



Council of the Isles of Scilly: Housing Department

TENANT HAND BOOK

Information and advice

www.scilly.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 1234 105 option 3

Email: housing@scilly.gov.uk

Welcome

This handbook contains important information about your tenancy & should be read alongside your tenancy agreement. It explains your rights and responsibilities as a tenant, as well as the rights and responsibilities of the Council of the Isles of Scilly. We have tried to cover most things in this handbook that you will need to know but if you would like more information please contact us.

We aim to provide a high-quality housing service. We will listen to your views and involve you in the decisions that affect you and your home.

Should you need this handbook in a different format please contact us.

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Who we are

The Council of the Isles of Scilly Housing department is known as your landlord. Your tenancy agreement is the legal contract binding you and the landlord with certain rights and responsibilities. Please keep it in a safe place and read through in detail at the earliest opportunity.

Our Commitment to you

Your tenancy agreement sets out the full conditions, but in brief we will:

- Ensure our services are accessible to all
 - Treat you with respect and dignity
 - Use language that is easy to understand
 - Be open and honest
 - Maintain your confidentiality
 - Listen to your views
 - Inform you of any changes in central or local government that will affect either your tenancy, or how we manage your tenancy
 - Deal with issues fairly and provide you with clear information
 - When visiting your home we will always try to make an appointment first. Where an appointment hasn't been made we will always offer to return if the visit is inconvenient to you
 - Treat your home with respect
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Our expectations of you

- Look after your home (and garden if you have one) and return it in good condition
- Allow us to conduct annual safety inspections and complete any works to keep your home safe and secure
- Treat your neighbours and our staff with courtesy and respect
- Pay your rent
- Complete any repairs you are responsible for or inform us to action repairs we are responsible for
- Inform us and gain approval prior to conducting any interior or exterior alterations
- Inform us of any change in your financial or personal circumstances



How to pay your rent

You can pay the rent for your home by:

- Telephone using a debit or credit card on 0300 1234 105 (option 5)
- Cash, cheque, debit or credit card at the Council's one stop shop. These are located at the St Mary's Library and the Carn Gwaval Wellbeing Centre
- Standing order – your payment can be sent on any day of the week or month

Difficulties in paying?

We understand that many people have difficulty in paying bills sometimes. If bills are left unpaid the situation often gets worse. We want to help you avoid this.

If you experience any difficulty in paying your rent please contact us immediately. We may be able to offer you advice and ways to help. You may be entitled to Housing Benefit. Please contact our Benefits team for more information on 01726 226885 (Monday's only).

Should you want independent advice, local agencies and the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) amongst other can help. Their advice is confidential and they can be called on 08444 994188 or visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk (CAB).



What happens if you refuse to pay?

If you do not pay your rent on time, you will be in rent arrears. We will take action to recover arrears. Please get in touch with us before this situation is likely to occur, we do not want you to fall into arrears and we are here to help.

Should you force us to take action to recover these arrears we will:

- Write to you – telling you how much is owed and ask you to pay or to make a repayment agreement.
- Call you or visit – to discuss the arrears and a way forward.
- Write to you again – telling you how much is owed and ask you to pay or arrange a repayment agreement. Failure to contact us or rectify the arrears will result in you being served with a ‘notice of Seeking Possession’ or ‘Notice of Possession Proceedings’ on your home (the last step before court action). If it gets to this stage, you may be about to lose your home. But, you can still stop further action by contacting us to make payment in full or making a agreed repayment plan.
- Further failure to pay will see us taking you to court and a possession claim being issued. The court will order you to pay your arrears and in addition you will be responsible for the court costs.
- We may then request an eviction. If evicted you will still be expected to pay your arrears.

We will always be there to give you the chance to pay your arrears. The Housing Officer and Finance Team will be able to provide you with the support you need to resolve your issues and sustain your tenancy. If however, you choose not to interact with us, we will evict you and recover all monies owed. Remember it is always best to speak to us on 01720 424001 or arrange an appointment at the first moment you start having difficulties paying.

How to report a repair

Accidents and breakages happen. Boilers, gas and electrical points all need maintenance and servicing. We are committed to conducting all repairs we are responsible for quickly, and wherever possible in one visit. We ask you pay similar attention with repairs and maintenance you are responsible for.

Our responsibilities

- The structure of and exterior of the building (roofs, ceilings, window frames, external doors, guttering, outside pipes).
- Kitchen and bathroom fixtures (basins, sinks, toilets and baths)
- Council of the Isles of Scilly owned heating and hot water equipment
- Council of the Isles of Scilly owned electrical wiring, gas and water pipes
- Communal areas**, paving, shared gardens, parking areas and rubbish storage areas
- Communal areas** around your home (stairs, lifts, landings, lighting, entrances)

NB The rent you pay covers these repairs unless they are due to damage or neglect by you, your family, visitors or pets. If the repair is the result of neglect or deliberate damage we may do the work and charge you for it.

**The service charges (if applicable) must be paid to facilitate these actions.

To report a repair, call us on 01720 424440 or

Email Housing@scilly.gov.uk

Your responsibilities

- Interior decoration (painting walls – be aware we may ask you to paint them back to a neutral colour when you leave)
- Minor interior works and repairs i.e light bulbs, fluorescent tubes and fuses
- Maintenance of your garden (if you have one), bushes, hedges and trees*
- Regular ventilation of your property – to prevent damp and mould growth
- Allow us access to conduct servicing of gas, oil, solid fuel, water or heating appliances and chimneys owned by us.

*Please note some trees may require planning consideration prior to pruning such as elms.

Please note you are not permitted to carry out any other works to your property without seeking prior permission. Please request a copy of our 'Alteration to Property Enquiry' form or call the Housing Department on 01720 424440 to discuss



Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

What happens if...

You want to decorate or make changes to your home

For minor internal decoration such as painting, please do so. We want you to feel comfortable and 'at home'. When you vacate your property we may request that you re-decorate in a neutral colour.

However more detailed DIY needs our permission. For example, you may want to put a new bath tub in – which is great but we need to check the installation is done properly. If it isn't, it may damage the home and result in additional unexpected charges to you. Changing electric sockets may seem to be an easy job, but it could affect, the safe wiring of our home, placing you in danger.

We want your home to be as comfortable as possible, but it has to be safe, and legally compliant. Therefore for any of the below changes you must get in touch with us beforehand and ask permission to do so.

Get in touch if you wish to do any of the following:

- Any addition or alteration to our fixtures or fittings such as replacing kitchen doors, units or bathrooms suites
- Any addition or alteration connected with providing services to your home, such as a new gas, fire, extra radiators, new boilers or heating systems
- Erecting a garage, greenhouse, shed or putting in a pond
- Carrying out any structural alteration to the property such as removing a wall
- Building a new car parking space
- Placing a radio, TV aerial or satellite dish
- External painting of the home or placement of new fencing
- Any alterations to the electrical switches or sockets in your home

If you wish to do any of the above, call us for permission and advice on 01720 424440 or email housing@scilly.gov.uk

You want a pet

You need permission for a pet in your home. This is for both safety and maintenance purposes. If you choose to get one without permission you will be in breach of your tenancy agreement.



You lose your keys

Get in touch with us. We will arrange for your door to be opened, change the lock and provide you with new keys – we will charge you for this service. If you lost a communal key, we will change all communal locks (for safety) – this will incur a further charge.

Glass in windows or doors breaks

If the external glass in your windows or doors is broken, we will board them up or re-glaze to maintain the security of your home.

We will only replace broken glass free of charge where a crime reference number can be provided (a crime reference number is given to you by the police when you report a crime).

For internal glass breakages you may be able to claim off your home insurance.

You find mould and condensation

To prevent mould (black and green substance) your home needs to be heated and ventilated properly.

Top tips are:

- Allow plenty of air circulation regularly in your home. i.e if a dry day, open the windows.
- Keep your home warm
- Do not use bottled gas or paraffin heaters inside
- Dry clothes outside
- Ensure appliances such as a tumble dryer are externally vented
- Leave a 2inch gap between the wall and any cupboards and wardrobes
- Open vents on window (if fitted)
- Wipe down a bath or shower after use
- Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed (to prevent moist air flowing through the home)

If you find mould, treat it by washing down the walls and window frames with an anti-fungal solution. There are also anti-fungus paints that can be used. If you continue to have problems please contact the housing department to report the problem.

Any other questions

These and many other questions can be answered in more detail by contacting the Council of the Isles of Scilly Housing Department, call us on 01720 424440 or email housing@scilly.gov.uk.

Safety in the community

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

As a tenant you are expected to be 'a good neighbour' it is your responsibility for respecting your neighbourhood and other residents around you.

We are committed to making the neighbourhoods and properties that we manage and own, safe places to live. We want you to be able to live in your home free from anti-social behaviour (ASB). If there are issues that are causing upset but outside of severe harassment, physical violence, or where harassment is discriminatory in nature then your housing officers will be able to work with all parties to reach a solution for all. If the anti-social behaviour is high level or persists, a higher level of enforcement will be assigned the case.

You can report anti-social neighbour behaviour by contacting us on 01720 424440 or emailing housing@scilly.gov.uk.

If you have concerns for your safety or an emergency situation dial 999.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is about protecting children, young people and vulnerable people from abuse and neglect.

If you have concerns about a child or vulnerable adult or are experiencing abuse or neglect and would like advice you can contact one of the dedicated safeguarding team members at the Council of the Isles of Scilly. All concerns are taken very seriously and dealt with sensitively and as confidentially as possible.

How to contact us

Write

Housing Department
Council of the Isles of Scilly
Town Hall
St Mary's
Isles of Scilly
TR21 0LW

Telephone

01720424440

Email

housing@scilly.gov.uk



Moving into your home: an aide



Electricity:

- Location of meter:
- Meter no:
- Location of fuse box:
- Current supplier:
- Meter reading/s:



Water:

- Location of meter:
- Meter no:
- Location of stopcock:
- Meter reading/s:



Waste Collection:

- Waste collection day:

You also need to notify the utility companies that you are the new tenant at this address. They will need your address and post code.

Other people and companies you may need to tell of your new address

✓ **Services**

- Council Tax
- Satellite or Cable
- Internet
- Electricity
- Gas
- Water
- Telephone
- Mobile Phone
- Post Office (redirection)
- Other account you hold

✓ **Health**

- Doctor
- Dentist
- Optician
- Hospital

✓ **Others**

- Home Contents insurance
- DVLA – Vehicle registration
- DVLA – Driving License
- Car insurance
- School/colleges/nursery
- Milk man
- Consider if there are any other account you may hold



