

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Our commitment to tenants | 1 |
| Customer care | 1 |
| Consultation and involvement | 2 |
| Tenants' Panel | 2 |
| Computer facilities | 2 |
| Communication | 3 |
| Annual General Meeting | 3 |
| Publications | 3 |
| Phone-in Day | 3 |
| Moving in | 4 |
| Services | 4 |
| Benefits | 6 |
| Your tenancy | 7 |
| Changing the tenancy agreement | 7 |
| Security of tenure | 7 |
| Lodgers | 7 |
| Subletting | 7 |
| Overcrowding | 8 |
| What should I do if I'm going away for a while? | 8 |
| Rent | 9 |
| What it covers | 9 |
| How your rent is set | 9 |
| Paying your rent | 9 |
| Rent arrears | 10 |
| Living in your home | 11 |
| Common halls and stairways | 11 |
| Keys | 11 |
| Pets | 11 |
| Rubbish and bulk refuse | 11 |
| Parking | 11 |
| Running a business | 12 |
| Aids and adaptations | 12 |
| Repairs | 13 |
| Reporting a repair | 13 |
| Repair categories | 13 |
| Emergency repairs | 13 |
| Urgent repairs | 14 |
| Routine repairs | 14 |
| Housing for Women's repair responsibility | 14 |
| Tenant repair responsibility | 15 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Complaining | 17 |
| Unsatisfactory repair | 17 |
| Complaint regarding services, staff or contractors | 17 |
| Nuisance | 18 |
| Noise | 18 |
| Neighbours and disputes | 18 |
| Racial or sexual harassment | 18 |
| Moving on | 19 |
| Transferring | 19 |
| Mutual exchanges | 19 |
| Buying your property | 20 |
| Moving to sheltered accommodation | 20 |
| Other housing for the elderly | 20 |
| Very sheltered accommodation | 20 |
| Ending your tenancy and moving out | 20 |

our commitment to tenants

customer care

As a responsive landlord, Housing for Women aims to respond effectively to tenants' needs in the services we provide. We will:

- Treat all tenants equally and in a courteous and respectful manner.
- Reply to normal communication within 10 working days.
- Acknowledge correspondence needing a more complex response within 5 working days, with a full response within 28 days.
- Give helpful replies with explanations written in everyday English. Where a tenant or applicant does not have English as their first language, we will endeavour to provide a translation or interpreter if required.
- Give tenants requesting a home visit an appointment within 10 working days.
- Answer the office telephone politely within a maximum of 6 rings.
- Respond to messages on the ansaphone or those given to officers within 24 hours, except over weekends when calls will be returned on the next working day.
- Aim to see people with appointments within 30 minutes of the arranged time.
- Advise tenants of the outcome of their transfer request within 7 working days after their transfer interview.
- Acknowledge complaints regarding staff misconduct within 5 working days, whilst full investigation is undertaken.
- Inspect and record the standard of services in all properties once per quarter.
- Annually provide information in a standard format detailing costs of services payable by tenants.
- Keep all tenants' and applicants' details confidential and only disclose information as provided by the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Respond to tenants' complaints in accordance with Housing for Women's complaints procedure.
- Promote the participation of tenants in a variety of ways, including encouraging Tenants' Associations, the Tenants' Panel and by holding tenants' meetings at a choice of venues allowing access to all tenants.
- Monitor current tenants' ongoing housing needs and incorporate findings into the Association's development strategy.
- Carry out responsive repairs within target response times.

consultation and involvement

Housing for Women believes in consulting and involving our tenants. We want your views on our services to help us improve them. To aid this we reserve two places for tenant members on our Board of Directors. Information about the Association's membership policy and selection procedure for Board membership is available on request.

Some of our properties have tenant associations and regular tenant meetings are held. Your Housing Officer will be able to let you have an up to date list of venues and dates.

tenants' panel

Membership of Housing for Women's Tenants' Panel is open to all tenants and the Panel meets several times each year. All travel and childcare costs are met by the Association.

The Panels' brief is to improve two-way communication between the Association and tenants and it has recently been involved in a review of this handbook and the formulation of the Association's Customer Care Charter.

The Panel also has an input into the day to day work of the association and nominates tenant Board members for the reserved places on Housing for Women's Board.

The panel has an ongoing involvement in the Best Value process, assisting in the scrutiny of the Association's activities, helping to ensure that tenants receive value for money.

The Panel's effectiveness relies on the interest of and input from tenants and if you are interested in membership, please contact your housing officer.

computer access

Housing for Women have a computer available in the reception area of our Blue Star House offices for the use of tenants. Tenants can book the computer for their own personal use for internet access and word processing facilities (Microsoft Word). Limited assistance is available to get tenants started with a nominal charge to defray telephone costs.

communication

Annual General Meeting

Housing for Women holds an Annual General Meeting each spring to which all tenants are invited. Tenants who are members of the Association are entitled to vote on the business transacted at the meeting. There are usually speakers from housing or related fields and it is an excellent opportunity for tenants to meet staff and Board members on an informal basis.

publications

Housing for Women produces an annual report, a copy of which is sent to all tenants. The report gives an overview of the previous twelve months and includes an expenditure breakdown. We also print a newsletter twice a year and welcome any articles, letters or comments for publication from tenants.

phone-in day

At least once a year we hold a phone-in day, when the Directors are available to take your calls and you can speak to them direct about the services provided by the Association.

moving in

Your tenancy start date will be agreed with your Housing Officer when you sign your tenancy agreement. THIS IS THE DATE FROM WHICH YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYING YOUR RENT. This may not necessarily be the date you actually move into the property.

services

electricity

Check the type of meter in the property - either electricity is paid quarterly or the meter operates on a Powerkey, where you pay as you go along. Many of our tenants have had a Powerkey meter installed. If so, you will need to arrange to get a new Powerkey from the electricity company. If you wish to change from a Powerkey to a quarterly meter, you may be asked to pay a deposit if you do not have a history as an electricity user. If it is a quarterly meter and you wish to change to a Powerkey again you must make an appointment with the electricity company.

gas

As with electricity, some properties may have a card prepayment meter.

water

This should be on when you move in but you will need to contact Thames Water to register for your supply. Most of our new properties have water meters. Please check with your Housing Officer how your bill is calculated.

council tax

It is your responsibility to register for council tax with your local authority. You may be eligible for a single person rebate and if you ask your Housing Officer she can help you fill in a claim form.

telephone

Most of our properties already have an existing telephone line. You will need to contact the appropriate supplier to transfer the account into your name.

insurance

We strongly advise that you insure the contents of your home. Housing for Women's insurance only covers damage to the buildings and not your personal belongings if they are lost, stolen or damaged. If you are a pensioner, Age Concern offer a low cost cover and if you are over fifty SAGA is a low cost insurer. Information on another low cost insurance scheme is also included in your introductory tenant pack. For further information contact your housing officer.

removals

Please take care not to damage walls or paintwork when moving your things in and out of communal areas. Our redecoration programme does not allow us to redecorate hallways more than every five years. Also, please be careful not to overload any lifts.

mail

It is a good idea to arrange with the post office to have your mail redirected. A small charge is made for this service and application forms are available from any post office.

tv licence

You are responsible for your own TV licence and you can spread the payments over 12 months.

benefits

If you are in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance or Income Support you should notify your local office of your new address immediately. Any delay in doing this could affect your claim for housing benefit. You should also inform the Benefits Agency which deals with child benefit if you have children and you can get a form for this from the post office.

If you wish to claim housing benefit your Housing Officer can help you with your claim but please ensure that you deal with any request from the local authority for information to support your claim. It is your responsibility to ensure that your housing benefit is renewed when the Benefit Office request you to provide additional documentation.

furniture

Housing for Women do not provide furniture for your property. You can contact your local Benefits Agency if you wish to apply for a grant or loan for help with purchasing furniture. There are also charities who can help, please ask your Housing Officer for further information.

decoration allowance

You may be entitled to a decoration allowance and if you are, your Housing Officer will have discussed this with you at the initial viewing. If you are eligible, half is paid at the time of moving in and the remaining half is paid following an inspection by the Housing Officer when the work has been completed.

your tenancy

Housing for Women has two sorts of tenancies, Secure and Assured. The type of tenancy issued is determined by when the tenancy began. If you became a tenant of ours before 15 January 1989 you are a Secure Tenant, but if your tenancy started after this date you are an Assured Tenant. The difference affects how your rent is set (see Your Rent section).

changing the tenancy agreement

If we wish to change the terms and conditions of your tenancy we will formally consult you and take your views into account before deciding whether to make any change. However this procedure does not apply to changes in the rent or service charge.

security of tenure

You can stay in your home for as long as you like provided that the full rent is paid and that you keep to the terms of your tenancy agreement. If you do not do this we will take legal steps which may result in your being forced to leave. We cannot evict you without going to the County Court to obtain a possession order and we must have a good reason for doing this - see below

Why we might obtain a possession order:

- Non payment of rent
- Harassment of other neighbours/tenants
- Your home being used for illegal purposes
- Damaging or not looking after your property
- You are living somewhere else
- You or your visitors are causing a nuisance

lodgers

A lodger is someone who lives with you as a member of your family. You have the right to take in a lodger provided it does not result in your home becoming overcrowded. You must inform your Housing Officer of the lodger's name, age and sex so we can check that there is no overcrowding.

subletting

Before you can sublet you must:

- Obtain our written permission in advance.
- You still need to be living in the property.
- We will need details of the person to whom you intend to sublet (name, age and sex).

We rarely refuse permission to sublet, but as your landlord we have to ensure that your actions do not create a tenancy which would give your sub-tenant security of tenure. We do not allow your tenancy to be passed on to a lodger or sub-tenant.

overcrowding

The tenancy agreement specifies the number of people who may live in your property. Ask your Housing Officer if you need clarification.

what should I do if I am going away for a while?

Tell us. We can then agree with you how your rent should be paid and if anyone can live in your home when you are away. It is important that we know when you are coming back and how to contact you when you are away. If you leave your home permanently we may have to take legal proceedings to end your tenancy.

your rent

The rent you pay includes the cost of:

- management
- maintenance
- major repairs
- renewals and improvements

Service charges are listed separately. They cover communal items like:

- lighting/heating in hall ways
- gardening
- cleaning communal areas
- mobile caretaker

Rent is due from the date your tenancy starts - NOT your moving in date. The tenancy start date will be agreed with your Housing Officer.

How the rent is set

secure rents

Tenants who had their tenancies before 1989 have their rent set by the Rent Officer for a two year period. You have the right to consult with the rent officer and you can appeal the level set, to a rent assessment committee.

assured rents

Are set by Housing for Women on an annual basis. All tenants receive one months' notice of any increase in the rents. Again there is a right of appeal if you are unhappy with the rent set. Full details of how to appeal are available from our office.

paying your rent

Paying the rent is an important responsibility. You must ensure your rent is paid regularly, when it is due, if you want to keep your home. Even if your rent is paid by housing benefit it is your responsibility to ensure these payments are made. Your Housing Officer can help you with your claim or problems.

ways to pay

1. The simplest way to pay rent regularly is by STANDING ORDER from your bank or building society. Your pack contains a standing order form - remember to include your rent reference number. Standing orders are normally paid on a monthly or fortnightly basis.
2. POST OFFICE GIRO - you will be given a giro paying in book which you can use at any post office. Payments can be made by cash or cheque (payable to Post Office Counters). The counterfoil of each payment is stamped, which is your receipt. Payments take 5 days to reach Housing for Women.
3. CHEQUE OR POSTAL ORDER - you can send these directly to our office. Please make sure your name and address is on the back and do not send cash through the post.

rent statements

We usually send you a rent statement every quarter but you can request one at any time. If you have a problem with the statement contact your Housing or Rent Officer.

rent arrears

We aim to deal with rent arrears in a fair but firm way. If you have difficulty paying your rent you must immediately contact your Housing Officer who can give advice in strict confidence. You can also be advised on any benefit entitlement that might help. Arrangements can be made for paying off arrears, perhaps by instalments. Should your arrears rise and:

- you do not respond to attempts to discuss the problem
- you fail to keep to arrangements to clear arrears

we may have to start legal proceedings and serve you with a notice of intention to seek possession of your home - the first step in a legal process which could end with your eviction.

This is very much a last resort when all other attempts to help you pay have failed.

living in your home

common halls and stairways

Under health and safety legislation communal halls and stairways exist as a means of escape in case of fire and must be kept clear and free of clutter and not used as a storage area. Housing for women is responsible for the upkeep of communal areas but please try to ensure that the decorations do not get badly damaged by the moving of bikes and prams, as entrance areas can quickly begin to look shabby.

The cost of lighting, cleaning and floor covering of these areas and gardening is covered by your service charge. In most areas communal lighting is controlled by a timeswitch, this helps to reduce electricity bills. Please let us know if the timer is not working or if any bulbs are not working.

keys

Housing for Women do not keep spare sets of keys in the office.

We advise tenants to give a spare set to a friend or relative. If your property has a special security lock such as Banham or BEST, you need to contact the office maintenance section about getting copies of keys cut.

pets

You cannot keep a pet without the permission of Housing for Women. Talk to your Housing Officer.

rubbish

Please keep your bin areas tidy by depositing your rubbish in bags and then into the bin. Dumping rubbish is anti-social and encourages vermin and further dumping. We welcome any information about people dumping and will treat it in strictest confidence.

bulk refuse

Most local authorities offer a bulky refuse collection service, for old beds, fridges etc, and your Housing Officer or local council office will be able to give you the telephone number.

parking

Many of our properties do not have free parking spaces. Where there is designated parking this is for tenants' private cars. If you wish to park a light commercial vehicle or caravan you should ask permission first. Untaxed vehicles should not be left on Housing for Women property and we will remove them after an appropriate warning has been issued. You will be charged for this.

Please do not park anywhere other than in designated parking areas; you could be blocking access for the emergency services.

running a business

Your home cannot be used for business purposes unless you have our prior permission. This will not be given if the business is likely to disturb your neighbours, create a traffic problem or involve the storage of a lot of materials. You must not display a sign or notice advertising a business from the property, nor use the Association's property address in any business correspondence.

aids and adaptations

If you or a member of your family becomes disabled you may benefit from some aids or adaptations to your home. Contact your Housing Officer to discuss your needs.

repairs

Both you and Housing for Women share responsibility for looking after your home. This section tells you how to report repairs and how these repairs are carried out. It also lists which responsibilities are yours as the tenant and which are the responsibility of Housing for Women.

reporting a repair

You should contact the office, either in writing, emailing or by telephone. When doing so please give as much detail as possible regarding the nature of the repair, including a telephone number and a way in which contractors may gain access to your property.

repair categories

There are three types of repair

- emergency
- urgent
- routine

Examples of each are given below.

emergency repairs

These are repairs that give rise to a danger to life or limb or an imminent structural fault. Emergency repairs are dealt with on the day when they are reported (within 24 hours) for example:

- Pipe burst indoors
- Total loss of electric power
- Unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting
- Total loss of water supply
- Total or partial loss of gas supply
- Blocked flue to open fire or boiler
- Total or partial loss of space or water heating between 31 October and 1 May.
- Blocked or leaking, foul drain, soil stack or (where there is no other working toilet in the dwelling house) toilet pan
- Toilet not flushing (where there is no other working toilet in the dwelling house)
- Leaking from water or heating pipe, tank or cistern
- Unsecure external window (basement and ground floor), door or lock

If an emergency arises out of normal office hours phone the emergency out of hours number. This is given on the Housing for Women answering machine out of office hours. Emergencies are defined as works necessary to prevent personal injury or further damage to the property.

If you call out the emergency contractor for a non-emergency you will be recharged the full amount.

urgent repairs

These are dealt with within a week (seven days). Examples are:

- Partial loss of electric power
- Partial loss of water supply
- Total or partial loss of space heating or water heating between 30 April and 1 November
- Blocked sink, bath, basin
- Tap which cannot be turned on or off
- Leaking roof
- Loose or detached banister or handrail
- Rotten timber flooring or stair tread
- Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working
- Unsecured external window (1st floor and above)

routine repairs

These repairs would be carried out within four weeks (28 days) and examples are:

- Repairs to plaster work
- Repairs to door, windows etc
- Repairs to bathroom and kitchen fittings
- Fencing
- Damaged communal clothes lines
- Paths and steps
- Floor tiles
- Wall tiles

Times quoted are maximum times, quite often repairs are completed in less time. Once you report a repair you will receive a copy of the work order, please check that the details are accurate. The order will:

- Confirm work to be done
- Give a target completion date
- Give the name of the contractor
- Confirm access arrangements
- Ask you to complete and return a questionnaire relating to the handling of the repair carried out.

Housing for Women's repair responsibilities

It is the Association's responsibility to keep the structure and exterior of your home in a good state of repair. This includes:

- Drains, gutters and external pipes
- The roof
- Outside walls, outside doors, window sills, window catches, sash cords and window frames (including necessary painting and decoration)

- Internal walls, floors and ceilings, doors and door frames, door hinges and skirting boards (not including painting and decoration)
- Chimneys, chimney stacks and flues (not including sweeping)
- Pathways, steps and other means of access
- Plasterwork (other than hair line cracks)
- Boundary walls and fences

It is our responsibility to keep in good repair, and working order, any installations provided by the Association for heating and sanitation and for the supply of water, gas and electricity. These include:

- Basins, sinks, baths and toilets
- Electric wiring including sockets and switches, gas pipes and water pipes
- Water heaters, fitted fires, fireplaces, central heating installations

We also have a responsibility for keeping common entrances, halls, passageways, lifts and stairways in reasonable repair and for decorating the exterior of premises and common parts.

tenant repair responsibilities

The tenant is responsible for the internal decoration and upkeep of their flat including:

- Painting and decorating walls, ceilings and all woodwork
- Sweeping chimneys
- Putting on mortice locks or extra security items in the flat
- Clearing blockages from sinks, toilets or baths, unless the plumbing is at fault.
- Damage caused to a tenant's belongings by another eg letting the bath overflow into the flat below. We strongly advise that all tenants are adequately protected by insurance to cover such incidents.
- Minor repairs which can be classed as keeping the flat in 'tenantable repair' such as repairing door handles, tap washers, small plaster cracks, replacing toilet seats, replacement of batteries in smoke alarms.

The tenant is responsible for any damage which is clearly caused by the tenant including:

- Replacing broken windows except where it is clearly the responsibility of the Association
- Any damage caused wilfully or by neglect or carelessness on the part of the tenant (or by any visitor to the tenants flat) eg to fittings and installations or to any aspect of the common parts of the property.

The tenant is responsible for any loss or damage to tenant's property where there is no evidence of negligence by the Association including: burst pipes after frost, damage by independent contractors.

The tenant is responsible for clearing their individual rubbish from the garden/common areas.

It is the tenant's responsibility to report to the Association any disrepair or defect for which the Association is responsible.

The tenant is required by law to permit the Association or its authorised representative to inspect the premises upon receipt of reasonable notice to the tenant.

tenants' comments on repairs service

Each time a repair is reported we issue a works order which includes a satisfaction survey section for you to complete. Please ensure you do this because it lets us know if you were happy with the repair or if you experienced any problems with the contractors employed.

Every completed form returned to us is included in our six monthly raffle draw.

A full copy of the repairs and maintenance guide is available from the office

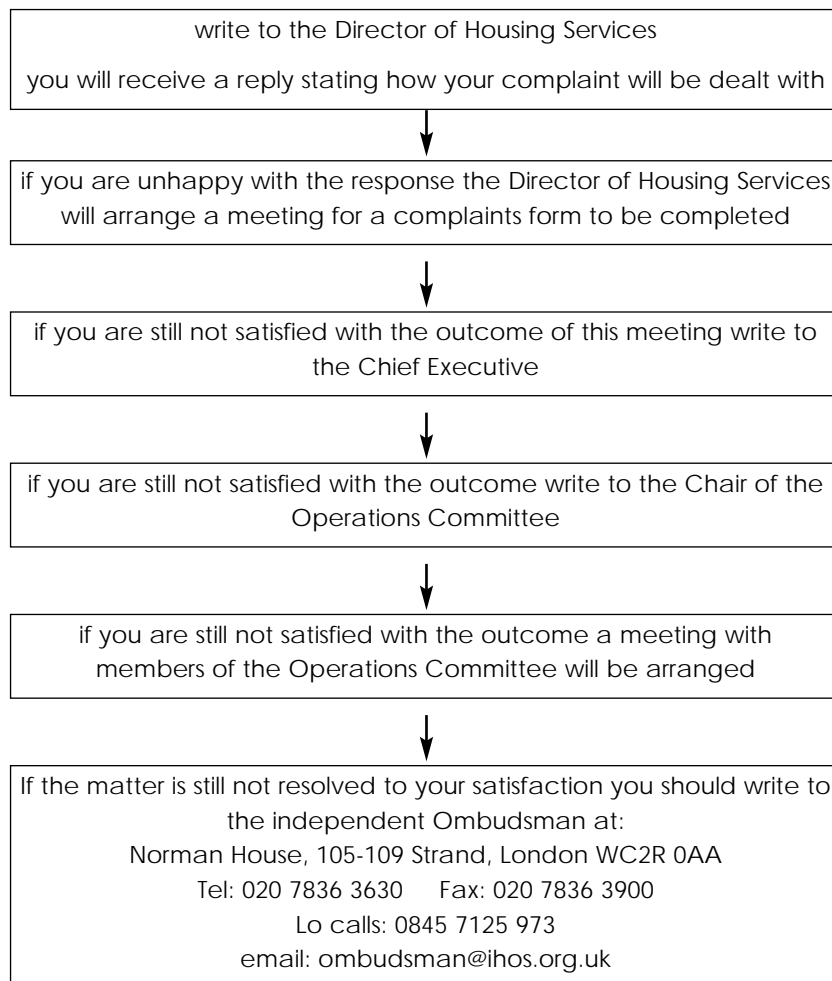
how to complain

repairs

If you are unhappy about a repair that has been carried out you can:

- Write your comments/complaint on the bottom of the works order.
- You can telephone our maintenance department.
- You can put your complaint in writing (see below).

if you have a complaint about the Association's services



You may, at any stage in this process, wish to be represented by for example a colleague, solicitor, Citizen's Advice Worker or whoever you choose. A full copy of the procedure is available from the office on request.

ALL COMPLAINTS ARE TREATED AS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

nuisance

Please act considerately towards your neighbours and remember that everyone is entitled to 'peaceful enjoyment' of their home. It is a condition of your tenancy that you do not cause a nuisance to others and this includes violent or abusive behaviour towards other tenants or employees of Housing for Women. This responsibility not to cause a nuisance also extends to the behaviour of all other members of your family, lodgers, visitors and pets.

noise

Tenants who live in flats are most likely to be affected by noise and anti social behaviour by those living nearby and no flat is completely soundproof. Please remember:

- TV's, radios and hi-fi systems should be played at a reasonable volume. It is a condition of your tenancy agreement that they should not be heard outside your property between 11pm and 7am. This also covers noisy domestic appliances such as washing machines.
- Do not place any noisy equipment against a party wall.
- Be considerate of shift workers.
- If you know in advance that you are going to make more noise than usual eg with a party, warn your neighbours in advance.
- Be tolerant of other people and their different lifestyles.
- Parents should ensure that their children do not cause a nuisance to others.

neighbours and disputes

Hopefully you will not experience any problems with your neighbours. However, if you do, the best way forward is to try and work out any differences before the problem becomes too great. Talk to your neighbour about any problems they may be causing you. Often explaining your side of things in a calm and polite manner sorts things out quickly. Always try and keep the lines of communication open but if this does not resolve the problem the next step is to talk to your Housing Officer.

Your Housing Officer will be able to listen to both sides and then decide the most appropriate form of action. A letter or visit usually sorts out most problems but in some cases we can offer an independent mediation service. See our policy leaflet on neighbour disputes and nuisance

racial or sexual harassment

Housing for Women takes very seriously any incidents of racially (or sexually) motivated harassment. If you believe you are being harassed, contact us immediately and we will treat it in the strictest confidence and respect your wishes in dealing with it.

See our policy leaflet on racial harassment.

moving on

There are many reasons why you may wish to move from your home:

- your family has grown and you need somewhere larger
- you need to move to another area for work or support
- your family is now smaller
- medical or social reasons

Your main options are:

- transfer to another Housing for Women property
- transfer to another housing association or local authority through the HOMES scheme
- exchanging with another tenant - HOMESWAP scheme
- buying your own property - HOMEBUY scheme
- moving into sheltered accommodation if you are over 55 years old

transferring within Housing for Women

- All applications are dealt with on the basis of housing need
- You cannot apply for a transfer until you have been a tenant for more than two years (unless your circumstances are exceptional).

If you wish to apply for a transfer please contact the office for a form and when this is completed you will be visited by your housing officer. However, because we have only a limited number of properties and are committed to housing homeless women and their families, transfers are limited. Housing officers will discuss options for transfers with you and try and indicate the length you may have to wait.

transfer to another housing association or local authority

If you wish to move to another part of Britain or to another social landlord you can make an application through the HOMES scheme. You need to complete the HOMES form and your Housing Officer will then contact all housing associations and local authorities who have suitable properties in your area of choice.

Please see the enclosed copy of our Transfer policy.

mutual exchanges

These are organised by tenants themselves and can only go ahead if both landlords give their approval. This cannot be reasonably withheld providing your rent account is clear. Suitable tenants can be found through the HOMESWAP scheme or be advertising locally. Your Housing Officer can give you a HOMESWAP form.

Please remember that our charitable status only allows us to issue tenancies to women.

buying your own property

You may qualify for help to buy on the open market under the HOMEBUY scheme. This scheme allows a tenant to buy a home anywhere in England (up to a set value limit). Tenants receive a loan for 25% and you have to arrange a mortgage for 75% of the property value. The loan is only repaid should you sell.

To be eligible you should:

- Have not been in receipt of housing benefit for the previous twelve months.
- Not be unable to afford to buy a home outright on the open market without help of the scheme.

Your Housing Officer can give you details of which housing associations are dealing with applications.

moving to sheltered accommodation

Sheltered housing schemes are small groups of flats for the elderly and these tenants have the same security and rights as other tenants. All accommodation is linked to a resident community warden by an alarm. Accommodation usually consists of a bedsitting room or one bedroom flat - two bedroom flats are rare.

If you are over 55 years old and feel that you would like to move somewhere that offers a little bit of support and houses older people, please contact your Housing Officer. Housing for Women does not have any sheltered accommodation but your Housing Officer can help you with an application to another provider.

other housing for the elderly

Elderly Designated - this type of accommodation is within the general housing stock but it is a group of properties totally designated for the elderly. They do not have their own warden but are linked to a community alarm service.

very sheltered accommodation

This offers more support than sheltered accommodation such as 24 hour personal care. Your Housing Officer or Social Worker will be able to give you further information.

ending your tenancy and moving out

It is a requirement of your tenancy that you give four weeks notice of your intention to leave your accommodation and that you leave it in good repair, clean, tidy and empty of all possessions.

Remember to inform the gas and electric suppliers of your meter readings when you leave and contact your Housing Officer about arrangements for handing over your keys.

Dear Tenant

Welcome to Housing for Women. We have produced this handbook to help you have a trouble free tenancy. It gives you information about our services and how to look after your home. If you have queries about your home or tenancy, the first place to look is in this handbook. Please keep it in a safe place along with your signed tenancy agreement.

Housing for Women is a charity and a housing association, registered with the Housing Corporation. We have been housing women for over 60 years. Although many of our original properties were in Kensington and Chelsea, we have expanded over the years to other parts of London. We now have almost 600 properties in management and they include homes in Camden, Hounslow, Southwark, Lewisham, Ealing, Greenwich and Westminster. The majority of our properties are offered to applicants who are put forward by local authorities but we also have a number of other approved referral agencies

Although most of our properties are for women who do not have special needs, some of our newer properties have adaptations for women with impairments.

We recently opened a six-room hostel in west London to house women rejecting domestic violence. The hostel provides temporary, safe accommodation for women and children and is staffed by hostel-based workers.

The Association is managed by volunteers. An elected Board of Directors consisting of volunteers (including two tenant members), oversees the running of the Association by our paid staff. Membership of the Board can be found in our latest annual report.

Housing for Women pursues a policy of equality of opportunity in all areas of its activities. A copy of this policy is enclosed in your new tenancy pack.

We hope you enjoy a long and happy tenancy with us.

Elizabeth Clarson

Chief Executive

Housing for Women

Tenant Handbook



Housing for Women aims to be an independent, effective and dynamic housing association, by ensuring that single women on low incomes are recognised as a group with specific housing needs and by providing good quality homes and services in which women can achieve their chosen quality of life.

Sixth Floor Blue Star House
234–244 Stockwell Road London SW9 9SP
Tel: 020 7501 6120 Fax: 020 7924 0224
email: info@h4w.co.uk

Company Registration No. 420651

Registered Office: Sixth Floor Blue Star House
234–244 Stockwell Road London SW9 9SP

Registered Charity No. 211351

Housing Corporation Registration No. L0970