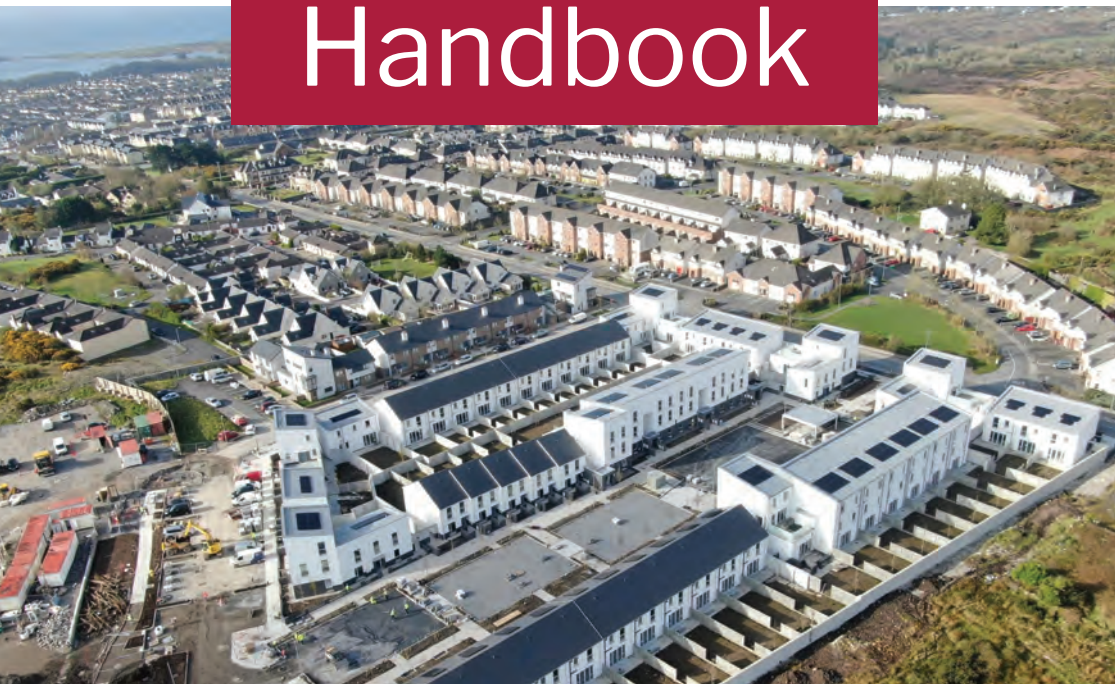


# Tenant Handbook



**Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe**  
**Galway City Council**

Version 4 June 2023

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# Welcome

Galway City Council would like to welcome you as a tenant and is pleased to provide you with a copy of the Tenant Handbook.

This handbook provides you with the basic information you need as a tenant, including the responsibilities of Galway City Council as the landlord and you as the tenant.

The handbook is intended as a guide and does not go into detail about every aspect of Galway City Council housing services. Additional information is available on the website [www.galwaycity.ie](http://www.galwaycity.ie).

## **The Housing Department is located at:**

Galway City Council,  
City Hall, College Road,  
Galway H91 X4K8.

The Housing Department can also be contacted by phone or by email.

Telephone: (091) 536400

Email: [housing@galwaycity.ie](mailto:housing@galwaycity.ie)

Website: [www.galwaycity.ie](http://www.galwaycity.ie)

Please keep this document in a safe place in your home as you may need to refer to it in the future.

**Version 4 June 2023**

# Tenancy Conditions

Every tenant of Galway City Council signs a Tenancy Agreement. This document establishes a legal relationship between you and the Local Authority. The conditions of your tenancy are set out in detail in your Tenancy Agreement. By signing the agreement, you are agreeing to all of the conditions set out in the agreement.

The main points are summarised below.

## How does my tenancy operate?

- You must live in the house as your main home and nowhere else.
- You must not use the house, garden or shed for business purposes of any kind.
- You must get written permission from the Council if you intend to be absent from the house for six weeks or more in any one year.
- Rent must be paid in full every week.
- You must give the Council full and accurate details of everyone living in your household and of your household's income.
- You must not take in lodgers or sub-tenants. All occupants of the property must be declared.
- The tenancy cannot be transferred to anyone else without the permission of Galway City Council.
- You must give the Council four weeks' notice if you wish to surrender your house.
- You must look after and maintain the dwelling properly.
- You must not make alterations to the property without prior written consent from the Council.
- Authorised officers of the Council must be allowed to enter and inspect the dwelling at reasonable times or carry out necessary work.
- Pets can only be kept with the Council's permission. Pets must be kept under control.
- You and your household, including visitors, shall not cause nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to neighbours.
- We have the right to end your tenancy and repossess (take back) your home if you do not keep to the conditions of your tenancy agreement.

The breach of any one or more of the conditions of your tenancy places your tenancy with Galway City Council at risk.

## Community

When you are allocated a dwelling by Galway City Council, you become more than just a tenant, you become a member of the community in which you live. Living as part of a community means creating a social network amongst you and your neighbours. It involves helping one another out and looking out for those that are elderly and vulnerable. Galway City Council encourages all tenants to become active participants in their community and to take part in events and activities that allow you to meet and socialise with your neighbours.

**Please be respectful, polite and considerate towards others.** Anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated. Offending tenants and their families may have their homes repossessed.

## Environmental Protection

Please respect the environment. Dispose of your waste correctly and do not litter. Try to reduce the amount of waste you produce and the energy and water you use. Get involved in local environmental initiatives. Small changes can make a big difference.

## Equality and Diversity

Galway City Council is committed to implementing our public sector duty by having regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect human rights. This commitment is motivated by the values of dignity, autonomy, participation, inclusion, social justice and environmental justice, as outlined in the Human Rights and Equality Statement developed by Galway City's Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). The Housing Department is fully supportive of this Statement. Everyone who comes in contact with the Housing Department of Galway City Council can expect to be treated with dignity and respect. All will be treated equally and respected for their individuality and diversity.

## Protecting Our Staff

Galway City Council is committed to customer care but is also concerned about the safety and wellbeing of our staff. Tenants must treat Galway City Council staff, or anyone working on the Council's behalf, with dignity and respect. Inappropriate behaviour, including abusive language, will not be tolerated and will be treated as a breach of your Tenancy Agreement.

## Confidentiality

Galway City Council is committed to treating information about you in confidence. We try to ensure that information we hold is accurate and up-to date. If any of your details change, please let us know.

# Living in Your Home

When you become a tenant of Galway City Council, you are given the right to occupy the property as your home, subject to the conditions of your Tenancy Agreement.

## Moving In

When your property is ready to let, Galway City Council will make an appointment to meet with you so that you can sign your Tenancy Agreement. You will also be given the keys to your property.

The property will have been inspected and be in a good state of repair. Further decoration of the property is the tenant's responsibility. Furniture and white goods do not form part of the tenancy. If you need financial assistance purchasing essential items for your new home, you should contact the Department of Social Protection for further information on eligibility criteria. It is the Tenant's responsibility to take ownership of all utilities for the property immediately. No pre -pay electricity meters are allowed for properties with heat pumps.

## Your Household

### **Can I add another person to my household/tenancy?**

If another person wishes to become part of your household, you must seek written permission from Galway City Council. If the request is approved and the person is granted permission to reside at your property, they will be included on your rent account. No person can reside at the property until formal, written permission has been granted by Galway City Council.

### **Can I take in a lodger or sub-tenant?**

**No.** This would be a breach of your tenancy conditions.

### **Can I operate a business from my house?**

**No.** This would be a breach of your tenancy conditions. You must not use the house, garden or shed for business purposes of any kind.

## Pets

### Can I keep pets in the house?

You must get written permission from the Council prior to getting a pet.

Dogs must be micro-chipped and have an up to date dog Licence. Licences must be renewed annually at your local Post Office.

The Tenant shall not keep any horses, poultry , pigs, ferrets, large birds, reptiles or other animals (other than domestic pets which are not likely to create a nuisance or become a source of annoyance) or engage in the breeding of dogs or cats in about the Unit ; if domestic pets are kept by the Tenant he/she shall ensure that no nuisance is caused and the sheds, shelters or yards where such domestic pets are housed shall be properly constructed, paved, and drained. All domestic pets shall be kept under control, confined or tied.

### What are Restricted or Controlled Dog Breeds?

Certain types/breeds of dog are not allowed in Council property. These dogs as defined as 'Controlled Breeds' under the 'Control of Dogs Regulations 1998'. These include: American Pit Bull Terrier, Bull Mastiff, Doberman Pinscher, English Bull Terrier, German Shepherd (Alsation), Japanese Akita, Japanese Tosa, Rhodesian Ridgeback, Rottweiler, Staffordshire Bull Terrier and strains and crosses of these breeds.

If you have a problem with stray dogs, please contact the Dog Warden on (091) 757094.

## Horses

Control of Horses Bye Laws are to be adopted in late 2023

The Bye Laws will be enforceable in the entire area of Galway City.

- A horse owner must have a current horse licence issued by Galway City Council for their horse. The horse must be microchipped and have a horse passport.
- A horse cannot be allowed graze , stray, or remain on public land in Galway City without the written consent of the Council.
- A Horse cannot be stabled within the curtilage of any dwelling in Galway City.
- Nobody is allowed race horse drawn vehicles on public roads within Galway City.
- The Bye Laws provide for the seizure, detention and disposal of horses in circumstances outlined in the Bye Laws.

A copy of the Bye Laws can be obtained from [customerservice@galwaycity.ie](mailto:customerservice@galwaycity.ie) or by ringing 091 536400.

**Horses are not permitted in or around any council property or on public lands in the city. Any horse found in an estate or public place will be impounded.**

## Garden

Am I responsible for the garden or just the house itself? You are responsible for both. It is part of your agreement with Galway City Council that you will keep your house and gardens in a clean and tidy condition and not allow them to become an eyesore. It is not permitted to replace green areas - your front or back garden with concrete, paving or tarmac. You must keep them tidy by keeping them clear of rubbish, maintaining fences, hedges and walls, cutting the grass and ensuring that plants, shrubs and trees do not become over-grown. You are expected to keep the footpath adjoining your property, including road gutters, free from litter.

## Vehicles and Parking

Galway City Council Community Wardens monitor and enforce Road Traffic Regulations on all public roads / areas within the city.

Please be considerate when parking at your dwelling. This applies to all household members and visitors to the dwelling.

- Obey the rules of the road at all times.
- Do not park or drive on open/green public spaces, footpaths or grass verges.
- Do not park unroadworthy or illegal vehicles within the boundary or general vicinity of your home.
- Occupied caravans and motorhomes are strictly prohibited within the boundary or general vicinity of your home.
- Please contact your local Garda station if you suspect a car has been abandoned in the vicinity of your home.
- Do not cause an obstruction that could affect access of emergency services.
- Do not block anyone's gate or driveway.
- Tenants do not have designated parking spaces and must not appropriate communal parking areas for their own use. Trailers or horse boxes should not be stored in parking spaces.

Vehicles should only be parked in a driveway, or designated parking area if they are road worthy, taxed and insured.

Galway City Council reserves the right to remove and impound any vehicle, truck, trailer, caravan, mobile home, horse box or boat that may cause a nuisance/annoyance or is not road-worthy, taxed and insured.



## **Can I park a caravan or mobile home at my house?**

A caravan, mobile home or camper van must not be placed or kept within the curtilage of the dwelling, otherwise than in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 and the regulations made thereunder. Permission must be sought from Galway City Council. Unauthorised caravans can be impounded and the cost of removing and storing the caravan is charged to the tenant.

## **CCTV**

If you wish to install CCTV at the property, you must request permission from Galway City Council stating the reason CCTV is required. Before approving the request, the Council must be satisfied that:

- The CCTV system covers just the property you are residing in and no other property or communal area.
- Installation of the CCTV system will not cause damage to any property.
- Suitable signage is installed.
- Galway City Council is able to view the cameras once fitted, at installation or at a later time, if requested.
- The CCTV system complies with relevant Irish and European law.

CCTV installed on any residence is the responsibility of the residents in that dwelling. Galway City Council is not the data controller of this data. If cameras are clearly focused on areas other than your own property, this will be deemed as behaviour causing nuisance and is a breach of your tenancy agreement. Galway City Council can request that CCTV equipment is removed from your property. We reserve the right to take legal action to remove it, if necessary.

## Breach of Tenancy

Breach of tenancy is the term used when you fail to keep to the terms and conditions of your Tenancy Agreement. The Tenancy Agreement is a legally binding contract between you and the Council. A breach of one or more of the conditions of your tenancy places your tenancy at risk and can result in the repossession of your home by the Council.

Where a breach of tenancy is confirmed, Galway City Council will issue a statutory Tenancy Warning. If the breach continues following the statutory Tenancy Warning, Galway City Council can commence proceedings to obtain a Possession Order for the property through the courts.

Behaviour that may result in the Council taking legal action against you includes:

- Rent Arrears
- Damage to property
- Arrestable criminal offences, such as drug dealing
- Engagement in serious and/or persistent anti-social behaviour
- Continuing to break the rules of the Tenancy Agreement, despite warnings asking you to stop

If you are evicted from your home for a breach of your tenancy, the Council will deem that you have made yourself intentionally homeless as a direct result of your own actions. If this occurs, you may not be re-housed by the local authority.

## Neighbourhood Nuisance

A range of things can cause neighbourhood problems resulting in minor disputes. Neighbourhood nuisance problems are common. However, most can be resolved quickly and easily without causing undue distress or upset. Galway City Council will not generally become involved in neighbourhood nuisance problems. If the first your neighbour hears of your problem is from us, it can make matters worse.

### What is Nuisance?

A nuisance is inconsiderate behavior that causes others to suffer; it is not usually aimed at one person. The term is applied to various types of conduct which are considered to be less serious than anti-social behaviour. Examples of nuisance might be failing to adequately control a pet, a poorly maintained garden, the accumulation of litter, minor noise pollution, family arguments affecting neighbours and minor verbal harassment.

If a tenant / resident is affected by a neighbour's dog barking, the tenant / resident can make a complaint to the District Court rather than Galway City Council. Section 25 of the Control of Dogs Act 1986 deals with nuisance by barking dogs

### What can I do if I am having problems with my neighbours?

The first thing to consider is that your neighbour may not be aware that their actions are causing a nuisance. If this is the case, you may be able to resolve the problem by simply speaking to your neighbour and drawing their attention to the matter in a tactful manner. Generally, this is the best approach to neighbourhood nuisance as the problem can be quickly resolved and you still maintain a good relationship with your neighbour.

If you are unable to resolve the issue, you can contact the Housing Estate Liaison Officer for your area who will advise you how best to deal with the problem. If you wish to complain about nuisance, it is recommended that you keep a diary of the dates, times and details of any alleged incidences. For information on anti-social behavior, see page 27.

Unreasonable noise from a dwelling is a common problem and if a resolution cannot be agreed then a complainant can make an application to the District Court for a Noise Abatement Order in accordance with Section 108, Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992.

### How to be a good neighbour

Getting along with your neighbours is an important part of community living. You should try to always respect your neighbour's privacy and not intrude on their property. You should also try to look out for your neighbours, in particular older residents. If you think any of your neighbours are in need of help or support, contact the Housing Department.

### How to be a good neighbour

- Welcome new neighbours and say hello to them.
- Respect your neighbours' right to live peacefully.
- Do not engage in behaviour that offends or upsets others.
- Maintain your house and garden.
- Make sure you and your visitors park cars safely and in a way that doesn't create difficulties for others.
- Take responsibility for your pets.
- Dispose of your waste correctly and do not let refuse build up in your house or garden.
- Warn neighbours when you are going to do something particularly noisy: drilling, hammering or having a party.
- Keep noise, in or near your home, right down from 10pm to 8am.
- If you have a dog, do not leave it barking constantly in the home, or in the garden, and clear up any mess it makes.
- Make sure your children think about how their playing habits might affect neighbours.

## Moving Out

### Can I pass on my tenancy to someone else?

No. Each case will be examined on its own merits. In situations such as death if the tenant, long term hospitalisation or imprisonment of the tenant it may be possible for a member of the tenant's household to succeed to the tenancy.

### What if I want to give up the tenancy of my house?

You may decide you wish to end your tenancy with Galway City Council. Before you do end your tenancy, it is important to speak to a member of staff in the Housing Department who can give you all the information you need to make a final decision. In deciding to leave a council property, you are giving up all rights and entitlements to the property and any future housing needs will not be the responsibility of the Council.

If you decide to surrender your tenancy, you must give us four weeks' notice. When you leave the house all furniture and white goods must be removed or a charge will apply.

**Costs incurred by the Council in relation to works to a vacated house will be deemed to be the responsibility of the previous tenant where the works are not attributed to normal wear and tear. The Council will seek to recoup these costs.**

# Rent

The Housing Rents Section will assess your rent and deal with any queries you may have about your account, method of payment or problems with rent arrears.

## How is my rent calculated?

Your rent is calculated using the Council's Differential Rent Scheme. Rents are assessed on total household income and taking into consideration details of all household members, including dependents. It is important that you provide Galway City Council with full details of household composition and income so that your rent can be calculated accurately.

The Council reviews the Differential Rent Scheme every year and it is subject to change. A copy of the current Rent Scheme is available on request.

## When is my rent due?

Your rent falls due on the Monday of each week.

## How can I pay my rent?

The Council provides a range of payment methods:

**Standing Order:** Payment through your bank

**Household Budget Scheme:** Deductions from social welfare

**An Post:** Payment at any Post Office using a Billpay card

**Pay Online:** at [www.galwaycity.ie](http://www.galwaycity.ie)

**In person:** at the Cash Office in City Hall

## What if my circumstances change?

You should keep the Council informed of any change in your household income or those living in the house. For example, you should let us know when:

- A person in your household gets a job
- A person in your household becomes unemployed
- A person joins the household
- A person in the household starts claiming social welfare
- A student continues or commences 3rd level education
- There is a birth in the household
- There is a death in the household

### **What if I don't tell the Council about a change in circumstances?**

When we discover that you have not notified us of a change in your circumstances, your rent will be reassessed and your account backdated. This could result in significant arrears on your account.

### **Can I get a statement of my rent account?**

Yes. Statements of Account are sent to all tenants during the year. The statement shows details of the rent charges, payments and adjustments made to the account. It also shows the balance on your account. You can request a statement of your rent account at any time.

### **What if I have difficulties paying my rent?**

If you are unable to pay your rent, please inform Galway City Council immediately. It is in your interest to inform us of your difficulties at the outset and to try to avoid your rent account falling into arrears.

You should contact Galway City Council's Debt Management Unit and they will help you in any way they can. A payment plan can be arranged to allow you to clear your rent arrears over time. If you are in arrears, the sooner you tackle the problem the better the outcome. You may also wish to contact the local Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS).

### **Will the Council take me to court for rent arrears?**

Yes. If you refuse to come to a reasonable agreement or if you do not keep to the agreed plan, the Council will serve the appropriate warning letters and can institute legal proceedings to recover vacant possession of the property. If you are evicted for rent arrears, you are still responsible for the arrears and the legal costs.

**Tenants who have arrears on their account will not be eligible to apply for a transfer to another Council dwelling. In addition, rent arrears may affect your eligibility to purchase the property under the Tenant Purchase Scheme. With the exception of essential repairs, maintenance work may not be carried out where rent accounts are in arrears. This will be dealt with on a case by-case basis at the discretion of the Council.**

# Maintenance and Repairs

## Maintenance and repairs

The tenant shall be charged for unnecessary call-outs for inspection of items that are the tenants responsibility.

Galway City Council may, from time to time in the interest of safety and for the protection of their property, repair an item that is the tenant's responsibility and shall charge the tenant the cost of the repair

In order to maintain your rented dwelling in good condition, repairs and maintenance are necessary. As the tenant, you share responsibility for these repairs and maintenance with the Council.

The Council is generally responsible for the structural elements of the dwelling while the tenant is responsible for day-to-day maintenance and general upkeep of the dwelling.

You must get the Council's written agreement before starting any improvements, alterations or additions to your home.

It is a condition of your tenancy that your property is kept in good order and state of repair. If you have any queries about repairs and maintenance, you should contact the Housing Maintenance Section of Galway City Council.

### **Will the Council carry out any repair I want?**

No. Galway City Council is responsible for many repairs but it is not responsible for all repairs at your house. There is a clear division of what repairs are your responsibility and what repairs are the Council's responsibility. In general terms, the Local Authority is responsible for most structural repairs and repairs due to fair wear and tear.

The tenant is responsible for the repair of any wilful or malicious damage and damage caused by negligence. There are some repairs which the Council will consider carrying out if the tenant pays the necessary charge. A list of the Council's responsibilities and the tenant's responsibilities in relation to maintenance and repairs is found in the Appendix on pages 39-40.

### **Do you repair properties before new tenants move in?**

We do all we can to make a house or flat habitable, complying with the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2017, or any updated version of these regulations, before a new tenant moves in.

## What repairs am I responsible for?

A list of the Council's responsibilities and the tenant's responsibilities in relation to maintenance and repairs is found in the Appendix on pages 43.

It is the tenants responsibility to transfer the utility bills into their name from commencement of the lease.

## Will the Council make an exception?

The Council considers requests to carry out repairs which are the tenant's responsibility only in exceptional circumstances, such as old age where it is impossible for the tenant to carry out the repairs. If you feel you are unable to look after your house, you should contact the Housing Estate Liaison Officer in your area for advice.

When response maintenance work is requested by the tenant, which is deemed to be the responsibility of the tenant, the tenant may be billed the cost of the work by Galway City Council. Failure to pay this cost within the set timeline, or enter into an agreement to this cost by way of staged payments, could result in the tenant being deemed to be in breach of their tenancy agreement.

Tenants should understand that they will not be compensated for repair works they carry out themselves, which subsequently turn out to be the responsibility of the council.

## How do I make a repair request?

It is your responsibility as the tenant to notify the Council of any maintenance faults. You can contact the Council:

**by telephone:** 091 536400

**by email:** [housing@galwaycity.ie](mailto:housing@galwaycity.ie)

**in writing:** Housing Maintenance, Housing Department, Galway City Council, City Hall, College Road, Galway

**in person:** At City Hall, College Road, Galway

The Council will investigate your report and advise who is responsible for the repair. Where the Council is deemed to be responsible, you will be given an indication of when the repair will be carried out.



Respect for Galway City Council and Contracted Staff

It is a condition of your Tenancy Agreement that you do not threaten or abuse Council staff or anyone working on the Council's behalf. Inappropriate or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated. It will put your tenancy at risk and may result in works not being carried out at your property. Tenants should not call to the housing office whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Any assaults, threats, intimidation, harassment, racism of any form, obstruction and/or interference with its employees in accordance with the provisions of the Housing Acts 1966 to 2014, may result in legal proceedings against any person engaged in such activity. Any such incident will be reported to the Gardai as per GCC's policy on mandatory reporting, whilst having regard to procedures under our Dignity at Work Policy

**Note:** rent is automatically checked when a request for maintenance is made to the Council and maintenance works or improvement works may not be carried out if your rent account is in arrears.

How long will it take for repairs to be carried out?

The Council categorises maintenance complaints under four headings:

Emergency	Repairs carried out where there is a possible danger to human life.	1-3 working days	Examples include: Electrical problem with fuseboard, faulty socket, tiles falling off the roof
Urgent	Repairs carried out quickly to avoid damage to the house in cases where the tenant has not caused the problem.	10 working days	Examples include: Leaking water pipe, no water in the tap, burst pipe
Routine	These are medium priority repairs	12 weeks	Examples include: Replace fire backs, faulty heating system
Cyclical	These are low priority works, such as planned maintenance and upgrades.	Cyclical maintenance programme every 5-7 years	Examples include: Leaking gutters, rotting fascia board

It is the aim of Galway City Council to respond to maintenance requests within the time scales, subject to available resources and the co-operation of the tenant.

### **What should I do if the repair team call to my house when I'm not there?**

If the repair team calls to your house and cannot gain access, they will leave a card with a contact number. You should telephone and leave details of the best day/time to call again and a contact telephone number. If you are not at the property during normal working hours, you should arrange with a neighbour or friend to be present to allow the repair team to gain access to the property.

### **Who carries out repairs caused by malicious damage?**

You are responsible for repairs arising from all deliberate or malicious damage to Galway City Council property, no matter who causes it. Galway City Council will not carry out these repairs.

### **Can I make alterations to my house?**

You must get the Council's written agreement before starting any improvements, alterations or additions to your home. We are usually happy to agree to alterations, once an approved contractor carries them out, but we must check them out first.

You must also get the Council's written agreement to do any of the following;

- Constructions of a shed on the property requires permission.
- Erect fencing, walls or gates in the front or rear of the house.
- Erect any aerial, satellite dish or any fitting or fixture to the outside of the house.
- Install a patio/paving/decking/pond/any concrete works.
- Paper the internal walls of the house.
- Paint any external walls, woodwork, cement, gates or fencing.
- Installation of Electrical charge chargers, Photo-voltaic panels.

You may need planning permission for certain works. All such alterations become the property of the Council. They are not removable by the tenant if the tenancy is terminated nor is any compensation allowable in respect of them. For a more comprehensive list of the works requiring the Council's permission please see pages 47 & 48.

In the case of unauthorised alterations carried out, the Council may require you to fully reinstate the property to the original condition.

## **Your responsibility under Health & Safety**

Please note that the Health, Safety & Welfare at Work Act 2007 & Construction Regulations 2013 apply to construction works at domestic dwellings, including local authority tenants who undertake construction works at their rented dwelling. Certain maintenance and repair works may be covered by this legislation. Where such works are not being carried out personally by the tenant, the regulations require appointment of competent contractors and may, depending on circumstances, carry other liabilities and/or responsibilities. Compliance is the responsibility of the tenant.

### **Is my house insured by the Council?**

The Council insures the structure of all rented houses. It does not insure the contents. As a tenant, you are advised to insure the contents of your dwelling, as this is your responsibility.

### **Will the Council call to inspect my house?**

Yes. Council employees may call to carry out an inspection of the property or to carry out necessary repairs. You must allow employees of the Council to enter and inspect the property. Gas, water and electricity supply authorities or any contractor employed by the Council must also be allowed to enter the property to carry out inspections or necessary works. Where possible, advance notice will be given.

All Council workers and utility workers carry identification. Please make sure you check for appropriate identification before letting anybody into your home. Also, we ask that you and members of your household do not smoke while inspections or repairs are taking place.

### **Am I responsible for pest control?**

Yes. While Council officials will be available to provide advice and assistance, as the tenant, you are responsible for arranging pest control services in your home. You can help deter mice and other rodents from your house by not storing waste in or around your house and by not leaving food out in your garden for pets or other animals.

Where these pests are affecting a number of residents the Environment Section of the Council may intervene to remove/eliminate the pests and recoup any cost from the responsible tenant

### **What about maintenance in the case of transfer of tenancy?**

Where a transfer from one Council house to another takes place, the tenant has responsibility to ensure that the property being vacated is left in excellent condition. The Council will not allow transfers to proceed if the condition of the primary property is unacceptable at the time of inspection prior to transfer.

Also, if fixed items such as kitchen units, fireplaces or wardrobes are removed by the tenant from the property being vacated, the tenant will be charged for the replacement of these items and the cost may be added to the tenant's rent account. If the vacated property has to be cleaned up by the Council, the tenant will be liable for all clean-up costs incurred.

All properties must be returned in a fit and tenanted state and all outstanding rent paid. The house will be inspected prior to vacation.

## Safety in your Home

### Home security

There are some very simple steps you can take to help improve the physical security of your home:

- Always close your windows and lock the doors when you go out, even if it is only for a few minutes.
- Don't forget to secure any side doors or gates.
- Make sure that you do not leave tools, bicycles or other items lying about in the garden of your home.
- If you have to go out at night time, consider leaving a light on in the bedroom or living room. You might consider fitting an automatic control which turns a light on at dusk.
- Cancel milk and newspaper deliveries when you go on holiday and tell someone trustworthy and known to you to keep an eye on your house for you.
- Never leave valuables lying around. Limit the amount of cash kept in the home.
- Do not leave keys on a string behind the letterbox, hidden under the doormat or in other "hiding" places.
- Pull curtains at night.
- Make sure you lock your shed.
- Photograph and mark all valuable property.
- If you have an alarm fitted, use it.
- Consider fitting a good quality door chain and use it when strangers call.
- Do not let anyone in to your property until you are satisfied you know who they are and what they want.

Advice on home security is available from your local Crime Prevention Officer. Contact your local Garda Station for more information.

## Electricity

- Know the location of the fuseboard so that circuits or power can be switched off in the case of an emergency.
- Do not overload electric sockets with appliances.
- Use properly sized fuses on all electrical appliances.
- Do not tamper with wall sockets, wall switches, the fuse board, or any part of the electric installation in the house.
- Switch off isolator switches (disconnect switch) before moving any electrical appliance, such as a fridge or washing machine.
- Make sure that electrical plugs of all appliances are removed from wall sockets before going to bed at night.

Where it is the tenant's responsibility to repair an electrical fitting or installation, other than the replacement of bulbs or fuses, the work should be carried out by a qualified and competent electrical contractor. Where such a contractor carries out electrical work in a Council dwelling, the name and the business address of the contractor must be sent to the Housing Maintenance Section with a brief description of the work carried out.

## Gas

- Know the location of the shut off valve for the gas supply to the boiler and cooker.
- Do not tamper in any way with gas boiler or any gas appliances.
- Make sure that wall vents are fully open at all times in rooms with open gas fires.
- **IF YOU SMELL GAS IN YOUR HOUSE**
  - Ensure gas appliances haven't been left on and unlit.
  - Don't smoke or use a naked flame.
  - Don't unplug or switch anything electrical on or off.
  - Open windows or doors.
  - If the appliances are off but the smell persists, turn off the gas supply at the meter and contact Bord Gais.

**EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS FOR BORD GAIS 1850 20 50 50 (24 HOUR LINE). IF YOU CAN'T GET THROUGH, DIAL 999.**

Do not use a phone in the immediate area of the leak, either call from outside of the property or use a neighbour's phone, if necessary.

## Plumbing

- Know the location of the stopcock in the kitchen (usually beneath the kitchen sink) and know how to turn off the water supply in the case of an emergency, such as a burst pipe.
- In the case of a burst pipe, once you have turned the water off, the next thing is to try to prevent further damage to the house and your belongings. If leaking water might threaten the property's wiring, turn off your electricity at the fuse board. To reduce water damage, use the simple solution – grab a bucket and put it under the leak.
- If you are going on holidays, make sure that stopcock in the kitchen is turned off before leaving the house.
- When the house is unoccupied in very cold weather, you can leave background heat on (or set the timer to come on for a few hours each day and night) to prevent pipes freezing.

## Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that has no colour, taste or smell. It is produced when any fossil fuel such as gas, coal, oil or wood is burnt without enough oxygen.

### **To prevent carbon monoxide building up in your home**

- Ensure that any new appliance fitted by an approved installer is serviced at least once a year.
- Ensure that flues and chimneys are checked and swept to remove any blockages.
- Ensure that permanent ventilation openings are kept clear.
- If you do not have a carbon monoxide alarm in your house, contact the Housing Department of Galway City Council to request one.

The Council will install and commission smoke and Carbon Monoxide alarms and heat detectors in the house prior to the commencement of the Tenancy. The tenant is then responsible for the maintenance of smoke and Carbon Monoxide alarms and heat detectors. This includes the checking and changing of batteries on a regular basis, or when required. You should be aware of the lifespan of the alarm and the council should be informed when the unit is near end of life.

## Fire Safety

Fire is a danger in every home. In the event of a fire, get out, stay out and dial 999 or 112 immediately.

## Fire prevention

Prevention is the best firefighter. Check for fire dangers in your home and correct them.

### X DO NOT

### ✓ DO

**DO NOT** Smoke when you are in bed, tired or if you have consumed alcohol or are on medication

**DO** Put a fire blanket and working fire extinguisher within easy reach in the kitchen and learn how to use them

**DO NOT** Leave the room when there are candles burning

**DO** Use a proper fitting spark guard and fireguard with open fires

**DO NOT** Leave young children alone near an open fire or cooker

**DO** Turn off your cooker when not in use and keep clean & free from grease

**DO NOT** Leave matches and lighters where children can reach

**DO** Keep your gas cylinder outside, on solid ground and away from anything hot

**DO NOT** Leave the room when a chip pan or frying pan is on, even for a minute

**DO** Use a proper holder for candles and keep away from items that may catch fire

**DO NOT** Overload electrical sockets as it is a major fire risk – one socket, one plug

**DO** Repair or replace faulty electrical appliances immediately

**DO NOT** Use electrical appliances that don't work, If electrical cables or plugs are damaged, worn or frayed, contact a qualified electrician

**DO** Check your electric blanket regularly for damage and do not use if you are in any doubt. Unplug your electric blanket before you go to bed

**DO NOT** Run electrical appliances from a light socket

**DO** Empty ashtrays before you go to bed. Run the contents under the tap before you bin them

**DO NOT** Use a heater or the cooker to dry clothes. Never place clothes to dry on a fireguard or in front of an open fire

**DO** a fire safety check before you go to bed

**DO NOT** Use petrol or paraffin to light a solid fuel stove

**DO** Close all doors at night

**DO NOT** Store items like paper, magazines, clothing or combustible items near a fire

**DO** Practice extreme care when using portable heaters and ensure they are switched off and/or plugged out before you leave the house or going to bed

**DO NOT** Burn waste in your open fire or stove

**DO** Clean your chimney regularly

**DO NOT** Leave your mobile phone charger plugged in at night time or when leaving the house

## Fire detection

- Install smoke alarms and ensure they are in good working order.
- Check your smoke alarms regularly, at least once a week.
- Replace the batteries every year and immediately when you hear the warning beep.
- Vacuum your alarm casing to remove dust every six months.

## Plan for escape

Make a Fire Escape Plan and practice it often:

- Keep escape routes clear at all times.
- Whether you or your smoke alarm have discovered the fire, stay calm and put your fire escape plan into action.
- Check doors with the back of your hand; if they are warm it means the fire is on the other side, so do not open them. Only open doors you need to escape through.
- If there is smoke, crawl along near the floor where the air will be cleaner.
- Raise the alarm. Shout to wake everyone up and make your way out by the quickest route. (This is usually by the front door).
- Do not investigate the fire.
- Once everyone is out of the house, call the Fire Service at 999 or 112.
- Do not go back in until the Fire Service tells you it is safe.

## Fire safety checks

Every night:

- Switch off all appliances not in use at night
- Ensure fires are well down and place a spark guard in front of open fires
- Extinguish all candles
- Empty all ash trays
- Keep your way out completely clear
- Close all doors

For further information on fire safety, you can contact Galway Fire Authority.



## How can I best prevent a chimney fire?

One of the best ways to prevent a chimney fire is to clean the chimney regularly - follow the recommended cleaning guide:

### Fire Type Cleaning Interval

- Wood burning fires & stoves 2 times a year when in use
- Solid fuel fires & stoves Once a year if using smokeless fuel. Twice a year if using coal
- Oil fires Once a year
- Gas fires Once a year if designed for sweeping
- The cleaning of chimneys is the tenant's responsibility.
- When a fire occurs as a result of the lack of cleaning the tenant will be held responsible for any damage/costs incurred.

## Condensation

Condensation causes dampness and mould in houses. If it continues, it can make walls, floors and ceilings damp and discoloured, and mould can grow on their surface. The Council cannot take responsibility for condensation and damage caused by condensation in your home, but we are available for advice on the prevention and cure if you need it

To avoid mould forming in your home and affecting your belongings, you need to avoid creating condensation. Condensation is created when the moisture in the air from everyday living, such as cooking, washing, hot baths and drying clothes, reaches a cold surface (such as a wall or window) and some of the water in the air is left behind. This dampness encourages mould to grow.

To control condensation in your home, it is the tenant's responsibility to:

- Reduce the amount of moisture you produce and try to limit it to certain areas of the house. Dry clothes outdoors, when possible.
- Reduce the number of surfaces in your home and keep it free from clutter.
- Do not block wall air vents & window vents. Open windows for a short while when cooking/bathing to allow the moisture to escape.
- Maintain an adequate room temperature. It is better to turn your heat on low for a long time rather than on high for a short time.
- Moisture extractor fans to be used at all times when cooking & bathing.
- Clean and treat mould growth with in the property.

An information leaflet on Controlling Condensation and Mould is available on request [www.galwaycity.ie](http://www.galwaycity.ie).

**N.B.** You should also note that you are responsible for repairs arising from condensation damage.

## Ventilate

Ventilation is essential to allow steam to escape and to keep condensation at bay. When cooking or bathing keep the extractor fan running and the windows open. While sleeping keep a vent open. Don't block up the built-in ventilators. Ventilate when drying clothes. This is crucial because clothes drying can produce six litres of water while washing them can produce two litres. On dry windy days keep windows open as far as security precautions allow so that the rooms may dry out. You may be able to fit stops to windows to give security while they are open.

# Tenant Participation

Galway City Council recognises the importance of resident and tenant participation in estate management and is committed to working in partnership with residents and tenants to promote estate management in their estates.

## Engaging with communities

We encourage you to become actively involved in your estate and we are eager to hear your views and suggestions on how your estate can be improved. To help you to become involved, Galway City Council has employed Housing Estate Liaison Officers (HELOs). Each HELO is designated to a group of estates across the city and provide a high profile presence on the estates. They will deal individually with any query you have on your tenancy and will deal regularly with the local resident association or representative group for your area.

If there is no Residents' Association operating in your area and you and your neighbours are interested in establishing one, Galway City Council can assist you. Grants are available for community activities and for establishing Residents' Associations. Training and information is also available to assist your group participate in estate management.

The Housing Estate Liaison Officer (HELO) is responsible for building good relations within the community to ensure effective estate management.

HELO will help develop and support:

- Resident Committees / Networks / Community Houses
- Deliver Pre-Tenancy Training courses to allow tenants to understand the various aspects of their Tenancy Agreement
- Investigate complaints of an anti-social nature, working with residents to combat problems and reach positive solutions
- Work in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations tackling issues of safety to allow your community to be a safer place to live
- Liaise with vulnerable tenants and relevant agencies to ensure they are in contact with necessary supports
- Work with other sections within the Council to further develop initiatives for the betterment of your community

## Vacant Houses

Vacant houses in an estate can become a target for antisocial behaviour and/or squatters. If you intend surrendering your house, you must give us four weeks notice in writing. We can then make arrangements to have it re-let to ensure it does not remain vacant for any length of time. If there is a vacant house in your estate, don't assume that we know about it. Tell us! The sooner you do, the sooner we can arrange to have it re-let. Anti-social behaviour is a very serious matter and should not be allowed to develop in YOUR estate.

## Traveller Specific Accommodation.

Galway City Council provides group housing and halting site accommodation for Traveller households seeking to live in Traveller specific accommodation.

The information contained in this booklet relates to houses. However, the same procedures are in place for halting sites and repairs to day houses. Galway City Council does not have responsibility for maintaining caravans which are owned by the tenant.

# Anti-Social Behaviour

Galway City Council is committed to tackling anti-social behaviour in our estates to create safer and better communities for our tenants.

**Galway City Council expects all tenants to show consideration and respect towards their neighbours.**

It is recognised that the vast majority of Council tenants live in, and wish to enjoy, the peaceful occupation of their dwellings and that only a very small number of tenants are involved in anti-social behaviour. The Council will not allow a minority to spoil it for the majority.

We need your help in order to succeed in tackling anti-social behaviour in your area. Please report any incidences of anti-social behavior to the Council. All information will be kept in the strictest confidence.

- All anti-social behaviour should be reported to the Council. The Council will deal with any such behaviour in the strongest possible manner.
- It is important that complaints of a criminal nature are also reported to An Garda Síochána for investigation.

## Definition of Anti-Social Behaviour

The legal definition of anti-social behaviour is as follows:

- (a) The manufacture, production, preparation, importation, exportation, sale, supply, possession for the purposes of sale or supply or distribution of a controlled drug (within the meaning of the Misuse of Drugs Acts 1997 to 2007)
- (b) Any behaviour which causes or is likely to cause any significant or persistent danger, injury, damage, alarm, loss or fear to any person living, working or otherwise lawfully in or in the vicinity of a house provided by a housing authority under the Housing Acts 1966-2014 of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 or a Housing Estate in which the house is situate and, without prejudice to the foregoing, includes
  - i. violence, threats, intimidation, coercion, harassment or serious obstruction of any person,
  - ii. behaviour which causes any significant or persistent impairment of a person's use or enjoyment of his or her home,  
or
  - iii. damage or defacement by writing or other marks of any property, including a person's home.
  - iv. Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2014

### **What can I do if I am a victim of anti-social behavior?**

If your neighbours are causing problems for you and other neighbours and they are tenants of the Council, do not assume that we already know about it. You should contact the Housing Estate Liaison Officer for your area either by telephone, by email or by letter. It will be helpful if you keep a record of the dates and times when incidents occur and the names of the person involved, if known.

### **What should I do if I witness anti-social behavior?**

Take note of any incidents you witness and record the date, time and persons involved. Report it to the Housing Estate Liaison Officer for your area and to your Local Garda Station. Do not wait for someone else to report it.

### **What if I am afraid to report anti-social behavior?**

This is understandable. However, the names and addresses of complainants will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed to the person against whom a complaint is made.

### **What happens if I disturb my neighbours?**

You must make sure that you, other people living with you, including children, and any other visitors to your home do not damage your neighbours' property or cause nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to your neighbours.

In particular this means:

- no loud noise of any kind
- no drug dealing
- no violence or threats of violence
- no harassment or abuse to include racial abuse
- no intimidation

### **What happens when a complaint is made?**

The Council will respond to complaints by initially seeking to agree a resolution between the parties informally. This may involve a meeting with the Housing Estate Liaison Officer, mediation or other forms of voluntary dispute resolution. The Council liaises with An Garda Síochána and other agencies in the city when investigating complaints.

Please note that, on receipt of a complaint, preliminary enquiries may be made to confirm its validity and to ensure that the complaint is not being made maliciously or in order to cause annoyance.

If an informal resolution is not possible, the Council will undertake the following actions and will escalate them, when required, if the offending behaviour does not cease.

- Formal meeting with senior housing staff
- Statutory Tenancy Warning
- Application for Possession Order (eviction proceedings) and/or Excluding Order

A statutory Tenancy Warning is designed to prevent and prohibit anti-social behaviour. However, in serious cases, housing authorities can bypass this process and proceed directly to the Courts to recover possession of a dwelling involved in anti-social behaviour.

The Housing Department's approach is to try and maintain people in their tenancies, unless the circumstances are so severe as to merit enforcement action. A copy of Galway City Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy is available on request.

### **What if a complaint is made against me?**

If a complaint is made against you, we will arrange to meet with you. You will be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint and you will be treated in a fair and impartial manner. The Council will consider all relevant matters and any representations or observations made by you in deciding on the appropriate course of action.

There is an obligation on you, the tenant, to ensure that neither you, nor any member of your household engages in anti-social behaviour of any kind.

- If you, or any member of your household, engages in anti-social behaviour, it can seriously affect you and your tenancy.
- Tenants and their families who engage in anti-social behaviour may face eviction or be excluded from the dwelling and the surrounding area.
- Galway City Council may refuse to sell a dwelling to a tenant where it considers that the tenant is or has been engaged in anti-social behaviour.
- Galway City Council may refuse a transfer to an alternative property to a tenant where it considers that the tenant is or has been engaged in anti-social behaviour.

## **What is an Excluding Order?**

An Excluding Order is an order issued by the court which prohibits a person from entering a dwelling and can also prohibit a person from entering the surrounding area of the dwelling. These orders can be sought against a member of a tenant's household who is engaging in anti-social behaviour. This targeted approach avoids the possible eviction of an entire household.

If the tenant chooses not to apply for the Excluding Order through violence, threat or fear, or for any other reason, the Council has the authority to apply for the Excluding Order in the interests of good estate management.

When the court grants an Excluding Order, it is an offence for the person against whom the order has been made to breach that order.

**All tenants are responsible for their behaviour, the behaviour of any visitors and the behaviour of their children and pets.**

# Your Housing Options

Galway City Council provides suitable accommodation to qualified applicants, in accordance with its Scheme of Letting Priorities. We allocate dwellings in a fair and reasonable manner. In doing so, we hope we have satisfied your housing need.

Future changes in your household circumstance may mean you need to review your housing situation and, therefore, we would like to make you aware of all the housing options available to you as our tenant.

## Can I apply for a transfer to another property?

Yes, council tenants can apply to transfer to alternative accommodation for reasons of overcrowding, downsizing, medical/compassionate grounds or exceptional circumstances. Maintenance issues or anti-social behaviour are not grounds for transfer and will only be considered in exceptional cases.

To qualify for a transfer, you must meet the following conditions:

- Hold a tenancy in the present property for a period of at least 2 years
- Have a clear rent account
- Have kept the dwelling in a satisfactory condition, subject to inspection
- Have no record of anti-social behaviour

## How do I apply for a transfer?

A transfer may be considered under the following circumstances:

- a)** Overcrowding as per Section 63 of the Housing Act, 1966: Galway City will complete an Inspection to verify details of same.
- b)** Medical Grounds e.g. special adaptations to dwelling/ground floor accommodation required to meet a housing need. The transfer application form must be accompanied by an Occupational Therapist's Report, Consultant's letter and or any other relevant documentation.
- c)** Downsizing: considered as part of Galway City's policies on good estate and property management of housing stock, subject to alternate accommodation in the particular area of choice.

Please note, you will not be considered for a internal transfer if your rent account has fallen into arrears after the transfer application was approved.



### **How soon can I apply for a transfer?**

Council tenants who have been a tenant in their present dwelling for a period of at least two years can apply.

### **How do I apply for a transfer?**

You must complete a transfer application form, which is available from the Housing Department.

### **When I am applying for a transfer, can I choose the area?**

Yes. It is reasonable to express a preference for a general area (East or West of the city). You will be placed on the transfer list for that area. However, it is not appropriate to specify individual estates or houses.

### **If I am approved for a transfer, what happens next?**

You will be added to the transfer list for the area of your choice. It is not possible to give an indication of how long it will take before you are transferred, as it will depend on the area you choose and the availability of houses in that area.

Costs incurred by the Council in relation to works to a vacated house will be deemed the responsibility of the previous tenant where works are not attributed to normal wear and tear. The Council will seek to recoup these costs.

### **Can the Council refuse to make a transfer?**

**Yes.** The Council will refuse to make a transfer offer in the following cases:

- There are arrears on your rent account. Transfers may be considered in cases where there is an accepted arrangement in place to clear the arrears and it has been kept for at least 6 months
- You have not complied satisfactorily with your Tenancy Agreement
- You or members of your household have engaged in nuisance or anti-social behaviour
- Your present dwelling is not being kept in a satisfactory condition
- Non-disclosure of information. The Council may refuse a transfer if false or misleading information is furnished to Galway City Council or information requested is not given.

## **Choice Based Letting (CBL) scheme.**

CBL is a system used for the allocation of designated Social Housing Units. It allows housing applicants to express an interest in being considered for the allocation of designated Social Housing Units.

Housing applicants will be able to use the CBL portal to express their interest in available properties advertised.

Transfer Applicants may now access Choice Based Letting by logging onto our CBL portal. A login username and password will be provided to all Transfer Applicants.

## **How does it work?**

Available CBL properties will be advertised. Transfer applicants can log in each week to check the dwellings that are available using their username and password (see above). Expression of interest in a property must be made online within a specified time frame.

## **Can I add someone to my tenancy?**

A joint tenancy is a tenancy where more than one tenant signs the Tenancy Agreement. If a sole tenant wishes to add someone to their tenancy (for example, a partner or spouse), they can apply to Galway City Council for a joint tenancy. Joint tenancies are not allowed between parents and their children, with the exception of when a house is being considered for purchase under the Tenant Incremental Purchase Scheme.

## **Can I remove someone from my joint tenancy?**

Sometimes due to a breakdown of a relationship, you may wish to change your joint tenancy to a sole tenancy. This change can only happen when both tenants put a request in writing to Galway City Council. All tenants requesting a change to the tenancy will receive relevant information to ensure they understand the implications of their actions. They will be advised to take legal advice and make independent informed decisions.

## **What happens to the tenancy if my parents are the tenants and they die or leave?**

On the death or departure of both parents, the Local Authority will normally facilitate the continuation of tenancy by a family member, provided that he/she has been living in the dwelling for at least two years immediately prior to the death or departure of the tenant and had been declared for rent assessment.

The person must qualify for social housing support and the property must satisfy their housing need. If the person will be over-accommodated in the property, they may be transferred to a smaller property. Each case will be examined on its own merits.

## **Succession:**

There is no legal right to succession, however, Galway City may, at their discretion, grant such a request and will consider requests on an individual basis. In particular and to ensure the best use of the housing stock, the Council may offer alternative accommodation more suited to your housing needs.

In the processing of applications, the following broad criteria will apply;

- Succession will only be granted once.
- The successor must have, with the full knowledge and permission of Galway City, been resident in the property with the tenant for a minimum of 24 months prior to the death of a tenant (as principle home).
- The successor must not hold an interest in any other property.
- The successor must be aged 18 or over.
- The property must be suited to the successor's needs.
- The successor must not have caused a direct breach of tenancy whilst residing with the tenant.
- The succession will always be subject to local authority approval

## **Can I buy my dwelling?**

There is a national Tenant Purchase Scheme whereby Council tenants can apply to purchase the property they are residing in. The terms and conditions of the scheme, including the eligibility criteria and the properties available for sale, are subject to change. Not all Council houses are deemed eligible for purchase. Properties are ineligible for sale if :

- (a) has been specifically designed for occupation by one or more than one elderly person,
- (c) has been specifically designed for occupation by travellers,
- (e) has been transferred to a planning authority in accordance with an agreement under section 96 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (No. 30 of 2000)
- (f) in the opinion of the authority, should not be sold for reasons of proper management of the authority's stock of housing accommodation or on account of the house's structural condition.

**TP Scheme**

You must not have been behind in your rent or any Council charge for more than 12 weeks in the past three years or if you were, you must have agreed a payment plan with the Council and abided by the terms and conditions of the plan.

**Can the Council provide me with a mortgage to purchase a property?**

Local Authorities can provide finance for house purchases. The terms and conditions are subject to change and you should make contact with the Housing Loans Section for more information.

**Will the Council assist me in carrying out improvements to my rented dwelling?**

Where you are a tenant applying for medical reasons, the Council may consider carrying out improvements or alterations to your house. Full details of these schemes are available from the Housing Department.

**My house is over-crowded, is there anything I can do?**

Yes. You can apply for a transfer to more suitable accommodation. In exceptional circumstances, the Council may consider carrying out alterations to your existing house.

# Climate Action and the Environment

Climate Change is understood to be a large scale, long term shift in the planet's weather patterns and average temperature. Energy Efficiency in the home - most of Ireland's energy comes from fossil fuels, like coal, oil, gas, peat. While these fuels help us to heat our homes they are a major contributor to climate change. For helpful tips on energy efficiency, emission reduction, preparing for extreme weather events please visit our website on [www.galwaycity.ie/publications/housing](http://www.galwaycity.ie/publications/housing).

## Waste Management

Galway City Council tenants are responsible for lawfully disposing of their own waste in an appropriate manner, as per Waste Management Act 1996, Litter Pollution Act 1997, Segregation Storage and Presentation of Household and Commercial Waste Bye – Laws 2019, and the Air Pollution Act 1987.

Tenants are obliged to have a three-bin system, provided by a licensed waste collector, in place for the management of their waste. **It is a breach of your Tenancy Agreement if you do not.**

Waste is separated as follows:

- Compost bin for organic waste
- Recycling bin for recyclable materials
- Waste bin for non-organic waste and non-recyclable waste only.

Your waste collector is required to offer advice on what goes in which bin and inform you of the correct collections day/s for your area. For further information, contact your waste collector directly.

Put your wheelie bin neatly on the footpath or designated collection point on bin collection day and don't overfill your bins.

Galway City Council may periodically request written records from you to ensure that you are managing your waste in an appropriate manner.

### **It is illegal to burn waste.**

Burning of waste is strictly prohibited in appliances or on your property. Uncontrolled burning of waste is illegal and can cause air pollution which may lead to serious health and safety issues.

## Galway City Council promotes positive action for the environment.

You can help in the following way:

- Keep your house and surrounding area clean and litter free
- Adopt a reduce - reuse - repair - recycle approach to managing your waste
- Choose low-energy rated appliances
- Turn off appliances when not in use
- Use sustainable modes of transport
- Conserve water
- Do not put nappies, sanitary towels, kitchen cloths or paper other than toilet paper into toilets or drains

## Energy Saving Tips for Heating

Approximately 60% of the energy used in Irish homes goes towards heating it.



Turn down your thermostat. If you turn the thermostat down by just one degree, you can reduce your heating bill by 10%. The thermostat for your living/kitchen area should be set at 18-20°C, while hallways and bedrooms can be cooler, ideally between 15-18°C



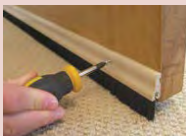
Close doors between rooms that are heated and unheated to keep the heat in



Move furniture away from radiators. When trying to stay warm at home during winter be strategic about your furniture placement. Place your desk, bed or sofa around any heat sources, without blocking them.



Avoid drying clothes on your radiators. This lowers the quantity of heat released by the radiators, so the boiler must run for longer to achieve the same room temperature, thereby using more fuel overall.



Tackle draughts. Cold air can come up through the floor and from around your skirting board. Close the curtains in the evenings to keep heat in. You can purchase a relatively cheap draft stopper/draught excluder for external doors.



Bleed your radiators on a regular basis. If there is air in your radiator your boiler burns longer.



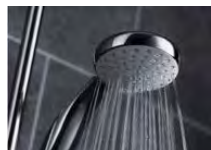
Consider installing an immersion timer to ensure you have hot water only when you need it.

## Energy Saving Tips for Domestic Hot Water

Approximately 25% of the energy used in Irish homes goes towards heating domestic hot water.



Take a shower rather than a bath. A regular shower uses only 20% of the energy it takes to heat the water for a full bath.



Pumped electric showers are one of the biggest energy users in the home. By reducing your shower time, you could save a lot of energy and water.

## Energy Saving Tips for Lighting

Lighting accounts for 10-15% of the electricity bill. To help reduce this energy use, it is good to maximise natural daylight when we can.



Always turn off lights when you leave a room and adjust your blinds or curtains to let in as much light as possible during the day.



Replace old light bulbs with LED energy efficient options, which can use 90% less electricity and last 10- 20 times longer than ordinary light bulbs.



Select the lowest wattage bulb needed to light the room/ area and consider the size of the space and how much natural light the space gets.



Position your furniture so you make the most of natural light.



Using task lighting for reading or at your office desk can significantly reduce the energy consumption of general lighting in a room.



Keep lights clean. A dusty light bulb or a dirty lampshade can obstruct as much as half the light. Dust the bulb and wipe or wash the shade regularly.



## Energy Saving Tips for Appliances

Many homes use modern automated electrical appliances which consume considerable amount of electrical power.



About 90% of the energy used for washing clothes is spent on heating the water. Unless you are dealing with clothes that are heavily stained, run your washing machine on a low temperature. Only run full loads in your washing machine and dish washers.



Using the clothesline is the most energy-efficient alternative for drying clothes. If you do not have adequate outdoor space or live in an apartment, place a dryer rack by an open, sunny window.



Adjust your fridge/freezer temperature. Your fridge should be between 3-5°C and your freezer should be between -15-18°C.



Defrost the inside of your freezer at least every 6 months to help it run efficiently.



Turn off all appliances at night or when not in use. They can use a lot of energy on standby mode (e.g., TV, computer).



When purchasing electrical devices, ensure you upgrade appliances to A+++ rated. Low- cost devices may not work out cheaper over their lifetime.



Only fill your kettle with as much water as you need.

## Litter and Environment

Under the Housing Acts and as part of the Council's Estate Management Policy and Tenancy Agreement, tenants are expected to keep their rented house in good condition and keep their gardens in a clean, tidy and sanitary state.

Under the Litter Pollution Act 1997 fines can be issued by the Council's Litter Warden to tenants if they "deposit any substance or object so as to create litter in a public place or in any place".

Under no circumstances should domestic refuse or refuse of any kind be allowed to accumulate on Council property, except for refuse awaiting collection. Littering of your garden, alleyway or laneway is considered anti-social and will not be tolerated by the Council. It is the responsibility of those residents served by a gated laneway to ensure that it is kept clean and free of rubbish, etc.

Waste and Litter complaints are first logged by Environment and then passed on to the Community Wardens. Ring: **091 536400**, e-mail: [environment@galwaycity.ie](mailto:environment@galwaycity.ie) or visit [environment@galwaycity.ie](mailto:environment@galwaycity.ie), if you want to report littering or dumping activity.

# Tenant Welfare

Galway City Council provide a range of supports and interventions to assist tenants sustain and gain value from their tenancies.

## Tenancy Training

All tenants are required to attend pre-tenancy training prior to moving in to their properties. At this training, the wide range of services available to Galway City Council tenants is outlined.

Post-tenancy supports are also available, including training on topics such as committee skills, parenting skills, budget management and drug awareness.

## Social Work Service

The Housing Estate Liaison Officers are available to assist and offer advice to all of our tenants. In addition, the Housing Department provides a social work service. If you wish to discuss issues relating to your tenancy with a member of the social work team, please contact the Housing Department for more information. Referrals are accepted from support agencies, as well as through self-referral.

## Look after your mental health

It is important to Galway City Council that tenants are safe, well and happy in their home and environment. However, from time to time, there are things that can get on top of you and make life that little more difficult.

There are few things you can do to help lift your mood:

- Eat well
- Keep in touch with friends and family
- Take a break
- Keep active
- Drink sensibly
- Ask for help
- Do something you're good at
- Talk about how you feel

## Emergencies

Galway City Council has an out-of-hours emergency call service. If an emergency should arise outside normal working hours, tenants can call (091) 536400. They will arrange for the correct emergency service in response to the request. Situations will only be attended to where the required work cannot wait until the next working day. The Housing Department reserves the right to determine what constitutes an emergency that may be attended to outside of normal working hours.

If you need the FIRE BRIGADE, GARDAI, or an AMBULANCE, DIAL 999 OR 112 yourself. DO NOT WAIT for a member of the Council's staff.

If you have a GAS LEAK, phone Bord Gais IMMEDIATELY at 1850 20 50 50

### Examples of an Emergency:

- Serious risk to life or health
- Threat of the house being flooded by water or sewage
- Total failure of your electricity supply or an electrical fault
- A risk of significant damage to the house

If staff are called out where there is not an emergency, the tenant will be charged the full cost of the call-out.

If the problem does not fall into the examples above, report the problem as soon as possible on the next working day.

# APPENDIX 1

## Housing Maintenance – Tenant and Council Responsibilities

### Tenant responsibilities

The following are examples of the types of repairs for which you are responsible:

#### **Internal Repairs:**

- Internal plaster cracks.
- Repairs to or replacement of cupboards, wardrobes, kitchen units and their doors, hinges, handles, locks, catches and drawers.
- Curtain rails and window boards.
- Chimney sweeping.
- Repairs arising from condensation damage.
- Wall and floor tiles.
- Internal woodwork such as floors, doors and skirting boards.
- Ventilator covers.

#### **Doors and Windows:**

- External and internal locks and handles.
- Window stays, catches and restrictors.
- Draught proofing of doors and windows.
- Replacement of broken glass.
- Permavents where fitted.
- Internal tiles on window sills and window boards.
- Letter boxes.
- Timberwork on windows, internally & externally, should be painted/ varnished by the tenant on a regular basis (maximum interval of five years).

#### **External Repairs:**

- Maintenance of gardens and hedges in tidy conditions.
- Repairs to, or replacement of fences and garden boundary walls erected by Council and by tenant.

- Repairs to, replacement of and re-erection of front gates, side gates or doors leading to garden areas.
- Fuel sheds or outhouses.
- Cleaning of silt, leaves or other deposits from gutters & gulleys.

### **Electrical Repairs:**

- Ceiling roses, lamp holders and plugs.
- Fuses, except main fuses.
- Elements for electric fires. All repairs to electric appliances, fires and heaters not installed by the Council.
- Replacement of light bulbs and any bulbs that may be required for pilot lights.

### **Plumbing Repairs:**

- Cleaning of gully traps.
- Cost of clearing of blocked house drain where a single drain serves a dwelling and the apportioned cost of clearing a combined drain.
- Replacement or repair of waste pipes inside the dwelling.
- Clearing air locks in pipes.
- Replacement or repair of taps on sink unit and wash-hand basins including leaking and dripping taps.
- Replacement or repair of toilet bowl.
- Replacement or repair of wash-hand basin.
- The Tenant is responsible for the repair & replacement of shower curtain/rails, shower surrounds/glass panel, glass doors and opening & closing mechanisms or otherwise
- Replacement or repair of toilet cistern and cover.
- Replacement or repair of ball-cock in toilet or other water flotation control unit within the toilet unit.
- Replacement or repair of toilet seat, chains and handles.
- Cooking and Heating Appliances:
  - Solid fuel, gas or other heating or cooking appliances installed by the tenant(s).
  - The basket / grate in all fireplaces and the replacement of glass panels in doors of room heaters. A replacement range will not normally be considered
  - Repair and replacement of tiles on fireplace / hearth. A replacement fireplace/ hearth will not be considered.

**Leaks:**

If the leak is outside the curtilage of the property the first point of contact for all water supply or foul drainage issues is Irish Water at **www.water.ie** or on **1850 278 278**

**General:**

You are responsible for the repair of any wilful or malicious damage. If the Council undertakes repairs resulting from such damages, the cost of such repairs will be charged to the tenant(s).

You are responsible for repairs to doors, windows, fixtures and fittings in the dwelling caused by destruction or damage by burglary, housebreaking, larceny or theft.

Where there are repeated call outs for any of the above items which are your responsibility and it is clear that the repairs or replacement are caused by mistreatment by the tenant, the tenant will be responsible for the cost and may be served with a Tenancy Warning

## Council responsibilities

The local authority may at their discretion carry out repairs and maintenance resulting from normal wear and tear without removing the responsibilities you have in relation to the maintenance of the property.

The Council is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the following items

**Structure of the Dwelling.**

- Structural repairs of walls
- Structural repairs of ceilings
- Structural repairs of floors
- Structural repairs of skirting
- Structural repairs of staircases
- Structural repairs of the roof (including tiles/slates, ridge cappings and barges)
- Structural repairs of chimneys (external parts)
- External repairs to airbricks and ventilators
- Repairs due to damage caused by wet and dry rot
- Fire damage repairs (except redecoration)
- Replacement/repairs of fascia board and soffit

## **External Repairs**

- Communal amenity areas
- Lighting in communal areas
- Communal stairs, paths, ramps and drives built by the Council
- Maintenance (not cleaning) of gutters and downpipes
- Replacing external doors and frames and weatherboards, where needed and identified by the Council.
- Replacing window frames and sashes, where needed and identified by the Council. Replacement of fences, where necessary and identified by the Council

## **Electrical Repairs**

- Repairs and renewal of electrical wiring
- Repair/Replacement of sockets
- Repairs/Replacement of ceiling roses
- Repairs/replacement of lamp holders, light switches, immersion heaters
- Wired mains smoke detectors installed by Galway City Council

## **Plumbing Repairs**

- Cistern and Water Storage tanks (cracked and leaking through wear and tear)
- Stopcocks, back boilers and hot water cylinders
- Toilet cisterns, basins, taps, toilet bowls cracked or leaking (through normal wear and tear)
- External wastepipes and drains – not blockages

## **Cooking and Heating Appliances**

- Defective Stoves or Ranges are no longer being replaced/ installed by Galway City Council as part of our Climate Action Strategy.
- Fire checks, immersion heaters

## Exceptional Circumstances

The Council will consider requests for repairs, which are your responsibility only in exceptional circumstances where it is impossible for you to do so. In these instances, work will be carried out on a chargeable basis.

**Note:** The Council shall ensure that, any project/works/construction/ maintenance/ repairs to the dwelling, which arise in accordance with its responsibilities under the Letting Agreement, and performed upon its direction, are carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013.

## Alterations to the Property

You must get written permission from Galway City Council to carry out the following works. Please note that this list is not exhaustive and you are advised to contact the Housing Department before commencing any works at your property to clarify whether permission is required.

- Install stoves & ranges
- Install fireplaces
- Replace kitchens
- Replace, renew flooring in wet areas
- Erect fencing or gates in the front or rear of the house
- Erect any aerial, satellite dish or any fitting or fixture to the side of the house
- Install CCTV cameras
- Paper the internal walls of the house
- Paint any external walls
- Alterations to internal layout, e.g. creation of a new door opening, sub-division of rooms, etc
- Fit an electric shower
- Removal of baths
- Installation of Pre-Pay electricity (Pre Paid Gas Meters are not permitted)
- Please note constructions of a shed on the property requires permission
- Extensions to existing property, sheds & entrances
- Installing new entrances
- Erection of dog runs is not permitted



- Alteration to existing doors & windows
- Replacing existing door & windows

Maintenance and repairs to these items will always be the responsibility of the tenant.

You may also need planning permission for certain works. If you are in doubt as to whether permission is required for any proposed alterations, please contact Galway City Council's Planning Department for clarification.

Where the tenant vacates a dwelling and wishes to remove any equipment fitted by them during the course of their tenancy, such as a stove or kitchen unit, they must ensure that the dwelling is reinstated to its pre-tenancy condition.

In the case of unauthorised alterations carried out, the Council may require you to fully reinstate the property to the original condition at your cost.

If the requested change involves the construction of an external structure you will need to draft up plans, clearly outlining the

following at the very minimum:

- The scale of the proposed changes.
- What level of consultation you have had with your neighbours about these plans.
- What extent of consultation you have had with the Planning Department.
- What extent of communication you have already had with officers of Galway City Council Housing Department in relation to the proposed changes.
- The name of the proposed builder.

In the event that alterations have been agreed: only qualified and experienced tradesmen should be used.

- Only contractors who are registered with a recognised and approved body should be used, for example; Construction Industry Federation (CIF).
- Contractors should have adequate insurance cover for both public and employer's liability.
- Tenants should make themselves aware of the requirements of the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Regulations 2013 (or latest if updated) in terms of the Client's responsibilities when carrying out certain works.

- The proposed works shall not spill over onto areas outside of your property without the consent of your neighbours, and the council's Housing Department where relevant.
- Alterations will not be permitted to newly built or refurbished houses during the defects liability period. Normally a period of 12 months following completion.
- Any alterations that you choose to carry out on your property become the property of Galway City Council as soon as the works are completed.

## Electric Vehicles and Charging Points

Tenants must request permission to install an Electrical Car Charger, tenants must adhere to the following conditions:

- There must a private driveway to the property, this is for Health & Safety reasons and insurance and liability issues. If the driveway is a public driveway or on a communal parking area then permission will not be granted for the installation of a private electric charger.
- The proposed installation works are compliant with all relevant Building Regulations.
- The proposed unit will not in any way, inhibit exiting utility (Water, Sewer & Surface water drains, Gas, Telecom, Broadband etc.) services within the curtilage of the property.
- Only contractors/trades persons who are registered with RECI are permitted to complete the proposed works. Cert to be forwarded to Galway City Council on Completion of the works by email to [housing@galwalwaycity.ie](mailto:housing@galwalwaycity.ie)
- Type and make of electric vehicle chargers shall be approved by SEAI and comply with all EU regulations and GCC are to be provided with details and specification of same.
- Only charger Level 1 or Level 2 are allowed to be installed, no Level 3 chargers allowed. Level 1 are standard 120 volt outlet, Level 2 have 240 volt power and Level 3 are DC super or fast chargers, direct from supplier grid. All chargers or wallboxes, be they standard, smart or load balancing must have own isolation switch.
- Contractors should have adequate insurance cover for both public and employer's liability.
- The proposed works shall not spill over onto areas outside of the curtilage of the property.
- Any alterations that are carried out on your property become the property of Galway City Council as soon as the works are completed.

- All costs associated with the installation of the electric charger are the responsibility of the tenant.
- The tenant is responsible for any liability issues that may arise from the installation of same.
- If the tenant no longer wants the charger it is their responsibility to remove it and reinstate the wall to its previous condition. All associated costs will be the responsibility of the tenant.





# Useful Contacts and Directory of 3rd Party Contacts

## Utilities Companies

Gas Networks	.....www.bordgaisenergy.ie	1850 632 632
ESB Networks	.....www.esbnetworks.ie	1850 372 999
Electric Ireland	.....www.electricireland.ie	1850 372 372
Energia	.....www.energia.ie	1850 300 700
SSE Airtricity	.....www.sseairtricity.com	1850 81 81 10
Bord Gais Energy	.....www.bordgaisenergy.ie	01 611 01 51
Climate Action Regional Offices (CARO)	.....www.caro.ie	
Climate Ireland	.....www.climateireland.ie	
Green home- An Taisce	.....www.greenhome.ie	
Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) Triple E List	.....www.seai.ie/Your_Business/Triple_E_Product_Register/	
Stop Food Waste	.....stopfoodwaste.ie/stop-food-waste-week-2019-working-to-reduce-food-waste	

## Waste Disposal Company

City Bin	.....www.citybin.com	1800 24 89 24
Barna Recycling	.....www.barnarecycling.com	091 771619
Wers Waste	.....www.werswaste.ie	1890 229 377

## Home Contents Insurance

Compare Insurance	.....www.compareinsuranceireland.ie	042 935 9090
Quote Devil Insurance	.....www.quotedevil.ie	01 254 1300
Axa home insurance	.....www.axa.ie	1890 24 7 365
Allianz home insurance	.....www.allianz.ie	01 448 48 48
FBD home insurance	.....www.fbd.ie	01 761 7617
123.ie home insurance	.....www.123.ie	01 518 1434

## Welfare Rights and Support Services

Consumer Rights	.....www.ccpic.ie	1890 432 432
Money Advice Budgeting Service	.....www.mabs.ie	0761 07 2000
Citizens Information Centre	.....www.citizensinformation.ie	0761 07 4000
HSE Elderly Support Services	.....www.hse.ie	1850 24 1850
The Samaritans	.....www.samaritans.ie	116 123
Childline	.....www.childline.ie (24 hrs)	1800 66 66 66
OR Text BULLY or TALK or HELP to 50101 for One to One texting 10am – 4am		

## Freephone Numbers

Childline	.....	1800 666 666
Rape Crisis Centre	.....	1800 77 8888
Garda Confidential Line	.....	1800 666 111
Women's Aid Helpline	.....	1800 341 900



**Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe**  
**Galway City Council**

City Hall, College Road, Galway, H91 X4K8.

**Email:** [customerservice@galwaycity.ie](mailto:customerservice@galwaycity.ie)

**Rphost:** [seirbhisdhochustaimairi@galwaycity.ie](mailto:seirbhisdhochustaimairi@galwaycity.ie)

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**[www.galwaycity.ie](http://www.galwaycity.ie)**