problem in your home, there might be a few things you can do to help. You can do the repair yourself, or make sure the problem doesn't get any worse before we get there.

### Problems with pipes

#### When they leak – a slight flow of water

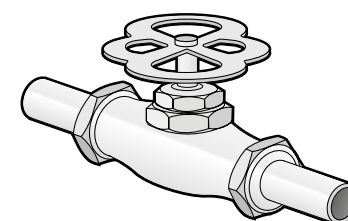
Pull back any carpets that are affected and use towels to absorb any moisture. Then place a bowl (or something like a baking tin, if there is no room for a bowl or bucket) underneath the leak, to catch dripping water. Ring us on 0161 448 4200. Don't forget to keep checking the bowl to make sure it doesn't overflow.

#### When they freeze – no water coming out in very cold weather

Follow steps 1 and 2 below and call us on 0161 448 4200.

#### When they burst – an uncontrollable flow of water

1. Turn the water supply off at the stop-tap. It's probably near the kitchen sink. Turn off any gate valves from the water tank – these are normally next to the tank.



2. Turn the cold taps ON. Make sure all the sink and bath plugs are out. Save some drinking water in a jug for later.
3. Turn the immersion heater and central heating OFF, if you have them. If you have a solid fuel boiler, let the fire die out.
4. Turn the hot taps ON to drain the water out of the system.

5. If there's water near the lights or sockets, turn the electricity off at the meter.
6. Catch leaks in basins and soak up water with towels as much as you can to prevent water damaging your home.
7. Phone us on 0161 448 4200 (8am - 5.30pm, Monday to Friday). You can use this number outside normal office hours as well if the problem is an emergency that threatens your health, safety or security.
8. Try to keep warm and dry. Put on extra layers of clothes till things warm up again.

#### When ceilings bulge due to flooding from burst pipes

Place a bucket under it, and carefully pierce a small hole in the middle of the bulge to let the water through.

If electric fittings get wet DO NOT touch them. Turn electricity off at the meter with dry hands.

### Can you smell gas?

- Open all doors and windows
- **DON'T...**
  - turn any electrical switches on or off
  - use the doorbell
  - smoke, or use matches or lighters
- Make sure the gas on the cooker is switched off. Then check to see if the small 'pilot' light on your boiler has gone out - it's a small flame that you should see through the spy hole on your boiler. If it's not there, turn the



boiler off, and don't turn it on until the smell of gas has left the house.

- **If you can still smell gas, turn the main gas supply off at the gas meter. Then call CADENT on 0800 111 999.**

## Control your central heating

### Control the temperature

Your thermostat controls the temperature. Turn the dial, so the arrow or marker is at the temperature you want. A comfortable temperature is usually between 18°C and 22°C.

### Set a digital timer

Firstly, check the clock is showing the right time. If it isn't, put the timer switch to 'clock' and change the time using the 'forward' and 'reverse' buttons. Reset the timer to 'auto'. Then set the 'heating' and 'hot water' switches to come on whenever you want them to. In freezing weather it is best to keep the heating on all the time, and turn the thermostat down low at night or when you're out.

### Set a clock timer

Turn the clock until it shows the right time. Decide when you want the heating to come on and off, and set the small pins or arrows to those times.

- If your timer has pins, push them in against any time you want the heating to come on and pull them out against the time you want the heating off.
- If your timer has arrows, slide the red ones to the time when you want the heating to come on, and slide the blue ones to the time you want the heating off.

Then set the timer switch to 'timer' or 'auto'. In freezing weather keep the thermostat on low through the night or when you're out.

## Bleeding your radiator

### Does it need doing?

If the top part of the radiator is cold, it means air is trapped in the heating system.

Bleeding the radiator releases this air and lets the hot water in so that the whole radiator warms up.

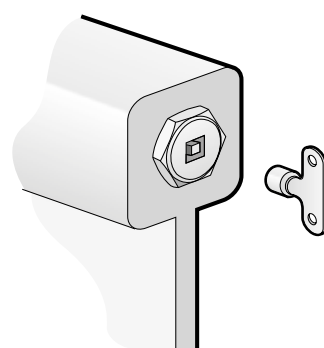
### When you shouldn't do it

Don't bleed your radiator if you have a combination boiler (combi-boiler) – unless you are confident about restoring the correct pressure to your boiler afterwards. A combi-boiler will have a pressure gauge or measure on the front of the boiler, and it won't have a separate hot water cylinder. Bleeding your radiators will result in a drop in boiler pressure that has to be restored afterwards so, if you are not sure how to do this, ring us on 0161 448 4200 instead.

Don't bleed your radiator if the whole radiator is cold or more than one radiator is cold. We may need to check the whole heating system if this happens.

### How to do it

- Turn off the heating system.
- You will need a special radiator key – if you can't find it, you can get one very cheaply from your local DIY store. You'll also need a cloth and a small bucket.
- Put the key over the small square valve at the top end of the radiator and hold the cloth around it. Gently turn the key anticlockwise until you hear a hiss of



air. Don't unscrew it completely. When the water starts to come through, turn the key back clockwise quickly to shut the valve off. When you turn on the heating, the radiator should now become warm at the top.

## When your power goes off

### Fuse or trip switch?

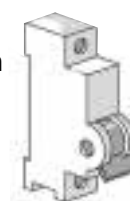
Check your consumer unit or fuse box near your electricity meter. It will either have a fuse or trip switch.

### If it has a fuse ...

Only replace a fuse if you are confident you can do it safely, and have a replacement of the same amp. Your current fuse will have the amp on it. If in doubt, call us on 0161 448 4200 or call a qualified electrician.

### If you have a trip switch...

Open the consumer unit, to see which switches have tripped to the OFF position. To restore power, flick them back to the ON position.



### Why does it happen?

*Common causes include:*

- Too many electrical items being used at the same time;
- A faulty or misused electrical item;
- Overfilled kettles;
- Unclean toasters;
- Worn-out cooker rings;
- Faulty immersion heaters;
- Faulty connections on leads to stereo, TV, computer, etc.

### If it happens again

You've probably got a faulty electrical item that needs replacing. Go around the house noting which set of lights or sockets are not working. Unplug all appliances on that problem circuit and switch off the immersion heater. Switch the tripped fuse to the ON position and plug in the appliances, one by one, until the trip switch goes again. Leave that appliance unplugged. If one of our appliances is at fault, report the repair; otherwise you will need to get it fixed yourself by a qualified electrician or service

engineer.

## Clearing blockages in the sink or bath

### By plunger

Remove any water from the bath or sink with a jug. Block the overflow by holding a large rag cloth over the opening. Place a plunger (you can get one from a DIY shop) over the plughole and quickly push it up and down. When the blockage is cleared, you should clean out the trap where the waste has gone.

### By clearing the waste trap

Remove any water from the bath or sink with a jug, and make sure the taps are off. Put a bowl underneath the trap to collect the waste. Then unscrew the joints and remove and clean out the trap. Put the trap back, making sure the seals are in place and the joints are screwed back tightly.

### When you might need us

If the toilet is blocked or if more than one fitting is blocked, it will probably need to be cleared by one of our repair workers.

### Prevent blockages

Bits of food, hair and other small particles that get through the plughole can cause a blockage. Try to avoid getting these things down the sink, if you can. And keep the plughole clean by occasionally flushing with hot water and soda crystals.

Nappies, toys, sanitary towels and air fresheners can block the toilet. Be sure not to let this happen, because if you can't remove the blockage, we'll have to charge you for clearing it. Nappies are a major cause of blockages, so always dispose of these sensibly – not down the toilet.

## Keep out damp and mould

### Put a ban on moisture:

- Cover pans on the cooker and don't leave kettles boiling;
- Never use paraffin or portable bottle gas heaters – you would be breaking your tenancy agreement if you used things like this. They produce huge amounts of water vapour, and can be very dangerous to use;
- Dry washing outside, or in a closed bathroom with an open window or fan – not on radiators;
- If you have a tumble dryer, put the outlet pipe through an outside wall – not out of a window. Condenser type tumble dryers are best, as they keep moisture levels down.

### Let your home breathe:

- Let the air circulate and open a small window when you're at home;
- Let out steam by opening kitchen and bathroom windows or using extractor fans;
- Close kitchen and bathroom doors when you're in there;
- Don't overcrowd your wardrobes or cupboards;
- Don't block ventilators or chimneys.

### Keep it warm:

- Insulate your loft - but don't block openings or under the eaves;
- If it's cold keep the heating on low all day, even when you're out;
- Draught-proof windows and doors - but get rid of mould and condensation first;
- Don't completely draught-proof bathrooms, or rooms with a cooker or gas fire – you need to have some ventilation.

## What to expect when you order a repair

You can order routine repairs online or on the phone on 0161 448 4200. Our phone lines are open from 8am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. You can also report an emergency repair on the same phone number 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but please call us only if the problem threatens your health, safety or security.

We have timescales for doing repairs. The more urgent the work, the quicker we'll do it. And we deal with emergency repairs within three hours. When you call, tell us all you know – describe the problem, and say where it is.

You can help by telling us the make and model of whatever might be causing the problem - the boiler, for example, so the engineer can turn up with the right replacement parts.

We will immediately order the repair, or arrange an inspection to check exactly what needs doing.

### Inspections

If it isn't clear what repairs are needed, or if the repair is complicated, we'll make an appointment to visit you at home. We'll do an inspection and decide exactly what repair is needed.

### How long does it take?

When you ask for a repair, we give the work a deadline - depending on its urgency. The first appointment we offer you will be before that deadline.

We give your repair one of four deadlines. They are:

- Emergencies - within 24 hours;
- Routine - 10 working days;
- Major - 45 working days.

### Repairs categories

#### Emergencies – three hours

We don't make appointments for emergency repairs, because we do them within 24 hours – we'll just tell you to stay in and wait for the worker to call. The sorts of things we class as emergencies include:

- Blocked toilets, if there are no other toilets in your home;
- Blocked or leaking drains (not blocked sinks);
- Serious storm, accident or flood damage to rooms;
- Dangerous structures;
- Serious electrical faults;
- No mains water supply;
- Regaining entry where you are locked out – although we are likely to charge for this;
- Loss of heating, in very cold weather;
- Loss of heating at any time of year for elderly or vulnerable people living alone, and for families with children under 12 months.

If you have extra needs, or feel you really need immediate attention, we may be able to class your repair as an emergency.



When you phone we will ask you questions, to check whether the work really needs doing as an emergency. If it does, we will send someone to your home within three hours. In some situations it may only be possible for workmen to attend and make the situation safe temporarily. The repair will then be completed in normal working hours.

### Urgent repairs

We will carry out this type of repair within five working days.

Examples of urgent repairs are:

- Electrical repairs;
- Minor leaks;
- Loss of hot water;
- Partial loss of heating;
- Blocked sink;
- Faulty toilet;
- Running overflow;
- Minor repairs to windows;
- Single glazing and doors.

### Routine repairs

We will carry out this type of repair within ten working days. Examples of routine repairs are:

- Floor tiles and boards;
- Double glazing;
- Gate repairs;
- Broken kitchen units;
- Minor plastering;
- Broken handles;
- Outside repairs;
- Replacement boiler;
- Replacement fires or radiators;
- Broken or uneven paving flags.

### Major repairs

These are repairs where your day-to-day life is not adversely affected and/or the work needs specialist manufacture. Examples would be fitting a new damp proof course, new external door or new window frame, fencing, a roof that needs overhauling, or a heating system that needs taking out and replacing. A repair usually gets this deadline after we have been to check a problem and found that we need to totally replace a large item, rather than just repair it. This priority allows for better resource planning and programming of non-urgent, non-routine repair works.

### Repairs appointments

Apart from emergency repairs, where we ask you to wait for us to arrive, you can make an appointment to get most repairs done at a time that suits you. Appointments are Monday to Friday, with five appointment categories each day, from early morning to early evening. This means there's no need for you to wait in all day for someone to turn up! Making sure your repair happens

### Be there for your repair!

At Southway we work hard to make sure that we carry out repairs when it suits our tenants, so you don't need to wait in more than a few hours for the repair team. All we ask of you is that you be there for your repair. If you can't be there, tell us in advance and we'll re-book a better time for you.

**DON'T FORGET** – when someone calls – **always ask for ID.** All our staff and our contractors carry photo identification cards, and there is an office contact telephone number on the back of the card if you want to check the identity of the worker. If in doubt, check first.

### During the repair

The worker will do the repair or carry out the inspection and will leave the job clean and tidy. If they can't do all the work needed on that visit, they will explain why and arrange another appointment with you.

If the problem is being inspected first, they will tell you what needs doing, and by when it will be done – the deadline for the repair.

### After the repair

You can help us improve our service by telling us how we've done. After a repair is completed, we will leave you a form asking you how satisfied you were with the work. Please take the time to complete this and return it to us – it's free to post it back.

If you tell us you were not happy with the work, we will contact you and look into it. If there is still a problem, we will put it right.

We regularly publicise our repairs performance (such as, how many jobs are done on time) on our website and in our newsletters.

### Have we said no to your repair?

We always repair rather than replace if possible, to keep down costs. We may not carry out a repair straight away. For example, it wouldn't make sense for us to repair a kitchen unit, if we were planning to put in new kitchens to your home in the next few months. We don't replace a working item just for minor cosmetic reasons, such as discoloured plastic baths or surface cracks in a washbasin.





## Repairs you must do yourself

By law, we must do certain repairs – on the structure of your home, on gas, electricity, plumbing, heating installations and so on. These repairs are free.

But there are other, smaller jobs that you must do yourself, although we will do many of them if you are disabled or elderly (*these are marked (S) on the list below*).

Examples of these are:

- Faulty fittings that were not put in by us or the Council (unless you have an agreement for us to maintain them) like cookers, fridges, showers and window blinds;
- Hairline cracks in plaster;
- Broken or missing plugs and chains for a basin, sink or bath (S);
- Relighting pilot lights (S);
- Telephone points;
- TV aerials and sockets (unless they are communal);
- Loss of keys;
- Internal decoration (paintwork and wallpaper) and floor coverings;
- Fixtures and fittings (like coat hooks, curtains, curtain rails and washing line).

## Repairs you must pay for

Most people take a real pride in their homes, but there are a few who damage things deliberately or thoughtlessly. We don't want decent tenants to pick up the bill for putting this right, so people who cause damage deliberately or by neglect have to pay for the repair.

We will normally carry out all repairs that are essential to protect the health and safety of you and your household, or that are necessary to protect and maintain our property. We do, however, have the right to decide whether or not we will carry out a rechargeable repair. If you owe money to Southway and have not made an agreement to repay it, we may refuse

to carry out any repairs we are not legally obliged to do.

## What counts as deliberate damage or neglect?

You won't have to pay for things that have been damaged by fair wear and tear. Neither will you have to pay if the damage was caused by a crime – as long as you have reported it to the Police. We will ask you for evidence of this. If there is doubt about the reason for the damage, we will investigate before we make a decision. We will also decide what action to take if you have broken your tenancy agreement, for example by carrying out alterations without getting our permission first, or if there are rent arrears.

## Repairs we charge for

- Replacing lost keys/replacement locks;
- Damage caused by forced entry after losing keys;
- Broken window glass, damaged window frames;
- Broken kitchen unit, toilet, basin or bath;
- Broken electrical fittings;
- Any restoration work after a flood, fire or where the damage was caused by your actions or negligence or by someone else living in your home;
- Any unauthorised alteration that has to be repaired;
- Vandalism, unless you can quote a Police crime number;
- Failing to clean and clear your home at the end of your tenancy, and any rechargeable repairs found on inspection.

## How would I pay?

We'll tell you how much it will cost before we do the work. If you want time to pay the money, we can make an agreement to collect it in instalments. If you don't pay, we will take legal action and stop you from getting another Southway home until you have agreed to pay.

## Can I refuse to have the repair?

Yes, in some cases, but not if it causes a health and safety risk or more damage to your home. You could do the work yourself – but we will check the work to ensure it is to the required standard.

## Can I avoid paying for rechargeable repairs or damage by moving out?

No. If you do that we will track you down and, if necessary, use legal action to get you to pay up. You will not be allowed to get another home until you have paid the bill.

## Compensation for damage

You can apply for compensation if your belongings have been damaged during a repair. We only pay compensation if we've been at fault. For example, you can't claim if a pipe bursts and the water immediately damages a carpet – but you might be able to claim if you reported a leaking pipe straightaway, and there is extra damage because we didn't arrive within our promised timescales.

## Claiming compensation

We'll deal with applications for compensation quickly. We'll visit you to investigate and find out if we are at fault. Some questions to ask yourself if you're planning to claim:

- Did you report the repair straightaway?
- Was someone at home when we came to do it?
- Did the repair worker take care to avoid damage?
- Have you retained any damaged items as evidence?

If you think you may be entitled to compensation, apply for it.

## Get covered!

The best way to have peace of mind about your belongings is to get good household contents insurance. Some tenants think we automatically insure furniture, possessions and decorations,

but we don't – and you could be left with unexpected bills if damage is done. Our weekly paid, low cost insurance scheme makes it easy for you to get covered. Call us on 0161 448 4200 or find out more online.

## Doing your own home improvements

Your Tenancy Agreement gives you the legal right to make improvements to your home as long as you get our agreement first.

We welcome tenants improving their homes. We will only say no if there is a good reason, for example, if the work affects your neighbours or is unsafe.

## Some examples of alterations you may wish to make:

- Forming a driveway for a car;
- Building a garage/car port;
- Putting up a garden shed/greenhouse;
- Altering windows or doors;
- Extending central heating;
- Installing a new kitchen or bathroom;
- Removing internal walls;
- Fitting a satellite dish or TV aerial;
- Fitting laminated or fixed vinyl flooring.

## How to get our agreement.

Call us for a form. Fill it in and send it to us at least 28 days before you plan to start work.

We will then visit you at home to check the proposed work and assess its likely effect on the property and on other people.

Depending on what you want to do, you might need planning permission and building control approval from Manchester City Council. You will definitely need to get permission and approval to put up a new building or extension.

**Do not start work until you have got all the permissions and approvals you need – you could end up having to put it all back again!**



## 12 Gas safety checks

### Keeping you safe, keeping you warm

As a Southway tenant, you get a FREE service and safety check of your gas equipment and smoke alarms. And it's not just a one-off - we come round every year to do this vital work.

This *FREE* gas check isn't optional – the law says that, as your landlord, we must check every home every year, and your tenancy agreement says that you must let us in to do this. If you do not let us do this, we have to take legal action to enter the property, and you risk a fine of over £700 – the cost of us going to Court and gaining entry to your home.

### We have to do the safety checks - by law

Every year, around 30 people die from breathing carbon monoxide fumes from faulty gas appliances, and many more end up in hospital. We do not want this to happen to you.

Carbon monoxide is a silent killer – it has no taste or smell. The best way to make sure that you and your family are not at risk from it is to let us check and service the gas appliances in your home regularly.

### What you need to do

We use Gas Safe Registered gas safety contractors, and their fully-qualified gas engineers will give your home expert treatment. This will help to keep your heating bills down, and give you peace of mind too. All of their workers carry photo identification cards.

**Please ALWAYS ask for ID before you let anyone into your home.**

They will service all your gas appliances and smoke alarms to check that they are operating safely. You must make sure that there is gas available at your home at the time of the appointment.

If you buy your own gas appliances, they must be fitted by a Gas Safe Registered contractor, and you should have proof of this with the relevant gas certificate given to you by the contractor (a CP12 certificate). We will service gas appliances you own - apart from your gas cooker. Although we will check the cooker at the time to ensure that it is safe for you to use, you must make your own arrangements for it to be serviced.

### When will I get my free check?

We will write to you each year with details of an appointment so that this essential service can be carried out. **If you keep the first appointment, or keep a re-arranged more convenient first appointment, we'll enter you into a monthly free prize draw to win £100.**



## 13 Protect your family from fire

Most fires in the home start by accident – and once a fire starts, it can spread quickly and easily. If a fire does break out in your home you should **get out, stay out and call 999**. Don't try to tackle it yourself.

### Prevention

Here are a few basic steps you can follow to prevent fires from starting in the first place.

#### Chip pan fires

Chip pan fires cause more fire-related injuries in the home than anything else. They often start when the fat overheats or spills onto the cooker.

- Never fill the pan more than one third full with fat or oil;
- Never leave the pan alone with the heat on - not even for a second;
- Dry chips before putting them in the pan;
- Never put the chips in the pan if the oil starts smoking – turn the heat off to let it cool down;
- If your chip pan catches fire - don't panic. Don't move the pan;
- Turn off the heat if you can, but don't reach over the pan to get to the controls;
- NEVER throw water or use a fire extinguisher on the fire;
- If you can, drape a damp cloth or towel, or something like a heavy bread board or tray over the pan to smother the flames.
- **Leave the pan to cool down for at least half an hour**
- If you can't control the fire yourself, close the kitchen door, and get everyone out of the house;
- Dial 999 and don't go back inside until the Fire Service tells you it's safe to do so.

#### Kitchen fires

Over half of all accidental fires in the home start

in the kitchen – and nearly all of these involve the cooker.

- Never hang tea towels on the cooker;
- Never leave the cooker alone when it is switched on;
- Make sure the cooker is turned off when you have finished using it;
- Keep electrical leads from other appliances, like kettles or toasters, away from the cooker;
- Don't let fat and grease build up on the cooker, especially in the grill pan;
- Never leave children in the kitchen unsupervised.

#### Smoking

Cigarettes, lighters and matches are the biggest killers in accidental fires in the home. Every three days, someone in the UK dies because of a cigarette fire.

- Never smoke in bed;
- Always use a sturdy ashtray;
- Never leave a lit cigarette unattended;
- Take extra care when you're tired or when you've been drinking;
- **Keep matches and lighters away from children.**



## Candles

Candles are popular, but they have exposed flames which can cause a fire if you are not careful.

- Place candles on a flat, stable and heat-resistant surface;
- Use a proper candleholder, and make sure the candle fits firmly inside it;
- Leave plenty of space above and around the flame;
- Keep candles away from draughts, curtains, furniture and materials;
- Never put candles on polished surfaces like televisions;
- Never leave candles unattended or go to sleep when they are lit;
- Keep candles out of the reach of children and pets;
- Use a metal spoon to put the candle out. Let the candle cool down before you move it.

### Before you go to bed

Many fires in the home start at night – so think about your bedtime fire safety routine to prevent these fires. Remember to:

- Turn off and unplug all electrical appliances that aren't designed to stay on;
- Make sure you put all cigarettes or pipes out safely;

- Never smoke in bed;
- Switch off portable heaters;
- Close the doors to all rooms.

## Electrics and wiring

Following these simple rules will help to prevent electrical equipment starting fires in your home:

- At night, turn off and unplug all electrical appliances except those that are meant to be permanently switched on (like videos and fridges);
- Make sure your electrical appliances have the right fuse. Use 3amp fuses for equipment up to 720 watts, and 13amp fuses for equipment over 720 watts;
- Avoid multi-way adaptors. One plug, one socket is best;
- Don't run extension leads or cables under carpets;
- Look out for warning signs of dangerous wiring, like:
  - Hot plugs and sockets;
  - Fuses that blow for no obvious reason;
  - Lights that flicker;
  - Brown scorch marks on sockets and plugs.

If you see any of these warning signs, get in touch with us.

## If a fire starts

If a fire starts in your home, you might only have a short time to get out.

Don't panic. Tell everybody else, then **get out, stay out and dial 999**.

- If fire is blocking your escape, this important advice will help to keep you and your family safe:
- If you can, close the door of the room where the fire is, and close all the doors behind you as you leave. This will help to slow down the spread of fire and smoke;
- Don't waste time trying to pick up valuables or possessions;
- Never open a door unless you have to escape through it. If you have to open a door, use the back of your hand to touch it first. If it's warm, don't open it;
- If you can't get out, go into a room and close the door. Use towels, sheets or clothes to block any gaps under the door to help stop smoke spreading into the room;
- Go to the window and shout for attention. Ask people to dial 999;
- If the room gets smoky, stay close to the floor. It's easier to breathe there because smoke rises;
- If you are on the first floor and in danger, drop bedding to the ground to cushion your drop from the window. Get out of the window feet first, and lower yourself down as far as you can, before you let go.

## Smoke alarms

A good quality British standard smoke alarm could save your life. In fact, you're twice as likely to die in a fire at home if you haven't got one. It's the easiest way to alert you to a fire in the home, giving you precious time to escape. They're cheap and easy to fit – and there's no excuse for not having one.

### FREE fire safety check and smoke alarm

The Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service offer a FREE 'home fire risk assessment' service to every home in the area - making sure that you have access to a quality smoke alarm and up-to-date fire safety advice.

During the assessment, fire service staff will tell you how to spot potential risks and how to prevent them, and will help you work out an escape plan in case a fire does break out. If you already have a smoke alarm, they'll test it - and if you don't, they'll fit a free one.

### If you buy your own smoke alarm:

- Get one that complies with the British Standard;
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions to fit it;
- Fit the alarm in between the living areas and the bedrooms;
- Make sure you can hear it throughout your home, especially from the bedrooms;
- Test your smoke alarm each week by using the test button;
- Change the battery every year;
- Use your vacuum to keep it free of dust.



## 14 Hot tips for cold snaps

Freezing temperatures can burst your pipes and ruin your home. Just follow these hot tips to keep the warmth in and the plumbers out!

### Be prepared in the kitchen

Find out where your stop-tap is. Here's information on where it should be, and a handy reminder chart to mark down where it is. (Section 8, page 21). Check that it is working properly and, if there are problems with it, let us know.

### Get to grips with heating controls

Central heating thermostats and time switches can be complicated. Take a look at the advice on how to set your time switches. (Section 9, page 23].

### Set the temperature

If you have central heating, use the thermostat to keep the temperature comfortable. During the day a good setting is between 18°C and 22°C.

If it's very cold outside, set the heating to stay on continuously, but turn the thermostat down lower for the night. Remember, the higher the thermo-stat setting, the more fuel you use.



### When you're away

If you've got central heating and you're away when it's cold outside, leave the heating on continuously with the thermostat right down

to 6°C. This will stop your pipes freezing, but it won't cost much.

If you haven't got central heating and you're going away turn the water off at the stop-tap, turning the tap clockwise. Then drain off all the cold water. This empties the pipes and cold-

water tank. Then turn the immersion heater to OFF. If you have a solid fuel boiler, let the fire die out, then drain off all the hot water.

### What to do if a pipe bursts

1. Turn the water supply off at the stopcock tap. It's probably near the kitchen sink. Turn off any gate valves from the water tank.
2. Turn the cold taps ON. Make sure the sink and bath plugs are out. And save some drinking water in a jug for later.
3. Turn the immersion heater and central heating OFF if you have them. If you have a solid fuel boiler, let the fire die out.
4. Turn the hot taps ON to drain out the water.
5. If there's water near the lights or sockets, turn the electricity off at the meter.
6. Catch leaks in basins and soak up water with towels to prevent water damaging your home.
7. Phone us on 0161 448 4200 (8am-5.30pm, Monday to Friday) you can use this number outside normal office hours if the problem is an emergency that threatens your health, safety or security.
8. Try to keep warm and dry. Put on extra layers of clothes until things warm up again.

## 15 Everybody needs good neighbours

Everyone wants to live next to a good neighbour - someone who's considerate and respectful of you and your family. It is so much better to live in a neighbourhood where people are civil and polite to each other, and we support all tenants who live this way.

Thankfully, most of us do have good neighbours, and don't think twice about it. But there are a handful of people who don't. That is unfair to all those who are doing their best to think of others, as well as themselves, in their daily activities.

We want to put a stop to inconsiderate behaviour on our estates. The Southway Tenancy Agreements have a section that reminds people that they are responsible for their own actions, and those of their family members, friends and visitors, in and around their home and in the neighbourhood. We deal firmly with antisocial tenants – and persistent 'nuisance neighbours' can even lose their homes.

We don't want things to get to that stage. So we have created a list of helpful reminder tips on how to be a good neighbour. Of course, we don't expect people to live in fear of making noise

or having fun at home – these are just sensible guidelines, to keep harmony in your home and neighbourhood.

### Some neighbourly advice

#### Around the house

You might be behind closed doors, but you'd be surprised at how far your noise can travel. It's impossible to live without making some noise, but just keep an eye on the levels in your house – these tips should keep it calm:

- Don't shout, swear or scream loudly;
- If you don't have carpets, wear slippers to soften your stamp;

- Don't let children run up and down the stairs.
- Close your doors quietly;
- Try to do washing and hoovering, or using any noisy machinery, only between 9am and 9pm;
- Control your dogs' barking, and keep them within your boundaries;
- Tell your neighbours if you're planning to have a party.

#### Stereo and TVs

It's one of the most common complaints. There's nothing more annoying than hearing someone else's overloud TV or stereo, when you want a bit of quiet. Take this advice to keep the peace with your neighbours:

- Limit the volume on your TV or stereo, especially in the evening;
- Don't put your TV or speakers on, or right next to, the walls;
- Don't play loud music inside when you're outside;
- Limit the volume if your stereo is outside.

#### In the garden

We want you to enjoy your garden, yard or balcony - but be aware that your neighbours can often hear and see what happens there. Take pride in your outside spaces and follow these golden rules:

- Avoid having very large noisy parties;
- Consider the volume of music and also the smoke fumes if you're having a BBQ;
- Don't let your garden become an eyesore.

## Next to your home

Outside your home is just as important as inside. It says everything about the state of your home and neighbourhood. Remember these tips to keep it looking and feeling nice for you and your neighbours:

- Park cars so they don't block your neighbours' driveways;
- Put your bins back in your courtyard or grounds after they've been emptied;
- Put out and take in your neighbours' bins if they are away from home;
- Don't let the outside of your home become an eyesore – keep it clear and tidy;
- Report any graffiti, dumped rubbish and vandalism on 0161 954 9000.

## Mediation: we can work it out

If you do have a problem with your neighbours, it's always best to work it out before things get too difficult. But it can be hard to talk to neighbours if you've got an issue with them. You just want a quiet life - and to get things sorted.

That's where Mediation Services comes in. They can help to solve disputes with neighbours - and they have a 97% success rate to prove it.

It's a step-by-step process where independent experts help find a solution that suits everyone. Mediators listen to both points of view – they will talk to both sides separately. They don't judge people as 'right' or 'wrong'. The mediators are all volunteers who live or work locally. They don't take sides, and the service is FREE for the people in dispute.

## When mediation works and when it doesn't

Mediation works well if you're more interested in a solution than in blaming your neighbours. But mediation won't be right for you if threats, violence, severe mental illness, or drug or alcohol problems are involved, or where legal action is being taken. For help with serious

antisocial behaviour like this, you should call us on 0161 448 4200 immediately.

## How to get in touch

Call Mediation Services on 0161 908 0392 (there's a 24-hour answer phone outside office hours) or write to them at:

## Mediation Services (PSS)

The Workshop  
Abraham Moss Centre  
Crescent Road, Crumpsall,  
MANCHESTER M8 5UF

Or if you'd prefer, you could call us on 0161 448 4200 and we can contact them for you.

## Homewatch

If you're concerned about keeping your neighbourhood safe why not set up a Homewatch scheme? You and your neighbours agree to keep an eye out for suspicious activity, and to be vigilant about strangers in your area. To find out how to set up a scheme, call 0161 856 6087.

Of course, being a good neighbour is not only about being sure that you are not causing nuisance to others. If you are aware of anybody who is elderly, alone or has special problems why not introduce yourself?

You can make a real difference to your neighbourhood if you keep a caring eye out for needy neighbours, and offer what help and assistance you can. If there are problems where you think we may be able to help, just let us know.



## How does your garden grow?

Lots of our tenants have beautiful gardens that are a credit to them and to the estates they live on. Everyone likes to see a well kept garden, and Southway tenants have some of the best in Manchester. Thanks to all of you who help to keep the area green and attractive in this way.

Even if you don't have the greenest fingers on your estate, your Tenancy Agreement still makes you responsible for keeping your garden, including any paved areas in it, in good shape. We don't expect people to be out pruning shrubs and planting bulbs every other week, but we do expect a certain level of care.

Section 3.16 in your Tenancy Agreement says that, at the most basic level, you must keep your garden and paved areas clean, neat and tidy. This includes cutting the grass and trimming hedges regularly, and keeping the area free from rubbish and unwanted household items.

## Can't do it?

We know it can be hard for some of you to keep on top of your gardens. You might be elderly, in poor health or have an impairment. If you are physically unable to do it yourself and you can't afford to pay a gardener, and there is nobody who lives with you, or available to you who might reasonably be expected to help, we may be able to help instead.

You can apply for help by filling in a form online, at [www.southwayhousing.co.uk](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk) (under 'at your service') or you can call us on 0161 448 4200 and we will send you a concessionary gardening application form. When your Neighbourhood Environment Officer receives the application form, we will carry out checks to confirm that the information is accurate. Your Neighbourhood Environment Officer will then write to you with a decision, and arrange a visit to your home within 10 working days. He or she will let you know if and what we can do to help, and when we can do it.

## Won't do it?

If your garden is overgrown, or littered with unsightly rubbish and there is no good reason why you can't sort it out yourself, despite our requests, we will arrange to clear it for you. We will not allow it to continue to spoil the look of the estate for everybody else. We will then charge you, fairly, for the cost of the work plus an admin fee, and you will be expected to pay this charge.

## Report a problem with another garden

If you see a garden that's overgrown, or has any rubbish dumped in it, please tell us. It's not fair on the people who look after their gardens, and make the effort to keep their own part of the estate looking clean and tidy. We treat this kind of antisocial behaviour seriously. You can fill in a short online form at [www.southwayhousing.co.uk](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk) (under 'at your service')

## Get rid of large items of household rubbish for FREE!

The Council run a FREE service for Southway tenants - removing larger unwanted items like beds, cookers, microwaves, furniture, fridges, sofas and garden waste.

You can arrange for bulky items to be collected online at [manchester.gov.uk](http://manchester.gov.uk).





Moving home can be stressful at the best of times. To make the process easier, we have prepared a list of things you will need to do when you move home.

### Four weeks' notice

You need to give us at least four weeks' notice in writing, before we can end your tenancy. If you give us less than four weeks' notice, we still have the right to claim the full four weeks' rent. Your notice period must end on a Sunday and, when you notify us, you'll need to tell us your name(s), your current address and your new address.

You can tell us that you're leaving in one of four easy ways:

- By email at [connect@southwayhousing.co.uk](mailto:connect@southwayhousing.co.uk)
- Online at [www.southwayhousing.co.uk](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk)
- By phoning Southway Connect on 0161 448 4200;
- In the post to Southern Gate, 729 Princess Road, Manchester M20 2LT;

### Ending a joint tenancy

If you have a joint tenancy, any joint tenant can end the tenancy by giving us at least four weeks' notice. By law, we do not have to allow other joint tenants to stay in the home – it all depends on your circumstances, and whether the property could be more suitable for another type of family or household. However, we will never ask any other joint tenants to move home without good reason.

### Handing in your keys

You must return every set of house keys no later than 12 noon on the Monday of your tenancy end date. This includes window lock and bin store keys if applicable. If you do not return every set of keys, you run the risk of paying for a full change of locks. You will be given a receipt

for the keys, which you should keep as your proof of having correctly ended your tenancy.

### Paying your rent

Unless you've made a special arrangement with us to pay off any arrears, all your rent payments must be up-to-date. If you are struggling to pay your rent, get in touch with us as soon as you can. We will do what we can to help you.

### Leaving your home clean and tidy

Please leave the property and its outside spaces clean and tidy, ready for the next person to move in. We expect some reasonable wear and tear in the house, but you are responsible for any damage caused by your actions or neglect – including damage caused by family members and visitors. If you have removed any original internal fittings, you must replace them with fittings of the same quality. If you don't, we'll have to charge you for replacing them.

### Removing your belongings

It is your responsibility to remove all your furniture, floor coverings and belongings from the property before you hand in your keys and end your tenancy. Don't forget to check the loft. If you do not do this, we will have to charge you for their removal. Please don't dump anything outside, as we will have to charge you for its removal and disposal. The Council will pick up any unwanted household goods – chairs, settees, fridges, cookers etc – for no charge. Just call them on 0161 954 9000 to tell them what you want them to move and to arrange a collection date. And, if your unwanted items are in really good condition, why not take them to your local charity shop?

### Home improvements

If you have made fixed home improvements to your home, they will usually become our property. We may be able to give you an allowance for any major improvements that you've made, like putting in a shower or installing central heating. Just let us know, when you're handing in your notice. The home improvements must have been authorised by Southway Housing. If not, you could be re-charged for putting them right.

### Benefits and utilities

If you claim Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, remember to give your new address and moving date to the Benefits Service and the Council Tax office. You do not want to lose out on any benefit to which you are entitled.

Before you leave, remember to take final readings from your gas and electricity meters, telling your suppliers the exact date that you're moving.

Make sure all water taps are turned off, and turn the mains water off at your stop-tap.



### Checklist for moving home

#### I have...

- ☐ Given Southway Housing four weeks' notice in writing.
- ☐ Arranged mail redirection (get a form from your Post Office).
- ☐ Asked friends or a removal firm to help me move.
- ☐ Cancelled milk and paper deliveries. Arranged for the removal of unwanted bulky items.
- ☐ Taken final meter readings and told my gas, water and electricity suppliers.
- ☐ Repaired, cleared and cleaned the house, inside and out.
- ☐ Handed all my keys in to Southway Housing and collected the receipt. Cancelled contents insurance.
- ☐ Sent my new address to:
  - ☐ Benefits office
  - ☐ Council Tax office
  - ☐ Southway Housing Trust
  - ☐ Bank or building society
  - ☐ My employer
  - ☐ The children's school
  - ☐ Insurance companies
  - ☐ DVLA (for car owners)
  - ☐ Doctors and dentist

Antisocial behaviour can cause real misery for people who just want to get on with their lives. It comes in all shapes and forms, and ranges from serious acts of violence, hate crime and harassment, to everyday incidents like nuisance caused by noisy dogs, or eyesores such as overgrown gardens.

Whatever the problem, we take all complaints of antisocial behaviour seriously – and we take swift action to stop it.

## Are you in danger?

If you're in immediate danger or you're being threatened with violence or abuse, call the police on 999. Then, once you have had their help, let us know what has happened.

## First steps

We'll contact you soon after you've reported the problem to us, to let you know that we're looking into the case.

We can sort out obvious problems fairly easily. For example, if you tell us about a rubbish-filled garden, we'll just go round and check. And we'll tell the other person to clean it up, and take action against them if they don't.

But most cases aren't as easy as this. If the antisocial behaviour is not that obvious, or it's aimed directly at you (like abuse or harassment), we will need to talk to you before we start an investigation.

In most cases, we'll need to meet you to talk about the problem. We can do this wherever is best for you – at home, in our office or somewhere else. We'll speak to other people in the household who have been affected, as well.

Then we'll get an action plan together, listing what you should do, and what we will do to get the problem sorted out. We'll give you a copy of this action plan too. This case now becomes a partnership – we are working for you, but you have to help us by keeping to your side of the action plan.

## Talk it over

If the case doesn't involve threats, violence or harassment, the action plan could include talking the problem through with the other person. Sometimes a neighbour just needs to know that his or her behaviour has upset you.

But if you have tried this, and the other person is unreasonable, just walk away. Don't get involved in an argument. If you feel uneasy about this, we can set a meeting up for you, and we can be there to help you talk through the problem together.

## Mediation Services

If you don't feel comfortable with this approach, there's a special service that can help solve your dispute. Mediation Services have expert advisers who can help find a solution that suits both you and your neighbours. They don't take sides, and their service is FREE for people in dispute. You do not have to meet with your problem neighbours unless you wish – the mediators will speak to them separately.

We can put you in touch with them. If you think you could use this service, please ring us on 0161 448 4200.

## Getting the evidence

We can't take action against someone, just because another person has complained about them – we need evidence. The most important piece of evidence is an Incident Diary. It's a special booklet that we give you to record antisocial behaviour that you see or hear – we can show you how to fill it in.

We might need additional evidence, like photographs, video or tape recordings of the incidents happening. We can sometimes do this for you but, if the incident happens suddenly when we're not there, it may be best if you do it yourself, as well.

We might have to speak to other people who have seen the problem too – like your neighbours. It could be difficult to take the case any further without these other witnesses. Your neighbours could fill in their own Incident Diaries, as supporting evidence.

## Taking action

If the evidence proves the antisocial behaviour, we will take action – and in very serious cases, we'll go straight to legal action.

But, in most situations, we'll take a step-by-step approach to try and get those responsible to change their behaviour. We will interview the perpetrators – those who are causing the nuisance or disturbance. (You can ask us not to do this, but it would then be difficult to take the case further). We will tell them to change their behaviour, or they will risk having legal action taken against them. This is usually enough to solve the problem.

If the antisocial behaviour continues after a final warning – or if someone is in danger – we will start legal action straight away. We would give you more advice and information, if it ever got to that stage.

## All sorted?

We want to know that you are happy with the way that we dealt with your complaint, and the way we resolved the problem.

After a couple of months, we will get in touch with you to see how things are, and ask you to fill in a short questionnaire. What you tell us will help us to monitor the way in which we deal with antisocial behaviour, and to see if there are any improvements or changes we need to make to the service.





## 19 Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is the abuse of someone, within a family or close relationship. It is the repeated, random and habitual use of intimidation to control another person – usually a partner, ex-partner or other family member.

The abuse can be physical, emotional, psychological, financial or sexual. Anyone who is being forced to alter his or her behaviour, because they're frightened of the other person's reaction, is being abused.

Domestic abuse includes:

- physical or sexual abuse of you or your children;
- threatening or behaving badly to you or your children;
- doing things to make you feel fearful or frightened;
- destroying your property and possessions;
- insisting on knowing where you are all the time;
- making sure you haven't got access to money;
- separating you from friends or family.

Emotional abuse can be just as harmful as physical abuse, and the effects can last much longer. Many people still carry the emotional scars, long after the physical injuries have healed.

If you are going through any of these things, you are not on your own and you do not have to suffer in silence.

**In an emergency phone 999, or get someone else to phone, immediately. Move to a safe place; avoid the kitchen and stay near a door. If in doubt, get out.**

### Lifeline contacts

These advisers deal with domestic abuse phone calls every day of the year. They will always be

careful and discreet - respecting your privacy, your details and your identity.

- If you're in danger or immediate threat of violence, always call 999.
- Greater Manchester Police Domestic Violence Unit
- Open 24 hours, 0161 872 5050
- Manchester Women's Domestic Violence Helpline
- Monday – Friday, 10am - 4pm, 0161 636 7525
- National Domestic Violence Helpline Open 24 hours, 0808 2000 247
- Domestic Violence Outreach Team
- Monday – Friday, 9am - 4pm, 0161 234 5393
- Samaritans – 0161 236 8000

### Safe in your Southway home

**We want you to feel safe in your home.**

We can help and support you with many things, like:

- Helping you access services to make you feel safer in your home;
- Making alterations to your home so you feel safer in it;
- Getting expert help on legal action;
- Helping you find somewhere else to live.

**Contact us on 0161 448 4200.**

## 20 Enquiries, compliments and complaints

Here are the customer service standards you can expect from us when you use our service.

### When you phone we will:

- Answer your call within six rings;
- Introduce ourselves;
- Deal efficiently with your query, or put you through to the right person straight away;
- Ring you back if the query is going to take a long time to sort out (e.g. more than five minutes).

### When you email or write we will:

Answer as quickly as possible, certainly in no more than ten working days and usually much sooner;

Use plain language, and no jargon;

Tell you what we are going to do with your query or request;

Include full details of who has written our letter or email, and who to contact if you need more information.

### When you want to speak to someone in person we will:

- Arrange an appointment at a convenient time for you – either at your home or in the office;
- Treat you politely;
- Be dressed smartly and wear a name badge;
- Arrange for a signer, a translator, or interpreter if you need one;
- Respect the privacy of your home if the meeting is there.

Our staff should serve you with courtesy and respect. We protect our staff against threats and abuse. We can refuse to serve anyone whose behaviour is offensive. We aim to treat our customers in the way in which we would wish to be treated ourselves, taking extra care if there are special needs to consider.

### Happy with our service?

We'd love to know if you've received great service, or if someone has been especially polite or helpful. That way we can thank the member of staff for treating you so well. And we can also understand our customers' needs and use this information to keep improving the service for everybody.

Please fill in the form "Happy with our Service". You can pick up a form from your local Southway office, call 0161 448 4200, or go online at [www.southwayhousing.co.uk](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk) to make your comments.





Dotted lines for writing notes.

Dotted lines for writing notes.

Your home,  
safe in our hands

# Southway

**Southway Housing Trust  
(Manchester) Limited  
Tenants' Handbook 2020**



T: 0161 448 4200

[connect@southwayhousing.co.uk](mailto:connect@southwayhousing.co.uk)

[www.southwayhousing.co.uk](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk)

Southern Gate, 729 Princess Road, Manchester M20 2LT