



North Warwickshire
Borough Council

TENANT HANDBOOK





1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your new home with North Warwickshire Borough Council.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide important information on living in one of our homes. It sets out in brief your main rights and responsibilities as a tenant, what you can expect from us as a landlord and how you can contact us if you need further assistance.

It covers the following areas:

MOVING IN

YOUR HOME

YOUR RENT

YOUR TENANCY

YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

GETTING INVOLVED

MOVING ON

If you have any questions or issues which are not covered in this handbook, we would encourage you to contact us.

If you, or someone you know, requires information from us in alternative format, such as in large print, on audiotape or in another language, please tell us. Details of how to do this are on the back cover of this handbook.



HOW TO CONTACT US

You can contact us with a general enquiry in any of the following ways:

- by telephone: **01827 715341** (between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday)
- by writing to us:
**The Council House, South Street,
Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 1DE**
(between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm,
Monday to Friday)
- by email: **housingervices@northwarks.gov.uk**
- through our website:
www.northwarks.gov.uk

If you wish to report a repair, you can do this in the following ways:

- by telephone: **01827 715341** (between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday)
- by email:
customerservices@northwarks.gov.uk
- through our website:
www.northwarks.gov.uk

If you require an emergency repair outside of our normal hours, you can report this by telephone on **01827 715341** (calls will be directed to the lifeline centre which is manned 24 hours per day). Please note that this service is for emergency repairs only.

Feedback

Our teams want to provide a good service. If we do something well it is great to have your feedback so that we know that we are on track and working to your expectations. It is also great for staff to know that their efforts are appreciated. We share compliments with the people concerned.

We don't want any of our tenants to experience a failure of our service. If it does happen we want to hear from you so that we can understand your concern and resolve it. Complaints are also an opportunity for us to learn about our customer's view of our service so please tell us what you are unhappy about or want us to change.

How to have your say

- on our website **www.northwarks.gov.uk**
- by email to
complaintsandcompliments@northwarks.gov.uk
- by telephone to **01827 715 341**
- in writing

Our complaints procedure reflects the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and the good practice guidance for complaint handling by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

We will act fairly when investigating a complaint. Investigating officers will seek to carefully consider all of the available information, act independently with an open mind and keep the matter confidential as far as possible.

We will follow our published procedure to endeavour to resolve a complaint. Further information can be found on our website

www.northwarks.gov.uk/hcc

If the member of staff considering the complaint feels that it can be resolved quickly, to the customer's satisfaction, they will act to do so in 5 working days. The process will be overseen and recorded by the Performance and Quality Officer. If the complaint cannot be resolved in this short timescale a formal complaint investigation will be initiated.

You can find details of the standards that you can expect from our services in our leaflet which can be found in your welcome pack and on our website **www.northwarks.gov.uk/sshmm**

2. MOVING IN

Now that you have the keys to your property, this section sets out some of first things that you need to do to help you settle in to your new home.

Top tips on moving in to your new home

- 1. Tenancy Ready** – it can feel a little bit scary moving into a new home, whether it is your first home or whether you are just moving to another home. The 'Step into YOUR Tenancy' information is available on the Councils website www.northwarks.gov.uk/benefits and will help guide you through setting up your bills and planning your budget so that you can be as ready as possible to move in, enjoy your home and not worry about getting into arrears or debt with your bills. To get the most out of the 'Step into your Tenancy' guide, it is best to work through it, step-by-step online, as it has interactive links that will take you to all the websites you will need to set up your bills and to find out more information. There is also an accompanying 'to do checklist' that you can fill in, to help keep you on track! You just need tick of all the things that you've done and keep any important dates and any notes safe as a reminder.
- 2. Make arrangements to ensure your rent to be is paid on time** – it's vitally important that you ensure that you stay up to date with your rent payments. There are a number of ways for you to make a payment (they are set out in section 4 of this handbook). However one of the easiest ways is to set up a Direct Debit, so that your rent is automatically taken out of your bank account each month or week.
- 3. Make sure you are receiving all of the welfare benefits you are entitled to** – many people who fall behind with their rent find that they were entitled to help, but had not realised it. To prevent this, ensure you are claiming all of the benefits that you are entitled to. If you are not sure about your entitlement, contact us on **01827 715341** and we will be able to advise you or visit www.northwarks.gov.uk/benefits.
- 4. Take out home contents insurance** – our insurance will cover any damage caused to your home (the building itself) by an incident such as a fire or a flood. However it will not cover any damage caused to the contents of your home (your belongings). We strongly recommend that you take out home contents insurance to cover the cost of replacing damaged possessions, in the event of an accident and operate a contents insurance scheme, which offers favourable rates to our tenants. For more information about how to join contact us on **01827 715341**. For more information visit our home contents insurance page www.crystal-insurance.co.uk or telephone **0345 4507286**. You should always compare rates with other providers to ensure you get the best deal.
- 5. Read the meters and contact your utility suppliers** – make a note of the readings on your water, gas and electricity meters when you move in. You will also need to contact your utility suppliers to put your name on the bill. Top Tip – "Screenshot" or take a photograph of them so you have got a record.
- 6. Make sure you have notified everyone of your change of address** – you will need to notify a number of organisations, such as your bank and any credit card companies, of your new address. You can also arrange for any mail sent to your previous home to be forwarded on to you by visiting your local post office. There is a small charge for this service.
- 7. Register with a doctor** – you will also need to notify your doctor and your dentist of your new address or, depending on how far you have moved, you may need to register with a new surgery. For details of surgeries, and other amenities, in your area visit www.nhs.uk, then select NHS Choices, Find services and enter your post code.

8. Make sure you have a television licence – it is a criminal offence not to have a valid TV licence and you can be given a substantial fine if you fail to get one. You can purchase a TV licence at your local post office or online at www.tvlicencing.co.uk. You can ask to spread your payments by asking to pay monthly.

9. Get any spare sets of keys that you need cut – we do not keep a spare set of keys for your home so if you lock yourself out of your home, you will need to call a locksmith. Alternatively, you may want to leave a spare set of keys with a friend, relative or neighbour who you trust or use a key safe.

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3. YOUR HOME

This section covers the maintenance of and improvements to your home. It summarises what you are responsible for as a tenant, what we are responsible for as the landlord and what you should do if you need a repair.

Maintaining your home

In general, you are responsible for looking after your home and ensuring it does not have disrepair and that installations are in proper working order. This includes:

- internal decorating and minor plaster cracks
- maintaining your garden, if you have one
- responsibility for minor fittings such as light bulbs, plugs, fuses, door handles and toilet seats
- maintaining any equipment or improvements to your home that you have installed, such as a TV aerial or satellite dish
- repairs to your own appliances, including external items such as fencing that you have erected or accepted responsibility for.

These are illustrative examples of the kinds of things that you are responsible for. They are not a complete list of your responsibilities. Please refer to your tenancy agreement and our separate leaflet on maintenance for more details. If you have a problem and are not sure whether it is your responsibility or ours, please contact us using the details below.

You are responsible for ensuring that you, your pets, other members of your household and your visitors do not cause any damage to your home. If you do damage the property, we may charge you for the cost of carrying out any repairs that are needed as a result.

If you need a repair

In general, we are responsible for maintaining and repairing the structure and fixtures of your home.

This includes, for example:

- basins, sinks, baths and toilets
- electrical installations

- installations for heating your home and hot water
- repairing damaged items such as doors and windows, brickwork, guttering or external pipes.

If you wish to report a repair, you can do this in the following ways:

- by telephone: **01827 715341** (between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday)
- by email: **customerservices@northwarks.gov.uk**
- through our website: **www.northwarks.gov.uk**

If you need an emergency repair outside of our normal hours, you can report this by telephone on **01827 715341**. However, please note that this service is intended for emergency repairs, such as a burst water pipe or a dangerous electrical fault, only. We will deal with emergency repairs as quickly as possible. For all other repairs, we will arrange an appointment to carry out the repair at a time that is convenient for you. We will usually give you a morning or afternoon appointment during which we will carry out the repair, and wherever possible we will offer you a choice of appointments.

It is important that you are at home at the time of your appointment, or that you arrange for someone else, like an adult friend, relative or neighbour, who you trust to be there if you cannot be.

Keeping your home safe

Gas safety

We carry out an annual safety check on your gas boiler and will contact you to arrange an appointment when it is time for a check to be carried out. We are legally required to carry out this check to ensure that your home is safe.



It is particularly important that you make sure that we can get into your home at the time of your appointment, as an unsafe boiler could be a danger you to and to your household. If you refuse to allow us into your home to carry out this check, we may take legal action to require you to let us into the property and you may be charged for any costs that we incur as a result of this.

Fire safety

You must ensure that hallways in your home and communal corridors, if you live in a block of flats, are kept clear and free of combustible items. Our Neighbourhood Wardens may contact you directly if we need your co-operation to keep these areas clear and safe from tripping or fire hazards. More detailed advice on fire safety is available from the fire service at www.fireservice.co.uk

Asbestos

Asbestos is a building material that was used widely in homes built between the 1950s and the 1980s. Left undamaged, asbestos is not generally dangerous but when it is disturbed, for example by drilling or sanding, it can be harmful. If inhaled in higher concentrations over a long period of time, it can cause serious illness.

Where we have information about asbestos in our properties we will inform the tenants, usually as part of their sign up pack. For certain repairs and improvements we will arrange for an asbestos inspection report before works can start. If you are not sure if you have asbestos in your home, or of how to act if we have informed you where it is, please do not hesitate to contact us. Asbestos can be difficult to identify, but if you are concerned and need advice before you undertake any D.I.Y jobs please contact us on **01827 715341**.

Damp & mould

We need tenants to report faults so that the Council can act to deal with the disrepair at an early stage. We encourage tenants to report mould conditions and damp so that we can remove the underlying issues that are causing them.

If you report a problem with damp and/or mould conditions we will organise an inspection to find out the cause within 10 working days. When we have discovered the

cause we work closely with tenants to resolve the problem. There may be just one or a range of interventions however our policy requires us to act promptly to remove mould conditions, deal with disrepair and provide additional interventions to act on the underlying problem.

Contractors

We have an in house team of tradesmen to do urgent repairs. Sometimes we use contractors to do maintenance work. We fund these services from your rent payments. You should never be asked for payment for a repair we have organised for you. If you are, do not pay and let us know straight away.

Improving your home

You have some rights to make improvements to your home, such as replacing fixtures that were provided for you when you moved in or installing a satellite dish. However, you must ask for our permission before you make any improvements.

To do this please contact us on **01827 715341**. We will usually agree to these requests and will never unreasonably refuse permission. You should also be aware that for some larger improvements, like building an extension or a conservatory, you will also need to obtain planning permission.

We also carry out periodic work to maintain and improve your home. This might include, for example, installing a new bathroom or kitchen, providing new windows or doors or electrical rewiring. There may be long periods of time between us carrying out this kind of work on your home however we will inform you if your home is part of an improvement programme.

Details of the work we have planned will be on the Council's website www.northwark.gov.uk and in the Tenants Link newsletter.

4. YOUR RENT

This section covers your rent. It explains why it is important to keep up-to-date with your rent payments and what happens if you do not, how to make a payment and what you should do if you are having a problem with your rent.

Why you must make sure you pay your rent

Your rent covers the cost of us managing, maintaining and repairing your home. Depending on the type of accommodation that you live in, additional charges may also be added to your rent to cover the cost of some further services that you receive, such as window cleaning, cleaning of communal areas and grounds maintenance.

Making sure your rent is paid in full and on time is one of the main conditions of your tenancy. It is important that you pay your rent or that you contact us immediately if you are having difficulty paying. We will always try to help tenants who are having problems but if you repeatedly do not pay your rent, you could lose your home as a result.

How to pay your rent

Your rent is due weekly in advance, or you can pay it fortnightly or monthly so long as you are paying in advance.

There are a range of different ways in which you can make a payment:

- **by direct debit.** This means that your rent will automatically be taken from your bank account each month or week. Many tenants find that this is most convenient way to pay, as you do not need to remember to make a payment each time it is due. You are able to make payments weekly or monthly. To set up a direct debit please contact us on **01827 715341**
- **by standing order.** You can set up a bank standing order with your bank giving you control of how much you pay. Any payment date or frequency can be selected. You will need to include your 6 digit tenancy reference number.

- **by telephone** using our 24 hour automated payment line **01827 719421**. Select option 4 and enter your tenancy reference number
- **online** at **www.northwarks.gov.uk**. Select Payments, Pay for Housing & Garage Rent, On Line Payments and enter your tenancy reference number
- **by using your swipe card or bar code** on your letters at your local Post Office or Payzone point. Please note that the bar code is unique to your property and payment can only be paid into your rent account.

We will write to you in advance to tell you of any changes to your rent, this typically happens once a year at the beginning of April. We will always tell you at least 4 weeks before any change in your rent. You can end your tenancy if you do not agree to the new amount.

If you would like a rent statement you can call us on **01827 715341** and we are usually able to send it to you straight away. If you have any queries, please speak to your Tenancy Services Officer who will be able to assist you



If you are having difficulty with your rent

If you are having a problem with your rent you should contact us immediately. We will always try to help tenants who are having difficulty, for example by:

- helping you to check that you are claiming all of the benefits that you are entitled to
- telling you where you can get help with budgeting and managing your money , this may include a referral to our Tenancy Sustainment Team who offer specialist advice to our tenants.
- reaching an agreement so that you can pay back any rent arrears that may have built up over time, at a rate that you can afford.

If you wish to discuss your rent with us in confidence, please contact us on **01827 715341** and ask to speak to your Tenancy Services Officer or email housingservices@northwarks.gov.uk.



5. YOUR TENANCY

This section explains the different types of tenancy that we use and answers some of the questions we are most frequently asked about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. For more detailed information please refer to your tenancy agreement.

At the beginning of your tenancy, you will have signed a **tenancy agreement**. Your tenancy agreement is a legally binding contract between you, as a tenant, and us, as your landlord. It sets out what you can expect of us (your rights) and in turn, what we will expect from (your responsibilities).

About your tenancy

The Council operates an Introductory Tenancy Scheme; further information can be found in the Introductory Tenancy Guide for New Tenants. If you are a new tenant who was not previously a secure tenant, you will usually be offered an introductory tenancy for the first 12 months. We use two main types of tenancy, secure tenancies and flexible tenancies. If you are not sure which type of tenancy you have, please check your tenancy agreement.

Secure tenancies are the most common form of tenancy that we use. If you have a secure tenancy, you can stay in your home for as long as you choose, provided you do not breach any of the terms of your tenancy (for example by not paying your rent or by causing a nuisance to your neighbours).

However we now let some of our homes using flexible tenancies. These are different to secure tenancies in that they last for a specific period of time. This will usually be either 5 years or 10 years.

If you have a flexible tenancy, we will visit you at least 6 months before the end of this period to talk about your circumstances and to make a decision on whether or not to offer you a further tenancy, so that you can stay in your home for longer. If we decide not to give you a further tenancy, we will offer advice and assistance to help you find somewhere else to live.

The main rights and responsibilities that secure and flexible tenants have are the same.

Prevention of Social Housing Fraud

Your tenancy agreement requires you not to commit tenancy fraud. There are certain circumstances where the Council may decide to end a tenancy:

- Where the tenant/s has deliberately provided false information or forged documents in support of their housing application
- Where the tenant has failed to notify the Council of any changes of circumstances which would affect their entitlement to social housing
- Where the tenant has unlawfully sub-let their rent property or
- Where an individual is registered as living at more than one property

The Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013 brought fully into force in England on 15th October 2013, which:

- Creates new criminal offences of unlawful subletting by assured and secure tenants in social housing
- Gives local authority powers to prosecute in cases of unlawful subletting
- Enable courts to order the recovery of any profit made from unlawful subletting from tenants and
- Provides that tenants who unlawfully sublet the whole of their dwelling cannot subsequently regain their security of tenure

We will take all reports seriously, whether anonymous or not and will act promptly. Tenancy fraud is a waste of public money and can stop someone in genuine need from getting a Council property. If you suspect someone of committing tenancy fraud, please let us know straight away.

Report it:

- by telephoning the Tenancy Services Team on **01827 715341**
- by writing to us at **The Council House, South Street, Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 1DE**
- email **housingervices@northwarks.gov.uk**
- on line at **www.northwarks.gov.uk/tenancyfraud**

The information you provide is very important and will be treated in strict confidence. Your name will not be divulged to any other person.

North Warwickshire Borough Council is under a duty to protect the public funds it administrates and to this end may use the information you provided for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share information with other bodies responsible for auditing or administrating public funds for these purposes.

Frequently asked questions about your rights and responsibilities

Q. Am I allowed to take in a lodger?

A. You can take in a lodger (someone who rents a room from you and shares the communal rooms in your home, such as the kitchen and bathroom, with you) as long as it will not make your home overcrowded.

You can also sub-let part of your home (this is a more formal agreement with the person living with you, in which they would usually have a separate tenancy agreement), but you must ask for our permission before you do this. We will not unreasonably refuse permission. However you cannot let the whole of your property to someone else and live elsewhere.

Q. Can I run a business from home?

A. Yes, but you need to ask for our permission before you do this. We will not unreasonably refuse permission, but we may not allow you to run your business if we are concerned that it might cause damage to the property or a nuisance to your neighbours.

Q. Am I allowed a pet?

A. Yes, but if you live in a flat or a maisonette, you must ask for our permission first. We will consider where you live and the type of pet that you want to have when making a decision. This is to make sure that your home is suitable for the animal that you want and that it is not likely to cause a nuisance to your neighbours.

If you do have a pet, you are responsible for its welfare and its behaviour. You must ensure that it does not cause a nuisance to your neighbours.

Q. Am I responsible for looking after my garden?

A. Yes, you are responsible for keeping your garden tidy. If you are having difficulty doing this, please contact us as we may be able to offer assistance.

Q. Can I buy my home?

A. Yes, both secure and flexible tenants have the 'Right to Buy' their home at a discounted rate. You must have been a tenant for at least five years before you can do this however, there are some exceptions. If you want to discuss buying your home, you should contact us on **01827 715341**.

Q. Can my partner go on the tenancy agreement?

A. Yes, although we will undertake some basic checks on your circumstances before agreeing to this. Once your request has been agreed, your existing tenancy will come to an end and you will be issued with a new joint tenancy agreement, which both you and your partner will need to sign.

Q. Can my tenancy be passed to a family member if I die?

A. Your tenancy can be passed on to your partner, civil partner or cohabiting partner when you die. This is known as succession. If you have a joint tenancy, the other joint tenant will automatically take over the tenancy if you die. But, only one succession is allowed.

If you were a tenant before April 2012, another member of your family can also succeed to the tenancy if they have lived with you for the past 12 months.

You should contact the Council for further information about rights of succession. If the property is not suitable for your housing need you may not be able to stay there and the Council will assist you with finding a more suitable property.

If you need to ask our permission to sub-let part of your home, to run a business from home, to keep a pet in a flat or a maisonette or to change your existing tenancy for a joint tenancy with your partner, you can do this by writing to the **Housing Division at The Council House, South Street, Atherstone, CV9 1DE** or by emailing **housing@northwarks.gov.uk**. We will reply to your request in writing within 10 working days.

If you do not have the Council's permission when you have to this will be viewed as a breach of tenancy conditions and appropriate action will be taken.

6. YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

This section provides information about living in your neighbourhood. It sets out what we expect you to do to be a good neighbour to those living around you, what we will do to keep your neighbourhood clean and tidy and what you can do if you have a problem.

Being a good neighbour

We expect all of our tenants to show consideration for their neighbours, for example by:

- treating others with respect and not using abusive or threatening language
- not causing excessive noise, for example by playing loud music, especially late at night
- disposing of their rubbish correctly and not dumping it anywhere in the neighbourhood
- keeping any pets under control
- being respectful when parking your car

Please remember that you are also responsible for the behaviour of other members of your household and anyone who visits you.

We treat complaints about neighbours whose behaviour is 'anti-social' very seriously and will take action to try to resolve problems and to prevent them from occurring again. If you are experiencing anti-social behaviour, such as noise nuisance or aggressive or abusive behaviour, from one of your neighbours, please tell us about it. You can do this by contacting your Tenancy Services Officer on **01827 715341**. They will give you advice on how to deal with the situation and will usually arrange to visit you in person. Any information you give will be treated in confidence.

If you experience a serious incident, for example, one involving violence or threats of violence, you should contact the Police.

Keeping neighbourhoods clean and tidy

We aim to help keep the neighbourhoods in which our tenants live clean and tidy. To do this we employ Neighbourhood Wardens to deal with problems and nuisance issues in our neighbourhoods. This includes, for example, picking up litter and identifying and reporting instances of graffiti and vandalism. You can report any issues or concerns you have to them directly when they visit your area.

Disposing of unwanted bulky waste items

The Council will collect large bulky items from you for a small charge. You should contact **01827 715341** to arrange a collection. They will advise you on what items can be collected and also the next available Friday collection date. For further information and details of current charges for this service visit **www.northwarks.gov.uk**, Select Rubbish and Recycling then Bulky Waste Collections.

Before deciding to dispose any of your unwanted furniture, why not consider donating it to charity so that it can be reused. There is a charity reuse shop operating at Lower House Farm, Baddesley Ensor, Near Atherstone. All proceeds from the sale of items from the shop go directly to the charity. To find out more you can contact the reuse shop on **01827 289410**.

We ask that you dispose of bulky items in the correct way and do not leave them in communal areas that could cause an obstruction and a potential fire risk.

Community rooms for older people

Community rooms are available throughout the Borough. If you are part of a sheltered scheme and would like to make use of one of our community rooms as an extension of your home or attend one of the activities, please contact Neighbourhood Services on **01827 719402** who will be able to advise you further.

The community rooms are managed by the Neighbourhoods Team who regularly inspect and coordinate hiring of the rooms. The rooms can be hired by outside voluntary groups and private organisations, making them available for the local community with permission and at a reasonable fee.



7. TENANT INVOLVEMENT

This section is about the opportunities that are available for you to get involved in improving your neighbourhood and the services that we offer. It explains the benefits of being involved and some of the ways in which you can do this.

Why get involved?

We offer opportunities for tenants to get involved because we want to make sure that our services are focused on the things that really matter to you and that we are taking your views into account in the way that we look after your neighbourhood. By getting involved, you are helping to improve the quality of the services that we provide and to make your neighbourhood a better place for you and your neighbours to live.

There are other benefits for you too. We provide support and training for tenants who are actively involved, so it can be a good opportunity to learn new skills, to enhance your CV and to help you move in to, or progress in, work.

We don't want you to be out of pocket as a result of your involvement, so we will usually cover any reasonable expenses that you might incur, such as travel or child-care costs.

How to get involved

We recognise that different people will be able to commit different amounts of time to getting involved and will also enjoy taking part in different kinds of activities. For this reason, we offer a range of different ways in which you can get involved.

Some of these are quick and informal, while others mean committing some of your time on an on-going basis. They include, for example:

- filling in one of our questionnaires or surveys
- coming to one of our coffee mornings or fun days

- taking part in one of our community panels, which can bid for funding to carry out improvements to their local area
- joining our Borough Wide Tenants Forum, which discusses issues that affect the whole borough
- joining one of our task and finish groups that review different aspects of our services and make recommendations for improvement
- carrying out mystery shopping or helping to scrutinise our services

If you are interested in getting involved and would like to discuss the different options that are available to you, please:

- telephone us on: **01827 719402**
- email: **housingervices@northwarks.gov.uk**
- Further information about how to get involved, meeting dates and events in your area can be found on the Council's website at **www.northwarks.gov.uk/gettinginvolved**
- write to the us at **The Council House, South Street, Atherstone CV9 1DE**



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8. MOVING ON

This section sets out what to do when you want to move on from your current home. It explains the ways in which you can look for another social rented property in North Warwickshire and what you should do if you need to tell us that you are planning to move out.

How to look for a new home

Provided you do not breach any of the terms of your tenancy, you can stay in your home for as long as you choose (if you have a secure tenancy) or until your tenancy expires (if you have a flexible tenancy). However there may come a time when you want to move on, for example:

- to be closer to friends or relatives or to your place of work
- because your home has become either too big or too small for your household.

If this happens there are two main ways in which you can look for a new home:

- by applying for a transfer
- by looking for someone you can swap homes with, this is called a 'mutual exchange'.

Applying for a transfer

To transfer to another social rented property in North Warwickshire, you must apply to join our Housing Register. Your need to be rehoused will be assessed in accordance with the Council's Lettings Scheme. You will only be able to join the housing register if you are in housing need and have conducted your tenancy satisfactorily. Your property must be in good condition and you must have a clear rent account for at least 6 months. There may be an exception to this if the Council decides that in order to make best use of its stock a management move is required. The Housing Services Manager will assess and approve these cases. A home visit will be required to assess the condition of property. If you are accepted to join the housing register, we will allocate properties to the household with the greatest need, out of those that express an interest.

If you are under occupying your home and wish to consider moving to a smaller property the Council can assist you with this. You may qualify to receive a tenant incentive scheme payment to help towards your moving costs if you are freeing up a family home or are affected by under occupation charges.

If you wish to apply for a transfer you should contact your Tenancy Services Officer in the first instance on **01827 715341** who will discuss your needs and provide information about whether you meet the qualifying criteria.

Looking for a mutual exchange

Due to the high demand for social housing in North Warwickshire and depending on your circumstances, you may find that you have to wait for some time before you are offered a transfer. As a result, many tenants find that the quickest way to find a new home is to look for a mutual exchange.

To do this you must register on the website **www.homeswapper.co.uk**. If you need help doing this, you can contact us using the contact details listed above. As the Council is a member of the HomeSwapper Service our tenants are able to register free of charge.

You will be asked to upload information about your current home to the website, along with details of the type of home that you are interested in moving to. The website will then help you to find potential matches. You can use **www.homeswapper.co.uk** to look for a new home in any part of the country, not just in North Warwickshire.

You should always visit the property before agreeing to a mutual exchange. You should also be aware that you will take on the responsibilities of the person you are swapping with, so for example you will have to pay the rent that they currently pay.

Once you have found someone to swap with, you will need to ask for our permission before you can complete the exchange. We will usually agree to these requests but we may say no if, for example, your home is too big or too small for the household you are planning to exchange with.

To ask for permission to complete a mutual exchange, please contact us on **01827 715341** and ask to speak to a Tenancy Services Officer. Alternatively, you can email housingservices@northwarks.gov.uk or write to us at **The Council House, South Street, Atherstone, CV9 1DE.**

We will send application forms to both parties and consider the request once the forms have been returned. We will confirm our decision in writing.

How to end your tenancy

If you want to end your tenancy without seeking another social home in the Borough, you will need to give us 4 weeks notice that you intend to move out. You will still be responsible for paying your rent throughout the notice period.

To give us notice that you intend to move out of your home you should telephone us on **01827 715341** or write to us at **The Council House, South Street, Atherstone, CV9 1DE.** You will be required to sign a form to confirm that you wish to end the tenancy and we will arrange to meet you at your home to explain what you need to do and to inspect your property. We will let you know if there are any repairs you will need to undertake before you hand the keys back. If you do not complete these, we may charge you for the cost of doing them.

If you are transferring to another Council home in the Borough, you must make sure that:

- your rent account is up to date
- you have carried out any outstanding repairs for which you are responsible
- you are leaving the property clean, tidy and in a good condition
- you have removed all of your possessions and any rubbish from the property

Your move may be delayed if your property is not in good order and you may incur re-charges should the Council have to remove any belongings or rubbish left inside or outside the property.

CONTACT US

Email: housingservices@northwarks.gov.uk

Telephone: 01827 715341
(between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Out of Hours Emergency Repairs Telephone: 01827 715341
(calls will be directed to the lifeline centre which is
manned 24 hours a day)

Complaints and Compliments:
Email: complaintsandcompliments@northwarks.gov.uk

Write to:
Housing Division
North Warwickshire Borough Council,
South Street,
Atherstone,
Warwickshire,
CV9 1DE

Website: www.northwarks.gov.uk

North Warwickshire Borough Council and the Borough Wide Tenants Forum are committed to working in partnership with tenants to ensure that our neighbourhoods are places where people choose to live and can contribute to their community.

If you require a version of this document in large print, audiotape or in another language, please contact us.



North Warwickshire
Borough Council

📍 South Street, Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 1DE

✉ housingservices@northwarks.gov.uk

☎ 01827 715341

🌐 www.northwarks.gov.uk