

Tenant's Handbook

**Everything you need to know
about your tenancy with RWP**



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This communication has been issued by Progress Housing Association Limited and/or Reside Housing Association Limited, trading as RWP.

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Other formats

If you would like this brochure in another language or format, please contact your housing officer on 0333 320 2675.

Jeśli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać tę publikację w innym języku lub formie (na przykład dużym drukiem, w wersji dźwiękowej lub brajlem) albo potrzebują Państwo usługi tłumacza, prosimy o zatelefonowanie do Biura Obsługi Klienta pod numer: 0333 320 2675.

اس اشاعت کی نقل اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا شکل (فارمیٹ) میں چاہئے، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان (انٹرپرائٹر) کی خدمات درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی کسٹمر سروسز سے فون نمبر 0333 320 2675 پر رابطہ کریں۔

Section 1 – Welcome



Hello

- This handbook tells you what you need to know about living in your **home**
- This handbook tells you all about the **rights** and **responsibilities** you have whilst living in your home
- But if there is anything else you need to know please ask us
- If you need **help** to go through this handbook or you want to speak to someone from **RWP** you can **telephone**, **e-mail** or **write** to us (see page 9 for details) or ask someone else to speak to us on your behalf
- To help you understand some of the '**jargon**' words we have highlighted them in **red**. We explain what the words mean on pages 7 and 8
- We have highlighted other important words in **bold** to help you read this handbook

Section 2 – About your home

In this section we explain the following:

- Who is RWP?
- Opening hours
- Head office address
- Making sense of the jargon
- Your tenancy agreement
- Living in your home

Who is RWP?

RWP owns or leases the house you live in. This means RWP is your landlord.

Our main offices are in Leyland and London, but we have property all over the country.



Our **reception opening hours** are:
Monday to Friday – 8.30am to 4.30pm

Telephone opening hours are:
Monday to Friday – 8am to 6pm

Live chat opening hours are:
Monday to Friday – 8am to 5pm

Our head office address:
RWP, Sumner House, 21 King Street,
Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 2LW

Tel: 0333 320 2675

Email:
RWPenquiries@progressgroup.org.uk

Web: www.residewithprogress.org.uk

Making sense of the jargon

To help you understand some of the 'jargon' words we use, we have highlighted them all in red. We explain what these words mean on the next three pages.

(You can
insert a
picture of
yourself, if
you like.)

Tenant

This is **you**.



Property

Property is a general way of describing the home you live in. Some people live in a house, some in a bungalow and others in a flat.



Landlord

RWP is your landlord. We usually own or lease the **property** you live in.



Tenancy agreement

This is the contract you sign that gives you the right to live in your home. It tells you your rights and responsibilities. It also tells you what your **landlord** has to do.

Making sense of the jargon (continued)



Rent

Tenants pay money called **rent** to their **landlord**. You have to pay rent every week.

Housing Benefit and Universal Credit



Housing Benefit is money you may get from your local council or Department of Work and Pensions to help you pay your rent.

Rent arrears

If you get behind with paying your **rent** you will get into **arrears**. Money you owe to your **landlord** is called **arrears**.



Service charges



Part of your rent includes a **service charge**. Service charges pay for communal services at your home. Please see page 15 for more information.

Housing officer

(If you would like to insert a picture of your housing officer, please let us know and we will send you a photo)

The employees working for **RWP** who visit you are called **housing officers**.

They will give you your **tenancy agreement**. They will make sure we are receiving your **rent** and help sort out any problems such as repairs and **arrears**.

Support worker

(You can insert a picture of your support worker if you like)

Your **support worker** will help you with the day-to-day support you need to live as independently as possible.



Your tenancy agreement

When you moved into your home, you, or a person who supports you, signed a tenancy agreement.

A **tenancy agreement** is a legal contract. It tells you your **rights** and **responsibilities** whilst living in your home.

A tenancy agreement also tells you what **RWP's** responsibilities are.

The **tenancy agreement** tells you what rights you have as a tenant such as:

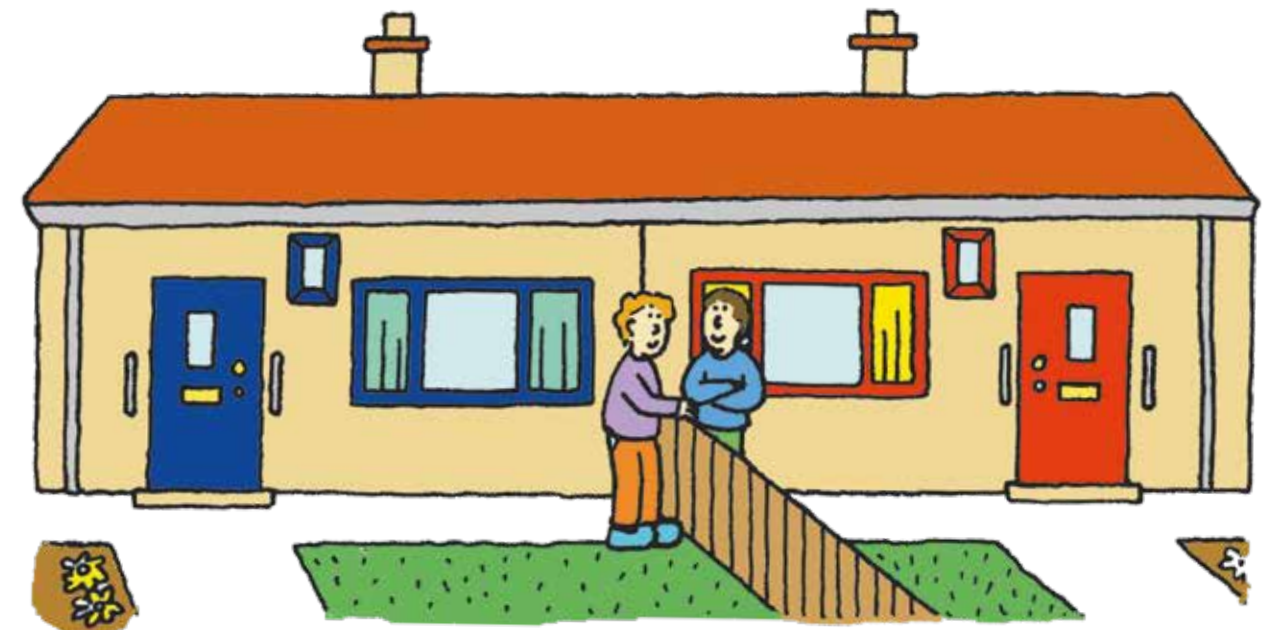
- The right to enjoy your home in peace
- The right to have repairs done
- The right not to be annoyed, upset or frightened by anyone else in your home
- The right to complain if you are not happy with your home

The tenancy agreement tells you that

you also have **responsibilities** such as:

- Not being violent or aggressive to other people because of the colour of their skin, their age, disability, gender or for any other reasons
- Not causing a nuisance to anyone else in your house, any visitors, support staff or your neighbours
- Not playing music or your TV so loudly that it disturbs other people, including your neighbours
- Not causing damage to the furniture and fittings in your house
- Making sure you pay your rent

Your address is:



Living in your home

- You may live in a house or bungalow that you share with other people
- You may live in your own flat, house or bungalow
- Support is provided to help you live independently in your home



(You can insert a picture of your home here, if you wish)



Section 3 –
What you can
expect from us

In this section we explain the following:

- Customer care
- Equality and diversity
- Data protection
- The RWP Team
- Giving advice and assistance
- New tenants
- New properties
- Review visits
- Meetings with the people who support you

Customer care

All our employees want to provide you with an excellent service at all times.

We want to give you a quality housing service, which gives value for money.

We want to listen to you.

Equality and diversity

RWP is committed to giving you **equal treatment** regardless of your age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) or sexual orientation.

Data protection

We comply with all applicable data protection laws when collecting, using and sharing your personal data. Your personal data will also be processed following our own data protection policies, procedures and privacy notices.

For further information about how we use your personal data and your rights, please see our privacy notice which is available on our website at www.residewithprogress.org.uk/privacy/

Giving advice and assistance

Our employees can give you **advice** and assistance on all matters to do with your home. For example advice about repairs to your home, your **rent** account or about applying for **Housing Benefit** or housing cost payments from **Universal Credit**.

New tenants

- If you are a new **tenant** your **housing officer** will give you your **tenancy agreement** and will tell you about your rights and responsibilities

New properties

- A **housing officer** will visit a new **property** within four months of it opening to make sure that there are no problems

Review visits

- Your **housing officer** will visit you at least twice a year to make sure you are happy with your home
- Your **housing officer** will ask you and your **support worker** if you:
 - Are satisfied with our service?
 - Have any outstanding repairs?

The **review visit** is an opportunity for you to meet your housing officer and to tell her/him about your involvement in running your home and if you are happy.

Please remember:

You do not have to wait until your yearly review visit to speak to your **housing officer**. Please telephone or write to them anytime you like.

Meetings with the people who support you

We do **not** provide the day-to-day support that you may need to live independently.

We work with many different agencies that provide our tenants with the support they need to live as independently as possible.

- Your **housing officer** works very closely with the people who support you
- **Housing officers** meet on a regular basis with the managers of the people who help support you from day-to-day
- They talk about matters such as reletting empty rooms, resolving neighbour disputes, **rent arrears**, managing **service charges** and any problems



Section 4 – paying for your home

In this section we explain the following:

- What is rent?
- How much rent will I have to pay?
- Rent review
- What is the rent spent on?
- Communal service charges
- What the rent does not pay for
- How to pay your rent
- What is Housing Benefit and what is Universal Credit?
- Important information about claiming help with your housing costs
- What happens if you don't pay your rent

What is rent?

Rent is money paid to your landlord. The money pays for your home and includes service charges as well. If you want to carry on living in your house, flat or bungalow you will have to pay rent for this.

How much rent will I have to pay?

The amount of rent you pay depends on the type of home that you live in and where you live.

If you want more information on how we work out how much rent you have to pay, please let us know and we will tell you.

Rent review



Every year the rent you pay to us will be reviewed. This only happens **once a year**, no more.

We will always write to you at least one month before the rent is changed to let you know the new amount due.

If you receive Housing Benefit we will also write to your local council to tell them the new rent, so that they can amend the amount of Housing Benefit you receive.

You should also tell the local authority about your rent increase. If you receive help with housing costs through Universal Credit, please advise them too.

If you are **not happy** about the amount your rent is being increased by, please let us know and we can tell you what you can do.

What is rent spent on?

The rent you pay to RWP will be used to:

- Pay for the repairs to your home
- Pay back the money we borrowed to buy your home
- Provide employees to manage your property

Communal service charges

The total amount of rent that you pay also includes a service charge.

Your service charge pays for communal services. **Communal** means the parts of your home that you share with other people so does not include your own room(s).

Communal service charges could include a charge for:

- Heating and lighting shared rooms
- Cleaning shared rooms like the kitchen
- Cleaning some windows
- Maintaining your garden
- Some furniture and kitchen appliances
- Decorating shared rooms like the living room
- A shared telephone



What the rent does NOT pay for

- Your support worker
- All of your household bills
- The insurance of your personal belongings

How to pay your rent

Your **rent** should be paid every Monday **in advance**.

You can pay your **rent** monthly but this must also be in advance.

You can pay your **rent** by:

Direct Debit

If you wish to pay by **Direct Debit** then your **housing officer** can arrange for you to complete a **Direct Debit form**. This means that the money for your **rent** will come straight out of your bank account into ours.



What is Housing Benefit and what is Universal Credit?

Some people may receive help with housing costs through Universal Credit. Universal Credit is a benefit paid to help people who are on low incomes.

If you move into a supported living property you are usually entitled to claim Housing Benefit to help pay your rent. When you move into your house you have to fill in an application form for Housing Benefit and send it to your local council. Your local council will decide if they can give you this money.

If you need help filling in your **Housing Benefit form** your **support worker** should be able to help you. You can also ask one of our **housing officers** to help you. They can give you advice about **Housing Benefit** or **Universal Credit**.

Your local council will look at how much income you get each week and how much savings you have. This will help them decide if you are entitled to **Housing Benefit**. They may not pay all of your **rent** but they may pay something towards it.

Important information about Housing Benefit and Universal Credit

- If you receive help with housing costs through Universal Credit, you will need to contact the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure you continue to get help with your rent
- If you claim Housing benefit and hand your form in late they will not pay your **rent** from the day you moved in
- This means that you would have to pay the **rent** yourself
- This could mean that you get into **rent arrears**, which is very serious as you could lose your home
- It remains your responsibility to make sure the rent is paid in full even if you get **Housing Benefit** or help with housing costs through **Universal Credit**
- You must also tell **Housing Benefit** or **Universal Credit** if your circumstances change, for example if your income goes up



- When you apply for **Housing Benefit** you will need to provide proof of your identity and proof of your income and savings

What happens if you don't pay your rent?

If you do not pay your weekly **rent** you will get into **arrears**.

If you get help towards your **rent** and this stops for whatever reason you will also get into **arrears**.

This means that you owe money to your **landlord**.

Not paying your **rent** can be very serious. You could lose your home if you do not pay your rent.

Your **housing officer** will be happy to work with you to stop things becoming more serious if you get behind with your **rent**.

Please remember if you have any difficulties paying your rent that we are here to help you.



Section 5 – repairing and maintaining your home

In this section we explain the following:

- How to get things repaired
- Repairs inspectors
- How long will it take to get things repaired?
- What if it is an emergency?
- Urgent repairs
- Non-urgent repairs
- Who pays to get things repaired?
- The yearly maintenance visit
- Planned maintenance
- Your right to get things repaired
- Compensation
- Tenant repairs reply form
- Kitchen appliances and furnishings
- Decorating your home
- Changing your home to make it easier to live there
- Your garden

How to get things repaired when they go wrong

- When things get **broken** and need repairing, please tell us straight away
- You can telephone us to **report a repair** or your **support worker**, friend or relative can telephone on your behalf
- Telephone our **Customer Contact Centre** to report a repair

The telephone number for our **Customer Contact Centre** is:

Telephone: 0333 320 2675

Email: RWPenquiries@progressgroup.org.uk

When you telephone us you will be asked for some information:

1. Your **name**.
2. Your **address**.
3. A **telephone number** so we can contact you.
4. As much **information** about the repair as possible.
5. When we can get **access** to your **home**.

Sometimes we will need to arrange for one of our **repairs inspectors** to contact you.



Repairs inspectors

One of our **repairs inspectors** may phone you for more **information** about your repair.

They may **visit** you.

They may arrange for a local **contractor** to visit you on their behalf.

The **repairs inspector** will decide what work needs doing and how much it will cost.

They will arrange for someone to repair what is broken.

They may also visit you after the problem has been repaired to check that it has been done quickly and to a good standard.

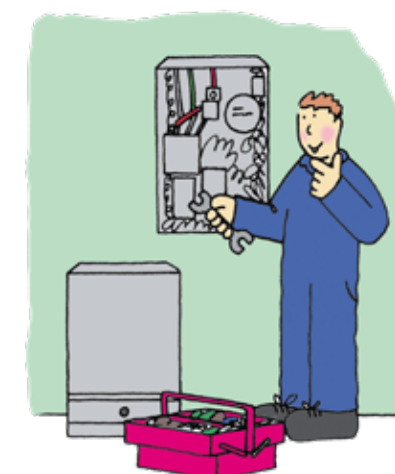
How long will it take to get things repaired?

We aim to complete repairs within three target times:

Emergency repairs – to make safe within 24 hours

Urgent repairs – to complete within five working days

Non-urgent repairs – to complete within 20 working days





What if it is an emergency?

A repairs contractor will visit your home within 24 hours and make the situation safe.

Emergencies

If you have an emergency and it is outside of our office opening hours you can still telephone **0333 320 2675**.

The out-of-hours service operates: Mondays to Fridays – from 6pm to 8am

All weekends and at bank holidays.

Here are some examples of the type of repairs falling within each target times:

EMERGENCY REPAIRS – We will make the situation safe **within 24 hours**.

An **emergency repair** is something that could be **dangerous** or cause **serious damage** to your home.

For example:

- If you have **no electricity**
- If you have **no heating**
- If you have **no hot water**
- If you have a **leak or burst pipe**
- If your house is **not secure**
- If your only **toilet is blocked**
- If you have a **gas leak** – telephone **National Grid** (free) on telephone number: 0800 111999

If you say a repair is an emergency when it isn't **you will be charged** the cost of the repair.



URGENT REPAIRS – Should take no longer than **five working days**.

An **urgent repair** is something that causes you a great deal of **discomfort** or **inconvenience**.

For example:

- Work needed following an emergency repair
- If some, but not all of your electrical power and lights are not working

- If some, but not all of your water supply stops working
- If some, but not all of your gas supply stops working
- If some, but not all of your heating stops working
- If some, but not all of your hot water stops working
- If your drains are blocked or leaking
- If your toilet is blocked or not flushing
- If your sink, or bath is blocked
- If you have a leak from your water or heating pipe, tank or cistern
- Your roof is leaking
- Your windows, door or lock is insecure
- Your banister or handrail is loose or broken

NON-URGENT REPAIRS – Should take no longer than **20 working days**.

Non-urgent repairs are repairs that can wait a short time before being dealt with.

For example:

- If you have a small problem with your toilet, bath or sink
- If your doors or windows are sticking
- If you need plaster or brick work repairing

Who pays to get things repaired?

As your landlord, **RWP** will repair some parts of your home for you. You don't have to pay any more money for this.

However, you will be charged the full cost of the repair if:

- You say something is an emergency when it isn't
- You, your visitors or your support staff cause any damage in your home

The yearly maintenance visit

Once a year one of our **repairs inspectors** will visit to look at the condition of your home.

He/she will see what **repairs** need to be done.

Planned maintenance

We also have to plan ahead to maintain some parts of your home. We call this the **planned maintenance programme**.

There are two types of planned maintenance:

- Cyclical repairs
- Major repairs

Cyclical repairs is work that is repeated every year or at longer intervals. For example:

- Servicing gas appliances annually
- Painting the outside of your house

The **major repairs** programme is where we plan for the replacement of major items in your home.

For example:

- Windows
- Kitchen units
- Bathrooms
- Roofs

Your right to get things repaired

You have a **right** to have things that need fixing repaired.

You have a **right** to have repairs fixed **within the set times** that we have shown in this handbook on pages 20 and 21.



Compensation

What is compensation?

Compensation is **money that may be paid to you** if we do not fix **certain repairs** within the set times we have shown on page 19.

If we have not repaired something and it has put your **health, safety or security** at risk you may be entitled to compensation.

- If you think you may be entitled to **compensation** please **contact us** and we will tell you more about the repairs covered under this scheme and what to do
- Please **do not** arrange for somebody else to do the work instead of us

If you ask somebody else to do the work we will not be able to accept responsibility for the bill.



Tenant repairs reply form

When we carry out a repair at your **property** we will send you a tenant repairs reply form.

Please complete this **freepost form** and return it to us. We want to know:

- If you were happy with how the repair was carried out
- If the workmen were polite and respectful
- Did the workmen do a good job?

This information is very **important** to us, as it will help us improve our repairs service. We will tell you the outcome of reply forms sent back in our tenant's newsletter.

Return your form to us and we will enter you into a **prize draw**.



Kitchen appliances and furnishings

RWP may own some of the kitchen appliances and furnishings in your home.

If you have a problem with any of the kitchen appliances and furnishings that **RWP** are responsible for, please let us know.

You can telephone our housing colleagues on **telephone: 0333 320 2675**.

Decorating your home

The money you pay in your **service charge** will pay towards the cost of decorating any rooms that you share with other tenants.

You are responsible for decorating any rooms that only you have use of.



Changing your home to make it easier to live there

If you have a disability which makes day-to-day living in your home difficult, we may be able to help you by changing your home to make it easier to live there.

Here are some examples of the types of alterations that may help make life easier for you:

- Ramps to help you get your wheelchair in and out of your house
- Changing the doors to make it easier for you to move around in your wheelchair
- Extra banister rails to help you get up and down stairs

We will consider adaptations for your home but we will need a **recommendation from your occupational therapist**.



Your garden

If you have a garden you must keep it tidy.

You may want to do this yourself or

Your **support workers** may arrange for a gardener to keep your garden tidy.

You may pay money in your **service charge** that will pay towards the cost of maintaining your garden.

You must get our **written permission** if you want to put up a garden shed, greenhouse or other permanent structure.

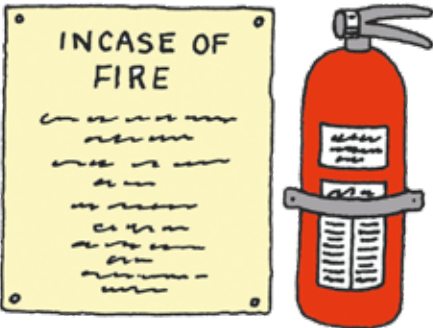
You must **not remove** any trees, fences, hedges or sheds without first getting our **written permission**.



Section 6 – keeping your home safe

In this section we explain the following:

- Fire safety
- Fire drills
- Health and safety rules
- Location of equipment
- Gas boilers and gas appliances
- Portable appliance testing



Fire safety

In some properties, where employees are trained to use them, **RWP** has provided fire extinguishers and fire blankets.

RWP will service all **fire equipment** every year that we provide. This means that we will make sure that it is working properly and it is safe to use.

Fire drills

Your **support worker** is responsible for carrying out regular **fire drills**, where appropriate. This is so you know how to get out of your home safely if there is a fire.



Health and safety rules

Your **support worker** will be able to tell you what the **health and safety rules** are for your home. Health and safety rules are there to make sure you are safe and well in your home.

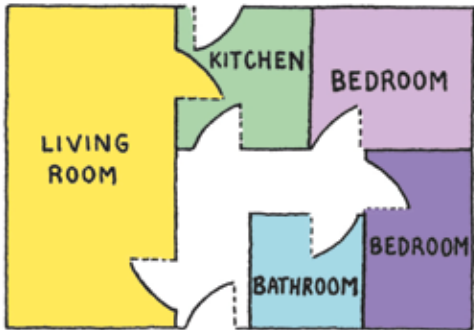
Some examples of health and safety rules are:

- Do not block the doorways in your home. If you see a doorway that is blocked then let your **support worker** know
- Do not leave things on the floor that people could trip over and hurt themselves

It is **your responsibility** as much as your support workers to make sure you stick to the health and safety rules.

Location of equipment

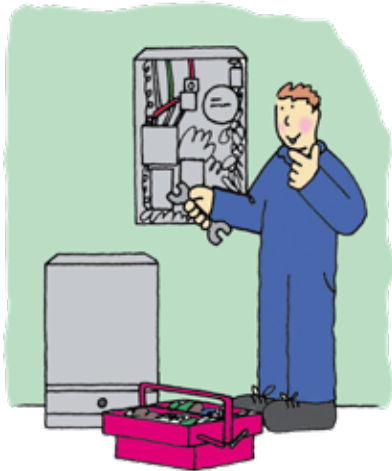
It is useful to know the location of certain things in your home such as stopcocks and fuse boxes. This is so they can be turned off quickly **in an emergency**. You can record their positions in the table below.



Item	Position in your home
Stopcock	
Trip switch (if supplied)	
Gas tap	
Central heating boiler	
Hot water cylinder	
Hot water cylinder	
Water tank	

Gas boilers and gas appliances

If you have a gas boiler or gas appliances **RWP** will **service them every year**. This means that we will check that they are working properly and that they are safe.



Portable appliance testing

RWP may own some of the electrical equipment in your home but we do not own all of it. Where we own the electrical equipment we will **test it every year** to make sure it is safe. Examples of electrical equipment we might test are fridges and washing machines.



Section 7 – you, your neighbours and the people you live with

In this section we explain the following:

- Getting on with your neighbours and the people you live with
- Keeping a pet



Getting on with your neighbours and the people you live with

Sometimes people have problems with their neighbours. If you have a problem with your neighbours or the people you live with talk to your **support worker** first and get them to help you sort it out.

If you can't sort it out with the help of your **support worker** let us know and we will try to help.



Keeping a pet

You may be able to keep a pet if you want to. But please **write to us first** to make sure it is okay.

We will want to know the pet will not cause a nuisance or health risk.



Section 8 – moving home

In this section we explain the following:

- Giving up your tenancy
- What if RWP ends your tenancy?

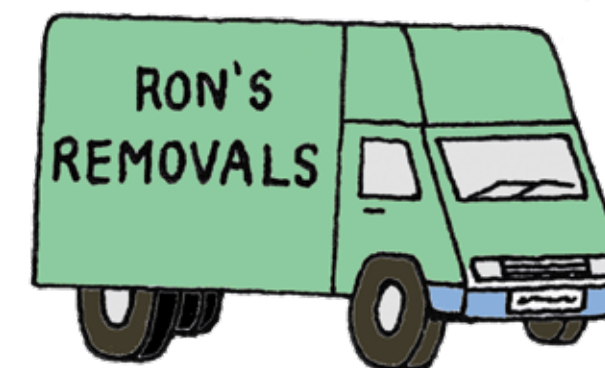
Giving up your tenancy

You need to tell us if you want to move out of your house.

Put it in writing.

You must give us **four weeks' notice** from a Monday.

Clear out all personal belongings and leave your flat/room clean and tidy.



What if we end your tenancy

RWP can only end your tenancy and ask you to move out, if we get a **Court Order**. We would usually give you **four weeks written notice** if we intended to end your tenancy.

Examples of why we might end your tenancy:

- If you were not repaying your **rent arrears**
- If you had broken one of the rules of your **tenancy agreement**
- If you were causing **serious damage** to your home
- If you were **threatening** other people sharing your home



Section 9 – how to complain

In this section we explain the following:

- When to complain
- Who can complain
- How to make a complaint
- What will happen if you make a complaint?
- What happens if you are not happy with what we say about the complaint?
- The Housing Ombudsman Service

If you are not happy with something, tell us

You should complain if you feel we have:

- Not done something we should have
- Treated you unfairly or impolitely
- Done something we should not have done
- Done something badly

Who can complain?

Tenants or anyone else who is unhappy with our service can complain.

You can also have someone to deal with your complaint on your behalf, such as a friend, relative, support worker or Member of Parliament (MP).

If you would like a copy of our **complaints leaflet**, please let us know and we will send you one.

How to make a complaint

You can make a complaint by:

Calling us: 0333 320 2675, Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm

Sending us an email:
RWPenquiries@progressgroup.org.uk

Visiting our website:
www.residewithprogress.org.uk

Using live chat:
www.residewithprogress.org.uk,
Monday to Friday 8am – 5pm

Writing to us: RWP, Sumner House,
21 King Street, Leyland, Lancashire,
PR25 2LW

Talking to us: your Housing Officer or your Involvement Team will help. You can also visit us at Sumner House.

What will happen if you make a complaint?

We will look at your complaint (Stage One).

We will contact you within five working days to tell you what we will do next.

You can tell us how you would like us to contact you by telephone, email or letter.

We will listen to what you are telling us and show you how we will try to make things better.

What happens if you are not happy with what we say about the complaint?

You can ask us to look at your complaint again (Stage Two).

We will do this and contact you by letter or email within five days. You will receive a full written response within 20 working days.

If you are still not happy, you can ask someone else to speak with us about your complaint, such as a friend, relative, support worker or Member of Parliament (MP).

Housing Ombudsman Service

The Housing Ombudsman Service is the organisation that makes sure we deal with complaints in the right way by following the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. This can be found on their website at www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ComplaintHandling-Code-Published-March-2022-1-1.pdf

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman at any time for advice or support.

The Housing Ombudsman's contact details are:

The Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 152
Liverpool
L33 7WQ

Email:
info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 111 3000
(Monday-Friday 9.15am – 5.15pm)

Compliments, complaints and comments leaflet

If you would like a copy of our Easy Read compliments, complaints and comments leaflet, please let us know, and we will send you one.



Section 10 – would you like to be involved with us?

In this section we explain the following:

- What is tenant involvement?
- Why get involved?
- How to get involved

What is tenant involvement?

Involvement is where:

- You tell us what you think about our service and how we can do it better
- We listen to what you have to say
- We act on your suggestions, where possible

We employ a **tenant involvement co-ordinator** who is here to help you get involved.

Why get involved?

- If we are to offer you the best possible service we need to know that you are satisfied with us
- If you think we can do things better we want you to tell us
- Your involvement will help us respond to your concerns and suggestions
- You could develop your own skills and self-confidence. You might learn how to run and take part in meetings or write articles for our newsletter

Remember you have the right to be told what is going on and a right to tell us what you think.

How to get involved

You can get involved with us when and how you like.

We use a 'menu method' of involvement, which means you can get involved with us in the way that best suits you.



You can talk to us on your own or in a group



Complete a questionnaire or survey



Send us a story or photograph to include in our newsletter.

If you want to speak to someone about getting involved, please telephone our tenant involvement co-ordinator.

Telephone: 0333 320 2675

Or complete the "Do you want to be involved?" feedback sheet at the back of this handbook.



You will find a feedback sheet on the page opposite. We would be really pleased if you could make time to fill in this sheet about any of the following:

- What do you think of RWP?
- Would you like to be involved with RWP?
- What do you think about this tenant's handbook?

Name: _____

Telephone number: _____



RWP

Sumner House, 21 King Street,
Leyland, PR25 2LW



Telephone: 0333 320 2675



Email: RWPenquiries@progressgroup.org.uk
Website: www.residewithprogress.org.uk



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