



9

Section 9 —

What your home will be like, and making it yours (home standards)

The main points

- ✓ Your home will be clean, safe and in good repair when you move in.
- ✓ We give you some furniture and some white goods, like a cooker and a fridge.
- ✓ You can make your home feel like yours. You can put up pictures and photographs.
- ✓ Ask us first before you paint, or before you change anything that is fixed to the building. We will not say no without a good reason.
- ✓ If something is not right when you move in, tell us. It is not too late.

What your home will be like when you move in

Before you move in, we check your home.

We make sure it is:

- clean
- safe
- dry
- warm enough
- in good repair
- fitted with working smoke alarms

We check that the heating, the hot water, the electrics and the water all work.

We also check the gas, if your home has gas.

What we give you

We provide some things in your home. These belong to Harbour Light, not to you.

We usually provide:

- a washing machine and a tumble dryer, or a washer-dryer
- a fridge freezer
- an oven and hob
- in your bedroom: a bed, mattress and headboard, a wardrobe, a bedside cabinet and a chest of drawers
- in living areas: a sofa or armchair, a coffee table, and a dining table and chairs

Some larger or shared homes have some other furniture as well.

If you are not sure which things in your home belong to Harbour Light, ask your support worker or ask us.

If something we provided stops working, tell us. We will repair it or replace it. Section 5 explains how to tell us.

What you bring yourself

You bring your own things. For example, your clothes, your bedding, your television, and anything else that is yours.

Your own things belong to you. You can take them with you if you move.

Please note: we do not insure your things. If a fire or a flood damaged your belongings, we could not pay to replace them. If you want your things covered, you will need your own contents insurance. Your support worker can help you look into this. Section 5 explains more.

If something is not right when you move in

Sometimes something gets missed. That happens.

If you find something that is broken, dirty or missing when you move in, tell us.

You can tell us at any time. There is no time limit.

Tell your support worker, or use Fixflo, or telephone us. Section 5 explains how.

Making your home feel like yours

This is your home. We want you to feel at home in it.

You can do these things without asking us:

- put up pictures and photographs
- put up posters

- put out your own ornaments and cushions
- put your own furniture in your room
- put up net curtains
- keep plants

Please use hooks or picture strips where you can, rather than large nails or screws.

Please ask us first before you:

- paint or wallpaper
- put up shelves
- change a floor covering
- put up a satellite dish or an aerial
- change anything that is fixed to the building
- put anything up in a shared room

We will not say no without a good reason. If we do say no, we will tell you why.

Ask us or ask your support worker. We will give you an answer in writing if you want one.

Painting and decorating

If you want to paint or decorate your room, ask us first.

If we say yes, here are the rules:

1. The work must be done safely.
2. It must be done properly and neatly.
3. Do not paint over anything that should not be painted, like electric sockets, radiator valves or window seals.
4. Do not use very dark colours or very unusual colours, because they are hard to cover afterwards.
5. Do not paint anything outside your home.

Your support worker can help you plan it. Ask us if you need advice about what is safe to use.

We may be able to help you with decorating, for example through our own decorating team. This depends on when your home was last decorated. Ask us or ask your support worker.

Changes to the building for health reasons

Sometimes a person needs a change to the building itself. For example, a grab rail, a ramp, or a walk-in shower.

These are called adaptations. They work differently from decorating.

Section 13 explains how to ask for an adaptation. You may not have to pay for the work yourself.

Looking after your home

We ask you to look after your home. That means:

- keep it reasonably clean and tidy
- open a window or use the fan after a bath or shower, if you can
- do not damage your home on purpose
- tell us when something needs repairing
- let us in for repairs and safety checks, when we have arranged a time
- if you live in a shared house, help keep the shared rooms clean and tidy
- if you live in a block of flats, keep the shared hallways and entrances clear of your things

Your support worker can help you with any of these.

If you are finding it hard to look after your home, please tell us or tell your support worker. It is much better to say early, so that the right help can be put in place.

Damp and mould

If you see damp or mould, please tell us. We will come and find out what is causing it.

Section 8 explains what we will do and how quickly we must do it.

Gardens and outside space

We look after the gardens, paths and bin areas at Harbour Light homes.

Please help to keep them tidy. Do not leave rubbish or belongings in them.

If you are not sure about anything, ask us or ask your support worker.

Sheds, aerials and other things outside

Please ask us first before you put anything up outside. For example, a shed, a fence, a satellite dish or an aerial.

Please do not keep rubbish, old furniture or broken things outside. If you need something taken away, ask us or ask your support worker. Section 10 explains about bins.

Keeping your home safe

Some things are not allowed in your home because they are dangerous.

- Do not use a portable gas heater or a paraffin heater.
- Do not put an e-bike or an e-scooter, or their batteries, in a hallway, a stairway or by a door you would use to get out. Section 7 explains more.
- Do not block the ways out of the building.

If you need to store something and you are not sure where, ask us.

When you leave

If you move out one day, we will ask you to:

- take your own things with you
- leave the home clean and tidy
- leave the things we provided
- give back your keys

You do not have to put right fair wear and tear. Things get worn out over time and that is normal.

Section 17 explains more about moving on.

Getting help to understand this

If any of this is hard to understand, that is OK. Ask your support worker. You can also ask a relative, a friend or an advocate to help you.

You can ask us for this information on paper, in a bigger size, or in another format. Just ask us or ask your support worker.

More detail

This box is for tenants who want more detail, and for support staff, relatives, advocates and social workers. You do not need to read it to understand the section above.

Condition at the start of the tenancy. Harbour Light's repairing obligation arises under section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and under the tenancy agreement. The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 requires the dwelling to be fit for human habitation at the beginning of the tenancy and throughout it. Fitness is assessed by reference to the twenty-nine hazards in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System under the Housing Act 2004 and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (England) Regulations 2005.

Letting standard. A published letting standard (sometimes called a void standard) sets out the condition in which a home will be let — for example the cleaning, decoration, safety checks and appliance testing carried out before a new tenant moves in. It is good practice for a registered provider to hold and publish one, and the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards expect a landlord to be able to evidence the quality of its homes. Harbour Light is preparing a letting standard and a final void checklist.

Alterations and improvements. The tenancy agreement requires the landlord's written consent before alterations, and provides that consent will not be refused without good reason (tenancy clause 2.7). Assured shorthold tenants do **not** have the statutory right to make improvements that applies to secure tenants under section 97 of the Housing Act 1985, nor the associated compensation scheme. The commitment in the main text not to refuse without a good reason is therefore contractual and policy-based, not statutory.

Reasonable adjustments and alterations. Where a term of the letting prevents a disabled tenant from making an alteration and that puts them at a substantial disadvantage, Schedule 4 to the Equality Act 2010 requires the landlord to change the term so far as necessary to enable the alteration. It is never reasonable to require the landlord to remove or alter a physical feature of the let premises, which is why structural adaptations are routed through the local authority and the Disabled Facilities Grant regime. See Section 13.

Furniture and appliances. Harbour Light provides furniture and white goods at its schemes and insures them (SLA clause 11.4). Items provided remain Harbour Light's property and are repaired or replaced by Harbour Light. Upholstered furniture supplied by a landlord must meet the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988. Electrical appliances supplied with the property are covered by the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016 and by the landlord's duty to keep electrical installations and supplied appliances in repair and proper working order. Harbour Light does not issue an individual inventory to tenants.

Fair wear and tear. A tenant is not liable to make good deterioration arising from ordinary use over time. Harbour Light may recharge for damage caused by a tenant's actions or inaction where the work is not otherwise funded, applied fairly to all tenants, after discussion with the tenant and support worker and taking account of health and

disability (see Section 5). Any recharge must be assessed against the fair wear and tear principle and Harbour Light's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Damp and mould. Harbour Light will always investigate a report of damp or mould and will not assume it has been caused by the tenant's lifestyle. Awaab's Law timescales apply on report. See Section 8.

Gardens and communal areas. Harbour Light is responsible for gardens, paths and bin areas, and for cleaning the common parts of blocks of flats (SLA Schedule 2(x)). In blocks, tenants are expected to keep common parts clear of their belongings but not to clean them. In shared houses, tenants, with the help of their support provider, are expected to keep the main shared rooms and circulation areas clean and tidy. Tenancy clause 2.5 is to be aligned with this at the next tenancy revision.

Portable heating appliances. The prohibition on portable gas and paraffin heaters reflects fire and carbon monoxide risk and is consistent with the fire risk assessment approach described in Section 7. The prohibition will be included in the tenancy agreement at its next revision.