



United Communities

Residents' Handbook





Your Handbook

Welcome to your new home!

We are pleased that you've chosen to live in a United Communities home.

Your handbook has been produced with the help of United Communities' residents. It contains information and advice about your home, your tenancy and the service that we provide as your landlord.

We've set out our Customer Service Standards so that you know the level of service you can expect to receive from us. We will report to you annually so that you know how we are performing against our standards.

We've also defined our commitment to deliver the **'More Than'** Deal. This tells you how you can make a difference to your tenancy, your home, your community and your life.

Please keep your handbook safe. You may need it to answer questions about your tenancy, your home and to contact us.

Please get in touch if you need any part of your handbook explained or translated.

Contents

- 02 Your Handbook
- 03 About Us & The **'More Than'** Deal
- 04 Customer Service Standards
- 05 Your Tenancy
- 06 Your Tenancy With Us
- 07 Paying Your Rent
- 09 Repairs To Your Home
- 14 Staying Independent In Your Home The **'More Than'** Deal
- 15 Safe and Secure Neighbourhoods
- 16 Support And Wellbeing The **'More Than'** Deal
- 17 Customer Care The **'More Than'** Deal
- 18 Leaving Us
- 19 Contact Us





About Us & The 'More Than' Deal

Our values are to:

- Act professionally and deliver our promises.
- Show respect, tolerance and kindness for each other.
- Be one team working together.
- Take individual responsibility for delivering exceptional services.
- Be nimble and creative, and the best we can be.

How United Communities is managed:

United Communities has a board of management that helps to set our policies and make decisions about the way that the business is run.

Our staff team take care of the day-to-day running of the housing association and all our services.

We would love you to get involved with the way that United Communities is managed and run without your feedback we can't know how you would like us to improve.

We have a range of opportunities for you to take part in the **'More Than'** Deal which supports all our residents to make a difference. The **'More Than'** Deal opportunities are highlighted throughout your handbook.

Please contact your Housing Officer if you would like to find out more about getting involved and giving us your feedback.

If you want to raise any matter with the Board, contact United Communities and we will put you in touch with a Board member. You can find out more about our Board members by visiting our website www.unitedcommunities.org.uk

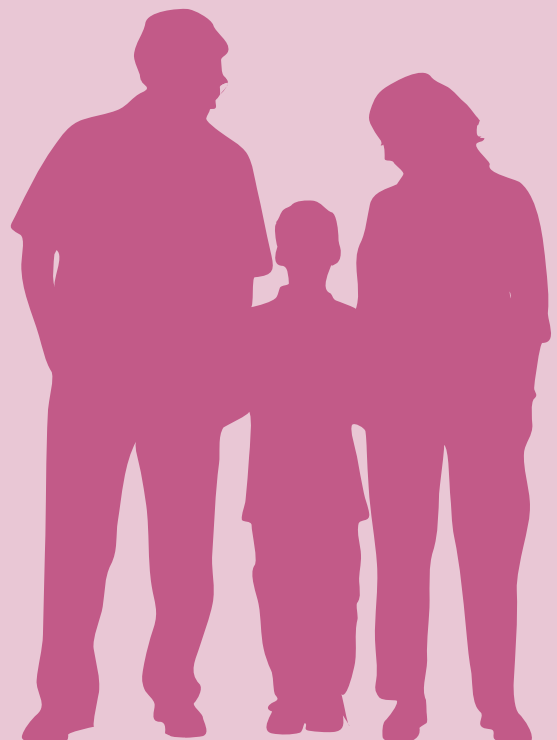
Our purpose is to be:

'More Than' just a roof by working alongside residents to create great homes and strong communities.

The 'More Than' Deal

In return for providing your home, a good repair service and support when you need it, we need you to pay your rent on time, allow access for repairs and gas safety and to live peacefully in your home.

We want you to make the most of your talents and we will work with you to help you achieve your goals so that you feel in control of your future. In return we expect you to commit to working with us - making the most of the opportunities on offer and helping to make your neighbourhood a great place to live.





Customer Service Standards

We want to deliver customer services that our staff and residents are proud of. To help us achieve this, we've all worked together to agree our service standards so that you know what you can expect when you contact us.

Our staff will be polite and introduce themselves when they greet you. Our office will be accessible, welcoming and we can arrange a visit to your home at a time to suit you if needed.

Letters and emails will be acknowledged within one working day and you'll receive a full response within eight working days.

You'll be seen within ten minutes of your appointment time at our office. We'll see you within 15 minutes if you don't have an appointment or make an appointment for you to come back later.

Phones will be answered promptly and we'll take individual responsibility for dealing with your query. We'll respond to your messages within one working day or provide a voice message so you know when we'll be back.

You'll be given emergency contact details when our office is closed; all phone calls might be recorded to improve the services we provide.

We'll provide a phone and computer in our office for you to access key employment and housing websites and a private meeting space.

Our staff will be clear about what we can do and honest about what we can't do.

We'll give you information in the way that best suits you, and in another language if needed.

We'll wear name badges so you know who we are and leave our name and job title if we leave you a message on your phone.

To protect your information, we'll ask you security questions to confirm your identity when we speak to you.

As part of the **'More Than'** Deal we will offer you help to find work and training opportunities and support to sustain your tenancy if you need it. Your part of the deal is to take good care of your home, to be an active citizen in your community and to look at your employment and training aspirations.



Your Tenancy

Finding and moving into your home.

United Communities will give you clear information to help you decide where you want to live. We will:

- Provide you with an application form to register with the local authority for housing.
- Provide a computer in the office for you to bid for homes on a Home Choice website.
- Let you know when you can have the keys for your home. We will explain your rights and responsibilities as a resident, how your rent can be paid and give you a copy of the Residents' Handbook.
- Arrange an interview with you so that we can find out if the property is suitable for you and if you need any support.
- Arrange for you to view the property with a member of staff. We will give you a copy of our home standard and tell you about any repairs we may need to do after you move in, and when the repairs will be done. If appropriate, we will offer you decoration vouchers.
- Give you advice and support from the time you are offered one of our homes.
- When you move in we will meet you at your home and tell you where things are and how they work. We will also give you a gas safety certificate and an energy performance certificate.
- We will visit you within six weeks of moving in to see how you have settled in and check if any minor repairs have been completed.
- if you move into a new build home, we will ask you to complete a survey 6 months after you move in. We will also survey your property 12 months after you move in to check for any problems or defects.

To make sure that we let our homes fairly and efficiently we will:

- Use probationary (starter) tenancies for new residents. If you have kept to your tenancy agreement, after 12 months we will transfer you to the most secure form of tenancy available to us.
- Help you to maintain your tenancy. We'll provide extra help or support if you need it.
- Actively enforce tenancy rules to protect your home, community and environment.
- Expect you (the tenant) to live in your home (and we will check periodically that you do).
- Allow you to make certain alterations to your home, but you must ask our permission first.
- Help you move home (if you need to) by subscribing to the national HomeSwapper service.
- Provide you with advice and information about exchanging your home with another resident. See page 18.





Your Tenancy With Us

It is important that you know your rights and responsibilities when you become a United Communities resident.

What is a tenancy agreement?

It's a contract between you (the tenant or joint tenants) and United Communities (your landlord). You sign a tenancy agreement when you accept the property. After you sign it, the terms & conditions of the agreement can only be changed with the agreement of you, (except for the amount of rent and the service charge).

What if I do not understand my tenancy agreement?

We will explain it to you when you sign up for the tenancy. If English is not your 1st language, we can arrange for an interpreter to translate your tenancy agreement into another language. We can arrange for information to be sent to you in another format such as larger print, on different colour paper or in braille. Please let us know if you require this.

Can United Communities end my tenancy?

We cannot evict you without a court order. We can apply to court to end your tenancy if you have broken your tenancy agreement with us. This could include:

- If you fall behind with your rent.
- If someone living in, or visiting your home causes a nuisance or behaves anti-socially.
- If you let the condition of your home seriously deteriorate.
- If you have been violent or threatened violence to your partner or member of your family, neighbours or United Communities staff.
- If someone living in or visiting your home is convicted of using the property for illegal or immoral purposes.
- If you fail to allow us access to carry out our statutory obligations.

- If you no longer live at the property as your main or only home.
- If the court ends your tenancy, a date will be set for you to leave your home. A bailiff will attend and evict you if you are still in the property.

What happens before United Communities asks the court to end my tenancy?

We expect you to keep to the terms of your tenancy agreement. If you do not or if you fail to make contact with us following our requests, we could serve you with a Notice of Seeking Possession (NOSP) or a Notice to Quit. These documents will detail the grounds or reasons for this course of action.

Can I pass my tenancy to someone else?

You may be able to do this in certain circumstances, please contact United Communities for more information. Any changes to a tenancy agreement can only be carried out with the permission of United Communities or an court order.

You may be able to pass on your tenancy to a partner when you die. This is called a succession. The successor must have lived in the property for the previous 12 months and be living with you at the time of your death. A tenancy agreement usually only allows one right of succession so there must not have been a previous succession.

What if I have a joint tenancy?

You share the tenancy and all the rights and responsibilities of the tenancy agreement apply equally to both of you. This means that you are both responsible for paying the rent and for repaying any debt. This is still the case if one of you decide to move out of the property and live elsewhere.



Paying Your Rent

Everyone must pay rent; your home is at risk if you do not pay. Without your rent we can not provide services or meet our part of the 'More Than' Deal.

When do I pay my rent?

Rent is due weekly in advance every Monday. You must make sure that your rent is paid on time, every time. If you wish to pay fortnightly or monthly, you will need to pay rent in advance so that your account remains clear for the whole period until your next rent payment is due.

What if I have problems paying my rent?

Contact United Communities immediately if you get into difficulties paying your rent. We will help in any way we can including giving you support to ensure you are claiming all you are entitled to and helping you to balance money coming in and going out.

If you cannot pay the full amount that you owe, we will make an arrangement with you (a Rent Debt Agreement) to repay what you owe in regular manageable instalments.

If you fail to pay your rent we may serve you a Notice of Seeking Possession (NOSP). This document allows us to go to court to request possession of your property. We do not normally request a court date if you keep paying your rent and you stick to the agreements you have made.

You may wish to get independent advice from an advice centre.

Can my rent change?

Rents are calculated and increased or decreased annually in accordance with Government set regulations. Rents are usually changed on the first Monday in April.

You will be informed in writing about any changes to your rent at least one month in advance. If you

pay by standing order, please make arrangements to increase the amount in advance of the increase.

What about service charges?

Residents pay service charges if they live in a flat or in a house where a service is provided by United Communities.

Service charges must be paid at the same time as rent and items covered by a service charge will always be stated at the end of your tenancy agreement. Service charges are normally reviewed annually, we will consult you first and notify you of any changes.

Can I access my rent account online?

You can check your rent account using the **'My Tenancy'** facility on our website. If you wish to use this facility, United Communities will provide a secure user name and password on request.

Paying and collecting your rent

United Communities offer a variety of ways for you to pay your rent. We will:

- Provide you with clear details of your rent and any services you pay for before you decide to move in.
- Each year we will set your rent and service charge and explain how we have done this.
- Consult you about any major changes to services you receive and pay for.
- Send you a rent statement twice per year and provide you with online access to your rent account at any time.



Paying Your Rent

- Help you fill in housing benefit forms and verify evidence needed for your claim.
- Contact you quickly about any rent debt and make rent debt agreements with you to ensure you pay your debt.
- Give you support and advice if you get into difficulty with your rent and provide access to welfare benefit advice, debt counselling etc.
- Explain clearly and at an early stage, what will happen if you do not pay your rent or if you fail to keep to an arrangement.
- Take legal action if you break your agreements and charge you the cost of doing this.
- Pursue any debt, even if you have moved out.

Here are some of the different ways you can pay your rent:

By direct debit

You will need to contact us so we can set this up for you. You can pay monthly, four weekly, fortnightly or weekly.

By standing order

You need to ask your bank to set this up for you, using the bank details below:

Account Name: United Communities

Account Number: 9780 8466

Sort Code: 56 00 05

At our office

You can pay by debit card at our office or by calling United Communities on **0117 942 4600/0117 947 0501 (option 2)**. You will need your debit card. You will be given a receipt.

Allpay payment swipe card



Make payments at the Post Office or local shops that are part of the PayPoint network, by telephone 24 hours a day and over the internet.

Paying at the post office



Accepts cash, debit card and cheques (cheques made payable to Post Office Ltd).

By telephone



Call Allpay 0844 557 8321.

Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You will need your Allpay payment swipe card and debit card.

Paying by internet



Log on to www.allpayments.net or via www.unitedcommunities.org.uk. You will need your Allpay payment swipe card and debit card.



Repairs To Your Home

How to contact the Repairs team:

Phone:

Office hours 0117 942 4600

When the office is closed you will be signposted to our out of hours team.

Text:

You can text a repair to us by starting your message with the word **REPAIRS** then your message and send it to 07779 149 149

Email:

repairs@unitedcommunities.org.uk

Website:

www.unitedcommunities.org.uk

Visit our website for hints and tips regarding carrying out your own repairs.

- Ensure all work is of a good quality, make sure your home is secure at all times and carry out work safely.

For more information, please see the 'Contractor Code of Conduct' on our website.

In return we expect you to:

- Keep appointments and allow access to your home.
- Be considerate towards our contractors.
- Be ready for the work to be carried out, for example moving belongings and furniture.

Safety checks & access to your home

Certain repairs or safety checks are essential and it is in your interest to give us access to your property to sort out these issues. If we cannot arrange a mutually convenient appointment or you break the appointment, as a last resort we will take legal action to gain access. You will be recharged for the costs of the legal action. Examples of essential repairs or safety checks are:

- Where there is a risk to your health and safety.
- A risk of serious damage to the property.
- Safety checks on, for example;
 - your gas boiler.
 - your electrical system.
- Water system to check for legionella risk.
- Any asbestos in your property.
- Ventilation system.
- Solar panels.

For other repairs that we regard as non essential, if we cannot arrange a mutually convenient appointment or you break the appointment we will contact you to ask if the repair is still needed. If we do not hear back from you, we will assume that the repair is no longer required.

Introduction

We are committed to providing an excellent repairs service for our tenants. We have listened to what is important to you and we are always looking to improve. If you'd like to comment on the service we've provided, please contact us using the methods above.

Working in your home

We expect our contractors to treat you and your home with respect. They should be polite, professional and courteous. They will:

- Keep appointments.
- Wear identification.
- Never enter your home unless there is an adult present.
- Wear overshoes if asked.
- Ask permission if they wish to use your facilities.



Repairs To Your Home

Our responsibilities

Day to Day repairs

When something in your home needs repairing we will:

- Provide an emergency service 24 hours a day, seven days a week and complete all emergency repairs by the end of the next day.
- Agree an appointment with you and give you a choice of: am or pm; 10am–3pm; early evening; Saturday am.
- Send you a letter or text with details of the appointment and the contractor.
- Tell you if a repair is your responsibility and who should pay for it before we carry out the work.
- Complete the repair on the first visit where possible.
- Tell you if a job will take longer than planned and keep you informed of progress.
- Keep our appointment.
- Give you a choice of ways to report repairs (e.g. website, telephone).

Emergency repairs

Emergency repairs are those that are needed to avoid serious health and safety risk, serious structural damage or to ensure a home is secure.

We aim to respond within four hours but will definitely respond by the end of the next day to the following types of emergencies:

- Total loss of electricity, water or gas supply (you should establish if this is a neighbourhood problem and if so, contact the appropriate utility company).
- Severe storm damage.
- Dangerous wiring and risk of electric shock.
- Broken or jagged glazing.
- Fire damage: to secure the building.

- Security: locks or other items if home is not secure.
- Major plumbing leaks (internal).
- Flooding.
- Gas leak (in an individual case, you the resident should call TRANSCO 0800 111 999).
- WC not flushing if you are elderly and it is the only WC (all others should use buckets of water to flush as a temporary measure).

Other emergencies where United Communities will respond by the end of the next day include:

- No heating or hot water for elderly and vulnerable residents.
- No heating or hot water for all other residents between 31st October and 1st May.
- Shower repairs for people not able to use the bath.
- A loose or broken WC pan where serious leak could occur or if potentially dangerous.
- Racist or offensive graffiti.
- Dangerous walls (to make safe).
- Blocked flue to boiler.
- Blocked foul drains affecting the house internally.
- Toilet not flushing if there is no other working toilet.
- Leak from water or heating pipe, tank or cistern or rain penetration if not severe.
- Insecure external window, door or lock.
- Any repairs in the four hour emergency category where daylight is essential for repairs.



Repairs To Your Home

Residents repair responsibilities

General

- Replacing lost keys (including window) and forced entry when keys are lost.
- Tightening or replacing screws generally to doors, drawers and window fittings.
- Replacing and repairing internal door handles, catches and locks.
- Minor repairs to kitchen units and drawers.
- All internal decorations, including after a leak.
- TV aerials (except communal aerials to flats).
- Fittings installed by you (the resident).
- Small cracks in ceiling or wall plaster.
- Trimming doors when you fit floor coverings.
- Pests: fleas, ants, wasp nests, rats and mice.
- Cleaning communal areas unless stated otherwise in your tenancy agreement.
- Replacing broken or cracked glass where no Police crime report number is obtained.
- Repairing or renewing floor coverings.

Electrical

- Light bulbs in the home, including; Kitchen fluorescent tubes and shaver lights, excluding; sealed light fittings where tools are required to remove the bulb.
- Electrical fittings installed by you (the resident) e.g. ceiling fans.
- Resetting trip switches.
- Testing, cleaning and replacing batteries in smoke detectors.
- Cleaning of fans and cooker hoods.
- Door bell (if not hard wired)

Plumbing

- Replacing sink/bath plugs and chains.
- Replacing WC seats.
- Stained internal sinks, WC or baths.
- Blocked waste pipes where the blockage is caused by you (the resident).
- Mixer taps and showers fitted by you (the resident).
- Installing/maintaining your washing machines and dishwashers and plumbing.
- Checking the room thermostat or heating programme is set at the correct temperature/setting.
- Bleeding radiators (not combi boilers).
- Taking steps to stop water in external taps and pipes from freezing.
- Turning off water at the stop tap if a pipe bursts.
- Cleaning and descaling shower heads
- Keeping sealant free from mould.

Outside the home

- Maintaining gardens including: clothes lines; hedges and trees and mowing the lawn.
- Keeping garden and driveway clear of rubbish, disused cars and furniture.
- Cleaning leaves from gully grids.
- Sheds and outbuildings.



Repairs To Your Home

What is a rechargeable repair?

You are responsible for damage that you, your family, visitors or pets have caused. This includes repairs caused by accidental damage, misuse or neglect, poor DIY and alterations made without permission. We will recharge for any damages caused in these circumstances. These are called rechargeable repairs. If a potentially rechargeable repair is posing a health and safety risk, we will carry out the repair and recharge the cost to you.

We will also charge you...

- If you fail to keep an appointment and if United Communities has to pay the contractor for an abortive call.
- For the cost of legal action necessary to gain access to your home

What do I do if my home is damaged by crime?

1. Report the incident immediately to the Police.
2. Keep the following information and pass it to United Communities: the crime reference number given to you by the Police; the date and time of the crime. This should be done within 7 working days, otherwise you will be liable to pay for any works that have been carried out.
3. If your home is not secure, please report this immediately to the office. Call the emergency out of hours number if the office is closed.

Should I have content insurance?

The structure of your home is insured by United Communities against things like fire or flood. This does not include your personal items or furnishings e.g. carpets or furniture. We strongly advise you to take out contents insurance to cover your belongings.



Visit our website for hints and tips regarding carrying out your own repairs.



Repairs To Your Home



Condensation, damp & mould

The most common cause of condensation, damp and mould is high humidity in your home. High humidity can be easily prevented by making sure your home is well ventilated and kept warm. Mould can be washed off surfaces using anti-fungal cleaning products, which is the resident's responsibility. For more information on preventing condensation and mould in your home, please see our website.

Major repairs/components replacement

United Communities will replace major building components such as kitchens and bathrooms as part of a planned programme.

We will inspect your property at least every five years and note its condition and then plan ahead to do the works according to its condition and the availability of funds. We will notify you of any future planned works.

Alterations in your home

You have the right to alter and improve your home and garden but you must get written approval from us before starting any work.

Examples of alterations that you **MUST** get prior approval for are:

- Electrical works, including but not limited to changes to sockets and light fixtures or the installation of an electric shower
- Works effecting plumbing, for example installing a new bathroom
- Structural changes, for example the removal of walls or boarding the loft
- Alterations to existing fixtures and fitting, for example the kitchen
- Any changes to the heating system
- Major alterations to the garden, such as laying a patio.

This list is not exhaustive, we recommend getting in contact with the repairs team if you are planning on carrying out any alterations to your home or garden.

Alterations carried out must be carried out to a good standard and as specified by us.

We will write to you with our decision and state any specifications. We may inspect the work while it is being done and on completion. If you don't request permission for an alteration, we may ask you to put your property back to its original state at your own expense.



Staying Independent In Your Home

The 'More Than' Deal

To help you stay in your home, if you are having difficulty getting around or using the facilities, we will:

- Acknowledge all requests for aids and adaptations to the home within five working days and let you know who will be dealing with your request.
- Involve you in deciding the best solution for you.
- Aim to complete all minor adaptations such as grab rails and lever taps within 28 days.
- Help you to get an assessment by an occupational therapist if needed.
- Pay for all adaptations costing up to £2,500.
- Keep you informed about your application and let you know when we plan to do the work.
- Contribute 50% towards major works costing £2,500 - £10,000 and help you access local authority grants where needed. We aim to complete these within six months.
- Inspect all work to make sure it is of good quality and that it meets your needs.
- Regularly service adaptations and equipment and repair them when needed.
- Where possible, arrange for adaptations (e.g. lever taps) to be carried out when undertaking major improvement work to minimise disruption.
- Support you to move to a more suitable home if needed.

This is subject to budgets and affordability.

We will assess and install minor adaptations such as:

- Grab rails.
- Handrails.

- Ramps.
- Raising electrical sockets.
- Door alterations.
- Shower trays.

For more complex cases you will need to contact Social Services Adult Care to request an occupational therapist to assess your needs. We can help you by liaising with occupational therapists and the local authority for the provision of larger adaptations.

Examples of more complex works are:

- Hoists.
- Stair lifts.
- Low level baths.
- Wet rooms.
- Alterations to kitchen units.

Please contact our repairs team on 0117 942 4600 if you think you need an aid or adaptation to help you live more comfortably in your home.





Safe & Secure Neighbourhoods

We want our neighbourhoods to be safe and enjoyable places for residents to live and work in.

Anti social behaviour (ASB)

Our **'More Than'** Deal requires you to be respectful to your neighbours and not cause anti social behaviour. If issues do arise, in the 1st instance we encourage you to talk to the person(s) concerned to try to resolve the issue. It is important that you stay safe so if you feel threatened or in immediate danger call 999. If the behaviour upsets you but is not an emergency call 101.

We will:

- Work to prevent ASB by explaining the tenancy agreement and what is expected of residents.
- Respond to all ASB reports within three working days or one working day if hate crime/violence is involved.
- Help you to report ASB and provide information about the service and what United Communities can do.
- Act early to prevent problems escalating.
- Agree an action plan with you so you understand what United Communities will do and what you need to do to try to resolve the problem.
- Keep you informed of progress and expect you to keep in contact with us about the ASB.
- Agree with you any agencies that might be involved to help resolve problems and give you support.
- Treat reports of ASB confidentially.
- Remove racist and other offensive graffiti on United Communities property within 24 hours.
- Support you if your case goes to court.
- Encourage community involvement to tackle, prevent and promote tolerance.
- Use restorative approaches to deal with ASB including informal and formal action when appropriate.

Reporting ASB

As well as reporting ASB to the Police in cases where you feel in immediate danger you can also:

- Contact your local noise pollution team if the problem is about noise.

- Contact your local council's waste team if the problem is related to fly-tipping or dumped rubbish.
- Contact United Communities

If there is an urgent need, we will support you to apply for rehousing. It is important to note that we cannot guarantee the outcome or speed of this.

Support for residents

United Communities will take a victim orientated approach when supporting residents affected by ASB. If informal action does not have the desired effect and the ASB continues, we will take formal action where appropriate (if enough evidence can be gathered to go to court), which may include:

- Requesting an injunction to stop the behaviour. The junction may include Positive Requirements which will set out do's and don'ts that the perpetrator will be expected to adhere to. E.g. not playing music after a certain time, attending drug counselling.

When residents need to be witnesses at court, our staff will accompany them and ensure their time in court is as stress-free as possible.

What is not ASB

Although they can cause annoyances some types of behaviour will not normally be investigated by United Communities. These include but are not limited to:

- Noise from children playing during day time hours.
- Personal differences/family disputes.
- Living or domestic noises (vacuuming, washing machines, etc).
- Children falling out with each other.
- Cooking smells.
- Cats straying/fouling in gardens.
- People being inconsiderate or thoughtless.
- People looking or staring.



Support & Wellbeing

The 'More Than' Deal

Tenancy support

We aim to help you sustain your tenancy, pay your rent on time and to live as independently as possible. To do this we will:

- Explain United Communities' and your role and responsibilities at the start of each tenancy.
- Visit you within six weeks of moving in and at nine months to find out if you are settling in and managing your tenancy.
- Provide minor adaptations to help you live independently. We will also work with other agencies to get major adaptations completed.
- Provide support if you need it to help you live as independently as possible, either from a United Communities' staff member or a specialist agency.
- If you need extra support we will carry out an initial assessment with you and agree a support plan which we will review with you.
- Provide you with help to budget and find employment and training options.
- Liaise with other agencies about child protection and safeguarding issues.
- Be proactive in tackling ASB if you are subjected to or causing harassment, alarm or distress.
- Have trained staff who will listen in confidence to residents suffering domestic abuse and provide housing advice and help to get specialist advice and protection.

Health and wellbeing

We want to make a positive impact on your lives and the communities where we have homes. We are committed to providing **'More Than'** just a roof and will work with you, communities and local organisations to help you sustain your tenancy and become more self reliant.

Employment and training

Our staff can help with finding work, training and volunteering opportunities. Help with CV writing and interview skills can also be given.

New opportunity fund

United Communities residents can apply for a grant of up to £500.00 to take up employment and training opportunities that will help them move into or towards employment. (Subject to our annual budget).

Referrals

We work in partnership with local agencies and can refer/sign post residents to service providers for a range of support such as:

- Support for older people.
- Support for carers.
- Getting online.
- Energy saving advice.
- Being active.
- Budgeting and benefits advice.

Contact your Housing Officer to find out more about our Tenancy Support or Health and Wellbeing services.





Customer Care

The 'More Than' Deal

Providing customer care

We are committed to providing excellent customer service to all our customers. We know that some times things go wrong, when this happens we will:

- Apologise when we have got things wrong and put things right where possible.
- Offer you support if you need help to make a complaint.
- Acknowledge your complaint within three working days and send you a copy of our customer feedback policy which can also be found on our website.
- Make it easy for you to contact us, tell you who will deal with your complaint and when they will respond by.
- Investigate your complaint as fully and as quickly as possible.
- Listen to you and ask what action you think we should take.
- Respond to your complaint within eight working days or if we can not reply in this time, we will let you know when we will respond by.
- Keep you updated on progress, including action and timescales where appropriate.
- Always let you know what to do if you're not satisfied.
- Ask for your views on how we handled your complaint.
- Offer compensation in certain circumstances: where damage has been caused by a contractor or member of staff. Or, if a contractor does not attend an appointment and where United Communities fail to carry out certain repairs in a reasonable time or when service charge work is not carried out.

Full details of our compensation policy can be found on our website www.unitedcommunities.org.uk

Influencing our services

To help us make sure that you can tell us what you want from our services we will:

- Provide a range of opportunities for you to influence the services you receive.
- Keep you informed via newsletters, an annual report and by regularly updating our website and facebook page.
- Keep up-to-date records of residents who have expressed an interest in getting involved.
- Pay reasonable pre-agreed expenses so that you are not left out of pocket as a result of getting involved e.g. transport, child care, mileage expenses
- Provide support and training for any resident who wants to get involved.

Visit our website for all the different ways you can get involved and give us your feedback.





Leaving Us

Exchanging your home

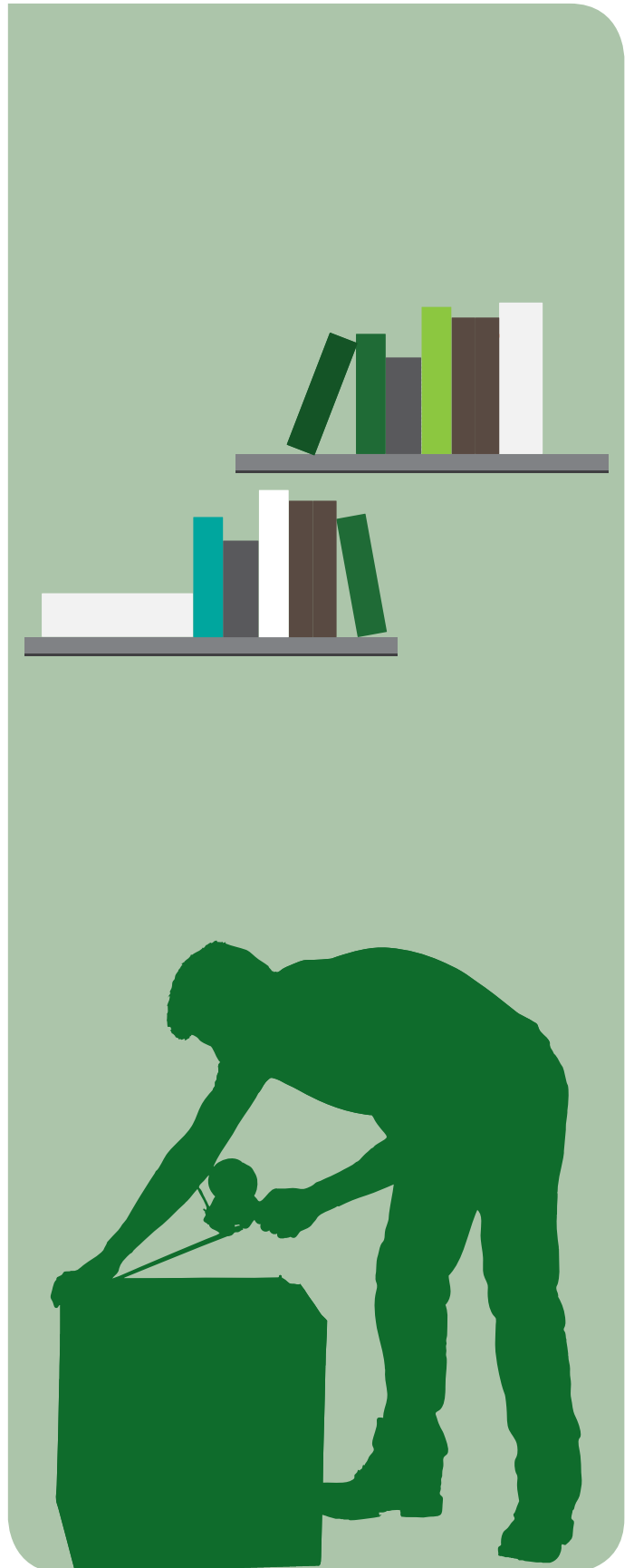
To help residents who want to exchange their home with another resident we will:

- Provide free access to HomeSwapper when you have no rent debt or recharge debt with United Communities.
- Give you access to the HomeSwapper website in our reception and help you to use it.
- Reply to any application to exchange your home within 42 days and let you know about any conditions that may apply. If we refuse we will let you know the reasons why.
- Advise you that you will need to agree to accept the property in its current condition.
- Advise you that you retain the same security of tenure when exchanging with a resident on a fixed term tenancy, unless the tenancy is of less than two years duration.

Leaving your home

If you decide to leave your home, before you move out we will:

- Sign a 'ending a tenancy' or 'surrender form'.
- Agree with you the date that your tenancy will end and tell you if there is anything you need to pay us.
- Visit you to talk about your plans to move, why you are moving and to inspect your property.
- Agree how you can return your keys.
- Ask you for a forwarding address, e-mail address and/or contact number.
- Remind you to remove all of your personal belongings, furniture and rubbish as any left in the property will result in a recharge.





Contact Us

Address

Eden House, 10 Eastgate Office Park, Eastgate Road, Eastville, Bristol, BS5 6XX

Tel: 0117 942 4600

Fax: 0117 942 1565

Email: info@unitedcommunities.org.uk

Website: www.unitedcommunities.org.uk

Office opening hours

Monday	9.00am – 5.00pm
Tuesday	9.00am – 5.00pm
Wednesday	10.30am – 5.00pm
Thursday	9.00am – 5.00pm
Friday	9.00am – 4.30pm

Appointments can also be made outside of these hours.

Accessibility

Our office is wheelchair accessible and we have installed hearing loops. When you come into the office, the first member of staff you meet is usually our Customer Service Officer who will answer your questions or arrange for you to see another member of staff who can help you.

Text service

Text service **07779 149 149**. These are the words to text for the following services (use all lower case or all capital letters):

- Text **RENT** and your message to your Housing Officer.
- Text **BALANCE** to receive your rent balance.
- Text **DD** to set up a direct debit.
- Text **REPAIRS** and your message to tell us about a repair.

Emergencies

For out of hours emergency repairs call **0117 942 4600** and provide as much information as possible.

Only use the emergency service in an emergency where there is serious health and safety, security or structural damage risks.

If a contractor is called out unnecessarily, we will pass the charge of their visit on to you.

- **Electrical emergency:** call **0800 365 900** (Western Power Distribution).
- **Gas emergency:** call **0800 111 999** (Transco, National Gas Emergency).
- **Water emergency:** call **0800 214 651** (Wessex Water: Water Leakstoppers).

If you have a water leak, please turn the water off using the stopcock.



Please let us know if you would like this document in another format (such as large print or another language).
A digital copy can also be found in the documents and policies section of our website.

Arabic

يُرجى إعلامنا إن كنت ترغب في تحويل هذه الوثيقة إلى صيغة أخرى (كاستخدام نمط الطباعة الكبيرة أو صياغتها بلغة أخرى). كما ويُمكن الاطلاع على النسخة الرقمية مدرجة في الوثائق وقسم السياسة عبر موقعنا الإلكتروني .

Bengali

আপনি এ নথি ভিন্ন কোন মাধ্যমে (যেমন বড়-ছাপায় বা অন্য কোন ভাষায়) চাইলে আমাদেরকে জানান। এ নথির একটি ডিজিটাল কপি আমাদের ওয়েবসাইটের পলিসি সেকশনে পাবেন।

Cantonese

如需本文件的其他格式，如大型列印版本或其他語言版本，敬請告知。數位版本可于我網網站‘文件和原則’部分查閱。

Farsi

اگر شما نیاز به فرمت دیگری از این سند (مانند چاپ بزرگ و یا به زبان دیگری) دارید لطفاً به ما اطلاع دهید. یک کپی دیجیتال این سند را می توان در بخش اسناد و قوانین وب سایت ما پیدا کنید.

Polish

Prosimy się z nami skontaktować, jeśli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać niniejszy dokument w innym formacie (na przykład dużą czcionką lub w innej wersji językowej). Elektroniczna wersja dokumentu znajduje się na naszej stronie internetowej w zakładce odnoszącej się do dokumentów i polityki.

Punjabi

ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ ਕੀ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੋਗੇ (ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰ ਜਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ)। ਡਿਜੀਟਲ ਕਾਪੀ ਸਾਡੀ ਵੈਬਸਾਈਟ 'ਤੇ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਅਤੇ ਨੀਤੀ ਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

Somali

Fadlan aan ogaano haddii aad u jeceshahay dokumentigan qaab kale (sida far waaweyne ama luqad kale). Nuqul digitaal ah ayaa laga heli karaa dukumentiyadan ama qeybta siyaasadda ee barteena.

Turkish

Bu belgeyi başka bir formatta (örneğin büyük baskı olarak veya başka bir dilde) isterseniz lütfen bize bildirin. Dijital bir kopyası, web sitemizdeki Belgeler ve Politika bölümünde bulunabilir.

Urdu

اگر یہ دستاویز آپ کو دیگر کسی فارمیٹ (مثلاً بڑے حروف یا دیگر کسی زبان) میں چاہیے ہو، تو برائے مہربانی ہمیں بتائیں۔ ڈیجیٹل نقل ہماری ویب سائٹ کے حصہ 'دستاویزات اور پالیسی' میں مل سکتی ہے۔

Vietnamese

Vui lòng cho chúng tôi biết quý vị/bạn có muốn tài liệu này ở định dạng khác (ví dụ như: chữ in khổ lớn hay ngôn ngữ khác) hay không. Có thể tìm được một bản điện tử trong phần tài liệu và chính sách trên trang web của chúng tôi.



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