



Tenant handbook


About this handbook


This handbook has been produced by Phoenix staff together with our Resident Communications Group. It includes information about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant and about our rights and responsibilities to you as your landlord.


This handbook should be read together with our Phoenix Standards. These will be supplied to all new tenants with this handbook and are available on our website and on request.

The Phoenix Standards are an explanation of what you can expect from Phoenix and go beyond the standards set by our regulator. If we don't meet the Phoenix Standards in any way, please tell us so we can investigate and put things right. Your feedback helps us to provide better services.


Icons Key

 When you see this symbol, turn to page 31 for helpful contact details.

 When you see this symbol you can go online for more details.

 When you see this symbol, a service or facility may attract an additional cost. Up-to-date charges information is available on our website or by contacting us.

Definitions When you see a word in bold italics, we have included a definition in the margin.

 When you see this symbol, you can sign up or log into our resident portal to contact us.

A note from our Chief Executive and Chair

Welcome to Phoenix and your new home!

We understand that there's a lot to think about when moving into your new home. We've created this handbook to help guide you through the process and to provide you with information about your tenancy, paying your rent, repairs and our other services.

Please remember that this handbook is only a guide. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, it is your tenancy agreement that sets out your obligations as a tenant, and ours as your landlord.

If you have any questions that this handbook does not answer, please visit our website or contact your Housing Officer, who is here to support you and will be happy to help.

We are so pleased to welcome you to Phoenix. Residents are at the heart of everything we do and there are lots of opportunities for you to get involved. We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at some of our events.

Enjoy your new home!



Denise Fowler
Chief Executive



Carmen Simpson
Phoenix Chair

Contents

1.0 About Phoenix

1.1 About us, our aims, our values	4
1.2 Phoenix Standards	4
1.3 Complaints and compliments	5
1.4 Data protection	6

2.0 Getting involved

2.1 Membership	7
2.2 Gold Club	7
2.3 Ways to get involved	8

3.0 Paying your rent

3.1 Rent payments	09
3.2 How to pay your rent	09
3.3 Support to pay your rent	09
3.4 If you do get into arrears	09
3.5 Good reasons not to get into arrears	10
3.6 Legal action to recover rent arrears	10
3.7 Possession order	10
3.8 Money judgement	10
3.9 Eviction	11

4.0 Your tenancy

4.1 Tenancy agreement	12
4.2 Types of tenancy	12
4.3 Your rights	13
4.4 Your responsibilities and our duties as a landlord	14

5.0 Moving in

5.1 Getting connected to utilities and other services	16
5.2 Keeping a pet	16
5.3 Carpets	16
5.4 Fobs	16
5.5 Council tax	16
5.6 Furniture agencies	16
5.7 Home contents insurance	17
5.8 My Phoenix	17
5.9 Sustainability	17

6.0 Health and safety in your home

6.1 Resident Safety	18
6.2 Gas safety	18
6.3 Fire safety	20
6.4 Smoke alarms	21
6.5 Electrical safety	21
6.6 Water safety	21
6.7 Asbestos safety	22
6.8 Callers to your home	22

7.0 Repairs

7.1 Tenant repair responsibilities	23
7.2 Reporting a repair	23
7.3 Emergency repairs	23
7.4 Gaining access	23
7.5 Gas servicing and safety checks	23
7.6 Aids and adaptations	24
7.7 Handyperson scheme	24
7.8 Home improvements	24
7.9 Damp and condensation	24

8.0 Caretaking and estate services

8.1 Caretaking	25
8.2 Grounds maintenance	25
8.3 Environmental issues	25
8.4 Parking	26
8.5 Household rubbish and recycling	26
8.6 Aerial and satellite dishes	26
8.7 Pest control	26

9.0 Antisocial behaviour, harassment and domestic abuse

9.1 Antisocial behaviour	27
9.2 Harassment	28
9.3 Domestic abuse	28
9.4 Safeguarding	29

10.0 Moving home

10.1 Moving in the local area	30
10.2 Moving to a smaller home (downsizing)	30
10.3 Swapping your home	30
10.4 Ending your tenancy (moving out)	30

Useful contacts 31

Contact us 32 (backcover)

Important information

My rent account number:

Contents insurance policy number:

Tenancy reference number:

1.0 About Phoenix

1.1 About us, our aims, our values

We are proud to be a not-for-profit, resident-led housing association. We own and manage more than 6,000 homes and are the first housing association in London to use the community gateway approach. This model encourages all our tenants and leaseholders to get involved, take part in our decision-making and become shareholding members.

Tenants and leaseholders elected by residents are the largest group on our Board, and there are opportunities for residents to get involved and to shape our plans throughout Phoenix.

For more information about Phoenix, including our strategic objectives and corporate plans, please visit our website or get in touch. ➡



1.2 Phoenix Standards

The Phoenix Standards are an explanation of what you can expect from Phoenix and go beyond the standards set by our regulator, the **Regulator of Social Housing** (RSH). The standards are split into seven categories:

- Tenant involvement and empowerment
- Home
- Tenancy
- Rent
- Neighbourhood and community
- Value for money
- Governance and financial viability.

They were reviewed and updated by our staff and residents and approved by the Board in 2016.

Definitions

Regulator of Social Housing
The body responsible for regulating social housing and all registered social housing providers in England.



Definitions

Housing Ombudsman
An independent, impartial service that looks at complaints about housing organisations.

1.3 Complaints and compliments

Residents are at the heart of Phoenix and we aim to do things properly first time, every time.

However, mistakes can be made and we encourage you to tell us when this happens. We want to resolve your complaint and your views and feedback will also help us to learn from mistakes and improve our services.

You can make a complaint in writing, in person, by telephone or by emailing complaints@phoenixch.org.uk

We will firstly try to put the matter right informally within seven days. If we are unable to resolve the

matter to your satisfaction, it will become a formal complaint and we will follow our formal complaints process to resolve your complaint.

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you can work with a designated person or a tenant panel, to consider it, and they can work with you and Phoenix to resolve the complaint. After you have been through all the stages of our complaints process, your complaint can be referred to the **Housing Ombudsman**. ➡

Full details of our complaints procedure are available on our website or by request. ➡



The Phoenix Privacy Promise

We promise:

- to keep your personal information safe and secure
- never to sell your personal information
- to tell you how we use your personal information.

As your landlord we hold personal information about you and members of your household. This includes your name and date of birth, your home address and contact details.

We collect personal information on forms and applications that you fill in and from other organisations who help us to deliver our services. We use the information we collect for a number of purposes, but primarily to provide housing accommodation and services to you.

We may also hold sensitive personal information about you and other members of your household, but

will only collect it with your consent. We use this information to help provide services to meet your needs and use it to check if our services are accessible to different groups.

In order to deliver these services we may share your personal information with the Phoenix Repairs Service and with other contractors who provide services on our behalf. We may also share your personal information with other organisations when we are legally required to do so.

Full details of how we collect, store and use your data, along with full information about your rights in relation to your personal data, are included in our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Statement available on our website and on request.

If you have any questions about the data that we hold about you, please contact our Data Protection Officer by calling 0800 0285 700 or email data.protection@phoenixch.org.uk

2.0 Getting involved

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We value your involvement and hope that residents feel part of all that we do.

We are proud to be a resident-led housing association. Our residents play a key role in helping us to deliver and improve our services. Every resident can have a say and influence our decision making.

Tenants and leaseholders are the largest group on our Board. You can also influence services and future priorities by attending our engagement events, taking part in our consultations or joining a resident group.

We value your involvement and hope that you feel part of all that we do.

enables you to elect resident Board Members, attend and vote at our Annual General Meeting and share in the decision making of Phoenix.

2.2 Gold Club

Our Phoenix Gold Club is an opportunity for us to say thank you to residents. When you do things like pay by Direct Debit or keep to appointments, you help to reduce our costs, which means we can offer good, quality services. In return, as a Gold Member you will earn reward points that we convert to shopping vouchers at the end of each Gold Club year.

Any Phoenix shareholder is eligible to become a Gold Member, so long as you pay your rent and service charges on time, or have an agreement in place for paying them off.

2.1 Membership


One of the easiest ways to get involved is to become a shareholding member of Phoenix. Any tenant or leaseholder over the age of 16 is able to become a shareholding member. Shareholding membership



2.3 Ways to get involved

You can help us to improve the way we deliver our services, make decisions and communicate with you by joining one of our resident groups. These include:

- Resident Scrutiny Panel
- Policy Working Group
- Resident Communications Group
- Sign up to attend focus groups
- Mystery Shoppers
- Working Groups
- Phoenix Gateway Committee.

For more information on these groups and how to join, visit our website or contact us. 

2.3.1 The Board

Our Board is made up of six residents, two Lewisham Council nominees and four independent members. The Board plays a comprehensive role in managing and scrutinising Phoenix, as well as setting our direction. It is supported by Audit, Development and Human Resources and Remuneration sub-committees. Our rules say our Chair and Vice Chair will always be tenants.

2.3.2 Phoenix Gateway Committee

Our Phoenix Gateway Committee is made up of residents, staff and Resident Board Members. The group offers their advice and gives views to our Board. The committee aims to shape Phoenix services, influence key events, and promote membership and ways for residents to get involved.

2.3.3 Community events and activities

Attending community events and activities are an opportunity for you to get involved in your local area.

We regularly host events and activities throughout the year where you will have the opportunity to meet other residents and Phoenix staff, discuss the issues that matter to you and influence our plans and services.

2.3.4 Scrutiny Panel

Our Resident Scrutiny Panel is an independent body of residents who put Phoenix under the microscope.

They work together with staff to monitor and review how we are performing and recommend improvements.



3.0 Paying your rent

Definitions

Rent arrears

Rent money that is owed to us.

Your rent pays for the services we provide to all Phoenix residents. It is important you keep up with your rent and manage your finances to prevent financial difficulties and **rent arrears**.

3.1 Rent payments

You must:

- pay your rent in advance and on time
- apply for housing benefit or Universal Credit to help pay your rent if you receive benefits
- contact us as soon as possible if you can't pay, and arrange to clear the arrears within a reasonable time.

Phoenix will:



- support you to apply for housing benefit or Universal Credit and agree a realistic repayment plan with you if you fall into arrears
- contact you if you don't make regular payments and you fail to contact us
- take legal action to recover any unpaid rent if you fail to make or keep to an agreement to repay the arrears.

3.2 How to pay your rent

Direct Debit is the easiest and most convenient way to pay your rent.

When you sign up to pay by Direct Debit you don't have to worry about remembering to pay each week – your payment will automatically come out of your bank or building society account when it's due. You also don't need to notify your bank or

building society if the amount of your payment changes – we will do it for you. Call us on 0800 0285 700 to set up a Direct Debit over the phone.

Other payment methods, including online and by text are available. Please contact us for more information.  

We do not accept rent payments in cash.

3.3 Support to pay your rent

If you are struggling to pay your rent, we can provide support and refer you for specialist advice on managing other debts. Our team can offer you advice on issues such as:

- your rent payments
- housing benefit and Universal Credit
- setting up payment arrangements
- maximising your income and saving money.

3.4 If you do get into arrears

If you have **rent arrears**, we will take action to recover the amount owing. You will receive a letter asking you to contact us. Please get in touch as soon as possible – do not ignore this letter.

We will make reasonable and realistic arrangements for you to pay back your rent. That includes ensuring you are claiming all those benefits to which you are entitled.

We see eviction as a last resort and want to support you to keep your home.

3.5 Good reasons not to get into arrears

- If you are evicted from your home for rent arrears, the council will not normally re-house you.
- You may have trouble getting credit such as loans and hire purchase.
- A possession order always carries a **money judgement** for the amount of arrears, plus court costs. This lasts for seven years and will affect your credit rating.
- You will not normally be able to get a home transfer or mutual exchange.

3.6 Legal action to recover rent arrears

If you do not accept our support and remain in rent arrears, we will take legal action by serving a notice of seeking possession. If this happens, and you don't arrange to pay the arrears within four weeks, we will apply to the court for a possession order.

A court hearing will be arranged for your case, which you should attend. If we take a tenant to court for not paying rent, we may ask for one of the following:

- **a suspended possession order**
- **an outright possession order.**

A money judgment will be requested if either of the above is awarded.

3.7 Possession order

If we are owed a large amount of rent, we will also ask the court for a possession order on your home.

The court can make a suspended possession order. This means that you will only be able to keep your home if you agree to the terms for repaying the rent owed as set by the court.

The court can choose to make an outright possession order. This means that your tenancy will end and you will lose your home.

If an outright possession order is given and Phoenix decides to enforce the order, the court bailiff will arrange to repossess your home.

3.8 Money judgement

A money judgment will be requested if any type of possession order is awarded. Phoenix will ask the court for a money judgment to clear the debt owed. If the court awards the money judgment, you must repay the debt and meet Phoenix's court costs.

Having a money judgment against you can also affect your chances of getting credit because details of money judgments are openly available to financial organisations. This means that you may not be able to buy goods on credit from catalogue companies, get a loan from a bank or other company or get a credit card.

Definitions

Money judgement

When a court rules that a tenant must pay back any debts owed and court costs to Phoenix.

Suspended possession order

This is an order granted by a court which sets out what a tenant must do to prevent a possession order being granted by the Court and them losing their home. For example it could include paying their current rent and an amount back to Phoenix each week.

Outright possession order

This is an order granted by a court which means a tenant must leave their property once a bailiffs' order has been granted. This means they will be evicted.

3.9 Eviction

If you are evicted because you owe rent, you may be considered to have made yourself intentionally homeless.

If this is the case, neither Phoenix nor the council have any obligation to provide you with accommodation. It is then likely you will have to find your own accommodation in the private sector.

We're here to help

Remember, please contact us as soon as possible if you are having difficulties or are worried about paying your rent. We are here to help and advise you.

As well as an internal financial wellbeing team we can also refer you to the Citizen Advice Bureau or other agencies who can help.

There is also a Credit Union located at the Green Man.



4.0 Your tenancy

4.1 Tenancy agreement

The tenancy agreement you sign when you become a Phoenix tenant is a legal contract. The contract establishes that we as your landlord are responsible for certain things, and that you also have certain responsibilities.

You should keep your tenancy agreement in a safe place. If you lose it, let us know and we will provide you with another copy.

4.2 Types of tenancy

There are different types of tenancies at Phoenix. Your tenancy type is printed on the front of your agreement.

4.2.1 Probationary tenancy

Most new Phoenix tenants are given a probationary tenancy, sometimes called a starter or introductory tenancy. This gives less security than an assured tenancy.

It means it is easier for Phoenix to evict a new tenant for breaking their tenancy conditions. That could include failing to pay rent or causing nuisance or antisocial behaviour.

Phoenix staff will visit new probationary tenants after six weeks, and around eight months into the tenancy to make sure they are settling into their new home, receiving the right benefits and support and are meeting their obligations under the tenancy.

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The tenancy agreement you sign when you become a Phoenix tenant is a legal contract.



Definitions

Rights

Some of these rights are legal requirements, while others are contractual additions that Phoenix and the Board have developed.

Probationary tenants are also invited to attend a Phoenix welcome session to meet staff and pick up useful information about their tenancy.

Probationary tenancies automatically convert to assured tenancies after the first year, so long as there have been no breaches of tenancy conditions.

4.2.2 Assured tenancy

Most Phoenix tenants are assured tenants, including all those whose tenancies were transferred from the London Borough of Lewisham.

As an assured tenant with Phoenix, your rights are covered partly by Acts of Parliament and partly by a legally binding contract - your tenancy agreement - between you and Phoenix.

4.2.3 Assured shorthold tenancy

An assured shorthold tenancy is given to people who are living in a Phoenix property on a temporary basis.

4.3 Your rights

The right of security of tenure You have the right to stay in your home as long as you keep to the conditions of your tenancy agreement.

The right to live in your home peacefully

The right to one succession of tenancy You have the right to pass on your home to your partner or a member of your family if you die. This person must have lived in your home with you for at least 12 months. You must obtain our agreement for any succession to go ahead.

The right to one assignment of your tenancy If you are an assured tenant and need to leave your property to live elsewhere, you may have the right to assign (hand over) your tenancy to someone else. You can assign your tenancy only to those people who would have the right to succeed.

The right to take in a lodger A lodger is someone living closely with you in your property and paying you rent. You must contact us and obtain our agreement before taking in a lodger.

The right to sublet your property Subletting is when you let part of your home to someone else while you are still living there. If you wish to do this, you must get our permission first. You must not sublet the whole of your home.

The right to swap your home with someone else You can swap homes (do a mutual exchange) with another Phoenix resident, local-authority tenant or tenant of another registered social landlord. You must first get permission from both landlords.

The right to buy your home If you were a tenant of your home when it was owned by the London Borough of Lewisham, you may have the preserved right to buy your home. Otherwise you may have the right to acquire. Find out more by contacting us. ☎

The right to be consulted We will consult you before making any decision on a matter of housing management, including maintaining and improving homes, providing services and changes to policy likely to affect a number of tenants.



The right not to have your tenancy changed without your consent

Except for changes in rent or service charges, your tenancy agreement may only be altered if both you and Phoenix agree in writing.

The right to see your housing records You can inspect information held on your housing file or any information we hold about you.

The right to repair If Phoenix does not complete certain repairs within specified timescales, you can request that the work be placed with a designated contractor.

The right to improve You have the right to improve your home as long as we, as your landlord, think it is reasonable and give consent.

4.4 Your responsibilities and our duties as a landlord

The tenancy agreement you have signed is a legal contract. The contract means that we as your landlord are responsible for certain things, and that you too have certain responsibilities.

This section summarises these responsibilities. More information about the different aspects of your tenancy are included in this handbook.

Rent payment

- You must:
- pay your rent in advance and on time
 - apply for housing benefit or Universal Credit to help pay your rent if you receive state benefits
 - contact us as soon as possible if you can't pay, and arrange to clear the arrears within a reasonable time.

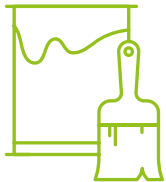
- Phoenix will:
- support you to apply for housing benefit and agree a realistic repayment plan with you if you fall into arrears
 - contact you if you don't make regular payments and you fail to contact us
 - take legal action to recover any unpaid rent if you fail to make or keep to an agreement to repay the arrears.

Looking after the property

- You must:
- take care of your home, and any fixtures and fittings we have supplied
 - keep the property in a clean condition and the internal decoration in good order
 - report any repairs that are our responsibility
 - allow us reasonable access to do repairs and annual gas servicing
 - keep your garden in a good condition, if you have one.

- Phoenix will:
- respond to any emergency repairs
 - repair items that are our responsibility
 - charge you for the cost of any repairs needed because of inappropriate action by you, your family or visitors
 - do an annual gas service of any gas appliances in the property
 - get the necessary legal authority to enter your property if you don't let us in to do the service
 - complete other safety checks and inspections and complete any required works.

“ ”
You have the right to improve your home as long as we, as your landlord, think it is reasonable and give consent.



- Communal (shared) areas**
- You must:
- use any communal areas reasonably and keep this area clear of obstruction
 - dispose of rubbish properly
 - keep the balcony outside your flat clean, if it is not a walkway
 - make sure any pets do not foul in the communal areas or cause a nuisance.

- Phoenix will:
- keep the communal areas clean and litter free
 - complete any repairs needed to communal areas swiftly and efficiently.

Consideration of neighbours

- You must not:
- make too much noise, or let those living with you or visiting you do so
 - do anything that interferes with the peace, comfort or convenience of other people
 - harass, threaten or use violence against anyone else
 - use the property for illegal purposes.



- Phoenix will:
- tell you if you are disturbing your neighbours or causing antisocial behaviour
 - investigate anyone living in a property we own who appears not to be the rightful tenant.

Being away from your home for a long time

- You must:
- get our permission if you are going to be away for longer than 28 days.

Moving home

- You must:
- give us four weeks' notice that you intend to leave
 - pay the rent until the end of your tenancy
 - leave the property in a good, clean condition and remove any rubbish before you leave.

5.0 Moving in

We want you to enjoy your home and are here to help you settle in. If you need help or advice, please contact us. 📞

5.1 Getting connected to utilities and other services

Your gas and electricity supplies should be connected when you move in but you will need to contact the utility companies and provide them with a copy of your tenancy agreement to register as a new consumer. Give your supplier a meter reading for gas and electricity on the day you move in so that you are only charged from when your tenancy started.

Water

Some tenants pay water rates with their rent. Arrangements for water rates at your property will be explained at sign up.

Please make sure you know the location of the stopcock in case of an emergency.

5.2 Keeping a pet

Your tenancy agreement allows you to keep pets.

Phoenix reserves the right to withdraw permission to keep a pet if they cause a problem or the property is not suitable for their needs

5.3 Carpets

If you live in a flat, it is advisable to have carpets in your home to minimise noise to the flats below. If you live above someone else, you must get our permission before laying laminate flooring.

5.4 Fobs

If your home requires access through a communal door you will be given three fobs when you sign your tenancy agreement. These are only to be used by tenants who live at the property address. If you lose your fob, you should notify us. Replacement fobs are available for a charge and you will need to provide proof of your address and identification. £

5.5 Council tax

It's your responsibility to tell the local authority that you have moved into your home and to make arrangements to pay any **council tax** that is due.

5.6 Furniture agencies

There are organisations that offer furniture and furniture packages at reduced prices to people on low incomes. Please contact us for details of these schemes. 📞 £

Definitions

Services

when we talk about services we mean utilities that include gas, electrical, water or waste services.

Council tax

is a tax that you pay to your local authority to pay for local services such as schools, libraries and rubbish collection.

5.7 Home contents insurance

You are responsible for insuring your home contents and we encourage you to take out a policy with a reputable provider. If in the event of theft, fire or flood your belongings were stolen or badly damaged, Phoenix would not be liable to contribute towards the costs and if you are not insured you would have to pay to replace them. Phoenix Gold Club members can benefit from a 20% discount on home insurance through our special scheme.

5.8 My Phoenix

As a resident of Phoenix, you can now sign up to our resident portal that will allow you to book and manage repairs online, update your personal information, stay up to date with news in your area and pay your rent online. Signing up for an account is easy, you will need your tenancy ID. Visit our website for more information. 📱 MY PH

5.9 Sustainability

We are working to reduce our carbon footprint by 2050. This means that we are working to make sure our homes are well insulated, have energyefficient appliances and improve the energy bands within our homes.

We will also provide you with ways to save money on your energy bills and learn more about how we are implementing our sustainability pledge.

To find out more about our sustainability strategy, visit our website. 📱



6.0 Health and safety in your home

Your safety is our priority. We want you to enjoy your home and be aware of the potential risks and dangers concerning safety. If you have any questions or would like further advice, please visit our website or contact us. ☎

6.1 Resident Safety

As part of your tenancy agreement, it is important to give us access to your home to ensure we can carry out regular safety checks for asbestos, water, fire, gas, and electrics as well as regular servicing of lifts and fire safety equipment.

Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in 2017, we are undertaking a major review of the safety of our buildings to ensure we're in line with the new regulations.



6.2 Gas safety

Gas is highly explosive and can be extremely dangerous if it is set alight in an uncontrolled situation.

As your landlord, we carry out an annual safety check on all appliances owned by Phoenix in the property. Gas appliances may include your gas boiler, gas fire, gas cooker or hob, central heating system, radiators or hot water system.

6.2.1 If you think you smell gas

If you think that you can smell gas within your home, it is important to follow the steps below immediately:

- open all doors and windows
- put out any flames and do not smoke
- turn off the gas supply at the meter
- do not touch any electrical appliances or switches
- leave the property
- call 0800 111 999 – the national gas emergency number.

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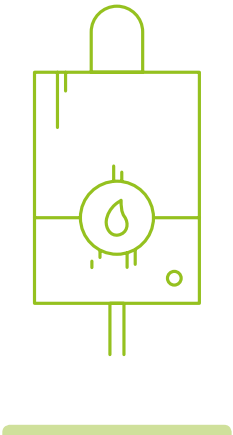
We do not allow unqualified people to work on your gas appliances. For your safety all of our engineers are Gas Safe registered.

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Our gas safety checks and servicing protect you, your family and your neighbours. Please help us by letting us into your home on the first arranged appointment or contact us to change your appointment if it is unsuitable.

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Always report any concerns that you have relating to gas appliances, gas flues or gas pipe work by contacting us.



6.2.2 Carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless and tasteless gas. It can have serious health implications, be toxic to animals and can lead to death if left undetected.

There are no obvious signs of carbon monoxide. You can't see it, taste it or smell it. The early symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include tiredness, drowsiness, headaches and nausea.

We install carbon monoxide alarms in all of our tenanted properties that contain fuel burning appliances. We recommend that you test the alarms regularly. Please contact us if you do not have a carbon monoxide alarm or if it is not working correctly.

You are at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning if:

- you do not give us access to test your appliances as part of your annual gas safety check
- your appliances have been poorly installed
- your appliances are not working correctly
- there is not enough fresh air in the room
- your chimney, flues or vents have been blocked or covered
- you allow unqualified people to install or maintain your gas appliances.

Action you can take:

- Always let us in to carry out your annual gas safety check.
- Never use a gas appliance if you think it's not working properly. Signs to look out for include yellow or orange flames, soot or stains around the appliance and pilot lights which frequently blow out.
- Never cover an appliance or block the convection air vents.
- Never block or obstruct any fixed ventilation grills or air bricks.
- Never block or cover outside flues.

Carbon monoxide exposure

If you suspect that you have been exposed to carbon monoxide, or are experiencing some of these symptoms you should:

- stop using any fuel burning appliances immediately
- ventilate the property by opening the windows and doors
- call 0800 111 999 to report the suspected carbon monoxide leak
- allow access to the emergency engineer.

6.3 Fire safety

Most fires in the home start accidentally and the effects can be devastating.

It is important that you know how to keep your family and your property safe. We recommend that you agree a safe meeting point in the event of a fire and plan an escape route.

Please make sure that everyone in your home can find the keys for doors or windows by keeping them in an accessible place at all times.

If you live in a block of flats and you or someone in your household can not leave the property in the event of a fire; or would find this difficult; let us know. We can make sure the fire brigade know and arrange to do a personal **emergency evacuation plan** with you.

6.3.1 Fire doors

Fire doors are an essential piece of life saving equipment designed to keep you, your family and neighbours safe.

All front flat doors need to meet a specific standard to contain smoke and flame for 30 minutes. These doors are called FD30S fire doors. You may be required to ensure your flat front door is compliant.

6.3.2 Key fire safety advice

- Make sure you know where the fire escape routes are from your home and building.
- If you see an object blocking any of the fire escapes, please move it if it is safe to do so, or report it to us.
- Please do not leave fire doors wedged open.
- Please make sure all internal fire doors remain closed to limit the spread of a fire.
- Please do not store items in communal (shared) areas such as corridors and balconies.

- Arrange for us to install a smoke alarm within your property and test it regularly. It could save your life.
- Make it a habit to keep the exits from your home clear, so that people can escape if there is a fire.

If the fire is in your home:

- raise the alarm
- tell everyone in your home and get them to leave the building, closing your front door behind you
- move to a safe distance away from the building
- call the Fire Brigade by dialling 999 or 112 asking for FIRE
- remain a safe distance away from the building and await the Fire Brigade.

If you see or hear of a fire in another part of the building:

- raise the alarm
- stay in your home as this will usually be the safest option unless you are directly affected by the fire. Close all windows and be prepared to leave
- phone the Fire Brigade by dialling 999 or 112 and asking for FIRE
- you must leave the building immediately if smoke or fire directly affects your home or you are directed to do so by the Fire Brigade. Close your front door behind you
- move to a safe distance away from the building, remain there and await the Fire Brigade
- do not try to re-enter the building.

Remember

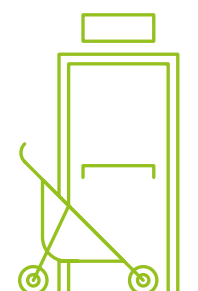
- Do not take risks.
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings.
- Do not return to the building for any reason unless authorised to do so.
- Do not use lifts.



It is important that you do not store items in any shared areas to ensure that the exits are kept clear.

Always know where your nearest fire escape route is.

To minimise risks to our residents, we regularly carry out Fire Risk Assessments at our blocks of flats. Weekly fire safety checks ensure that we identify dangers and manage any potential fire risks.



Arrange with us to install a smoke alarm within your property and test it regularly.

It is important that you do not damage or remove smoke alarms.




Our fire, electrical and water safety checks and servicing protect you, your family and your neighbours. Please help us by letting us into your home on the first arranged appointment or contact us to change your appointment if it is unsuitable.

- To reduce the risk of a fire spreading, please dispose of your rubbish in the correct bin areas.
- Don't store flammable liquids or gas in pram sheds/storage cupboards.

6.4 Smoke alarms

We are responsible for the installation and servicing of the smoke alarms in your home. Fitting a smoke alarm in your home could save your life.

For your safety we advise that once fitted, you test your alarms weekly and report to us when your alarms are faulty or not working.

If you do not have any working smoke alarms in your home, please contact us immediately. 

6.5 Electrical safety

Almost half of all domestic fires are caused by electricity.


As your landlord it is our responsibility to ensure that the electrical wiring and fittings in your home are safe to use.

We carry out checks to the electrical wiring in your home every five years and in communal areas every five years to identify any defects or required repairs.

For your own safety, you should:

- take care of your own electrical appliances and visually check them regularly
- remember to switch off electrical appliances when they are not being used
- take care not to overload electrical sockets with plug adaptors as they can overheat and cause fires
- never touch electrical appliances or switches with wet hands

- never use mains powered electrical appliances in your bathroom.

If you have any questions about electrical safety, please contact us. 

6.6 Water safety

Legionella bacteria is a common form of bacteria found in water systems. You can take steps to reduce the risk of bacteria multiplying.

The bacteria can multiply in temperatures between 20-45°C. This type of bacteria can cause Legionnaires' disease which is a serious lung infection, caused by inhaling water droplets containing legionella bacteria.


Anyone can develop Legionnaires' disease but vulnerable residents are most at risk, such as those with ill health or respiratory problems.

The symptoms of Legionnaires' disease can be similar to flu and may include a high temperature, mild headaches, muscle pain, chills, tiredness and changes to your mental state.

To reduce and manage the risk of exposure to Legionella, we complete water safety risk assessments for all of our properties and communal stored water tanks. We also service and maintain our water systems regularly to ensure they are safe for you to use.

We recommend that you:

- regularly clean and disinfect showerheads
- call our repairs team if your hot water is not working properly
- run water outlets that are rarely used for a couple of minutes every two weeks
- allow access to your home for a water safety risk assessment.

Please contact us if you would like us to carry out a water safety check on your home, or would like more information. 

6.7 Asbestos safety

Asbestos was widely used in construction in the 20th century. It is possible that some materials containing asbestos were used when your home was built or adapted.

Asbestos fibres are only a danger to your health if you breathe or swallow them. Asbestos is not a risk to you unless it is damaged or located somewhere it can be easily damaged.

We regularly carry out asbestos surveys on all of our properties and maintain a register to safely manage the risk of asbestos to you and your family.

We maintain a register of where asbestos has been located, removed or is presumed present to ensure that we safely manage asbestos.

Even if there is asbestos in your home, it is unlikely to be a problem unless it is disturbed or damaged.

For your safety you must:

- take precautions to avoid damaging anything that contains asbestos
- not carry out DIY on an area where you think asbestos is present

- ask us for permission before carrying out anything other than basic decoration work to your home
- soak wallpaper before stripping it and use a steam stripper if possible.

If you think that you find asbestos:

- don't panic - it is safe unless disturbed or damaged
- do not try to remove it – this must be done by a specialist
- do not carry out any DIY on anything that you know or suspect to contain asbestos.

If you suspect that asbestos may be present in your home, or would like further information, please contact us. ☎

6.8 Callers to your home

Our staff and contractors will always carry photo identification when they visit you at home. If you have any doubts about callers to your home, do not give them access and call us to verify their identity. ☎



Our Asbestos safety checks and servicing protect you, your family and your neighbours. Please help us by letting us into your home on the first arranged appointment or contact us to change your appointment if it is unsuitable.



We will reinspect your home and shared communal areas every two years and provide you with a report.

7.0 Repairs



We aim to complete all everyday repairs within 28 calendar days.

Repairs to your home are carried out by Phoenix Repairs Service.

7.1 Tenant repair responsibilities

You are responsible for keeping the inside of your property in good decorative condition, including repairs for fittings and fixtures that you own, ensuring adequate use of heating and ventilation to combat condensation, replacing locks if keys are lost and testing smoke alarms on a regular basis.

It is important that you provide access for Phoenix staff and contractors to undertake repairs and safety checks, including your annual gas safety check.

7.2 Reporting a repair

To report a repair, please contact us or login to our resident portal. ☎ MY PH

You will be given an appointment date and time. We will always aim to complete your repair in one visit at a time that is convenient to you. Appointment slots are from 8am to 1pm, or from 12noon to 5pm, each weekday. We can sometimes provide early morning and early evening appointments on request.

If you cannot make the appointment for any reason, please contact us so we can rearrange the appointment.

We aim to complete all everyday repairs within 28 calendar days.



7.3 Emergency repairs

In the event of an emergency occurring outside of normal working hours, please report your repair in the usual way.

We operate an emergency service outside of our office hours. This service is available between 5pm - 8am weekdays, weekends and bank holidays.

Our out of hours service is there to 'make safe' the situation until our repairs team are able to visit you during normal working hours.

7.4 Gaining access

It may sometimes be necessary to gain access to your property to carry out a repair that affects someone else's home. If this is the case, we will arrange an appointment with you giving as much notice as possible.

7.5 Gas servicing and safety checks

Your safety is our priority. We carry out an annual gas safety check at all of our tenant properties, along with an annual service of any gas appliance belonging to us.

Gas leaks can be fatal. Our gas safety checks and servicing protect you, your family and your neighbours. Please help us by letting us into your home on the first arranged appointment or contact us to change your appointment if it is unsuitable.



If we have not completed your gas service and safety check after several appointments, we will request court action to force entry to your property.

Checklist for problems with your heating:

- check there is power to the system, and check there is gas at the meter
- check there is water within the system (the clock face on the front of the boiler)
- check to see if the power is turned on.

If you think you can smell gas:

- put out any flames
- do not touch any electrical appliances
- open all windows and doors
- leave the property.

If you smell gas contact the National Grid Gas Emergency Line immediately and call us. ☎

7.6 Aids and adoptions

To support you to live independently, we can offer minor aids and adoptions to your property. These can include handrails, taps and bath rails.

Major Property Adaptations will require a Lewisham Occupational Therapy referral. ☎

7.7 Handyperson scheme

We offer a handyperson scheme to help with small DIY jobs in your home. This service is free for residents who are over 60 or have a disability. A charge applies for other residents. Please contact us for more information. £

7.8 Home improvements

You do not need our permission for internal decorations. However if you remove or damage any of our fittings, you must replace them at the end of your tenancy, or pay for them.

Any structural alterations, including construction of conservatories, extensions or stud partition walls, cannot be undertaken without our prior written consent.

You must not convert your front garden into a driveway or parking space or build upon these spaces.

7.9 Damp and condensation

Condensation is the most common cause of damp and mould, and usually occurs when warm air comes into contact with a cold surface. Most homes get condensation at some point, usually when lots of moisture and steam are produced. For tips on how to avoid this problem, please visit our website or contact us. ☎



To report an emergency repair, please call us immediately on 0800 0285 700.



8.0 Caretaking and estate services

We all want to live in a safe, clean and tidy environment. We clean and maintain external and shared communal areas in our blocks and estates. Please help us by keeping the shared areas around your home clean and tidy.

8.1 Caretaking

Our caretakers are responsible for looking after shared indoor and outdoor communal areas. These include:

- cleaning hallways, stairs, landings
- removing litter from grassed areas
- checking and cleaning lifts
- reporting communal repairs
- removing graffiti
- looking after rubbish chutes and bin rooms.

8.2 Grounds maintenance

We are lucky to have lots of green areas on our estates and we promise to inspect them and look after them. We want to work with you to keep them well maintained. If you report a problem with a green area to us, we will visit the site within two working days.

8.3 Environmental issues

Please contact us if there any broken items or environmental issues on your estate, such as graffiti, flytipping or abandoned vehicles. We will investigate to catch those responsible.





8.4 Parking

Any untaxed or abandoned vehicles on our estates may be removed and the cost of removing them will be recharged to the registered owner of the vehicle.

Parking management systems operate on some of our estates and are signposted. Please contact us for more information or to request a permit. ☎

8.5 Household rubbish and recycling

All household rubbish should be sealed in plastic bags and placed in the chutes or bins provided. If you live in a house, please contact your local authority to find out when rubbish is collected.

Please use the recycling bins provided to dispose of anything that is recyclable – guidance is available from your local authority on what can and can't be recycled.

If you have large items of furniture, white goods or electricals, you should take these to a recycling centre. If you are unable to do this, the local authority will collect them for a charge. ☎

8.6 Aerial and satellite dishes

You must obtain permission from Phoenix before installing any aerials or satellite dishes in your home. Please include as much detail as possible about the work you would like carried out.

8.7 Pest control

You can receive help from the local authority if you have a problem with pests in your home.

If there is a problem with pests in the communal areas of your block, please contact us and we will investigate. ☎

“ ”

Parking management systems operate on some of our estates and are signposted.

9.0 Antisocial behaviour, harassment and domestic abuse

“ ”

We take reports of ASB very seriously and will take the necessary steps within our powers, to protect residents.

We want you, your family and neighbours to enjoy living in your home and community. We provide advice and guidance and can intervene and take action if you experience difficulties.

9.1 Antisocial behaviour (ASB)

We take reports of ASB very seriously and will take the necessary steps within our powers to protect residents.

ASB can include:

- verbal or physical abuse
- criminal damage
- vandalism and graffiti
- noise nuisance
- threatening or intimidating behaviour
- selling drugs
- nuisance driving and nuisance vehicles
- racial, sexual and other harassment or hate crime.

If you are being disturbed by neighbours making excessive noise, or noise at unreasonable hours, please contact us. ☎

If you feel able to talk to your neighbour directly about noise, approach them calmly and politely, explaining what they are doing to disturb you.

9.1.1 How to report antisocial behaviour

You can report ASB to us between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. Please call the police in an emergency.

When you report incidents of antisocial behaviour please try to provide as much information as possible. This should include:

- what the problem is and how it affects you
- who is causing the problem
- how many incidents have taken place (please provide times and dates if possible).

We will provide you with an incident log to record any repeat ASB incidents.

9.1.2 Action we will take

After you report ASB, we will arrange an interview with you within one working day for emergency cases and five working days for low-risk cases. We will agree a suitable course of action with you and investigate the reports made. This could involve sending a warning to the perpetrator, suggesting mediation or asking them to sign an acceptable behaviour contract. There are many available options for different situations. It is important that you maintain contact with us so that we can discuss and agree these with you.

We will work with partner agencies to resolve ASB and to ensure a joined up approach. This can include the police, safer neighbourhood teams and local mental health, social services and council community safety teams.

Continues overleaf ►



In most cases, we can resolve the issues between neighbours in an amicable way, and rely on the cooperation of all parties to achieve this.

We will take direct enforcement action in some cases and this can lead to eviction.

We will stay in regular contact with you throughout and update you about the actions we are taking.

9.2 Harassment

Harassment is when someone behaves in a way which offends you or makes you feel distressed or intimidated. This could be abusive comments or jokes, graffiti or insulting gestures.

Harassment is a form of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 and may be linked to a person’s age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

We believe that you have the right to live in quiet enjoyment of your home without harassment or violence. We take reports of harassment seriously, whatever its type, and investigate thoroughly. We will work closely with you and the police where appropriate.

9.2.1 What you can do if you suffer harassment:

Please contact the police and Phoenix to report any incidents of harassment.

It is helpful if you keep a record of all incidents, noting the date, time, place, what happened, who was involved and any witnesses’ names. Try to take photographs of any damage or vandalism and record any damage to your belongings.

9.2.2 What Phoenix will do

When you report harassment to us we will investigate and take suitable action, which may include:

- doing any repairs or removing graffiti
- helping to make your home safe
- taking action against, or seeking the eviction of, the person harassing you.

We will agree with you what we will do and let you know how your case is progressing.

If your family is in clear danger, we can refer you to the Lewisham Council’s Housing Options team for emergency advice and assistance. Your safety is our main concern.

9.3 Domestic abuse

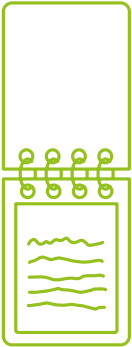
Domestic abuse is physical, psychological, sexual or financial abuse that takes place within an intimate or family-type relationship and forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour.

Domestic abuse is a crime and the police have specially trained officers to help you. They can also take action to protect you. If you suffer abuse or are threatened by someone you are in a relationship with, please report it to the police and to Phoenix. We can advise you and provide support and guidance to help address the situation.

As well as helping the survivors of domestic violence we can also take action against the person causing the abuse. If they live in our property, we may consider evicting them.

“ ”

It is helpful if you keep a record of all incidents...



9.4 Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting at risk adults, young people and children and enabling them to live free from abuse and neglect.

The welfare of our residents is important to us. We work in partnership with external agencies to agree appropriate action where people are at risk.

Everyone plays a part in recognising abuse, reporting it and being safe in our community.

If you have concerns about a neighbour or relative, please contact your local authority and speak with the social care team who will be able to help.



10.0 Moving home

Social housing is in very high demand in our area. However, there are a number of schemes that can help you to find a new home.

10.1 Moving in the local area

Lewisham Council runs a choice-based lettings scheme called Homesearch. People can use Homesearch to bid for available homes owned by Phoenix and other landlords. If you would like to bid for a new property, please register and apply online on the Homesearch website.

10.2 Moving to a smaller home (downsizing)

If you are living in a home with more bedrooms than you need, you may wish to move to a smaller home.

If your property has more bedrooms than you are assessed to need, your housing benefit or Universal Credit payment may be reduced.

If you would like to move to a smaller home, we may be able to offer a cash incentive and help with your removals costs.

10.3 Swapping your home

You can swap your home with another Phoenix tenant or a tenant of any council or housing association in the UK. This is called a mutual exchange. You can find potential tenants to swap with through various different online swap sites such as the House Exchange website, www.houseexchange.org.uk

If you find someone to exchange with, please contact us.

Before giving approval, a surveyor will inspect your home to establish whether it needs any repairs or has any damage or alterations that you need to put right before completing your mutual exchange.

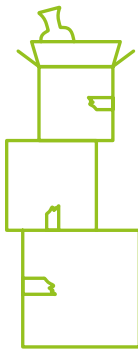
10.4 Ending your tenancy (moving out)

If you want to end your tenancy, you must give at least four weeks' notice in writing. This must state the day you intend to move out and give your forwarding address. It is important that you pay the rent due until the end of your tenancy and leave the property in a good, clean condition and remove any rubbish before you leave.

If you don't hand in your keys on time, you will be responsible for any additional rent. If you give four weeks' written notice and leave your home in a clean and tidy condition, you may be eligible for a Golden Goodbye payment.



If you would like to move to a smaller home, we may be able to offer a cash incentive and help with your removals costs.



11.0 Useful contacts

Bromley Council
Bromley Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley, BR1 3UH
020 8464 3333
www.bromley.gov.uk

Citizens Advice
Lewisham - Leemore Community Hub, Bonfield Road, Lewisham, SE13 5EU
0800 2315 453 www.lewishamcab.org.uk
Bromley - Community House, South Street, Bromley, Kent, BR1 1RH
0800 2315 453 www.bromleycab.org.uk

Electrical Safety First
020 3463 5100
www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk

Energy Saving Trust
0300 123 1234
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

First-Tier Tribunal (Property Chamber)
First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber), 10 Alfred Place, London, WC1E 7LR
0207 446 7700
london.rap@justice.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/first-tier-tribunal-property-chamber

Fire Brigade
999
www.london-fire.gov.uk

Gas Safe Register
0800 408 5500
www.gassaferegister.co.uk

Independent Housing Ombudsman
Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ
0300 111 3000
info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Lewisham Council
Lewisham Town Hall, Catford, London, SE6 4RU
020 8314 6000
www.lewisham.gov.uk

Lewisham Homesearch
01204 771 656
www.lewishamhomesearch.org.uk

National Debt Line
0808 808 4000
(Mon-Fri 9am-9pm, Sat 9:30am-1pm)
www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

National Gas Emergency number
0800 111 999

National Grid Electricity Emergency number:
0800 404 090

Safer Neighbourhood Teams
Bellingham: 020 8721 2489
Downham: 020 8721 2486
Whitefoot: 020 8721 2487

Thames Water 24hr Emergency leak line
0800 714 614

UK Power Networks (Electricity):
0800 31 63 105
www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk

How to contact us



www.phoenixch.org.uk



info@phoenixch.org.uk



MyPhoenix - You can sign up or log into our resident portal to log repairs, keep your information up to date and make payments online.



By telephone - From 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, please call us on our Freephone number 0800 0285 700. Press 1 for repairs, and 2 for all other enquiries.

Outside of these hours, you can use this number to report emergency repairs.



In person - You can visit our offices between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday at: The Green Man, 355 Bromley Road, London, SE6 2RP

If you are unable to visit our offices, or would prefer, we will provide a home visit.

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🐦 [@phoenixtogether](https://twitter.com/phoenixtogether)

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