

Crawley Homes' Tenants Handbook

Welcome

Welcome to your Tenants' Handbook from all of us at Crawley Homes.

This handbook goes with your tenancy agreement, and we recommend that you read both of them.

The handbook provides information and advice on various aspects of your tenancy and we hope it answers any questions you might have, but if you need to talk something over or you have any comments please get in touch with us.

Over time, sections of the handbook may alter due to changes in legislation or policy. The latest version will be available to view on the council's website.

Information correct as at May 2023



Crawley Homes

Our name reflects the fact that our business isn't just about houses and properties but about homes and the people who live in them.

We want to deliver the best service possible and make sure that everyone is treated fairly, without discrimination and taking into account their individual needs.

Therefore, we hope we will be able to work with you to provide a home that you are proud to live in.

Contents	Page
Useful numbers	2
Your tenancy	3
Your tenancy agreement	3
Crawley Homes' Tenancy Policy	3
Joint tenancies	4
Succession (inheriting the tenancy)	4
Assignment	5
Sharing your home	5
Going away for more than four weeks	5
Improving your home	6
Personal information	6
Living in your neighbourhood	11
Nuisance and anti-social behaviour	13
Money	15
Your rent	15
Rent statements	19
Behind with your rent?	20
Money advice	20
Help with paying your rent	22
Help us prevent fraud	23
Maintaining your home	24
Working in your home	25
Repairs that are your responsibility	26
Re-chargeable repairs	25
Reporting repairs	26
Improvements, alterations and additions to your home	27
Gas safety	28
Energy efficiency in your home	30
Adaptations to your home	30
Asbestos in your home	31
Damp and condensation	32
Planned maintenance	33
Cleaning and Clearance	34
Getting involved	35
Getting involved	35
Keeping you informed	36
Comments, compliments and complaints	37
Moving	38
Moving out – ending a tenancy	38
What to do if you want to move	39
Right to Buy	40
Sheltered housing	42
Useful information	43
Neighbourhood Services	43
Garages and stores	43
Useful contacts	45

Useful numbers

Some useful telephone numbers for Crawley Homes.

Other useful contact numbers can be found at the back of the Handbook.

Repairs

Crawley Repairs Team including Gas heating and hot water repairs	Office hours 8am to 5pm	01293 438111 Email: housing.repairs@crawley.gov.uk www.crawley.gov.uk/repairs
Emergency Repairs	Repair emergencies including gas heating outside of office hours including weekends and public holidays	01293 438111

If you live in Apex Apartments

Contact Pinnacle Property Management for maintenance of communal /shared areas outside of your flat on 0203 960 1633.

For repairs inside your flat call 01293 438111.

If you live in Forge Wood

For grounds maintenance issues, including road maintenance, grass cutting, street lighting and fly tipping contact Preim. Email: helpdesk@preim.co.uk or call 01778 382210.

Housing Officers

For tenancy management and rent queries

www.crawley.gov.uk/tenants

To find your housing officer and their up to date contact details please visit the website.

Your tenancy

Your tenancy agreement

Your tenancy agreement is the legal contract between Crawley Borough Council, your landlord and you as our tenant. It sets out the rights and responsibilities for all concerned.

If there is anything you do not understand about your tenancy agreement please contact a Housing Officer or seek advice from an independent housing advisor or solicitor.

Crawley Homes' Tenancy Policy

Different council tenants have different tenancies and these give different rights and responsibilities.

Our Tenancy Policy sets out the type of tenancies offered to new tenants. This was agreed in February 2013 and makes use of the options introduced by the Localism Act 2011.

The policy was updated in March 2023 as councillors made a decision to stop using five year flexible tenancies,

All new tenants are given a one year introductory, or trial, tenancy. If this tenancy is a success their tenancy becomes a secure tenancy..

Introductory tenancies

This tenancy is for a 12-month trial period to show that new tenants can:

- Keep to the tenancy agreement
- Look after their home
- Pay their rent on time and
- Not be a nuisance to neighbours.

If there are problems we will always investigate first to see if things can be sorted out, but if the problem is serious or the tenant won't co-operate with our efforts to find a solution, we can take legal action to evict them straight away.

If you break any of the terms and conditions of an introductory tenancy agreement we may decide to extend the introductory tenancy trial period, but you should be aware that the council has the right to end your tenancy by serving you a Notice to Terminate. Before this can be done though we have to show that we have tried to contact you in a variety of ways.

If a Notice to Terminate is served the tenant has the right to a review of this decision before the court grants possession of the property back to the council. Any court costs incurred will be claimed back from the tenant.

Secure tenancies

Security of tenure means that provided you keep to your tenancy agreement you can live in your home. We can only make you leave after taking the proper legal action and a court has given us a possession order.

Tenants' rights

As a council tenant, the law gives you certain rights and these are listed below.

Secure tenants

As a secure tenant you have the right:

- To repair
- To improve your home with prior written permission
- To be consulted
- Of succession (changes in law mean different tenants can have different rights of succession, see the section on succession for more information)
- Of assignment ((some exceptions apply)
- To exchange your home (some exceptions apply)
- To take in lodgers
- To sub-let part of your home
- To buy (some exceptions apply).

Introductory tenants

An introductory tenant has most of the same rights as a secure tenant; however you do not have the right as an introductory tenant to:

- Buy your council home
- Take in lodgers or sublet part of the property
- Exchange your home with another tenant.

Demoted tenancy

If you or your household are responsible for persistent anti-social behaviour we may apply to the county court to have a secure tenancy reduced to a demoted tenancy.

This means that your tenancy rights would be reduced to those of an introductory tenancy for up to a year.

If it becomes necessary to start possession proceedings (legal proceedings to end your tenancy and take back a property) you are entitled to have the decision to demote your tenancy reviewed by a panel of senior managers from the council.

Non-secure tenancies

A few of our tenants may have a non-secure tenancy. These are usually given when we are providing temporary accommodation under the council's statutory homelessness duty. Non-secure tenancies therefore have very few rights.

Joint tenancies

Joint tenancies will be granted to joint housing register applicants when they successfully bid on a property. Under a joint tenancy all the tenants share equal responsibility.

Joint tenancies will not be granted to existing tenants except in exceptional circumstances.

If you are joint tenants either of you can end the tenancy by giving the council Notice to Quit This will end the tenancy for all joint tenants regardless of who has given the notice.

Succession (inheriting the tenancy)

When you die, any surviving joint tenants or other family members who live with you may have the right to take over the tenancy. This is called succession. Succession is governed by legislation and who has the right of succession depends on the date your tenancy started.

The following people will be considered for succession:

- Remaining joint tenants
- Your partner (whether or not married to the tenant or civil partner, and including a same sex partner) provided that the property was their only or main home at the time of your death and they have been living with you for the 12 months before your death
- Other family members (who may be required to move to other accommodation). For tenancies starting after the 1 April 2012 statutory succession will be to the spouse, civil partner or co-habiting partner only.

If you inherited (succeeded to) your tenancy, then it cannot be passed on again.

There will still be options for family members who have no right of succession. These include an offer of suitable accommodation if they are likely to become homeless and the council would owe them full homeless duty.

Another option that could be considered is a two year non-renewable fixed term tenancy in an appropriate property to give some short-term stability following bereavement.

Assignment

This is where you pass on your tenancy to another person. There are only two cases where you can pass on your tenancy:

- If you want to assign the tenancy to a person who would legally be entitled to succeed if you die.
- If you are exchanging your home under your right to exchange.

If you are thinking of passing your tenancy to another person, you will need to notify us and talk to a Housing Officer about it.

Sharing your home

Lodgers

A lodger is someone living in your home that does not have exclusive use of any part of your house except for a bedroom, and you may provide extra services for them such as meals and cleaning.

You can take in a lodger provided it does not cause over-crowding in your home, the maximum number of people that can live in your home is shown on your tenancy agreement, or you can find out from a Housing Officer.

Please contact a Housing Officer before taking in a lodger as this may affect any benefits you may be claiming.

Subletting part of your home

This is where you rent part of your home to another person (sub-tenant). They will probably pay you rent to have exclusive use of part of your home and to live independently from you and your family.

You should not sub-let any part of your home without getting written permission from us first. We cannot refuse to give this permission unless you are a non-secure or introductory tenant or we have good reason to.

Please note that it is against the conditions of your tenancy agreement to rent out the whole of your home and not live there yourself. If you do this, we will serve a Notice to Quit to end your tenancy.

Things to be aware of

If you have a lodger or sub-tenant in your home:

- You have a legal responsibility to check their immigration status and right to rent before the start of the tenancy (www.gov.uk/check-tenant-right-to-rent-documents)
- It may affect the amount of any means tested benefit you are getting
- You are responsible for their behaviour and conduct whilst they are living in your home
- You will be responsible for making sure they move out if you end the tenancy with us or if you want to end the arrangement with them.

Going away for more than four weeks

If you have to leave your home for more than four weeks, for example for a long holiday or hospital stay, please let us know. It would also help if you could tell us what your contact details will be, the contact details of someone who will have a key to your home, and the dates you will be away.

This will help us if there is an emergency where we need to gain access such as burst pipes.

If you are going abroad for more than four weeks and you receive Housing Benefit, you will need to tell them as this could affect your claim and your benefit could be stopped.

Improving your home

You have the right to make improvements, alterations or additions to your home, provided you get our written permission first. We will usually give permission unless we have very good reason not to. However, when we give you permission to carry out any changes to your home we may set certain conditions for you to keep to, such as the standard of work, obtaining planning consent, providing minor works certificates, FENSA certificates etc.

Contact your area surveyor to request permission.

Personal information

Crawley Borough Council's Data Protection Policy explains how it complies with the Data Protection Act 2018 (the Act) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

GDPR is a regulation in EU law on data protection and privacy for all individuals within the European Union. It aims to give you control over your personal data that the government and other organisations store about you.

The Rights that individuals have about how your personal data is handled and stored has been changed and enhanced. Our Privacy Notice gives more information on this.

Privacy Notice for Crawley Homes – December 2022

This Privacy Notice applies to Crawley Homes, which is the Council's landlord service. It applies for all tenants, leaseholders, and shared owners of the Council. It covers anyone who is housed in the Council's temporary accommodation (hostels), which are managed by Crawley Homes. It also covers anyone who rents a garage from the Council.

This Notice explains how personal information is going to be used, what it is used for, who it might be shared with and why and for how long it is to be kept.

What information is collected?

The information we collect and may hold about you depends on our relationship with you through your Tenancy agreement, Lease or licence and may include:

- Personal information including name (and proof of your identity / photo ID), age, date of birth, sex, gender identity, relationship status, household relationships religion, ethnicity, nationality, national insurance number, income and benefits details, employment details and status, contact details (phone, email, correspondence address), banking information (if you pay your rent by direct debit or card though we do not retain card detail information) and details of unspent criminal convictions.
- Details of any change of circumstances.
- Information you provide relating to your housing eligibility, including income assessments and any interest or equity in other property.
- Information relating to your home including photographic evidence of repair and maintenance issues or tenancy breaches.
- Basic details of all members of your household (name and date of birth).
- Details of your next of kin and anyone authorised to act on your behalf if applicable
- Information relating to any pregnancy, disability, vulnerability, medical issues, support needs or caring responsibilities if applicable.
- Records of any of our contacts with you, your contact with us and any contact from third parties representing you or about you.
- Any feedback you provide on our services.
- Other personal information that will vary on a case by case basis to help us manage your tenancy or lease, resolve breach of tenancy, alleged anti-social behaviour or fraud this may include details of any behaviour carried out by yourself or members of your household.
- CCTV images of you if you visit or live in a Hostel.
- In some circumstances we use and retain images and / or sound recordings captured on CCTV, camera or recording devices to help in the detection and prevention of crime, anti-social behaviour and/or tenancy breaches.
- From time to time we may also take photographs at our events, at our properties or in our neighbourhoods to use for general marketing and publicity (we will not publish these without your consent).
- CORE data collected will be shared with Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the MHCLG privacy notice can be found on the council's website on the Moving into your council house page.

Generally the information we hold will have been provided by you (on application or enquiry forms when we communicate with you) but we may also hold information provided by third parties where this is relevant to your housing circumstances e.g. from social workers, health professionals or the police.

We will only ask for personal information that is appropriate to enable us to deliver our services. If you do not provide the information we need then we may not be able to provide all our services to you, and ultimately you may not be able to hold a tenancy or lease with us.

****When you provide information about household members we assume that you do so with their full knowledge and consent and we may then store and use this information in the same way as we use your data.**

Why do we collect your personal information?

We collect, process and store personal information about you and other household members in order to manage, operate and deliver services to you. This includes:

- Managing your account charges and payments including any arrears
- Managing the repairs, maintenance and any adaptations to your property
- Ensuring your contractual obligations are complied with
- Complying with relevant legislation and regulation
- Deliver services and support to you
- Train and manage the employment of our workers who deliver those services;
- Help investigate any worries or complaints you have about your services;
- Keep track of spending on services;
- Check the quality of services.

Data Controller

Crawley Borough Council is registered as a Data Controller with The Information Commissioner's Office (Registration Number Z5327706)

The Council (CBC) complies with The Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR.

We ensure that your personal data is processed fairly, kept safe and secure and retained for no longer than is necessary.

The Data Protection Officer for CBC is Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

If you have any concerns or questions about how we look after your personal information please contact the Data Protection Officer at DPO@crawley.gov.uk

The Legal Basis for Processing Personal Data

- Consent of the data subject
- Processing is necessary for the performance of a contract with the data subject or to take steps to enter into a contract.
- Processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation.
- Processing is necessary to protect the vital interests of a data subject or another person.
- Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller.

The Legal Basis for Processing Special Category Data

- Processing is necessary for the purpose of carrying out obligations and exercising specific rights of the Controller.
- Processing is necessary to protect the vital interests of the data subject.
- Processing is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest.

Who we share Data with

Normally, only Crawley Homes staff will be able to see and process your personal information. However, there may be times when we will share relevant information with third parties for the purposes outlined above. When sharing personal information, we will comply with all aspects of the Data Protection Act.

Sensitive information about health, sexual life, race, religion and criminal activity for example is subject to particularly stringent security and confidentiality measures.

Where necessary or required, we may share your personal information as follows:

- Internal departments
- Our repairs contractors
- Other third-party service providers for example Mole Valley Life (if you have a 'Life Line' or live in sheltered housing) and FCS Laser Mail
- Other statutory organisations with whom we have a duty to co-operate including: social services and health services as necessary for exercising statutory functions (for example safeguarding).

- Other local authorities and government departments, as necessary for administering justice, or for exercising statutory, governmental, or other public functions.
- The police and other relevant authorities (e.g. Probation) in relation to the prevention and detection of crime and fraud.
- Registered Social Landlords Housing (for example in relation to mutual exchange applications)
- Benefits Agency.
- Utility companies and other organisations to confirm occupancy. We will specifically share with British Gas:
 - The name and forwarding address of any outgoing tenant who has moved out of one of our homes where the energy supplier was provided by British Gas
 - Details of incoming tenant(s), including names, meter readings and date of occupation to allow for the transfer of the energy supply to that tenant
- Third party creditors (in relation to provision of debt advice)
- HM Court Services.
- CORE data collected will be shared with Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the MHCLG privacy notice can be found at on [our website](#).

This list is not exhaustive as there are other circumstances where we may also be required to share information, for example:

- To meet our legal obligations
- In connection with legal proceedings (or where we are instructed to do so by a Court order)
- To protect the vital interests of an individual (in a life or death situation)

We will not share data with third-parties for marketing purposes.

Retention Periods

Please refer to Crawley Homes' Retention Schedule at the end of this notice..

Rights

You have the right to:

1. Be informed of data processing (which is covered by this Privacy Notice).
2. Access information (also known as a Subject Access Request).
3. Have inaccuracies corrected.
4. Have information erased.
5. Restrict processing.
6. Data portability.
7. Intervention in respect of automated decision making.
8. Withdraw Consent (see below).
9. Complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (See below).

To exercise any of these rights please contact The Data Protection Officer.

Withdrawal of Consent

The lawful basis upon which CBC process personal data is set out in this Notice However, where personal data is solely processed on the basis of consent, you will have the right to withdraw that consent.

Where can I get advice?

If you have any worries or questions about how your personal information is handled please contact our Data Protection Officer at DPO@crawley.gov.uk

For independent advice about data protection, privacy and data rights, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire DK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or 01625 545 745 if you prefer to use a national rate number. Alternatively, visit ico.org.uk or email casework@ico.org.uk

Retention Schedule – Crawley Homes

This schedule refers to Housing Provision, the management of social housing by the local authority

Why we process information	How long we keep records for	Examples of the records we keep.
Management of tenancies: processing information for the awarding of tenancies in social housing, management of tenancies, provision of support and legal obligations e.g. safeguarding	Retain from end of tenancy for six years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspondence regarding the tenancy • Tenancy files, case notes and records • Council housing application forms and supporting material • Application for transfer of tenancy and supporting papers • Application for emergency housing or referral from another agency • All records relating to support given to housing tenants • Tenancy renewal application forms and supporting material including income assessments • Signed tenancy agreements.
Management of rent accounts	Retain from end of tenancy for six years. Where a tenancy ends with rent arrears we will retain records for six years after the debt is cleared.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation relating to the notification and enforcement of breaches of council tenancy agreements • Correspondence concerning rent payments • Requests for payment • Bank details • Financial information, employment information, benefits information and debt information.
Housing repairs	Retain from end of tenancy for six years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact information
Garage lettings	Retain from end of tenancy for six years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All records relating to the management of garage lettings
Feedback surveys	For one off surveys personal data is deleted after the final report is written. For continuing surveys personal data is deleted after three years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic feedback surveys • Satisfaction surveys e.g. after repairs work.
Leasehold services	Retain from end of contractual relationship i.e. the onward sale of the property for six years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaseholder contact information
Right to Buy	All records relating to the management of Right to Buy schemes will be retained from date property purchased for 12 years and 12 months. The casefile relating to the Right to Buy retained from close of case for six years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sale documents • Agreement concerning sale

This notice may be amended from time to time and the latest version is available on request.

Living in your neighbourhood

Being a good neighbour

We all want to live in a place that is safe, clean and free from nuisance, by being a good neighbour and having consideration for others, you can help to achieve this.

Parking

Please park your vehicle in an area set aside for parking. Grass may look suitable for parking on, but the weight of a car can cause damage, such as causing drains underneath to crack, which can cost a lot to repair. When the ground is wet, parking on the grass can cause damage to the ground and grass itself, making the maintenance of that area much more difficult.

Poor parking in the street can affect the traffic flow, not just cars but the emergency services as well. What if that ambulance, police car or fire engine could not get through? It also causes a problem for our rubbish collection teams.

Some of our newer homes have allocated parking and this is shown on the plan with the tenancy agreement. Please respect this and make sure any visitors use the visitor parking areas.

In some areas where parking is limited we will use a Private Parking company to help us manage parking.

Abandoned cars

If you think a car has been abandoned this can be reported online at www.operationcrackdown.org

Rubbish

Crawley Borough Council has a weekly rubbish collection service and fortnightly REDTop recycling collection.

This is an 'edge of property' service which means your rubbish and recycling will only be collected from just inside the boundary of your property. Please take care to put your rubbish out on the right day and securely tie your rubbish bags before putting them in your bin.

If you live in a flat with a shared, communal, bin area all rubbish must be securely tied in black sacks ready for collection. These bin areas are for the normal domestic rubbish only please do not put bulky household waste or garden waste in them.

The council's Waste and Recycling Team provide a special collections service for your unwanted furniture and other bulky items. Please call them rather than dump these items in your neighbourhood. There may be a charge for this service.

During the summer months the council operates a GREENbin service for green garden waste. There is a charge for this. Find out more by calling 01293 438772.

Pets

If you have a pet, you must be able to look after it and prevent it from causing a nuisance to other tenants. You must also get written permission from us for any pets you have in your home.

Some types of home are not suitable for animals. If you live in sheltered housing, a multi-storey block of flats or in flats that share a common entrance, you may not be able to keep certain types of pet.

The council may refuse permission if it believes that it would not be reasonable or fair to keep an animal in your home.

You must not allow your pet(s) to frighten, annoy or cause a nuisance to neighbours or others living near to your home. Dogs must be accompanied by a tenant or a responsible adult member of the household and kept on a lead in communal areas.

Examples of nuisance include: allowing your pet to foul in inappropriate places, letting your dog run loose (straying), barking, offensive smells and creating any kind of health hazard. If these happen permission may be withdrawn for you to keep the pet/s and you will be asked to remove them from the home.

You, or anyone else living with you, must make sure that no pet kept at your home prevents anyone working for the council gaining access to your home.

If you own a dog you must comply with any laws about keeping them, for example:

- The Control of Dogs Order 1992
- The 1991 Dangerous Dogs Act (as amended 1997).

In cases of cruelty to animals, permission to keep any animal will be withdrawn and cases may be reported to the RSPCA or the police.

Keeping dogs in your property is the responsibility of the owner and not the council. Fences are erected as boundary markers, not to keep in pets. If the fence is in need of repair, it is your responsibility to keep the dog from straying until such time as the fence is repaired

Microchipping

All dogs must be microchipped as well as having name tags. Contact the Council's Community Wardens to find out more.

Gardens

If you have a garden, you are responsible for keeping it tidy and free from rubbish. You are also responsible for maintaining any trees within your garden and ensuring they do not endanger others.

Bonfires

Under the terms of your tenancy agreement, you cannot have a bonfire at your property.

Bonfire smoke can be very irritating and cause great distress to those who are exposed to it. Naturally this not only causes an inconvenience to neighbours but can drain on the resources of West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service if they have to attend.

CCTV

There are strict guidelines for installing a CCTV system, these can be found on the [Information Commissioners Office website](#). If you are thinking of installing CCTV please read this first along with the information on permissions for improvements then contact your area surveyor.

Ball games

Children love to be active and playing ball games is one way to have fun and let off steam. It is important however, neighbours aren't upset.

We'd like to encourage you to let your children play where it's safe and where property cannot be damaged and in a way that respects everyone's right to have a safe and peaceful place to live. If there is a problem, have a chat with your neighbours first to see if you can find a solution everyone is happy with.

The council cannot stop or ban ball games so we won't put up 'No Ball Games' signs.

Home contents insurance

We do not insure the contents of your home or your belongings. You need to take out your own home contents insurance policy to cover these things. However, Crawley Homes has arranged a special home contents insurance scheme for tenants and leaseholders. To find out more call their helpline on 0345 450 7286. You can also email them at crystal@thistleinsurance.co.uk

Nuisance and anti-social behaviour

Tackling neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour is a priority for Crawley Borough Council. The council's nuisance and anti-social behaviour team work closely with residents and local partners to make sure that Crawley is a safe and happy place to live.

The team deal with nuisance and anti-social behaviour across the borough, for both private and council housing and also community related problems.

What is neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour?

Nuisance and anti-social behaviour is irresponsible, inconsiderate and unreasonable behaviour that affects you in the vicinity of your home. This can include:

- Rowdy and nuisance behaviour in residential areas
- Noisy neighbours
- Animal issues including dog fouling and barking dogs
- Threatening and intimidating behaviour and verbal abuse
- Drug dealing and drug use
- Street drinking
- Fly tipping / littering
- Anti-social use of vehicles
- Graffiti
- Aggressive ball games

What you can do

Sometimes people experience problems with their neighbours due to differences in life-styles. These can often be sorted out by talking to your neighbours and explaining what the problem is, and what you would like them to stop doing. A friendly approach is often better than an 'official' approach.

How to report neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour

If you are unsuccessful in resolving the problem yourself, you can report anti-social behaviour to the council by calling 01293 438438 or complete the online form in [myCrawley](#).

What to expect

If you report a problem to the council you will be able to speak to an anti-social behaviour caseworker about your problem. We also work closely with local partners including the police, housing providers and other statutory and voluntary organisations.

Most cases are resolved quickly and successfully by speaking to both parties about the problem.

When cases can't be solved in this way, and the anti-social behaviour is extreme and having a significant impact on the lives of people in the community, legal action may be taken. This is however a last resort.

If we are unable to resolve a problem, we will explain why we can't take things further and tell you where you could find further help.

How can you help us deal with the problem?

If you are a victim of harassment, nuisance or anti-social behaviour you may be feeling stressed, unhappy and frightened. We understand this, but we are likely to need your help to resolve the problem.

You can keep us informed of any further incidents that occur and in some cases we may need you to keep a diary of incidents.

This helps us build a picture of what is happening and how often incidents occur, which can be important in working out the best course of action for resolving the problem.

Anti-social behaviour case review (formerly known as The Community Trigger)

Anti-social behaviour case review is intended to encourage a collaborative problem-solving approach amongst the police, council and other relevant bodies when dealing with serious and persistent cases of ASB and hate crime, and to identify whether further action can be taken to resolve the problem.

Hate hurts, don't support it, report it!

Crawley Homes is committed to encouraging good tenancy relations and equal opportunities between its tenants and for all members of the local community.

We will not tolerate any incidents that are motivated by prejudice or hate whether committed by one of our tenants, a member of the community, an employee or a contractor.

If you – or someone you know – experiences discrimination or harassment which you believe is based on race, nationality, faith, sexuality, disability or gender identity, you can report it.

If you feel that a hate incident is a crime, or is serious and needs immediate attention, call the police on 999. For other incidents call the Hate Incident Reporting Line: 0808 168 9274 (Freephone) or report it online to [West Sussex County Council](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk). or email: SussexHateIncidentReport@victimsupport.org.uk

Fly-tipping and graffiti

To report fly-tipping or graffiti you can contact the council's Neighbourhood Services Department directly on 01293 438772 or complete a report a problem form on [myCrawley](https://www.crawley.gov.uk/myCrawley).

Community Wardens

The Community Wardens deal with a wide range of anti-social behaviour issues such as stray dogs, litter, dog fouling and traveller encampments. They can be contacted on 07884 492324.

Domestic violence

Housing Officers will provide support and assistance to anyone who experiences domestic violence. We will maintain strict confidentiality and help you to get in touch with other agencies that may be able to help.

If possible we will take action against perpetrators. However, we recognise that victims with access to legal advice and the courts will, in most cases, be able to take action more quickly and appropriately themselves.

If you are a victim of domestic violence, abuse or harassment you may be able to take part in our Sanctuary Scheme, which aims to make it possible for you to remain in your home and feel safe without having to make yourself voluntarily homeless. The scheme involves upgraded home security measures in your home and appropriate advice. Some checks will have to be done with the police before we can consider you for this scheme.

Money

Your rent

Your rent is used to pay for the costs of repairing and managing your home. If we do not get the rent that is due to us, we cannot meet our responsibilities to you.

Social and affordable rents

The council charges a social rent for most council housing worked out from a formula set by government.

For some brand new homes the council's Tenancy Policy allows us to charge affordable rents. In most cases this affordable rent is set at 80 per cent of market rent.

Setting your rent

In February each year we will write to you to let you know how much your rent and any service charges will be for the next financial year starting in April.

Service charges

Some of you will find that service charges appear as a separate item on your rent account. These charges reflect the cost of an additional service that you receive, such as cleaning of communal areas in a block of flats. By doing this we can separate the cost of managing and maintaining Crawley Homes from the cost of additional services.

Sheltered housing charges

If you live in sheltered housing you will be charged some or all of the following service charges:

- **Sheltered alarm charge**
This covers the cost of your pull cord equipment and the emergency call centre.
- **Housing management charge**
This covers the office and buildings management, health and safety checks around the scheme and management of the communal room and guest room where applicable.
- **Service charge**
This covers the communal cleaning in your scheme.

Paying your rent

The rent is payable in advance every Monday. You may pay your rent at different periods, for example monthly, but rent must be paid in advance.

When you move in, we will discuss how you are going to pay your rent. We will then agree with you a 'payment plan'. This could be as simple as agreeing to pay by monthly direct debit or cash every week.

How to calculate your rent payments

These examples show how to work out your payments for the whole year, if you change the way you pay your rent or if your entitlement to housing benefit changes, your payments will change, but our housing officers will help you to work out how much to pay.

When and how often you pay (Payment frequency)	How to work out your payment
Monthly Direct Debit On the 1, 15 or 25 of the month	This will be based on your weekly rent (less any housing benefit) multiplied by the number of rental weeks in the year* and divided by 12 (months). We will let you know, at the beginning of the year or if your Direct Debit changes, how much we will be taking each month. This example uses 52 rental weeks: Weekly rent £105.00 x 52 /12 = monthly direct debit of £455.00
Calendar monthly You pay the same day each month (12 payments per year) Payments could be by card, cash or standing order.	Weekly rent (minus housing benefit) multiplied by rental weeks* divided by 12 (the number of payments you make throughout the year). This example uses 53 rental weeks: Weekly rent £105 x 53 /12 = monthly payment of £463.75
Four weekly You pay every 4 weeks and the date varies every month (13 payments per year).	Weekly Rent (less any housing benefit) x 4 (weeks) Example: Weekly rent £110 x 4 = £440 If there are 53 rental weeks we recommend you divide the extra week by 13 (the number of payments you make throughout the year) and add this to your four-weekly payment. Example: weekly rent £115 /13 = £8.85 additional payment every four weeks. 13 x four-weekly payment ((£115 x 4) + £8.85) £468.85
Fortnightly You pay every other week, your payment is for the current weeks rent and the following week.	Weekly rent (less any housing benefit) x 2

*Most financial years will have 52 Mondays but some have 53. As rent is due on a Monday, some years will have 52 rental weeks and some 53.

53 rental weeks

Most years have 365 days – 52 weeks and one extra day.

Rent is charged for full weeks only, but that extra day is not rent free. Every few years that 'one day' falls on a Monday, and you pay for all those 'one days' as an extra week.

How to pay your rent

There are several ways you can pay your rent. Remember that however you pay, you will need your payment reference number when you pay.

You can find this on your rent statement your PayPoint card or by contacting us. It is essential that you use the right reference or your money won't be credited to your account.

Direct Debit

This is an agreement between yourself, your bank and the council. On the payment date you choose, your rent will be paid from your bank account to your rent account.

Monthly Direct Debits can be set up or you can set up a weekly Direct Debit for every Monday. Please note that if the date falls on a weekend or bank holiday, payments will be collected on the first working day after that.

Setting up a Direct Debit

All you need to do is:

- Call your Housing Officer. Remember to have your bank account details handy. We will need the name and address of your bank, the bank's sort code and the account number
- Use an electronic form at www.crawley.gov.uk/payments
- Fill in the form you can get from the Town Hall.

Recurring card payments

You can set up regular payments from a debit card that can be weekly, fortnightly, monthly or four weekly. This allows you to pay your rent on any day of the month at intervals that suit you. This works well if you are claiming Universal Credit or are paid four weekly.

PayPoint payment cards

This card can be used to pay your rent wherever you see the 'Paypoint' symbol.

At PayPoint outlets you can pay by cash only, however, at Post Offices you can pay by cash, cheque or debit card. PayPoint outlets can be found throughout Crawley and you can find the nearest one to you by searching your postcode at www.paypoint.co.uk

Please be aware that Paypoint payments will take an average of three working days to reach your rent account. Therefore payments need to be made in advance.

Standing order

This is an agreement between yourself and your bank. You arrange for the bank to make payments to us straight from your bank account so it is always in your control. You will have to make sure that payments are paid on the right day and for the right amount, so you will need to change the instructions to the bank if the amount of rent you pay changes.

You can pick up a form to complete from the Town Hall, or you can use the following details to set up a standing order with your bank.

Bank: Lloyds bank

Account name: Crawley Borough Council -
No 2 Account

Account number: 10625660

Your reference:

Sort code: 30-80-12

Debit or credit card

- Call the cashiers on 01293 438312. This is an automated 24 hour phone line.
- Call the Contact Centre on 01293 438000 during office hours.
- Pay online at www.crawley.gov.uk/payments
- Visit the banking hall in the Town Hall.

Paying online

- Log onto www.crawley.gov.uk/payments
- Select online payments and choose the rent payment option
- Enter your credit or debit card details

Internet banking

If you bank online you can use the internet to make payments to the council. The details to use are:

Sort code: 30-80-12

Account number: 10625660

You must also add your payment reference number which you can find on your rent statement.

Self-Pay Kiosk

Self-service touchscreen kiosks can be found on the ground floor next to Cashiers. These accept cash, debit and credit cards quickly and securely. The machine has voice assistance if required.

To use the kiosk you just need your account number or invoice to pay.

The self-pay kiosks can be used when the Town Hall is open.

Rent statements

To help you keep track of your money, we send you a rent statement every three months. Please take a few minutes to look at it; you can then see if you are paying us the right amount, check that any housing benefit is being paid and find out if you are in arrears or if we owe you any money.

The first page of the statement gives general information such as your reference number, the period the statement covers and how your rent is made up.

The next page of the statement will contain a table with seven columns. An example is shown below

Week Commencing	Gross Rent	Housing Benefit	Net Rent	Payments	Adjust	Balance
<i>Balance at start of period</i>						65.54 CR
07-Oct-2019	119.14	61.92	57.22	0.00	0.00	8.32 CR
14-Oct-2019	119.14	61.92	57.22	230.13	0.00	181.23 CR
21-Oct-2019	119.14	61.92	57.22	0.00	0.00	124.01 CR
28-Oct-2019	119.14	61.92	57.22	0.00	0.00	66.79 CR
04-Nov-2019	119.14	61.92	57.22	0.00	0.00	9.57 CR
11-Nov-2019	119.14	61.92	57.22	238.41	0.00	190.76 CR
18-Nov-2019	119.14	61.92	57.22	0.00	0.00	133.54 CR
25-Nov-2019	119.14	61.92	57.22	0.00	0.00	76.32 CR
02-Dec-2019	119.14	61.92	57.22	0.00	0.00	19.10 CR
09-Dec-2019	119.14	61.92	57.22	0.00	0.00	38.12 DR
16-Dec-2019	119.14	61.92	57.22	238.41	0.00	143.07 CR
23-Dec-2019	119.14	61.92	57.22	0.00	0.00	85.85 CR

Week commencing

This is always a Monday. Any rent due and any payments made during the week following this date will appear in the columns across the page in line with this date.

Gross rent

This is the gross rent you pay and does not take into account any Housing Benefit you may get.

Housing Benefit

This shows your weekly Housing Benefit entitlement this is how much help you get towards paying your rent.

Net rent

This is the amount that you need to pay. It is calculated from the total rent due less any Housing Benefit you receive.

If you receive full Housing Benefit this figure will be £00.00. If you receive some Housing Benefit the figure will be the rent due less the amount of benefit you receive. (Rent – Housing Benefit). If you do not receive Housing Benefit this figure will be the amount of rent due for your home.

Payments

This shows all payments you have made to the rent account.

Adjust

This includes payments such as Housing Benefit underpayment, adjustments or refunds.

Balance

This shows the current balance on the account. CR shows a credit balance and DR shows how much you still owe us.

Behind with your rent?

We do believe that most people prefer to pay their way, but we understand that unexpected problems can arise in anyone's life that can result in debts building up.

With this in mind, we ask you to get in touch with us as soon as you realise you are likely to have a problem paying. We can then discuss things with you and make sure that you are getting all the benefits you are entitled to.

We will make every effort to help you if you get into rent arrears because of genuine financial difficulty, but non-payment of rent is a serious issue and one that Crawley Homes does not take lightly. We believe that taking prompt action before arrears get too large is important.

We will, and do, take legal action against tenants who get into rent arrears and therefore break the terms of the tenancy agreement. This could result in you losing your home.

Contacting you

If you get behind with your rent or you don't make the regular payments you agreed, we will get in touch with you. As well as writing to you, we may call you on the telephone, text, send you an email or visit you at home. We may also ask you to come into the Town Hall to talk about paying your rent and what can be done to clear any debt.

We want to work with you to help you manage your rent account, making sure that any agreement to pay that you make with us is realistic and affordable for you.

We will at all times treat you with courtesy, consideration and in absolute confidence, and take into account your personal circumstances when deciding on a course of action.

Get in touch

If you have problems paying your rent you must contact your Housing Officer as soon as possible. This will help to make sure that your debts are tackled before they get too big.

When you contact us:

- We will aim to help you and talk to you about any benefits you may be entitled to
- We will direct you, where appropriate, to people who can give you debt advice and support.

If you don't contact us or fail to keep in touch or break a payment agreement we will take legal action that could result in you losing your home.

Money advice

Many people have difficulty managing their money and can get into debt so when looking at your money situation, please bear in mind a few golden rules:

- Don't ignore any problems - they will not go away, and generally they get worse if ignored
- Don't panic - take one step at a time and you will be able to sort matters out
- Ask for help - there are plenty of organisations who will help you free of charge
- Be realistic and honest - with yourself and others, it makes problems easier to resolve.

Asking for advice

Our Housing Officers can offer you advice, support and assistance with any money issues you may have including debts and benefits.

Money Advisor

Our Money Advisor is there for you to talk to about money worries, help with your budgeting and debts, check you're claiming all the benefits you are entitled to and liaise with others - such as the Department for Work and Pensions, Housing Benefit and Housing Officers. Contact 01293 438931 or email [financialinclusion@Crawley.gov.uk](mailto:financialinclusion@ Crawley.gov.uk)

Useful contacts

You can also get free help, advice and support for problems with money, budgeting and debts from:

Citizens Advice

The Orchard
1-2 Gleneagles Court
Brighton Road
Southgate
Crawley
West Sussex
RH10 6AD
Advice Line: 0808 278 7969
www.advicewestsussex.org.uk/

Money Helper

(Formerly Money Advice Service)

For free guidance to help make money and pensions choices clearer

www.moneyhelper.org.uk

0800 138 7777

StepChange Debt Charity

Debt advice available to all, including debt management plans when appropriate. This organisation is free, impartial and confidential.

Tel: 0800 138 1111

www.stepchange.org

National Debtline

Free, confidential and independent telephone helpline for anyone in debt.

Tel: 0808 808 4000

www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

Shelter

For help and advice on all housing issues

https://england.shelter.org.uk/get_help

Horsham Debt Advice Service

11 Queen Street
Horsham
West Sussex
RH13 5AA

www.hdas.co.uk

Tel: 01403 258040

Email: hdas@btconnect.com

Budgeting

One of the easiest ways to see what money you've got coming in and what you're paying out is to write it down or use a budget planner.

Make a list of all the money you have coming in and another list of everything you pay out. Don't forget to include one-off expenses such as car tax and make an allowance for extras like haircuts, clothes and birthday presents. Keeping a spending diary might help you work out where your money goes on a day to day basis.

Make sure you work with accurate figures, for example if you decide to do a weekly budget make sure you've broken down monthly bills into their weekly amounts; do the same in reverse for a monthly budget.

Pick up a budget sheet from your Housing Officer or find one online at

[Budget Planner | Free online budget planning tool | MoneyHelper](#)

Help with paying your rent

If you are on a low income, whether you are working or not, and need financial help to pay all or part of your rent, you may be able to get help with your rent.

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 brought changes to the way benefits are claimed and paid. Housing Benefit will become the housing element of Universal Credit.

Universal Credit (UC)

You are on a low income you may be entitled to claim UC, if you are of working age and you need to make a new claim for any of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Income related Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income related Employment Support Allowance
- Housing Benefit

If you already receive any of these benefits you will gradually be moved to UC over time and you'll get a letter from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to tell you when and how. However, if your circumstances change, you may have to make a claim for Universal Credit.

If you get Universal Credit this may include a housing element that you will need to pay to us.

If you get Universal Credit, your rent will **not** be paid direct to us, you will have to pay your full rent.

Housing Benefit

Not everyone can claim Housing Benefit. Visit the [Government website](#) to see if you are eligible.

You can get more information or a claim form by:

- Visiting the Town Hall between 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday
- Calling us on 01293 438611
- Emailing benefits@ Crawley.gov.uk and include your telephone number

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

If you're on a low income, whether you're working or not, and need financial help to pay your Council Tax bill, you may be able to get help from the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, visit [the council's website](#) or call 01293 438611 to find out more.

Help us prevent fraud

Benefit and tenancy fraud are serious, they cost the council money and stop families with a genuine housing need from having a home. If you're worried about how a property has been obtained or used, please help and get in touch

Housing Fraud

There are different types of housing fraud. The most common types are tenancy fraud and these include:

- Unlawful subletting
- Obtaining housing by deception
- Wrongly claimed succession
- Key selling

With the introduction of the "Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013", it is now a criminal offence to sub-let a council or housing association property and the council could prosecute where appropriate.

You can report tenancy or council tax fraud to the council's anti-fraud team online. Visit www.crawley.gov.uk/fraud

Benefit Fraud

If someone is being paid or has attempted to claim Housing Benefit based upon details they have provided, but these details are untrue and they know them to be untrue, that is benefit fraud.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) now investigate Housing Benefit Fraud. You can report housing benefit fraud at www.gov.uk/report-benefit-fraud or call 0800 854 440.

Maintaining your home

Crawley Borough Council is responsible for most repairs to your home, providing they are due to normal wear and tear and not due to malicious damage. This section of the handbook explains our responsibilities and what you, as a tenant, are responsible for.

Where it is found that items are damaged by the tenant, occupants or visitors a recharge will apply. Any rechargeable work will not proceed unless the person named on the tenancy has signed and agreed for the work to proceed and for the recharge to apply. More details on recharges can be found below.

If you live in Apex Apartments in West Green, our repairing responsibilities are different to those listed in this handbook. Please refer to your tenancy agreement for information about repairing responsibilities for your flat.

Maintaining external elements of your home

Crawley Borough Council will maintain external elements of your home such as:

- Chimney pots and stacks
- Roof coverings (tiles, slates etc)
- Roof leadwork (flashings etc)
- Gutters and drainpipes
- Fascia boards, soffits and large bargeboards
- Brickwork, rendering and cladding of external walls
- windows and window frames, glass (in most circumstances)
- doors and frames
- foundations
- original footpaths and steps leading to front, side or rear doors.
- boundary walls, gates and fences (owned by the council).

Maintaining internal elements of your home

Crawley Borough Council will maintain internal elements of your home such as:

- Roof space and insulation
- Cold water tanks and pipe work
- Structural ceilings and ceiling boards, doors, door frames
- Architraves
- Door furniture
- Window boards and window furniture
- Skirting(s)
- Structural floors, floorboards and screeds etc
- Council fitted floor coverings
- Sub-floor installations
- Staircases, handrails and balustrades
- Sanitary ware
- Waste water and soil disposal installations including pipes and traps.
- Kitchen cupboards and work/sink tops
- Electrical supply installations (including switches, sockets, cooker panels and customer control units from the meter)
- Gas supply installations from the meter
- Water supply installations including taps, stopcocks, valves and the underground supply from the property boundary
- Maintain central heating installations, including the boiler, cylinder, pump, thermostats
- Any communal areas connected to the property including stairs, lifts, landings and lighting

(The council has the right to amend this list from time to time.)

Note: All drains external to the property are likely to be the responsibility of Thames Water (the water authority). For maintenance of external drains, including blockages please, in the first instance, contact them on 0800 316 9800.

The council will carry out all “qualifying repairs” as defined by the Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994.

Working in your home

Our commitment to you

When we are working in your home we will:

- treat you and your home with respect
- respect different cultures and religious beliefs, valuing the diversity of the communities we serve
- be polite and courteous at all times
- ensure your possessions are protected before we start work
- take all reasonable precautions to prevent excessive noise, dust and rubbish

Working in your home

Your responsibilities

When we are working in your home we want you to:

- allow us access to your home as requested so that we can complete the work
- give at least 24 hours notice if you have to cancel an appointment
- treat all staff and sub-contractors with respect and consideration
- keep children and pets away from the work area for their own safety and to allow us to work efficiently
- make sure we can get to the area that needs work by removing any obstructions
- ask to see I.D. before letting workers into your home.

Children and pets

Please do not leave children under 16 alone in your home while we are working. Our staff will not carry out works where children are unaccompanied.

You are responsible for the health and safety of your children while we are working at your home, so please keep them safe by keeping them away from where we are working and supervise them closely whilst we are working in your home.

It is your responsibility to keep your pets safe. If you want them to stay in your home while we are working, please keep them away from the work area. If you cannot keep them away from the work area you should arrange for them to stay somewhere else temporarily.

Re-chargeable repairs

Most of the repair and maintenance work that we carry out is not charged to you, as you pay for the repair and maintenance services in your rent. However, as set out in your tenancy agreement, there are times when we can charge you for repairs.

You may be charged:

- For the cost of repairing any damage caused by negligence or lack of care, by yourself or any of your visitors
- For any repairs that cannot be regarded as fair wear and tear
- For putting right any work you have done within your home
- To make your home secure.

If you report a repair that you can be charged for we will give you an estimate for the work which you sign to say you accept. If the work is considered an emergency we will send you an invoice once the work has been completed and take necessary legal action if the amount is not paid.

We strongly recommend that you take out home contents insurance as in some instances you may be able to make a claim against the insurance policy.

Where there has been a crime it is important that you report the incident to the police and obtain a crime reference number, there may be a need to provide a statement to explain how the damage occurred.

Repairs that are your responsibility

There are some types of repair which are your responsibility and these include:

- Replacing locks, keys or fobs when you get locked out or keys and fobs that are lost unless you have been a victim of crime or are vulnerable. NB: at the end of your tenancy you must return at least one key or one fob for any external locks
- Resetting trip switches
- Replacing fuses, bulbs, fluorescent tubes and starters
- Clearing blockages in sink, basin or bath wastes, toilets or other domestic drains
- Fitting plugs to sinks and baths
- Repairing minor decorating cracks and holes in plaster or partitions
- Repairing any alterations or improvements you have made to your home
- Repairing or paying for repairs caused by carelessness, neglect or misuse by you, your family or visitors
- Any outside taps as agreed by the water authorities and the council, must be isolated in winter
- Any plastic or rubber hoses to washing and dishwashing machines
- Any damage caused by screws, nails or any other fixings through water/gas pipes or electrical cables
- Annual sweeping and safety check of chimneys if solid fuel is used. NB: a certificate may be requested for validation
- External venting of tumble dryers
- Maintenance of your own fixtures and fittings
- Ensuring any permanent ventilation within your home is not removed or blocked
- Any water butts fitted by you and cut into the council's down pipes
- There is no obligation for the council to stain or treat timber fencing, however you can do this yourself if you want to providing a suitable environmentally friendly product is used
- Fitting and relaying any floor coverings that have to be moved for repair work to be completed.

Reporting repairs

Day to day repairs: 01293 438111 (Mondays to Fridays 8am to 5pm)

Gas heating repairs and servicing: 01293 438111 (Mondays to Fridays 8am to 5pm)

Emergency repairs: 01293 438111 (out of hours, including gas heating)

For non-urgent repairs you can:

- Email: housingrepairs@crawley.gov.uk
- Complete an online repairs report form by visiting www.crawley.gov.uk/repairs

Using your home in a tenant like manner:

As a tenant of Crawley Borough Council, you must ensure that you look after your home in a reasonable manner so it remains in good condition at all times. You should do this by:

- Taking proper care of your home, which will involve cleaning and decorating the inside of it on a regular basis
- Stripping old wallpaper carefully, don't soak the plaster behind it as the plaster as well as the paper could come away
- Repairing any small cracks in the plasterwork
- Ensuring that water pipes are kept lagged to guard against frost damage in cold weather
- Turning off the water and draining the system if you are leaving the premises for more than a short period during cold weather, or alternatively leave the heating on at a low level to prevent the pipes freezing
- Clearing the sinks, baths, basins, WCs and domestic drains when blocked by waste
- Ensuring that, in the event of an electrical fault in your home, before replacing fuses or re-setting any trip switches (which have cut out) you disconnect all of your own electrical equipment, (unplug electric cooker, refrigerator, televisions etc.) to check that they are not at fault. You should then replace blown fuses or re-set trip switches. If they then continue to cut out you must inform the council
- Ensuring that you keep your home adequately heated and ventilated during the winter months to prevent damp and condensation
- Advising the council in advance of any DIY projects and clearing away any waste.

Improvements, alterations and additions to your home

You shall not, without the written consent of the council housing division of the council:

- Carry out alterations or improvements to any part of the property or its outbuildings
- Put up a shed, summer house, conservatory, garage or any other building
- Fix a radio mast, television aerial or satellite dish
- Erect any sign
- Put up any form of structure on, or alter the landscape of, any communal area
- Paint the frames of upvc (plastic) framed double glazed windows and doors
- Paint plastic coated (melamine finish) kitchen units
- Supply and fit any laminate flooring to any floors above ground level
- Alter the current heating system
- Install a log or coal burning stove as these are a potential hazard if not installed correctly
- Use textured coating to walls or ceilings.

What is an improvement or alteration?

An alteration or improvement to your home is any work you undertake which alters or improves the current fabric of the building, its grounds or the fixtures and fittings within it.

Before you start

You need landlord permission

Your tenancy agreement says you need to get prior written permission from the council before carrying out any improvement works to your home.

This permission needs to come from the council as your landlord. Depending on the work you intend doing, you may also need Building Control approval and/or Planning permission.

Don't start work until you have received all the necessary permissions.

Send your area surveyor details of what you intend to do, who will be carrying out the work on your behalf. Provide a plan, drawing or sketch of the proposed alteration and/or improvement and provide details of materials you intend using. Photographs can be useful to show where you intend to do the work. We're happy to get this by post or by email.

Contact your area surveyor if you have any questions about work you wish to do.

How are we doing?

We want you to let us know how well we are doing, if you receive a satisfaction survey by email please fill it in. The Repairs satisfaction form can also be found on the website at www.crawley.gov.uk/repairs

Gas safety

Every year people die from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gas appliances and flues which have not been properly installed or maintained.

You may not even be aware you are being poisoned. You can't see it, you can't taste it and you can't even smell it, but it can kill without warning.

Tenants of Crawley Homes get an annual gas safety check free of charge.

Did you know?

The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 requires us to carry out a gas safety inspection of your home every 12 months. We have to check all gas pipes and appliances that are installed in your home. It is a criminal offence if we do not comply with these regulations and all landlords must comply in the same way.

Most of you co-operate with us in this, which means that we can carry out these inspections quickly and efficiently. There are however a few of you, who for one reason or another do not allow us access to your homes for us to carry out the check.

These inspections are also vital for safety reasons, so it is very important that you let us in to carry them out.

What does the inspection cover?

We must inspect any flues, pipe-work and appliances, this includes checking the gas meter fitting. You are responsible for ensuring the safety of your own gas appliances, such as cookers and fires, but to fulfil our duties it is sometimes necessary to disconnect any unsafe appliances. If one of your appliances is disconnected you need to get a Gas Safe registered engineer to undertake the repair.

As part of the central heating system inspection we will check the operation of the radiators and controls making sure it is working properly and to maximum efficiency.

We will also service the gas boiler and any appliances that are our responsibility.

What do you need to do?

Please let us in and make sure the engineer can get to all your radiators, the gas meter, the boiler, your programmer and hot water cylinder.

Our maintenance records are computerised so we will automatically contact you to carry out a check of your home every year. We may contact you by phone, text message or email.

When we contact you, please make an appointment for the annual safety check and keep it.

If we ask you to contact us please do this as quickly as possible. It is vital that you respond, even if you believe that a gas safety check has recently been completed.

If you do not respond?

We will try to get in touch with you using several different ways a number of times and we'll give you lots of ways to get in touch with us. We do work outside normal office working hours, if daytime appointments are a problem.

We may cap your gas supply if your gas safety certificate becomes out of date, this will mean that you have no gas central heating or hot water.

We can as a last resort take legal action to gain an injunction to gain access to your home or serve a notice of our intention to seek possession of your home because you have breached the terms of your tenancy agreement. If we take you to court we will ask the court to order you to pay our legal costs if court proceedings are necessary; these will exceed £200 in most cases.

Health and safety

Your safety is our main priority, so please help us, by:

- Responding promptly to our calls and letters
- Responding promptly if you receive a calling card
- Contacting Crawley Homes or our gas maintenance partner if you are unsure of when the last gas safety inspection of your home was undertaken.

Some safety points for you to note

A room containing a gas appliance including a gas fire **CANNOT** be used as a bedroom. This means you cannot use a living room as your bedroom if there is a gas fire in it.

We use **GAS SAFE** - registered contractors and fitters, so **ALWAYS** ask to see their identity cards.

- **Never** try a do-it-yourself repair on any gas pipe or appliance, you could be breaking the law and putting yourself and others at risk.
- **Never** block sources of ventilation, such as air-bricks, or obstruct flues.
- **Always** follow the user instructions on any gas appliance.

Fitting gas cookers in flats

Since 2008 all new gas cookers installed in flats need to have a flame supervision device (FSD) fitted to every burner. This shuts off the fuel supply to the hob if the flame goes out, preventing accumulations of gas.

Anyone selling gas cookers will be able to help you choose the right one as Gas Safe registered engineers will not fit the wrong type.

Keep flues clear

By blocking or covering the flue, a gas boiler will not burn properly and will produce carbon monoxide. As a room sealed appliance it needs air from outside to work safely.

We have found examples of dangerous gas flues, where a simple lean-to has been built over or around the flue on the outside wall.

Don't forget carbon monoxide (CO) is a highly poisonous gas. You can't see, taste or smell it, but it can kill without warning, within a matter of hours.

Ventilation

As well as keeping flues clear it is important to have good ventilation in your home, so make sure you keep air vents clear.

New gas appliance

If you wish to make use of a previously unused gas supply to your home, it is important you contact us for permission and so we can update our gas safety records.

**If you smell gas, or notice fumes?
Call the gas emergency services on
0800 111 999**

And:

- Turn off the gas at the meter
- Open the windows
- Extinguish naked flames
- Do NOT use electrical switches

Energy efficiency in your home

Energy efficiency in your home is important to us as the more energy efficient your home is then the warmer you will be and the lower your fuel bills will be.

Insulating your roof space

If your home has a loft space, then this needs to be insulated. The depth of insulation recommended to keep a house warm changes over time, but at the moment it is recommended to increase insulation in the roof space to a thickness of 270mm.

Heat loss through windows

Heat loss through the windows can be reduced by fitting double glazed units; this is one of the reasons why we have been systematically carrying out a uPVC window replacement programme for many years.

Home appliances and boilers

The energy efficiency of your home can be improved by making sure that all the appliances in your home are modern, high efficiency ones. The most important item here is the gas boiler. Therefore when we replace old boilers, we install the latest energy efficient condensing boilers.

Other energy efficiency tips

- Replace your light bulbs with the new low energy bulbs
- Turn down your thermostat by 1°C will cut your bills by 10 per cent
- Don't overfill the kettle, boiling more water than you need wastes energy
- If you do not need something 'on' then 'Switch It Off'. It's the low cost way of saving energy and money.

Solar energy

Many of our new homes have been built with Solar PV panels on the roof providing electricity to the house or the communal areas in flats.

We have also installed Solar PV panels on about 250 houses across the town and we continue to look at how we can do this for more homes in the future.

Adaptations to your home

We want to ensure that our residents with disabilities enjoy a good quality of life. For this reason we work closely with the West Sussex County Council's Occupational Therapy Service to help people make the most of their abilities and remain independent in their own homes. If you or someone who lives with you has a disability, we may be able to arrange adaptations to help you to continue to live in your home. Any work that we do has to be recommended by the Occupational Therapy Service and is done to meet individual needs.

The adaptations we can provide are intended to give you better access in and around your home and to help you use essential facilities.

If you are a tenant of Crawley Homes and feel that you or an adult member of your family, living with you, would benefit from an adaptation to your home please contact the Adults' CarePoint at West Sussex County Council for an Occupational Therapy assessment. You can ask them to reassess if the condition has changed.

Tel: 01243 642 121

Email: socialcare@westsussex.gov.uk

Opening hours: 9.00am - 5.00pm, Monday - Friday (excluding Bank Holidays)

For children, any health or education professional can make the initial referral to occupational therapy.

For more information on social care visit www.westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health

Asbestos in your home

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a strong mineral fibre that is resistant to heat and chemicals. This has led to the use of asbestos fibres in a wide range of building materials and products, often as fireproofing. Homes built since the mid-1980s are very unlikely to contain asbestos in the fabric of the building. Homes built after 1990 are extremely unlikely to contain asbestos anywhere in the building. Asbestos cement has been widely used as a cladding material and can still be found in garages and sheds.

Asbestos can be found in all types of property including housing, commercial and industrial buildings, in both the private and public sectors.

Why may asbestos be a problem?

When asbestos materials age or become damaged they can release fibres into the air. These can be breathed deep into the lung where they may stay for a long time, causing possible damage. When very high levels of these fibres are breathed in, there is a risk of lung diseases, including cancer. People who have worked with asbestos for many years as part of their job or have washed the dusty clothing of those who worked with asbestos are most likely to be affected. Workplace regulations now protect such people.

Is everyone exposed to asbestos?

There is a very low level of fibres in the air everywhere because asbestos has been used widely. Exposure to this low level of fibres is unlikely to harm people's health. Levels of fibres may be higher in buildings containing asbestos materials, especially where the materials have been damaged. It is very unlikely that the levels of asbestos fibres found in any building will be harmful, but if you think you have damaged asbestos materials in your home, you should seek advice on the appropriate action to take.

High, short-term exposures to asbestos fibres can occur during 'DIY' work. For this reason, do not work on materials that may contain asbestos, and especially avoid sanding or drilling.

Where is asbestos found?

Building materials containing asbestos were widely used from 1930 to around 1980, particularly from the 1960s onwards. Therefore, houses and flats built or refurbished at that time may contain asbestos materials.

Asbestos has also been used in some heat resistant household products, such as oven gloves and ironing boards.

The use of asbestos in these products decreased greatly around the mid-1980s and since 1993, the use of asbestos in most products has been banned.

It is not always easy to tell whether a product contains asbestos, as modern, asbestos-free materials often look similar, remember it is usually older products that contain asbestos. Loft or cavity wall insulation does not contain asbestos.

How can I identify products or materials containing asbestos?

Generally, it is not possible for the average person to be able to recognise materials containing asbestos. It needs people with specific skills and experience to do this and even then, only a laboratory test can positively identify whether or not a material contains asbestos.

Seeking advice.

The council has set up a telephone help line to answer any queries you may have regarding the presence of asbestos in your home.

If you need help, seek advice by telephoning the Crawley Homes' Asbestos Surveyor at the Town Hall on 01293 438429.

Remember

Avoid disturbing or damaging asbestos materials that are in good condition.

If you have damaged or deteriorating asbestos materials in your home - seek advice.

Take care when carrying out 'DIY'

If you have asbestos materials in your home, extra care should be taken when doing DIY. Do not attempt to carry out work before contacting the council for advice.

Damp and condensation

Types of damp

There are four main types of damp that could affect your home:

1. Rising damp - caused by water from the ground rising up into the home. It will be seen all year round, usually as a tidemark low down on the wall.
2. Penetrating damp - caused by a problem outside such as blocked gutters, broken pipes or leaking roofs.
3. Defective plumbing - leaks from water or waste pipes
4. Condensation - caused by water vapour or moisture coming into contact with a colder surface such as a window or wall. This is the most common cause of damp.

If you're a council tenant and think the damp in your home is likely to be rising or penetrating damp, or caused by a plumbing problem, give the repairs line a call on 01293 438111 and we'll investigate it. However, if the damp is caused by condensation it's your responsibility to take steps to combat it. Here is some advice to help you.

Tackling condensation

Condensation mainly occurs during colder months and generally affects corners, north facing walls and windows; it's also often the cause of black mould.

How you live in your home may have an impact on the amount of condensation in your home. These could include not letting enough air in (ventilation), leaving lids off pots during cooking, and drying clothes indoors. The following five steps will help reduce condensation. The more steps you can do the greater your chances of reducing the problems caused by condensation.

1: Produce less moisture

- Cover pots and pans when cooking and use a microwave where possible
- Dry clothes outdoors when you can; do not dry clothes over radiators
- Vent tumble driers to the outside or buy a condenser (Remember you'll need permission if you want to make a vent through a wall)
- Don't use bottled gas heaters, they produce a lot of water vapour - they're expensive too!

2: Ventilate to remove moisture

- Always open a window when using the kitchen or bathroom and close internal doors to prevent moisture laden air from spreading
- Keep furniture and other objects away from walls as this will allow air to flow around them
- Open bedroom windows (for up to one hour) when you get up
- If you have blocked up fireplaces make sure the chimney flue is ventilated.
- If your home has a mechanical ventilation and heat recovery system do not turn this off

3: Wipe away excess moisture

Always wipe the windows and window sills of your home every morning to remove condensation. This is especially important in the bedroom.

4: Keep your home warm

Keep your home adequately heated all day and night by leaving your central heating on low.

Dealing with mould growth

Mould spores are invisible to the naked eye and are always present in the atmosphere both inside and outside homes. They only become visible when they land on a surface where they can live; the most important thing they need to survive is moisture, which generally comes from condensation.

You can buy special cleaners and sealers from your local supermarket or DIY store.

Virtually every home suffers from condensation to some extent so once you've cleaned the mould try to follow the five steps above. Reducing condensation - will significantly improve, if not eradicate, the problem of mould.

Planned maintenance

Planned maintenance is the long term management of repairs to the housing stock by the timely replacement of building elements. This enables the council to maintain a high quality standard of accommodation.

Examples of planned maintenance works are:

Cavity wall insulation

The energy efficiency of properties is currently under review and the council is working with an insulation contractor to make improvements. In certain cases, residents may be eligible for a free upgrade.

Painting

External painting is carried out on a cyclical basis. These works include minor repairs that are found during the painting process. Approximately 1,600 properties are painted annually.

Internal decorations of communal areas are carried out every five years, subject to condition.

Gas boiler replacement

Boilers are replaced when age and inefficiency dictates. They are replaced with energy efficient 'A' rated boilers, thermostatic radiator valves and room thermostats, ensuring the system complies with current Building Regulations.

Electrical works

An inspection report is undertaken on electrical installations every 10 years to ascertain its condition. Electrical rewires are carried out when age and condition dictates, ensuring the system complies with current Building Regulations.

Neighbourhood improvements

The estate improvements programme is delivering communal improvements to housing estates. This helps to maintain the visual and physical appearance of the neighbourhoods.

Cleaning and Clearance

Crawley Homes Cleaning Services provide the cleaning and clearance service for Crawley Homes.

The four teams that make up this essential service are:

- Mobile cleaning
- Clearance
- Bin store
- Fixed site cleaning

Mobile cleaning

The mobile cleaning team provide a fortnightly cleaning service for the enclosed communal areas of blocks of flats.

They sweep the landings and stairs, and then mop and clean them with Orange Squirt cleaner. Safety signs are used to warn people that cleaning is taking place and every effort is made to leave the floors as dry as possible to help prevent anyone slipping on them.

Windowsills, ledges, skirting boards and window frames are wiped clean and cobwebs are removed.

Any faulty light bulbs are replaced and lighting faults are dealt with within 24 hours of being reported. Any other repairs that are needed to the area e.g. faulty doors are reported to the repairs section at the Town Hall.

A cyclical programme of deep cleaning supplements the routine fortnightly cleaning. Deep cleaning involves a thorough clean, using mechanised cleaning equipment once a year.

Bin store team

Bin stores are communal areas where the dustbins for all the flats in a block are kept. If the bin store is enclosed and is in a block of flats that already has the communal areas cleaned by Crawley Homes Cleaning Services then the bin store area will also be cleaned on a fortnightly basis.

During cleaning the bins are moved from the store so that the floor can be cleaned. Any lights that are not working properly are replaced and the light fittings are cleaned.

Clearance team

The Clearance Team carry out the clearance of empty properties and garages. When someone moves out of a property, it is a condition of their tenancy agreement that the property is left in a clean condition and clear of all rubbish, furnishings and belongings, including those that are no longer needed. If they fail to do this the property still needs to be cleaned, anything left in the property has to be removed and disposed of and this is where the Clearance Team come in. Please note that in all but the most exceptional circumstances, the cost of doing this clearance and cleaning will be charged to the outgoing tenant.

Crawley Borough Council is committed to reducing waste and maximising the re-use and recycling of waste material in its own operations. Recycling is a priority for Crawley Homes Cleaning Services and all suitable goods are delivered to recycling sites, e.g. tyres, car batteries, white goods.

There are times when the Clearance Team are called upon to carry out an 'extreme clearance'. This could involve the clearance of drug related items and clinical waste. These works always receive a high priority in view of the possible danger to the public and before it is carried out comprehensive risk assessments are completed.

Fixed site cleaning team

The cleaning service for the communal areas of:

- Sheltered housing schemes
- Hostels
- The large block of flats at Milton Mount.

Getting involved

Housing Standards

The Homes and Communities Agency regulate all social housing providers, including councils. As a social housing provider we need to meet certain national standards and to let you know how well we are doing. We do this in our Annual Report to tenants.

The National Standards for Social Housing

As a local authority we have to show how we meet the four national consumer standards. These are: Tenant involvement and empowerment, Home, Tenancy and Neighbourhood and community

There are also three national economic standards that other social housing providers have to comply with. These are: Value for money, Governance and financial viability and Rent.

Visit [The Regulator of Social Housing](#) to find out more about the standards.

Getting involved

Every time you contact Crawley Homes you could be making a difference. Every call or contact lets us know where things could be improved or if we're getting it right. As well as getting involved in more formal ways.

Crawley Homes is committed to working in partnership with you, our tenants, so that you can have your say in the way the council manages your homes. It's not just about involving you but getting you to check on how well we deliver the service too.

What you do is up to you as you can choose how and when you have your say.

Contact the team

If you want to know more about becoming an involved tenant contact the Resident Involvement Team on 01293 438434 or email tenantparticipation@crawley.gov.uk

No meetings required

You don't have to go to meetings to have your say and help us improve our service.

Surveys

You can help to influence the service just by responding to any surveys that we send to you. These can be anything from simple telephone satisfaction surveys for repairs to bigger general satisfaction surveys.

Complaints and feedback

When you make a complaint you're also telling us what you think about our service and can help us to improve what we do. If you're not happy with anything we've done please feed this back to us. We also welcome compliments when we've done a good job as they let us know what works well.

Meetings in your neighbourhood

As well as getting involved in the work of Crawley Homes, there are also some local neighbourhood groups that meet.

These include: Northgate Matters, Talk Broadfield, Talk Bewbush, Three Bridges Neighbourhood Forum, Tilgate Neighbourhood Forum and Langley Green Neighbourhood Forum

Regular scrutiny meetings

Tenants & Leaseholders Action Panel (TLAP)

This panel is made up of twelve residents who meet quarterly to scrutinise Crawley Homes' performance, including complaints. The members of the panel are selected through a comprehensive recruitment process.

Training and support is given to members of this panel to help them with their role.

Other meetings

Working groups

From time to time small groups of tenants are recruited to work on specific projects. These have included the Annual Report Working Group that helps to produce the Crawley Homes' annual report to tenants.

Keeping you informed

Newsletters

Crawley Homes has a range of newsletters to keep its tenants and residents informed about what is happening with the management of their homes.

Crawley Homes News

An newsletter with short, snappy items sent to your inbox.

Leaselink

Leaselink is published for Crawley Homes' leaseholders twice a year.

Crawley Homes' Annual Report to Tenants

A yearly report, that gives an overview of how Crawley Homes has performed in the last financial year. This is usually sent out with the October rent statements.

Website: www.crawley.gov.uk/crawleyhomes

With the growing popularity of the internet the council's website plays an ever increasing role in keeping you informed. The council housing pages contain a wealth of information about our services along with e-forms that you can complete to report non-urgent repairs, ask for rent statements and make an enquiry about Lifeline and to make comments or complaints

Crawley Live

This is the council's magazine for all residents of Crawley and we regularly submit articles to the editor.

Comments, compliments and complaints

Our commitment to you

As a council, we are committed to delivering a high quality service. We aim to achieve the highest possible standards. However, despite our best intentions and hard work, things can go wrong. When this happens, we want to hear about it so that we can explain things and put them right.

Your comments, compliments and complaints give us essential information about what you think of our service.

Complaints

We treat every complaint seriously and think of them as an opportunity to improve our services.

How do I complain?

If you are dissatisfied with the service you have received you should, in the first instance, contact the relevant department who may be able to resolve the problem quickly without having to use the formal complaints procedure.

Complaints procedure

Stage 1 - If you are still not happy with the service provided or the explanation you have been given then please let us know. You can do this by filling in a form from the Town Hall, filling in a Feedback Form online at www.crawley.gov.uk/contact writing a letter, telephoning us, or come in and see us. Your complaint will be acknowledged within two working days and you will normally receive a full response within ten working days.

Stage 2 - If you are not happy with the reply at Stage 1 you can contact the Head of Crawley Homes to have your complaint reviewed. Your request for a review will be acknowledged within two working days and a full response will normally be sent within ten working days. If this is not possible you will be notified of the reasons why and when you can expect a full response usually within twenty working days.

If you remain dissatisfied with the response at Stage 2, you have the right to submit your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

To find out more visit www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk The Housing Ombudsman is an independent person employed by the Government to monitor the actions of registered social landlords, including council housing.

How to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service

Write to: 81 Aldwych, London WC2B 4HN

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Fax: 020 7831 1942

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Other non-housing complaints about the council are dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH. Visit their website at www.lgo.org.uk. Or call their Advice Team on 0300 061 0614 or 0845 602 1983.

Comments and compliments

Your comments on how we can improve our services are welcomed. Your compliments let us know when we are getting things right and allow us to reward employees for outstanding customer service. If you have a comment or compliment for us, please let us know.

Moving

Moving out – ending a tenancy

When you are moving out of your home you need to give us 28 days notice (unless you are moving to another Crawley Homes' home). If you leave the property earlier than this, we will charge you for the full 28 day period. In the event of the tenant's death, this period can be negotiated.

Different types of tenancies need to give different types of notice so please contact your housing officer as soon as possible so that we can send you the right forms.

If you have a secure or introductory tenancy you will need to give us a Notice to Quit.

If you are acting on behalf of the tenant either because of their death or incapacity then we will need the address and telephone number of where you can be contacted.

We will need a copy of the Death Certificate if the tenant has died and you are acting on behalf of the tenant as the next of kin

If you are acting on behalf of the tenant with power of attorney we will need a copy of the relevant paperwork.

Clearing the property

You must make sure that the property is left in a clean condition and clear of all rubbish, furnishings and belongings, including those that you no longer need. This includes lofts, gardens, pathways and outside buildings. If you do not do this you will be charged for any cleaning and for the removal and disposal of anything left behind. The council can collect large bulky items that you wish to dispose of before you move out (there may be a charge for this). Contact the Special Collection Service on 01293 438772.

Repairs

If we have to carry out any repairs to the property due to damage, including its fixtures and fittings, you will be charged for them. In the case of death the money may be claimed from the tenant's estate.

Returning the keys

You must return all of the keys to the property, including any outside buildings, sheds or cupboards and gas and electric meter keys by noon on the day that your tenancy ends. If we receive them after this time, we will charge you rent until we receive the keys.

The keys should be returned to a Housing Officer at the Town Hall where you will be given a receipt for them.

Before you leave, please make sure that all the rent due has been paid. We can still take action to collect any rent that has not been paid after you have ended the tenancy and left the property.

If you have any queries or would like to talk to someone about moving out or ending a tenancy, please contact a Housing Officer.

Housing Benefit

If you receive Housing Benefit to help you pay your rent and you are moving, you must inform Revenue Services at the Town Hall, as soon as possible of your change in circumstances and your new address.

In the event of the tenants death Housing Benefit will only be paid to the Sunday of the week in which the death occurred. Rent due after that date may be claimed from the deceased's estate.

If the tenant is moving to a nursing/care home please contact Revenue Services as soon as possible to discuss the tenant's individual circumstances.

What to do if you want to move

If you want to move you can apply to join the housing register or you can think about exchanging your home with another tenant by mutual exchange. Find out more at www.homeswapper.co.uk

Joining the housing register

The council has a policy which sets out how applications for housing will be prioritised and the procedures followed when selecting applicants to be tenants. People are prioritised for offers of accommodation depending on their current circumstances and housing need.

To join the Housing Register you will need to call them on 01293 438608.

Mutual exchanges

What is HomeSwapper?

HomeSwapper is for council and housing association tenants who want to swap homes. Their website allows you to look for other tenants who want to move. Signing up is free to Crawley Homes' tenants as we are partnered with the scheme.

Once you have found someone to swap with, you will both need to complete the Mutual Exchange forms you can get from the Town Hall or they can be printed off the website and return them to the Housing Management Team at the Town Hall.

Don't forget to complete the forms with details for both (all) parties otherwise this will delay things.

You must be a secure tenant with Crawley Homes to be considered for a Mutual Exchange although the person you swap with can be a secure council tenant or a housing association tenant. Introductory tenants do not have the right to exchange.

There are certain conditions that have to be met before a mutual exchange can be agreed by Crawley Homes, including a clear rent account. For more information on how to exchange your property with another tenant contact a Housing Officer or visit www.homeswapper.co.uk

Right to Buy

Under the Right to Buy scheme, secure tenants can buy their home at a price lower than the full market value. This is because the length of time you have previously spent as a tenant entitles you to a discount.

Do you qualify for the Right to Buy?

If you've been a council or public sector tenant for three years (it doesn't have to be three years in a row) you can apply for the right to buy. A public sector tenancy could be a tenancy with a council or a tenancy with certain housing associations or other public bodies.

You will **NOT** be eligible to apply for the Right to Buy if any of the following apply to you:

- You are under the age of 18 years
- You live in sheltered accommodation
- You have an introductory or demoted tenancy
- The property was let to you in connection with your employment
- You have a Bankruptcy Order (Insolvency Order) pending against you
- You have broken the terms of a Suspended Possession Order with regard to rent arrears
- You or a member of your family who is resident at the property is the subject of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO)
- The property is suitable for occupation by elderly people*

*A property that is suitable for occupation by the elderly is defined with regard to its location, size, design, and other features. In addition, the property was previously let to a person aged 60 or more.

How do I apply?

Apply for the Right to Buy by completing the form 'Notice Claiming the Right to Buy'. This form is known as an RTB1 and can be obtained online at www.righttobuy.communities.gov.uk or from the Town Hall. Once you have completed the form, return it to the council where it will be processed.

You will be entitled to a discount based on the number of years you have been a tenant. The discount is worked out as a percentage of the current market value of the property, although there is a maximum cash limit. On 21 July 2014 the law changed and maximum cash discounts will now increase annually by inflation. Contact us or visit www.righttobuy.communities.gov.uk to find out what the current maximum discount is. The property is valued at current market value and the discount deducted accordingly.

Initial costs incurred by exercising your Right to Buy

Applying for the Right to Buy is free, providing you deal with the council direct. We would advise you not to enlist the help of companies who either charge you for this service or offer you money up front in a deal which could ultimately lead to them owning your home.

When buying your property, you may have to pay Stamp Duty (Land Tax). You will need to employ either a licensed conveyancer or a solicitor to act on your behalf for the purchase. You will also need to have a survey done on the property. Your mortgage lender may insist on this.

Regular costs of being a homeowner

Before you buy, consider the costs involved after you have bought it. For example, once you have purchased the property you will be responsible for ALL of the repairs to the property. Leaseholders are responsible for all internal repairs to the property. They are also responsible for paying their share of the costs for external repairs.

Repair and maintenance

Once you purchase your home, you will be responsible for all of the costs of any repairs or maintenance of the property. It is your responsibility to seek advice as to the condition of the property before you buy it. Additionally, the council will no longer service your gas boiler each year. It will be your responsibility to ensure that annual checks are carried out.

If you are buying a flat, you will have to pay **service charges** for the upkeep of the property and you will be expected to contribute to maintenance, improvement and general day-to-day management costs. An estimate of the expected costs for the first five years will be issued to you when you receive your offer notice.

Risk of repossession

It is very important to keep up with your mortgage payments. If you are unable to keep up with your payments, your lender may take you to court to gain possession of your property. Should this occur, the council is under no obligation to grant you a tenancy should you find yourself homeless.

More information on the Right to Buy can be found:

In the government leaflet 'Your right to buy your home' on the Gov.uk website.

On The Governments Right to Buy website – www.righttobuy.communities.gov.uk

The Right to Buy Facebook page - www.facebook.com/righttobuy

Sheltered housing

We have approximately 550 homes in our sheltered housing schemes providing homes that allow residents to live independently but with the reassurance of knowing someone is there to help them if they need it.

If you are over 60 have you thought about living in sheltered housing?

We have sheltered housing schemes in most neighbourhoods of Crawley so you can live near to family and friends.

In one of our retirement homes:

- **You have your own front door** - The homes in our sheltered housing schemes are self-contained. You have your own front door, giving access to your own lounge, bedroom(s), kitchen and bathroom. You can come and go as you want, live life at your own pace and have your friends and family visit. Sheltered housing allows you to keep your independence in a home that best suits your needs.
- **There is someone to help if you need them 24 hours a day** - If you need help in an emergency you can pull the red emergency cords that can be found around your home and the communal areas of the schemes. During the day this call will be answered quickly either by an Older Persons Support Officer if they are on site or go through to our care centre. The care centre will respond during the night. The care centre will know automatically who you are, where you live and will contact the most appropriate person to help you. The care centre will make sure you get the right help as quickly as possible.
- **Security is paramount** - Most schemes provide a door entry system, which gives security and control over who enters your home via a handset in your apartment. This means that the only visitors you receive are welcomed ones. You also have the added security of the emergency alarm system that you can use if you need reassurance or want to set your mind at rest.
- **You are close to local buses and facilities** - Our sheltered housing schemes are generally near to the local shops and bus routes, allowing you to be independent and to get out and about. If you need to use an electric scooter, some of our schemes have special storage areas with recharging points for them. If you have your own car, the majority of our schemes have parking spaces close by so you have somewhere to park near to your home.

Living in a sheltered housing scheme has many benefits and these can include becoming a welcome member of the community you live in. The majority of the schemes have a communal lounge, where many activities take place. These range from the more traditional bingo and coffee mornings to games of darts, carpet bowls, snooker, and even lunch clubs. You can choose to join in as much or as little as you want

If you want to find out more about sheltered housing in general please contact our Older Person's Services Manager on 01293 438350 and they will be happy to talk to you and answer any queries you might have.

If you want to apply for a home in one of our sheltered housing schemes or you want up to date information about the availability and demand of sheltered housing please contact 01293 438608.

Useful information

Neighbourhood Services

Neighbourhood Services is part of the council. It is responsible for a range of services. These include:

- Rubbish and recycling collections

They collect your household rubbish every week. They collect your recycling from your REDtop bins every fortnight.

To find out which day your waste or recycling is collected please look on the website: www.crawley.gov.uk/waste or, if you don't have access to the internet please call 01293 438772

You can also find out more about your collections if you sign up to myCrawley.gov.uk

- Bulky item collection service
- GREENbin collection service or garden waste
- Clinical waste collection service for syringes, blood and human tissue
- Parks and outdoor spaces: Tilgate Park, Goffs Park, Worth Park, Bewbush Water Gardens and Ifield Mill, Broadfield Park, Memorial Gardens, Southgate Park, West Green Park.
- Sports grounds maintenance
- Allotments
- Trees - removal of dead, dying or dangerous trees
- Keeping the streets clean
- Graffiti removal
- Litter picking
- Grass cutting of verges and shrub bed maintenance - of council-owned beds and hedges.
- Snell Hatch Cemetery
- Let's FACE it!

Let's FACE it! is a volunteer programme for residents of Crawley. It encourages local people to make their environment a more pleasant place. Projects can range from planting bulbs, through to litter-picking or even clearing large areas to turn into flowerbeds.

For more information, or if you need help with any of the above services please contact:

Tel: 01293 438772

Email: amenity.services@crawley.gov.uk

www.crawley.gov.uk

Garages and stores

The council manages thousands of garages across Crawley and you don't have to be a council tenant to rent one from us.

In some areas all our garages are let, however you can put your name down on a register for the next available garage or we may be able to offer you a garage in another area.

A second garage can be rented at a reduced rate if there is no demand or no waiting list.

If you or someone you know would like to rent a garage or store or you'd just like some more information please contact us on 01293 438208, or visit www.crawley.gov.uk/garages

Lifeline

The link between you and people you can rely on Crawley Homes provides an emergency alarm called 'Lifeline' for anyone of any age living in Crawley who could need help without warning.

Lifeline is a discreet and prompt service enabling you to live independently. Having a Lifeline means you can let someone know if you get into difficulty, wherever you are in your home.

What is a Lifeline unit?

A Lifeline is a personal alarm system that provides a lifeline between you and the people you can rely on – 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The system which connects through your phone comes with a base unit and pendant. The pendant can be worn on a neck cord or wrist strap.

How the Lifeline works?

To raise an alarm call, you simply press the red button on the pendant or base unit

You will then speak directly to the operator using the powerful microphone and speaker in the base unit. The operator will call the appropriate help for you e.g. family/friend, ambulance, etc.

Who will answer my call?

When you press the red button on your pendant or the Lifeline itself, the Lifeline automatically dials our Care Centre where fully trained operators are available to deal with your call. When your call is answered, our Care Centre staff will know automatically who you are, where you live and who you would like them to contact in an emergency.

What do I need to have a Lifeline installed?

You will also need spare door keys to be held by family, friends or neighbours who would be prepared to act as your emergency contacts. If you don't have any key holders locally or you have trouble answering the door, you could still have a Lifeline. In these circumstances a keysafe maybe the answer. A secure code means you control who can open your door and in an emergency the Care Centre can pass this to the emergency services.

Will there be a charge?

There is a weekly rental charge for Lifeline. This charge includes all servicing and maintenance costs for the Lifeline unit and pendant, replacement of pendant batteries and the services of the Care Centre.

You will be responsible for the cost of your own telephone calls and line rental and you will continue to receive these bills in the normal way. For current charges please contact us.

Who can apply?

If you or someone you know is of retirement age or has a medical condition and they live in Crawley, you or they can apply for Lifeline. It does not matter whether you are a council tenant, rent your home from a Housing Association or private landlord or own your own home. Whether you live on your own or live with someone, you can apply for Lifeline. If you want to apply or just want to find out more about Lifeline please contact us.

Telecare products

You can add to the basic unit and pendant with a range of Telecare products that monitor your surroundings and automatically contacts the Care Centre if they detect a problem. The products are personal monitors (such as fall detectors, movement sensors, bed and chair occupancy sensors and medication dispensers) and environmental sensors (such as flood detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, temperature extremes sensors and heat detectors).

Further information

Tel: 01293 438468

Email: lifeline@crawley.gov.uk

www.crawley.gov.uk/lifeline

Useful contacts

Other areas of the council

Contact Centre

The main telephone number for the whole council.

01293 438000

www.crawley.gov.uk

The council's website contains lots of information about what we do across the whole council.

Housing Options

For all enquiries about the housing register or housing options advice

01293 438608

Payments

For credit or debit card payments to the council

01293 438312 (automated telephone system)

www.crawley.gov.uk/payments

Community Wardens

Litter, fly-tipping, dog fouling, stray dogs

01293 438000

Call 07884 492324 for an urgent response, 7:30am to 10pm, seven days a week.

Outside of the council

West Sussex County Council

General enquiries: during office hours

01243 777100

www.westsussex.gov.uk

Roads and transport

Roads, road safety, maintenance

01243 642105

To report faulty street Lighting:

0800 0482 435

West Sussex Mediation Service

Park House, North Street

Horsham

RH12 1RN

Tel: 0300 200 0025

Email: info@wsms.org.uk

www.wsms.org.uk

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction scheme

Benefits - 01293 438611

Email: benefits@crawley.gov.uk

www.crawley.gov.uk/benefits

Neighbourhood Services hotline

All services managed by Neighbourhood Services including rubbish and recycling collections.

01293 438772

Email: amenity.services@crawley.gov.uk

Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour Team

01293 438438

Email: asb@crawley.gov.uk

Claiming benefits

Department for Work and Pensions (i.e Jobcentre Plus, The Pension Service and Disability and Carers Service)

www.gov.uk/browse/benefits

NHS 111

The NHS non-emergency number.

Tel: 111

Citizens Advice

Advice Line: 0344 477 1171

www.centralandsouthsussexcab.org.uk

Utilities

Water

Southern Water (Supply of all areas except Maidenbower and Forge Wood)

www.southernwater.co.uk

Calls charged at local rate

Automated Telephone Service - 0330 303 1263

Payment enquiries - 0330 303 0277 (8am to 7pm, Monday to Friday and from 8.30am to 2pm on Saturdays)

Water and wastewater enquiries - 0330 303 0368 (8am to 7pm, Monday to Friday and from 9am to 1pm on Saturdays)

Thames Water (Sewerage)

www.thameswater.co.uk

0800 980 8800 (8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm Saturday)

Textphone 0800 316 6899.

South East Water (Supply in Maidenbower only)

www.southeastwater.co.uk

24 hour automated services - 0333 00 00 247

Account enquiries - 0333 000 0001 (8am to 7pm Monday to Friday, 8am to 1pm Saturday)

Water supply and general enquiries - 0333 000 0002 (8am to 7pm Monday to Friday, 8am to 1pm Saturday)

Independent Water Networks (Supply and Waste Water – Forge Wood)

www.iwnl.co.uk

Phone: 02920 028 711 (Enquiries 8.00am to 8.00pm Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 1.00pm Saturday)

Water or Drainage Emergencies Lines open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Gas and electricity

Information on who is the current supplier to your home can be obtained from National Grid for gas supplies.

0870 608 1524 (This is the M Number enquiry line. Ask for your MPRN (Meter Point Reference Number)). 0870 numbers will cost 7 per minute plus your phone company's access charge

EDF Energy Networks Meter Point Administration Service (MPAS) for electricity supplies.

0845 601 5467

These telephone numbers are particularly useful if you have just moved in.

Gas (gas escapes) - National Grid 0800 111 999

Electricity (power cut) - UK Power Networks 105 or 0800 3163 105

The Office of Gas & Electricity Markets (OFGEM). can provide advice on household energy bills and dealing with energy suppliers.

www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers