

TENANT HANDBOOK



Comhairle Contae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

ACCEPT YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES!

TENANT HANDBOOK

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— INTRODUCTION

Leitrim County Council would like to welcome you as a new tenant and are pleased to give you a copy of our Tenant Handbook (updated May 2016).

The Handbook is an important document giving factual information about various matters relating to your tenancy – what you can expect the Council to do and what the Council expects you to do. It provides information on a wide range of issues such as rent payments, repairs and maintenance, neighbourhood relations, community involvement and safety in your home. The Tenant Handbook is intended as a guide and does not go into detail about every aspect of the services available. Over time, our services and policies may change and may not be reflected here.

The Housing Department will deal with any problems or queries you may have about your tenancy. You may also refer to our website to access our policies online and also avail of useful information on other services provided by Leitrim County Council at www.leitrimcoco.ie.

We recommend you read this Handbook carefully and store it in a safe place for further reference. You should check this Handbook in relation to any repairs, maintenance, servicing work prior to contacting the Council.

You may contact the Housing Department of Leitrim County Council as follows:

In writing to:

- Housing Department
Leitrim County Council
Arás an Chontae
Carrick on Shannon
Co. Leitrim

We can also be contacted by phone, email or through our website as follows:

- Housing Department contact number: 071 9650426
- Email: housing@leitrimcoco.ie
- Web: www.leitrimcoco.ie

Housing information may also appear from time to time on Leitrim County Council's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/leitrimcoco>) and on Twitter @leitrimcoco

— MOVING IN —

Pre Tenancy Training

Prior to receiving the keys to your new house, you will be required to undertake pre tenancy training. This is compulsory for all new tenants and for existing tenants transferring from one local authority property to another. This course provides tenants with relevant information on Council and other services in the area.

Keys

You will be presented with your keys once you have:

- Paid your first week's rent
- Completed your pre tenancy training
- Signed your tenancy agreement and associated documents
- Returned all relevant documents

Moving In: To Do List

1. Electricity

Leitrim County Council will arrange to transfer the electricity account for your new home into your name. A meter reading is taken prior to you moving into the property and you will be liable for all electricity charges from the date of your appointment as tenant. Make sure you take a final meter reading at your old address and notify your electricity supplier of your date of vacating that property.

2. Insurance

Organise household contents insurance. Leitrim County Council insures the structure of your new home but does not insure your furniture, clothing, personal belongings or decorations against fire, theft, vandalism and accidental damage. **We strongly advise that you take out a home contents insurance policy to cover those items.**

3. An Post

Let An Post and other relevant organisations know that you have changed address.

4. Connection of TV/ Broadband /Telephone/CCTV

Contact the relevant service provider for connection/ installation of your telephone line/broadband connection and/ or television connection. Please note satellite dishes and television aerials are not permitted to be erected at the front of your house or on the chimney. They should go on the back or side of the building. Avoid damaging roof tiles by not allowing T.V. aerial/satellite dish installers to walk on the roof and only use approved climbing aids or ladders.

It is the policy of Leitrim County Council in the interest of privacy and data protection to prohibit the

erection of CCTV on the external walls of any of its properties.

Installation of cameras without permission will be seen as breach of tenancy and the tenant will be instructed to immediately remove same. The Council reserves the right to remove and confiscate CCTV and associated equipment where it is installed without permission or where the tenant has failed to comply with instructions in regard to same.

5. Refuse Collection

You must register with an authorised waste collector for the disposal of your waste.

6. Irish Water

Leitrim County Council will provide Irish Water with details of your new house. However, you must register your full details with Irish Water.



– TENANCY CONDITIONS

When your house is allocated to you by the local authority, it will be in good condition. It is then yours to live in and enjoy.

Tenancy Agreement

The conditions of your tenancy are set out in detail in your tenancy agreement, which is a legal contract between you and Leitrim County Council. It is an important legal document, so please read it carefully and make sure you fully understand what your obligations and responsibilities are. When you sign this agreement you are agreeing to all the conditions set out in the agreement. Each tenant receives a copy of their tenancy agreement within a week of having signed it and this should be kept safely for reference purposes.

You should check if you are responsible for any repairs/maintenance/servicing work that is required prior to contacting the Council (see page 11).

For your convenience, the main points are summarised below:

- You must live in your house as your main home and no-where else.
- You must not, save with the consent of the Council, cease to reside in your dwelling for more than six weeks in any period of fifty two weeks.
- The house, garden or shed must not be used for business purposes of any kind.
- Rent must be paid in full every week.
- You must provide the Council with full details of income and household circumstances and you must also notify the Council of any changes of income and household circumstances.
- Only domestic pets may be kept and these must be kept under control and must not cause nuisance, annoyance or disturbance. (see page 24 on the keeping of pets).
- You must not make alterations without the prior written permission from the Council.
- You must give the Council four weeks' notice if you wish to surrender your house.
- Prior to vacating you are responsible for removing all belongings, cleaning house and garden and removing all refuse etc and leaving the house in a good state of repair and condition as it was in when you were allocated the house.
- You must maintain your house, garden, fences, walls, etc. in good condition on an ongoing basis and not allow your house to fall into disrepair.
- Refuse to be collected regularly by an authorised collector.

- You are expected to co-operate with the Council in all matters concerning your tenancy agreement. Authorised Officers of the Council must be allowed to enter and inspect the dwelling at reasonable times and carry out necessary work.
- You may not take in lodgers or sub tenants. This includes family members who return home or partners moving in.
- You and your household, including visitors, must not cause nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to neighbours including:- harassment or violence or threats of violence; unreasonably loud noise of any kind.

Joint Tenancies: Can the tenancy be in joint names?

Leitrim County Council usually gives joint tenancies to two adults who apply for housing together.

Each tenant is equally responsible for keeping to the provisions of the Tenancy Agreement including the payment of rent and will be held equally responsible if these conditions are not adhered to.



Breach of Tenancy: What if I break the Tenancy Agreement?

Breach of tenancy is the term used when you fail to keep to the terms and conditions of the Tenancy Agreement. The Tenancy Agreement is a legally binding contract between you and the Council. By signing it you agree to the conditions of tenancy that are set out in the agreement. These are the rights and responsibilities that you and the Council must keep to.

The Council has a right to terminate a tenancy and repossess your home for breach of any part of your tenancy agreement. If you are evicted from your home for breach of any of the above conditions, the Council may deem that you have made yourself intentionally homeless as a direct result of your own actions. If this occurs, you will not be re-housed by the local authority or be eligible for rent supplement.

Behaviour that may result in the Council taking legal action against you would include:

- Rent Arrears
- Damage to property
- Arrestable criminal offences, such as drug dealing
- Continuing to break the rules of the Tenancy Agreement in a minor way despite us warning you to stop
- Engagement in serious and/or persistent anti-social behaviour

— RENTS AND RENT ASSESSMENT —

Every tenant of a County Council house (Council owned, RAS or Leased house) is obliged to pay a rent to the County Council. The Housing Section will assess your rent and for queries in relation to your account, methods of payment and problems with arrears, you will be referred to the Revenue Collection Department. Some general questions are answered below. You can contact the housing section at any time however with more specific queries in relation to your rent account. Telephone numbers are contained at the back of this booklet.

DID YOU KNOW?

If you do not keep your rent payments up to date you will not be provided with a full maintenance service!

How Is My Rent Calculated?

Your rent is calculated in accordance with the Council's Differential Rent Scheme. It is calculated as a proportion of total household income in a manner which ensures that the rent amount you are charged is reasonable and does not lead to undue financial difficulties. Details of the current scheme are available on request.

Your rent will be reviewed from time to time through the completion of rent assessment forms issued to you. This process is compulsory, with non-completion resulting in a penalty rent being applied to your account. It is important that you complete

these forms correctly each year when requested by the Council and any other time there is a change of income or family composition in order to ensure that any such changes are reflected in your rent.

A new Rent Scheme may be introduced by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government from time to time. You will be notified of the introduction of any new Rent Scheme and details therein.

How Do I Pay My Rent?

The Household Budget Scheme is compulsory for those in receipt of certain social welfare payments. Through this Scheme, the rent amount is deducted from your social welfare payment and this will enable you to manage the rest of your income, resting assured that your rent is already paid.

NOTE:

To qualify for the Household Budget Scheme you must be in receipt of one of the following social welfare payments: Back to Work Allowance, Back to Work Enterprise Allowance, Disability Allowance, Blind Pension, Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit, Farm Assist, Invalidity Pension, Jobseeker's Benefit, Jobseeker's Allowance, State Pension (Contributory), State Pension (Non-Contributory), One

Parent Family Payment, Pre-Retirement Allowance, Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension, Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Non-Contributory) Pension, Back to Education Allowance, Supplementary Welfare Allowance (basic payment)!

Tenants who do not qualify for Household Budget can pay rent by any of the following:

- 1. By Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to:**
 - Allied Irish Bank, Main Street, Carrick-on-Shannon
 - Sort Code: 93-70-61 // Account No: 24328188
 - IBAN: IE81 AIBK 937061 24328188 // BIC: AIBK IE2D
- 2. Bill Pay (through the Post Office with your Bill Pay Card)**
 - At the Cash Office, Aras an Chontae, Carrick-on-Shannon
 - Calling in person between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
 - Posting your cheque, postal order, money order. Please ensure payments are made payable to "Leitrim County Council". DO NOT SEND CASH.
 - Credit/Debit card payments can be accepted over the phone – please call (071) 9620005, Ext. 400

Please quote your Customer ID on all correspondence sent to this office and on any EFT payment. Further details on any of the above payment methods can be got from the Council's Revenue Section.

What happens if I fall into rent arrears?

If you are in arrears the sooner you talk to us and tackle the problem the better. If you have missed payments you should contact us immediately before the situation gets out of hand. You must enter into an agreement to clear your arrears over an agreed period of time in addition to payment of your weekly rent. Please note that if you are experiencing financial difficulties and require advice and assistance you should contact the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS). Phone numbers of these services are provided at the back of this handbook.

What if I fail to address my rent arrears?

If you fail to address payment of your arrears Leitrim County Council, under Section 8 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014, will issue you with a Tenancy Warning Notice outlining a breach of your rent related obligation and your requirement to pay the arrears immediately or in the case of hardship to make immediate contact with us with a view to entering into rescheduling arrangements in respect of the arrears due. If you still have

failed to either pay the arrears or enter into a rescheduling arrangement to address same Leitrim County Council may initiate proceedings in the District Court under Section 12 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014 for an order of possession of the dwelling. You should note that non payment of rent or breach of a tenancy agreement under housing legislation may result in a tenant becoming ineligible for social housing support including social housing assessment and assistance payments such as Rent Supplement, Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) and Housing Assistance Payments.

NOTE:

A rent statement can be provided to you upon request at the Revenue Collection Department.

What If My Circumstances Change?

You must keep the Council informed about changes in your family circumstances. This means you must tell us when:

- A person in your household gets a job
- A person in your household becomes unemployed
- A person in your household starts claiming a social welfare payment
- An additional person joins the household

- There is a birth in the household
- There is a death in the household
- A person in your household leaves home
- A person in your household reaches 18 years of age and is in receipt of an income in their own right

What If I Don't Notify The Council When My Circumstances Change?

When changes in your circumstances come to light, your rent will be reassessed and your rent account backdated to the date of the change. This could result in a serious arrears situation. In addition, by failing to notify the Council of a change in your circumstances and completing new rent assessment forms, you are breaching your tenancy agreement for which further action may be taken against you.

REMEMBER!

Do not ignore letters you receive about your rent account. If you owe rent, act quickly. Talk to our staff – we are there to help

REMEMBER!

If you are evicted from a local authority house, you will not be eligible for rent allowance or to apply for local authority housing.

— MAINTENANCE —

In order to maintain your rented dwelling in good condition, repairs and maintenance are necessary. As the tenant, you share responsibility for these repairs and maintenance with the Council, as set out in the terms of your tenancy agreement.

TENANT RESPONSIBILITY

REMEMBER!

WATER AND SEWERAGE

All repairs to the public watermain and public sewer to which the house is connected is now the responsibility of Uisce Eireann/Irish Water. The tenant is obliged to deal directly with Uisce Eireann/Irish Water for all charges for water in and waste water out. Further information is available from www.water.ie or LoCall 1890 278 278

The local authority will only carry out structural repairs to your home. You are responsible for arranging and paying for all other repairs. Each tenant, on the signing of his/her tenancy agreement, assumes responsibility for repairs of a non structural nature.

The following are examples of the type of internal repairs for which you, as the tenant, are responsible:

- Internal Repairs
- All interior decoration
- Internal plaster cracks
- Internal doors and their handles, hinges and locks
- Repairs to or replacement of Council provided cupboards, wardrobes, kitchen units and their doors, hinges, handles, locks, catches and drawers except where their repair or replacement is **necessary due to end-of-life**
- Curtain rails and window boards, stairs, balustrades, banisters and trapdoors
- Maintenance to fireplace, mantelpiece, replacement of fire grates, fire fronts, fire back, hearth and glass panels of stoves and other heating appliances (including damage by whatever means)
- Chimney cleaning (recommended twice yearly at a minimum)
- Wall, floor and fire place tiles, splash back tiling above solid fuel appliances including tiling in shower areas **except where repairs/maintenance is as a result of normal wear and tear**
- Internal woodwork such as floors, doors and skirting boards and handrails
- Ventilator covers
- Maintenance of smoke alarms, heat sensors and carbon monoxide alarms
- Replacement of batteries in smoke alarms, heat sensors and carbon monoxide alarms
- Repairs arising from condensation damage
- Repairs arising from smoke damage

REMEMBER!

Condensation appears as black mould on walls and the edges of windows. It is mainly caused by not opening windows, especially in bathrooms, or by keeping window vents in a permanently closed position. It is also caused by drying laundry in rooms with no windows open. Always make sure that vents are clear to allow air to flow into a room. Avoid generating excessive amounts of steam in the kitchen and bathroom areas as this type of moisture can lead to dampness and mould growth.

The following are examples of the type of repairs for which you, as the tenant, are responsible:

Doors, Windows and Floors:

- Replacement of broken glass (whether it occurred by malicious means or otherwise)
- External and internal door locks and handles, hinges, locking systems and keys
- Letter boxes (repair and replacement)
- Window hinges/stays, handles, catches, restrictors, sashes, seals etc
- Draught proofing of doors and windows
- Timberwork on windows, internally should be painted by the tenant on a regular basis (maximum interval 4 years)
- Damage to window sashes (upvc and wooden)
- Internal tiles on windowsill and window boards
- All damage to external door finishes (e.g. Door Bells, Knockers, Spy Holes etc)

The following are examples of the type of external repairs for which you, as the tenant, are responsible:

External/within the boundaries of the dwelling

- Maintenance of lawns, gardens and hedges in a tidy condition.
- Repairs to, or replacement of fences and garden boundary walls erected by the council and / or by the tenant where the damage is caused other than through normal wear and tear or storm damage
- Repairs to, or replacement of, and re-erection of front gates, side gates or doors leading to garden areas (including damage by whatever means)
- Fuel sheds or outhouses including fuel shed door and fittings.
- Cleaning of silt, leaves or other deposits from gutters, eaves, downpipes and gullies
- Maintenance and repair of footpaths, driveways and entrances, handrails, ramps and steps (within the boundary of the dwelling)
- Maintenance, repair/rodding and cleaning of sewers between the dwelling and the main sewer line (i.e. clearing of local blockages within the boundary of the property). In case of rural cottages the maintenance, service, and

repair of pumps, septic tank, treatment plant, percolation area etc. Only authorised and licensed waste carriers to be used when de-sludging. The tenant must maintain written proof of maintenance and service having being carried out at least every 12 months.

- Maintenance of gardens. Maintenance, repair/replacement of manhole covers and Armstrong Junctions (A.J) covers and grids (within the property)
- No manholes, inspection chambers, gullies, Armstrong Junctions (A.J) shall be covered over
- Any damage caused as a result of erection of T.V. aerials/satellite dishes, broadband antennae etc

The following are examples of the type of electrical repairs for which you, as the tenant, are responsible:

NOTE:

All electrical repairs (other than replacement of fuses and bulbs) and improvements (such as installation of an electric shower) must be carried out by a qualified and competent electrician. A recognised certificate by the Electrical Technical Council of Ireland is required for all new wiring. Where it is established that electrical works carried out are not up to standard, the tenant is responsible. Alternatively the Council may undertake works and in such circumstances the tenant will be charged the costs.

Electrical Repairs:

- Ceiling roses, lampholders and plugs.
- Fuses, except mains fuses.
- Elements for electric fires. All repairs to electrical appliances, fires and heaters not installed by the Council.
- Replacement of light bulbs and any bulbs that may be required for pilot lights.
- The repair of light switches/ sockets damaged by whatever means
- The repair of the electrical connections to the water heating cylinder where damage is arising from misuse
- Repair or replacement of immersion heater where damage is arising from misuse

NOTE:

Immersion heaters – Many immersion heaters are fitted with a Safety / Energy Saving Device which operates as follows: - If the immersion is left on for a long period of time (usually in error), or as a result of excessively hot water in the cylinder heated from other sources, the thermostat may cut in and prevent the immersion heater from working. This is to self protect the immersion unit. However, in such cases, the immersion will not operate again until the thermostat is re-set.

The newer type immersion heaters have a re-set button – This re-set button (usually red in colour) is

located inside the hot press above the immersion unit itself on the cover. This re-set button should be pressed and this should re-set the immersion unit and the immersion heater will then operate as normal. If the immersion unit fitted in your house does not have this re-set button, or if after pressing this re-set button, the unit still does not operate correctly, you will need to contact the housing department to report the fault.

The following are examples of the type of plumbing maintenance repairs for which you, as the tenant, are responsible:

Plumbing maintenance and repairs

- Repairs to burst pipes in the dwelling caused by frost or freezing temperatures and arising from inadequate heating or from the property being left unoccupied without appropriate precautions being put in place. Leitrim County Council will not be responsible for the repair of any furnishings or fittings or appliances arising from such events (see page 38 for information on preparing your home for cold weather)
- Cleaning of gully traps and non-heavy duty manholes within house boundary
- Clearing blockages in toilets, sinks, showers, bath etc.
- Cost of clearing a blocked house drain where a dwelling is served by a single drain and the apportioned cost of clearing a combined drain.
- Annual cleaning, desludging and maintenance of septic tank / maintenance of puraflo and other effluent treatment systems.
- Replacement or repair of waste pipes inside and outside the dwelling (wastepipe leading from sink to gully)
- Clearing of air locks to radiators and pipe work
- Replacement or repair of taps and stoppers on sink unit and wash-hand basins including leaking and dripping taps.
- Replacement or repair of toilet bowl, toilet cistern and cover including ball-cock/Water Floatation Control Device) toilet seat, chains and handles (including where damaged by whatever means)
- Replacement or repair of washbasin. (including where damaged by whatever means)
- Replacement or repair of bath (including where damaged by whatever means)
- Where the mal-function of ball-cocks or other water floatation control devices (e.g. water flowing from overflow pipes from water storage tank in attic) presents an immediate danger to the structure/interior of the house, e.g. flooding, the tenant is expected to take the necessary measures to protect the house – e.g. conserve water, contact your local plumber, turn off the water supply and ensure that the damage is minimised.

- Maintenance or repair of electrical/ pumped shower, shower tray, shower doors, shower head and hose, rails and brackets including where damaged by whatever means except when this repair/ replacement is necessary due to end-of life
- Correct use and maintenance of shower unit

REMEMBER!

All plumbing repairs to be carried out by a qualified and competent plumber

The following are examples of the type of cooking and heating appliance repairs for which you, as the tenant, are responsible:

Cooking and Heating Appliances

- Maintenance, cleaning, repair and servicing of solid fuel, storage heating, oil units, gas or other heating or cooking appliances installed by the tenant
- Repair of storage heaters / room heaters installed by the council where the damage is caused by improper use
- Maintenance, repair and replacement of fire grates, fire bricks, fire backs and fire fronts, glass panels in all fireplaces and council installed solid fuel cookers and solid fuel stoves
- Repair and replacement of tiles on fireplace / hearth and on splash back above solid fuel appliance.
- Cleaning & maintenance of solid

fuel cookers and stoves installed by the council to include replacement of fire backs, fire grates, fire fronts, rope seals and all utensils and glass panels

- Maintenance and cleaning of central heating oil boiler systems

NOTE:

Oil Boiler

Heating

Systems

– Tenants

should avoid

allowing their

oil tanks to run out of oil – if you run out of oil your oil line may become air-locked and need to be bled. You will be responsible for arranging this. It is recommended that you maintain 300mm (one foot) of oil in your tank at all times. Tenants should ensure that they purchase their heating oil from a reputable source as poor quality oil contributes to maintenance issues arising within the oil heating system.

In periods of severe weather it is essential that your oil fired boiler is run at regular intervals during the day and night in order to prevent frost damage to the boiler and/or the oil heating pipes. In the event that damage is caused to the oil boiler / oil heating pipes as a result of lack of oil and/or failure to run the boiler on a regular basis in periods of severe weather, please note that you may be held responsible for a portion of the cost of the associated repairs. (See page 38 “Prepare your home for cold weather”)



REMEMBER!

If Leitrim County Council arrange a call-out and at time of call-out it is evident that the maintenance issue has occurred as a result of misuse (e.g. running out of oil, poor oil quality etc), tilting or tipping of oil storage tank then a letter will issue to the tenant outlining that the damage was tenant inflicted and will not be addressed in future if there is a reoccurrence.

Air to Air Heat Pumps

Air to Air Heat Pumps give a comfortable, energy efficient heating solution for your living room and bedrooms. The heat pump system heats the room by circulating hot air around all parts of the room.

Using a remote controller you can adjust your room temperature, flow rate and operation mode. Each indoor unit has its own remote controller with holder fixed to the wall. The tenant is liable to pay for a new remote controller (€85.00) if the original is lost or damaged. It is also the tenants responsibility to replace the batteries

in each remote controller as and when required. The Council are responsible for the maintenance of all indoor units at the approved service intervals.

COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPAIRS/MAINTENANCE

The Council is responsible for the following:

- Repairs to roofs, tiles, slates, ridge capping, chimneys (not damaged by fire), barges, fascia and soffit.
- Structural repairs/replacement of floors, walls, lintels, foundations, paths, driveways.
- Planned electrical re-wiring
- External walls of dwelling house including plastering, brickwork/blockwork.
- Replacement of windows/external doors and frames – replacement as deemed necessary by Leitrim County Council and having regard to financial resources
- Servicing of Central Heating Oil Boiler Systems at approved service intervals

REMEMBER!

- The Council will NOT be responsible for the repair of any of the above items where:
- Damage has been caused by the tenant, member of the household or visitors

- Unapproved alterations have been carried out by the tenant
- Where the tenant has neglected to properly maintain the dwelling.
- If the Council undertakes repairs resulting from such damages, the cost

of repairs will be charged to you as the tenant. The Council will not accept any liability in respect of damage which may have been caused to the contents of the house as a result of any delay in carrying out these repairs.

NOTE

With the exception of repairs which have health and safety implications, the Council will only undertake to carry out those repairs for which it has responsibility when you have a **clear rent account** or have kept to an agreement to repay any outstanding arrears.

How do I make a repair request?

- It is your responsibility as the tenant to notify the Council of any maintenance faults. You should contact the Council by telephone (071 9620005), email: housing@leirimcoco.ie, in writing or by calling to the Council office at Arás an Chontae, Carrick-on-Shannon.

The Council will investigate your report and advise who is responsible for the repair. Where the Council is deemed to be responsible, you will be given an indication of when the repair will be carried out.

How long will it take for repairs to be carried out?

Leitrim County Council will carry out repairs for which it is responsible within a reasonable time period, giving priority to urgent repairs. Listed below are the categories of repairs.



CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
1	Emergency (Possibility of danger to occupant or public) – Response within 24 hours
2	Urgent (Risk to the property being seriously damaged) – (A follow up phone call to ascertain nature of repair/level or urgency)
3	Routine (Repairs that are needed but not an emergency or urgent) – These are logged and are scheduled as soon as resources become available
4	Planned (Multi-annual maintenance programme covering wells, sewage treatment systems, smoke and CO detectors, complete re-wiring, solar panels, heat pumps, wood pellet, gas and oil heating appliances, window & door replacement, etc) – This programme is resource dependant

Compliance with Health, Safety & Welfare at Work Act 2007 & Construction Regulations 2013

These Regulations are effective from August 1st 2013. These new regulations have placed duties upon all clients who intend to carry out construction work on domestic dwellings. These new duties also apply to local authority tenants who undertake construction work at their domestic dwelling. It is important to note that construction work at your residence may involve maintenance and repair. Maintenance and repair of your residence as set out in your Tenancy Agreement/Tenant's Handbook may require compliance with the regulations.

Where such works are not being carried out personally by the tenant, the regulations require appointment of competent contractors and may, depending on circumstances carry other liabilities and/or responsibilities. Compliance is the responsibility of the tenant.

What types of work are defined as construction and therefore included under these Regulations?

Examples of construction work on your house, which may come within these regulations, would include employing somebody to complete:

- Building an extension, porch or garage
- An attic conversion
- Re-fitting a kitchen etc
- Re-slating a roof

- Getting solar panels or skylight fitted etc. DIY work does not come within the regulations.

If I am renting a house, am I a "Client"?

The person having the building work done is the "client". In most cases it will be the landlord (Leitrim County Council in this instance) who will be the client. In a small minority of cases where you as a tenant get building work done on the property then you may fall under the definition of a client.

You will have to:

- Ensure you use competent people to do paid construction work for you
- Appoint project supervisors for projects that involve more than 1 contractor, involve a particular risk or are planned to last greater than 30 days,
- Keep the safety file for the work as appropriate (this will be provided to you by your Project Supervisor at the end of your project, and
- Let the Health and Safety Authority know if your project is going to take longer than 30 days or more than 500 person days (person days mean the number of days the work takes multiplied by the number of people doing the work).

Does this apply if I am doing all the work myself, for example DIY?

- No. These Regulations will not apply if you are carrying out the work yourself and not employing anybody to do it for you. In these

circumstances you are not a client and not subject to occupational health and safety legislation.

Who is a “Client” under the Regulations?

- A “client” is any person having building/construction work carried out. Clients include individuals such as homeowners and those running small businesses. Clients can also be entities, for example local authorities and private bodies such as companies and similar undertakings, including charities and other non-profit organisations.

Can I fulfil the Project Supervisor’s roles myself?

Yes, it is possible to appoint yourself in these roles. It is important to note, however, that you must be competent to carry out these roles and they do carry duties under the regulations. Normally these roles are carried out by experienced designers or contractors.

What if the contractor has an accident?

If there is an accident on the building site and the person is out of work for more than three consecutive days the contractor must report the accident to the HSA who may investigate. If you are a client and have made your appointments you will have fulfilled your duties and responsibilities in that respect.

Can I be prosecuted if I do not make the appointment?

These are legal duties and any queries regarding these regulations or for further information please contact the HSA at 1890 289 389 or www.hsa.ie

Questions:

Will the Council Carry Out Any Repair I Want?

No. The Council will carry out repairs in line with the provisions outlined in this handbook. You, as tenant, are responsible for arranging and paying for all other repairs.

Must I Insure The Dwelling?

The Council insures the structure of all rented houses against fire, flood and storm damage. **IT DOES NOT INSURE THE CONTENTS.** You are advised to make arrangements to insure the contents of the house. Should you decide to buy your house, you then become responsible for both structural and contents insurance.

Am I Responsible For The Garden as well as the Dwelling

You are responsible for both, and for any laneway / walkway adjoining your house. Laneways should be kept clean and should not be used for dumping. You are also responsible for garden walls, gates and fences.

Can I Make Alterations?

You must get the Council’s written agreement before starting any improvements, alterations or additions

to your home. An application form is available on-line and from the housing department. All constructions and erections become the property of the landlord and are not removable by the tenant upon termination of the tenancy, nor is any compensation allowable in respect of them. You may need planning permission for certain works. Where planning permission is required, permission from the housing department does not in any way pre-empt the planning process and decision. In the case of certain unauthorised alterations, carried out to the dwelling, the council may require full re-instatement to the original condition and the cost of this re-instatement will be charged to the tenant.

Am I Responsible For Pest Control?

Yes. While Council officials will be available to provide advice and assistance, as the tenant you are responsible for arranging for pest control services in your home. You

can help deter mice and other rodents from your house by:

- Using a wheelie bin disposing of your refuse regularly (do not store rubbish inside or outside the house)
- Not leaving food for dogs or cats in your back garden.

You are responsible for the disposal of vermin in your dwelling or garden and should make contact with a reputable pest control company to deal with the matter.

Will The Council Assist Me in Carrying Out Improvements To My House On Medical Grounds?

Yes. Where you are a tenant applying for medical reasons, the Council may consider carrying out improvements or alterations to your house. Full details of these schemes are available from the Housing Department.

— SAFETY IN YOUR HOME —

1. ELECTRICITY

- Know the location of the fuseboard so that circuits or power can be switched off in the case of an emergency.
- Do not overload electric sockets with appliances. If in doubt connect only one appliance to each wall socket.



- Use properly sized fuses on all electrical appliances.
- Do not tamper with wall sockets, wall switches, the fuse board, or any part of the electric installation in the house.
- Switch off isolator switches before moving any electrical appliance such as a fridge or washing machine.
- Make sure that electrical plugs of all appliances are switched off and removed from wall sockets before going to bed at night.
- Once a month, check operation of RCD trip switches on fuse board by pressing test button and re-setting RCD.

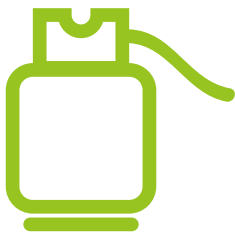
2. FIRE.

- Press test button of all smoke alarms once per week to check for correct operation. Replace batteries when not working in relevant units. These smoke alarms should be checked by you on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating correctly. Contact the Council immediately if there is any malfunction. If the fire blanket becomes damaged for any reason, it must be replaced by the tenant.
- The fire blanket must be retained in the location where it is installed in your property and maintained for appropriate use



- It is recommended that a first aid kit is stored in the kitchen.
- Standard pots or saucepans are not recommended for cooking chips due to the risk of life loss from fire. If you do use a chip pan, never leave it unattended and never overfill it. If a chip pan catches fire, use a fire blanket or smother the flames with a lid, a large plate or a well dampened towel. DO NOT use water to put out the fire.
- Never smoke in bed or when you are feeling tired.
- Close all doors to all rooms at night time.
- Be sure to keep matches, candles and lighters out of reach of children and do not leave children alone in the dwelling. Position candles away from draughts and curtains.
- Where small children live in the house, ensure that securely fitted patent type child fireguard is in place at all times around lit open fireplaces, gas fires and electric fires.
- Ensure that fireguard is placed around all open fires before going to bed at night.
- In open fireplaces, light small fires in the first instance in order to avoid cracking the fireback.
- Ensure that gas fires and electric fires are turned off before going to bed at night.
- Check flexible hoses regularly for signs of wear and tear.

- Clean the chimney twice a year.
The tenant will be responsible for any damage caused by a chimney fire and for Fire Brigade Costs
- All gas & electrical appliances should be used and serviced in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- At Christmas time, take particular care with Christmas tree lights and decorations.
- Do not store petrol or other highly flammable liquids indoors.
- **In the event of a fire, get out, stay out and dial 999 or 112 immediately.**



3. GAS.

- All gas appliances must be installed by an authorised agent and a Certificate of Compliance/ Installation must be obtained and retained by the tenant as proof of proper installation. Tenant may be required to submit evidence of same to Leitrim County Council.
- Gas fired heating / appliances are not provided in Leitrim County Council dwellings. In the event that the tenant has installed gas appliances the following should be observed:-

- Know the location of the shut off valve for the gas supply to the boiler and cooker.
- Always keep cylinders upright and switch off at the regulator when not in use
- Never store cylinders indoors
- Check flexible hoses regularly for signs of wear (check date on hose and change accordingly)
- Do not tamper in any way with gas boiler or any gas appliances.
- Make sure that wall vents are fully open at all times in rooms with open gas fires or gas heaters.
- If you smell gas in your house, follow these important steps:
 1. Ensure gas appliance has not been left on and unlit.
 2. Don't smoke or use a naked flame.
 3. Don't unplug or switch anything electrical on or off.
 4. Open windows or doors.
 5. If the appliances are off but the smell persists, turn off the gas supply at the meter and contact the local authority or Bord Gais.

Emergency Contact Numbers for Bord Gais:

24 Hour Emergency Services / Gas Escapes: 1850 20 50 50

Carbon Monoxide Information:
1850 79 79 79



4. PLUMBING.

- Know the location of the external stopcock (generally in the footpath at the front of the dwelling) and the location of the shut off valve in the house (usually beneath the kitchen sink or in the hotpress) and know how to turn off the water supply in the case of an emergency such as a burst pipe.
- Operate water stop valve in your hot press or under your sink regularly to keep it in working order
- Check hot press pipework, valves, cylinder etc., for leaks, removing linen/clothes stored in hot press if necessary
- When heating system is not in use for long periods, e.g. summertime, operate circulating pump fortnightly by turning thermostat to zero and returning it to proper setting after the pump has run
- Run cold water through electric showers after using
- Do not discharge foul wastewater from washing machine, sink, etc., to the storm water system
- If you are going on holidays, make sure that stopcock in the kitchen is turned off before leaving the house.
- When the house is unoccupied in very cold weather make sure to leave background heat on (or set the timer to come on for a few hours each day and night) to prevent pipes freezing. Guidance on what to do in severe weather is available on page 38.

PETS

With regard to dogs and/or cats you are permitted to keep a maximum of two pets i.e. (2 dogs or 2 cats or 1 of each) as long as they do not become a nuisance to your neighbours or cause excessive wear and tear or damage to your property. The keeping of other domestic pets shall be by prior consideration and agreement of Leitrim County Council.

REMEMBER!

Horses, poultry, pigs and non domestic birds are not domestic animals. Keeping any of these is a serious breach of your tenancy agreement. Poisonous/Dangerous animals are strictly prohibited.

Dangerous Dogs

From 1 January 2016, new tenants of Leitrim County Council are not permitted to keep a dog of any breed, strain or cross known as the "Restricted Breeds" and listed under Section 5, Control of Dogs Regulations 1998 (SI N. 442/1998). These include:



English Bull
Terrier



Doberman
Pinscher



American Pit Bull



Staffordshire Bull
Terrier



Rhodesian
Ridgeback



Bandog



Bull Mastiff



German Shepherd



Japanese Tosa



Rottweiler



Japanese Akita

& All Strains
and crosses of
these dogs

Dog Licensing and Control

Under the 'Control of Dogs Act', 1986, every dog should be licensed. A license must be renewed annually and is available from your local Post Office or on line from leitrimcoco.ie at a cost of €20. You can be prosecuted if you do not have a licence.

From 31/03/2016, all dogs must be micro-chipped and registered. Ensure your dog is micro-chipped or face a fine of up to €5,000. Most veterinary practices will carry out micro-chipping of dogs. The cost varies but is in the region of €25. Leitrim Animal Welfare run a subsidised micro-chipping Scheme for senior citizens and persons in receipt of social welfare entitlements. Please call 071 9648300 or email leitrimawt@eircom.net for an appointment. Consult your local vet or phone 071 9648300 for further details.

Dogs in public places must be accompanied at all times. Unaccompanied dogs outside of your home may be considered 'strays' and may be impounded. The fine for dogs considered not under 'effective control' is €100.

REMEMBER!

You are in breach of the Litter Pollution Acts 1997-2003 if you fail to clean up after your dog has fouled in a public place or in any other area visible from a public place. The on the spot fine is €150.

Please contact the Environmental Hotline if your dog passes away: 1890 205 205

If you want to keep a dog you must keep it under control at all times.

In addition to the above, do not:

- Leave it alone for long periods
- Allow it to bark excessively
- Allow it to frighten or disturb your neighbours
- Allow it to foul in public areas

Excessive dog barking causes nuisance and may be considered anti-social behaviour. Your neighbours can apply to the District Court and an order can be issued by the court to make you control the situation. Advice concerning your dog or cat can be obtained from Leitrim Animal Welfare: 071 9648300 or www.leitrimanimals.com. If you own a dog or a cat, please ensure that you have it neutered.

– WASTE, RECYCLING & ENERGY SAVING –



Waste Disposal

Householders must dispose of their waste in an appropriate manner.

“You are obliged to ensure that you have a three bin system in place for the management of your waste and that such waste shall be disposed on a regular basis using an authorised waste collection facility.

Leitrim County Council may periodically request written records from you to ensure that you are managing your waste in an appropriate manner

Household waste refers to all waste produced within the cartilage of a building or self-contained part of a building used for the purposes of living accommodation and includes dry recyclable household waste, domestic organic waste and mixed house hold waste.

What are the responsibilities of the Householder with regard to the management of household waste?

All households including tenants of Leitrim County Council are obliged to manage their waste in accordance with the Waste Management Act, 1996. This means that you must present your waste to an authorised Waste collector on a regular basis. Leitrim County Council's byelaws require that all households shall segregate their waste using a three bin system as follows:

1. Grey/black bin for general waste
2. Blue Bin for recyclable waste
3. Brown Bin for organic waste.

Leitrim County Council requests that all tenants shall maintain records of their household waste disposal for at least the two calendar years prior to the most recent year e.g. if a household inspection is carried out in February 2016, householders should have all records from February 2014 to February 2016 available.

Waste shall only be stored in wheelee bins and shall be presented on the day of collection in accordance with Leitrim County Council's Waste Presentation Byelaws. Household Waste must not be stored in gardens, communal areas or emptied into gully traps, drains or sinks. All waste must be stored in one of the bins as outlined above. Your waste is your

responsibility until it is collected and failure to dispose of it correctly is a breach of your tenancy agreement and also is in breach of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 and the Waste Management Act, 1996, as amended. Please note that Leitrim County Council has the power to serve notice on the householder in accordance with Section 18 of the Waste Management Act, in order to seek information as to how the householder is managing their waste. Such information may include a request for receipts with regard to the appropriate disposal of waste over a specified period of time, hence the importance to retain proof of proper waste disposal as outlined above.

It is an indictable offence to give your waste to an unauthorised waste collector and such offence can result in a prosecution in accordance with Sections 32, 34 and 39 of the Waste Management Act, 1996 and fines up to €4000 for each offence.

Leitrim County Council also has the powers in accordance with Section 55 of the Waste Management, 1996 as amended to direct householders to carry out a clean up where it is clear that waste is not being managed in a proper manner. Failure to comply with such a direction can also result in a District Court Prosecution.

It is your responsibility to keep your house clean and litter free and ensure that waste is properly managed. Leitrim County Council advise that you recycle and divert organic waste to the brown bin so as to reduce the amount of waste in your black bin which will in turn result in an overall cost reduction.

Illegal Dumping and Littering

If you see someone engaged in illegal dumping, call the Environmental Hotline 1800 305 305. Those responsible for dumping and littering will be prosecuted and liable for any costs.

Environmental Initiatives

As a new tenant, we hope you will get involved in the many environmental and community initiatives organised in your area such as the Tidy Towns / Tidy Estates competitions and the National Spring Clean initiative. These aim to ensure that your estate remains a clean and welcoming place to live. For more information on these initiatives, contact your Residents Association or Leitrim County Council.



— HOUSING OPTIONS —

Leitrim County Council aims to provide suitable accommodation to qualified applicants in accordance with our Housing Allocation Scheme as approved and adopted by the members of Leitrim County Council.

Housing Transfers

It is the policy of Leitrim County Council to ensure that its rented stock is used to optimum capacity. As a result, tenants can apply for a transfer to alternative accommodation in certain limited circumstances, namely,

- **Down-sizing:** – tenants who wish to transfer to a smaller unit of housing authority accommodation.
- **Exceptional medical/disability or compassionate grounds:** where the tenant has a serious disability / medical condition or illness for which the allocation of a transfer to an alternative housing authority dwelling would improve the tenant's medical condition. The housing authority shall obtain and have regard to a report from an Occupational Therapist/ Medical Practitioner in respect of any specific accommodation requirements.
- **Overcrowding:** where the existing accommodation is no longer suitable on the grounds of overcrowding due to an increase in the family composition since the original date of allocation of the property.

Notwithstanding the above, and subject to the availability of suitable alternative accommodation, tenants seeking a transfer must fulfil the following requirements to the satisfaction of the housing authority –

1. Tenants must have a clear rent account with no arrears relating to their existing tenancy
2. The tenants must have complied with all the conditions of their letting agreement
3. The tenants must not have engaged in anti-social behaviour for the previous two years
4. The tenants must have resided in their current accommodation for the previous two years
5. Subject to an inspection of the existing accommodation the property must be in a satisfactory condition
6. The date of application for a transfer will only be set after all the conditions for a transfer have been met in the opinion of the housing authority.

NOTE:

The housing authority will not consider transferring a tenant because of unsatisfactory relations with a neighbouring tenant or because of dissatisfaction in general with the estate or the neighbourhood.

How soon can A Tenant apply for a transfer?

Applicants will not normally be placed on the transfer list unless they have been tenants in their existing dwelling for two years.

Can the Council refuse to make a transfer?

Yes. The Council will refuse to make a transfer offer in the following cases:-

- 1. Rent Arrears** - A clear rent account is required before a transfer can be considered.
- 2. Non-compliance with Tenancy Agreement** - Compliance with the Council's tenancy conditions must be satisfactory and the dwelling must be surrendered in a satisfactory condition to include the removal and proper disposal as appropriate of all furnishings and personal possessions and rubbish and other unwanted items.
- 3. Anti-Social Behaviour** - Tenants or members of the household who engage in anti-social behaviour will not be considered for transfers and may in fact be evicted by the Council.
- 4. Non-disclosure of information**
A transfer may be refused where the tenant fails to disclose any information which is requested or provides false or misleading information either on the application form or at a subsequent interview.

Succession of Tenancy - What happens to the tenancy if my parents are the tenants and they die or leave?

On the death or departure of both parents the tenancy will normally be given to a son or daughter, irrespective of the number in the family, provided that he/she has been living in the dwelling for at least one year immediately prior to the death or departure of the tenant and has been declared for rent purposes. In cases where a family member has not been declared as residing in the house, tenancy must be surrendered. Each case will be treated on its individual merits. The Council will try to ensure the most harmonious settlement to the benefit of the whole remaining family and their accommodation needs.

What happens if there is a joint tenancy in place and one of the joint tenants die?

Where death of a joint tenant takes place the tenancy is normally given to the surviving joint tenant.

Can anyone else succeed to a tenancy?

In the case of an application for succession from non family members, the Council will consider the merits of each case where the tenant has been declared as resident in the dwelling and can prove entitlement.

The entitlement to make an application for a succession of tenancy will not apply where the housing authority is satisfied that the applicant for succession deliberately took up occupancy in the dwelling for the sole purpose of obtaining tenancy in these circumstances. The Council will make whatever enquiries are necessary to verify any particulars furnished in support of an application for succession.

Under some circumstances where succession is being considered, the Council may require the family member to move to another property if it considers the property to be too large or if the property has been designed or adapted for the use of someone with a disability who no longer resides in the property. No succession to the tenancy will be considered where the property has been designated as an Older Persons Dwelling (and where the person applying for succession is not an elderly person) save in exceptional circumstances.

Tenant Purchase

Can I buy my dwelling?

Tenant Purchase Schemes are available from time to time subject to the approval of the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.

Under the scheme, you can apply to your local authority to purchase your local authority house and live in it as your normal place of residence at a considerable discount subject to terms and conditions of the particular scheme.

All eligible tenants will be informed of the details of such schemes.

If you need advice on any aspect of a Tenant Purchase Scheme, contact the Housing Department of Leitrim County Council.

NEIGHBOURHOOD RELATIONS & ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Getting on with your neighbour is your responsibility and common sense plays a large part in making it happen.



In practice this means:

- Residents / visitors respect each other's right to live peacefully with everyone respecting dignity and diversity
- Residents /visitors do not engage in behaviour that offends others
- Tenants maintain their houses and gardens
- Residents / visitors park their cars in a way that doesn't endanger or interfere with others
- Residents / visitors taking responsibility for their pets

If Difficulties Arise?

There may be occasions where difficulties arise between neighbours. Before approaching your neighbour, stop and ask yourself:

- Are you reasonable?
- Have you all the facts?
- Are you willing to listen to what they have to say?

- Are your expectations reasonable of your neighbourhood?

Explain to your neighbour how their behaviour is affecting you – they may not be aware of it. Try to resolve the problem yourselves and don't get other neighbours involved if they are unaffected. If the problem persists, contact the housing department.

What Is Anti Social Behaviour?

We want you to enjoy living in your home. We recognise your right to enjoy living as you choose, as long as this does not adversely affect other tenants and neighbours. We ask that all tenants and their families are considerate towards their neighbours and help to create a caring community. The Council will endeavour to promote harmony on all estates and try to deal with any problems.

REMEMBER!

All tenants are responsible for their behaviour, the behaviour of any visitors and the behaviour of their children and pets.

The Council has adopted a very strong position where acts of anti social behaviour are proven. **OFFENDING TENANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES MAY HAVE THEIR HOMES REPOSSESSED.**

Tenants evicted will be regarded as having made themselves homeless and will not be re-housed.

Definition of anti-social behaviour

The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014 states that “anti-social behaviour” includes either or both of the following :

- a) The manufacture, production, preparation, importation, exportation, sale, supply, possession for the purposes of sale or supply, or distribution of a controlled drug (within the meaning of the Misuse of Drugs Acts, 1977 and 1984)
- b) Any behaviour which cause or is likely to cause any significant or persistent danger, injury, damage, alarm, loss or fear to any person living, working or otherwise lawfully in or in the vicinity of a house provided by a housing authority under the housing acts 1966 to 2002 or Part V of the Planning & Development Act 2000 or a housing estate in which the house is situate or a site and without prejudice to the foregoing includes: violence, threats, intimidation, coercion, harassment or serious obstruction of any person.

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR includes but is not restricted to:

- Behaviour which causes any significant or persistent impairment of a person's use or enjoyment of his or her home (this includes noise as set out in the tenancy agreement).
- Damage to or defacement by writing or other marks on any property, including a person's home.

- Use of the property for any criminal, immoral or illegal purpose such as selling or using drugs, storing or handling of stolen goods.
- Threatening or violent behaviour to anyone in the house or in the local area.
- Threatening or violent behaviour to any employee of the Council.
- Excessively loud noise.
- Dumping of waste in the garden or yard of your house or anywhere else, including laneways, green areas, parks, roads.

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT ANTI SOCIAL NEIGHBOURS?

Do not assume the Council already knows about it. Put your complaint in writing, giving full details of the nature of the complaint, including dates and times of incidents, and forward it to both the housing section of the Council and the Garda Síochána.

APPROACH AND POWERS AVAILABLE TO THE COUNCIL TO DEAL WITH ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB)

The Council will respond to all complaints of ASB by initially seeking to agree a resolution between the parties informally. This may involve a meeting with Tenant Liaison Officer, mediation, or other form of voluntary resolution of a dispute.

If an informal resolution is not possible, the Council will undertake the following actions and will escalate them when required if the offending behaviour has not ceased. (Full

details are in the Council's Anti Social Behaviour strategy.)

Making a Complaint

- Any person who is a victim of ASB should contact the Housing Office.
- Phone calls, emails and letters will be accepted. Persons reporting ASB will be requested to fill out an Incident Report Form. Persons making a complaint will be requested to sign the Incident Report form or letter.
- Persons making a complaint may be interviewed by the Council's Tenant Liaison Officer (TLO) either by phone, visit to their home or by arranged interview in the Council offices.
- All complaints received are recorded/stored in writing and electronically.
- The complaints system is a confidential service and every effort is made to protect the identity of the complainants. The Council assumes that a complainant requires the complaint to be dealt with in conditions of complete confidentiality unless the complainant specifically states (in writing) otherwise. It should be noted that confidentiality is not a right in law and cannot be exclusively guaranteed in every circumstance of complaint.
- The Council reserves the right to investigate any complaint or a series of complaints if it is reasonable to assume there is substance to the nature of the

issue being reported.

- Anonymous complaints are treated with caution and generally do not warrant or are not pursued for investigation.

Investigating the Complaint

- Leitrim County Council will carry out such enquiries as it deems necessary to establish whether there is reasonable basis for believing that the respondent is engaged in ASB.
- The TLO may contact Gardaí, HSE, Dept. of Social Protection, TUSLA, other local authorities, witnesses, local resident's groups/tenants and residents groups to seek information. In order to take effective measures to resolve these cases Leitrim County Council works closely with the Gardaí, residents and community groups. All cases are monitored and complainants are encouraged to keep written records of complaints so that evidence can be built up over time.
- The TLO will seek to deal with the issue initially on an informal basis. That may involve an informal interview with the respondent, complainant, or both at their homes or in the Council offices. This informal meeting seeks to establish the common ground and reduce any misunderstandings that may have arisen between the parties.
- The TLO will write a First Letter to the Respondent if the issue is not resolved after informal discussions or if the issue is deemed serious. This letter will set out the issue of

concern and inform the respondent what improvement is necessary and the timeframe required.

- If there is no improvement, the TLO may write a Second Letter to the Respondent requesting that they attend an interview. This interview will set out the issue of concern and inform the respondent what improvement is necessary and the time frame required. A record of this meeting will be held by the Council.
- If there is still no improvement or the matter is sufficiently serious the Council will write a Tenant Warning letter to the respondent / tenant. This Tenant Warning Letter is part of the process set out in the Housing (Misc. Provisions) Act 2014 for responding to and dealing with Anti Social Behaviour. The Tenant Warning Letter sets out:
 - The issue or behaviour of concern
 - Improvements necessary from the respondent / tenant
 - The timeframe to be adhered to
 - That failure of the respondent / tenant to comply with the Warning Letter may lead to legal proceedings for possession of the house.
 - That the respondent/tenant may appeal the Tenant Warning letter. This will be dealt with by an Appeals Officer.

Legal Proceedings

- If there is an appeal and the Appeal Officer finds that the

Tenant Warning Letter was issued correctly and / or the unacceptable behaviour continues, the Council may proceed to make a determination if legal proceedings are necessary.

- These will be:
 - an application to the District Court in accordance with the Housing (Misc. Provisions) Act 2014 for possession of the house.
 - an application to the District Court under Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) 1997 for an Excluding order against one or more members of the respondents / tenants household.
- Appeals to higher Courts by the respondent / tenant will be challenged by the Council.

The Council may also determine to take these other actions if appropriate:

- Refusal to sell a Council house to a tenant under a Tenant Purchase or Incremental Purchase Scheme.
- Refusal or deferral of a housing application for a transfer on the grounds of good estate management.

Will Leitrim County Council re-house me if I am evicted from my home for anti social behaviour?

No. If you are evicted from a local authority house due to anti social behaviour, you will be deemed

as making yourself intentionally homeless and will therefore not be given another local authority house. You will also not be entitled to rent supplement.

Owner Occupiers

If you have bought your local authority house and a member of your household is found to be causing anti social behaviour in the estate, Leitrim County Council can apply to the court for an exclusion order to prevent that person from living and entering the estate.

Shared Space

The anti social behaviour section of your tenancy agreement relates to your behaviour both in your home and in the rest of your estate, including shared areas such as estate paths and grass areas. These should only be used for rest and quiet recreation. They should not be used for:

- Using drugs and drinking alcohol
- Gathering in groups or holding impromptu parties
- Developing situations which will intimidate other residents
- Riding motorbikes, scooters or skateboards
- Carrying out motor vehicle repairs
- Playing loud music from portable stereos or vehicles
- Discharging fireworks
- Illegal Dumping
- Pet release or pet / animal grazing

Abandoned Vehicles

If there is a vehicle abandoned in your estate, contact the housing department with details of the vehicle, registration number and location. Arrangements will be made for the Community Warden to investigate.

Noise Nuisance

This is persistent loud or excessive noise, which causes disturbance especially during unsociable hours i.e. 10pm – 8am. Good tenants will be conscious of their neighbour and keep volume at a reasonable level on TVs, radios, stereos and musical instruments. If you are doing DIY works or having a party, inform your neighbour first and tell them what time the work / party will finish at. Always remember that neighbours may have children, may be elderly or may have health issues all of which need a good night's sleep!

It is an offence under Section 108 of the Environmental Protection Act, 1992 to cause an annoyance to a person in any premises in the neighbourhood due to noise, which is so loud, so continuous, so repeated, of such duration or pitch or occurring at such times as to give reasonable cause for annoyance.

Any person being so affected by noise nuisance may make a formal complaint to the District Court seeking a court order to deal with the nuisance.

– TENANT PARTICIPATION

When you are allocated a dwelling by the local authority, you and your family become members of the community in which you now live. As a tenant, Leitrim County Council wants you to participate and have a say in the running of your estate. You can do this by getting involved in your local Residents Association. A list of residents associations and contact details are included on page 43.

What is a Residents Association?

A Residents Association is a group/committee of people who live in the same estate and work together for the good of their community. They play an important role by representing the views of their community. They endeavour to make their neighbourhood a nice, clean and safer place to live.

Resident Associations will meet at least once a year and apply for a grant through the Council for insurance purposes; they pay for the petrol used by the Community Employment Scheme workers and they have options for Community Fundraising, Fun Days and Clean Up Days and additional landscaping plus possible training for residents.

In both new and already established estates, the local authority provides support through the Tenant Liaison Officer to assist in the setting up of a Residents Association. The Tenant Liaison Officer will be available

to meet tenants and Residents Associations on a regular basis. In this way, issues will emerge, with immediate and long term implications, which can be prioritised in estate action plans. The long term aim is that you will be part of a community, which is represented by an active residents association, which can communicate effectively with the local authority.

If there is no Residents Association operating in your area and you and your neighbours are interested in establishing one, you should contact the Housing Department.

Housing estates with a Residents Association will generally look tidier and well kept, be litter free and be a more pleasant place to live.

What is the role of Leitrim Residents Network Association?

- Developing and supporting Residents' Associations in County Leitrim
- Lobbying for funding for enhancement of local authority estates
- Lobbying for better services and resolving issues on estates
- Promoting community spirit
- Feeding into local housing policy
- Negotiating group public liability insurance

— MOVING ON - HOW DO I END MY TENANCY? —

There may be changes in your circumstances over time that may mean that you have to review your housing needs and you wish to terminate your tenancy with the Council. The following procedures apply to a tenant wishing to terminate their tenancy:

1. Inform the Housing Department that you intend to terminate your tenancy (you must give at least four week's notice) and complete a Surrender of Tenancy Form.
2. Arrange for a Pre-Termination Visit/Inspection of your property by the Council.
3. Make arrangements to pay off any outstanding arrears.
4. Remove all furniture and rubbish from the property. You may be charged for the cost of clearing any furniture or rubbish you leave behind.
5. Check Repairs – the property will be assessed for repairs. If any repairs are needed as a result of wilful damage or alterations you have made for which you did not have permission, you may be charged for the cost of these repairs. Please ask if you are unsure.
6. Notify the electricity provider of your change of address and date of leaving. Please make sure that your meters are read on the day you leave.
7. Re-direct mail to your new address.

NOTE:

We actively pursue arrears owed by former tenants through court action where necessary

Vacant Dwellings

Vacant dwellings in an estate can become a target for vandalism. If you intend surrendering your dwelling, or if you are aware of a house in your estate that appears vacant, do not assume that the council know about it. Tell us so that we can arrange to have it re-let.

NOTE:

If you hand back the keys to your local authority house, you may be deemed as making yourself intentionally homeless and will not be eligible for rent supplement or re-housing by the Council. You are responsible, if you are surrendering a tenancy for ensuring that you have made adequate provision for your future housing accommodation.

REMEMBER!

The Council have the right to amend, add or delete at their discretion any of the foregoing provisions and any such amendment or deletion shall have effect as if they had been incorporated in this Tenant Handbook in the first instance, on the notice in writing of such changes being given to the tenant.

— PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR COLD WEATHER —



When the weather becomes very cold, the water pipes in your home can freeze. This can lead to a burst pipe in the thaw, which can cause a lot of damage to your home and belongings.

REMEMBER

It is your responsibility to insure your home contents

Tips to prevent frost damage

- Leave the heating system on for short periods of time throughout the day/night
- Let warm air into your roof-space by keeping the attic trap door partially open
- Keep the cupboard door under the sink open
- Keep room doors slightly open to allow warm air to move around the house

- Do not run your taps – doing this results in water shortages for everyone
- If your property is to be left unoccupied for a period of time, make sure that the stopcock in the kitchen is turned off and that the domestic water system is drained down before leaving the house

What to do if your pipes freeze

- 1. Frozen Service Pipe** i.e. no water in cold tap in the kitchen
 - Use water from attic tank as sparingly as possible until normal service returns
 - If you have a back boiler in your fire/range (i.e. if your fire/range heats water or radiators) only light a small fire while the water is off, provided that there is water in the small storage tank.
- 2. Frozen Internal Water Pipe** i.e. water in cold tap in kitchen but no water in other tap or cistern in house
 - Turn the water supply off at the stopcock
 - Thaw along the pipe, starting from the end nearest the tap
 - Put hot water bottles or a thick cloth soaked in hot water over the frozen pipe, or use an electric hairdryer at its lowest setting to thaw pipes. Be careful not to warm them too

quickly or they may burst. Do not use a blow lamp or any naked flame.

- Check attic and ceilings for signs of leak – if leak detected drain attic by running both taps.
- If you have a back boiler in your fire/range (i.e. if your fire/range heats water or radiators) only light a small fire while the water is off, provided that there is water in the small storage tank.

What to do if a pipe bursts

- Turn off the stopcock by turning it clockwise
- Try and block the escaping water with towels or other thick cloths
- Turn off your central heating, immersion heater and any other water heating systems. If the central heating uses solid fuel, let this die out.
- Once you have shut down your water heating, turn on all your taps to drain the system. Flushing your toilet several times will also help.
- If water leaks near anything electrical, switch off the mains electricity immediately. If the mains switch is wet, do not touch it as it may be dangerous!
- If water has been leaking through for some time and the ceilings are bulging, rooms may not be safe to enter. If you notice the leak quickly you can catch dripping water in buckets. If the ceiling has just

started to bulge, you could punch a small hole in it with a screwdriver to release the water.

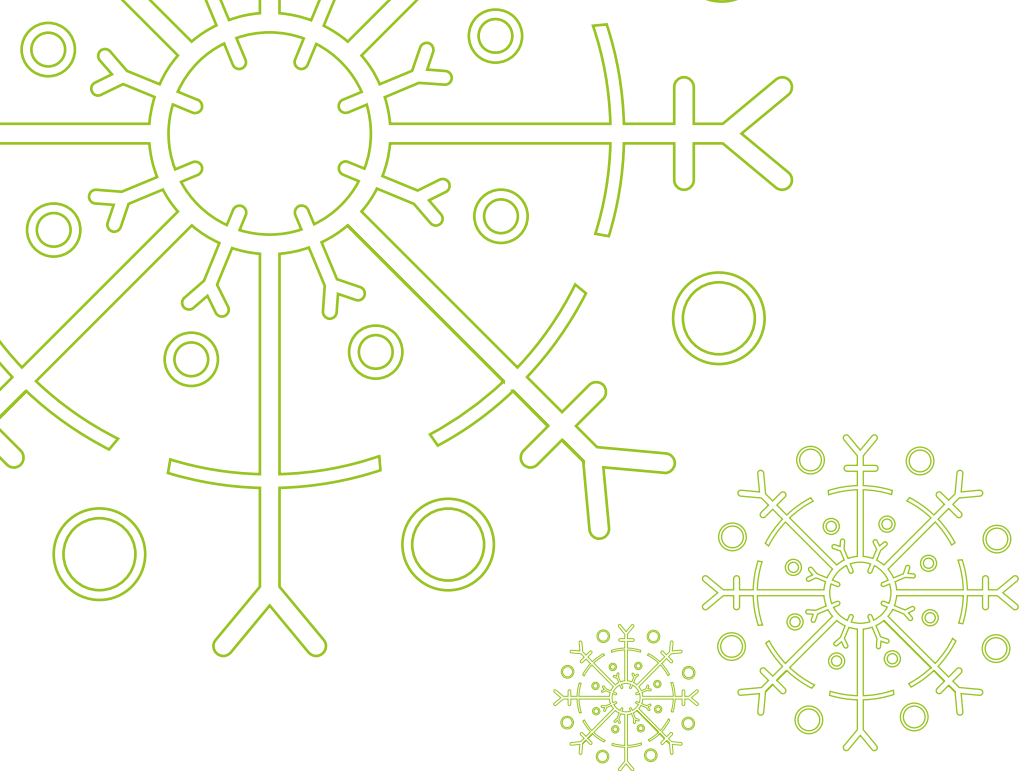
- Call us on **071 9650426**
- Don't forget to turn off your taps once the problem is fixed!

How do I find my stopcock?

The stopcock is a valve for turning off and on the cold water system in your home. Turn the stopcock in a clockwise direction to shut the water supply off. You can turn the water supply back on by turning the stopcock in an anti-clockwise direction.

Stopcocks are usually found in your kitchen, below the sink unit. However, in some houses the stopcock is found in the hotpress. It is important that you know where the stopcock is and that you check that your stopcock is working.





How do I check my stopcock?

Run the cold water tap in your kitchen and turn the stopcock in a clockwise direction to check if the cold water turns off. If you find it difficult to turn or it isn't working, call us on 071 9650426.

If you cannot find the stopcock, you can call us and we will try and assist you in locating it.

External stopcock

This is usually located adjacent to the property boundary, generally on the footpath or verge. You should ensure that you are familiar with its location and how to turn it off and that it is easily accessible.

Before any problem arises ensure that you can turn both stop cocks on an off (i.e make sure they are not stuck or seized) – don't wait until you have a problem with your water supply to do this.

Heating Systems Generally

If your water supply is cut off at the mains it will affect your heating system (unless you have an electrical heating system). Most heating systems can continue to be used, as once the systems are filled with water they only need to be replenished very occasionally. Particular care is needed when dealing with solid fuel or back boiler type systems.

Check the type of system you have and follow the advice below:

Any heating system with cold water storage tank and hot water cylinder (i.e. oil or solid fuel)

If the water supply is cut off but your cold water storage tank is full, it is still safe to run your central heating but use your domestic water sparingly, as you risk running the storage tank dry and creating an airlock.

Oil fired systems

Don't run out of oil. Dip your tank now. If you have less than 300mm (one foot) of oil left in the bottom, order oil immediately. Remember there may be big demands on suppliers at times of extreme weather and delivery delays can result.

If you do run out of oil, your oil line may become air locked and need to be bled. You will be responsible for arranging this.

In severe frost ensure that your oil fired boiler is on regularly throughout the day/night to prevent frost damage to the boiler or the heating pipes.

Solid fuel central heating system

If you have a back boiler in your fire/range (i.e. if your fire/range heats water or radiators in your home) only light a small fire when the water is off.

Important general information

regarding water shortages in freezing conditions

- Conserve water as much as possible
- Don't use your washing machine or dishwasher
- We strongly recommend that you don't use your immersion heater because you can burn it out if it's not completely covered by water.

REMEMBER

be particularly vigilant for leaks when a thaw sets in

In a prolonged severe weather event out-of-hours contact numbers will be available – You will be directed to the relevant number by dialling 071 9620005. Details will also be publicised on local radio.

Be a good neighbour – Check on elderly or unwell neighbours who might need assistance during cold weather.

— **USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS** —

Gardai, Fire Brigade, Ambulance 999 or 112

Health Service Executive

Carrick on Shannon 071 9620308

Manorhamilton 071 9820400

Department of Social Protection:

Ballinamore 071 9645250

Carrick on Shannon 071 9650700

Manorhamilton 071 9820030

Environmental Hotline 1890 205205

Dog Warden 071 9163320

Leitrim County Council 071 9620005

Housing Section 071 9650426

Leitrim Citizen's Information Centre

Carrick on Shannon 076 107 5670

Leitrim MABS (Money Advice & Budgeting Service) 076 107 2630

Now Doc

Inver Geal, Carrick on Shannon 1850 400911

— RESIDENT ASSOCIATIONS —

Aughameeney Residents Association
Breffni Crescent / Townspark Residents Association
Cappagh Residents Association
Cois Leachta/Dispensary Field Residents Association
Dristernan Residents Association
Drumlease Residents Association
Hillside View Residents Association
Hyde Terrace Residents Association
Knocklongford Residents Association
Lahard Residents Association
McDermott Terrace Residents Association
Melvin Court/Glenview Residents Association
Naomh Pdraig Residents Association, Drumshanbo
O'Carolan Court Residents Association
Radharc an tSeipeal Residents Association
Sheena/College View Residents Association
Taobh Tire/Arus Breffni Residents Association
The Barley Field Bredagh Residents Association
The Ross Residents Association
Treanmore Residents Association
Cois na hAbhainn Residents Association
Pairc an Muilleann Residents Association

Further Information contact:

Leitrim Residents Network: www.leitrimresidentsnetwork.ie

Leitrim Development Company as follows:

Main Office: Church Street, Drumshanbo
Telephone: (071) 9641770 **Email:** info@ldco.ie

Sub Offices: Credit Union Building, Mohill **Telephone:** (071) 9631715
New Line, Manorhamilton **Telephone:** (071) 9856016

Bernie Donoghue, Community Development Co-ordinator - **South Leitrim**

Teresa Butler, Community Development Co-ordinator - **North Leitrim**

TENANT HANDBOOK



Comhairle Contae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council