

# Welcome

All you need to know  
about your new home



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# Welcome

## Hello

This is your handbook. It gives you the information you need about your rights and responsibilities as a Knowsley Housing Trust (KHT) tenant. This includes the standards of service you can expect from us, important things about your tenancy and how we will look after your home and help you.

We have also provided some vital safety information, and a list of useful contacts so you know who to call when you need us.

Keep your handbook somewhere safe so that you can refer to it when you need to.



### Call us

0151 290 7000 /  
0800 561 0007 (Freephone)



### Want to chat?

Try our Live Chat service for your online advisor at [www.k-h-t.org](http://www.k-h-t.org)



### Email us

[contactcentre@firstark.com](mailto:contactcentre@firstark.com)



### Write to us

KHT - Lakeview, Kings Business Park, Prescot, Merseyside L34 1PJ

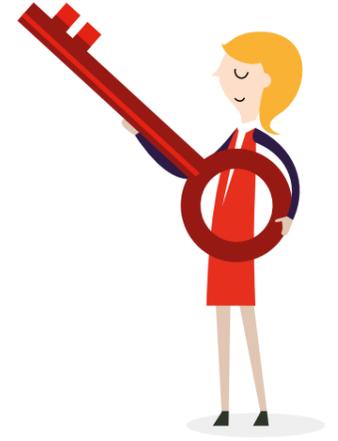


### We're open

Monday to Friday - 8am to 8pm  
Saturday - 9:30am to 1pm



# Moving in



## Removals

We can offer low cost, fully insured packing and removals to move your contents from home to home.

## Keys

**When you've signed your tenancy agreement, we will give you the keys to your new home:**

- 3 front door keys
- 3 back door keys (*where applicable*)
- 1 key or fob for any communal areas

If you lose any you may be charged and at the end of your tenancy, we will ask for a complete set of keys to be returned to us, so keep them safe.

## Lettable standard

When you accept your tenancy, we will make sure that your home is at an agreed 'Lettable Standard'.

**To ensure that it meets our standards, we will do the following:**

- Make the property clean and clear
- Ensure it offers an appropriate degree of thermal comfort
- Ensure that it is safe for you to move into

- Conduct gas and electricity safety checks
- Ensure all doors open and close correctly and are in a serviceable condition
- Provide keys for all doors, communal doors and windows
- Ensure the property is watertight and free of any major defect
- Ensure that kitchen and bathroom floors are in a serviceable condition
- Ensure that all bathroom tiles and fittings (*bath/shower, sink and toilet*) are usable and hygienic
- Ensure that the smoke/heat detection in the property is in working order

## Insurance

We insure the structure of your home (*buildings insurance*) but you are responsible for insuring the contents.

Contents insurance will help you to replace essential items in the event of a burglary, fire or flood. It is your responsibility to arrange this insurance cover.

## Utility bills

You are responsible for setting up utility accounts in your name for your new home. This includes your gas, electricity and water.

## TV and telephones

Television aerials are your responsibility, unless you live in a flat with a communal area where a service charge applies - we are not responsible for previous installations of telephone, satellite and TV media packages.

## Home improvements

For assured tenants only, if you wish to make alterations or improvements, you need to put the request in writing to us, including plans and quotes for the work where appropriate. For gas/electrical changes you must use a suitably qualified contractor.

## Blinds

Blinds can offer an alternative to curtains, controlling the amount of light that filters into a room. We can provide and fit roller and vertical blinds in a variety of styles, patterns and colours to suit your home and budget.

## Flooring

We can offer an extensive selection of affordably priced, quality carpets, laminates and vinyl flooring in a variety of styles, colours and patterns.

## Furniture

All our general needs properties are let unfurnished. There are a number of furniture projects run by local charities and voluntary organisations offering second-hand furniture at a low cost. For more information, please visit [www.knowsley.gov.uk/residents](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/residents).

## Financial services

Once you have moved in to your new home, you may want to review your financial needs, both now and for the future.

**Our team can offer advice on the following:**

- Pensions
- Life Insurance
- Retirement
- Critical Illness
- Income Protection
- Family Protection

**For more information about our services:**



**Call us**  
0151 290 7891



**Email us**  
[info@orient-living.co.uk](mailto:info@orient-living.co.uk)

# Understanding your rent



## Paying your rent

Your tenancy agreement will say whether you pay monthly or weekly. If you pay your rent weekly it is due every Monday. This is usually by direct debit.

You can also pay over the telephone, or at a Pay Point facility. Shortly after signing your tenancy agreement, you will receive a payment card; you must keep this in a safe place even if you currently have no rent to pay.

If you are claiming Housing Benefit you will need this payment card when you migrate onto Universal Credit.

## Housing Benefit

You may be eligible for help with payment of your rent, depending on your financial circumstances. Claims for assistance can be made by calling [0151 443 4042](tel:01514434042) or emailing [benefits@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@knowsley.gov.uk).

## Your responsibilities

Your rent account should never be in arrears. Paying your rent is your responsibility.

**If you have any change in circumstances, you should tell us and Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC) and:**

- Provide all information requested for your Housing Benefit claim
- Tell us if you are having difficulties paying your rent

## How we can help

If you are struggling to pay your rent, it is important that you get in touch with us straight away. We can give you advice about applying for benefits that you might be eligible for.

Our team is well trained and highly experienced in Welfare Reform and have helped our customers to access over £3 million in unclaimed benefits. We can help with completing Disability Benefit and Housing Benefit claim forms as well as advising you about Universal Credit, Benefits Cap and Bedroom Tax.

We can also give you basic advice on organising your debts and refer you to the different agencies that can help you to resolve your debt problems.

## Universal Credit

Universal Credit is designed for people who are looking for work or who are on a low income.

**Universal Credit will affect you if you are of working age and are claiming, or want to claim, any of the following benefits:**

- Income-based Jobseekers' Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

See page 26 for more information on Universal Credit.

If you receive Universal Credit your payment may include assistance toward your rent. It is your responsibility to pay your rent to us and to ensure that you can cover your rent in full. For more information about Universal Credit, see our website [www.k-h-t.org](http://www.k-h-t.org).

## Rent arrears

If you get behind with your rent, we will deal with the matter quickly, efficiently and in a confidential and sympathetic way. We will contact you at every stage of the process to advise and help you manage your account. We will always try to come to an arrangement with you to start making repayments. As long as you keep to this arrangement and the outstanding debt decreases, we will not take any further action against your tenancy. However, if you do not keep to this arrangement, you may be at risk of losing your home.

# About your tenancy



## Your Tenancy Agreement

Your tenancy agreement is a legal contract between you and KHT - your landlord.

The terms and conditions of your tenancy agreement will be explained to you when you accept the tenancy and sign the agreement.

We offer 3 types of tenancies depending on your circumstances and the property:

### 1 Assured tenancy with Preserved Right to Buy

This type of tenancy applies to people who had secured tenancies with Knowsley Borough Council which transferred to us on 15 July 2002.

### 2 Assured tenancy

This type of tenancy applies to people who were housed by us from another social landlord after 15 July 2002, and already had this type of tenancy. It does not have the Preserved Right to Buy.

### 3 A starter tenancy

This applies to all our new customers. It means that you will have a probationary tenancy for your first 12 months. If there are no problems during this time, your tenancy will be converted to an assured tenancy (type 2).

The tenancy agreement outlines both your rights and responsibilities and those of KHT. By signing the agreement, you accept these rights and agree to abide by your responsibilities.

#### We will:

- Give you written notice to change your rent or service charge
- Consult over any proposed changes to your tenancy agreement
- Complete necessary repairs to the structure of your home

#### You will:

- Pay your rent in advance
- Notify us of any repairs that are needed
- Occupy your property as your principal home
- Give us 4 weeks' written notice if you are moving out
- Maintain the internal decoration and not cause damage to your property
- Avoid causing nuisance to your neighbours through your behaviour or that of your visitors

## Service charges

In addition to your rent, some properties have a charge for other services provided to your home and which are in addition to the rent you pay.

#### Some examples of such charges are:

- Communal heating
- Lighting and cleaning communal areas
- Landscape maintenance
- Buildings insurance and management

All service charge items are detailed in your tenancy agreement and are reviewed every year.

## Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

Anti-social behaviour is defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as “acting in a manner that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress.”

**Knowsley Housing Trust’s tenancy agreements set out the responsibilities of our tenants as follows:**

*Not to cause, commit or allow anyone living with you, or your visitors to cause or commit any act or omission in your home, in communal areas, on surrounding land or in the locality of your home which is, or is likely to:*

- Be a nuisance or annoyance to; and/or
- Interfere with the peace and comfort of: and/or
- Cause injury or offence

KHT takes ASB extremely seriously. If at any time you find yourself a victim of ASB please contact your ASB Housing Officer on **0151 290 7000** or email them at [asb@firstark.com](mailto:asb@firstark.com). For more information on ASB please visit [www.k-h-t.org](http://www.k-h-t.org).

## Pets

You need written permission from us before you are allowed to keep a pet. Please refer to your tenancy agreement for more information. Permission will not be withheld in respect to tenants or prospective tenants with disabilities who depend on pets, regardless of their property type, e.g. Guide Dogs.

## Supporting you in your home

We have a team of Tenancy Sustainability Officers who offer support to our most vulnerable customers or to those customers who have not held a social housing tenancy previously.

This team will help you manage your home and give you the confidence to manage independently, taking control of decisions that affect you. If necessary, we will signpost you to other agencies to provide additional ongoing support, with your consent.

As part of your application for housing with KHT, we will assess whether you need support from this team. If we conclude that you would benefit from this extra support it will be offered to you. It is highly unlikely that you would be offered a tenancy if you refuse to accept this additional support.

### How does the tenancy support service work?

The support is provided by trained officers who will visit you at your home to discuss the help you need and develop a personalised action plan with you.

This plan will set out what you want to achieve and the support that is available to you. Often we will need to contact other agencies or organisations on your behalf.

Tenancy support is not intended to replace any help you may be getting from departments and organisations such as Social Services, Women’s Aid or the NHS, but provides additional support to help sustain independent living in your home.

If you need support please call us on **0151 290 7000** to talk about how we can support you in your home.

## Moving out

If you wish to end your tenancy with us you would normally give us 4 weeks written notice. Our Customer Services team will take you through ending your tenancy.

**Before you leave your home, you will need to:**

- Leave it in a clean and tidy state, with no damage
- Ensure no belongings (*including furniture, curtains, carpets, laminate flooring, light fittings*) or rubbish are left in the house or garden, including lofts and outbuildings
- Tell the utility companies (*gas, water, electric*) you are moving
- Advise Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council’s benefits team of your move and of your forwarding address if you’re claiming benefits
- Arrange with the Post Office to have your mail redirected to your new address
- Make sure you have paid your rent and any other charges before you move
- Ensure your property is empty and there is no one living there
- Provide us with your forwarding address
- Return all of the keys you were given when you first moved in

**Please note:** If you leave the property in need of any rubbish removals or with damage caused by you, a household member or visitor, we will require a payment plan for the remedial works and this may affect any future housing applications.

If in doubt, please contact Customer Services on **0151 290 7000**.

# Repairs & maintenance

## What we do

We provide a comprehensive repair service for tenants and ensure that our properties remain in good condition. We are constantly working to improve our service, ensuring that repairs are carried out quickly, efficiently and to a good standard.

## Completing repairs

Your repair will be categorised by urgency:

### Emergencies

These will normally be completed within 24 hours (e.g. mains water bursts, serious leaks, complete or partial loss of power).

### Routine

These will normally be completed within 28 calendar days (e.g. leaking gutters, easing doors and windows).

## Planned maintenance

When we are carrying out planned work to your home, we will inform you at least 28 days in advance. For disruptive works (e.g. electrical rewiring), we will aim to give as much notice as possible.

For further information please visit [www.k-h-t.org](http://www.k-h-t.org).

## Cyclical repairs and maintenance

Along with emergency and planned work, we will also carry out regular repairs and maintenance in your home.

These include the following:

- Annual gas safety inspection if you have a domestic gas supply
- Electrical test at a frequency determined by the previous electrical test
- External repair and painting programme on a rolling basis
- Periodic inspections of lifts, dry risers, water pumps and lightning conductors in our high-rise blocks
- Servicing of all of our residential stair/vertical lifts and ceiling track hoists twice a year

We will offer you an appointment for gas or electrical tests, or you can book one at a time and date that is convenient to you.

For all regular repairs and maintenance work, we will let you know in advance when we will be visiting your property.

## Chargeable repairs

As part of your Tenancy Agreement you agree to maintain your home to a reasonable standard. If you do not do this and we are required to carry out any repairs to your home, you may have to pay for the cost of the repair.

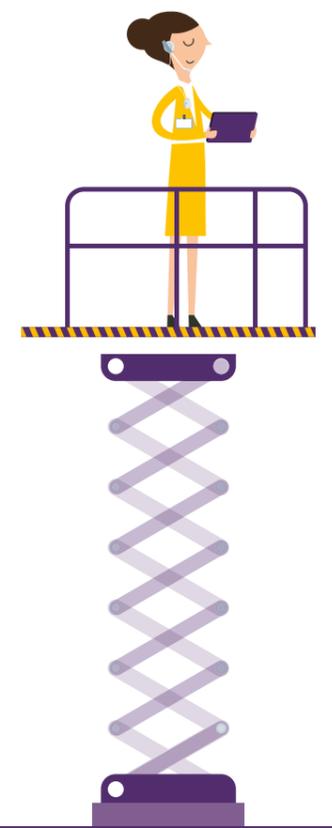
We will charge for repairs when it:

- Falls under tenant responsibility including gaining access due to lost keys and blockages to baths, basins and WC
- Is a result of an act of negligence or misuse caused by you, a family member or visitor
- Is to return the property to its former state due to unsatisfactory or unauthorised improvements/alterations
- Is to any overgrown or ill-maintained garden including removal of rubbish left in the home, outhouse or garden area if your tenancy is terminated

**Please note:** We receive up to 10 calls per day regarding blocked toilets, which is a chargeable repair.

To save you time and money, follow these simple tips:

- Keep a bin in the bathroom. Non-biodegradables such as baby wipes, cotton wool, buds, sanitary products and nappies (to name but a few) are likely to cause a blockage, so make sure they go in the bin, **not** your toilet
- Never put food scraps, fat or oil down the sink or toilet
- Remember that the only things that should be flushed down your toilet are human waste and toilet paper



Type of repair	KHT responsibility	Tenant responsibility
Filling small plaster cracks		✓
Plastering	✓	
Replacing keys and locks when lost		✓
Easing internal doors to fit carpets		✓
Repairs due to wear and tear	✓	
Repairs due to tenant neglect or damage		✓
Additional security		✓
Clearing blocked sinks, basins, toilets or shower wastes		✓
Plumbing in washing machines		✓
Tap washers	✓	
Sink and bath plugs		✓
Shower curtain and rail		✓
Renew and fix toilet seat		✓
Leaks	✓	
Hot and cold water tanks	✓	
Bleeding radiators	✓	
Re-lighting boilers		✓
Boiler repairs	✓	
Radiator leak	✓	
Gas leak within property	✓	✓
Gas servicing	✓	
Gas/electric fire fitted by KHT	✓	
Gas/electric fire fitted by tenant		✓
Sweeping chimneys based on who fitted the gas appliance	✓	✓
Replacing fuses		✓
Replacing light bulbs		✓
Extractor fans	✓	
Lighting	✓	
Sockets	✓	

Type of repair	KHT responsibility	Tenant responsibility
Immersion heater	✓	
Communal gardens and grassed areas	✓	
Entry phone	✓	
Lifts	✓	
Beams	✓	
Chimney stacks	✓	
Foundations	✓	
Rainwater and soil pipes	✓	
Timbers and joists	✓	
Gutters, soffits and bargeboards	✓	
Roof covering	✓	
Brickwork	✓	
Insect/rodent infestation to block Insect/rodent infestation to individual property	✓	✓
Concrete screeds	✓	
Floor joists	✓	
Floor boards	✓	
Skirting boards	✓	
Floor tiles	✓	
Kitchen/bathroom vinyl	✓	
Carpet		✓
Laminate		✓
Internal decorations		✓
Decorations to and maintenance of communal areas	✓	
Window fasteners, catches etc - not damaged by tenant	✓	
Window frames	✓	
Window glazing		✓
Communal fencing, walls and gates	✓	
Boundary fences and walls - where installed by KHT	✓	
Pathways - where installed by KHT	✓	

# Independence & comfort



## What we do

KHT is committed to meeting the needs of its disabled and vulnerable residents.

Our aim is to help residents and their families to continue to live independently and comfortably in their homes for as long as possible.

Under the Equality Act 2010, if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities you are classed as disabled.

The responsibility to provide equipment and adaptations lies with your Local Authority, in this case Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC).

However, as your Landlord we have a social and moral duty to work with others to take care of our most vulnerable residents.

## Partnership working

Our adaptation service is provided through a partnership with KMBC.

KMBC will provide Occupational Therapy services while KHT will provide specialist contractors to carry out works together with technical knowledge, guidance and supervision.

## What's an adaptation?

Disabled adaptations are pieces of specialist equipment, extra fittings or minor alterations to your home, which enable you and your family to overcome day-to-day difficulties.

The purpose of an adaptation is to restore independence, privacy, confidence and dignity, giving you control of your own life.

### Equipment and adaptations include:

- Ramp
- Lever taps
- Grab rails

## Categories and timescales

The need for an adaptation will be based on the definitions contained within the Department of Health's 'Prioritising need in the context of Putting People First' document.

## Assessment for adaptations

The majority of requests for adaptations will be considered upon the recommendation of a community or hospital Occupational Therapist or similar professional. This will occur after we have carried out an assessment of needs using the Fair Access to Care model.

Where a minor adaptation is required an assessment can be carried out by our trained staff within our contact centre, in line with the "Minor adaptations without delay" guidance published by the College of Occupational Therapists.

## Third party agencies

Often we will need to contact other agencies or organisations on your behalf. Tenancy support is not intended to replace any help you may be getting from departments and organisations such as Social Services, Women's Aid or the NHS, but provides additional support to help sustain independent living in your home.

If you need support please call us on **0151 290 7000** to talk about how we can support you in your home.

## Applying for adaptations

There are a number of ways you can apply for an adaptation:



### Call us

0151 290 7000 /  
0800 561 0007 (Freephone)



### Email us

enquiries@k-h-t.org



### Want to chat?

Try our Live Chat service for your online advisor at [www.k-h-t.org](http://www.k-h-t.org)

You can also apply via Knowsley Council's Access team on **0151 443 2600** or through specialist organisations such as the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB), SAFFA or Age Concern.

# Safety in your home

## Keeping you safe

Keeping you and your loved ones safe in your home is important to us. This section provides some advice on how you can help us to keep you safe.

## Gas safety

A regular safety check is the best way to protect you, your family and home. We have the legal duty to carry out an annual check in your home, even if you do not have a live gas supply.

### About your gas safety check

When your gas safety check is due, you will receive a letter from us with a date and time for the check to be carried out. Should you need to re-arrange, please call us on **0800 561 0007**. The inspection takes around 45 minutes, is not intrusive and is free. Evening appointments are available.

### Allowing access to your home

It is essential that you allow us access into your home to carry out these checks. If you do not, you will be breaching your tenancy agreement, and endangering the safety of you, your family and others.

**If you persistently deny us access to your home for these checks, we will take legal action, which could result in you losing your home and any legal costs may be charged to you.**

### What to do in an emergency

**If you smell gas or suspect there is a leak at your property, you should immediately:**

- Turn off the gas supply at the meter
- Put out naked flames
- **Not** smoke or strike any matches
- Open all doors and windows to ventilate the room
- **Not** operate electrical equipment or use electrical switches
- **Immediately contact the National Grid Gas Emergency Freephone number - 0800 111 999**
- Contact KHT on **0800 561 0007**

## Electricity safety

We are responsible for maintaining the electrical circuits in your home to a good standard. To make sure you are safe, we must carry out a safety check from time to time.

### Allowing access to your home

If you do not provide access to your home for safety checks, you will be breaching your tenancy agreement, and may be endangering the safety of you, your family and others. If you persistently deny us access to your home to make these checks, we will have no alternative but to take legal action, which could result in you losing your home.

### What will the electrical safety check involve?

**The engineer will:**

- Check for any faults to the fixed wiring system in your house
- Test the wiring for safety
- Check that the fuses or circuit breakers fitted in the fuse board are the correct type and size and that the circuits are labelled correctly
- Check and test whether the earthing is correct in your home and conforms to the latest regulations

### Preparing for an electrical engineer's visit

We will tell you in advance when a service is due and will come at a time that suits you.

**It will be helpful to us and will mean a shorter visit if you could take the following steps to prepare for the service:**

- Ensure access to sockets in all rooms
- Ensure access to the fuse boards, especially if they are in cupboards

Should you need to rearrange please call us on **0800 561 007**. To find out more visit [www.k-h-t.org](http://www.k-h-t.org).

**If you persistently deny us access to your home for these checks, we will take legal action, which could result in you losing your home and any legal costs may be charged to you.**



## Fire safety

### Fire services

We are actively working with the Fire and Rescue Services in all our blocks to ensure we do all we can to keep our tenants safe.

### What does KHT do to manage and reduce the risks of fire in your home?

We undertake a series of measures to ensure that your home is safe and protected from the risks associated with fire.

#### Some of these are:

- Regular inspections of communal areas in blocks to identify any potential breaches in fire safety
- Robust monitoring of fire alarm systems where fitted. If the system detects heat/smoke, the monitoring station will call the fire service who will attend
- Regular routine maintenance of fire detection and alarm systems, emergency lights, smoke ventilation systems and dry risers
- Undertaking a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) on all our common areas

### What can you do as a tenant to reduce the risks of fire in your home?

#### Most fires can be avoided if these simple rules are followed:

- Do not use or store gas cylinders, paraffin, petrol or other highly flammable liquids in your home
- Never place candles on or near materials that could burn or catch fire (e.g. curtains, paper, wood)
- Only ever use candles if they are in a stable holder and never leave candles unattended
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children
- Never overload plug sockets
- Never leave cookers unattended, avoid using chip pans, and keep children away from the kitchen while you are cooking
- Report any broken switches, sockets, light fittings, exposed wiring etc. to our Contact Centre on **0151 290 7000** who will arrange a repair
- If your own electrical items have exposed wires, stop using them and arrange for them to be repaired or replaced
- Communal areas **must** be kept clear at all times. Items in these areas may catch fire or obstruct your escape route and may hinder the movement of the emergency services
- Doors are designed to be self-closing to slow down the spread of fire to other areas. **Do not** wedge open under any circumstances. **Do not** remove self-closing devices. We may charge to refit if removed
- If you live in an apartment, don't smoke in any communal areas including landings, lifts, stairs and foyers. It's the law, and is for yours and your neighbours' safety
- Maintain your smoke alarm, testing it regularly (*ideally once a week*)

## Using and maintaining your smoke alarm

### To test

1 Once a week, press test button in centre and release

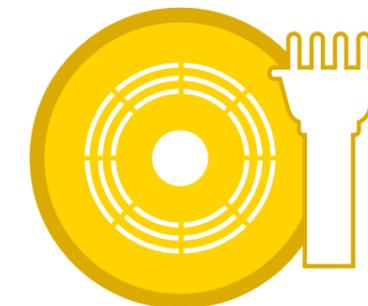


2 The alarm will emit a loud noise and stop automatically



### To maintain

1 Remove dust every 3 months with vacuum cleaner with soft brush



2 Do not use solvents or cleaners and do not paint the alarm



If there is a fire, never assume that someone else has called 999 – make the call yourself.

### Simple fire safety checks before bed

- Close internal doors. If a fire does breakout, this will assist in ensuring it is contained within that area
- Unplug electrical items (*but not items like fridges and freezers*)
- Check that your cooker is turned off and do not leave the washing machine or tumble dryer on overnight
- Leave your door keys in a convenient position close to the door, but away from the reach of burglars
- Check doors to the outside are clear and free from obstructions
- If you smoke, make sure you put cigarettes out properly, and don't smoke in bed or while sleepy

### What to do in the event of a fire breaking out in your home

Below is some advice from Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services:

- Make sure you are familiar with emergency evacuation procedures
- Make an escape plan so that you and your family know what to do if there is a fire in your home
- Practice this plan, make sure everyone understands it and knows where the door key is
- If it is too dangerous to follow your planned escape route because stairs and hallways are full of smoke, ring 999 and stay inside the safest room. Keep the doors closed and use towels or bedding to block the smoke at the bottom of the door

If you live in a high rise building, a block of flats, an extra care or sheltered scheme, there may be specific fire procedures for that building. You will be told about these when you move in and notices will be displayed throughout the building.

#### Important:

- Try to remain calm and don't panic
- Alert everyone else in your property to the fire
- Check doors with the back of your hand before opening them - if they are warm do not open them, the fire may be on the other side
- If you have a balcony, never use this to escape from unless it forms part of an official escape route
- Never go back into the building until the Fire Service have advised that it is safe to do so

## Condensation

### How to prevent condensation in your home

Condensation occurs when warm air meets a cold surface. Water is formed at the point of contact with the cold surface, just as a bathroom mirror steams up when you have a hot bath.

You can reduce the problems caused by condensation and dampness by following the advice below:

- Never block air bricks or vents in your walls, door or windows. If you have a gas boiler in your home then vents may provide oxygen for the efficient operation of your heating system, therefore it is dangerous to block these vents off
- When taking a bath or shower provide ventilation by opening a window or using an extractor fan if fitted
- When cooking in the kitchen, keep the door closed but open a window to allow steam to escape. If you have no windows the extractor fan should be left to run for a while
- Reduce the amount of moisture in the air by not drying clothes directly on radiators or storage heaters
- Do not allow kettles and pans to boil for longer than necessary
- If you have an extractor fan then please use it
- Avoid using portable gas heaters as they produce high levels of water vapour
- Ensure that tumble driers are vented to the outside

## Water safety

In line with health and safety guidelines, we inspect a sample of multi-occupancy properties on an annual basis. Any Legionella risks will be identified and rectified. We also flush water systems in all vacant properties at handover stage to reduce risk.

### What is Legionella and Legionnaire's disease?

Legionella is bacteria that lives in water supply systems. It is not a major risk in homes, but can be a risk to health in some places like little-used water outlets.

### Is there any risk to KHT properties?

The risk posed by Legionella in water supplies in our properties is minimal. To date there have been no reported incidents of Legionella, however, we have decided to make customers aware of the risks.

## What you can do to prevent Legionnaire's disease

**There are several easy steps you can take to help reduce the risk of being exposed to Legionella bacteria and ensure that your domestic water supply is fresh and safe:**

- If you go on holiday or leave your property unoccupied for more than two weeks, run all the taps/showers for approximately two minutes to freshen your system before using the water supply. It's also useful to descale the showerhead as you would your kettle or iron to keep it clean and effective
- Do not alter the temperature of your boiler or immersion heater. These should remain on the optimum setting (*greater than 60°C*) to ensure that the boiler is working to maximum efficiency

## Asbestos safety

**Asbestos can be found in most homes in the UK that were built before the year 2000.** If asbestos containing materials (ACMs) are left undisturbed, there is no significant health risk. When asbestos is disturbed it breaks up into small fibres which are released into the air. These fibres - invisible to the naked eye - may pose a health risk if they are breathed in.

### Where can asbestos be found?

- Insulation around pipes
- Textured finishes e.g. Artex
- Ceiling tiles and vinyl floor tiles
- Service ducts
- Bath panels
- Heating appliances and domestic equipment
- Fire-break materials used in lofts
- Panelling around steelwork
- Insulation boards and riser panels in bathrooms or ducts
- Cement sheets (*flat and corrugated*) used as roofing, wall cladding and guttering

### Our commitment to you

UK legislation requires landlords to identify ACMs only within 'common areas' of their properties and make a plan to manage the asbestos. There is no legal requirement to identify ACMs within domestic properties.

## Our policy is in line with the government and Health and Safety Executive:

*Leave asbestos in place unless it is in an unsatisfactory condition or is likely to be subject to frequent disturbances, or if it can be removed as part of a repair, improvement or alteration.*

To comply with legislation, we have carried out asbestos surveys of communal areas in our properties. We have also committed to go further and carry out a survey programme to identify ACMs in our customers' homes.

### Asbestos and DIY

**You can carry out decorating and DIY, but you must take note of the advice relating to asbestos that may be present in your home. Asbestos should not be drilled, sanded, rubbed down or disturbed in any way.**

For any major works, permission must be gained from KHT by calling **0151 290 7000**.

### If in doubt:



#### Call us

0151 290 7000 /  
0800 561 0007 (*Freephone*)



#### We're open

Monday to Friday - 8am to 8pm  
Saturday - 9:30am to 1pm

# Universal Credit



## Your Universal Credit check list

- Set up a bank account
- Get yourself online
- Work out how you will pay your rent
- Prepare yourself a monthly budget
- Once you move onto Universal Credit call us on **0151 290 7000** and we can support you.

## Your Universal Credit step-by-step guide

### 1 Get a bank account

You must have a bank account to receive Universal Credit.

#### To open a bank account, you will need to provide:

- Proof of ID e.g. a current passport
- Proof of current UK address e.g. council tax bill, or a copy of your tenancy agreement

To pay your rent you will need your rent account number, which you can find on your rent card.

Make sure you have an up-to-date rent card. If you have lost your rent card, please call us on

**0151 290 7000** or Freephone **0800 561 0007** to request a new one.

### 2

#### Get online to claim Universal Credit

To claim Universal Credit you will need to go to the Universal Credit website - [www.universalcredit.service.gov.uk](http://www.universalcredit.service.gov.uk).

If you don't have access to the Internet at home, your Job Centre can tell you about local places where you can access the Internet for free. Also, if you would like to improve your computer skills, then your Job Centre or library should be able to find you a course.

The government say that households who are not online are missing out on savings of up to £560 per a year from shopping around and paying bills online. We can help you get online through our partner team, One Ark. Call them on **0151 290 7000** for more information.

### 3

#### Paying your rent

If you were previously in receipt of housing benefit, your rent will have been automatically paid directly to us. This will now change. Once you receive Universal Credit, it will be your responsibility to pay your rent directly to us.

#### There are lots of easy ways you can pay your rent:

- Direct Debit
- Online at [www.k-h-t.org](http://www.k-h-t.org)
- Standing Order
- Telephone - call **0844 557 8321** for our automated service or **0151 290 7000** or Freephone **0800 561 0007** to speak to one of our operators
- In person - go to your nearest PayPoint

Under certain circumstances we may be able to apply for your housing costs to be paid direct to us. If you feel that you would benefit from this service, please contact your Income Officer on **0151 290 7921**.

### 4

#### Budget your money and keep track of your outgoings

When you receive Universal Credit, you will need to ensure that you budget for your priority bills including your rent. Creating a budget can give you greater control of your finances.

Think about what you need to budget for using this handy monthly budget planner. If you need any help with your budget planning, our Welfare Reform and Income Team are on hand to provide advice and support. Call them on **0151 290 7921**.

## Household budgeting

Household income	£
Universal Credit	
Other <i>(e.g wages, benefits etc)</i>	
<b>Total</b>	

Household expenditure	£
Rent	
Council tax	
Electricity and Gas	
Water	
Food	
Petrol	
Mobile phone	
TV subscription	
Internet	
Other <i>(e.g insurance, gym membership, loans etc)</i>	
<b>Total</b>	
<b>Less income</b>	
<b>Total remaining</b>	

If you find you have a minus total please call our Welfare Reform and Income team on [0151 290 7921](tel:01512907921), who will be able to help.

## Your questions answered

You can go to [www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit) or call on:

- Universal Credit live service:  
[0800 328 9344](tel:08003289344)
- Universal Credit full service:  
[0800 328 5644](tel:08003285644)

Monday to Friday - 8am to 6pm  
*(closed on bank holidays).*

Contact us today if you have any queries regarding Universal Credit:



### Call us

0151 290 7921/  
0800 561 0007 *(Freephone)*



### We're open

Monday to Friday - 8am to 8pm  
Saturday - 9:30am to 1pm

# Let us know

## Compliments and complaints

We are committed to providing a quality housing service in a professional and efficient manner.

All of our staff members are trained to provide the highest possible standard of service. However, if our service does not meet those standards, we would like to hear from you.

We welcome your complaints, compliments and suggestions, and we use your feedback to identify areas for improvement.

We keep records of all the complaints we receive and we check them regularly to make sure we are dealing with them effectively and consistently.

## What is a complaint?

A complaint is 'an expression of dissatisfaction with a standard of service, action or lack of action from KHT where a response is needed'.

This could include a perceived service failure or a failure against local or national standards.

### A formal complaint is not:

- A request for a service e.g. initial reporting of a repair
- A request for information on our policy
- An appeal for a review of a decision

We will aim to handle all expressions of dissatisfaction at the first point of contact and informally. However, if the action taken doesn't resolve your issue, a formal complaint will be logged and fully investigated in line with our published process. For further information visit [www.k-h-t.org](http://www.k-h-t.org).

## Have your say

We actively encourage our tenants to have a say in how we run things at KHT. Through KHT's Customer Involvement team you can make a real difference to your community.

### Why not get involved and have your say?

Here are a few of the activities you can take part in:

#### Customer Assurance Panel

This panel is made up of tenants who scrutinise the services we provide. This includes carrying out service reviews, reviewing policy and ensuring we are meeting regulation.

#### Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs)

TRAs are run by the community, for the community. They seek to influence and improve their area, and their concerns are not limited to housing issues. They also act as a community network bringing local people together.

#### Tenant Inspectors

Tenant Inspectors mystery shop and reality check KHT's services to ensure they are being provided efficiently and to the highest standards of customer care.

## Focus Groups

KHT holds a number of focus groups throughout the year. Focus groups are small groups of no more than twelve people commenting on and reviewing specific KHT services e.g. our repairs service. The meetings usually last around two hours and we can arrange free transport to and from the meeting.

### Want to know more?

Contact our Customer Involvement team on 0151 290 7000 or visit our website [www.k-h-t.org/for-residents/get-involved](http://www.k-h-t.org/for-residents/get-involved).



# Useful information



## Useful contacts

Organisation	Telephone number
National Grid Gas Emergency <i>(if you smell gas, call them immediately)</i>	0800 111 999
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service	0800 731 5958 <i>(999 in an emergency)</i>
Crime Stoppers	0800 555 111
Universal Credit full service	0800 328 5644
Women's Aid	0151 548 3333
Royal National Institute for the Blind <i>(RNIB)</i>	0151 298 3222
Age Concern Knowsley	0151 480 4632
Knowsley Family Information Service	0151 296 5470
Kirkby Community Fire Station	0151 296 5505
Kirkby Community Fire Safety	0151 480 5325
Fire Service Direct <i>(For a free home fire safety check or advice on an existing smoke alarm)</i>	0800 731 5958

## Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council *(KMBC)*

Department	Telephone number
General enquiries	0151 489 6000
Customer services	0151 443 4031
Knowsley emergency support scheme	0800 408 2014 or 0151 443 3200
Council tax 24-hour payment line	0151 443 4476
Housing benefits	0151 443 4042
Housing advice and homelessness	0800 694 0280
Financial Inclusion helpline	0151 443 3300
Environmental services <i>(inc. bin collection and pest control)</i>	0151 443 2400
Education	0151 443 3232
Home to school transport	0151 443 2500
Leisure	0151 443 2200

Please visit [www.knowsley.gov.uk](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk) where you can:

- **Apply for it** - Housing benefit or Council Tax reduction, school places, replacement bins, planning applications and Emergency Support
- **Book it** - Registrars' appointments and taxi MOTs
- **Pay for it** - Council Tax, Business Rates, Fixed Penalty Notices, planning applications, building control, housing act advances, housing benefit overpayments and right to buy repayments
- **Report it** - Abandoned vehicles, potholes, faulty street lighting, missing/damaged street signs, pest control, fly tipping, litter, missed bins, dog waste, and noise pollution

## Contact us



### Call us

0151 290 7000 /  
0800 561 0007 (Freephone)



### Want to chat?

Try our Live Chat service for your  
online advisor at [www.k-h-t.org](http://www.k-h-t.org)



### Email us

[contactcentre@firstark.com](mailto:contactcentre@firstark.com)



### Write to us

Customer Services, First Ark  
Lakeview, Kings Business Park,  
Prescot, Merseyside L34 1PJ



### We're open

Monday to Friday - 8am to 8pm  
Saturday - 9:30am to 1pm

At KHT, we are committed to providing excellent service to all our customers. If you would like this information in another language or format, please call us on [0800 561 0007](tel:08005610007).

