

# Everything you need to know about renting a home with us.



## Need to get in touch?

We're always here to help.



Speak to your  
**housing officer**



Visit us at  
**www.dghp.org.uk**



Call us free on  
**0800 011 3447**



Email us on  
**customerservice@dghp.org.uk**



Find us on Facebook  
**www.facebook.com/teamdghp**



Write to us  
**DGHP, Grierson House  
The Crichton, Bankend Road  
Dumfries, DG1 4ZS**

## What's inside?

Find out about...



### Section 1 My tenancy

Everything you need to know about your rights and responsibilities.

### Section 2 My rent

Your guide to paying rent and the ways we can help.

### Section 3 My repairs

Everything you need to know about your repairs service.

### Section 4 My safety

Your guide to keeping safe and sound in your home and community.

### Section 5 Ways we can help

We have lots of ways to help you, no matter what stage in life you're at.

### Section 6 Get involved

How to get involved and help shape our services.

### Section 7 Compliments and complaints

If you're happy or unhappy with any of our services let us know.



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

We can produce information on request in large print, Braille and audio formats. Visit [www.dghp.org.uk](http://www.dghp.org.uk) or contact your local housing officer.

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## Welcome to your DGHP home

We hope you will be happy in your new DGHP home. We're here to help you get the most out of being a tenant with us.

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### Your Tenant Handbook

This is your handy guide to your home and our services.

In here you will find lots of information about paying your rent, booking a repair and your rights and responsibilities. You will also find out about the help we can give you.

Please take time to have a look and keep it in a safe place so you can look things up when you need to.

### My Account

The easiest way for tenants to do many things now is through My Account, our online self-service portal.

It is simple to register and, once you have, you will be able to check your rent account, report a repair and request other services.

The good thing is you can do all that, and more, at any time of the night or day as long as you have access to the internet on a phone, tablet or computer.



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Sign up for **My Account**, register today at [www.dghp.org.uk](http://www.dghp.org.uk)

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## About us

At DGHP we are all about **better homes, better lives**. That means as well as providing you with a warm, comfortable home, we also offer a range of services to help you get the most out of living in your community.

All our staff are focused on delivering excellent customer services and on treating people with courtesy and respect. If we ever fall short of that, please let us know as we want to keep improving.

It is important that you talk to us if you are experiencing any difficulties in your tenancy. By doing so we will usually be able to find a solution to any problem.

We are part of Wheatley Group and work with our partners in Wheatley to do more for our customers and communities.



You can find out more about what we do and Wheatley Group at [www.dghp.org.uk/about](http://www.dghp.org.uk/about)

# 1

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## My tenancy

Everything you need to know about your rights and responsibilities.

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## Section 1 What's inside?



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## My tenancy

As a tenant you need to be aware of your responsibilities, and also your rights. You'll find all the details in your Tenancy Agreement, which is a legal document. Here is a quick guide to the important bits. We hope you find it useful.



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## My tenancy

### Your rent

Rent is payable every week in advance by you on or before the first day of each rental period. If you become a tenant, you are responsible for rent from day one. As soon as you accept the offer of a tenancy you will be sent a Homecard to make rent payments. You must make at least one week's rent payment before you sign your tenancy agreement.

If you choose to pay fortnightly, four-weekly or monthly, payments must be made in advance to avoid your rent account falling into arrears. DGHP's preferred method of payment is Direct Debit. Your housing officer will discuss this or alternative payment methods with you at the welcome visit.

You must make sure you do not break the terms of your Tenancy Agreement. This includes paying your rent. If you break the terms of your agreement, we may raise legal action which could ultimately lead to your eviction.

You and any joint tenant are equally responsible for paying rent, service charges and keeping to the terms of your Tenancy Agreement.

We carry out a rent review each year and will then consult with you. We listen carefully to the views of our tenants before making any decision on rents. We are entitled to increase rent after consultation as long as we tell you in writing at least four weeks before the increase starts.

### Your home

You must live in the house and use it as your only home. You must tell us who is living with you and any changes to people living there.

Reasonable care must be taken to avoid damage to your own and neighbours' homes. Please tell us in advance if you are leaving your home unoccupied, particularly in freezing weather.

All tenants must ask permission before they keep a pet or other animal.

You must not use your house for illegal or immoral purposes including dealing in drugs, running a brothel, dealing in stolen goods, illegal betting, or gambling.

You must take your turn in cleaning the common areas (unless there is a service charge for this to be done) You must keep the garden tidy and free from rubbish.

### Respect for others

You, people living with you and visitors must treat neighbours, other residents and our staff with respect. This means you should never:

- harass or act in an anti-social manner towards them
- threaten them with violence
- pursue any course of anti-social conduct towards them.

If you have a complaint about other people's behaviour, report it to us. We will investigate and take appropriate action if necessary.

We will not discriminate unfairly against you. If you believe we have acted unfairly, you can make a complaint.

### Sub-letting, passing on or exchanging your home

You must make a written request for permission before you:

- sub-let your tenancy to someone else
- pass on or assign your tenancy to someone else
- exchange your house
- take in lodgers
- add, change or remove the joint tenant.



Visit **page 67** for details about making a complaint.

## My tenancy

### Repairs, improvements and alterations

Before your tenancy begins we will inspect the house and carry out work to ensure it is wind and watertight and ready for you to live in.

You must tell us about repairs needed in your house. We will arrange to fix things within our repairs timescales.

You must report any damage to the house and common areas. We are not responsible for repairing damage caused by you. If we do, we will charge you for it.

Every year we will inspect the gas installations provided by us.

You must get written permission before you carry out any alterations or improvements to your home.

You are responsible for redecoration in the home.

### Ending your tenancy

Your tenancy can be ended in the following ways:

- › by you and any joint tenant, giving us at least 28 days' written notice
- › by written agreement between you, any joint tenant, and us
- › by court order for eviction after having first given you a written warning
- › by your death, if the house does not transfer to someone else
- › by conversion to a short Scottish Secure Tenancy.



You can find out more about repairs timescales on the repairs page of our website [www.dghp.org.uk](http://www.dghp.org.uk)

### What if a tenant dies?

If you die, the tenancy may be inherited by:

- › your husband or wife if it was their only home or
- › a joint tenant if it was their only home or
- › your partner if it was their only home or
- › any other member of your family who was living with you and it was their only home or
- › a live-in carer if it was their only home.

### Information and consultation

As a DGHP tenant you have been issued with a Privacy Notice that tells you what data we collect, how we store it and what we use it for. The most up-to-date version of our privacy notice is always available to view on our website at [www.dghp.org.uk](http://www.dghp.org.uk)

The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) gives you a number of rights including the right to find out if an organisation is using or storing personal data about you. You can exercise this right by asking for a copy of the personal data held, which is known as making a 'Subject Access Request'.

We will consult you about housing management issues.

We will also consult you on any proposal to transfer your homes to another landlord. Any such transfer would only take place if a majority of tenants were in favour of it.

## My tenancy

### Customer service commitments

We are committed to great customer service and exceeding your expectations in everything we do. Our commitments tell you how we will do this and what you can expect from us.

Customer service commitments We will	When
Process your housing application	within 10 working days
Attend emergency repairs	within 2.5 hours
Check all gas appliances in your home	once a year
All our staff and contractors visiting your home will wear corporate uniforms, present identification, and wear any relevant Personal Protection Equipment	on every visit
Our staff will be polite, courteous, respectful and approachable	on every visit
Our Customer Service Centre facility is available to give you access to advice and assistance	24 hours, seven days a week
Answer 80% of calls to our customer service centre	within 20 seconds

We will	When
Respond in full to your telephone enquiry	within one working day
Respond to or acknowledge any letters, emails, texts, facebook or twitter messages from you	within one working days
If unable to respond in full within this time, we will keep you advised of progress	every five working days
We are very happy to visit you at home (Covid restriction dependent – see pg. 29)**	on request, within five working days
If you make a complaint, we will acknowledge the complaint...	within two working days
...and give our decision (or advise you if further investigation is needed)	within five working days
If further investigation is needed to resolve your complaint, we will provide you with a full response	within 20 working days
We will provide publications and other information in different formats or languages	as soon as possible upon request
We will acknowledge Subject Access Requests and respond in full to requests made under Section 7 of the Data Protection Act 1998	within 40 days



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## My tenancy

### Complaints

We define a complaint as “the expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on our behalf.”

If you are not satisfied with the way we handle your complaint, you can complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

You may also take advice from an independent source such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau or a lawyer.

If you want to know more about your rights and responsibilities, talk to your housing officer or call us on **0800 011 3447**.



Visit **page 67** for details about making a complaint.

# 2

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## My rent

Your guide to paying rent and the ways we can help.

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## Section 2

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## My rent

We know money is tight – but paying your rent should be No.1 on your list.

It keeps the roof over your head. Don't risk losing your home because you've missed rent payments.



## My rent

**There are many ways we can help.** If you're worried about falling behind with payments then speak to your housing officer right away. It's important that you 'talk to us'.

We can help you keep on top of your rent – even if you're already in debt.



### When is my rent due?

Rent is paid as soon as you receive the keys to your new home.

Rent is due every every week.

### What does my rent pay for?

Rent allows us to keep improving homes, communities and the lives of our tenants. This includes:

- a quality repairs service
- new heating, insulation work, kitchens, bathrooms, windows, roofs and doors
- the environmental services and improvements around your home
- a customer service centre available 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- expert money, welfare and fuel advice to help you make the most of your money
- helping people into work, education and training.



Speak to your **housing officer** to find out more about when your rent is due.

## My rent

### Help with my rent

Are you worried about falling behind with your rent?

Don't wait until it's too late. We are here to help. Your housing officer has a range of support services to get you back on track.



### Repayment plan

Talk to us, we can help you pay off your debts either in full or with an arranged repayment plan you can afford.

### Money advice

Our expert money advisors can help you to manage your way out of debt and provide helpful budgeting advice.

### Benefit help

Welfare benefits advisors will help you get the maximum benefits so you receive every penny you are due. We can help with advice on Universal Credit, which will replace Housing Benefit, and advice on what to do if your benefit money is cut.

### Cut your fuel bills

Get on to the cheapest tariffs and arrange low-cost payment plans.

### What happens if I don't pay?

It is a condition of your Tenancy Agreement that you pay your rent on-time.

You must get in touch with us immediately if you miss a payment or are struggling to pay. We will do everything we can to help you. If you don't pay your rent and don't get in touch with us, we will contact you and find out why you haven't paid and offer you support to get back on top of things.

If you refuse to talk to us or fail to keep up with your agreed payment plan, we will take legal action. Where arrears continue to rise, we will, as a last resort, raise an action with the courts. If a Sheriff decides to grant a decree, an eviction must then take place.



Speak to your **housing officer** to arrange an appointment with a money advisor or request an appointment online.

## My rent

### Ways to pay my rent.

We have a range of easy ways to pay your rent.



### Direct Debit

Direct Debit is DGHP's preferred payment and easy to set up. Once you have set up a Direct Debit, your payment will come off your bank account on a date and at a frequency that suits you. If you don't have a bank account, we can help you get one.

### Recurring payment

If you pay regularly by debit card over the phone to our Customer Service Centre, we can make this easier for you by automating the process and prevent you having to keep contacting us to make a payment. If you choose this payment method, we can store your card details securely in the Allpay system and will take your weekly/fortnightly/four-weekly or monthly payment as scheduled.



#### Pay online

Visit our website and login to pay your rent online  
[www.dghp.org.uk](http://www.dghp.org.uk)

### Online

Register for, or log into, **My Account** and pay your rent. You can also see your account here. If you need help registering speak to your housing officer or call us.

If you pay using online banking, in a branch or by standing order, make sure you use your rent reference number so your payment goes into your account without delay.



**Set up a Direct Debit**  
Speak to your **housing officer** or call us on **0800 011 3447**.

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## Other ways to pay

### Phone

Call us for free Monday–Friday 8am–7pm on **0800 011 3447** to pay by debit or credit card and ask us about arranging a recurring card payment.

### Standing order

Set up a standing order with your bank.

### Post office

Pay at the post office with a DGHP rent payment card (Homecard).

### PayPoint

Pay at any shop that displays the PayPoint sign.

### Housing Benefit

If you receive full housing benefit, your rent is likely to be paid by Dumfries and Galloway Council. If you receive partial housing benefit, you are responsible for paying the rest.

The UK Government's Welfare Reform changes, will, over time, replace Housing Benefit with Universal Credit. Speak to your housing officer if you need any advice.

### Universal Credit

If you receive Universal Credit it is your responsibility to claim the Housing Costs as part of your Universal Credit claim and ensure that your rent is paid directly to DGHP. You will be responsible for any shortfalls.

# 3

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## My repairs

Everything you need to know about your repairs service.

## Section 3

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## My repairs

We do our best to keep your home warm, safe and dry. But we know things can go wrong from time to time. Our repairs team aims to fix problems quickly, first time.



## My repairs

### Reporting repairs

We are here 24 hours a day, seven days a week to deal with repairs – big or small. It is easy to report a repair.



#### Online

Are you registered for **My Account**? Report repairs by logging into your account and following the simple steps.



#### Call us

Not registered yet with **My Account**? Call us free of charge on 0800 011 3447. Monday–Friday 8am–7pm.

### What will happen?

Whether you book a repair online, by phone or in person, you will be able to:

- › describe the repair so we can send the right team to fix it
- › find out what your repair is classed as and what type of appointment slot you need (see more about the different type of repairs on page 32)
- › find out if the repair is covered by your Right to Repair (see page 34)
- › make an appointment that suits you.

Don't worry if you need to change the appointment. You can do that online or call us back on **0800 011 3447**.

### What happens next?

- › we will contact you to confirm the appointment before we visit you
- › our repairs team will arrive at your home – they'll have ID cards with them
- › please make sure you are at home so our team can get in to carry out the repair
- › The operative will ask you to fill in a feedback form on his or her hand-held device. Please fill it in to tell us what you think about our service. Your views will help us to keep improving.\*\*

\*\*These arrangements will be impacted by the existing Covid-19 restrictions on social distancing.



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## My repairs

**What repairs are DGHP responsible for?** Looking after your home is partly your responsibility and partly ours. Legally, as your landlord, we have to carry out certain repairs and to maintain your home to a safe standard.

Before a tenancy begins, we inspect the house and carry out work to ensure it is safe, secure and wind and watertight.

After you move in, we will carry out work to keep the property in reasonable repair. We will also inspect your home when required.

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## DGHP is responsible for repairing and maintaining:

- › the outside of the home including roofs, walls, gutters, downpipes, the close, close doors and backcourt
- › common areas inside such as entrances, halls, stairs, including walls, ceilings, paintwork, window safety catches and communal TV aerials
- › fittings in your home provided by us such as kitchen and bathroom fittings, water and gas pipes, heating systems, electrical wiring, windows and doors
- › areas around your home including paths, walls, fences, drains, bin stores and drying areas.

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## What are you responsible for?

You must:

- › report damage or any repairs needed to your home
- › allow us access to your home to carry out repairs and maintenance, inspections and annual gas servicing
- › take care of your home and communal areas
- › pay for repairs where someone in your household or a visitor caused the damage.

You are responsible for replacing:

- plugs
- lightbulbs
- toilet seats
- filters for cooker hoods
- lost or broken keys
- batteries in smoke alarms.

## My repairs

### Different types of repair

There are three types of repair – emergency repairs, appointed repairs and programmed repairs. Here is a bit more about them and what you can expect to happen for each type.



### Emergency repair

If there is a threat to health and safety or we need to take quick action to stop any damage to your home or to a neighbour's home, it is an emergency repair. Examples include burst water pipes or if your front door is not secure.

We will call and make your home safe within two-and-a-half hours and the repair should be completed within 24 hours.

### Appointed repair

If there's no health or safety risk but something in your home needs fixed because it's causing an inconvenience, it's an appointed repair.

Appointed repairs are carried out within 15 days. Most customers choose an appointment and the repair is done in four days.

### Programmed repair

Day-to-day repairs which are our responsibility but don't fall into either of the other repairs types are called programmed repairs.

We will attend within 30 days. Usually these repairs need an inspection to decide what work and materials are needed.



Report a repair online, sign in to **My Account** by visiting [www.dghp.org.uk](http://www.dghp.org.uk)

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## My repairs

### What you pay for

Remember if you or someone in your household, or a visitor to your home, causes damage, we will charge you for the repair. We also charge for lost or broken keys. We'll let you know upfront how much it will be.

### Our staff

Our staff carry ID badges with their photo on it. If you are in doubt about someone asking to get into your home, don't let them in and call us right away.

Our staff will always be professional and try to cause as little disruption in your home as they can. They will keep hazards to a minimum while work is carried out and make sure people can get in and out of your home at all times.

### Your rights

You have the right for small, urgent repairs to be carried out by us within set timescales.

Under The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, you may be due compensation if the repair isn't carried out in the time limit.

When you report a repair, we will:

- tell you if it's covered under the Right to Repair scheme
- tell you your rights.

The Right to Repair scheme covers certain repairs up to the value of £350. Repair times depend on the type of repair and are set by law, not DGHP.



Visit [www.dghp.org.uk/repairs](http://www.dghp.org.uk/repairs) for more on timescales for different repairs.

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## My repairs

### Tell us what you think

We really value your views on issues like repairs and customer service. It's only by listening to what our customers tell us that we can keep improving what we do.

Please let us know what you think by using the feedback form on the hand-held device that our staff will ask you to use or by contacting us in whatever way suits you. (Covid-dependent restriction – see page 29.)

### Our commitment to you

There are certain standards of service you have a right to expect when you are in contact with us. We call these standards our customer service commitments.



Visit **page 12** for our customer service commitments.

# 4

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## My safety

Your guide to keeping safe and sound in your home and community.

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## My safety

We want you to feel safe in your home. As your landlord, we help you stay safe by carrying out gas safety visits in your home every year, providing a smoke alarm and maintaining your home to a safe standard.



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## My safety

We ask that you take steps to make sure you don't put yourself or others at risk. That includes keeping your home free of fire hazards, putting rubbish in the bins or bin chutes and not leaving bikes or prams in stairwells where they block people's way out.



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### Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

We all want to live in quiet, safe communities without any anti-social behaviour. We do not tolerate anti-social behaviour and work closely with the police and fire services to deal with any issues. Remember, if you or anyone visiting your home acts in an unacceptable way, you could lose your home.

Housing officers and police officers share information to deal with issues such as anti-social behaviour, noisy parties, and drug dealing.

### Worried about anti-social behaviour in your area?

Report it to us straight away.



To report anti-social behaviour online, log on to **My Account** and use the website form or call us on **0800 011 3447**.

## My safety

### Fire safety

A fire in your home could kill you and your neighbours. We're working with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to make your home safe and help you reduce the risk of fire.



Make sure there is a working smoke alarm in your home. A smoke alarm will give you those precious few minutes of warning which could help you and your family get out safely.

If you want to know more, or think you need a smoke alarm fitted, get in touch with us today. You can also get a free home fire safety visit which will check for any risks in your property.

#### How do I get a home fire safety visit?

Home fire safety visits help tenants cut the risk of fire in their home.

Get a free home fire safety visit from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Fire officers carry out an inspection of your home and can warn you of potential fire risks. If needed, you'll get free smoke alarms

Speak to your housing officer to make an appointment or book your free visit from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service by:

- texting 'FIRE' to **80800** from your mobile phone
- calling **0800 0731 999**.

As your landlord, we also play our part including:

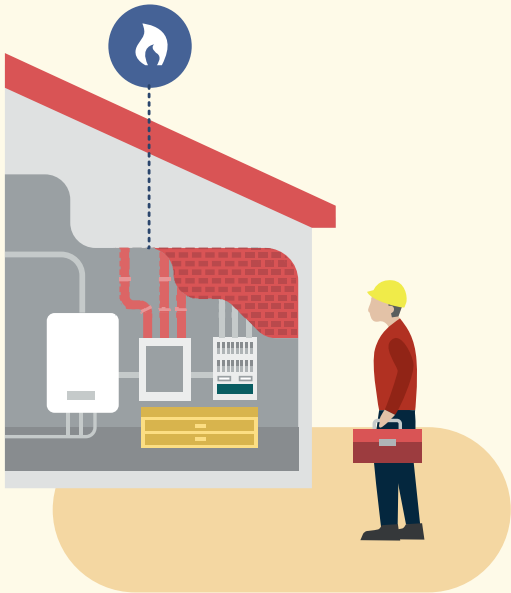
- making sure all gas appliances are in good working order
- carrying out a gas inspection each year
- fitting smoke alarms in your home
- keeping homes fit to live in.

Help us keep you safe by giving staff access to your home when needed.

## My safety

### Gas safety

We need to carry out at least one gas safety visit in your home each year. It's the law for all responsible landlords.



### Gas safety

We need to carry out at least one gas safety service visit in your home each year and within 12 months of the previous service visit. It's the law for all responsible landlords.

### What will happen

You will receive a letter from us 10 months after your last check with a date for your next visit. If you are not able to make the scheduled date, let us know and we will rearrange. Please note the service must be completed within 12 months from the previous service date.

Make sure you are at home on the day of your gas safety check. If you miss this safety check and any rearranged appointments, to comply with the law we may force entry to your home – and all costs will be charged to you.

**I smell gas. What do I do?**  
Follow these simple steps straight away:

- turn off all gas appliances
- put out any cigarettes
- open all doors and windows
- don't use matches or naked flames
- turn gas off at the meter
- don't switch on any electrical switches or appliances
- don't press buttons on the door entry systems.



### If you smell gas

Call emergency service company SGN as soon as you can on 0800 111 999.

You can also call us on 0800 011 3447.



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## My safety

### Asbestos

Asbestos is not dangerous if it's sealed safely and in good condition. It's only dangerous when it is broken and fibres are released into the air. It's important you don't:

- drill a hole through any asbestos boards
- cut or break off any parts of asbestos products
- rub down asbestos panels, or artex, with sandpaper
- use wallpaper scrapers on asbestos products
- remove asbestos panels to gain access to services.

### Why was asbestos used in homes?

Asbestos was a popular material for house builders right across the UK as it's resistant to heat and chemicals.

It's likely to be found in homes built between the 1950s and 1980s. Homes built since the mid-80s are unlikely to contain asbestos in the fabric of the building, but they may have some traces in parts of the building.

### Is asbestos still used in homes?

Homes built after 1990 almost certainly don't contain asbestos anywhere in the building.

If there's asbestos in your home, you must not damage or disturb it. Don't use any electrical tools or use a hammer to break any asbestos.

### I want to carry out DIY in my home. What should I do?

If you want to carry out DIY then speak to your housing officer first. They can check if there's any asbestos in your home.

### Be alert to bogus callers

Bogus callers are criminals who claim to be someone they're not to get into your home.

They could target anyone at any time, but they often focus on the over-60s. They'll often pretend to be from DGHP, a council department or a utility company. What they want to do is steal your money and valuables.

Rogue traders offer to carry out work on your house, garden or driveway. They charge inflated prices for shoddy or unnecessary work.

### Tips to keep safe:

- don't let any strangers into your home
- use a door chain, if you have one
- always ask for proof of identification and check it carefully – it must have a photograph of the caller on it
- never be persuaded or bullied to let someone inside your home or worry about seeming rude
- if in doubt – keep them out
- never give keys to workmen or tradesmen unless you are certain you can trust them – copy keys are easily made.

### What to do if you receive a visit from a bogus caller

Call the police on **101**. You should then call us on **0800 011 3447**. If the bogus caller or rogue trader refuses to leave or you feel scared, phone **999** and ask for the police.

## My safety

### Advice on keeping warm

As temperatures drop, it's vital to keep warm and cosy in your home. Make a few simple changes to your home and life and you'll not have to worry – even if the weather does its worst.



### Useful tips

Tips to beat the chill:

- have regular hot drinks and at least one hot meal a day
- wear several light layers of warm clothes to keep heat in
- keep active and wrap up warm if you go outside
- draw your curtains at dusk and keep doors closed to block out draughts
- keep your living room at around 18–21°C (64–70°F) to keep warm
- check dripping taps and overflows to prevent waste pipes freezing and flooding
- have your annual gas service to keep your heating system working well
- if you're not going to be at home for a couple of days, set your heating to come on for a couple of hours a day – and leave a key with a friend or neighbour.

Frozen or burst pipes? Heating or boiler broken? Tiles blown off your roof? Get in touch right away.

### Keep warm and keep bills down

Don't pay too much for your electricity and gas. Our fuel advisors help tenants of all ages find the lowest energy rates. Advisors can also arrange low-cost repayments if you have fallen behind with payments or, in some cases, get debts written off.



Speak to your **housing officer** to arrange an appointment with a fuel advisor or request an appointment online.

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## My safety

### Condensation

Do your windows steam up when the heating is on? Do you notice wet spots on your walls when you're cooking?

If so, it is likely to be condensation. Condensation happens when moist air touches a cool surface. It forms water droplets. It can also happen when large pieces of furniture, for example wardrobes and beds, are placed against an outside wall.

Preventing condensation in the home is your responsibility. But the good news is there are steps you can take to stop it happening.

You can treat little spots of mould quickly and easily. Use three parts warm water and one part bleach. Make sure you dry the wall after cleaning it. If this doesn't work, speak to your housing officer.

### Do:

- keep a window open when drying clothes indoors
- keep the internal kitchen door closed when cooking
- keep lids on pots and pans when cooking
- use an extractor fan in the kitchen and bathroom, if you have one
- heat and ventilate rooms at risk
- put the tumble dryer hose out of the window or door.

### Don't:

- dry clothes over warm radiators
- overfill cupboards and wardrobes
- keep furniture and beds hard against walls.

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# 5

## Ways we can help

We have lots of ways to help you, no matter what stage in life you're at.

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## Section 5

### What's inside?

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### Ways we can help

DGHP has lots of ways to help you settle into your home and to cope with life, whatever stage you are at.

Here we explain some of the ways we can help you.



## Ways we can help

### Worried about money?

We can help. If you ever think you need extra support, please talk to your housing officer.



### Money and benefits

We can help you budget, manage your finances and deal with any debt you may have.

Welfare benefits advisors are on hand to make sure you are claiming all the benefits and tax credits you are entitled to.

Speak to your housing officer to make an appointment or call us on 0800 011 3447.

### Don't go hungry

Are you worried about putting food on the table for yourself or your family?

Don't be embarrassed to ask for help – we're here to support you.

Our Eatwell scheme helps tenants who face real hardship and who may be forced to turn to food banks. Eatwell is about more than just emergency food parcels.

Our expert money, debt and budgeting support can help you in the months and years ahead. Speak to your housing officer or call us on 0800 011 3447.



Speak to your **housing officer** or visit **[www.dghp.org.uk](http://www.dghp.org.uk)** for more ways we can help.

## Ways we can help

### Advice on fuel bills

Our fuel advisors help tenants of all ages find the lowest energy rates. Don't pay too much for your electricity and gas.

Advisors can also arrange low-cost repayments if you have fallen behind with payments – or, in some cases, get debts written off.

### Banking

Many people worry about getting charges on a bank account. But we can help. We can help you open a fee-free bank account where you will not be charged when a direct debit or standing order fails.



Speak to your **housing officer** about the ways we can help or visit [www.dghp.org.uk](http://www.dghp.org.uk) for more.

### Jobs and training

We have a range of ways to help people into jobs and training.

We recruit Modern Apprentices each year and have other employability schemes to support people in our communities.

We encourage our contractors to provide jobs and training for tenants through our Wheatley Pledge scheme. To find out more and see the latest job opportunities go to [www.dghp.org.uk/recruitment](http://www.dghp.org.uk/recruitment)

### Need support settling in?

DGHP has lots of ways to help you settle in to your home and your local community. Speak to your housing officer about any extra support you need.

### Tenancy Support Service

Our Tenancy Support Service is a lifeline to people who may be struggling to make a go of their home. There are many reasons why people may not always manage to live well and stay safe at home – anything from debt to health problems.

Our Tenancy Support Service, run in partnership with Loretto, will give people personalised support.

The team can help with everything including: money and debt advice; applying for jobs; accessing support for mental health or addiction issues; or getting out into the community more.

### Over 60 or disabled?

We have a range of services to help you live well in your home.

### Disabled adaptations

We know there is no place like home. By making a few small changes at home we can help disabled tenants live safely and independently without having to move.



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## Ways we can help

There are two types of disabled adaptations, small and big.

### Small disabled adaptations

We can fit:

- handrails
- grabrails
- lever taps
- higher/lower power points
- an overbath shower.

### Big disabled adaptations

We can fit:

- ramps
- level access showers
- extensions.

An occupational therapist will visit your home to look at your needs.



Ask your **housing officer** about adaptations you'd like in your home or find out more at [www.dghp.org.uk](http://www.dghp.org.uk)

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# 6

## Get involved

How to get involved and help shape our services.

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## Section 6

# What's inside?

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## Get involved

Have your say – in whatever way suits you. Here's all the ways you can get involved and help shape our services.





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## Get involved

We want tenants to get involved and help shape our services. There are lots of different ways for you to have your say about your community, DGHP and the way we work.

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We hold community events – including litter picks and pop-up events – throughout the year where you can come along and talk to us.

We also carry out consultations and tenant conferences in our head office which let you have a say in some of the big issues for tenants.

Our Tenants' Satisfaction Survey, which is carried out each year, asks tenants their views on what we are doing right – and how we can get better.

### Registered Tenant Organisations

Tenant groups who meet our conditions can become a Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO). RTOs can get direct grant funding to help them with one-off costs. They represent the interests of customers in local areas. They also carry out a range of activities including organising events to improve their neighbourhoods.



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Keep up to date with what's going on and how you can get involved, visit [www.dghp.org.uk](http://www.dghp.org.uk)

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## Get involved

You can join in a conversation with us on Facebook and Twitter – or you can become part of our panels, forums or committees. Or you could apply to become a tenant Board Member.



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# 7

## Compliments and complaints

If you're happy or unhappy with any of our services let us know.

## Section 7

### What's inside?



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## Compliments and complaints

We do all we can to get things right for you first time.

If we don't get things right, we'll listen and learn so we can try to stop it happening again. If you're unhappy with any of our services, please let us know.



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## Compliments and complaints

Our complaints policy follows the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman complaint handling model.

We also want to hear from you if we've gone that extra mile to help. Get in touch to tell us about the great service you've received.

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### What is a complaint?

A complaint is when you tell us you are unhappy with the action – or the lack of action – we have taken. It's also when you tell us you're dissatisfied with the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

### How do I complain?

You can complain:

- online at [www.dghp.org.uk](http://www.dghp.org.uk)
- in writing to Grierson House, The Crichton, Bankend Road, Dumfries, DG1 4ZS
- by email at [customerservice@dghp.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@dghp.org.uk)
- by phone **0800 011 3447**

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. So please talk to a member of our staff. Then they can try to resolve any problems on the spot.

When complaining, tell us:

- your full name and address
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- how you want us to resolve the matter.

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## Compliments and complaints

### What happens when I complain?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint.

Our complaints procedure has two stages. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But if it is clear that the matter will need a detailed investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.

#### **Stage one: Resolving your complaint quickly**

We will tell you who is responsible for resolving your complaint within two working days. We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within five working days.

If you are unhappy with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at stage two.

#### **Stage two: Investigating your complaint**

We will review your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at stage one.

If it is clear that a complaint is more complex, sensitive or needs a detailed investigation or if there's a specific reason why it cannot be resolved quickly, we will investigate it as a stage two complaint.

We will acknowledge your complaint within two working days. We will give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than 20 working days unless there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.

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## Compliments and complaints

### Still unhappy?

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have handled your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) or where appropriate The Care Inspectorate to consider it. We will tell you how to do this when we send you our final decision.

### What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- delays in responding to your enquiries and requests;
- failure to provide a service;
- our standard of service;
- dissatisfaction with our policy;
- treatment by, or attitude of, a member of staff;
- our failure to follow proper procedure.

Your complaint may involve more than one of our services or be about someone working on our behalf.

### What can't I complain about?

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

- a routine first-time request for a service, for example reporting a problem that needs to be repaired or initial action on anti-social behaviour
- requests for compensation
- our policies and procedures that have a separate right of appeal, for example, if you are dissatisfied with the level of priority you have been given when applying for a house, you may have the right to appeal against the decision (details of how to do this are set out in our Housing Appeals process)
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal

- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision following a stage two investigation. If you are still not satisfied, you can ask the SPSO, or where appropriate The Care Inspectorate for an independent review of the complaint.

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns we will give information and advice to help you.

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## Compliments and complaints

### Who can complain?

Anyone can make a complaint, including the representative of someone who is unhappy with our service.

In these circumstances we will need a representation mandate so we can respond to the complaint.

### How long do I have to make a complaint?

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

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

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



Please also read the section 'Help to make a complaint' on **page 76**.

### Serious failures

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) can consider issues raised with them about “significant performance failures”.

A significant performance failure is defined by the SHR as something that a landlord does or fails to do that puts the interests of its tenants at risk, and which the landlord has not resolved.

This is something that is a systematic problem that does or could, affect all of a landlord’s tenants. If you are affected by a problem like this, you should first report it to us. If you have told us about it but we have not resolved it, you can report it directly to the SHR.

A complaint between an individual tenant and a landlord is not a significant performance failure.

The SHR also has more information on their website: **[www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk](http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk)** or you can phone them on **0141 271 3810**.

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## Compliments and complaints

### Help to make a complaint

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

We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service.

We can take complaints from a friend, relative, or an advocate, if you have given them your consent to complain for you.

You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting the **Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance** visit [www.siaa.org.uk](http://www.siaa.org.uk), call 0131 524 1975 or **Citizens Advice Bureau** visit [www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk)

### Compliments

Are you happy with our service? Please let us know as we can use your experience to improve things for other people.



Are you happy with our service? Visit [www.dghp.org.uk](http://www.dghp.org.uk) to let us know.



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## Sign up for My Account

Creating an account only takes a few minutes, you can pay your rent, report a repair and much more at a time that suits you.

Register at [www.dghp.org.uk](http://www.dghp.org.uk)