



The Charter for Social Housing Residents (Tenants)

Harbour Light Assisted Living

The Charter is a long document, and you can read it and ask the Housing Manager, your Support Staff, or Social Worker about any part of it.

It explains all the services and service standards that you can expect to experience as a tenant of Harbour Light.

It will also be explained to you in Tenants Meetings and it will be available in separate information sheets, which will also be discussed in Tenants Meetings.

Harbour Light will keep you informed of how well they are doing to provide all of the services mentioned in the Charter.

Harbour Light will also inform The Regulator for Social Housing about how well they are doing, to provide all of the services to a good standard, and about what they are doing to keep you informed.

The Regulator for Social Housing is a government organisation set up to make sure that all Housing Associations are providing good services and keeping tenants informed about everything important to them.



This **Charter** sets out what you should expect to be done for you by Harbour Light Assisted Living (Harbour Light) which is a Housing Association and is also a not-for-profit organisation.



People who live in social housing are called tenants and they pay rent and service charges to Harbour Light



Harbour Light Housing Association is your landlord, the organisation that leases your home and rents it to you.

The New Charter

The new Charter says that if you are a tenant in social housing, you should:



BE SAFE AND FEEL SAFE IN YOUR HOME

Harbour Light will inform you of all the services which it provides to keep you safe and comfortable in your home.

They will inform you every 12 months about how well they are doing to meet the requirements of the Charter and about how well they are meeting the Decent Homes Standards.

The first information about Harbour Light performance called: **How Well We Are Doing** will be released in June 2024.



You will have information from Harbour Light about the services they provide to keep you safe and comfortable.



That you should have any **complaints** dealt with quickly and fairly.



That you should be treated with **respect**.



That you should be able to speak up and have your **voice heard**.



That you should have a good **quality home** and **neighbourhood** to live in.

Harbour Light Services to its Tenants:

What Harbour Light staff do to help you safeguard your tenancy and Housing Benefits.

- When you first move in you will have to fill in your Housing Benefit Claim Form and Harbour Light will help you to complete the claim form.
- From time to time, you will have to give other information to the Housing Benefit department who pay your rent. Harbour Light and your support provider will help you to provide the information they need to make sure that your rent is correctly paid.
- Your Harbour Light Housing Manager will also speak to Housing benefits on your behalf whenever there is a need to discuss anything with you.
- At your sign-up meeting for your property, your Housing Manager will give you some important documents and will explain your Tenancy Agreement.
- The Tenancy Agreement is a legal document which explains what Harbour Light does and what you need to do to keep your home safe and comfortable.
- You will be asked to sign your Tenancy agreement after it is explained to you and the Housing Manager will also sign it.
- If at any time you are finding it difficult to meet the conditions of your Tenancy Agreement, then your Housing Manager will help you to sort out any problems which could affect your rights as a tenant.

What Harbour Light Staff do to help you to be safe and comfortable.

- Before you move into your property Harbour Light will check that your property meets the Decent Homes Standard.
- You can read more about the Decent Homes Standard in an information sheet for tenants (Sheet 1) which tells you more about the Standards and how we maintain our properties to keep them safe and comfortable.
- Whether you have reported a maintenance problem or not we will ensure that all of the services and utilities in your property are working safely. This includes recorded checks on your gas and electricity by certified tradesmen and checks on your water supply to ensure that it is clean and safe to drink and bathe in.
- Your Housing Manager will visit your property to make sure that you are safe and comfortable and to answer any questions that you have.
- When a Housing Manager visits, they will check your Support Provider is checking your alarms to keep you safe from fire, smoke, carbon monoxide, water cleanliness and other problems which could harm you.
- All of these regular health and safety checks, including alarms, emergency lighting and water temperature checks are recorded in a file at your property by your support provider.
- When your Housing Manager visits you monthly they also read and sign this Health and Safety file to ensure that you are being kept safe.
- Harbour Light services your fire alarms with a professional engineer who will visit your property and they also give advice to your support provider to make sure that the fire escape route out of your property is safe and uncluttered.
- Harbour Light will check that everything is working properly and that there are no trip hazards (things you might trip over like loose carpets) or poor lighting in the property.

What Harbour Light staff do to keep your property in good repair and well-maintained.

- You or your Support Staff can report any repair or maintenance problems to Harbour Light on the 'Fixflo' reporting system which is available online at your property. Your Support Staff will help you to do this.
- You can learn more about Harbour Light Repair and Maintenance services in Tenant Information Sheet 2.
- Harbour Light maintenance staff will make sure that all of the lighting is working on the stairs, corridors, kitchens, bathrooms and hallways as well as checking that the emergency lighting is working. This is the lighting which comes on if there is ever a loss of mains power.
- Harbour Light staff will help you to change light bulbs in your bedroom if you are unable to do it with your Support Staff help.
- Your Housing Manager and Harbour Light Maintenance Manager will ensure that your building, roof, garden and its gates, fences and walls are well maintained and that any reported repairs are dealt with as quickly as possible but always within our maintenance timescales.
- Your Housing Manager will give you and your Support Staff Tenant Information Sheet 2, which also explains how to use FixFlo.
- Fixflo is the online report for repairs and maintenance requests, which you or your Support Staff use to report any jobs which need doing at your property.
- Harbour Light provides a 24-hour Maintenance service for emergencies.
- Harbour Light will respond to an emergency maintenance referral within 4 hours after ensuring with your Support Staff that you are safe.
- Harbour Light will respond to other maintenance referrals as soon as we are able but no later than 20 days after the report is sent to us.

- Harbour Light and its contractors will treat all tenants with respect and courtesy.
- Contractors will carry out their work safely and tidily when in your property.
- Harbour Light and its contractors will notify tenants and agree when they are visiting before carrying out works.
- Harbour Light staff and contractors will operate any tools and equipment to ensure that tenants and other staff are kept safe, and tools will be kept securely away from tenants and other staff to avoid accidents.
- Maintenance tools and equipment will not be left overnight at tenanted properties.
- Wherever possible Support Staff will assist tradesmen by ensuring that tenants are supervised and away from the area in which works are being carried out.

What Harbour Light staff do to ensure that tenant's complaints are heard and are properly dealt with within timescales.

- Tenant Information Sheet 3 explains how Harbour Light deals with Complaints. This is for the benefit of Tenants and their informed representatives (support staff, family, social workers and friends).
- Harbour Light will treat all complaints seriously and in line with its procedures, including those which are rectified quickly and also where there are grounds for complaint, whether or not the tenant or their representative uses the term complaint.
- Harbour Light will advertise its complaints procedure in all of its properties and will respond promptly to any complaint before investigating and reporting back on the outcome of the complaint within the time scales of the complaints policy.
- Housing Managers will also assist tenants who wish to complain and the purpose of the complaints procedure is to ensure that Harbour Light deal effectively and fairly with any concerns raised by, or on behalf of tenants, rectifying any problems which have been caused and learning from complaints issues to improve services.
- Where a tenant or their representative is unhappy about the outcome of a Stage 1 investigation of a complaint then they can request that a Stage 2 investigation be carried out by senior managers and Board representatives, within the timescales.
- Stage 1 includes informal resolution of a complaint to the tenant's satisfaction and initial complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days and fully responded to within a further 5 working days.
- Stage 2 formal investigations will be completed within a further 10 working days.
- Where a tenant remains unhappy with the final outcome of a complaint Harbour Light will attempt to resolve the matter through arbitration but if the tenant is still dissatisfied, then after 8 weeks they can formally complain to the Housing Ombudsman for further consideration of the complaint.

- Harbour Light must first carry out its investigations within timescales before the 8-week period commences at the end of which the tenant may then formally complain to the Housing Ombudsman.
- The Housing Ombudsman's address is:

The Housing Ombudsman
PO Box 152
Liverpool
L33 7WQ

What does Harbour Light staff do to deal with anti-social behaviour?

- You can read more about how Harbour Light deals with anti-social behaviour towards its tenants in Tenant Information Sheet 4.
- Harbour Light has a zero-tolerance approach to anti-social behaviour if it occurs in its properties.
- This can arise from issues such as excessive and repeated noisiness, bullying or abusive language or behaviour, financial harassment, drunkenness or intoxication, illicit drug use, poor communal hygiene, allowing others when visiting to act in an anti-social manner towards tenants
- Harbour Light has to safeguard any confidential information about particular tenants but where anti-social behaviour occurs, they will intervene urgently to stop the behaviour affecting other tenants and will issue warnings to any person committing such behaviour, including the threat of eviction proceedings where the behaviour persists.

What Harbour Light staff will do to ensure that tenants are represented in their neighbourhood.

- Harbour Light is a small housing association with widely dispersed properties, mainly across Merseyside, and is therefore not of a scale to engage with major estate developments.
- Harbour Light maintains links and liaises with other agencies when required to intervene where there are neighbourhood issues impacting its tenants.
- This includes liaison with Council services and commissioners, anti-social behaviour teams and police community liaison services.
- Given that all of its properties are in supported accommodation for vulnerable people with mental health conditions and learning disabilities there are management agreements with all of its support partners and Harbour Light does participate in multi-disciplinary meetings and planning for individual tenants in their neighbourhoods.

What Harbour Light staff will do to ensure that there is effective tenant engagement and information sharing.

- Harbour Light will re-introduce tenants' meetings which were suspended during the Covid pandemic.
- These meetings will be tenant-focused with a shared agenda and they will be also used to publicise performance information.
- Meetings will be property-based with all tenants living at a particular site invited and supported at the meeting.
- Harbour Light will issue a series of summary information sheets under headings which are regulatory, and tenant-focused with updates and tenant input.
- Harbour Light will publish graphic summaries of its performance outcomes each year in June including compliance levels achieved and financial performance: rents are largely invested in lease costs to major freeholders and the income received from service charges will be published with allocations of funding identified, including our expenditure on repairs and maintenance, which is our largest expenditure.
- There will be an additional Board Meeting each year at which tenant representatives may attend and contribute to the agenda.