

Tenant Handbook

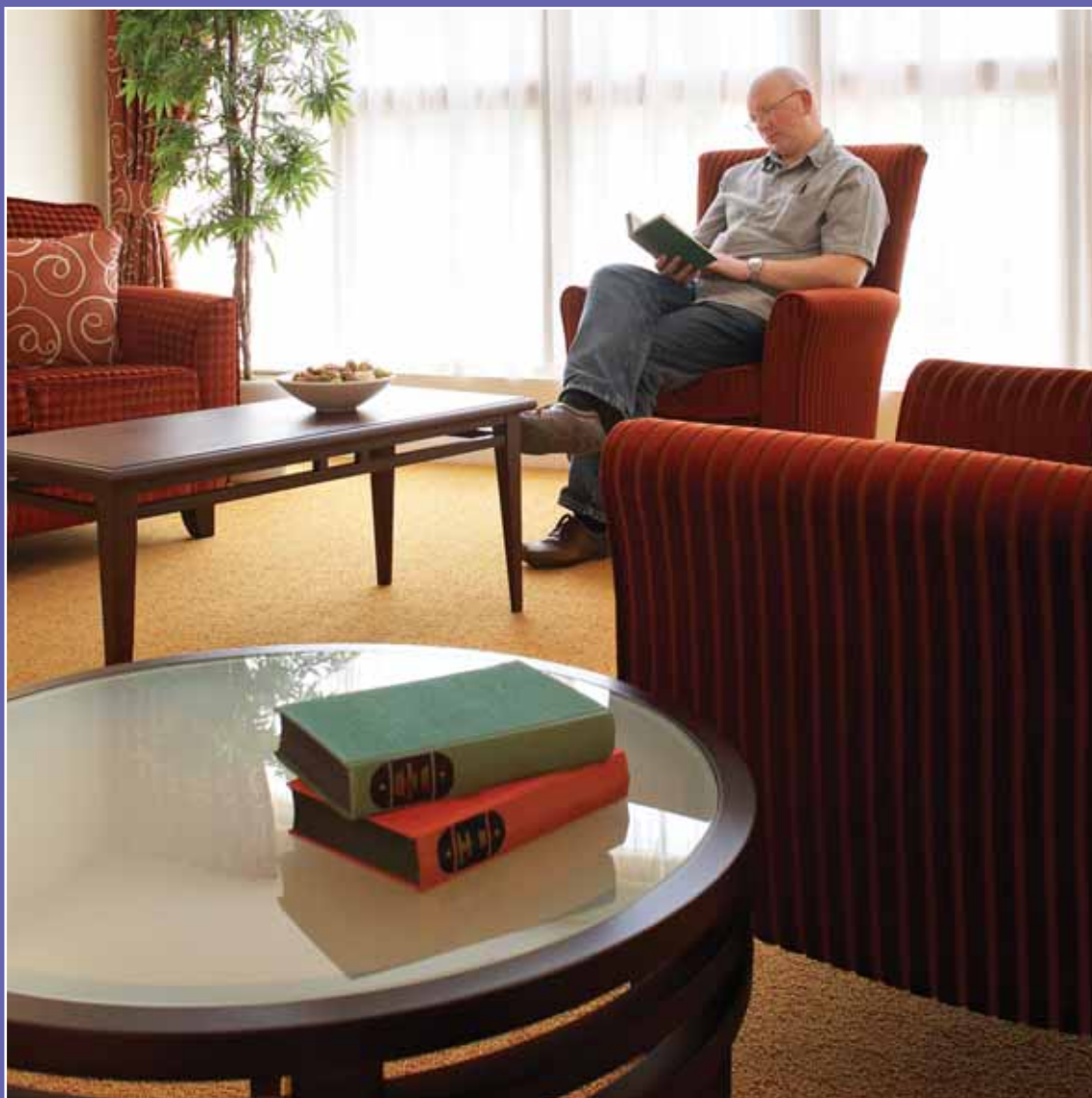


Family Housing



Contents

Section One	
Contact details	3
Section Two	
Introduction to Family Housing Association	4/5
Section Three	
Tenant participation	6/7
Section Four	
Complaints & Compliments	8/9
Section Five	
Property Services	10/11/12
Section Six	
Rents	13/14
Section Seven	
Transfers, Exchanges & Buying Homes	15/16
Section Eight	
Ending a Tenancy	17
Section Nine	
Older Persons' Services	18/19
Section Ten	
Supported Housing	20
Section Eleven	
Unacceptable behaviour	21



Contact details

Once you have settled in, please take time to read this handbook.
Please also refer to your Tenancy Agreement.

Our Head Office:

Family Housing Association
43 Walter Road
Swansea
SA1 5PN

Opening Hours 9.00am – 5.00pm
Monday to Friday
CLOSED BANK HOLIDAYS

Telephone: **01792 460192**

Fax: **01792 473726**

Emergency out of hours number
0800 435223

Email: **info@fha-wales.com**

Website: **www.fha-wales.com**

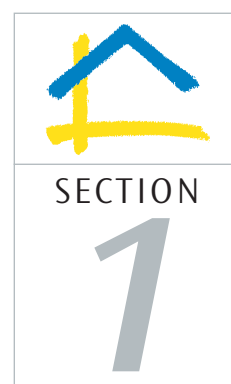
Useful contacts

Freephone Repairs: **0800 435223**

Freephone Rents: **0800 021 3930**

Rents Team: **01792 482705**

Lettings Team: **01792 482702**



Introduction to Family Housing

We are a registered social landlord, regulated by the Welsh Assembly Government. We have flats and houses throughout Swansea and Carmarthenshire as well as Neath Port Talbot, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire. We also provide accommodation for people requiring support.

Our Mission Statement

“We provide high quality homes and services giving support and assistance to people when needed.”



SECTION

2

Equal Opportunities

We are committed to ensuring that all policies and procedures are implemented within Equal Opportunities and anti-discriminatory principles. We aim to ensure that we work in an anti-discriminatory manner, both as an employer and service provider. As we review each policy and procedure, we will do so with a view to continuously improving our practices within these principles.

During your tenancy, we will:

- Provide you with accommodation
- Carry out repairs when necessary
- Provide advice on Housing Benefits and other benefits if needed
- Give advice if you fall behind with your rent
- Help you find a new home if you ever need to move
- Keep you informed
- Invite you to get involved with the Association
- Support you in your tenancy if required

Service Standards

A set of service standards has been produced following consultation with tenants. These are used to measure the quality of the service we provide. The current standards are available on request.

Confidentiality

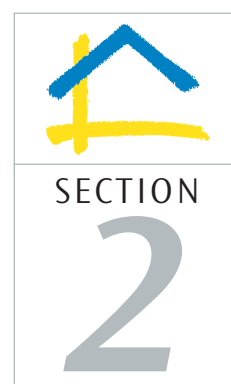
All information we receive about you is treated as confidential. This means that only those people who need to know this information will have access to it.

What information do we keep?

- ◆ Information about your housing needs when you apply for housing.
- ◆ Relevant details about your tenancy.
- ◆ All information is kept securely.

Can I see my file?

- ◆ Yes, after writing to us, giving us 28 days notice.
- ◆ We will correct any mistakes you notice.
- ◆ We cannot show you information given to us by another agency without their written consent.
- ◆ There may be a charge for this service



Tenant Participation

Tenant Participation is about communication and sharing information and ideas. It allows tenants to have a greater say and become more involved in the activities and business of the Association.

National Tenant Participation Strategy

The Welsh Assembly Government released this Strategy, stating that all Registered Social Landlords should promote Tenant Participation and should produce a Local Tenant Participation Strategy.



SECTION

3

We asked the Tenant Participation Advisory Service to assist us in putting together our strategy. We received excellent feedback on the content.

Tenant Participation Now

During the process of developing our Local Tenant Participation Strategy, it became apparent that a restructure of Tenant Participation was required. Family Housing Association has 2 tenants on the Board of Management and the Tenants' Panel has been in existence for approximately 12 years. However, attending such formal meetings, together with the commitment involved is not for everyone.

In spring 2008, we were very pleased to announce that the Tenants' Panel had been awarded a Tenant Empowerment Grant in order to establish a Property Services Tenants' Group. Following on from this success, we have now formed a Housing Management Tenants' Group.

A group of tenants have been trained to become Service Assessors. They will work with us to inspect our services.

We have smaller groups who meet to discuss specific topics and a reading group who reviews information to tenants as well as our policies and procedures. We also have a database of tenants who only wish to be contacted via phone or email once in a while.

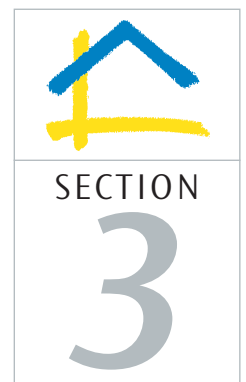
Less formal ways to participate include submitting an article or photo for the Tenants' Newsletter or entering the Annual Garden or Golf Competitions. So there should be a method to suit everyone who wants to be involved.

If you are interested in any of the above or would like to know more, please contact the Tenant Participation Officer by telephone on 01792 482762, email – tenantparticipation@fha-wales.com or by post – 43 Walter Road, Swansea, SA1 5PN.

Service Assessors 2009



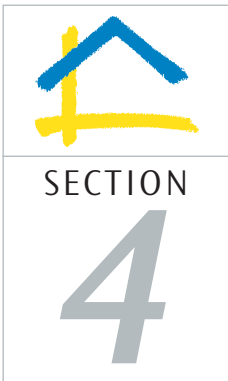
Back Row L-R: Keith Rogers, Doug Illing, Roy Raven, Tony Gilby, Mike Wiseman
Front Row L-R: Jennifer Howells, Carol Johns, Maria Round, Kath Jones



Complaints & Compliments

How to make a complaint about our service

At Family Housing, we strive to offer the best possible service at all times but there will be instances where an individual feels dissatisfied with what we provide. Our complaints policy aims to address any concerns and assist us to improve our services.



We aim to deal with all complaints, fairly, impartially, confidentially and promptly.

Please note that making a complaint in no way affects any of your rights as a tenant of Family Housing or the security of your tenancy.

What is a complaint?

The type of complaint we mean is not, for example, a neighbour's bad behaviour (see section 11). However, the complaint can be about your dissatisfaction with what we have done (or failed to do) in order to deal with that anti-social behaviour. The complaint could also be about dissatisfaction with the service provided under our policies, or the behaviour of any member of staff, agents or contractors.

Often the quickest way of resolving a problem is by phoning us or calling in to our Head Office and speaking to a member of staff who will be happy to do their best to resolve your complaint. If the person you speak to or write to cannot deal with your complaint, it will be passed on to someone with the authority to do so.

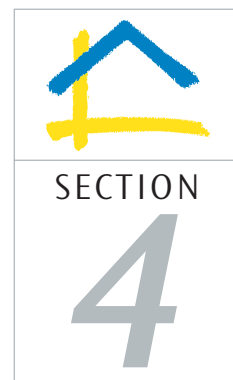
Compliments

We welcome positive feedback too and would like to hear from you when things are going well!

Details of how to make a complaint are provided in a leaflet which is available in our offices and on our website, or we will send you a copy if you contact us. The leaflet also contains information on what to do and how to contact the Welsh Assembly Government's Ombudsman, if we have not dealt with your complaint to your satisfaction.

Write to:

Family Housing Association
43 Walter Road
Swansea
SA1 5PN



Telephone: **01792 460192**

Fax: **01792 473726**

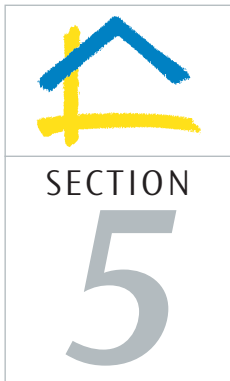
Email: **info@fha-wales.com**

Website: **www.fha-wales.com**

Property Services

The staff in Property Services manage the maintenance and improvement of our homes and landscaped areas.

We have a contract for maintenance and improvement work with local building contractors who are set targets for the level of service they must provide. The Association also has a team of directly employed estates staff who undertake the landscaping work.



If you need to report a repair you can do so by any of the following ways:

- Telephone on freephone 0800 435223
- Email repairs@fha-wales.com
- In person at our Head Office
- Fax on 01792 600290
- Informing a member of staff.
- Writing to our Head Office

We will ask the contractor to respond using the following priorities:

Job Priority	Target Times	Examples
Emergencies		
The problem causes a serious risk to people's health or to property.	Within 2 hours	Gas leaks or fumes from boilers, serious water leaks, dangerous electrical faults.
	Within 24 hours	Broken heating or hot-water system, broken lift, blocked or broken toilet (unless you have 2 toilets).
Urgent Repair		
The problem could be very inconvenient, but will not cause danger.	Within 7 calendar days	Blocked waste pipe, leaking roof, partly broken heating. System, broken electric fittings.

Day-to-day repairs

The problem may cause damage to your home if it is not dealt with quickly, but it will not cause great inconvenience.	Within 28 calendar days	Repairs to kitchen units replastering, wood rot, repairs to extractor fans.
---	-------------------------	---

Pre-arranged Repairs

Work which may be planned with others.	Up to 60 days	Kitchen replacements bathroom fitting renewals.
--	---------------	--



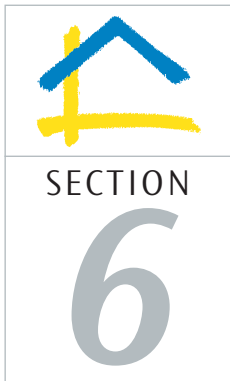
Property Services can also provide you with information on the following:

- ◆ Aids & adaptations
- ◆ Servicing of central heating
- ◆ How to get repairs done
- ◆ Access by appointment
- ◆ Code of Conduct for contractors
- ◆ Fire safety (Fire safety Order)
- ◆ Making a claim for damages and or loss against the Association
- ◆ Tenant recharges
- ◆ Repairs to your home – what we should do & what you should do
- ◆ Dealing with pests and infestations
- ◆ Welsh Housing Quality Standards
- ◆ Repair response targets
- ◆ Right to repair
- ◆ Service Charges (scheme specific leaflets)
- ◆ Tenants' choice
- ◆ Tenants' guide to satellite TV installations
- ◆ Tenants' Improvements
- ◆ The Property Services Tenants' Group

Rent

How to pay your rent

- ◆ By Phone – Telephone 01792 482705 or Freephone 0800 0213930 and pay over the phone (debit or credit card, such as Visa, Delta, Mastercard, Switch etc)
- ◆ Payment Card – Use your payment card at shops, post offices, garages displaying the Pay Point and Post Office sign. Our payment cards are not accepted at Pay Zone terminals. (Please make sure you keep your receipt as proof of payment)
- ◆ By Standing Order – Contact the Rent Department and they can give you a form to complete and forward to your bank or Building Society. Your rent will then be paid directly to us.
- ◆ Direct Debit – Contact the Rent Department and they will send you a Direct Debit Instruction form to complete and return to the Association. Your rent will be paid regularly directly to us and on time.
- ◆ Housing Benefit Direct – If you receive Housing Benefit, the Local Authority can send it directly to us.
- ◆ DSS direct payments – If you are more than 8 weeks in arrears you can request that arrears payments are taken directly out of your benefits.



Should you have difficulty paying your rent, please contact us immediately for advice and assistance. A leaflet is available giving full details.

Please remember that you could be at risk of losing your home if you do not pay your rent.

The Rents Team can be contacted by telephoning 0800 021 3930 or 01792 482705, or emailing info@fha-wales.com

Transfers, exchanges & buying your home

In future you may need to move house, for example if members of your family leave home or you have more children. There are several options open to you.

Transfer

You can apply to transfer to another one of our properties if:

- ◆ Your rent is up to date
- ◆ Your home in a good condition, and
- ◆ You have been a tenant for 12 months.

Mutual Exchange

- ◆ The scheme is open to all Local Authority and Housing Association tenants. You can therefore swap properties with a tenant of the council, for example.
- ◆ The Association along with other social landlords is a member of HOMESWAPPER, which is a free nationwide mutual exchange register.
- ◆ To find out more information or to apply to Homeswapper go to www.homeswapper.co.uk. If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact the lettings team on 01792 482702 and they will be happy to help you register.



The Right to Acquire

- ◆ In certain circumstances you may be allowed to apply to purchase the property you live in.
- ◆ To make an application, you must have been a secure or an assured tenant for at least 5 years (although not continuously) and you must occupy a property that is self-contained and has been wholly or partly funded by Social Housing Grant after 1 April 1997.

You can get an information leaflet giving full details of all the above by contacting the Housing Management Team on 01792 482702 or by visiting our website at www.fha-wales.com

Please note that with certain types of tenancy agreement mutual exchange may be not be possible. For more information, please contact the Housing Management Team as above.



Ending a tenancy

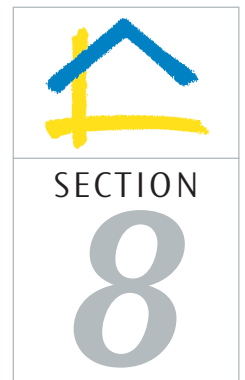
If you are moving out of your home, there are a number of important things to remember.

You must give us 4 weeks' written notice that you are moving out. If you live in supported housing the period can vary, depending on your occupancy agreement. Your Support Worker will explain this in more detail.

You can request a leaflet from our Housing Management Team on the following:

- ◆ Ending Your Tenancy
- ◆ Ending a Tenancy following the Death of a Tenant
- ◆ Ending Your Tenancy in Exceptional Circumstances

The Housing Management Team can be contacted by telephoning 01792 482702, or by writing to 43 Walter Road, Swansea, SA1 5PN or email info@fha-wales.com.



Older persons' service

Aim of the Service

The aim of the service is to enable tenants aged 55 years and over to live as independently as they are able.

Accommodation for Older People

Accommodation for Older People offers the opportunity for tenants to live in a safe environment with appropriate support being available to maintain your independence and help you live in your home.



SECTION

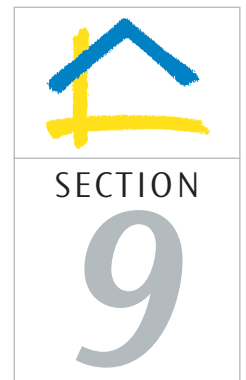
9

The Tenancy Support Worker is able to provide advice and support to assist you including:

- ◆ Assistance with claiming Welfare Benefits and maximising your income
- ◆ Advice in reporting repairs and maintenance to your apartment
- ◆ Assistance in 'sign posting' you to agencies or services who will best meet your needs
- ◆ Advice with maintaining your Tenancy
- ◆ Assistance in accessing community resources including leisure, education, and social opportunities

Out of Hours Service (Central Control)

When the Tenancy Support Worker is not on duty, support is provided through the communication system within individual apartments. Should you need support out of hours, you should pull the cord or push the button on your system. On doing so, an operator from Central Control will answer your call and offer you advice or arrange for emergency services, should this be necessary.



Older Person's Floating Support Service

This FREE service offers time-limited support tailored to meet your needs. The service is available to Family Housing Association tenants who are aged 55 years and over who live in the City and County of Swansea.

The service can help you with:

- ◆ Claiming Welfare Benefits and maximising your income.
- ◆ Finding out about local services and opportunities you wish to access.
- ◆ Arranging repairs, maintenance or adaptations to your home.
- ◆ Support to help you continue to live in your current home.

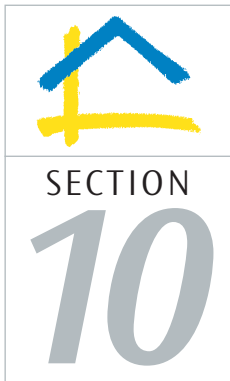
Tenancy Support Workers

All Tenancy Support Workers have Criminal Records Bureau checks, receive a comprehensive induction, regular training, supervision and support to ensure they provide the best possible service and meet Legislation and Codes of Practice requirements.

Supported Housing

Family Housing Association provides a wide range of support services throughout Swansea, Neath and Carmarthenshire including both supported housing and floating support services.

We provide supported housing for people with mental illness and for people who need support to manage their home.



The type of support we provide includes:

- ◆ Advice on managing money – paying bills, access to benefits, budgeting.
- ◆ Looking after a home – tenancy advice, improving living skills, getting on with neighbours, reporting repairs.
- ◆ Keeping socially active – Accessing employment, training and education, accessing social and leisure facilities, advice on maintaining relationships with family and friends.
- ◆ Keeping well – Accessing G.P. services, social services etc, help with managing medication, and advice on healthy living.
- ◆ Moving On – help with finding suitable accommodation, help with applications, arranging removals, advice with furnishings, arranging utilities.

Where tenants receive support from other agencies, support details will be provided by the agency involved.

You can see full details of these services in the relevant Guide to Services provided to tenants receiving support services or on the Association's website at www.fha-wales.com.

The Guide to Services can also be requested directly from project staff or the Association's Supported Housing Services Manager on 01792 482161.

Unacceptable behaviour

Nuisance caused by others

This could be noise related nuisance or more serious anti-social behaviour issues. We can help try and deal with the nuisance.

- ◆ Firstly, you may wish to speak to your neighbours to try and resolve the problem.
- ◆ Secondly, if you do not wish to speak to your neighbours or have already done so, you should contact the Housing Management Team to explain the problems you have been having.
- ◆ We will be able to tell you if we can help and give you advice.
- ◆ We can send you guidance on what you need to do next and also about what we can and cannot do with regards to dealing with anti-social behaviour.
- ◆ Please note that we treat information received as confidential. This means that only those people who need to know this information will have access to it.



The Housing Management Team can be contacted by telephoning 01792 482702, or by writing to 43 Walter Road, Swansea, SA1 5PN or email info@fha-wales.com.





Family Housing Association (Wales) Ltd
41-43 Walter Road
Swansea
SA1 5PN

Telephone: 01792 460192
Fax: 01792 473726
Email: info@fha-wales.com
Website: www.fha-wales.com

Family Housing Association (Wales) Ltd has charitable status