



LINK



TENANT HANDBOOK

Information about your tenancy and Link's services

Link will produce this information on request in Braille, Audio Tape, Large Print and Community Languages. To find out more please call 0330 303 0124

Arabic

ستصدر Link هذه المعلومات عند الطلب بطريقة برايل، ومن خلال شريط صوتي ونسخة بخط كبير واللغات التي يتحدث بها الأقليات. لمعرفة المزيد يرجى الاتصال بالرقم 0330 303 0124

Bengali

লিঙ্ক (Link) অনুরোধক্রমে এই তথ্যাবলীকে ব্রেইল, অডিও টেপ, বড় হরফের মুদ্রন বা কমিউনিটির ভাষাগুলিতে প্রদান করবে। আরো জানতে অনুগ্রহ করে, 0330 303 0124নম্বরে কল করুন।

Mandarin

Link将根据需求以盲文、录音带、大字体和各种社区语言提供此信息。了解更多详情，请拨打：0330 303 0124

Polish

Link może dostarczyć niniejsze informacje w alfabecie Braille'a, na taśmie audio, w wersji dużym drukiem lub w językach używanych przez mieszkańców społeczeństwa. Aby uzyskać więcej informacji, prosimy zadzwonić pod numer 0330 303 0124.

Punjabi

ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਇਹ ਲਿੰਕ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਬ੍ਰੇਲ, ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਮਿਊਨਿਟੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰੇਗਾ। ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0330 303 0124ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Urdu

درخواست پر اس معلومات کو لنک (Link) بریل، سُننے والی ٹیپ، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور کمیونٹی زبانوں میں فراہم کرے گی۔ مزید معلومات کے لیے برائے مہربانی نمبر 0330 303 0124 کو کال کریں۔



Get in touch

We are open Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm

For general enquiries, call us on **03451 400 100** (local rate from landline and mobile)

Text us for a call back on **07557 183553**

For rent enquiries, call us on **0330 3030 801** (local rate from landline and mobile)

Fax us on **01324 417184**

Email us at **csc@linkhaltd.co.uk**

Write to us at:

Link Housing Association Ltd.

Watling House

Callendar Business Park

FALKIRK

FK1 1XR

Out-of-hours gas boiler and heating repairs

call **03451 400 100**

Other out-of-hours emergency repairs

call **0800 783 7937** (service provided by Bield24)

Like us on Facebook at **www.facebook.com/LinkGroupLtd**

Follow us on Twitter **@Link_Group_Ltd**



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Welcome



Welcome to Link

Our Tenant Handbook has been produced by tenants and staff to cover all the important information you need to know throughout your tenancy.

The handbook sets out our customer care commitments to you and your responsibilities as a tenant. We hope you find it a useful guide to ensuring your new home meets your expectations and that you can easily access information about our wide range of services. We also send out newsletters throughout the year to give you up-to-date information on what Link is doing.

We recognise that living in a safe, secure and warm home is important to the quality of life of you and your family. We welcome and value your interest and contributions to help influence and shape the services we provide.

June Green
Director of Housing Services

About Link

Link Housing Association Ltd. was formally established in 1962. Now, over 50 years later, it is one of the largest organisations of its kind in Scotland. Link is governed by a voluntary Board of Management which meets every second month to discuss the business and performance of the organisation. Tenants and non-tenants make up the Board membership. Link Housing Association Ltd. is part of the Link group of housing, support and regeneration companies which offers a wide range of services to over 11,000 families and individuals in 26 council areas across Scotland.

WHAT WE DO

As your landlord, we are responsible for the day-to-day management of your home.

We provide:

- Housing management services to over 6,500 tenants in both general needs and sheltered housing
- Money and welfare advice services

OUR VISION AND VALUES

Our vision is to be a provider of choice and excellence in the delivery of a wide range of socially inclusive regeneration, housing and support services.

Our philosophy

- valuing people
- providing homes
- building communities
- working together

Our values

Our values underpin all our activities, working practices and strategies

- Responsibility - We all take responsibility for our actions
- Empathy - We work hard to understand how people feel as individuals and treat them with dignity
- Social Impact - We strive to ensure there is a positive social impact from our activities and work with others who share our aims
- Participate - We are proactive in providing opportunities for people to engage with us and help us improve our services
- Equality - We are all equal and different and we aim to provide inclusive environments for work and for living
- Challenge - We challenge ourselves and others towards excellence and innovation in all we do
- Transparency - We wish to be open and honest about what we do and how we do it

Service Standards

Our commitment to you

We are committed to providing an efficient and customer-focused service and are responsible for making sure that our services meet the standards and outcomes detailed in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. (An outcome is the result we should achieve for you as our tenant.)

The Charter aims to improve the quality and value of the services we provide and supports the Scottish Government's aim to create a better and safer Scotland.

Our performance is monitored by the Scottish Housing Regulator and we will report back each year to let you know how we are doing.

The Charter sets out:

- what standards of service and results you should expect from Link
- that we should focus on services and results which matter to you

The Charter covers:

- equalities
- communications
- participation
- quality of housing
- repairs, maintenance and improvement
- estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes
- housing options
- access to social housing
- tenancy sustainment
- value for money
- rents and service charges



For more information on the Charter visit www.housingcharter.gov.uk

Customer care

We have developed customer service standards as part of our commitment to put you first and deliver services that are accessible to everyone.

We will:

- treat you with respect and in a professional manner
- ensure your needs are identified and understood and try to see things from your point of view
- respect your right to confidentiality and keep your personal information secure in accordance with data protection legislation
- make copies of our policies available on our website and in printed form on request
- ensure we use plain English in any correspondence and it is concise, accurate and jargon free
- provide information in large print, Braille or audio tape or use translation services for customers whose first language is not English
- encourage and seek your feedback on services you have received
- ensure our offices offer equal access for all our customers
- inform and consult with you when there are changes to the services you receive
- keep you up-to-date with relevant information via newsletters, our website and social media
- maintain your property to a high standard, making sure it is warm, secure and comfortable
- look after common areas so that you have a pleasant environment in which to live



CONTACTING US

We have improved our response times for general enquiries to a maximum of 3 days for phone calls if you ask for a call back. We will respond within 3 days where possible and no later than 5 days to e-mail and written correspondence.

If it's going to take longer we will acknowledge your query or make a phone call to advise you how long it will take us to respond.

If you call us, we will:

- Answer the telephone within 20 seconds when the office is open
- Respond to telephone messages, left on our voicemail facility when the office is closed, within four hours of opening the next working day
- Call you back, if you have asked us to, within 24 hours where possible and no later than 3 days

If you write to us, we will:

- respond within 3 days where possible and no later than 5 days to e-mail and written correspondence
- If it's going to take longer we need to issue an acknowledgement or make a phone call to advise the correspondent
- Include a contact name and telephone number, together with any other information needed (eg reference number)

If you email us, we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your email within 24 hours
- respond within 3 days where possible and no later than 5 days to e-mail and written correspondence

VISITING YOU

We will:

- always wear an identification badge and, where appropriate, wear Link branded clothing
- offer appointment options when we need to visit your property or you request a home visit
- leave a card if you are out when we visit to let you know how you can re-arrange your appointment
- work with reputable contractors who work to our customer care standards



Complaints and feedback

We aim to get our services right first time.

We encourage you to let us know by phone, email, surveys, letter or face-to-face what you thought of the service you received. We are especially delighted to hear when we have got things right.

If you feel that our service has let you down and you want to make a complaint then please follow our complaints process which can be found on page 43.

We have a number of ways for you to provide feedback as part of our tenant participation activities. See Get Involved section on page 39.

The feedback you provide helps us learn from mistakes and improve the services we provide.

Your Tenancy

Your rights and responsibilities

Your tenancy agreement, usually called a **Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement**, is a legal contract between you and Link. It contains the rights and responsibilities you have (as the tenant) and Link has as your landlord.

YOUR RIGHTS

- You have the right to occupy your home as long as you comply with your Tenancy Agreement. Failure to do this may lead to you being evicted from your home. To ensure this doesn't happen you must:
 - pay your rent
 - keep your property in good order
 - be a good neighbour
 - not get involved in criminal activity
- If you provide false information to secure a tenancy you are at risk of eviction
- If you have a joint tenancy, both tenants have equal rights and are responsible for the tenancy
- Members of your household may have the right to take on your tenancy. This is called succession or assignation. See page 19 for more information.
- You have the right under Data Protection law to obtain copies of any of our policies or any information we hold on you
- You have the 'Right to Repair' – see page 32 for more information
- You may have the right to sublet or exchange your property
- You have the right to be involved in Link's decision-making processes

If you have any questions about your rights, please speak to your Housing Officer.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Link expects you to:

- pay your rent on time
- treat staff and neighbours with respect
- occupy your property as your only, or principal, home
- make sure that anyone living with or visiting you respects the terms of your Tenancy Agreement
- report any repairs promptly
- keep your property in good order
- allow access to your property for any repairs, checks or planned maintenance work
- request permission for any alterations you want to make to the property
- keep your gardens and/or common areas, drying greens or back courts tidy
- request permission for and control any pets by preventing them from fouling common areas
- put all waste in the bins provided, return bins to the proper place after they have been emptied and keep communal bin areas tidy
- not to use communal areas or stairs to store bikes, pushchairs or furniture or dump rubbish
- avoid disturbing neighbours with loud and persistent noise, particularly late at night and early in the morning
- avoid smoking before and during any visits by Link staff and ventilate your home where possible otherwise they may decide not to enter your home or may cut short a visit if they are concerned at the amount of smoke apparent at the time

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- We aim to provide you with a high quality home, which has been built (and will be looked after) to the highest standard
- This includes ensuring your home is in good decor, clean and secure and the gas, electricity and heating is good working order. We will issue you with a copy of the standards our properties should meet when you sign up for a new property.
- We will inform and consult with you on the rent increase and on any changes to the service you receive
- We monitor and report how we perform on the outcomes set in the Scottish Social Housing Charter, and consult with tenants to make sure this happens



If you are a Sheltered Housing tenant you will receive additional information about your home and our services.



If you have moved into a property which is in a new development please refer to the "New Home Manual" which you will have received separately. This gives you information on the key features of your new home.

Moving in

We will visit you within the first six weeks of your tenancy to see how you are getting on and to answer any questions you may have. Nevertheless, you can request a visit from your Housing Officer at any time.

To help you settle into your new home quickly and easily, below is a handy checklist of the things you need to do when you move in.

	✓
Make arrangements to pay your rent.	
Put your spare set of keys in a safe place as we do not keep duplicates.	
Choose and register with a gas and electricity supplier. Make sure you give a meter reading.	
Gas and electric cookers must be fitted by a suitably qualified engineer.	
Contact your local council and register for Council Tax. You are required to pay this from the date you move in.	
Contact your local council to make claim for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (if applicable).	
Organise home contents insurance – see below.	
Contact your preferred telephone provider who will advise how to get connected.	
If applicable tell your doctor, dentist, children’s school, employer, DVLA, TV licensing, and bank that you have moved. A handy checklist of other people you may want to contact is on page 49.	

HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE

Link is not responsible for insuring the contents of your home – you are. We are only responsible for insuring the building (and some fixtures and fittings).

If your home is affected by fire or a burst pipe (or flooding from another property) it could mean financial disaster and emotional trauma if your carpets, curtains, clothing, furniture and personal belongings are damaged or destroyed and you do not have home contents insurance.

Call Link’s Customer Service Centre for advice and special deals with recommended providers. Insurance costs from as little as 50p per week.



Being a good neighbour

How you get on with your neighbours can be one of the most important factors in determining whether you are happy in your home. We must remind you that any nuisance in or around your home, caused by yourself, family members or visitors, is a breach of your tenancy agreement. You can avoid problems by considering how your behaviour affects others – just follow these do's and don'ts.

DO

- take your turn at cleaning stairs and common areas (you will be informed if you have a stair cleaning contractor)
- close gates and doors behind you (particularly when controlled entry systems)
- take responsibility for your children, pets and any visitors to your home
- put your rubbish and recycling in bins provided

DON'T

- play music or your television loudly
- leave any rubbish or bulky items in common areas
- use household appliances (like vacuum cleaners or washing machines) late at night or early in the morning

Anti-social behaviour and neighbour disputes

We define anti-social behaviour in two categories – serious and less serious.

- serious anti-social behaviour, includes criminal activity, drug dealing, violence or threats of violence, verbal abuse, vandalism and graffiti
- less serious anti social behaviour includes neighbour disputes over parking, noise, leaving bulky items in communal areas

We do not tolerate harassment or anti-social behaviour and take all reports very seriously.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO THE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR PROCESS

If you have been disturbed by a neighbour and it is mild or a “one-off” occurrence please first speak to your neighbour and let them know that they are disturbing you. They may not be aware that their behaviour is affecting you. It is important you report any crime to the police.

If the behaviour persists, contact Link’s Customer Service Centre and report the details of the incident e.g. date, time and an incident number (if you had to call the police). This will be passed to your Housing Officer, who will then call you to discuss the incident.

Your Housing Officer will then speak to the other person concerned about the disturbances and may issue a verbal warning. If there has been a breach of tenancy, we will remind them of their obligations. We may also have to involve environmental health, social services or the Police.

If there is no breach of tenancy and the situation is a clash of lifestyles or personalities, we can offer mediation to help resolve the situation.

If the disturbance continues or gets worse, we will work with you and others affected, to collect diary entries and proof from either the Police or other witnesses.

Once proof has been collected about the disturbances we will progress through our anti-social behaviour procedure by issuing written warnings and look at ways to address the person’s behaviour. Your Housing Officer will keep you up-to-date with progress.

If we have followed our procedures and exhausted all measures available we may take legal action. We will need detailed accounts from the people affected and you may be required to appear in court and give evidence. The information is presented to the Sheriff who will then determine whether the offending tenant should be evicted. Only a Sheriff has the power to end a tenancy so the information you provide is very important.

Anti-social behaviour frequently asked questions



Q My neighbour is causing loads of hassle – why can't you evict them?

A Only a Sherriff of the court can evict a tenant by law. We need detailed evidence from witnesses to take a case to court.

Q Why do I have to do all the work for you to evict someone?

A We are not witness to the anti-social behaviour so you have to provide first-hand accounts of what has happened. We will collate all reports of anti-social behaviour and submit them for any subsequent legal action.

Q I'm afraid to call the police or report anti-social behaviour in case it backfires – what should I do?

A We cannot pursue any course of action unless there are corroborated reports. All complaints to the police, Link or any other agency are treated in complete confidence and full support will be given during any investigations. A referral can also be made to Victim Support Scotland.



Communal areas

ESTATE MANAGEMENT

We regularly inspect the common areas in our developments. This is to ensure safety and security and that appearances are maintained to appropriate standards. We often carry out these inspections accompanied by tenants who live in the area. If you would like to take part in an estate management inspection please speak to your Housing Officer.

BINS AND RECYCLING

We will tell you when and how often your bin collections will be. You must dispose of any bulky items either to a local community recycling centre or ask your local council to collect them. You must not dump items as this is called 'flytipping' and is illegal.

STAIR CLEANING

We provide stair cleaning service in some developments, which is paid for through your rent. If you have to pay for this service, details will be included in your service charge. If we do not provide this service, you and your neighbours need to agree a cleaning rota and should be prepared to clean the stairs at least once a week.

STAIRWELL

It is vitally important that you keep the communal area tidy, not just for you but your neighbours too. Fires within common areas are a regular occurrence and can happen at anytime. To prevent this, we ask you to dispose of any unwanted items in the appropriate manner. If you have any bulky or large items please contact your local council who will be able to pick these up for you, usually at no cost to you. These should be taken outside your flat or house on the day of collection and not before.

GARDENS

We provide a grass cutting service in some common gardens, drying greens and back courts, which you pay for through your rent. If you have to pay for this, details will be included in your service charge. If we do not provide this service, you and your neighbours are responsible for keeping the grass cut to a reasonable height. If you have a private garden you are responsible for maintaining the garden and keeping it tidy. If you do not do this you will be asked in writing to make improvements. If you do not do this we will carry out any necessary work and charge you.

FENCING

All requests to erect fencing must be made in writing and permission must be granted before purchasing or erecting a fence. All requests in writing should be sent to the Asset Planning Surveyor at our Falkirk office.

VANDALISM

Incidents of vandalism are rare but they do happen. If you witness someone vandalising a property please call the police. If we find out that a Link tenant (or a visitor to their property) caused the vandalism we may take action against them. If you find damage caused by vandalism, please report it to Link's Customer Service Centre.

Pets

You must ask Link for permission if you want to keep a pet in your home. If you are allowed a pet, you are responsible for it at all times ensuring that it does not cause a nuisance to neighbours or damage your property.



If you are a Sheltered Housing tenant, and want to keep a pet, please speak to your Sheltered Housing Officer.

Pests

You are responsible for keeping your home clean and tidy to reduce the likelihood of pests such as mice, fleas, ants and bedbugs. It is your responsibility to deal with pest problems in your home. You should contact your local council's Pest Control Department to remove any pests – some councils may charge for this service.

It is our responsibility to deal with any pest problems in common areas. If pests are getting into your home via damaged windows or doors, please contact the Repairs Team at the Customer Service Centre. See page 29 for more information.





Change in circumstances

It's important to let us know if someone moves out of your property, if you want someone to move in or you want to transfer your tenancy.

TRANSFERRING THE TENANCY

You can do this by assignation or succession. Assignation is when you transfer a tenancy to another member of your household. Succession is when a tenancy is inherited when a tenant dies. Please check with your Housing Officer to see if you are eligible for assignation or succession.

JOINT TENANCY

A joint tenancy gives equal rights to both people and makes them both responsible for the tenancy. If you have sole tenancy and you wish to change this to a joint tenancy please contact your Housing Officer.

RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN

If your relationship with a partner breaks down and you can no longer live together (and you are joint tenants), you will have to decide who will remain living in the property. If one person is the sole tenant they have the right to remain in the property whilst the other does not. Please contact Link's Customer Service Centre for more information before either person moves out.

See Housing Options on page 41 for information if you need to move.

Ending your tenancy and moving out

HOW TO END YOUR TENANCY

If you want to move out you must give us 28 days' notice in writing. We cannot accept a termination notice by phone or email.

We will write to you to confirm the date your tenancy ends and make an appointment to visit you in your home before you move out to check if it is in good condition and to let you know if you need to carry out any repairs or redecorate. If you do not carry out these repairs or redecorate before you move out, we will do the work needed and charge you.

MOVING OUT

	✓
Ensure your rent is paid until the date your tenancy ends	
Ensure your property is left clean, tidy and in good decorative order Do not leave any personal belongings in the property	
Return all sets of keys to Link no later than your tenancy end-date	
Advise Housing Benefit and Council Tax offices to let them know you are moving out	
Take final meter readings for gas and electricity and advise your supplier of these	
Ensure your garden is left in a neat and tidy condition	
Ensure any outstanding repairs have been carried out	
Ensure any gas cooker removal is done by a qualified gas engineer	
Ensure your property is secure and that all windows and doors are locked	

Don't forget to tell those listed on page 49 you are moving.

ABANDONMENT

If we believe that you are not living in the property (or have left without telling us), we can take legal action to end your tenancy. We will deliver a Notice of Abandonment to the property and give you 28 days' notice to inform us you are still living in the property. If you do not contact us, we will serve a second notice which formally ends your tenancy.

You have to pay your rent up until the date your tenancy ends and we will take action to retrieve any money owed.

Rents and Services

Ways to pay

There are a number of ways to pay. You can choose the one that suits you best:



Pay by Telephone

Call allpay on **0844 557 8321**, Link's Customer Service Centre on **03451 400 100** or the Rent Enquiry team on **0330 3030 801**, to pay by credit or debit card. Make sure you have a note of your allpay reference number.



Pay by Direct Debit

This is similar to a standing order but you don't need to contact your bank every time there is a change to your rent – we do it for you. If you want to set up a Direct Debit or switch your Standing Order then call Link's Customer Service Centre or the Rent Enquiry team.



Pay over the internet

Pay over the internet using either a debit or credit card at **www.allpayments.net**. Make sure you have a note of your allpay reference number.



Pay by Cheque or Postal Order

Cheques or postal orders should be made payable to Link Housing Association Ltd. If a cheque is dishonoured, we reserve the right to make a charge against your account to cover bank charges plus handling costs.



Pay using the allpay app

You can download the allpay app onto your mobile phone to make payments this way.



Pay by Cash

You can pay your rent for no charge in any Post Office, shop or garage which displays the Paypoint, E-pay, Payzone or allpay logo using an allpay card. Any payments you make are applied to your rent account within 24 hours and you will be given a receipt to confirm payment.

Paying your rent

Paying your rent is not a matter of choice and it is the most important obligation of your tenancy.

- If you do not pay your rent, you will go into rent arrears.
- If you do not contact Link about missed payments or if you do not keep to an agreement to repay any rent arrears, we will take legal action to recover the money owed. As a last resort, we will evict you from your home and will ask the court to charge the legal costs to you.
- If you receive Housing Benefit, it is your responsibility to make sure prompt payment is made. Contact your local council to ensure this arrangement has been made. At present you can ask the council to pay this directly to Link. If this changes in the future, you must ensure that a payment method is set up to Link.

WHAT YOUR RENT COVERS

Rent is the main source of income for Link and pays for:

- Repairs and improvements to your home
- Managing your home and neighbourhood
- Paying back loans borrowed to build and improve our properties.

SERVICE CHARGES

A service charge is added to the basic rent when you receive services such as:

- Grounds maintenance of common areas e.g. grass cutting, shrub pruning and litter picking
- Common stair and window cleaning
- Lighting of common areas
- Other services in Sheltered Housing.



Help with paying your rent

If you can't pay your rent or you have difficulties paying, please call us straight away. The earlier you tell us about your situation, the easier it is to help you sort the problem out. Not paying your rent puts your home at risk.

We take rent arrears very seriously and, whilst we are keen to help and understand difficult situations, we have strict procedures to deal with them. We will try to work with you by telephone or visiting you at home. If you do not work with us to help resolve your rent arrears we will take prompt legal action, which could lead to eviction.

We can refer you to our Advice Service who can provide independent support and information on budgeting and benefit entitlement.

Refer to **Money Matters** on page 25 for more information.

- Do not ignore the problem
- Do not ignore our letters or telephone calls regarding rent arrears as this will result in legal action if you do not contact us
- Do not borrow money from door-to-door or payday lenders as this will make your debt problems worse due to the high interest-rates you have to pay back on any loans

How your rent is set

Our aim is to charge rents which people on a low income can afford whilst maintaining high standards of services and properties.

Each year we set our rents in accordance with our rent policy.

We consult with tenants about any proposed changes and these are then approved by Link's Board. We write to all tenants giving 28 days' notice if there are to be any changes (these usually take effect as of 1 April each year).

If your tenancy started before 1989, your rent is set by an Independent Rent Panel. This is known as "Fair Rent".

If you want further information on how your rent is set, please contact Link's Customer Service Centre.

Rent frequently asked questions



Q I am having money problems – who can I go to?

A Link offers a dedicated advice service to all its tenants. If you are having trouble paying your rent and would like help, please go to page 15 for more information.

Q I think I am entitled to Housing Benefit – what do I do?

A You should apply to your local council for a Housing Benefit assessment. This will look at your income and advise if you are entitled to any benefit. For a list of local councils, please refer to page 47.

Q I have received a Notice of Proceedings – what does it mean and what should I do?

A A Notice of Proceedings is the first stage in the legal process that could result in your eviction. This is because you have rent arrears and have not contacted us to arrange a repayment. Please contact Link's Customer Service Centre or the Rent Enquiry team.

Q I've received an arrears letter but I am waiting for Housing Benefit – why are you sending me arrears letters?

A It is your responsibility as a tenant to pay your rent. If you are entitled to Housing Benefit, you should speak to your council to organise it and make sure it has all the information it requires from you to process your claim.

Q Why have I received a reminder letter when I paid my rent last week?

A There may have been an overlap between the letter being sent and your rent payment being received. Please contact Link's Customer Service Centre or the Rent Enquiry team to let us know.

Money Matters

Money and benefits advice

Our advice service offers free and confidential welfare rights, money advice and tenancy sustainment services by phone, email or by visiting you in your home. The service is impartial and focuses on your needs and options.

To allow us to make enquiries on your behalf, you may need to complete and sign a mandate agreement.

We can help you with all aspects of welfare reform, benefits and debt including:

- advice and information on benefits and benefit claims, tax credits and charitable grants
- completion and progression of benefit claims
- liaising, mediating and negotiating with the Department for Work and Pensions, HM Revenues and Customs and local councils
- Benefit Appeals complaints and disputes
- negotiating manageable repayments towards rent arrears or other debts
- Budgeting advice
- Debt solutions such as payment plans, Debt Arrangement scheme, Trust Deeds and Bankruptcy
- Supporting you to access financial education and financial products

Energy-saving advice

We try to make sure your properties are built and maintained to ensure they are warm and secure. But there are a number of ways you can keep your energy bills down as well.

- Turn your thermostat down – By turning your thermostat down by only 1°C you can save up to £65 a year. Bleeding radiators and using draught excluders can also help to save money.
- Install low-energy light bulbs – A 100W light bulb costs up to £3 a day to run. By fitting energy-efficient light bulbs you can save up to £50 a year on your bills and that includes the cost of the bulbs! Remember to switch lights off when not needed.
- Turn off appliances at the plug, don't leave them on standby. By switching off your TV at the wall you can save up to £40 a year. Doing the same for computers can save up to £27 per year.
- Set your washing machine to wash at 30°C and always do a full load.
- Use a bowl to wash up rather than leaving the hot tap running.
- Boil only the amount of water you need every time you use your kettle.
- Consider using pressure cookers, steamers or microwaves as these use less energy.
- Keeping your fridge and freezer full means they don't have to work as hard and therefore use less energy.

DON'T OVER-PAY FOR THE ENERGY YOU ARE USING

You should be aware that how you pay affects what you pay. For example, if you pay via monthly direct debit then you will be charged less than if you pay via a quarterly bill. You can also make savings by requesting online 'paperless' billing, which means you don't have the added cost for administration of paperwork.

Pre-payment meters may be the most expensive way to pay for energy. A number of saving options are available if you shop around for the best tariff or alternative payment methods to suit your needs. For more information contact Link's Advice team.

You may be eligible for the Priority Service Register. This register provides a higher level of service for those on a pension or for those who require extra assistance with mobility or have visual or hearing impairment.

SWITCHING SUPPLIER

Compare gas and electricity prices to make sure you're on the cheapest tariff for you. To compare energy prices, you will need to work out how much you are currently paying for your fuel over a set period of time (for example, over a month or a year). You can do this by contacting your current supplier and asking it for the information, or by looking at your previous bills. Once you have established what you are currently paying, you should contact alternative energy suppliers to compare their prices. You can do this by phone or by visiting a comparison website such as USwitch.

Suppliers can make special payment schedules for customers experiencing financial difficulties. Please contact your supplier direct to discuss your options.



Help with getting online

You may already access the internet at home through your smart phone or computer and we offer access to services such as paying your rent, reporting a repair or contacting us through our website.

We encourage all tenants to consider the benefits of learning to use computers and can provide advice about accessing free WiFi and internet access in local libraries and other community facilities.

Some Sheltered Housing complexes offer access to computers and the internet in communal areas. We provide computer equipment and training if you get involved in Board membership or tenants groups.

We aim to make sure everyone has access to – and the skills to use – information and technologies such as computers and the internet.

We can help you:

- Access products and services
- Look for employment opportunities
- Complete benefit claim forms online
- Manage your finances and pay your bills online
- Access ways to improve your IT skills such as being able to send emails and use the internet



CONTACT US

Call us on 01324 417 174

Email us at AdviceServiceTeam@linkhaltd.co.uk

Write to us at

Advice Service
Watling House
Callendar Business Park
FALKIRK
FK1 1XR

Repairs and Maintenance

How to report a repair

You can report a repair in a number of ways:

We are open Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm

Call us on 03451 400 100 (local rate from landline and mobile)

Text us for a call back on 07557 183553

Email us at LHARepairsteam@linkhaltd.co.uk

Complete the repairs form on our website www.linkhousing.org.uk
(non-emergencies only)

Out-of-hours gas boiler and heating repairs
call 03451 400 100

Other out-of-hours emergency repairs
call 0800 783 7937 (service provided by Bield24)

Please note if you call out an emergency contractor for a routine repair you may be charged for the cost of the call-out.



If you are a Sheltered Housing tenant, your Sheltered Housing Officer can report and monitor repairs and maintenance on your behalf.

TENANTS OF NEW HOMES



If your property is less than 12 months old, or it has had major work during the past 12 months it is in a "defects liability" period. This means the builder is responsible for completing any repairs for 12 months after the property is completed / refurbished.

If you report a repair we will advise the builder / contractor to complete it. They have the same timescales to attend to these repairs as we do. However, if the repair is minor (and will not cause further damage) the builder will probably carry this out at the end of the defects period.

For more information, please refer to your New Home Manual.

WHAT YOU NEED TO TELL US

We want to get things right first time so the more information you can give us about the problem, the better our chances of getting the repair done quickly and effectively. The details we need are:

- Your name, address and contact telephone number
- The nature of the problem
- Does it affect your home only or common parts of a close or block?
- When can you provide access for an inspection and/or the repair to be carried out?

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A REPAIR IS REPORTED

Once you have reported a repair we will tell you if it is an emergency, urgent or routine repair. The type of repair will determine how long we have to respond and complete the repair (where possible).

Response Category	Response Time	Definition	Examples
Emergency	Within four hours	Repairs that require immediate attendance to ensure the safety of tenants and the security of the property	Total loss of water or electricity, total loss of heating (in cold weather), serious roof leaks, breaches of security to outside doors and windows
Urgent	Within three days	Repairs that require attention to prevent further deterioration to the property or undue risk or inconvenience to the tenant	Plumbing leaks, central heating faults, blocked drains, minor electrical faults
Routine	Within 10 days	Any other day-to-day repairs	General joiner repairs – kitchen fittings, internal doors etc, minor plumbing repairs





APPOINTMENTS

We will ask you when you would you like an appointment. Where possible we will offer an appointment to suit you. If you are unable to be at home for the appointment please try to arrange for a family member, friend or neighbour to be there so that a tradesperson can get in to carry out the repair.

Sometimes a repair will need additional materials to allow completion. If this happens we will carry out a temporary repair whilst we wait for the materials to be delivered. We will tell you if there will be any delay to completing the final repair and will make another appointment to complete it.

If a tradesperson fails to attend an appointment as arranged, please let us know right away.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A REPAIR IS COMPLETED?

Once a repair has been carried out we will ask for your feedback on the repair and the service you received. We would appreciate your co-operation to answer a few questions, either by telephone or during a visit to your property, about the way your repair was handled to help us improve our service.

Right to repair

Some emergency and urgent repairs are covered by Right to Repair regulations set out by the Scottish Government. When you tell us about a repair, we will tell you whether it falls under this scheme.

“Right to Repair” means:

- If ‘qualifying repairs’ are not attended to within the timescales, you have the right to appoint another contractor to carry out the work agreed. We can give you contact details of our approved alternative contractor.
- We will pay for qualifying repairs up to a maximum value of £350.
- You are eligible for compensation if the repair is not carried out within given timescales (assuming that reasonable access has been provided). We will pay £15 compensation for the initial inconvenience plus £3 for every additional day until the repair is completed (up to a maximum payment of £100).

Description of Qualifying Repair	Response Time in Days
Blocked chimney flue to open fire or boiler	1
Blocked or leaking foul drains or toilet pans (where there is no other toilet in the house)	1
Blocked sink, bath or drain	1
Loss of electricity	1
Partial loss of electricity	3
Insecure external window, door or lock	1
Unsafe access path or step	1
Significant leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks, cisterns	1
Loss or partial loss of gas supply	1
Loss or partial loss of space or water heating (where no alternative heating is available)	1
Toilet not flushing where there is no other toilet in the house	1
Unsafe power or lighting socket, or electrical fitting	1
Loss of water supply	1
Partial loss of water supply	3
Loose or detached banister or hand rail	3
Unsafe timber flooring or stair treads	3
Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working	7



Please refer to the, “Right to Repair” leaflet in your welcome pack or contact the Repairs Team for further information.

Repair responsibilities

While the majority of repairs are Link's responsibility, there are some that are yours.

Please note that this is not a full list. If you are not sure about a particular repair, contact the Repairs Team at Link's Customer Service Centre.

REPAIR	LINK	YOU	MORE DETAILS
Replacing glass in windows	✓		Unless the breakage was caused by you, your family or a visitor
Replacing lost keys and cost of re-entry if tenant locked out		✓	
Maintaining heating appliances	✓		
Maintaining sanitary ware	✓		
Maintaining chimney flues	✓		It is your responsibility to sweep your chimney if you have one
Decoration and repair of common areas including closes	✓		
All internal decoration		✓	
Replacing light bulbs		✓	
Clearing blocked waste pipes	✓		Unless it is caused by carelessness
Damage caused through neglect or misuse of the property by the tenant family or visitors		✓	
Cleaning common areas like closes and staircases where Link does not provide a cleaning service		✓	
Smoke Alarm battery		✓	Although Link will assist if the alarm is inaccessible
Pest and vermin control		✓	Link will repair the building to prevent pest ingress, if required

Improvements to your home

PLANNED MAINTENANCE

Each year, items such as external doors and windows, central heating systems, kitchen units and bathroom suites are renewed when they reach the end of their useful life. This is called “planned maintenance”. If your property is due to have any planned maintenance we will write to you in advance to let you know all the details.

Once the work has been completed we will carry out a post-work inspection to make sure it is up to standard and ask the contractor to attend to any faults (if required).

If your decoration and / or floor coverings, except for laminate placed by a tenant, are disrupted by the work in your home we will pay you a standard allowance. Here are details of what we would replace or upgrade:

Kitchen

- kitchen units and worktops including the stainless steel sink, taps, water pipes, washing machine valves and waste pipes
- electric extractor fan
- electrical power sockets
- wall tiling between worktop and the bottom of kitchen wall units.

Bathroom

- bath (or shower cubicle), provide or renew electric shower unit, wash hand basin together with WC, water and waste pipes.
- wash hand basin and toilet if you have a second toilet.
- electric extractor fan in main bathroom (and second toilet, if you have one).
- Provide decorative, waterproof boarding in place of tiling around bath, shower and wash hand basin.

Electric Storage Heating Systems

- electric storage heating system and, if possible, replace it with a more energy efficient system.

Boiler or Full Gas Heating Systems

- gas boiler
- programmer/time-clock
- water pump
- thermostatic radiator valves.

Doors and Windows

- external doors
- windows within your home.

Other Maintenance

- external and internal common area painting
- gas servicing
- fire alarm maintenance
- estate management repairs such as fencing and guttering.



Alterations to your home

If you want to make any alterations to your home, you must write to Link to ask for permission. We will not give permission if the alteration is likely to make your home unsafe or could cause structural damage.

You must also write to Link if you want to install laminate flooring. We will only give permission for “click” flooring (not glued laminate) and only if you install additional soundproofing (if you have downstairs neighbours you must install additional sound proofing).

This flooring is laid at your own risk. If a repair is required which involves lifting the flooring Link will accept no responsibility for any damage incurred during the process. If the necessary repair is extensive, you will be asked to organise the lifting and relaying of your flooring.

If the laminate flooring is in excellent condition the incoming tenant will be asked if they would like the flooring left. If they agree, it will be their responsibility to maintain. If they do not want it, it is your responsibility to lift and dispose of it and repair any damage made to the floor before you move out.

If you terminate your tenancy, it is your responsibility to reinstate the property to its original condition.



If you have made improvements to your home you may have a right to receive compensation at the end of your tenancy. Please read, “Right to Compensation for Improvements” leaflet in your Welcome Pack – the right to compensation only applies to improvements carried out after 30 September 2002.

Medical adaptations

We are committed to helping you stay in your own home for as long as possible.

If you require your home to be adapted (such as a handrail at the entrance to your property or a shower unit instead of bath), you should first have an assessment carried out by one of your local council’s Occupational Therapists. They would then make an application for an adaptation to us on your behalf. Local council contact information can be found on page 47.

Each year we receive funding for medical adaptations from the Scottish Government and also set aside some of our own money to add to these funds. Nevertheless, due to limited funds some applications for adaptations may take priority over others.

For further advice, please contact Link’s Customer Service Centre.

Repairs frequently asked questions



Q Can I make an appointment for a repair?

A Yes, we can arrange an appointment at a suitable time for you.

Q When am I getting my kitchen/heating/bathroom upgrade?

A We produce a five-year plan to let you know when upgrades are happening and will write to you in advance of the work starting.

Q How long does a repair take to be completed?

A When you report a repair you will be given a clear timescale in which the repair should be carried out. If the repair has not been done in the timescale you should contact our Repairs Team.

Q I'm not happy with the repair, who do I tell?

A If you are unhappy about the standard of work carried out you should contact the Repairs Team. The repair may be inspected by one of our building inspectors.

Q My property is less than a year old – should I report defects/repairs to the contractor?

A You should still contact the Repairs Team at Link's Customer Service Centre. This applies to out-of-hours emergencies as well.

Safety in the home

GAS SERVICING

Gas servicing is essential to ensure the boilers and fires in your home are safe to use and are operating efficiently. Faulty appliances can produce dangerous levels of carbon monoxide which can prove fatal.

We have a gas servicing programme which ensures every appliance and gas installation is checked and serviced at least once a year. It is vital that you allow access to our gas servicing contractors when your appointment is scheduled. If the appointment you have been given is not suitable, please contact the gas servicing contractor or Link's Customer Service Centre to make another arrangement. Failure to do so may result in forced access to the property where you will then be liable for the additional costs to gain entry.

Please do not paint gas fire casings or surrounds as this can be a fire hazard and may give off poisonous gases.

If you would like further information, please contact the Gas Servicing Team.

ASBESTOS

We hold a register which records the presence of any asbestos-containing materials in your home. In order to maintain the register we regularly survey and update the information we hold. We will make you aware if any asbestos exists and any actions that may be necessary to ensure it remains in a safe condition.

We want to reassure you that if you receive a letter to say that asbestos-containing materials have been found in your home, we will manage and monitor them on your behalf.

Materials containing asbestos are perfectly safe as long as they are not disturbed, for instance, by drilling, cutting or rubbing where dust has been created. We ask that if you plan to carry out any DIY in your home, and you think you have asbestos present, you should contact us for advice.

If you are due to have work carried out in your home by a Link tradesperson they will make additional protection and preparation before work commences and will advise if this extra work will affect you.

BURST PIPES

Most properties can be affected by burst pipes when unoccupied during cold weather.

Although pipes are insulated, they can still freeze in exceptionally cold weather. To prevent this happening keep your heating on at a very low setting or turn off the mains water supply at the stop-cock.

If a pipe bursts you should:

1. Turn off the mains water supply at the stopcock
2. Turn off any central heating boilers or electric immersion heaters (unless you are certain that the burst is only on the mains supply pipe)
3. Turn on all taps to drain your storage tank
4. If water comes into contact with any electrical fittings, switch off the electricity supply
5. Telephone our Repairs Team
6. Warn any neighbours who might be affected
7. Try to store some water in the bath or another large container so that you have water for flushing the toilet, washing, etc., until the burst is repaired

CONDENSATION MOULD

Condensation occurs when warm moist air contacts a cold surface and can also occur through any activity that creates steam. The main sources of condensation are bathing, showering and cooking; drying clothes indoors; and using unvented tumble driers.

Condensation causes dampness that can lead to the growth of mould. If mould occurs then this can be cleaned using an appropriate household cleaner and damp cloth (do not to use bleach as this may damage coloured paint).

To help reduce the risk of condensation in your home:

- Keep a window open when drying clothes indoors
- Don't dry clothes over warm radiators
- If you use a tumble dryer, place the exhaust hose out of a window
- Keep kitchen and bathrooms well ventilated and close the doors when cooking or bathing
- Keep lids on pots and pans
- If you have an extractor fan use it; if it is not working contact Link's Repairs Team
- Make sure air can circulate behind furniture and inside wardrobes
- Keep your home warm and allow air and sunlight in.

Get Involved

Get involved with tenant participation

Tenant participation is how you can help influence the decisions made about the services you receive and the management of your home and neighbourhood. It is a two-way process which involves the sharing of information and ideas with the aim of improving the standard of service we provide. We welcome and encourage you to feed back your views and we recognise the importance of meeting your needs and expectations.

We are accredited with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service for our good practice in involving tenants in decision-making. We believe tenant participation is important to Link and we will let you know how examples of tenant participation have changed or improved the services we provide.

Why get involved?

Tenants who get involved with tenant participation have access to:

- more local contact with staff at neighbourhood meetings
- ways to meet neighbours and other agencies working in the community
- personal development and training opportunities
- incentives paid for some activities
- funding to help make improvements to your local neighbourhood and for community events
- influencing decision-making



Ways to get involved

There are a number of ways you can get involved in helping us improve our services and our performance. It's up to you how much or how little you want to participate.

Membership of Link	You can become a member of Link by paying £1. This entitles you to a copy of the Annual Review, Annual Accounts and an invitation to the Annual General Meeting.
Board membership	The Board meets monthly to govern and take strategic decisions about the organisation. Members are volunteers and training and support is provided.
Tenant scrutiny panel	The panel is made up of tenant volunteers who evaluate service performance, using surveys and interviews to identify service challenges and to recommend improvements. Training and support is provided.
E Panel	The E Panel allows tenants to provide feedback on a range of services and topics via surveys sent by email.
Consultation register	This allows you to take part in consultation activities and focus groups through meetings, emails or surveys. You can choose based on your interests and the amount of time you have.
Residents' Associations and Registered Tenant Organisations	These offer opportunities for residents to tackle local issues together. They act as a platform to consult with Link and feed back information to other tenants and residents in the area. We can provide assistance to help set up an association if one does not already exist in your area.
Sheltered Housing Forum	This brings tenant representatives from all our sheltered complexes together to discuss service improvement, funding and help to influence Link's decision-making.
Tenant conference	The annual conference has a range of workshops and talks on current housing and other issues that may affect you.

For more information about how to become involved please call Link's Customer Service Centre or the Tenant Liaison Officer on 03451 400 100 or email getinvolved@linkhaltd.co.uk



Please refer to the Tenant Participation Strategy and tenants newsletter for information on future consultation activities.

Housing Options

Rent a property

As a Link tenant you have the option to rent or move to another property depending on your circumstances.

TRANSFERRING YOUR TENANCY TO ANOTHER PROPERTY

Transfer to another Link property

We operate a choice-based letting system so you must register if you want to move to another Link property. Contact Link's Customer Service Centre for more information on how to register for the area you are interested in moving to.

Mutual Exchanges

You can apply to exchange your property with either another Link tenant or a tenant of another housing association or council, this is called "Mutual Exchange".

To apply for a mutual exchange contact Link's Customer Service Centre and you will be sent a form to complete. The person you wish to swap with must also do the same with their landlord.

Alternatively, you can sign up to Homeswapper (a national mutual exchange service) or HouseExchange (for properties in Edinburgh only). These advertise properties where people are looking to exchange with someone else and you can browse to see if anything is suitable and register your own property so others can contact you. The services are free of charge and you can register at www.HomeSwapper.co.uk or www.houseexchange.co.uk

Please note, there are circumstances where a mutual exchange would not take place. If you have any questions regarding eligibility, please contact your Housing Officer.

SHELTERED HOUSING

Our sheltered housing complexes encourage independent living where older people have the opportunity to enjoy company in a supportive environment and are available to single people or couples over 55. The properties benefit from the services of a Sheltered Housing Officer who is on duty from Monday to Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm. Each property is connected to an alarm system 24 hours a day in case of emergencies. If you are interested in Sheltered Housing, please contact Link's Customer Service Centre.

INTERMEDIATE RENT

These properties are set at a rent lower than private properties and aimed at individuals and households who are working and, due to a higher household income, are unlikely to be prioritised for a social housing tenancy or are unable to buy in their local housing market. Please contact the Link2Let team on **0330 303 0125** for more information.



Buy a property

If you decide you want to buy a property we can help you do this. The properties we build can be bought outright or purchased through an affordable ownership option which can help you get onto the housing ladder.

Most of these options are grant-funded and may not be available in all areas at all times.

SHARED EQUITY

Shared equity schemes allow people on relatively low incomes who wish to own their own home but can't afford to pay the full price, to buy a property either on the open market or at one of Link's developments.

SHARED OWNERSHIP

Shared ownership combines 'renting' with buying. It allows you to have a stake in the ownership of your home if you are currently unable to buy outright. You choose the size of the initial share then pay a monthly 'rent' on the rest.

Our website has the most up-to-date details of the schemes we manage on behalf of the Scottish Government.

If you are interested in finding out more about the housing options available to you to help buy a property, please call 0330 303 0125.

Compliments and Complaints

We are committed to providing high quality customer service. We value feedback (good and bad) and use this information to help improve the services we provide.

COMPLIMENTS

If you have received excellent service from a member of staff, please get in touch.

Call us on **03451 400 100** (local rate from landline and mobile)
Text us for a call back on **07557 183553**

Fax us on **01324 417184**
Email us at **csc@linkhaltd.co.uk**

Write to us at:
Link Housing Association Ltd.
Watling House
Callendar Business Park
FALKIRK
FK1 1XR

COMPLAINTS

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about what we do (or do not do) or about the standard of service provided by us or by someone working on our behalf.

You can complain about:

- delays in responding to enquiries and requests
- failure to deliver or standard of a service
- dissatisfaction with one of our policies
- treatment by, or attitude of, a member of staff
- our failure to follow proper procedure
- someone working on our behalf

WHAT CAN'T I COMPLAIN ABOUT?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints procedure. These include:

- a routine first-time request for a service; for example, reporting a problem that needs to be repaired or initial action on anti-social behaviour
- requests for compensation
- policies and procedures that have a separate right of appeal; for example, if you are dissatisfied with the level of priority you have been given when applying for a house, you may have the right to appeal against the decision. In this case you can ask Link to review the decision through an Appeals Process.
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision following a stage two investigation (see page 45).

WHO CAN COMPLAIN?

Anyone can make a complaint to us (including a representative acting on your behalf if you have given written permission to do so).

HOW DO I COMPLAIN?

You can complain in person at any of our offices, by phone, in writing, email or by completing the form on our website. It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. Please talk to a member of our staff working in the service you are complaining about. They can try to resolve any problems straight away. When complaining, tell us:

- your full name and address
- as much as you can about the complaint
- how we have failed in your expectations
- how you want us to resolve the matter.

HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO MAKE A COMPLAINT?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- the event you want to complain about, or
- finding out that you have a reason to complain – but no longer than 12 months after the event itself.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I HAVE COMPLAINED?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint. Our complaints procedure has two stages:

Stage one – Frontline resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong or immediate action to resolve the problem. We will give you our response in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If we can't resolve your complaint at this stage, we will explain why. If you are still dissatisfied you can ask for your complaint to be investigated further through stage two. You may choose to do this immediately or some time after you receive our initial response.

Stage two – Investigation

Stage two deals with complaints which have not been resolved at stage one and those that are complex and require detailed investigation.

We will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for
- give you a full response to the complaint within 20 working days or less.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you and agree a revised time frame.

WHAT IF I'M STILL DISSATISFIED?

If you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to look at it.

The Ombudsman cannot normally look at:

- a complaint that has not completed our full complaints procedure (e.g. been investigated at stage two level)
- events that happened, or that you became aware of, more than a year ago
- a matter that has been or is being considered in court.

You can contact the Ombudsman:

By Post:

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Freepost EH641

Edinburgh

EH3 0BR

Freephone: 0800 377 7330

Email: ask@spsso.org.uk

Website: www.spsso.org.uk



GETTING HELP TO MAKE YOUR COMPLAINT

We understand that you may be unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint yourself.

For more information and advice contact the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance or local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Tel: 0131 260 5380

Fax: 0131 260 5381

Website: www.siaa.org.uk

Citizens Advice Scotland

Website: www.cas.org.uk

Or check your phone book for your local office

REPORTING A SIGNIFICANT PERFORMANCE FAILURE TO THE SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR

The Scottish Housing Regulator can consider 'significant performance failures'. This is defined as something that a landlord does (or fails to do) that puts the interests of its tenants at risk, and which the landlord has not resolved. If you are affected by a problem like this, you should first report it to Link. If you have told us about it but we have not resolved it, you can report it directly to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

For more information on significant performance failures contact the Scottish Housing Regulator

Website: www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk

Tel: 0141 305 4199

Email: spf@scottishhousingregulator.gsi.gov.uk

Useful Information

Local councils

Local Council	Website	Telephone No.
Aberdeen City	www.aberdeencity.gov.uk	08456 080910
Angus	www.angus.gov.uk	08452 777778
Argyll & Bute	www.argyll-bute.gov.uk	01546 604040
City of Edinburgh	www.edinburgh.gov.uk	0131 200 2323
Glasgow City	www.glasgow.gov.uk	0141 287 2000
Clackmannanshire	www.clacksweb.org.uk	01259 450 000
East Ayrshire	www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk	0845 724 00 00
East Dunbartonshire	www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk	0300 123 4510
East Lothian	www.eastlothian.gov.uk	01620 827 827
Falkirk	www.falkirk.gov.uk	01324 506070
Fife	www.fifedirect.org.uk	08451 550 000
Highland	www.highland.gov.uk	01349 886606
Inverclyde	www.inverclyde.gov.uk	01475 717171
Midlothian	www.midlothian.gov.uk	0131 270 7500
North Lanarkshire	www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk	01698 403200
Perth & Kinross	www.pkc.gov.uk	01738 475 000
East Renfrewshire	www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk	0141 577 3001
Renfrewshire	www.renfrewshire.gov.uk	0300 300 0330
Scottish Borders	www.scotborders.gov.uk	0300 100 1800
South Ayrshire	www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk	0300 123 0900
South Lanarkshire	www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk	08457 406080
Stirling	www.stirling.gov.uk	0845 277 7000
West Dunbartonshire	www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk	01389 738 282
West Lothian	www.westlothian.gov.uk	01506 280 000

Useful numbers

	Website	Telephone No.
National Gas Emergency Service (for suspected external gas escapes / leaks)		0800 111 999
British Gas	www.britishgas.co.uk	0800 048 0202
NPower	www.npower.com	0800 072 2999
EON	www.eonenergy.com	0845 872 8636
Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE)	www.sse.co.uk	0845 026 0658
EDF Energy	www.edfenergy.com	0800 056 5927
Scottish Power Central and Southern Scotland	www.scottishpower.co.uk	0845 273 4444
Age UK Advice Line	www.ageuk.org.uk	0800 169 6565
Childline	www.childline.org.uk	0800 1111
Citizens Advice Bureau	www.citizensadvice.org.uk	
Credit Union (Abcul)	www.abcul.org	0161 832 3694
Crimestoppers	www.crimestoppers-uk.org	0800 555 111
Domestic Violence (National)	www.ncdv.org.uk	0844 8044 999
Drug Advice Helpline	www.talktofrank.com	0800 77 66 00
DVLA	www.dft.gov.uk	0300 790 6801
Energy Efficiency Advice	www.energysavingtrust.org.uk	0300 123 1234
Freecycle	www.freecycle.org	
Job Centre Plus	www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk	
Money Saving Expert	www.moneysavingexpert.com	
National Debtline	www.nationaldebtline.co.uk	0808 808 4000
National Grid UK Helpline	www.nationalgrid.com	0800 111 999
Neighbourhood Watch	www.neighbourhoodwatch.net	0116 271 0052
NHS 24	www.nhs24.com	111
Pension Credit Helpline	www.direct.gov.uk	0800 99 1234
Samaritans	www.samaritans.org	08457 90 90 90
Scottish Public Services Ombudsman	www.spso.org.uk	0800 377 7330
TV Licensing	www.tvlicensing.co.uk	0844 770 7142
Victim Support Scotland	www.victimsupportsco.org.uk	0845 603 9213

Moving checklist

If you are moving here is a handy checklist of people you need to tell you are moving.

Financial Services:	
Your Bank / Building Society	
Credit Card Companies	
Store Card Companies	
Insurance Providers:	
Car Insurance Provider	
Home Contents Insurance Provider	
Government Agencies	
Benefit Provider (ie DWP)	
Council Tax Office	
DVLA – Car Registration and Licence	
Electoral Commission	
Utilities & Services	
Gas	
Electricity	
Phone / Mobile Phone Company	
Internet Service Provider	
Satellite / Cable Provider (ie Sky, Virgin etc)	
TV Licensing	
Royal Mail – Mail Redirection	
Car Breakdown Services (ie RAC ,The AA etc)	
Health Providers	
Doctor	
Dentist	
Optician	
Vet	
Donor Card	
Miscellaneous	
School / College / University	
Employer	
Loyalty Cards and subscriptions	

Notes

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