

## Living in your home

Your rights and responsibilities as a tenant of the Borough of Poole are given in this section.

We have summarised the conditions detailed in the *Tenancy Agreement* that you signed when you became a tenant with us.



### **What are my rights as a tenant?**

We want you to have quiet enjoyment of your home. As a Council tenant with a secure tenancy, you have a number of rights that are set out in law (The Housing Act 1985). We have summarised the main ones for you here.

### **Do I have the right to be consulted about changes to my home or neighbourhood?**

By law, you have a right to be consulted about any proposed changes to the way we manage your home. More details are available in the *Resident Involvement Compact Formal Agreement*, available on request or on-line at [www.yourphp.org.uk/getinvolved](http://www.yourphp.org.uk/getinvolved)

We believe that it is very important that you are consulted about all aspects of managing your home, improving your neighbourhood and strengthening your community.

To ensure you have this right, we will consult with you about any proposed changes. We will usually use one or more of the following methods:

- ★ by letter
- ★ by e-mail
- ★ by phone
- ★ in person
- ★ by holding a public meeting
- ★ by an article in *At Home* magazine
- ★ by discussing proposals with your *Residents Group*

### **Do I have the right to make changes to my home?**

If you want to decorate your home e.g. painting, you have a right to do so without asking for permission.

However, if you want to make more substantial changes to your home, you must obtain permission from us before you start work. The type of work you would need permission for could include:

- ★ changing the layout of your home
- ★ adding extensions or conservatories
- ★ putting up a shed, greenhouse or garage
- ★ laying laminate/wood flooring
- ★ changing plumbing or electrical sockets

Always check about permissions BEFORE you go ahead with any major work.

If you don't get permission for any major work to your home, we may ask you to re-do it, or you may be re-charged if we need to make good any work that is not finished to an approved standard.

If you are unsure about what you need permission for and would like more information, please call the HelpDesk on 0800 652 3900 or e-mail us at: [repairs.php@poole.gov.uk](mailto:repairs.php@poole.gov.uk)

### **What are my rights about getting repairs done to my home?**

The *Right to Repair* is a scheme to ensure that small, urgent repairs (up to a value of £250), which might affect your health, safety or security, are done quickly and easily.

The types of repair we need to complete under the *Right to Repair*, and the response times you can expect from us, are set by law. See the **Repairs** section for more information.

## **Can I pass on my tenancy to someone else?**

Secure tenants may have the right for their spouse, partner or close relative to take over their tenancy when they die. This is called a *succession*.



To succeed a tenancy, the remaining occupant must have lived in the property for at least twelve months prior to the death of the tenant.

If you mutually exchange to another property, you can assign or hand over your tenancy to the person moving into your home and they, in turn, assign their tenancy to you.

If you do not move home but would like to add or remove someone from your tenancy, you may have to obtain a court order to do so. Your Housing Officer or Sheltered Housing Officer can give you advice on this.

If you are not the tenant i.e. you are not named on the Tenancy Agreement, and the person who is the tenant moves out, you may have the right to the tenancy.

Your right to the tenancy depends on your individual circumstances, so please talk to your Housing Officer or Sheltered Housing Officer.

If the tenant does move out, you must contact your Housing Officer or Sheltered Housing Officer as soon as possible. They will be able to advise you of your rights.

If you would like more information on successions and assignments, please contact your Housing Officer or Sheltered Housing Officer.

You can also obtain independent advice from your local Citizens Advice Bureau about your rights on successions and assignments.

### **What does it mean if I have a *Joint Tenancy*?**

If you have a *Joint Tenancy* with your spouse, partner or relative, you share the tenancy. The conditions of your *Tenancy Agreement* apply to you both equally.

You are both fully responsible for:

- ★ paying the rent
- ★ any rent arrears
- ★ keeping the property in good order.

If either person with a *Joint Tenancy* breaches any of the tenancy conditions both parties are equally responsible.

## **Can I take in lodgers?**

You may take in a lodger as long as this does not make your home overcrowded. You **MUST** have an available bedroom for the lodger.

Your lodger will **NOT** have the same rights as you do as a tenant. If you move out, he or she will not be allowed to remain in the property.

If you receive Housing Benefit, taking in a lodger may affect the amount you are entitled to. If you take in a lodger, you must inform the Council's Housing Benefit Team. Details are in the [Other useful contacts](#) section.

## **Can I sub-let my home?**

Sub-letting means that someone pays you rent to have the private use of a part of your home. You need to get our written permission before you can sub-let any part of your home.

You **CANNOT** sub-let your home to another person and move out of the property. If you move out, your tenancy will no longer be secure. This means you will lose your rights as a secure tenant. We will also take legal action to recover possession of your home.

If you would like to take in a lodger or sub-let part of your home, please speak to your Housing Officer or Sheltered Housing Officer first. They can give you advice specific to your circumstances.

## Do I have the *Right to Buy* my home?

If your tenancy began with us, or another public sector landlord, before 18 January 2005 you can apply to buy your home at a discount from the market value, provided your home is not in a sheltered scheme suitable for elderly people.



If your tenancy started on or after 18 January 2005 you will need to be a tenant with us, or another public sector landlord, for **at least five years** before you are eligible for the Right to Buy your home.

Once you are eligible for the Right to Buy, all residents in the Poole area are entitled to a discount of £30,000 from the market value, regardless of whether the property is a house or flat.

For more information on the *Right to Buy* please contact the Helpdesk on 0800 652 3900 or e-mail: [right2buy.php@poole.gov.uk](mailto:right2buy.php@poole.gov.uk).

## **What if I need extra support managing my tenancy?**

PHP's *Tenancy Support Service* provides flexible support to any tenant who is experiencing difficulties within their property. The type of support that the *Tenancy Support Service* can provide includes:

- ★ assistance for new tenants to set up utilities such as gas, electric and water
- ★ advice and assistance to claim benefits, including Housing and Council Tax benefit
- ★ assistance and support to access other services, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, addiction support services and mental health services. We can also help you to access services that will help you budget and manage debt
- ★ help and support to access more specialist services, such as employment and training agencies or adult education
- ★ help to access social activities or to do voluntary work
- ★ advice and assistance to access groups and services to meet your faith, religious beliefs or cultural needs.

If you would like to find out more about the *Tenancy Support Service* or you think you could benefit from the support we offer, please speak to your Housing Officer or Sheltered Housing Officer for information and advice.

Anyone can make a referral on your behalf or you can contact the *Tenancy Support Team* direct on 01202 264419 or e-mail [support.php@poole.gov.uk](mailto:support.php@poole.gov.uk).

## **What if I am finding it difficult to manage in my current home?**

If you are 60 years or over and think you would benefit from some support, you can apply to transfer into sheltered accommodation.

For more information, or to discuss how to apply for sheltered housing, please contact the Sheltered Housing Team on 01202 264421.

## **What information does PHP hold about my family and me?**

We keep details about you and your family that are relevant for the management of your tenancy. We also keep a record of all contact made between you and us.

PHP is registered with the Information Commission and adheres to the Data Protection Act 1998 to ensure that we keep secure the information we hold about you.

We will not pass on any information about you or your family without first getting written consent.

You have the right to see the information we hold about you and your family. If you do wish to see this information you can arrange an appointment to come to our offices. You cannot take the information away with you.

You can take copies of the information we hold and we can arrange this at a reasonable charge.

If you would like to find out more about the information we hold or how to go about arranging an appointment to see the information, please call the HelpDesk on 0800 652 3900.

### **How is my estate kept clean and tidy?**

We ensure that your estate is kept clean and tidy. We can arrange to remove any dumped rubbish and take action against those responsible, wherever possible.

We also arrange for landscaped areas to be maintained and grass to be cut on communal areas. Our contractors keep communal areas and stairways clean and tidy in flats and sheltered schemes.

Twice a year, we inspect all our estates to make sure they are clean and tidy, and to identify any work or improvements that need to be done.

You are welcome to join us on these inspections if you wish. We publish the dates of the inspections in our *At Home* magazine throughout the year.

You can find out when your next estate inspection is by calling the Helpdesk on 0800 652 3900.

## **Is my home insured?**

The structure of your home is covered by the Borough of Poole's buildings insurance, which provides cover for damage, such as that caused by fire or flood.

The Council or PHP does NOT insure your personal belongings. It is your responsibility to insure the contents of your home.

While it is your choice to have insurance or not, we would strongly recommend that you do insure your belongings as accidents do happen.

You may wish to consider the low cost home insurance scheme recommended by the National Housing Federation, *My Home Contents Insurance*.

For more information about insuring your home, call the HelpDesk on 0800 652 3900. Alternatively, you can make an appointment with your local CAB office for independent advice and assistance.



# Would your stuff be covered if the worst happened?

National Housing Federation  
My Home Contents Insurance scheme



**10**

reasons to choose the My Home contents insurance scheme.

- Flexible regular pay as you go payment options.
- No fuss, quick and easy to apply either through the post or over the telephone.
- No excess (you don't pay the first part of the claim).
- Covers theft, water damage and fire.
- Covers damage to internal decorations.
- Covers accidental damage to sanitary fixtures such as toilets and washbasins.
- Covers damage to external glazing for which you are responsible.
- Covers lost or stolen keys and freezer contents.
- You don't need to have special door or window locks.
- All post codes are included.

Sums insured are available from £5,000 to £25,000, all premiums, terms and conditions contained within the free information pack.

Ask your housing provider for an information pack or telephone 0845 337 2463



The National Housing Federation My Home Contents Insurance Scheme is a product name arranged and administered on behalf of The National Housing Federation by Jardine Lloyd Thompson Tenant Risks. A division of Jardine Lloyd Thompson UK Limited. Lloyd's Broker. Authorized and Regulated by the Financial Services Authority. A member of the Jardine Lloyd Thompson Group. Registered Office: 8 Drinfeld Frian, London EC2N 2PH. Registered in England No. 254 2321 96. The National Housing Federation is an Appointed Representative of Jardine Lloyd Thompson UK Limited.

## Do I have any other rights?

- ★ You have the *Right to Return* to your home if we have moved you to another property to carry out major work or repairs to your home.
- ★ You may be entitled to compensation for any work done by you to improve your home. You must get written permission before you do any work to your home and it must be completed to an approved standard.
- ★ You have the right to mutually exchange your property with another Council or Housing Association tenant (subject to certain conditions). See the **Moving Home** section for more information.

## How can I get involved?

Your opinions about your home and neighbourhood are very important to us, and we want to know your views about the service you receive.

We want you to be involved in making decisions that affect your home and neighbourhood. We call this Resident Involvement.

You can get involved by giving as much or as little time as you are able to, as either an individual resident, or your neighbours can elect/nominate you to represent their views.

There are lots of different ways to get involved and we will help you find a way that best suits your skills, interests and fits in with your other commitments.

### **What can I get involved with?**

- ★ planning proposed improvements in your neighbourhood
- ★ helping the local community
- ★ assist us to monitor some of the services you receive e.g. gardening and cleaning

You can also get involved with particular issues, such as:

- ★ disabled needs
- ★ repairs
- ★ re-investment in your home (e.g. new kitchens and bathrooms)
- ★ improving services

Another way to get involved is complete questionnaires or be part of a one-off focus group.

Some people choose to represent their street or community, or attend training sessions to learn new skills like computers, food hygiene or first aid.

We also work with other Residents' Associations in the Poole area and can provide you with details of how to contact them.

## ***At Home*: Your Magazine**

The *At Home* magazine is delivered direct to your door every quarter.

Each issue is full of the latest news and information, affecting you and your neighbourhood.

Inside you'll find:

- ★ Competitions
- ★ Kid's Page
- ★ DIY advice from 'Mend-It-Mike'
- ★ Readers' Stories
- ★ Leaseholder News
- ★ Your Letters



If you've got an idea for an article - maybe you, or someone in your neighbourhood has done something to benefit the community that you would like to tell us about - please call our Communications Officer on 01202 264436 or e-mail [enquiries.php@poole.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.php@poole.gov.uk).

**YOUR stories, YOUR estate, YOUR home...**

**...YOUR magazine**

