

# **NORWICH HOUSING SOCIETY**

## **TENANT HANDBOOK**



**Sheltered Housing**

*Revised September 2018*

## Welcome and Foreword

In 1934, Canon Charles Lanchester of the Parish St Barnabas Heigham had a passion for helping people who were homeless; over time this has developed into Norwich Housing Society and which has grown and improved to what we have today. Norwich Housing Society has 'Charity' status and exists to provide high quality, affordable rented accommodation for older people. We wish to develop communities where our tenants enjoy living.

This Handbook forms part of a collection of legal documents that make up your Tenancy. These documents include – Tenancy Agreement, Service Charge Schedule (where this applies) and 'Conditions of Tenancy'. Minimum age for applicants is 60 years and if you have a partner the minimum age is 55 years.



## **Our Properties**

The Society has in excess of 300 properties situated in the city of Norwich. The properties consist of one and two bedroom flats and one bedroom bungalows. These properties are grouped together to form 'Schemes' of between 20 and 62 dwellings over 9 sites. Most schemes have a Scheme Manager.

All properties benefit from an Emergency Alarm System which operates 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. Other safety features include smoke detectors and some schemes have a 'Key Fob' door entry system.

We believe having the support of experienced Scheme Managers offers the greatest peace of mind.

## **What is Sheltered Housing?**

Sheltered housing is generally for people who are 60 years of age and over who have a support need. People who choose this type of accommodation generally do so because of the advantages it provides for them, and not necessarily because they are particularly frail. Sheltered housing does not provide residential care or nursing care and our aim is to help

residents retain their independence whilst having a safe and secure home in which to live.

## **Sheltered Housing Manager's Role**

The Sheltered Housing Manager is employed to work from Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays) and to start at approximately 8:00 to 16:00 or 9:00 to 17:00 with an hour for lunch. Our service is supported by the pull cord system which is monitored on 365 days of the year on a 24 hour basis, providing our resident's complete peace of mind should any emergency arise when the sheltered housing manager is off duty.

The sheltered housing manager's main functions are:

- To maintain regular contact with all residents to ensure their well being and where problems are identified, provide assistance or refer the matter to another more appropriate agency, such as Adult Social Services or Age UK.
- To encourage residents to participate in social activities and facilitate a community spirit within the scheme. Many schemes hold regular coffee mornings which is an ideal opportunity for residents to spend a

few minutes in the company of others in an informal setting.

- To ensure the scheme runs smoothly in terms of identifying maintenance and repair requirements within the communal areas as well as recommending improvements and ensuring Health and Safety procedures are complied with at all times.
- To deal with emergencies and summon any other assistance as is necessary.
- To identify individual needs and be aware of changes in medical, social or financial circumstances.
- To arrange appropriate support from voluntary or statutory agencies.
- To monitor that support.
- To act on tenant's behalf (advocacy role).
- To assist in dealing with some housing management issues relating to the scheme.

All Norwich Housing Society staff must work within certain professional boundaries. These boundaries are in place to protect our residents' interests and also to protect the staff from allegations of misconduct.

On this basis, your sheltered housing manager **cannot:-**

- Provide day to day medical, nursing domestic care or personal care.
- Collect pensions or cash from any of your banks, building societies etc.
- Collect shopping or carry out other errands (apart from in exceptional circumstances on a "one off" basis).



## **Advantages of Sheltered Housing**

- A Scheme Manager
- 24 hour alarm service
- Communal lounges and grounds at most schemes
- Laundry rooms at most schemes
- Concessionary TV Licences available at schemes with a resident Scheme Manager
- Some car parking is available

Please talk to a member of staff for more information on the above.

## How to Contact us

Our main office is open Monday to Friday from 9.00am until 5.00pm

The Office address is –

13 Bracondale, Norwich, NR1 2AL.

Phone: 01603 625078

Website: [www.norwichhousingsociety.org](http://www.norwichhousingsociety.org)

E-mail: [information@norwichhousingsociety.org](mailto:information@norwichhousingsociety.org)

There is an answerphone for out of hours.



## Staff

Our main office at Bracondale is led by-

The Chief Executive, along with

Property Services Manager

PA to the Chief Executive

Assistant Accountant

Property Services Administrator

Housing Administrator

Administration Assistant

Administrator

We have three Scheme Managers who are based at some of the schemes with responsibility for around 90 tenants each.

Scheme Manager based at Rotary Court

Scheme Manager based at Eleanor Road

Scheme Manager based at Westwood House



## **Comments, Compliments and Complaints**

The Society has a complaints policy and is committed to improving the service we offer to you and welcome your feedback. If you would like to make a comment, have a constructive suggestion, or have a complaint please speak to a member of staff, or write into the main office. All complaints are taken seriously and are processed as soon as possible. The procedure for this is included with your welcome pack.

## **Your Responsibility as a Tenant**

As a tenant you are responsible for paying your rent in full, in advance. The rent may also include a service charge. You may qualify for Housing Benefit which will pay all or part of your rent as well as all or part of your Council Tax along with the service charge. Housing Benefit is calculated by the local authority.

Details of your rent and service charge can be found in your letter of Tenancy Offer as well as your Tenancy Agreement.

The rents are reviewed annually and we will give you 4 weeks' notice of any revisions.

Ways to pay your rent-

Standing Order

Housing Benefit

Cash

Cheque

BACS – please contact the office for details

## **Behaviour of Yourself, your Family and Visitors**

You are responsible for your own behaviour as a tenant and also for the behaviour of anyone else who may visit you. This applies to your home and all communal areas in the scheme and includes family, friends and other visitors.

Should they break the terms of your tenancy it will be treated as you breaking them.

## **Terminating your Tenancy**

When you need to terminate your tenancy, we will require 4 weeks written notice from the Sunday following the date we are officially advised, by you, the tenant or your legal representative. Following this, you will be sent a letter acknowledging the termination and we will need to make a home visit to check on the property and to answer any questions you or your next of kin may have.

## **Utilities**

As a tenant you are responsible for paying your utility bills such as Electricity, Gas, Water Internet and Telephone. Where possible we will let you know which company serviced the property last. With some properties these charges may be included in your rent. This will be detailed in your service charge. If in doubt please ask a member of staff.



## **Using your Home**

You are not allowed to use your home for any illegal purposes. You cannot run a business without permission from the Society.

## **Our Responsibilities as your Landlord**

We believe everyone has the right to live safely and with dignity and respect in their home. Our staff are there to support this and give guidance. The support we give means you can live as independently as possible as well as getting involved in local activities.

At times our staff work with other agencies to help you live independently and some tenants have a Support Plan which is tailored to the individual's needs. You can seek advice from your Scheme Manager.

We will carry out repairs when requested and within certain time frames. Some items in your

home are your responsibility to repair/replace. Please contact your Scheme Manager or the main office for clarification.

Should your personal circumstances change we will endeavour to make changes to your home or places of access or help you liaise with other agencies to get the problem solved.

We will keep any information we hold on you safe and secure. We may share this information with other organisations, for example, if we were helping with a Housing Benefit claim. We will ask you to sign a confidentiality waiver to help us share the information in this way. Our Privacy Policy is available on our website.

You can also refer to Norwich Housing Society Conditions of Tenancy for more information on your tenancy. This document can be found on our website and it is also held on your sheltered scheme.



## Living in your Home

You are not allowed to keep pets, with the exception of an assistance dog. For more information please refer to your Tenancy Agreement.

We ask you to be a good neighbour and show consideration to the neighbouring tenants. This includes keeping your TV and radio volume down, especially between the hours of 11.00pm and 7.00am. Please refer to your Tenancy Agreement for more information.

You are responsible for the internal decoration of your property. You would have been given details on what alterations you can make when you signed for your tenancy. You are very welcome to discuss this matter with our Property Service Manager.

Smoking including Vapes and E-cigarettes in communal rooms and corridors is not permitted legally. Inconsiderate smoking could be regarded as anti-social behaviour. If you are a smoker the society asks that you consider other tenants when smoking outside, especially close to neighbouring properties. Norwich Housing Society has a smoke-free policy in the flats which must be complied with.

Please also note that any specialised piece of equipment such as 'clos-o-mat' type of WC's, lifting aids and hoists and auto door openers will be the tenants' responsibility to have serviced and repaired following the end of the warranty period. It is also the tenant's responsibility to have these items removed at the end of the tenancy and to 'make good' any surfaces and redecorations as required.

Repairs and maintenance - please report all repairs directly to the main office or to one of the Scheme Managers as soon as possible. You can also report a repair via our website. Out of hours/in an emergency i.e. leaking pipes or no heating, please pull your Emergency Pull Cord.

Alarm testing - The Emergency Alarm Systems and smoke detectors in your properties are tested quarterly. Communal alarms and lighting are tested regularly where applicable. Gas safety check are carried out annually where applicable.

### **Internal Waiting List**

The Society holds an internal waiting list for tenants that need to move on health grounds e.g. a move from a first floor flat to a ground floor flat. If you need to move, we will require

this in writing along with a supporting letter from your Doctor.

## **Tenant Meetings**

The Society likes to keep in touch with our tenants. There are tenant meetings held at all our schemes regularly where members of staff and members of our Management Board can meet with tenants to discuss a range of topics.

## **Health and Safety**

The Society employs three Scheme Managers who work in the community at and around the schemes. One of their roles is to ensure there are no problems that could affect your health and safety. In this they work closely with the Property Services Manager. If you see anything or are aware of anything that could affect your health or your safety please bring it to the attention of a member of staff.

## **Parking**

There is limited parking at most of our schemes. We enforce a rule of one car per household. Parking at the schemes is for tenants and on a first come first served basis. One of our schemes has some garages for rent.

## **Communal Gardens**

Our grounds are maintained by a grounds maintenance team. Some courts have small areas where tenants can carry out a small amount of gardening. Please speak to the Scheme Manager for more details. We ask you to help look after the communal areas by taking away any rubbish and keeping noise to a minimum.



## **Household Rubbish and Recycling**

The Scheme Manager responsible for your scheme will be able to tell you how the rubbish is disposed of and what recycling provisions there are where you live.



## **Promoting Equality**

We are committed to treating people as individuals and we value the many different people who make up our tenant base. We work hard to deliver our services that are inclusive and fair regardless of age, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, disability, health or marital status. We understand and fully comply with equality law and will take action to eliminate discrimination.

## **Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour**

We expect our tenants to be able to live in a safe, peaceful and enjoyable way in their home. Sometimes there are problems with neighbours or other tenants. Please speak to a member of staff if you experience any problems. All reports of anti-social behaviour are taken seriously and fully investigated and we will bring in other agencies to help us deal with this.

## **Finally!**

We hope you enjoy living in your home and if you have any queries, comments or questions after reading this handbook please contact a member of staff. Remember this handbook can be read in conjunction with the document, 'Conditions of Tenancy' which is included in your sign up pack.

## **We Promise –**

To be polite.

Listen to you so we can understand your needs.

Aim to get things right first time.

Keep you informed.

Treat you fairly and with respect.

Protect your information.

Welcome your feedback.

## **Useful Telephone Numbers**

Welbeing

01362 698557

Notes: