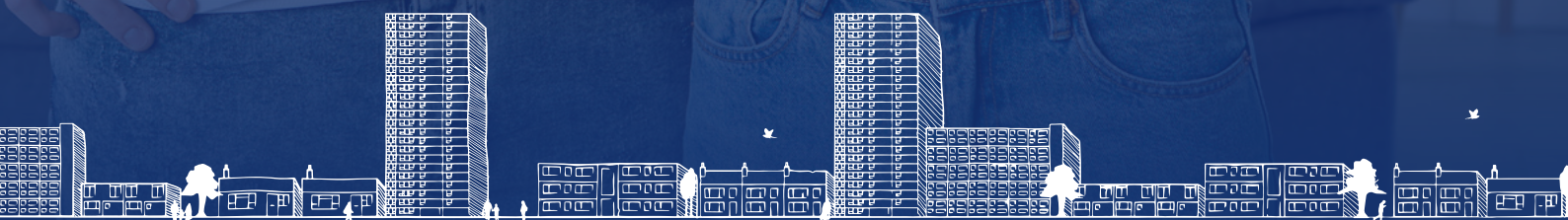




Welcome to Portsmouth Homes

Everything you need to know
about your new home



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Hello

from Portsmouth Homes, Portsmouth City Council's housing service, managing homes across Portsmouth, Havant, Gosport, Fareham and Winchester.

This is your tenant information pack.

We're so happy to have you in our community. We've proudly provided and managed council homes in Portsmouth since 1911.

You're at the heart of everything we do. We listen, learn and tailor our services to meet your needs. You'll have access to:

-  a dedicated housing or leasehold officer
-  responsive repairs and 24/7 support
-  money, employment and tenancy advice
-  our resident magazine, House Talk, three times a year
-  and our e-newsletters

We value your feedback and offer regular opportunities to connect, share concerns and celebrate successes. Our resident engagement team make sure your voice helps shape our services.

Let us know if you have specific needs - **we're here to help, every day of the year.**



James Hill, Director of Housing with responsibility for compliance with housing standards



Cllr Darren Sanders, Lead Member for housing complaints



Amy Holmes, Head of Compliance, lead officer for health and safety in partnership with the council's corporate team

About Portsmouth Homes

As a landlord, we are inspected by the Regulator of Social Housing to make sure we're doing a good job for our tenants and leaseholders. They have set four key standards that we legally must follow:

- 1. Safety and Quality Standard**
We must provide safe, good-quality homes and services, making sure repairs and maintenance are done properly and on time
- 2. Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard**
Tenants must be kept informed, listened to, and involved in decisions that affect their homes and communities
- 3. Neighbourhood and Community Standard**
We must work with others to keep shared spaces safe, tackle anti-social behaviour, and support community wellbeing
- 4. Tenancy Standard**
Tenants should be treated fairly, supported to maintain their tenancies, and supported to find an alternative home when circumstances change

Each year we complete self-assessments against these standards and the housing ombudsman's complaint handling code. You can view our latest assessments and how we're performing as a landlord by visiting portsmouth.gov.uk/tenants

You can also find all our policies online at portsmouth.gov.uk by searching 'Portsmouth Homes policies'. These policies explain what you can expect from us and what we expect from you. They help make sure everyone is treated fairly, decisions are consistent, and we follow the law. They're always available so you can check how we work and if we are delivering on our promises.

If you think that we are falling short on any of our standards or policies, there are lots of ways for you to hold us to account - see "Complaints, comments and compliments" on page 33.

For more information, search 'Regulator of Social Housing' on gov.uk.



Key contacts

Housing office/officer

Repairs and maintenance

023 9284 1311

Emergency repairs (out of hours)

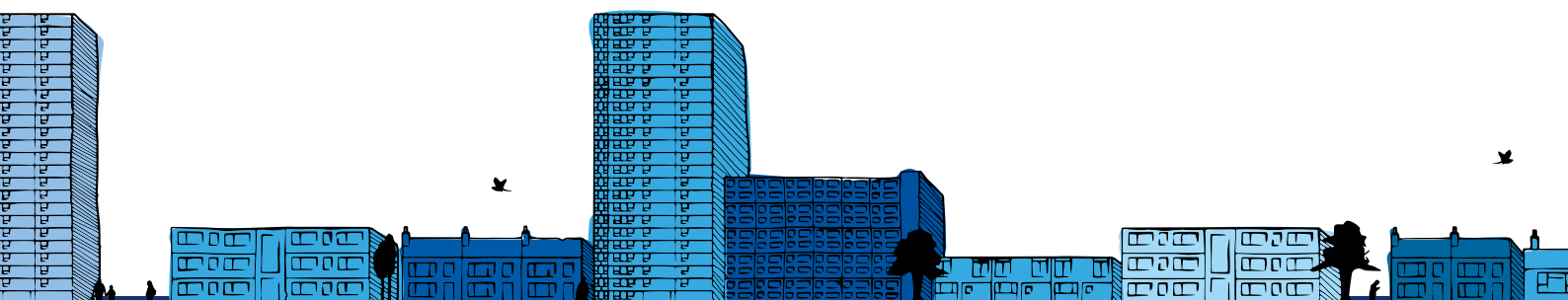
023 9282 4244

Resident engagement

023 9283 4835

Gardening and cleaning issues

023 9268 8444



Your tenancy

Tenant responsibilities



pay your rent on time



keep your home and communal areas clean and tidy



report repairs promptly on: 023 9284 1311



follow the rules in your tenancy agreement



ask permission before completing home alterations



maintain good decorative order



allow access to your home and be present for stock condition surveys and tenancy update visits; repairs, safety and electric checks, including gas servicing.

Note: contractors will not attend where there are children with no adult in the property



report safety concerns



treat people around you with respect. Do not harass or cause any distress to others.



report communal cleaning and gardening issues to us so we can respond 023 9268 8444



tell us if you're moving



do not sublet entire home



keep your garden tidy. If you need help, we may be able to offer help 023 9268 8444.



if working from home, collect any additional permissions and do not disturb your neighbours whilst working.



check with your Housing Officer before getting a pet. They must be well cared for and not disturb neighbours.

You should look after your property to the best of your ability. If something is broken, you should report it to the repairs team. For the full list of what is your responsibility and what is ours, visit "Responsibilities" on page 13.

Your agreement

General needs / Sheltered housing

*delete as applicable



Tenancy agreement

This agreement is between you as the tenant and the council as your landlord. If you have a joint tenancy then this agreement applies equally to both of you.

The council's responsibilities as your landlord

This tenancy agreement is managed by the housing service on behalf of the council.

If you think that the housing service is not keeping to these responsibilities contact your area housing manager who will investigate and answer your concerns.

1. Your right to live in your home

We will not interfere with your occupation of your home without your agreement except in an emergency or where a court has given us possession of your home.

(Any Notice of Seeking Possession or Notice to Quit will be valid if left at your home.)

2. Maintaining the structure of your home

We are responsible for maintaining the structure of our property and carrying out repairs.

The structure of your home includes for example:

- The outside structure includes the roof, chimney, drains, gutters, pipes, walls, doors and windows.
- The inside structure includes walls, floors, ceilings, doors and door frames.

3. Maintaining the installations in your home

We are responsible for maintaining the installations in our property and carrying out repairs.

The installations of your home includes for example:

- water pipes and tanks
- electrical installations including wiring, sockets and light fittings
- gas installations including all pipework
- heating installations including appliances, boilers and radiators

- kitchen units, sink and worktops
- bathroom installations including wash hand basins, baths and W.C.s

We may not be responsible for repairs that are required because of misuse, damage or neglect by you or any member of your household, visitor or pet or to installations fitted without our prior written consent.

You are responsible for decorations inside your home.

4. Communal areas

Communal areas are locations that all residents have access to and may include stairways, corridors, balconies, lifts, shared gardens and other housing land.

You must keep communal areas clear of your personal belongings and rubbish.

5. Timescale for repairs

We will endeavour to arrange a mutually convenient specific timed appointment with you to carry out any repairs required, the timescale of which will depend on the urgency of the repair.

6. Your right to be consulted

We will discuss with you any major changes or issues affecting your home.

www.portsmouth.gov.uk

Joint tenancies

A joint tenancy gives equal rights and responsibilities to both tenants. Both must follow the tenancy rules. You must let us know if you or the other joint tenant moves out. If your relationship breaks down, seek legal advice to decide who keeps the tenancy. You cannot move to another property until this is resolved.

Lodgers, subletting, and holiday letting

You can have a lodger who shares your home and meals. A sub-tenant lives separately and makes their own meals. You need permission to sublet part of your home. You cannot rent out your whole home and move out, including short-term rentals like Airbnb. Doing so can lead to losing your tenancy and legal action.

Your agreement

Lodger responsibilities

You are responsible for anyone living in your home. If you leave, your lodger or sub-tenant must leave too. Inform us and the Department for Work and Pensions about any rent you receive if you get housing benefit or Universal Credit.

Contents insurance

You need contents insurance to cover things like break-ins, fires or leaks. We offer an insurance scheme just for Portsmouth Homes residents. Ask your housing officer or search our website for **'home contents insurance'** for more information.

Ending your tenancy agreement

If you plan to move out, we will usually ask you to provide us with four weeks' notice but as a minimum you must give us the required notice period as outlined in your tenancy agreement.

Before leaving, you must:

- make sure all rent is paid up to your moving date
- arrange a property inspection with us
- leave the property clean and clear. Any leftover belongings or damage may result in a charge

You may also be asked to let a new tenant view your home before you leave.

For the full policy on leaving a property, you can view the 'Moving out Standard' in the Void Management Policy at portsmouth.gov.uk/void-policy

If you have any questions or concerns, contact your housing officer who will be happy to help.

Passing on or giving over a tenancy

If a tenant dies, certain people living in the home may have rights to take over the tenancy. Keep us updated on who lives in your home for benefit claims, Council Tax, and the Electoral Roll, as this affects succession rights. Contact your Housing Officer for more information.

You can transfer your secure tenancy to someone else (assignment) in these cases:

- mutual exchange with another tenant (needs our written permission)
- court order following relationship breakdown or orders relating to children
- with our permission, you can transfer your tenancy to someone who would succeed after your death, provided it doesn't result in under-occupation



Charges and payments

Your rent and service charge

Your regular payment to us includes your rent, and if it applies, a service charge. These are shown separately on your account, but it's just one payment.

Rent

Is calculated on a weekly basis every Monday. However, you can choose whether you'd like to pay your rent weekly, every two weeks, or monthly. We aim to be as flexible as possible to help you make payments without unnecessary stress.

Service charge

You may pay a charge for services we provide, such as cleaning and maintaining communal gardens to keep shared spaces safe, clean and tidy. Your service charges cover:

- caretaking
- out of hours services
- CCTV
- communal lighting
- support and community services

How much you pay is based on the actual cost of providing the services and we review this each year.

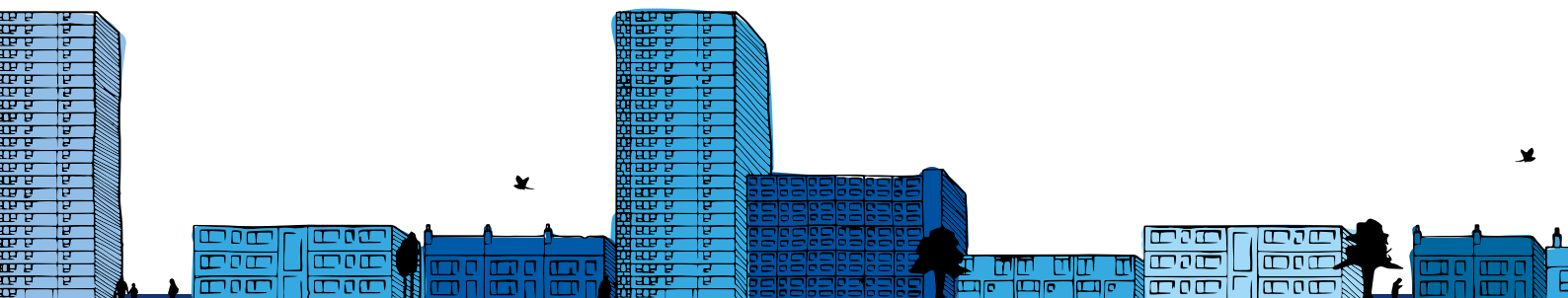
How to make a housing payment

Outside of your rent, there may be other housing payments you need to make, such as:

- former tenant arrears
- court costs or other debts
- garage or parking space
- leasehold service charges

There are lots of ways to make a housing payment, so you can choose the method that works for you.

- standing order, direct debit or bank transfer to:
 - **Portsmouth City Council (housing revenue collection account)**
 - Sort Code: **20-69-57**
 - Account Number: **23526623**
 - Branch Address: **Barclays PLC, 107 Commercial Road, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO1 1BT**
- cash or cheque at any of our housing offices or the Civic Office.
- giro swipe card at the Post Office





Problems paying rent

Paying your rent on time is really important. If you fall behind, you could lose your home, but we're here to help. Talk to us as soon as possible if you're struggling. Our Housing Officers and money advisers can support you with benefits, debt, and DWP issues.

If you don't respond or break a payment plan, we may have to take legal action. You'll get a notice and have one month to agree a repayment plan before we go to court. If the court grants possession, you could be evicted unless the debt is cleared.

We'd much rather help you stay in your home - it's never too late to ask for support. You can also get free, independent advice from Advice Portsmouth, Citizens Advice, or a solicitor. There's more information in "Money advice and support" on page 36.

Heating and hot water charges

If you live in block with communal heating and hot water, you will need to pay a heating charge. This is calculated based on the rate of use and projected energy prices and is consulted on every year.

Repairs and maintenance



Looking after your council property is a joint responsibility between you, the tenant, and Portsmouth Homes, your landlord. You can view a full list of what you need to maintain and what we can repair on our policy page which you can find by visiting [**portsmouth.gov.uk/tenants**](https://portsmouth.gov.uk/tenants).

As your landlord, we are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing. This means we must:

- provide homes that meet the government's Decent Homes Standard:
 - is safe to live in
 - is in reasonable state of repair
 - has modern facilities
 - provides thermal comfort
- follow health and safety laws, including managing asbestos, and ensuring gas, water, and electrical safety
- make sure all homes are fit to live in
- follow Awaab's Law to investigate and fix damp and mould within strict time frames.

Repair appointments are available Monday to Friday, between 8.30am and 5pm.

Emergency repairs can be carried out outside these hours, including weekends and bank holidays.

Repairs and maintenance

Responsibilities

What you are responsible for

To help us maintain your home, it is your responsibility:

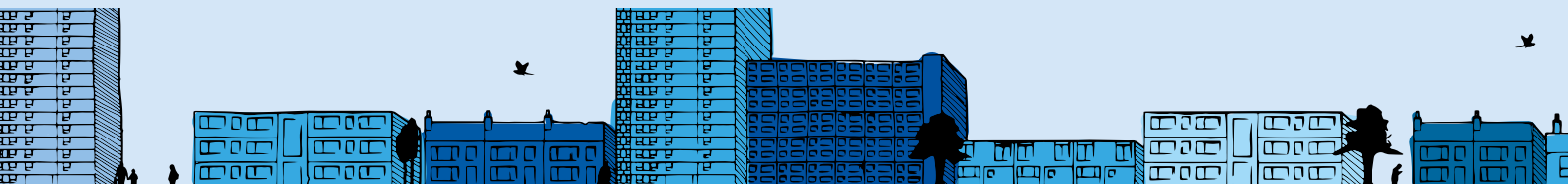
- to report repairs to your housing office as soon as possible.
- to keep your home (including any attached structures and private garden or outside space) clean, tidy and in reasonable condition. This includes good decorative order. If you have been given a decoration allowance it must be used for the purpose of carrying out decorations.
- to allow Portsmouth Homes or our contractors access into your home to inspect or carry out repairs such as the annual inspection and service of gas supplies and any gas appliances installed. We'll give you 48 hours written notice. If a repair needs to be carried out immediately because of a risk of personal injury or damage to the property, we reserve the right to enter without giving you notice.

You are responsible for repairing any damage caused by you or other members of the household, pets or visitors. Where this damage causes a health and safety risk to the you or other residents, we may carry out the repair and charge you for the work.

What we are responsible for

We are responsible for maintaining the structure of your home including roofs, walls, windows, and communal areas as well as key installations like heating, plumbing, electrics, kitchens, and bathrooms.

For the full list of responsibilities visit the repairs policy on our policy page at portsmouth.gov.uk/tenants



Repairs and maintenance

Repair timescales

Our repair timescales are:



emergency repairs

to be completed within 24 hours



urgent repairs

to be carried out within three working days (unless estimates or tenders are required)



routine repairs

to be completed within 20 working days



planned repairs

will be inspected within 20 working days and completion date to be confirmed subject to resources

When you call to report your repair, we will confirm what type of repair it is and the timescale.

You can contact repairs on:
023 9284 1311 or
portsmouth.gov.uk/repairs.

Out of hours repairs

Only emergency repairs will be undertaken out of hours including weekends and bank holidays.

For all other repair categories, you will be able to report repairs at any time, either by phone on 023 9284 1311 or via our website, by providing details of the repair and your availability to be contacted to make an appointment.

Planned repairs

Completion dates for planned repairs will be agreed based on available resources.

When you report a repair, you'll either be asked when you're available for a surveyor appointment or be connected directly to the contractor.

The first appointment will be to inspect the repair, arranged at a time that suits both you and the surveyor or contractor, during normal working hours.

Planned repairs usually take more than one visit, or involve new installations, replacements, or improvements to appliances or parts of the building.

The contractor will keep you regularly updated on the progress and timescales.



Repairs and maintenance

Temporary accommodation due to repairs

Very occasionally, we may have to do work that requires you to move to temporary accommodation. If this happens, we will do our best to arrange temporary accommodation which suits your needs and will try to offer similar property in an area of your choice. We will make a reasonable offer based on what is available.

Whatever happens, you will not be charged any additional rent on top of what you were paying, and you might be entitled to a disturbance allowance.

Your repairs feedback

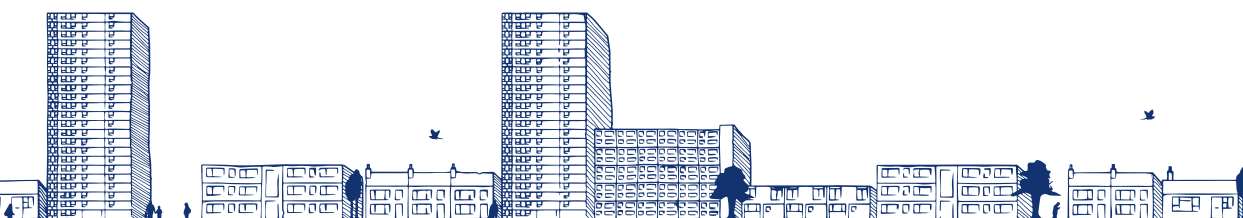
We will ask for your feedback once a repair or planned maintenance is completed. We, or the contractor, will invite you to rate the service you received and ask for feedback to improve the service.

Our repairs contractors

We have two main building repairs contractors and one gas repairs contractor. They are based locally and provide local jobs. All our contractors adopt apprentice employment schemes to encourage the development and growth of their staff.

We also have a lift maintenance contractor and a mechanical and electrical contractor.

To find out who are current contractors are, search '**Portsmouth Homes contractors**' on portsmouth.gov.uk.





Making changes to your home

You may want to make changes to your home, such as having a different kitchen or bathroom installed. You must seek prior written approval from the building repairs team before you start who will ensure any requests for proposed improvements and alterations is evaluated.

Here are some examples of home improvements you must contact us about in advance:

- altering windows, doors or doorways
- installing central heating, a new kitchen or bathroom suite
- dividing rooms or alterations to your loft space
- removing internal walls or chimney breasts
- building an extension or conservatory or a porch
- erecting a garage or car port, or laying a hard standing
- erecting a garden shed or greenhouse

If inappropriate or unsafe work is carried out without our approval, we can force you to undo the work to return the property to its previous state or we can instruct a contractor to make the works safe, for which you will be charged. So,

make sure everything is above board before starting work.

We are not responsible for repairs to any installations fitted without our written consent.

You can view the full Improvements and Alterations Policy on our policy page at portsmouth.gov.uk/tenants.

Planned maintenance projects

We regularly carry out larger maintenance projects to keep our buildings in good condition. These may include:

- re-roofing
- external repairs
- new windows
- safety improvements
- decoration schemes

Projects are prioritised based on need, with homes requiring the most work being addressed first.

If your home is included in a planned project, we'll contact you in advance with all the details.

If you live in a block of flats and the work is more extensive, you'll receive regular updates throughout the project from the contractor or our building projects team.

Safety

Gas safety



We are required by regulations to ensure the safety of gas fittings and appliances in properties. We carry out annual gas safety checks on all properties which we will need access to your home to complete.

If you smell gas in your property, you need to call the National Gas Emergency Helpline on **0800 111 999** and follow their guidance.

Electrical safety



We carry out inspections and tests at regular intervals. It is your responsibility to inspect portable equipment and appliances to ensure they are in good repair, sockets are correctly positioned and not overloaded, plugs are correctly attached and cables undamaged.

You should immediately report any evident electrical problems such as those described above to the Customer Repairs team. No attempt should be made to repair or alter the electrical installation as to do so could increase the risk of personal injury.

Fire safety



If you live in a council property, you should:

- let us know if you don't have a hardwired smoke detector and carbon monoxide alarm
- always let us in to do routine gas and electricity maintenance
- be cautious with lit cigarettes, candles and other naked flames

If you live in a block of flats:

- keep **all** personal belongings out of communal areas. We have a zero-tolerance policy for your safety.
- **do not** smoke in communal hallways or lifts, or put cigarettes out on the floor
- **do not** keep gas bottles or similar items in your flat or in the block, including sheds.

In the event of a fire, you can find your evacuation process on our website by searching 'building safety'.

Safety

Water safety



Legionella bacteria can cause serious illness, but the risk is easy to manage with a few simple precautions.

Our gas engineers ensure your hot water is heated to at least 60°C, which is hot enough to kill bacteria like Legionella. Please do not adjust your boiler settings. If you think your hot water isn't hot enough or notice discoloured or unusual smelling water, contact us right away.

To report a fault, contact us at customerrepairsteam@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Battery safety

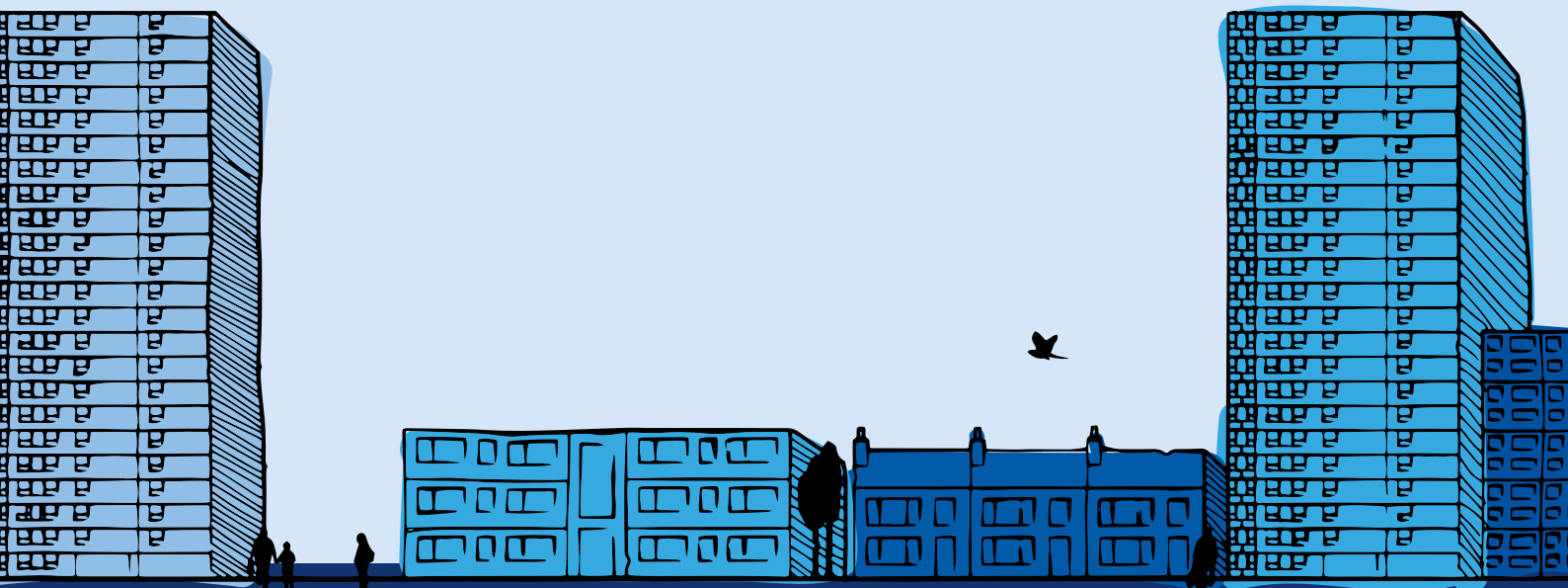


Not charging or storing devices with lithium-ion batteries properly can cause fires, so it's important you know how to keep safe.

You can tell if a device has lithium-ion batteries by reading the manual or finding the symbol Li on it.

If you're charging a device with lithium-ion batteries:

- Do not store or charge in communal areas
- Do not overload sockets or plug extension leads into each other
- Do not cover when charging
- Do not charge when sleeping or not home



Safety

Asbestos



Generally, asbestos is usually safe in the home unless it is damaged or disturbed. Therefore, it's always best to leave asbestos alone if possible.

Due to the age of the council's housing stock, it's likely that some asbestos will be present. The council has carried out asbestos surveys in a large proportion of properties and the overall risk was found to be low.

You should contact the Customer Repairs team if you are planning to make alterations or find asbestos in your home so we can identify asbestos before works are carried out.

Security



It's important to keep your home secure. Always lock doors and windows, especially when you're away. You might want to leave a light on a timer and keep the heating on low. When you return, run your taps for a few minutes to refresh the water.

In communal blocks, some buildings have intercom or door entry systems. These help control access but are not full security systems. Only let people in if you know who they are.

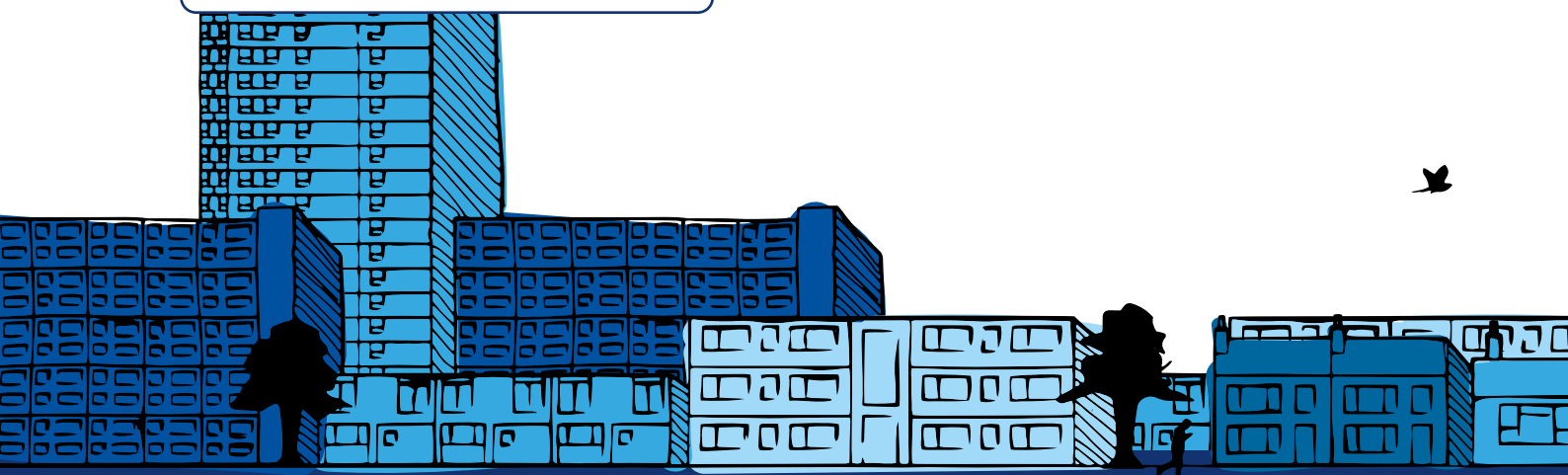
Some blocks also have CCTV. If a crime occurs, the police can request footage—residents cannot access it directly.

If someone visits and you don't know them, ask for ID. All council staff and contractors carry identity cards. Don't hesitate to ask for proof.

Living at height:



- Make sure windows are secure & safety catches are in working order
- if you have a balcony, anyone accessing it is safe when doing so





How to report a tall building safety concern

Building Safety concerns for residents living in our tall buildings (with over 11 floors)

The Building Safety Act sets out that we must have a separate complaints process for residents who live in our tall buildings who are concerned about the safety of their building.

To report a building safety concern rather than submitting a complaint, you can:

- speak with the customer repairs team on **023 9284 1311**
- email us at **building.safety@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**
- write to us at: Building Safety Team, Portsmouth City Council, Floor 3, Core 5, Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth, Hampshire, United Kingdom, PO1 2AL

Neighbourhood services



Neighbourhood services

Our neighbourhood services team are here to help keep your communal areas and neighbourhoods safe, clean and tidy. Our team is made up of three areas:

Green and clean team

We clean communal areas (if you live in a block), maintain communal gardens and open spaces in your area, and tend to the plants, flowers and trees on your estate.

Neighbourhood wardens

We help keep you safe by:

- checking your block's fire alarms are working
- carrying out safety checks on your estates
- investigating anti-social behaviour
- resolving fly-tipping issues

Housing depot

We collect bulky and green waste from your neighbourhoods and look after specialist cleaning issues.

To report an issue, you can call or email us:

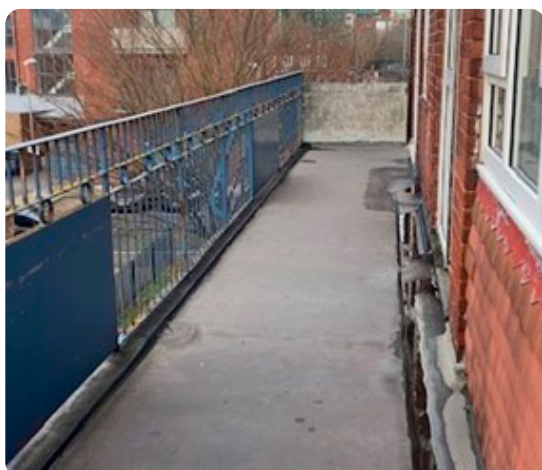
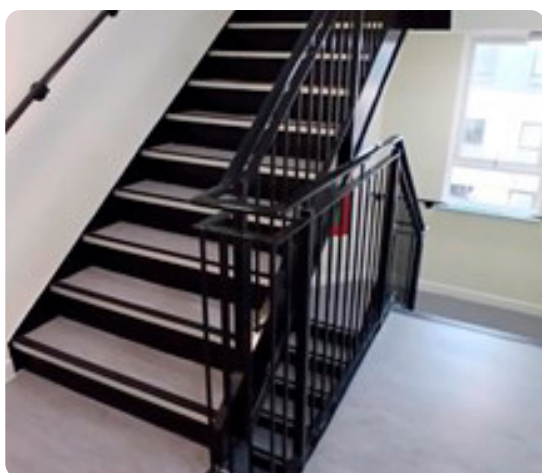
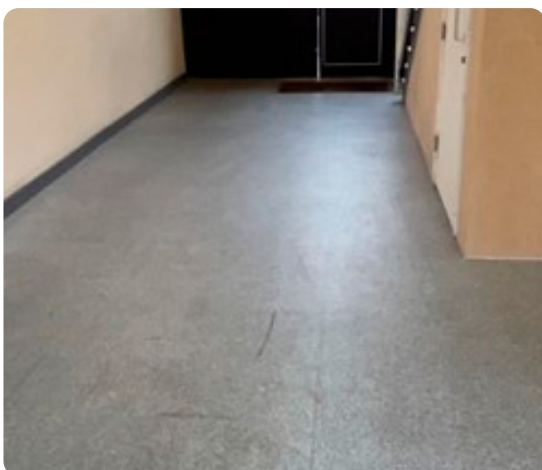
Phone: **023 9268 8444**

Email: housingdepot@portsmouthcc.gov.uk



Neighbourhood services

Keep your communal areas clear at all times



Be respectful in shared spaces

Everyone deserves to live in a clean and pleasant environment. Please make sure you and your visitors behave responsibly in communal areas.

Things like rubbish left outside bins, spilled drinks, cigarette butts, dog mess, and other waste in lifts, stairwells, communal gardens, parks and green spaces, can make the area unpleasant for others and create extra work for our neighbourhood service team, which impacts your service charge.

If you see any issues or people behaving irresponsibly, please report it to us.

If your communal area is not safe, clean or tidy, contact:

☎ 023 9268 8444

✉ housingdepot@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Neighbourhood services

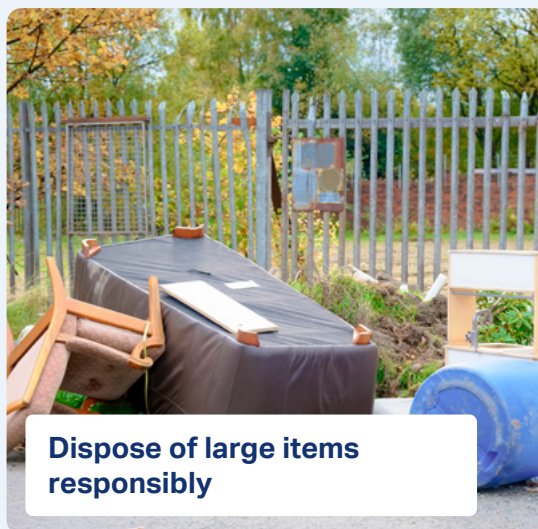


Dispose of your rubbish properly

Rubbish left in hallways or communal areas can smell, leak, create a trip hazard, and even make a fire more dangerous.

Always put bin bags directly into the bins provided. We may charge you if rubbish is not disposed of correctly.

Sort your waste properly: We have separate bins for general waste, food waste, and recycling. If the wrong items are put in a bin, the waste collection team may refuse to empty it, leading to bad smells and overflowing rubbish. In some cases, there may be a contamination charge, which can affect your service charges.



Dispose of large items responsibly

Dumping large items like old sofas or broken appliances is fly tipping. This is illegal, a breach of tenancy and may lead to charges or fines. If you need to get rid of large items:

- call or email us on the details below and we can offer advice
- if you're on a low income, you may qualify for a free collection - we can advise you on this

If you see anyone dumping waste, please report it. If you have details like a car registration, photos, or videos, you can send them to us - but never put yourself at risk to gather evidence.

Not sure what goes where? Ask us, we're happy to help!

☎ 023 9268 8444 | ✉ housingdepot@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Anti-social behaviour

We take anti-social behaviour (ASB) and hate crime seriously. We want everyone to feel safe and happy in their homes and communities.

We are committed to helping residents to live peacefully in their homes without fear, intimidation, threats of harm, nuisance, or unreasonable behaviour from others.

What is anti-social behaviour?



ASB is anything that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable. It includes:

- loud noise from music, animals or people
- threats or harassment
- abusive behaviour or language
- graffiti or vandalism
- damage to property
- drug or alcohol related incidents

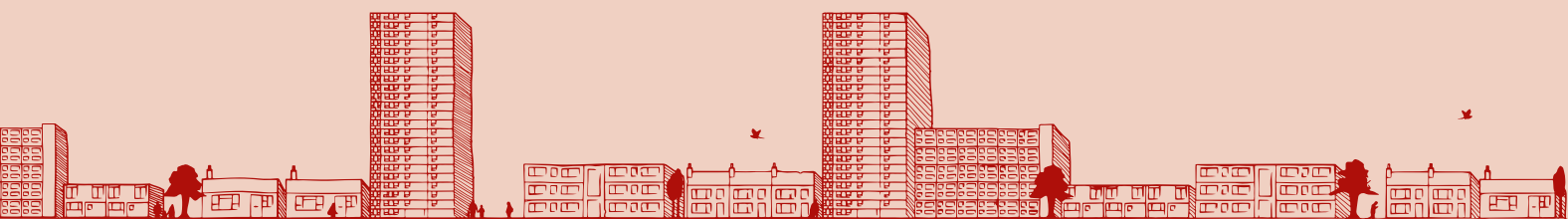
What is hate crime?



A hate crime is when someone is targeted because of their:

- disability
- race or ethnicity
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender identity

Portsmouth Homes takes reports of hate crime and hate incidents very seriously. We will take strong action when dealing with this, we will support anyone affected by hate crime.





What isn't anti-social behaviour?



Some noise and activity is normal, such as:

- children playing
- minor DIY during the day
- normal household noises like vacuuming
- cooking strong-smelling food
- minor personal differences such as comments on social media and dirty looks
- clashes in lifestyle or cultural differences

Tips to avoid complaints



To avoid getting complaints of ASB about you or your household, you should:

- not play loud music
- not harass others
- not smoke illegal substances in your property or communal area
- not cause distress based on race, gender, disability, religion or age
- keep pets under control



Anti-social behaviour

What you can do about ASB

Before taking action, remember:

- your neighbour may not realise they are causing a problem
- different people tolerate different levels of noise
- talking things through can help

If you have a problem with a neighbour and you usually get on well, try speaking to them first.

How to report ASB

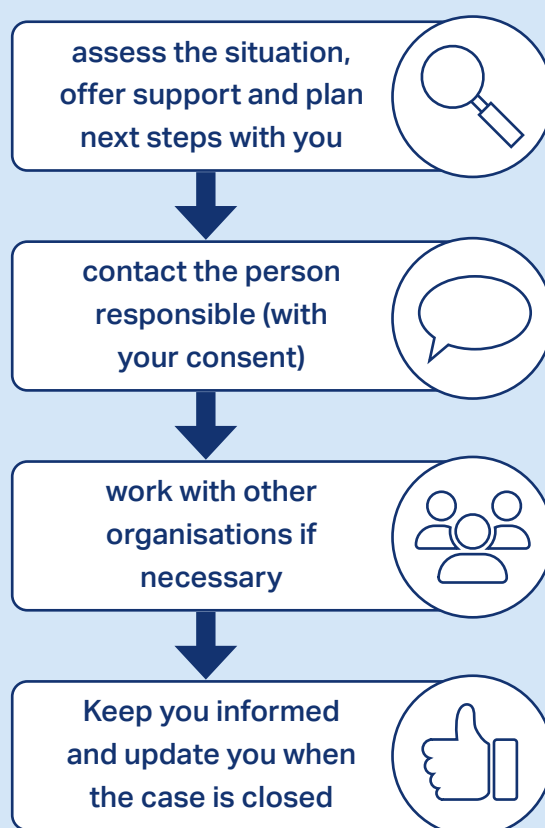
If you feel you are unable to approach your neighbour, or want to report ASB, please contact the following:

- **In an emergency situation call 999:**
If someone is in immediate danger, property is at risk of being damaged or a serious offence is or has happened
- **Call 101 for non-emergency police matters:** report a crime that doesn't need an emergency response or get crime prevention advice.
- **Call 023 9282 4244 to report non-emergency issues outside of office hours**

Please report all incidents of ASB to your housing officer even if you have reported it to another agency.

What happens when you report ASB?

We treat all ASB complaints in confidence and will listen carefully to your concerns. When you report ASB, we will:



We can refer you to support services if needed. Some cases may need legal action such as court orders or eviction.

Anti-social behaviour

How we can help

Our aim is to stop ASB from happening in the first place.

We help people change their behaviour by:

- offering support with family, finances, and mental health
- providing tenancy support to those at risk
- working with schools and community groups
- working with partner agencies

How we help communities

We work with residents to prevent ASB by:

- attending meetings to listen to concerns
- organising community events
- encouraging young people to respect their neighbourhoods
- removing graffiti and fixing vandalism quickly

We also take action against offenders by:

- issuing verbal and written warnings and Community Protection Notices
- working with the police and courts
- using legal powers available to stop the ASB

Get involved

You can help tackle ASB by joining our resident focus group or volunteering with:

- victim support
- witness support service

Working with external agencies

Sometimes we ask a partner agency, like Portsmouth Mediation Service, the police, or the council to help us resolve the issue. If we ask them to help with your case, it's important you work with them. This way we can fix problems together and help make your community a safe and happy place to be.

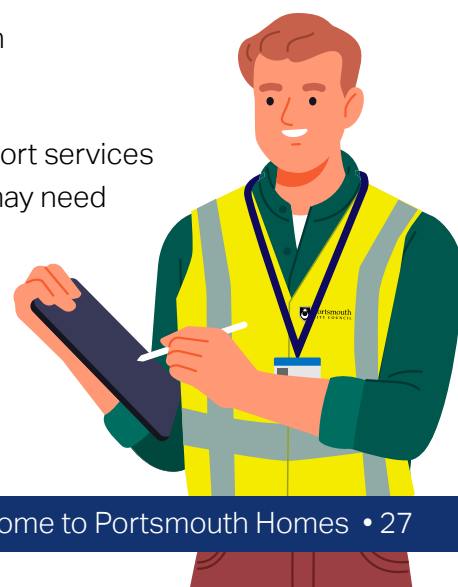
Your feedback

We may contact you for feedback after your case is closed. You can also share comments or complaints by speaking to your housing officer over the phone, in person or by email.

Your case may be referred to the Portsmouth Assessment Service. They:

- listen to your concerns
- explain your options
- help find a fair solution
- remain neutral

We can refer you to support services if needed. Some cases may need legal action.





Housing offices:

Our housing offices are open 8.30am-5pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am - 4pm on Fridays.

When your housing office is closed, our out of hours service can be contacted on **023 9282 4244**.

You can use this number to report emergency repairs and issues that you feel can't wait until our normal opening hours. You can also use this number to make a payment to your rent account, should you need to do this out of normal working hours.

You can use housing offices to:

-  make payments
-  ask for support or services
-  make an appointment to see a specific officer
-  report anti-social behaviour
-  ask about repairs

Our teams have been trained to high standards and work in partnership with support services and agencies in the community to support tenants in accessing help as needed. Some of the areas they can help with include:

- debt and benefits
- domestic abuse
- child and adult safeguarding
- mental health support

Whatever your problem, speak to us first. We're here for you!

For homes in Portsmouth, Housing Officers hold regular drop-in sessions in your local community, offering you face-to-face support closer to you.

For information about where and when your local drop-in sessions are, visit **portsmouth.gov.uk/housingoffices**

Alternatively, you can request for your housing officer to visit you in your home.

Other services

Resident Engagement

Get involved and make sure your voice is heard! The resident engagement team is based across our areas, offering lots of options to ensure there's an opportunity for everyone to have their say, so we consider a broad and representative set of views in a joined up decision-making process.

We want to engage with you so that the services we deliver, and any proposed changes and improvements, reflect your views.

We encourage residents to connect with each other, whether it's for fun through sports or creating groups, to challenge us as your landlord and help us improve, or to take part in community projects. Sometimes, funding is available to support these activities. To find out what's currently on offer, visit portsmouth.gov.uk/residentengagement

Residents' consortium

A formal group for residents, where residents set their own agenda for their monthly meetings.

Focus groups

A chance for residents to provide feedback directly to those involved and in a variety of subjects:

- rents
- repairs and maintenance
- neighbourhood walkabout
- communications
- estate services
- scrutiny
- house talk
- staff recruitment panel
- policies



Residents repairs focus group



a resident engagement event

Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey

This is an annual survey to check the quality of homes and services run by social housing landlords. Every year, we promote the survey and use the results to drive changes and listen to you, our residents.

The resident engagement team is available to help you fill in the survey, explain any questions and they visit multiple areas a week to promote the survey to as many residents as possible.

You can find the results of our latest survey by clicking on '**Our landlord performance**' at portsmouth.gov.uk/tenants. You can compare our results with others by visiting gov.uk.

Consultations

Local authorities have a duty to consult residents in accordance with the Housing Act 1985, The Building Act 2022 and The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Consumer Standard states that registered providers must take tenants' views into account in their decision making about how landlord services are delivered and communicate how tenants' views have been considered.

There are many ways in which you can be consulted or asked your views on an issue or proposal. Remember proposals can be changed as a result of what people have to say.

For example, you can:

- complete a survey to give your view on what needs to be prioritised
- be invited to give your views on a new improvement scheme
- be invited to an open meeting to discuss policy changes

We use many methods of consulting with residents. These are carried out on a needs basis, and we have a bespoke engagement and consultation strategy for each project that we work on, with consideration given to the residents that will be consulted and the most appropriate methods. These include:

- surveys
- door knocking
- focus groups
- public meetings and events
- letter / leaflet drop with requests for feedback - includes telephone, email, sometimes QR codes

Other services

Free resources

Resident Participation Centre

Residents and resident groups are able to use the Resident Participation Centre in Leigh Park. The centre has a small meeting room, kitchen, IT suite and garden area. The centre can be used to hold meetings, training or leisure activities that benefit the communities in which we work.

Community Rooms

The council provides community rooms in some blocks for resident associations and individuals to use for meetings and social events. They are free of charge for residents to use who live in the block.

They can also be used by residents of the block and for private functions like children's birthday parties (a small fee may be charged for this).

Community Centres

We have five community centres - Somerstown Hub, Charles Dickens Activity Centre, John Pounds Centre, Cosham Community Centre, and Paulsgrove Community Centre. These centres offer a variety of community spaces and resources which can be used by residents. Hire fees apply for the use of non-communal areas.

Hub Café

Our Hub Café is based at the Somerstown Hub and is a large, bright community space.

Adventure Playgrounds and Youth Clubs

Our six adventure playgrounds (Somerstown, Portsea, Landport, Buckland, Stamshaw and Paulsgrove) and four youth clubs (Somerstown, Portsea, Landport/Buckland and Paulsgrove) provide free spaces for children, young people, and their families to come together. Community events are also held from these venues. Learn more at www.pycportsmouth.co.uk

Landport Community Garden

Our community garden is a space where residents can come together to learn, grow, and get advice from our community gardener.



Landport Community Garden

Other services

Help with employment

Our resident engagement team are on hand to help you and any adult member of your household find work by helping with:

- courses
- qualifications
- travel costs
- photo IDs
- work clothes

Communication

House Talk

The exclusive magazine for Portsmouth Homes tenants and leaseholders.

Look out for your free House Talk magazine delivered straight to your door three times a year (we also publish them on our website). It's your go-to guide for all things Portsmouth Homes - from essential updates and local events to resident stories and home safety tips.

We create House Talk because we believe keeping you informed and connected to your community matters. It's our way of ensuring you never miss important information about your home and neighbourhood.

Portsmouth Homes Facebook page

If you want more regular updates, you can follow us at facebook.com/YourPortsmouthHomes to stay connected with everything happening in your community. It's a quick way for you to engage with us by liking or commenting on our posts to share your thoughts and opinions.

Portsmouth Homes e-bulletin

We have created a monthly e-bulletin to distribute to our tenants and leaseholders. The e-bulletin is an extension of the House Talk magazine, where we will reiterate important messaging and send timely updates and reminders on events going on in your area. The e-bulletin is not mandatory and you can unsubscribe at any time.



Other services

Complaints, comments and compliments

While we try to provide a good service, we know that sometimes things go wrong. We take all complaints and feedback seriously and want to put things right if they go wrong. On the flip side, you can also let us know if you've had a positive experience with us – your compliments make our team members' days.

Who can make a complaint, comment, or compliment?

Anyone receiving or affected by our landlord services can give feedback - including current and former tenants, leaseholders and shared owners.

Complain if you're unhappy with our services, actions, or lack of action affecting you or other residents.



Comment if you've got an idea for how we can improve, or you've noticed something we should investigate.



Compliment if you've had a positive experience or interaction with us.



We encourage you to first contact the relevant service area directly to tell us what is happening for you so we can try to resolve the issue informally and as quickly as possible.

How to complain, comment, or compliment

Do it online:

portsmouth.gov.uk/housingcomplaints



Phone us:

023 9283 4702



Email us:

hnblandlordcomplaints@portsmouthcc.gov.uk



Talk to us in-person
(any staff member)



Write to us:

HNB Landlord Complaints,
Portsmouth City Council,
Floor 2, Core 2-3,
Civic Offices,
Guildhall Square,
Portsmouth, PO1 2EP



How complaints are handled

Stage 1 - investigation

We'll make sure your complaint goes to the right service department to investigate and find a solution.

Your complaint will be:

- Acknowledged within five working days
- Given a written reply within 10 working days (and if this isn't possible, we'll let you know why and when you can expect a reply)

We'll address all points raised in your complaint and give you clear reasons for any decisions we've made.

Stage 2 - ask for a review if you're still not happy

Most complaints are sorted at stage 1, but if you're not happy with the solution we offer, you can take your complaint to stage 2.

Your stage 2 complaint will be:

- Reviewed by a senior manager not previously involved in the case
- Given a reply within an average of 20 working days (any delays will be clearly communicated to you)

Need help with a complaint?

Someone else can speak for you with your permission. We can also connect you with free independent support like Citizens Advice or help find you an advocate for your complaint.

Our in-house complaints team is also here to help if you need extra support with making a complaint, translating emails or letters, or using a representative for your complaint.

For more info visit portsmouth.gov.uk/housingcomplaints or call us on **023 9283 4702**.

Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman helps with complaints about social housing. They make sure landlords handle complaints fairly and can step in if the landlord's process is finished. Their service is free, independent, and here to help.

Whether your complaint has been sorted yet or not, you can still approach them at any point for free and impartial advice:

housing-ombudsman.org.uk

030 0111 3000



Support and useful links

Money advice and support

Our Housing Officers are trained to help with benefits and debt, and they work closely with a specialist money adviser for more complex issues.

If you'd prefer independent advice, you can contact:

- **Advice Portsmouth:** offers free, independent, and confidential advice to residents in the PO1–PO6 areas. They can help with debt, benefits, housing, employment, family issues, and consumer law.
 023 9279 4340
 adviceportsmouth.org.uk
- **Citizens Advice** who are funded by us to provide free impartial advice and support tenants with debt, benefits, and legal concerns.
 023 9400 6600
 caportsouth.org.uk
- or a solicitor

Help with everyday money worries

We're here to help with more than just rent. If you're struggling to afford food, energy, or household bills, speak to us. We can review your finances, help you apply for grants, and connect you with food banks, clothing banks, or community support.

Contact your local housing office or officer.

Debt and benefit forum

Our Money Advisers run a regular forum with partners like Department for Work and Pensions, Citizens Advice Bureau, Advice Portsmouth, and utility providers to find solutions and improve support for tenants.

Contact your local housing office or officer.

Support and useful links

Energy support

LEAP

We work with LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership) to offer free home visits, energy-saving advice, and small upgrades for residents in PO1 to PO13.

To book a visit:

 Call 0800 060 7567 or

 Apply online with LEAP

Switched on Portsmouth

Switched On Portsmouth is a free service for residents who need help with their energy bills. Whether you're in a dispute with your supplier, struggling to pay, or just need advice, you can call their freephone number for support. The team can also refer you to schemes for small or large energy-saving improvements. They hold drop-in sessions at the Civic Offices on the first Wednesday of every month and regularly pop up across Portsmouth, Havant, and Gosport.

 Call 0800 260 5907

 switchedonportsmouth.co.uk

Mental health services

We all need to look after our mental health, and we also need to know who to turn to if things feel too much.

If you or someone you know needs mental health support, there are free and confidential services that can help. Some of these services offer anonymous support online and others offer support via text, over the phone, or in person.

You can see the full support options online on our mental health page.

If you live in Portsmouth, visit www.portsmouth.gov.uk and search 'mental health'.

If you live in Hampshire, visit www.hants.gov.uk and search 'mental wellbeing'.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is a serious issue that can affect anyone, regardless of gender, age, or background. We take all reports of domestic abuse seriously and offers a compassionate, confidential, and proactive response.

If you're concerned about yourself or someone you know and want to know how we can help, visit portsmouth.gov.uk and search 'domestic abuse support'.



You can request this information in large print, Braille, audio or in another language by calling 023 9283 4092