

TENANT HANDBOOK

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL



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WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME

As a tenant of West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) we hope that you will enjoy living in your new home.

Most of our tenants have a Scottish Secure Tenancy. The Tenancy Agreement is the legal contract which allows you to occupy your home. Please make sure you keep this document in a safe place as it lays out the terms and conditions between you and us.

This Handbook gives you important information about being one of our tenants. It is provided in addition to your Tenancy Agreement.

We don't expect you to sit down and read it all in one go; however, it is a handy source of bite size information about the services available to you as a WDC tenant.

MY WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

My West Dunbartonshire is a citizen portal where you can access online services and if you have signed in using a mygovscot account, you can manage your tenancy online and track the progress of any requests you have made to us.

This online system puts you in control of your council accounts and all you need to get started is an email address.

With your My West Dunbartonshire Account you can do things such as,

- View your tenancy and property
- View your rent balance and rent payments
- Log repairs
- Make rent payments

If you would like to register please go to **My West Dunbartonshire** and register using your Rent Reference Number - e.g. 1234567899



YOUR HOUSING OFFICER

You should by now know who your Housing Officer is. It is their job to help and advise you on all matters concerning your tenancy.

Your Housing Officer must ensure all tenants adhere to the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement. Please read it carefully so that you are aware of your rights and responsibilities. If you require information in other languages or formats, please let your Housing Officer know this. We aim to ensure that everyone has equal access to our services.

Your Housing Officer should be your main contact for any housing issues you may have. Our Housing Officers are knowledgeable and understanding and will have the experience to provide you with the advice you need on main issues including:

- Paying Your Rent
- Garden Maintenance
- Cleaning Responsibilities
- Tenant Participation
- Changes to your Tenancy
- Transfers and Mutual Exchanges

My Housing Officer is.....

Mobile Phone Number.....

Email.....

My house is in Electoral Ward.....

If you cannot make contact with your Housing Officer, or you cannot find the answer to your query in this handbook, please call the duty helpline on 01389 737661 Mon - Thurs 9am - 4.30pm, Fri 9am - 3.30pm. You can also email any non-urgent enquiries to estate.managment@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

The following link takes you to the council website which has information on which Housing Officer covers an area, street, and ward. The most up to date information is held here as they can change from time to time.

Housing Operations | West Dunbartonshire Council



YOUR RENT

Your rent is charged weekly in advance and can be paid weekly, fortnightly or monthly, the rent charge is also reviewed annually. We will only review the rent after consulting with you and registered tenant organisations. We will always consult with you over any proposed changes. The consultation period for reviewing the rent commences in November with any rent increases being notified in February or March and applicable from April. If we are going to increase your rent, we will give you at least 28 days' notice in writing to enable you to re-budget or make an application for benefits.

There are five free rent weeks each year. If your rent is up to date, you don't need to pay anything in the rent-free weeks, and this can help tenants with budgeting and saving. If you are behind with your rent, you must continue to pay in these weeks so that the amount you owe is reduced.

If your rent is up to date, there are 5 rent free weeks:

- The first week in April
- Two weeks in July
- Two weeks over Christmas and New Year

If you do not pay your rent, you could be in danger of losing your home. We will however work with you to try to help resolve your financial difficulties, so that, if possible, you do not have to leave your home.

WAYS TO PAY

- **By direct debit and standing order**
 - You can arrange to pay by direct debit or standing order. This means that your rent is paid automatically from your bank account. You can arrange a form by calling contact centre on 01389 738282. These forms are also available on the Council's website.
- **By telephone**
 - Call our contact centre on 01389 738 282 or call our automatic telephone service 0161 6226948. Have your rent reference number to hand.
- **By internet**
 - You can pay via the Council website, www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk by clicking on the option to "Pay It" or going directly to the payments page which details a number of options, **West Dunbartonshire Council - Main Menu (e-paycapita.com)**
- **Post Office & PayPoint**
 - If you wish to pay cash or in person you can visit any Post Office or one of the many PayPoint locations scattered throughout West Dunbartonshire Council Area. Find your nearest PayPoint outlet by visiting: www.paypoint.com/en-gb/consumers/store-locator. A payment card can also be ordered for you by your Housing Officer after you sign for your tenancy.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT & CLAIMING HOUSING BENEFIT

Universal Credit

For most working age tenants, Universal Credit (UC) replaced housing benefit and your rent, (also known as housing costs) in most cases will be paid directly to you instead of the Council. If you struggle to manage money or have other difficulties, you can choose to have your rent paid directly to the Council.

To make a claim for Universal Credit you must complete an online form at www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit.

If you want to claim Housing Benefit (HB) you must provide the information and proof needed to process your HB claim. If you are getting HB at your current address and your household details and financial circumstances are remaining the same, we may be able to transfer your HB claim to your new address.

If you are making a new HB claim, you must provide proof of identity. For example, a passport, driving licence, birth certificate, proof of savings (a recent bank statement) and proof of earnings (2 pay slips if you are paid monthly) so that your HB claim can be processed.

We need the same proof for your partner, if you have one, and proof of income for any other adults (aged 18+) moving with you.

Normally, HB is only paid from the date you actually move into the property. Therefore, it is important that you do not delay moving in. There are a few exceptions to this and if you want to claim HB before you move in, you will need to apply and give reasons why you did not move in when your tenancy started.

We must see original documents, not copies. Your Housing Officer will be able to give you the most up to date advice on what documents, proof of identity and income you will need to produce. It is important to tell us about any financial or household changes to ensure you get the correct amount of benefit.

You are responsible for your rent even if you are in receipt of full or partial benefits.

Working 4U can help answer any other questions you may have on housing benefit or universal credit. You can contact them by email - Working4you@west-dunbarton.gov.uk or by phone on 01389 776929.

WE CAN HELP YOU

We know it can be hard finding enough money to go round, but please don't be tempted to skip a rent payment.

We offer a range of support services which will help you manage your money and prevent you getting into debt.

If you do have rent arrears, we can still help you, but you need to talk to us.

We may be able to give you advice on:

- Help with repayments - we can get you back on track with an affordable repayment plan.
- Help with money - welfare advisors can get you on top of debt and help you budget your money.
- Help with benefits and Universal Credit - you may be entitled to more benefits, and we can help you access them.
- Help with fuel bills - fuel advisors can help you switch to lower tariffs and access low payment plans.

Our Working 4U Teams and welfare rights partners have experienced advisors who can help you with:

- In and out of work benefit claims
- Benefit appeal representation
- Assistance with debt issues

They also specialise in supporting those with cancer and long-term health conditions and can sometime access other grant aid and social care services. This is a free and confidential service. You can call 01389 776929 to make an appointment or use the online referral form **Macmillan Benefits Team | West Dunbartonshire Council (west-dunbarton.gov.uk)**

COUNCIL TAX

This is a tax on domestic dwellings charged by local authorities throughout Scotland and is based on the estimated value of your dwelling and the number of persons living in it. Council Tax includes water and waste charges which are collected on behalf of Scottish Water. Council Tax is used to part fund services provided by the Council.

COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS

If you live alone, or with people who are under the age of 18, you may be entitled to a Single Person Discount. You should contact the Council Tax Office on 01389 737444 for an application form.

You can also view your Council Tax account on My West Dunbartonshire, this allows you to request and receive services online using your computer or smartphone, any day of the week when it is most convenient to you.





YOUR RIGHTS AS A TENANT

Most tenants will have a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST), and full details of your rights are set out in your tenancy agreement, which is the legally binding contract between you (the tenant) and West Dunbartonshire Council (the landlord).

OCCUPANCY REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN TENANT RIGHTS

Under your SST, tenants have certain rights, some of these can be requested, such as assignation, sub-letting and a joint tenancy, whilst others are clear rights which apply in certain situations such as succession. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 has a clear requirement for the tenant to notify their landlord of the occupants of their household, and for these occupants to have resided in the property for at least 12 months before these rights can be exercised. If we have not been notified of who is living in the property, then we will have grounds for refusal.

Your tenancy gives you the right to stay in your home for as long as needed, provided you do not break the terms of the tenancy agreement. If you have any problems with your home please contact your housing officer, who will be happy to discuss matters with you.

Anyone who lives with you, or intends to live with you, can apply to be a joint tenant. We are happy to agree unless there is good reason to refuse your request. This again is subject to the 12 months occupancy rule as mentioned above.

If your relationship with your partner or joint tenant breaks down, you may need to decide who is going to remain in the tenancy.

If you are married to each other, you both have a right to the stay in the home, even if it is not a joint tenancy, as the husband or wife of a tenant has occupancy rights.

In some special circumstances, some tenants maybe placed on a reduced tenancy called a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy. Your Housing Officer will make it clear to you that you are being placed on a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy and the reasons for being placed on this reduced tenancy will be laid out to you. You will receive support over the period of your Short Scottish Secure Tenancy with the aim being for your tenancy to be converted to a Scottish Secure Tenancy.

If a tenant dies, other members of the household may be able to take over the tenancy (known as succession).

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 made some changes to the right of succession.

The member of your family must have occupied the house as their only or principal home for at least 12 months immediately before your death to qualify to succeed to the tenancy. The 12-month period cannot begin unless we have been told that your family member is living in the property as their only or principal home. We must have been told that by you, a joint tenant, or the person who wishes to succeed to the tenancy. It is important to tell us about all household changes to ensure your and their rights are protected.

However, if your house has been designed or adapted for a person with a disability the remaining householders may not qualify to succeed, unless that person has special needs requiring that type of accommodation.

Your Housing Officer can provide you with further information.



GETTING INVOLVED

You could help improve housing services and your neighbourhood

We have a strong track record of supporting tenant participation activities and once you have settled into your new home perhaps you will think about getting involved in one of the range of opportunities available, depending on your interest and time available. Tenant participation gives you a voice and helps us improve services for all tenants. It is also a way for you to review housing performance and hold the landlord to account.

Joining a local tenant's group can be a good way to get to know your neighbours and others in your area, but if you don't want to join a group there are things for individuals to do too, like our Scrutiny Panel, local walkabouts or having your say in consultations or surveys. We hope that any participation will be personally rewarding and satisfying. We also provide transport or cover travelling expenses and provide grants to tenant groups to cover out of pocket expenses as well as the running costs of the group.

More information is on the website at **Tenant participation | West Dunbartonshire Council** (west-dunbarton.gov.uk), or follow us on Facebook or contact Jane Mack on 07983 542993 or email tenant.participation@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

HOUSING NEWS

The Housing News is a quarterly newspaper which is distributed to all West Dunbartonshire tenants. It provides up to date news on housing issues in West Dunbartonshire, including information on new builds, service developments, tenant consultations, information on tenant and resident's groups and useful contact numbers. The Housing News is delivered to your door and is also available online.



COUNCIL HOUSE ADAPTATIONS

If you are experiencing mobility problems or you find it difficult to make use of your home, you should contact The Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) at West Dunbartonshire Council to arrange an occupational therapy assessment. The team can assess and provide guidance, rehabilitation and, if needed, suitable aids or adaptations.

They can be contacted on 01389 776499 if you live in Dumbarton or Alexandria or if you live in Clydebank call 01389 811760.

Families with children who face similar difficulties please call Paediatric Services on 0141 562 8800.

The majority of adaptations can be installed, although there are some properties which are unsuitable and cannot be converted to suit individual needs. In this case you may need to consider moving to a more suitable property type.

ALTERATIONS & IMPROVEMENTS

If you would like to make certain alterations or improvements to your home, you may need permission. Permission is not required for painting and decorating the inside of your home, but permission is required for renewal or alterations to bathrooms, installation of showers, kitchens, electrical work, laminate flooring, or external works such as fencing and external structures like sheds for example. If you wish to discuss the alteration or improvement, you can email housing.repairs@west-dunbarton.gov.uk or call 0800 073 8708.



GAS AND ELECTRICAL SAFETY IN YOUR HOME

Gas Safety

If you smell gas, think you have a gas leak or are worried that fumes containing carbon monoxide are escaping from a gas appliance, please call the free Scotland Gas Network on 0800 111 999.

Gas appliance servicing

Gas Servicing is Compulsory!

We have a legal duty to service all our council owned gas appliances, flues and pipes every year. If you do not allow us access to your property to carry out an annual safety check, you will be in breach of your tenancy agreement, and we have the right to force access to carry this out and recharge you.

It is vital that this service is carried out to ensure your appliances are safe and to reduce the risk of breakdown. Our agent, City Technical, will contact you before your gas service is due.

When checking council owned appliances, we will also carry out visual inspections of any gas appliances that you own. This does not guarantee their safety, and you are still responsible for making sure they are serviced and maintained by a Gas Safe registered engineer. On inspecting your appliances, if they are found to be unsafe, we will disconnect the appliance and issue a warning notice. This is for your own safety, and you should not reconnect the appliance but call a Gas Safe registered engineer to rectify the fault.

Electricity

If your electricity goes off, first check if other houses in your area are affected. If you smell burning or unusual smells coming from your appliances or the fuse box, switch off the appliance immediately and call emergency repairs, available 24 hours, 0800 0738708 (daytime) or 0800 197 1004 (out with working hours).

We also have a statutory requirement to carry out an electrical check (EICR) to every property on a 5 yearly basis. Very much like gas safety checks, it is imperative that we get access to do this in order that we comply with legislation and that the electrical installation meets current standards.



KEEPING YOUR HOME SECURE

Home security is the best way to reduce your chances of being burgled. Some safety tips to keep your home secure:

- Make sure all doors are locked even when you are in the house or garden.
- Keep all keys in a safe place and make sure all family members know where they are.
- Close and lock all windows and doors when you go out.
- Fit a timer to a light if you are away from your home overnight or during holiday periods.
- Fit a security chain.
- Tell a neighbour if you are going away for a long period.
- If you are going to be away from your property for longer than a month you must also inform us of this as it may be necessary to drain down your pipes etc.
- In order to protect against identity fraud, shred all correspondence which includes your personal data.

STAYING SAFE IN WINTER

If it's cold outside, you need to be warm inside. Here are some tips for keeping safe and warm:

- Try to maintain an ambient temperature in your home of at least 18 degrees and boost this when necessary.
- Keep the room you spend most time in during the day warm and heat your bedroom before going to bed.
- Wearing layers of clothes is best.
- Know how to turn your water supply off if you need to.
- If your pipes do freeze, turn off your water supply and call the emergency repairs line, ensuring taps are turned off.



REDUCING DAMP & MOULD IN YOUR HOME

Dampness can cause mould within the home and can come from a variety of sources including rising damp, condensation and water penetration from roofs or choked gutters.

Avoid dampness within your home by:

- Reporting repairs – any water leaks from roofs, gutters, pipework.
- Heating – maintain an ambient temperature in the house and boost the heating for short periods when necessary. Extreme cold followed by excessive heat will cause condensation on cold surfaces.
- Ventilation – ensure that extractor fans in kitchens and especially bathrooms are working and that they are used at appropriate times, for example after showering and cooking. If there are none, report this as a repair.
- Windows – condensation can build up at night. Open the trickle vents at the top of windows and open windows when possible, to keep fresh air circulating. Airing bedrooms for half an hour in the morning helps take away moisture and improve air quality.

Adequate heating, ventilation and insulation ensures that the building fabric is performing properly.

Environmental sensors fitted in your home allow us to monitor air quality which can identify energy efficiency issues. A tenant's app is also available for you to see how you can help keep your home free of damp and improve the air quality.

You can report damp and mould to the Housing Repairs team on 0800 073 8707, by email, housing.repairs@west-dunbarton.gov.uk or via the council website at **Reporting a Repair | West Dunbartonshire Council (west-dunbarton.gov.uk)**



FIRE SAFETY

The communal areas around you are designed and intended to be escape routes and it is essential they are not used for the storage of combustible materials. Keeping these areas clear will both reduce the risk of deliberate fire raising and help you to escape safely in the event of an accidental fire in your or a neighbouring house.

If you have any bulky items of furniture or other waste materials that cannot be disposed of by the normal collection method, you can book an uplift with our waste services team on 01389 738282 or take the items to your local recycling centre.

For both your own safety and that of your neighbours, do not store combustible materials in the close or other communal areas of your building. Section 2.13 of the tenancy agreement states - 'No property belonging to you or anyone residing with you, including bicycles, motorcycles or prams, should be stored in any of the common parts except in areas set aside for storage. Scooters, E-bikes and mobility scooters and similar can **only** be stored in a designated safe area after Landlord consent. You must not do anything which causes inconvenience or danger to anyone using the common parts.'

Housing Officers inspect these areas on a regular basis and where they come across prohibited items, they will discuss this with the tenants involved. Where we cannot identify the owner/s of these items, we will discuss the matter with all the residents within the building and if we have to remove the material/s we may have to recharge all tenants if the owner of the material cannot be identified.

Everybody's home is at risk of fire, so it is important to know how to protect yourself if a fire starts in your home:

- Have an emergency plan on how you would leave your house in the event of fire.
- Keep low as the air is cleaner and cooler near the floor.
- Never open a door if it is warm to touch.
- If there is a lift, never use in the event of a fire.
- If your clothing catches fire, stop, drop, and roll.
- Do not stop for valuables.
- Remember - get out, stay out and dial 999.

To book a free home safety visit call the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on 0800 0731 999 or visit **Home fire safety visits | Scottish Fire and Rescue Service**

CONTENTS INSURANCE

West Dunbartonshire Council does not cover your home contents as part of the tenancy agreement. It is a good practice to insure the contents, your personal belongings, and decorations for your own peace of mind.

If you don't insure your belongings, you risk having to pay the full cost of repairing or replacing them if they are damaged or stolen. The cost of household insurance is small compared with the cost of replacing all your possessions.

It is recommended that you take out your own insurance. West Dunbartonshire Council can also arrange your insurance at a special low-cost rate.

When you take out this insurance most of your household goods and contents will be insured in your home. The insurance also covers replacement of external locks if your keys are lost or stolen and the contents of your freezer. There is also cover for personal liability, and cover for damage to WDC fixtures and fittings, which you may be legally responsible for under the terms of your tenancy agreement.

The scheme is open to all tenants, you must complete an application form to join the scheme.

Payment of the premium

Premiums can be paid weekly similar to your rent, via a number of different methods detailed below. You need to request a separate payment card to make payment to your home insurance account. Any questions / queries should be directed to Home Contents on 01389 737867 or HomeContents@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Pay by Direct Debit

Direct debit is the easiest and most convenient way to pay, please call 01389737867 to request a direct debit mandate.

Pay online

You can use your debit or credit card to make a payment by visiting our website www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk and clicking on the 'Pay It' button which takes you to the payment page.

Pay by telephone

Payments can be made by calling our automated payment line on 0161 622 6948. Please ensure that you have your account reference number and a valid debit or credit card.

Pay by PayPoint

You can pay in person using your payment card at any PayPoint outlet. Your nearest PayPoint outlet can be found at www.paypoint.com/en-gb/consumers/store-locator. If you need to order a payment card, please call 01389 738282.

LOOKING AFTER YOUR HOME

Maintenance staff and our approved contractors are here to help you and to provide a repair service you are happy with.

As your landlord we are responsible for making sure your home is well maintained, we must maintain the fixtures and fittings which supply gas, electricity, water, and drainage.

We also maintain all common area and facilities in blocks of flats or maisonettes, as well as open areas around our properties.

You are responsible for any repair needed because of damage caused by you or a member of your family or any invited guest, even if the damage was accidental. You are responsible for cleaning and caring for the inside of your home, including decoration.

Section 5.17 of your Tenancy Agreement states:

‘You are responsible for taking reasonable care of the house. This responsibility includes carrying out minor repairs and internal decoration. It also includes keeping the house in a reasonable state of cleanliness. However, you are not responsible for carrying out repairs which are due to fair wear and tear.’

Therefore, as a tenant, you should:

- Keep your property clean and in good decorative order.
- Make sure you heat and ventilate your home to reduce condensation.
- Keep your garden maintained and clear of debris.
- Make sure your grass and hedges are cut back when needed (you maybe eligible for the care of garden scheme if you meet the criteria, you can see more on the website: <https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/maintenance-repairs/garden-maintenance/>
- Make sure bins are utilised and put out for collection when due, there is assisted bin pull out if needed, for more information on this you can visit the website: <https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/recycling-and-waste/assisted-collection/>
- Take precautions to prevent further damage once a repair has been identified and to report it to us promptly.
- Repair damage caused by you.
- Maintain appliances you have installed e.g. a hob / cooker, fridge freezer or dishwasher.
- Report any criminal damage or vandalism to the police.

If you fail to maintain your tenancy in accordance with above and the terms and conditions of your tenancy agreement, this may result in you being recharged for any work the Council has to carry out to your property. For more information on recharges, you can view the Recharge Repairs Process on this link, <https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/tenancy-and-allocations/wdc-rechargeable-repairs-process/>

WHO TO CONTACT FOR REPAIRS

There are various ways to contact the repairs service:

Call us on Freephone 0800 073 8708 during office hours 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday - Thursday, 8:30 am to 4:00 pm Friday.

Email: housing.repairs@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

You can report a repair online at www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/maintenance-repairs or you can use your My West Dunbartonshire Account if you have created one.

What if I need an emergency repair out with office hours?

The out of hours service is for Repairs which are necessary to prevent serious damage to the building, danger to health, risk to safety or risk of serious loss or damage to your home.

If you require an emergency repair out with normal working hours telephone **0800 197 1004**

What happens when you contact us?

When you contact our maintenance and repairs service, we will fully discuss your requirements in order to arrange the correct trade operative, Building Services Officer and category of repair.

We will let you know if the repair is covered by the Right to Repair Scheme.

When arranging a repair, you will be offered an appointment for all internal work to your home where possible.

We will ask you to confirm your contact details in case we need to confirm or re-arrange. We will send you a text and/or email to confirm your appointment.

On occasion we may arrange a Building Services Officer to inspect the repair, during the visit they will advise you of the work required and agree an appointment if the work involved is inside your home.

What happens next?

The Operative appointments are either morning, afternoon or all day depending on the type of repair. Morning appointments are between 8:00 am and 12:00 pm and for afternoon appointments between 12:30 pm and 4:00 pm.

It is important after you have agreed an appointment that you give us access. If the appointment is no longer suitable, please contact us as soon as possible and we will be able to re-arrange to a more convenient date.

If you are not at home when we call a card will be left and we will cancel the repair and assume you no longer require the work.

On completion of the repair, we will text or email you and ask you to complete a satisfaction survey.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR REPAIRS?

The information on the following table contains some examples of who has responsibility.

REPAIR	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?
Bathroom	
Sanitary Wear	Us, unless you fitted it
Toilet Seat	You
Blocked Basin, Bath or Toilet	Us
Kitchen	
Appliances (Hob, Cooker, Fridge freezer)	You
Cooker Connection	Us
Kitchen Units, Sink, Bowl & Drainer	Us
Blocked Sink	Us
Doors	
Door Bell	You, except for door entry
Door Nameplate	You
Door Chain	You
Outside Doors (including doors to flats)	Us
Keys (lost or broken)	You
Internal pass doors	Us
Faulty Locks	Us
Central heating	
Chimney and flue	Us
Electric storage heater	Us
Heating system	Us
Any heating system fitted by you (permission required)	You
Electrical	
Communal television aerial	Us
Individual television/satellite/cable aerial/ Home broadband/ Landline etc	You
Light fittings	Us, unless fitted by you
Sockets and switches, including USB	Us
Extractor Fans	Us
Smoke detectors	Us
Close lighting	Us
Wiring circuits (fuse boxes)	Us
Plugs on your appliances	You

Garden

Maintaining Gardens/Cut grass,
hedges, trees

You

Sheds / Outbuildings

You

Fencing

Unless installed by you

Clothes Poles

Us

Rotary Dryers

You



REPAIR CATEGORIES

When will my repair be carried out?

The time taken to carry out a repair will depend on the category of the repair and if the work falls within the Right to Repair Scheme.

Emergency Repair

An emergency repair will be completed within 24 hours of notification and triaged in terms of priority. These repairs would typically be necessary to prevent serious damage to the building, danger to health, risk to safety or risk of serious loss or damage to the occupier's property. Where possible we will carry out a full repair, but it may be necessary to carry out a temporary repair to make the situation safe until we return to complete the repair.

Right to Repair

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 gives West Dunbartonshire tenants the right to have small urgent repairs carried out within a given timescale. This is called the Right to Repair Scheme.

Full details of the Right to Repair Scheme is available on our website, <https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/maintenance-repairs/right-to-repair-scheme/>

Some examples of repairs and expected timescales are in the table below.

1 Day	3 Days	7 Days
Significant leaks or flooding from water/heating pipes	Partial loss of water supply	Extractor fan in kitchen or bathroom
Blocked or leaking foul drain or toilet	Loose or detached banister or handrail	
Blocked sink, bath or drain	Unsafe stair tread	
Total loss of electricity		
Insecure external window door or lock		
Only toilet in house not flushing		
Unsafe electrical socket or light fitting		

Urgent

A general urgent routine repair will be attended within 5 working days, examples would be reglazing a window, non-emergency electrical work, faulty door entry systems and selected new tenant repairs.

Routine

Routine repairs will be carried out within 20 working days, these repairs are due to normal wear and tear, an example would be replacement of sink units or wiring of circuits in upgrade situations where no danger exists and non-urgent internal repairs.

Planned Repairs

These are day-to-day repairs which are general maintenance repairs and are not part of an existing cyclical maintenance programme. Planned repairs may involve working at height (scaffold platforms) and could include repairs that affect more than one property. Planned repairs are likely to require a pre-inspection to fully determine the scope of work required. Whilst the length of time to complete planned repairs will vary, dependent on the volume and type of work, the aim is that these will be carried out within **60 working days** of being reported.

Cyclical Maintenance

In addition to responding to reported repairs, we have a range of cyclical maintenance programmes in place to ensure the safety of tenants. These programmes include things such as an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) carried out every 5 years and the annual gas safety checks including the boiler.

Rechargeable Repairs

Under your Tenancy Agreement you are responsible for taking reasonable care of your home. You can be recharged for repairs where you, someone who lives with you, or someone who is visiting you, has been careless, or has neglected or misused the property.

You can also be charged for work that may be required when you move out of your property, if you have failed to leave the property in the condition detailed in your Tenancy Agreement, or if you fail to empty your property when you terminate your tenancy.

Section 5.10 of West Dunbartonshire Councils Tenancy Agreement states:

'Nothing contained in this Agreement makes us responsible for repairing damage caused wilfully accidentally or negligently by you, anyone living with you or an invited visitor to your house. If we decide to carry out the work, you must pay us for the cost of the repair. This paragraph does not apply to damage caused by:

- Fair wear and tear
- Vandals – caused by person or persons unknown as an act of vandalism (provided that you have reported the damage to the police and us as soon as the damage is discovered). You must provide us with the police incident number when making a report or have the police notify us on your behalf.

Council staff or contractors working on behalf of the Council will not ask you to give them cash or to make any form of payment directly to them. If they do, please report this immediately to the Council whistle blowing hotline **01389 738 217** or email **fraudinvestigation@west-dunbarton.gov.uk** or use the online form at:

<https://my.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/service/whistleblowing>

LOMOND & CLYDE CARE AND REPAIR SERVICE

If you are over 60 and have a tenancy with West Dunbartonshire Council and need some help with minor repairs or small jobs for example hanging curtains, changing lightbulbs. Lomond & Clyde Care & Repair may be able to help.

This company is funded by West Dunbartonshire Council and normally do not charge for labour, only materials. Before the company start any works the costs will be discussed.

Contact Lomond & Clyde Care & Repair on 01389 734188 or visit www.care-repair.co.uk for a full list of jobs they can assist with.



**Lomond & Clyde
Care & Repair Ltd**



MOVING HOME

We understand that your circumstances may change and that you may want to move to another property. This section of the Handbook explains your options.

Mutual Exchange

A mutual exchange takes place when two tenants want to exchange houses with each other.

The website www.homeswapper.co.uk is a free online service, which holds details of mutual exchanges within West Dunbartonshire and throughout Scotland.

A mutual exchange can take place between Scottish secure tenants regardless of location. Council tenants can also swap with housing association tenants.

Your Housing Officer is the best person to advice on this process.

Transfer

If you need more or fewer bedrooms, you could apply for a larger or smaller house, within West Dunbartonshire Council. Your housing officer can advise you on this.

For both Mutual Exchange and Transfers you must have lived in the property for 12 months before applying.

What happens if I abandon my house?

All tenants must use the property as their only or principal home. If you move out of your home without telling us, we may end your tenancy and let it to another applicant. If it is suspected that you have abandoned your property, the housing officer will serve an abandonment notice on you, giving you 28 days to respond. During this time, we will carry out investigations to find out if you are staying at your home.

If, after 28 days, it appears you have abandoned the property, the house will be repossessed by serving a second notice, and the locks will be changed. Please talk to us before moving out as we are always here to help you.

If you are planning on being away from your home for longer than 28 days, you should inform us of this.



TERMINATING YOUR TENANCY

Your tenancy can come to an end in any of the following ways:

- By giving us 28 days' notice in writing. You can complete a notice of termination form on our website, or you can ask your housing officer to send you one out.
- Both tenant and landlord agreeing, in writing, to end the tenancy.
- By abandonment, if we believe you have abandoned your property.

We can ask the court to evict you, for example, for non-payment of rent or anti-social behaviour. If you want more information, please read your Tenancy Agreement, or contact your Housing Officer.

CHECKLIST FOR ENDING YOUR TENANCY

- Receive written agreement.
- Allow access for a pre termination inspection.
- Remove any fixtures and fittings you have installed without our written permission and put right any damage caused.
- Clear out your home and remove all your belongings.
- Check that you have made all payments due to us.
- Re-direct mail
- Provide final meter readings, and details of your current suppliers for gas and electricity.
- Arrange to have your phone and internet disconnected.
- Contact Council Tax and provide information on the date you will move and your new address.
- Make sure any lodgers or subtenants leave with you.
- Leave the house in a clean and tidy order.
- Return keys to drop off key boxes in Cochno Street, Clydebank or Overburn Avenue, Dumbarton or Church Street, Dumbarton
- Provide West Dunbartonshire Council with a forwarding address.

If you fail to remove / clear any fixtures, fittings, or belongings, or put right any damage you have caused to the property, you could be recharged for any works the Council has to carry out.

NO HOME FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE

No Home for Domestic Abuse is Housing Services' zero tolerance approach to domestic abuse occurring within our properties. It provides victims/survivors of domestic abuse with access to practical help, legal assistance, and support to allow them to remain in their tenancy, if that is what they want.

Council tenants who are victims of domestic abuse are offered a range of housing advice and support based on their circumstances. This includes:

- Supporting victims to remain in their own home – including transferring the tenancy into their own name where possible and making them victim feel safe and secure by implementing such measures such as changing the locks.
- Supporting victims to obtain legal information and advice.
- Supporting victims to access specialist domestic abuse support.
- Providing suitable alternative safe and secure accommodation via the homeless service.

The council

- Will use the full scope of Anti-Social Behaviour powers in conjunction with Housing and Matrimonial Homes Legislation to legally remove perpetrators if necessary.
- Recognise that in order to support victims to stay in their own homes and to make them feel safe, we must also address the housing needs of the perpetrators too. Those found guilty of committing domestic abuse will be offered short-term tenancies appropriately distanced from the victim.
- Will partner with Police, Courts, and Community Justice partners to coordinate swift action against perpetrators.
- For more information on this you can contact the Anti-Social Behaviour team or for further information on the website:

Advice on anti-social behaviour | West Dunbartonshire Council



COMMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

We aim to get things right first time, however, despite our best intentions and efforts, problems may arise from time to time. We want to know when this happens in order for us to put it right and help to ensure it does not happen again. If you are dissatisfied with our services, you may want to make a complaint.

In the first instance, you can raise a complaint with any member of staff, who will try and resolve your complaint straight away. If for some reason you are not happy with the outcome, please ask and we will advise you how to complain to senior manager.

If you do not wish to complain to the Service Area, you may feel more comfortable calling the Citizens Relations Team on 01389 738 273 or fill in an online complaint form, which you can find on West Dunbartonshire website. **Complaints Procedure | West Dunbartonshire Council (west-dunbarton.gov.uk)**

Or you can email **Citizen.relations@west-dunbarton.gov.uk**

Or write to: Citizen Relations
West Dunbartonshire Council
16 Church Street
Dumbarton
G82 1QL

If you are still unhappy, you can complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, who would be happy to receive and investigate complaints by phone, post or email.

Phone 0800 377 7330
Email **www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us**

Compliments/Customer Feedback

If you wish to submit a compliment or citizen feedback to a staff member or service area who has assisted you please, complete the citizen feedback form below.

Citizen feedback | West Dunbartonshire Council (west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

Employee Recognition Awards

If you have had a great service from any West Dunbartonshire Council staff, you can nominate any of our staff, project or team for an employee recognition award. For further information please email **communications@west-dunbarton.gov.uk** or call 01389 738273.

DATA PROTECTION

We will use your personal details (known as Personal Data) to provide you with the service(s) which you or someone else (with your consent) have asked us to provide, as part of a contract or where we are under obligation to do so (public task or legal obligation). We will also use your personal details for purposes of crime prevention and crime detection and/or when required by law, and will share it with other public bodies for that purpose.

For a fuller description of how we handle your data please see our **Privacy Notice** on our website.



USEFUL WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL PHONE NUMBERS

West Dunbartonshire Contact Centre	01389 738282
General Housing Enquiries	01389 737 661
Homeless Emergency	0800 197 1004 (Out of hours)
Reporting a Repair	0800 073 8708 (8.30-4.30pm Mon-Thurs, 8.30-4pm Fri)
Reporting a Repair	0800 197 1004 (Out of hours)
Gas Heating Repairs (City Technical)	0141 646 5091
Council Tax	01389 737 444
Anti-Social Behaviour Team	01389 772 048
Environmental Health	01389 738 290
Litter Control	01389 772 059
Pest Control	01389 737 282
Caretaking Service	01389 738 282
Cleansing (uplifts)	01389 738 282
Care of Garden Scheme	01389 772 059
Welfare Fund	01389 737 640
Home from Home	01389 733 733
Report Fly Tipping	0300 777 2292
Corporate Debt Team	01389 737 788
Occupational Therapist Self-Referral	01389 811 760

For information on your bin day, garden waste permits and recycling you can visit the website at **Recycling and Waste | West Dunbartonshire Council (west-dunbarton.gov.uk)**

ADVICE CONTACT NUMBERS

West Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Bureau

Telephone advice, and by appointment only in office, call 0800 4840136
Opening hours 8.30am – 4.30pm Monday - Friday

Shelter

Shelter offers housing advice for everyone.
Phone an advisor on 0808 800 4444
9am – 5pm Monday – Friday

Women's Aid

Local office: Dumbarton	01389 751036
Clydebank	0141 9528118
Domestic abuse helpline	0800 027 1234

Police Scotland

Non-emergencies	101
Emergency	999



YOUR HOME

Moving In Checklist

- ✓ Organise rent payment method: standing order, direct debit, universal credit or housing benefit.
- ✓ Pay one weeks rent in advance.
- ✓ Take gas and electric readings.
- ✓ Contact utility companies for Gas & Electricity supply.
- ✓ Contact the heating contractor to commission your central heating system.
- ✓ Connect your telephone and internet.
- ✓ Ask if your house is connected to a communal satellite dish.
- ✓ Change your address with school, bank, and doctors.
- ✓ Arrange contents insurance.
- ✓ Register for Council Tax with West Dunbartonshire Council.
- ✓ Confirm bin collection days.

