



TENANTS' HANDBOOK

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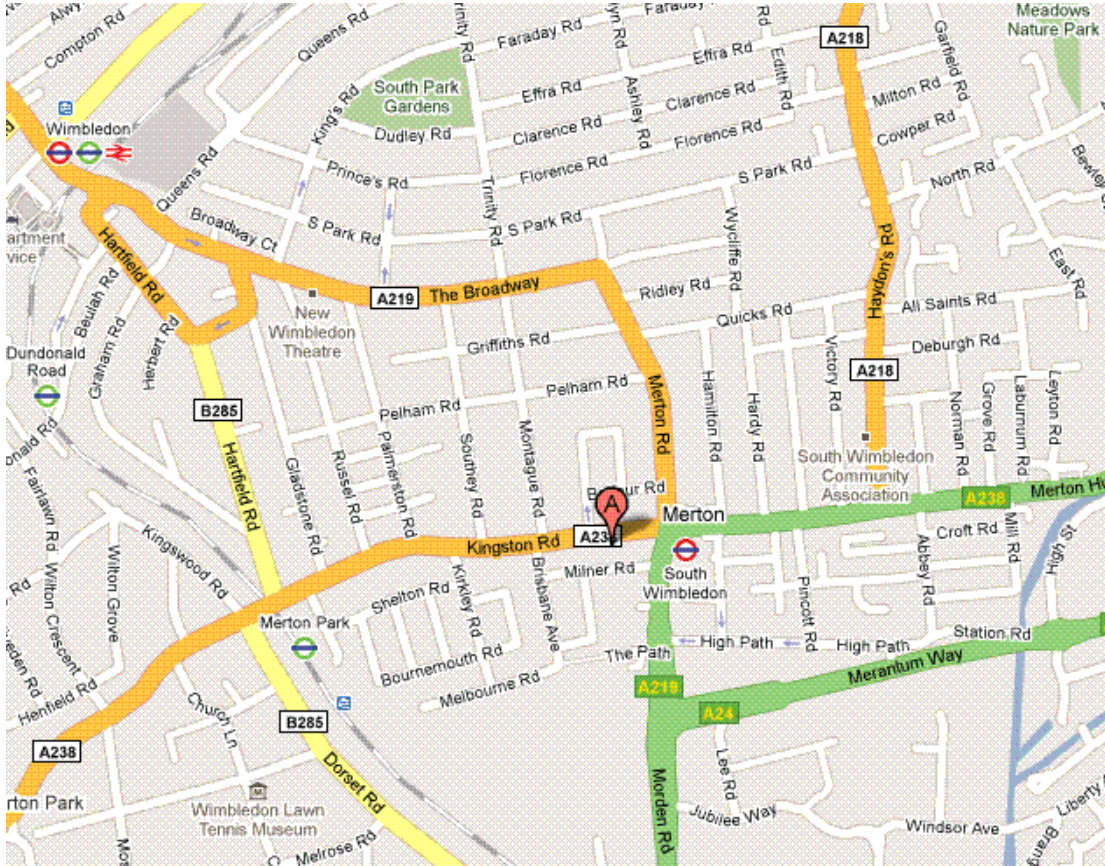
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1. Where to find us and how to get there

Office Address

16-20 Kingston Road, South Wimbledon, London SW19 1JZ

Map



By London Underground – the nearest station is South Wimbledon (Northern Line).

By Bus – the 152 bus stops directly outside of the building. Other buses that stop just down the road from Grenfell are, 57, 200, 219, S4 and the 131.

By Tram – trams run frequently between Croydon and Wimbledon, the nearest station is Morden Road, from there you can get the 93 bus.

Office Opening Hours

Monday	10:00 am – 6.00 pm
Tuesday	10:00 am – 6.30 pm
Wednesday	10:00 am – 6.00 pm
Thursday	10:00 am – 6.00 pm
Friday	10:00 am – 6.00 pm
Saturday	Closed
Sunday	Closed

How to contact us

Telephone 0208 545 2588

Fax 0208 545 2599

Email info@grenfell-housing.co.uk

Or

name@grenfell-housing.co.uk

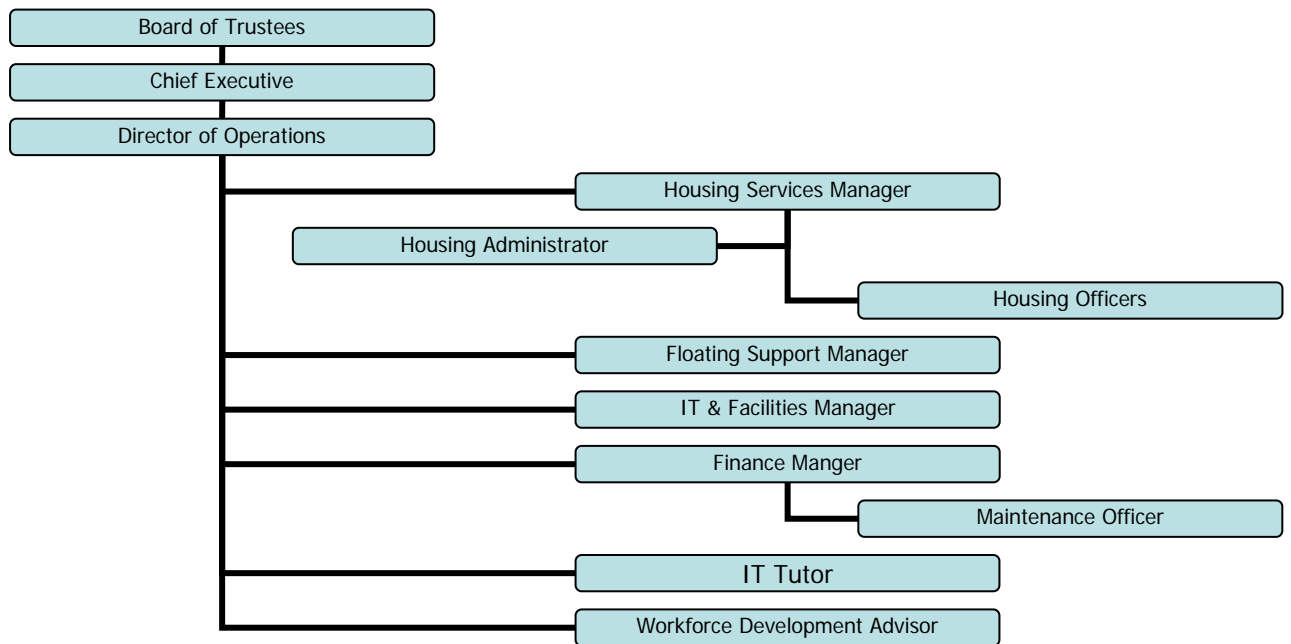
Web www.grenfell-housing.co.uk

If you wish to see your Housing Officer at the office, it is a good idea to phone first to check that they are available.

If you wish to book an appointment outside of the normal office hours, please speak to your Housing Officer or the Housing Services Manager.

The office is not open at weekends or on Bank Holidays.

2. How Grenfell is organised



The Chief Executive, with the support of the team, runs the organisation and reports to the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the organisation, including financial control.

Members of the Board of Trustees are volunteers from the local area who have particular skills or experience relevant to the running of the Association. Up to three Board Members are tenants of the Association.

Your Housing Officer, who can be contacted daily, can help you with any queries about your tenancy or accommodation. The Housing Officer also provides you with support and general advice.

3. Our aims and objectives

Our supported housing schemes - The Gables, Grenfell Road, Foyer and Independent Units have similar aims and objectives; these are to:

- Provide good quality supported housing for vulnerable young people
- Provide support with an integrated training and employment service
- Assist our tenants to access local training and employment services in order to increase their employment opportunities
- Using the 'dispersed' Foyer model provide a practical and less institutionalised living environment for young people preparing for the transition to independent living
- Assist in relieving street-homelessness of young people in the London Boroughs of Merton, Wandsworth & Kingston
- Help young people to move on to suitable accommodation in the private sector or social housing sector when they are ready to make the transition to independent living
- Encourage young people to have high aspirations for themselves and give them the skills to enable them to attain these
- Strive to develop creative and innovative services for young people that enable them to 'Be Healthy', 'Stay Safe', 'Achieve Economic Wellbeing', 'Enjoy & Achieve' and 'Make a Positive Contribution'

4. What happens when I move into Grenfell

The Housing Officer in charge of the property where there is a vacancy will contact you and offer you the opportunity to visit the property and meet the other tenants.

If you accept the offer of accommodation, the Housing Officer will explain the tenancy agreement which you have to sign before you move in. You will also sign a room inventory. The room inventory lists the furnishings and equipment in the room when your tenancy starts. You will be required to take good care of these items and return them in a reasonable state when you move out.

All our shared houses are fully furnished; you must get permission from your Housing Officer if you wish to bring any of your own furniture into the house. This is so that they can check that it is safe for you to do so.

Your Housing Officer will explain the Health & Safety requirements of living in shared accommodation and will explain the fire procedure to you. Your Housing Officer will also show you where cut off switches are for water, electricity and gas in the property.

If you do not know how to use the washing machine, oven or any appliance in the property your Housing Officer will also show you how to use these.

If you get JSA, Income Support or another benefit or, if you are working but on a low income, your Housing Officer will help you to fill in a claim for Housing Benefit.

Your Housing Officer will give you your keys, a copy of the Tenants' Handbook, your copy of your tenancy agreement and a starter pack.

5. Your Tenancy Agreement

Your Tenancy Agreement is a legally binding agreement. It is a contract which sets out your responsibilities as a tenant and our responsibilities as your landlord.

What type of tenancy do I have?

If you live in the Foyer, Grenfell Road, or The Gables you have an **Assured Shorthold Tenancy**.

If you live in one of our independent properties you may have an **Assured Tenancy**.

You will need to check with your housing officer what type of tenancy you have.

What does the type of tenancy I have mean for me?

An **Assured Shorthold Tenancy** is for a limited period (minimum of six months). You have the right to live at the property for the duration of the tenancy, so long as you keep to the terms of the agreement.

An **Assured Tenancy** has no time limit.

Both tenancies have similar rights and responsibilities. The major difference between the two tenancies is the length of stay.

For both tenancies Grenfell Housing Association will have to apply to the County Court for a Possession Order before we can evict you.

If you are in arrears with your rent, you are misusing the premises, creating a nuisance or failing to keep to any of the terms of your tenancy agreement Grenfell will seek to evict you.

Your rights and responsibilities are set out in your tenancy agreement and there is additional information about these in throughout this handbook.

6. Paying my rent

Where does my rent go?

Grenfell Housing Association is non-profit making organisation. The rent that you pay covers the costs of providing you with accommodation and some of the costs of your support.

All of our properties are leased from other organisations such as the Local Authority, another social landlord or, in some cases from a private owner. A significant amount of your rent pays the landlord for the lease of the property.

The remainder covers the costs of running the organisation and providing facilities and opportunities for you our tenants. These costs include for example, Council Tax, electricity, gas and water charges, staff salaries, maintenance and the like.

How to pay

At the Grenfell Office

Payment can be made to any member of staff at the office. You can pay by cash or cheque and you will be given a receipt.

By Post Office Giro

If you would like to pay your rent at your local post office you can ask your Housing Officer for a payment book. Each time you pay rent you will need to complete a payment slip which you give to the cashier with your payment. The cashier will stamp the book and this will serve as your receipt.

By post

Do not put cash in the post. Postal payments should only be cheques or postal orders. Cheques should be made payable to "Grenfell Housing Association", **not** to an individual. For security purposes, make sure the cheque is crossed and account payee only and that your name and address is written clearly on the back of the cheque.

By standing order

You can instruct your bank to make payments to us weekly, fortnightly or monthly depending on which is most convenient for you (but remember that your rent is due in advance). If you would like to pay by standing order please ask your Housing Officer for a form.

Arrears

Current and former tenants of Grenfell Housing Association accumulate a large amount of rent arrears after leaving the association.

Grenfell relies entirely on rental income to maintain and provide services to our tenants.

Almost all of these arrears come from failure to claim housing benefit when it was properly due.

Please remember though that you as the tenant are responsible for all of the rent, so if housing benefit isn't paid the debt will be yours.

Because of the large amount of rent outstanding, Grenfell's management have appointed a debt collection agency to recover money owed by tenants who have left with arrears.

Housing Benefit

If you are unemployed or you work but are on a low income you may be entitled to claim Housing Benefit. Your Housing Officer will help you to make your initial claim and advise you what evidence you will need to provide.

Remember that paying your rent is YOUR responsibility, not your Housing Officer's. Although your Housing Officer will advise and guide you, YOU must do everything you can to ensure that you respond to any letters from the Housing Benefit Department at the Council and provide them with the evidence they ask for.

The Housing Benefit Department at your council will require you to provide the following evidence to support your claim:

- If you are working, proof of your earnings – If you are paid monthly you will need to supply your last two payslips or if you are paid weekly your last five payslips.
- A copy of your Tenancy Agreement
- Personal identification such as birth certificate or passport
- Proof of your immigration status if applicable

From time to time the Housing Benefit department may write to you or visit you at your home to check that you are still entitled to benefit.

If you receive any letters from the benefit department you should fill in the form and return it straight away even if you cannot supply all the information they have asked for.

It is always best to take the form to the council's offices so that you can get a receipt, if you're not able to get to the council office then you should obtain proof of posting. Make sure you let your housing officer know what is happening with your claim and give them a copy of any receipts.

If your circumstances change, for example you get a pay rise, a new job or your JSA or any other state benefit stops for any reason you should let your housing officer know straight away. Your housing officer will let you know what to do about the change in your circumstances and help you to ensure that you get the right amount of housing benefit at the right time.

Whatever you do, it really is in your best interests to ensure that your housing benefit claim is kept in good order.

Never put off dealing with correspondence or letting your housing officer know what is going on – it could cost you your home now and ultimately lead to a County Court Judgement which might make it difficult you to get credit in the future.

Understanding my rent statement

Grenfell Housing Association

16-20 Kingston Road
South Wimbledon
SW19 1JZ

STATEMENT OF RENTS AND CHARGES

for:

-
-

Your name and address will appear here.

020 8545 2588

Date prepared:

02-Nov-10

Week Commencing	Due for week		Adjustments in week		Paid in week		Arrears/(Pre-payments) carried forward	
	HB	Personal	HB	Personal	HB	Personal	HB	Personal

Brought fwd.

04-Oct-10
11-Oct-10
18-Oct-10
25-Oct-10
01-Nov-10

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Rent arrears at the end of the week.

Rent due for the week. The split between Housing Benefit and Personal contribution is based on what the council have said they will pay towards your rent. This may change if we get a new notice from the council.

Any adjustments in the week. For example cancelled payments or changes in benefit.

Payments received by us in the week. These could be paid directly by you or paid by housing benefit for

Rents and charges are payable in accordance with your tenancy agreement issued by Grenfell Housing Association on behalf of Wandale Housing Association

A summary of your account at the date of the statement will appear here.

You will receive a rent statement every month, this will have all the details of your charges and payments. When you receive it you should check that any payments you have made are showing on the statement.

If you get housing benefit, you should check that there is a payment in the last 5 weeks, if there is not a payment you should contact your council's housing benefit department and let your housing officer know what is happening.

If there is anything you don't understand on your statement you should ask your housing officer to go through it with you.

What happens if I fall behind with my rent?

Grenfell Housing Association has a policy and procedure for dealing with tenants who fall behind with their rent. You can ask for a copy of the full document if you want to. What follows is a brief summary of the actions that we will take.

Verbal reminders – If you have not made a payment, but are behind by less than 2 weeks rent, your housing officer will call you or send you a text message to remind you to do so. You need to make a payment straight away to bring your account up to date

Stage 1 – If you owe between two and four weeks rent we will write to you to tell you how much you owe. If we have not received any housing benefit we will tell you in the letter what you need to do to make sure that you receive the benefit that you are entitled to. You will need to make sure that you continue to pay your weekly personal payments whilst your housing benefit claim is being decided.

Stage 2 – If your arrears continue to increase and are more than four weeks behind with your rent we will write to you again. This letter will tell you what you need to do to bring your account up to date and will include details of a time and date for you to come to the office to discuss your circumstances with a member of the housing team. It is important for you to attend that appointment so that we can help you to make sure that you are not in danger of being evicted.

Stage 3: Notice of Seeking Possession – If despite the earlier reminders you are still in arrears and not making any payments we will serve you with a Notice of Seeking Possession. This is the first stage in the legal process for us applying to the court to evict you. The notice gives you 28 days to bring your account up to date or enter into a realistic agreement to pay off the amount you owe. Once served on you, the notice remains valid for 12 months or until you pay off everything you owe.

Stage 4: Applying to court – If at the date the Notice expires you have not cleared your arrears or made an arrangement to do so we will apply to the court to evict you from your home. We will continue to try to help you to sort out any housing benefit problems where necessary. Please note that if we proceed to court and the judge agrees with us you will also have to pay our costs for the court hearing.

Move on

Support plan meetings

During your stay at Grenfell you will attend regular meetings with your housing officer. These meetings will focus on resettlement and making plans for moving on. Your housing officer should tell you what you must do to be considered for move-on.

Criteria for move-on

When an offer of accommodation is received Grenfell will make a decision on who to offer the nomination to, based on the following:

- Rent payment – each person nominated for further accommodation will have to show that they are able to pay their rent regularly and on time without being prompted to do so. Anyone in rent arrears will not be nominated.
- Grenfell will look at how well a tenant has handled their tenancy, if they have kept to the rules regarding cleaning, visitors, how they have worked with other tenants regarding difficult situations etc. and whether they have been considerate with noise levels. Grenfell are unlikely to put anyone forward who has breached their tenancy in anyway in the first 6 months.
- Your housing officer must feel confident that the individual can handle the responsibility of living independently before they are moved on.
- Level of independence – Grenfell will take into consideration a tenants ability to budget, keep appointments, communication with other organisations, deal with any problems and recognise when they are in need of help. Also if the tenant is active in job searching, keeping a job, training or education.

Being referred

When you are ready to be referred on to further accommodation you will be invited to the office to fill in the relevant forms. Grenfell send the forms out, but have no control over how long it will take to receive an offer or where it will be. When filling out forms you may be asked what areas you would or would not like to move to, the more restrictive you are with your choice, the longer you are likely to wait.

Receiving an offer

When you receive an offer you will be sent a letter from the organisation. Normally you will be given 24 in which to make an appointment to view the property. At this stage you should contact your housing officer and let them know that you have received an offer. If you wish your housing officer or somebody else at Grenfell will come to view the property with you. Once you

have viewed the property you will usually have no more than 48 hours to make up your mind about whether to accept the offer or not.

Turning down an offer

If you are nominated for move-on you will only receive one offer of a flat from the local authority or housing association you are nominated to. If you turn down an offer it is unlikely that you will receive another, unless you have a very good reason, which can be supported with evidence, for turning the flat down. Grenfell will only support you if you have good reason. For example you will not receive another offer if you turn down a flat because it is too small or you don't like the area etc.

What to expect when viewing a flat

Most offers of accommodation are one-bed flats, some are bed-sits. All flats are unfurnished and have no carpet, curtains or white goods in the kitchen.

Room sizes vary, but as a rule bedrooms are usually double rooms.

When viewing the flat ask the person showing you around as many questions as you can. For example where the nearest shops and bus stops are, if anything is broken or in need of maintenance, ask when it is to be fixed, find out where the meters are etc. Having your housing officer or someone viewing the flat with you would be helpful at this point.

Preparing yourself

- Have a look around the local stores and areas to find bargains so that you won't have to do this later.
- Buy small items in readiness, bins, cutlery, towels, bedding, etc. Anything that is easily stored
- Find different methods of paying for bills. Look into card meters, pay as you go etc. Find out who provides the cheapest gas and electricity in the area.
- Ask friends with flats how much they spend on bills to give you a rough idea.
- Prepare yourself mentally for moving on. Think about what issues there may be when living alone and ask your housing officer any questions you may have.

Accepting the offer and moving in

You will need to accept the offer within 24 hours or so. Your new landlord will take you through the sign up process. Ensure that all the utilities are changed into your name and decide how you are going to pay your bills. You will usually have to move quickly into your new property, however you may be able to apply for housing benefit on your current property and the new one which will give you more time to prepare. During this period your housing officer will give you as much support as they can.

Resettlement

Once you have moved out you will be offered up to six months support. Your housing officer will keep in contact with you for as long as you wish and you are always welcome in the Grenfell office.

7. Being a good housemate and neighbour

Living in shared accommodation can be a challenge at times but if everyone in the house follows a few simple rules problems are less likely to occur and any disputes can be resolved much more easily.

When you first move in to a shared house your housing officer will introduce you to the other tenants so that you will recognise each other. It is important to get to know your housemates and neighbours as it makes it much easier to resolve any issues that arise if you have made an effort to be friendly beforehand.

Being a good housemate and neighbour means that you must keep to the terms in your tenancy agreement and is based on mutual understanding and respect for each other.

Your tenancy agreement states that you must not do anything that would cause a nuisance to your neighbours – nuisance means things such as: playing loud music, dumping rubbish in communal areas, banging doors, leaving communal areas such as bathrooms and kitchens dirty or untidy, it is anything that interferes with someone's lawful enjoyment of their home.

Remember that you are also responsible for any visitors that you invite to the house and that if they do anything that causes a nuisance we will take action against you. You must never leave a visitor unattended in the house and, if you want your visitor to stay overnight it is good manners to ask your housemates if they have any objections to this.

If you have not seen one of your housemates for some time, do knock on their door to check that they are OK or let your housing officer know if you are concerned.

Don't leave any problem to fester, deal with things calmly and politely as soon as you can, problems are easier to resolve this way.

Don't use another housemate's belongings without asking first even if you think they wouldn't mind or they have let you do so before.

Dealing with disputes

If you have a problem you should first try to solve the problem yourself. Politely explain the problem to your housemate or neighbour and try to agree a compromise. If the problem persists you can ask your housing officer to help you to resolve it. Your housing officer might ask you to complete a written record of incidents that occur so that Grenfell can take formal action to resolve the problem.

Visitors Policy

Visitors are allowed to stay overnight a maximum of three nights a week and they must not be consecutive nights. However your housing officer and housemates must be informed before hand and your visitor must not under any circumstances be left unattended in the property.

- Be careful to avoid over crowding
- Give others a chance to say if they would not like someone to stay overnight, remember it is a shared house
- If a visitor is left unattended and an incident happens the visitor may be the prime suspect
- For the time the visitor is in the property they are you responsibility and your tenancy will be under threat if they break any of the rules or regulations while in the property.

8. My support

Grenfell aims to provide comprehensive support with good quality housing management to prepare tenants for independent living.

Grenfell does not house people with high support needs, although if the need for higher support becomes apparent while living at the scheme, Grenfell will help the tenant obtain any support necessary.

Advice and support services available

Managing a tenancy – understanding the tenancy agreement, repairs, visitors, noise nuisance, sharing and communication with others, tenants participation.

Budgeting – paying rent, bills, bank account.

Benefits – making a claim, support, dealing with other agencies, appeals, backdates.

Household skills – cleaning, shopping, storing food, cooking food.

Local community – health and safety, local amenities, dealing with neighbours, community services.

Health – physical / mental / sexual health issues, nutrition, signing up to a doctor or dentist, pregnancy.

Employment / education / training – where to get advice, CV's, schemes available, help with application forms, advice on benefits.

And other areas including self confidence, counselling (usually by referral to an outside organisation), dealing with debt.

Grenfell recognises that it needs to offer a variety of responsive and accessible ways to deliver advice and support to the tenants.

Tenants should contact their housing officer if they are in need of support or advice to arrange a suitable time to meet.

Leaflets with useful numbers and information can be found at the Grenfell office for tenants to take away with them.

Grenfell's shared housing is visited by a housing officer at least once a week. Housing officers should, where possible, inform the tenants of the times they will be visiting the properties and that they are available to give advice and support. They should not, unless it is unavoidable, go into a tenants room alone. Support sessions at the shared houses should be given in the communal areas. In the event that there is not enough privacy in the communal areas, an appointment needs to be made to take place at the office.

Training

In some circumstances Grenfell can provide one-off or set regular training on subjects to educate tenants towards independence.

Resettlement

Once a tenant has moved on from Grenfell they will be offered up to 6 months resettlement support. The purpose of this is to support the tenant while they are transferring into independent living by offering help and advice on a range of issues.

Tenancy reviews

Tenants will have a tenancy review when they have been staying at Grenfell for 4 months, 10 months, 16 months and 22 months. These give tenants the opportunity to let Grenfell know how they feel they are getting on in managing the tenancy and to make any other comments about the housing service received from Grenfell. It also gives Grenfell the opportunity to assess the tenant's ability to manage their tenancy and this will be taken into consideration when exploring options for move on.

Support plan meetings

Purpose – to enable tenants to identify their skills and support needs whilst living at Grenfell Housing Officers will help tenants to identify a list of realistic goals and aims, and a manageable time scale in which to meet them. The tenant and housing officer will decide who will be responsible for each action and record this. The housing officer and tenant will work towards an ultimate goal to recognise what tenants wish to achieve from living at Grenfell.

Time Scale – the first support meeting will aim to take place within the first 2 weeks of the tenants start date. This will be to identify existing skills and support needs which will be recorded on the support plan. Current tenants should be offered a meeting within a month of the support plan being implemented.

Support needs – these can be taken from the tenants referral or interview notes – or can be recognised during the support meeting – examples of support needs include: benefits, claims, appeals, dealing with problems, budgeting, education / training, maintaining tenancy, practical / emotional support.

Review – support plans will be reviewed every 3 months. The housing officer will arrange a suitable appointment to take place at the office. During this review they will look at what has been achieved from the support plan and what areas are still in need of work. Tenants may also identify new areas of support that will be resolved.

A copy of the support plan will be signed and kept in the tenant's folder, the tenant will also receive a copy to keep.

Unless tenants give permission for their support plans to be seen by specific external agencies, they will remain confidential within Grenfell. Tenants will be advised that support plans are useful evidence to support Community Care Grant applications with they move on.

Equality Policy

Grenfell Housing Association is committed to the principle of equality and opportunity and follows the requirements laid down in the Race Relations Act 1976, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and other more recent legislation whereby discrimination in any form is outlawed by legal statute.

The aims of these policies are to identify and eliminate any unlawful discrimination and promote equal opportunities across Grenfell Housing Association and will develop fair and equitable services and opportunities for all groups.

Training is given to ensure that members of staff are fully aware of their responsibilities regarding the equality policy and can take account the different needs of particular types of groups and are able to make reasonable provisions to cater for these different needs.

Aims

Grenfell will fulfil its duties in relation to recruitment, staffing and services to our tenants and will abide by the codes of practise and guidance of equal opportunities issued by the government and other relevant agencies.

Grenfell will ensure to comply with performance and social housing standards and all other guidance on equal opportunities issued by the housing corporation.

To provide housing management services that respect diversity, recognise and respond to the different needs of women, minorities and people with disabilities. And provide any relevant information to staff, tenants and any other organisations on relevant aspects of the equality policy.

Policy and procedures

This equality policy declares Grenfell Housing Association's commitment to promote equality in the treatment for everyone without discrimination or prejudice on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, nationality, cultural background, religion, gender, sexuality, marital status, caring responsibilities, disability, HIV status, age, physical appearance.

The association has adopted policies addressing equality issues for every aspect of housing management, including maintenance, re housing services, homelessness, and tenancy.

Grenfell Housing Association records details of those who apply for and use its services in order that no discrimination takes place and to identify possible areas of inequality. The association have monitoring arrangements to check the equal opportunities policies are being implemented properly.

Harassment Policy

Grenfell Housing Association has a policy and procedure to deal with any case of harassment. You should refer to this policy if you feel you have been harassed.

Grenfell Housing Association believes that all its tenants have a basic right to peaceful enjoyment of their home free from harassment.

Where Grenfell has to implement the harassment policy we will not discriminate against any person on any grounds.

Definition of harassment

Harassment includes any form of behaviour resulting in a person not peacefully enjoying their home whether it's a physical attack, damage to property, verbal abuse, threats or intimidation.

What action Grenfell may take if you are harassed

Grenfell will only take action with the agreement of the victim. All reports of harassment will be investigated and, wherever possible, will pursue legal action against those found to be causing harassment. Grenfell will encourage and support tenants to contact the police and take legal action against the people who harass them. However the association will be unable to provide any financial assistance.

If you are harassed Grenfell will support you by contacting outside agencies that will provide specialist advice and support and will co-operate fully with them. This will only be done with your permission. Grenfell will seek to evict tenants who are guilty of harassment, however proof must be provided and that it constitutes as a breach of tenancy.

Support will be provided to victims of harassment until the case has been resolved, wherever possible Grenfell will ensure that staff are available to support any victims if they wish.

Where an act of harassment had resulted in damage to a property, any repairs will be dealt with as efficiently as possible.

Grenfell will respect and maintain the confidentiality of matters concerning the tenants and of any members of the public giving information in harassment cases.

9. Confidentiality

Your file notes

Grenfell Housing Association is committed to policies and procedures that ensure confidentiality in respect of information relating to tenants, applicants, staff and management committee members.

The association will only keep relevant and adequate information that is required for records and move-on accommodation and no other purpose.

Information will be accurate and up to date and will be accessible only to the staff and other professionals who need it to carry out their work for the association.

The association will allow tenants, residents, applicants and staff reasonable access to any file about them held by the association and make changes if any information is inaccurate.

Information can only be withheld from an individual for a specific reason. Reasons will include information about, or from a third party or information that is subject to legal privileges.

Disclosures to other persons or agencies will only be made with the informed consent of the person to whom the information relates. Under circumstances where this is not practical such as claims etc. information can be given to parties concerned.

A file is set up in your name when you move in. The file contains copies of correspondence with you, notes from your support plans, notes on your progress, your benefit issues, and any information on you which is directly linked with your housing.

Information held on tenants is strictly confidential within the organisation and will not be disclosed or passed on to a third party outside Grenfell without your permission. We will give information about you to certain governmental organisations – e.g. the police and social services, only if we are obliged to do so.

Grenfell has policies and procedures on issues like Health and Safety, Confidentiality, Eviction, Complaints, Equal Opportunities, Tenant Consultation, Tenant Support and Advice, etc. The full policies can be obtained from the Grenfell office. Please note that any policies contained in this handbook are shortened versions.

10. Maintenance

Reporting maintenance issues

All maintenance issues should be reported to your housing officer or the Grenfell office as soon as possible.

If the office is closed and the repair is an emergency such as a breakdown of the boiler leaving you with no hot water or central heating, water leaks and anything which is a security risk or a health and safety hazard, you will find a list of emergency numbers to call on the notice board in your property.

When you report a maintenance issue please give as much information as you can. You should be given an idea as to how long it will be before the repair is carried out. Emergency repairs should be dealt with within a couple of days, other repairs may take longer.

It helps the association if you are available to give access to the contractors. This may mean waiting in for a contractor to arrive, if you agree to give access you must ensure it is given. Failure to do so will result in the repair taking longer.

Think carefully when deciding whether to call the emergency services in a situation.

Theft

If a theft of your property or the houses property occurs or if there is a break in at the property you should let your housing officer know as soon as possible and call the police immediately.

Gas

If you smell gas turn off the gas at the mains and telephone the gas board immediately. Open all windows and doors to increase ventilation. Do not turn on lights or use a naked flame. Inform someone at Grenfell as soon as possible. Call the number on the notice board at your property.

Electricity

If the electricity fails or you have an electric shock from any fitting, turn off all of the electricity. Contact Grenfell straight away. If it is outside office hours follow the emergency maintenance procedure.

Water

If you have a burst pipe turn off the water immediately at all stop valves. The main one is usually found underneath the sink in the kitchen. Turn on all the taps to drain away the water as quickly as possible from the system. Try to find where the water is coming from and telephone the Grenfell office or the emergency maintenance number.

If you can, try and stem the flow of water in any way. Place containers underneath any leaks.

If the water has been leaking through an electric light or switch **DO NOT TURN IT ON.**

For blocked drains and failure of water supplies follow the maintenance procedure.

Fire

There will be notices in your property telling you what to do in the event of a fire. Please ensure you are familiar with what to do.

At the start of your tenancy your housing officer will take you through what to do in the event of a fire.

NEVER IGNORE THE ALARM WHEN IT GOES OFF.

Make sure you leave the property and go to the assembly point as soon as the alarm goes off. Do not try to take personal belongings with you. Do not re-enter the building until you are told to do so by the fire brigade or authorised personnel. Fire drills are carried out during health and safety. It is important that you take the necessary action when these drills are carried out. Please do not ignore the alarm as you never know when it is going to be a real fire. If you are not sure ask your housing officer where your assembly point is. You can also speak to them about any concerns you have with regards to the fire procedure.

Know your fire extinguishers



The label on a **Class A Extinguishers** is green. This extinguisher contains water and will put out fires in ordinary combustibles, such as wood and paper.



The label on a **Class B Extinguishers** is red. This extinguisher will put out fires involving flammable liquids, such as oil, grease, gasoline etc.



The label on a **Class C Extinguishers** is blue. This extinguisher is suitable for use on electrical fires which may break out around plugs sockets or electrical appliances.



Some types of fire extinguishers can be used on different types of fires. These will have all the appropriate labels on them, showing which fires they can be used on, this type of label will look like this



Remember when using a fire extinguisher always be careful to check the labels and only use the extinguisher which is right for the type of fire.

Fire blankets

You can use a fire blanket to smother a small fire, for example if a frying pan catches fire while you are cooking.

Fire notices

There will be a fire notice in your property, make sure you read and understand everything on it.

If you do not have a fire notice in your property or if you have any questions about fire safety, contact your housing officer immediately.

11. Health and safety

Grenfell Housing Association must keep our properties safe and free from health hazards. We will make sure all gas and electrical appliances in the properties are properly installed and regularly checked. Tenants have a duty to use the property responsibly.

Every three months two members of staff from Grenfell will visit the property to conduct a health and safety check, they will inspect all rooms in the property and the communal areas.

All aspects of health and safety will be investigated and this means access to the tenants room is required. If the tenant is not in the property, Grenfell will gain access to their room using a duplicate key.

It is Grenfell's Housing Policy to advise tenants to store all valuables and money in a safe and secure space and take out adequate insurance.

A letter is sent to each tenant at the property letting know when the check will be taking place. Tenants are given at least 48 hours notice before the health and safety check.

12. If things go wrong

Complaints

Making a Complaint

If you have a complaint about something Grenfell has done, or about a fellow tenant or contractor, you must follow these procedures.

Informal Complaint

If you have an informal complaint, please contact your housing officer.

Formal Complaint

Stage 1 – Your complaint will usually be dealt with by a manager and should be responded to within 15 working days. If you are still not satisfied, you have 15 working days to take your complaint to stage 2.

Stage 2 – The Director of Operations and Chief Executive will deal with your complaint and will respond within 15 working days. If you are still unhappy, you then have 15 working days to ask for your complaint to be looked at by a panel from our board.

Stage 3 – The complaint will then be looked at by a panel of our board members. You will have a right to put your case forward to the panel. If after this you are still not satisfied, you can take your case to the Independent Housing Ombudsman.

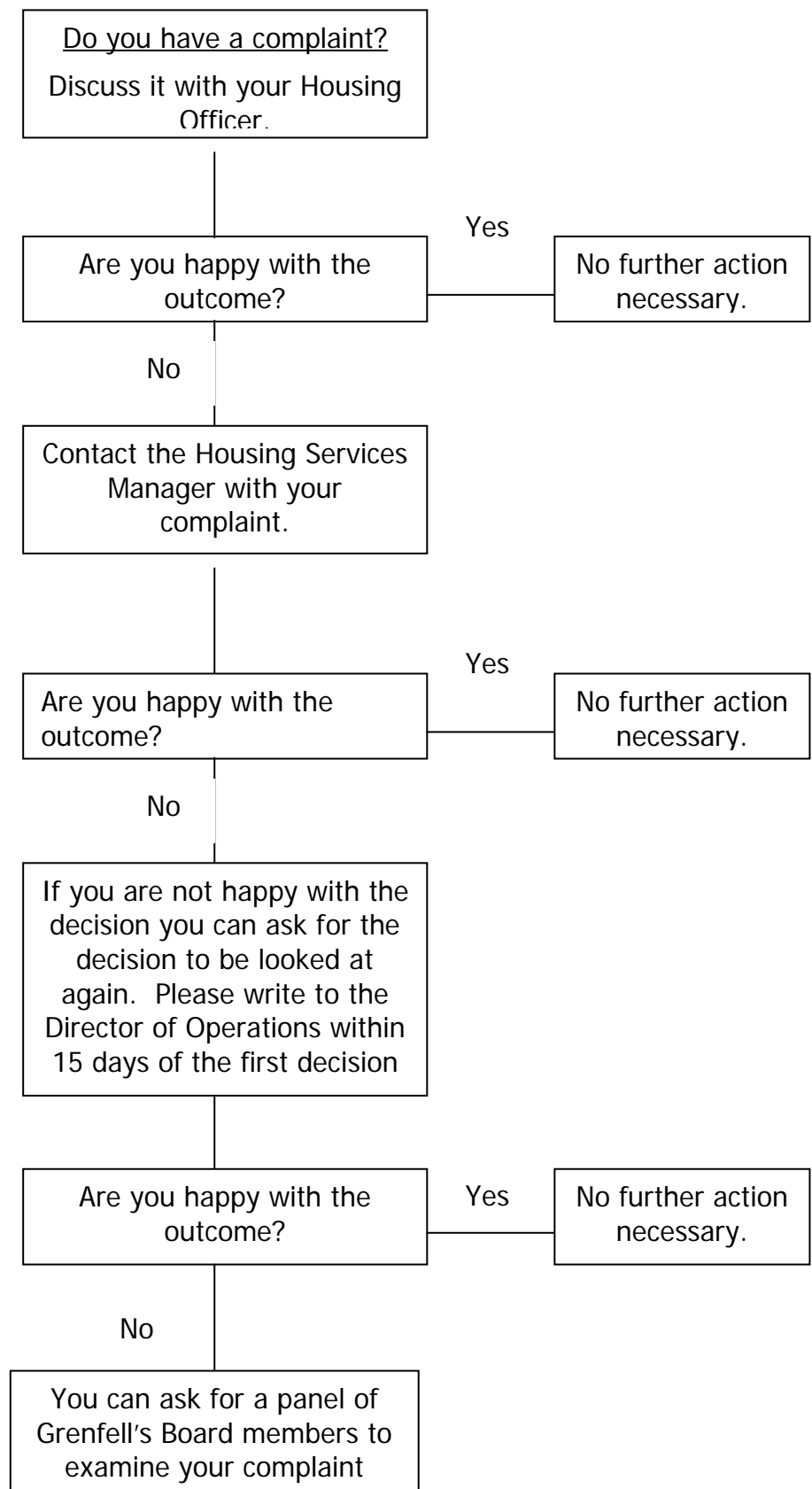
The Independent Housing Ombudsman will only deal with your complaint if you have first gone through our complaints procedure.

Please write to:

**Housing Ombudsman Service
81 Aldwych
London
WC2B 4HN**

A copy of the complaints procedure will be on the notice board in your property.

How to make a complaint



Appeals

You have the right to appeal against any decision that Grenfell makes about you or the service that we provide to you. For example, if we decide not to make you an offer of housing or to bring your tenancy to an end you can ask for the decision to be looked at again by a different person.

If you wish to appeal against a decision that we have made, please contact the Housing Services Manager.

13. Managing my money

When you move into Grenfell you must learn to budget your income. Think about what you are spending your money on now and how you can change that so you have enough money for rent, food and travel. If a tenant feels they struggle with budgeting a housing officer can help them manage their money and work out a budget plan for them.

14. My health

When you move into Grenfell you must register with a doctor, dentist and opticians, and ask for regular check ups.

If you are on a low income ask about free prescriptions and medical check ups.

A list of local doctors and dentists and other helpful numbers can be found in the handbook.

Healthy Recipes

Chunky Chicken and Pepper Stir Fry

Preparation time: 10 Minutes

Cooking time: 10 Minutes

Ingredients:

10ml / 2 teaspoons sunflower oil

1 clove of garlic

75g diced chicken

½ red pepper, sliced

½ green pepper, sliced

2 sprigs of broccoli

1 small tin of sweet corn

1 spring onion, sliced

A handful of chopped fresh herbs – parsley or basil are good

2 teaspoons soy sauce mixed together with 2 tablespoons of water

5ml / 1 teaspoon ground ginger or 1 teaspoon of chopped fresh ginger

½ cup brown rice or 1 block of noodles

Method:

Heat the oil in a large frying pan or wok.

Fry your garlic and chicken over a medium heat for 5 minutes, stirring constantly until the chicken is cooked through.

Add your peppers, broccoli, sweet corn, and onions and fry for 1 minute.

Add the soy sauce, water and ginger.

Cook for a further 3-4 minutes over a medium heat.

Serving suggestions – For a tasty vegetarian option why not try replacing the chicken with some tofu, or try adding in some courgettes and a handful of your favourite nuts.

If you like our food with a kick, try adding a red chilli for some extra bite.

Spaghetti Bolognese

Ingredients:

12oz minced turkey/beef
2 onions, finely chopped
1 large tin of chopped tomatoes
1 small tin of baked beans
4 tablespoons of tomato puree
1 stock cube
12oz spaghetti
1oz grated cheese

Method:

Place the mince and onions in a large saucepan and cook over a medium heat until brown (stir to stop in sticking).

Add the tomatoes and baked beans, stir in tomato puree and herbs.

Crumble the stock cube into the mixture and stir well.

Bring to the boil and simmer for 25 minutes.

Prepare the spaghetti as it says on the packet.

Serve the spaghetti and sauce together, sprinkle with some grated cheese.

Chicken Curry

Ingredients:

½ tablespoon of vegetable oil
1 onion thinly sliced
1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed
2 chicken breasts
2 tablespoons of curry powder
2 teaspoons of ginger powder
2 tablespoons of water
¼ pint of apple juice
¼ pint water with 1 stock cube dissolved in it
1 tablespoon of sultanas
1 apple, cored and cubed
1 tablespoon of corn flour

Method:

Heat the oil in a large sauce pan, add the onions and garlic.

Cook gently until soft.

Slice the chicken into thick strips.

Add the curry powder, ginger and 2 tablespoons of water to the pan. Stir well.

Stir in the chicken, apple juice, stock, sultanas and apple cubes.

Bring the curry to the boil, cover with a lid, reduce the heat to simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Mix the cornflower with the water to form a paste. Pour into the curry and stir well to thicken.

Serve with rice and naan bread. You could also use pork, lamb, beef or turkey instead of chicken.

Jacket potato with tuna and sweet corn filling**Ingredients:**

4 medium – large jacket potatoes

1 can of tuna in brine, drained

1 can of sweet corn, drained

¼ cucumber, chopped

1 pot low-fat fromage frais

Method:

Scrub the potatoes and jab with a fork.

Cook in a medium – high oven for about 1 hour.

This recipe is for 4 jacket potatoes.

If you are only making 1, you can save the rest in the fridge for up to 3 days.

Mix the ingredients together in a bowl and add the potato.

Fruit fool**Ingredients:**

1oz custard powder

½ pint skimmed milk

1 tablespoon caster sugar

1 can of fruit in natural juice

1 carton of low fat natural fromage frais

Method:

Make the custard following the instructions on the packet and let it cool.

Drain the fruit, keeping back a few pieces for decoration.

Mash the rest of the fruit and stir in the custard and divide into 4 serving glasses.

Chill and decorate with fruit pieces.

Here are some tips for keeping safe and clean whilst cooking.**The 4 C's...**

Cleaning – Keep yourself and your kitchen clean by washing and drying your hands thoroughly

- before preparing food
- after touching raw food, especially meat
- after going to the toilet

Make sure work tops, chopping boards and utensils are kept clean. If they have been touched by raw meat, poultry or eggs you'll need to wash them thoroughly.

Dish cloths and tea towels need to be changed regularly even if they look clean they are the perfect place for germs to breed,

Cooking – Germs such as salmonella and E.coli can be killed by thorough cooking

- always follow the instructions on the label
- always check your food is steaming hot in the middle
- do not reheat food more than once
- when reheating, take extra care to ensure your food is cooked all the way through

Some meat such as steak and joints or beef or lamb can be served rare as long as the outside has been properly cooked.

Chilling – Make sure the right foods are kept in the fridge, look out for a 'use by' date or 'keep refrigerated' on the label.

A few things to remember –

- keep your fridge at the right temperature, ideally between 0°C to 5°C
- Keep the fridge door closed as much as possible
- Wait for food to cool down before you put it in the fridge

- If your fridge is full it might need your help! Turn the temperature down to help it fight germs.

Cross contamination – One of the major causes of food poisoning,, caused by germs spreading around your kitchen and onto food that is ready to eat. A few things you can do to stop this from happening.

- keep raw meat separate from ready to eat food
- don't let raw meat drip onto other food – keep it in sealed containers at the bottom of your fridge.
- Never use the same chopping board for raw meat and ready to eat food without washing the chopping board thoroughly in between.

15. FAQ

Can I go on holiday (or leave the property for any length of time for any reason)?

Yes but you must inform Grenfell if you are leaving the property for longer than 7 days. If you do not contact the association, we may assume you have vacated the property. If you are in receipt of Housing Benefit or Job Seekers Allowance it is important to sort out your benefit before you go away, as you may not be entitled for to benefit whilst on holiday. Contact your housing officer for more information.

Can I allow friends/family to live with me?

If you are living in shared accommodation friends and family are allowed to stay overnight. However, you must abide by the visitors policy. You should inform the association when you have someone staying overnight. A friend or relative can stay overnight up to 3 nights a week however this must not be consecutive. In shared accommodation you are not allowed to have any people living with you. If you are living in permanent accommodation there is no problem with someone living with you, so long as it does not create an over crowing situation and you are not subletting but you must let your housing officer know beforehand.

Are my personal belongings insured?

Your belongings are not insured through Grenfell. Grenfell strongly advises all tenants to get some insurance. Speak to your housing officer if you require further information.

Can I borrow money from the association or from members of staff?

No, not under any circumstances. If you find yourself in financial difficulty your housing officer will be able to offer you advice.

Will the association give me a reference for an employer if I need one?

Yes, however we can only provide a reference as your landlord.

Do I have to pay Council Tax?

If you are in shared accommodation you do not have to pay Council Tax. If you are living in an independent unit, you do need to pay Council Tax. However you may be eligible for Council Tax Discount and/or Council Tax Benefit. Ask your housing officer for more information.

Do I need to pay for a TV licence?

Yes, everyone who has a TV needs a TV licence.

Can I redecorate my property?

If you are living in shared accommodation then you are not allowed to make any alterations to the property without permission from your housing officer. If you are living in an independent unit, minor alterations are allowed. You must not make major alterations and when you leave the property it must be left in the same condition as when you moved in.

Can I get satellite TV/telephone?

You will need to write to your housing officer asking for written permission before you are allowed to install a satellite television or telephone.

When do I move on?

Those tenants living in the shared schemes will have regular support plan meetings with their housing officer. During the meetings you will be told of the move on options available and the criteria you need to meet before being considered for move on. Grenfell Housing Association does not guarantee that you will be moved into your own flat. Many of our tenants will have to consider private rented accommodation.

Can I use the property for an address or a mail order catalogue?

Yes as long as it is registered in your name. Your tenancy agreement states that you must not use the premises for any illegal purpose. Obtaining catalogue goods fraudulently would breach your tenancy.

Can I refuse Grenfell access to my property for any reason?

If Grenfell requires access to your room, you will always receive at least 24 hours notice in writing, unless it is an emergency. On certain occasions a housing officer may visit your property unannounced and knock on your door to see how you are. If you do not wish to speak to your housing officer you can politely ask them to leave.

