



SOUTH ULSTER HOUSING ASSOCIATION



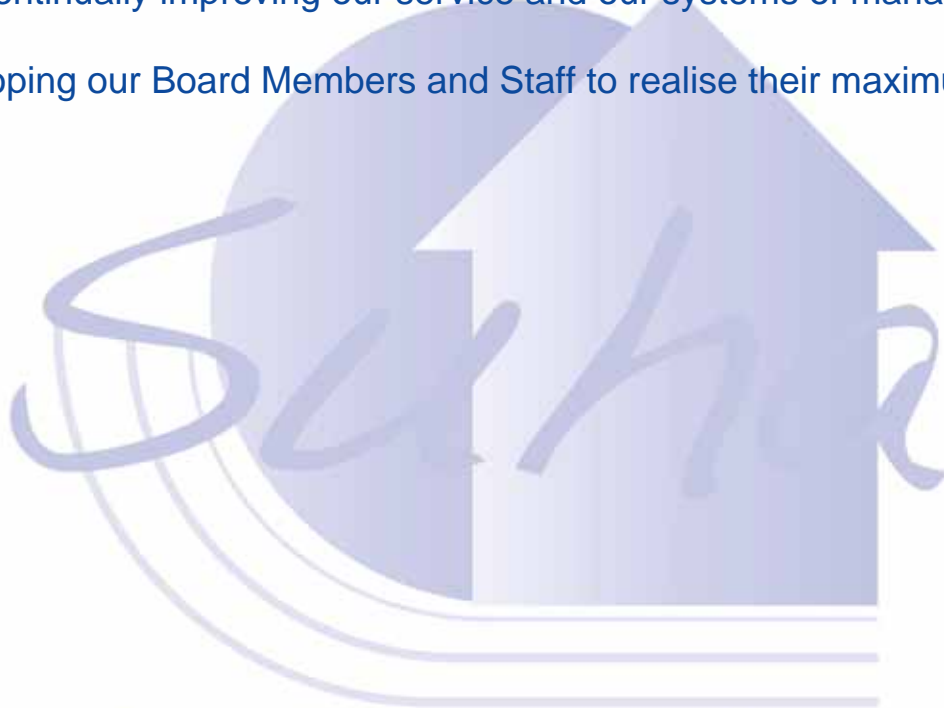
Tenant's Handbook

MISSION STATEMENT

“Your Needs are our Schemes.”

To achieve this we aim to be the best at everything we do. We will do this:

- by placing the highest value on being customer driven.
- by continually improving our service and our systems of management.
- by developing our Board Members and Staff to realise their maximum potential.



SOUTH ULSTER HOUSING ASSOCIATION

CONTENTS

PAGE

2	Introduction / Contact Details
3	Tenancies Information
4	Grounds for Eviction / Nuisance
5	Paying Rent
6	Payment Methods / Lost Cards / Rent Arrears
7	Repairs and Maintenance
8	Repair Responsibility
10	Gas Servicing
11	Advice on Maintenance
12	Alterations / Adaptations
13	Transfers / Lodgers / Succession
14	Exchanges / Consultation / Ending your tenancy
15	Tenant Participation / Complaints Policy
16	House Sales Scheme

INTRODUCTION TO THE TENANT'S HANDBOOK

Welcome to South Ulster Housing Association.

This is your Tenant's Handbook which will provide you with all the information you need to know as a tenant.

Some examples of information include, reporting a repair, anti-social behaviour, complaints and our House Sales Scheme. If you have any questions, or wish to discuss any matter, then do not hesitate to contact a member of staff.

South Ulster Housing Association is pleased that you have chosen our Association for your new home.

This handbook should be kept in a safe place and referred to as necessary. From time to time there may be a requirement to amend part of this handbook. In these cases we will contact you immediately with the updated information.

South Ulster Housing Association Ltd.

WHERE TO FIND US

ADDRESS

18-22 Carleton Street
Portadown,
Co Armagh
BT62 3EN

Telephone: 028 3833 9795

Fax: 028 3835 0944

E Mail: info@southulsterhousing.com

Website: www.suha.co.uk

Opening Hours: Mon - Fri 9am - 1pm 2pm - 5pm

THE TENANT'S GUARANTEE

The Tenant's Guarantee is a guidance document which all registered Housing Associations are required to adopt and which sets out the standards of service which tenants can expect, the information to be provided to tenants and also tenant's rights. The Tenant's Guarantee will have been issued to you at the commencement of your tenancy, but further copies are available on request.

SOUTH ULSTER HOUSING ASSOCIATION PERFORMANCE

Under the Tenant's Guarantee, the Association has to provide its tenants with information that is likely to be of interest to them including information on:

- Performance in response maintenance.
- Average rent charges for different sizes of homes.
- Number of complaints received.
- Success in collection of rents.
- Housing stock.
- Void properties.
- Letting times.

In order to inform you as a tenant, South Ulster Housing Association publishes a Tenant's Newsletter up to four times a year which will include this information which every tenant will receive. This information will also be published in our Annual Report.

INTRODUCTORY TENANCIES

Introductory Tenancies apply to all new tenants unless they held a secure tenancy immediately prior to becoming a South Ulster Housing Association tenant.

South Ulster Housing Association Ltd welcomes the use of Introductory Tenancies as a means to help tackle anti-social activity wherever it occurs and in whatever form it presents itself.

Such activity can range from excessive noise, illegal dumping right through to aggressive or violent behaviour.

ENDING YOUR INTRODUCTORY TENANCY

If you receive a 'Notice to Quit', it means that we intend to seek a decision from the court to obtain an order for possession and this will lead to your eviction.

As an Introductory Tenant you have the right to request a review of the decision to issue you with a 'Notice to Quit'.

If you are appealing the decision, you must send a written request within 14 days of receiving the 'Notice to Quit'. There will be no further opportunity for you to appeal. The review will normally have the form of written correspondence. However, if you request a personal hearing, we will notify you of the date, time and venue at least 7 days in advance.

You will have the right to:

- Be accompanied by another person who may be a solicitor
- Call upon other parties to give evidence
- Put questions to any persons giving evidence
- Make representations to the review panel in writing.

A senior officer from South Ulster Housing Association who was not involved in the original decision to terminate your Introductory Tenancy will review the case.

This request should be sent to:

The Director
South Ulster Housing Association Ltd
18 - 22 Carleton Street
Portadown
BT62 3EN

If the review upholds the decision to terminate your Introductory Tenancy, South Ulster Housing Association will apply to the Court for an Order granting possession. The Court has the authority to terminate your tenancy and you will be then asked to vacate your home. If you fail to do so, South Ulster Housing Association will apply to the Enforcement of Judgements Office for enforcement.

Please note that it is also likely you will be considered as ineligible for housing assistance by other Housing Associations or the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in the future.

You are recommended to seek independent advice on the 'Notice to Quit' by contacting a solicitor, Citizens Advice Bureau or Housing Rights Service.

SECURE TENANTS

The Housing (NI) Orders of 1983 and 2003 provide secure tenants of Registered Housing Associations with Statutory Rights. The tenancy is a 'Secure Tenancy' as defined in the Housing (NI) Order 1983. The Association therefore can only seek possession through the Courts and on the grounds set out in the Housing (NI) Orders 1983 and 2003.



GROUNDS FOR EVICTION

- Not paying rent or breaking any of the conditions of tenancy described here.
- The tenant or anyone residing in or visiting the dwelling using the premises for illegal or immoral purposes or have been convicted of an arrestable offence committed either in the dwelling or locality.
- The tenant or the tenant's partner has left the dwelling because of violence committed in the home by the other partner and is unlikely to return while other continues to remain.
- Damage to the property (including any common areas) by the tenant or anyone residing in or visiting the dwelling.
- Damage to any furniture that the Association has provided either by the tenant or anyone residing in or visiting the dwelling.
- Deliberately giving false information when applying for a tenancy or where tenancy was awarded on the basis of a false statement by a third party.

- If the dwelling was only given as temporary accommodation while the tenant's own home was being improved and these works have been completed.
- If the dwelling is defined by law as overcrowded.
- If the Association needs to gain possession in order to redevelop or rehabilitate the property.
- Where accommodation specifically provided for a physically disabled person is occupied by a person who does not need such special accommodation and it is wanted for letting to a disabled person.
- Where accommodation has been provided for persons with special housing needs and there is no longer such a person residing in the dwelling and it is required for letting to such person.
- Where grouped accommodation has been provided for those with special needs and it is occupied by a person who has no need for the special service or facility provided and it is required for letting to a person who has the special needs.

NUISANCE

You or anyone residing in or visiting your dwelling-house must not:

- Be guilty of conduct causing or likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance to a person residing, visiting or otherwise engaging in a lawful activity in the locality, or

have been convicted of:

- Using the dwelling-house or allowing it to be used for illegal or immoral purposes, or
- An arrestable offence committed in, or in the locality of the dwelling-house.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- The Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 includes a new ground which makes it clear that possession proceedings can be obtained in respect of domestic violence.

PAYING YOUR RENT

RENT

The Association may increase or decrease the rent by giving the tenant four weeks notice in writing.

RATES

Rates are assessed by the Valuation and Lands Agency. Any increase notified to South Ulster Housing Association is forwarded to the tenant and is applicable from the date of increase. However, the Association will endeavour to give reasonable notice of any rates increase.

SERVICE CHARGE

The Association will levy a charge to cover the cost of following services -

- Maintenance of communal facilities.
- Cleaning of communal areas.
- Gardening and maintenance of grounds
- Provision of Management Services.

HOUSING BENEFIT

We encourage tenants to apply for housing benefit when they first sign their tenancy agreement. It is the tenant's responsibility to claim Housing Benefit and also to notify the Northern Ireland Housing Executive of any change in their circumstances. Application forms and assistance are available at our offices. Changes in your circumstances must be notified to both the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Association.

PAYING RENT

South Ulster Housing Association rents are charged to your account on a Monday and are normally payable 2 weeks in advance. However, depending on your personal circumstances and by arrangement with the Association, it may be possible to vary this. You may be able to pay weekly or monthly, although all monthly payments must be made in advance.

PAYMENT METHODS

The Association endeavours to ensure that there is a suitable method for all tenants to pay their rent. A Rent Payment Card will be issued to you within 14 days of the commencement of your tenancy.

There are several ways of paying rent:

1. By Payment Card at the following outlets:

- Any Post Office
- Any PayPoint outlet where you see the PayPoint logo. PayPoint services are often found at newsagents, corner shops and garages many of which are open early, late and at weekends.
- Any Payzone outlet where you see the Payzone logo. Payzone services are available in larger shops and garages, again many of which are open early, late and at weekends.



2. By Direct Debit from your Bank or Building Society. Staff can give you a form to complete. There are advantages to paying by Direct Debit. South Ulster Housing Association can automatically collect rent due and it requires no action by you when the rent changes.

You are protected by the Direct Debit Guarantee and can cancel your Direct Debit by contacting the office.

3. By Post - Cheques should be made payable to South Ulster Housing Association Ltd and crossed A/C Payee only. Please write your name, address and tenancy reference number (if known) on the back of any cheques sent. Please do not send cash via the post.

4. In person in our office.

RENT ARREARS

It is essential that you pay your rent promptly as non payment may lead to eviction. If you fall into arrears, a member of staff will advise you in writing, or in person, of your arrears.

South Ulster Housing Association is pleased to advise that we have fully trained staff who can offer you confidential advice and assistance. Our aim is to reduce the arrears issue and to prevent you getting into further debt.

LOST CARDS

If you have lost your payment card, please contact the office immediately and a new one will be ordered. Staff will discuss alternative methods of payment until the card is delivered.

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE SECTION

South Ulster Housing Association is committed to providing a 24hour repair service. Repairs during normal working hours (Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm) should be reported directly to South Ulster Housing Association's offices.

For Emergencies Only

Outside working hours tenants should contact

FOLD Telecare
on 028 9042 1010

On telephoning, the advisor will require the following information:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number
- Description of fault

I would ask that all non-emergency repair requests are directed to the Association during normal working hours.

PRIORITY OF REPAIRS

Repairs will be given a priority by the Association to indicate the time scale within which it is expected that the work will be completed. Repairs are split into 3 categories as follows:

EMERGENCY

We will respond to your request and attend within 24 hours. Examples of emergency repairs include;

- Major plumbing leaks.
- Complete heating failure (in cold weather).
- Breakdown of lifts.
- Where there is a possible risk of damage to buildings or injury to persons.
- Fire damage.
- Gas leaks.

Please note that some emergency repairs may only make safe a fault at the first visit, with remedial work completed on a second visit.

URGENT

We will respond to your request and undertake the repair within three working days.

Examples of an urgent repair would include;

- Insecure external windows.
- Faulty door locks or door entry systems.
- Leaking roofs.
- Blocked drains/sinks.

ROUTINE

We will respond to your request and undertake the repair within 28 days.

Examples of routine repairs would include;

- Clearing of blocked gutters.
- Easing doors and windows.
- Internal plaster finishes.

PLANNED

South Ulster Housing Association has an active programme of planned maintenance designed to prevent long term repair problems and ensure the continuing comfort and security of all tenants. Therefore some repairs may not be actioned within the pre-described time scale and may be designated as planned work, which will be completed under a planned maintenance programme.

Some examples of planned maintenance are;

- Kitchen replacement.
- Window/door replacement.
- Heating upgrade.
- External decoration.

You will be advised if your repair request is included in a planned scheme.

HOW TO REPORT A REPAIR

If South Ulster Housing Association is responsible for the repair then contact the office by one of the following methods, giving the nature of the repair and when access will be available for the repair to be undertaken;

- Telephone the office
- Call into the office
- Email: info@southulsterhousing.com

In order to ascertain the responsibility for the repair, please check the following list. Please note that it is not exhaustive and staff will welcome any query you might have.

REPAIR	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?	EXCEPTIONS
Baths	SUHA	Where fault is due to misuse
Boilers and hot water tanks	SUHA	
Care/upkeep of gardens and hedges	Tenant	
Ceiling	SUHA	
Central Heating pumps, timers etc	SUHA	
Chains and stoppers for baths, sinks, wash hand basins etc	Tenant	
Chimney stacks/pots and cowls	SUHA	
Cleaning of gully traps	Tenant	
Cleaning/repair of gutters and downpipes	SUHA	
Coal bunkers	SUHA	
Curtain rails	Tenant	
Door bells	SUHA	
Door entry systems	SUHA	
Draught proofing	Tenant	
Electrical wiring, sockets, switches	SUHA	
Door hinges, locks, handles (external)	SUHA	Lock change where the tenant has lost/broken key
Door hinges, locks, handles (internal)	Tenant	
External stores	Tenant	If provided by SUHA
Floor boards	SUHA	
Floor covering (including adapting doors to accommodate access)	Tenant	Vinyl floor tiles and non slip sheeting by SUHA
Fluorescent tubes	Tenant	
Fuses	Tenant	
Garden paths, walls, fences, gates	SUHA	
Gas boilers	SUHA	
Glazing	Tenant	SUHA will replace if Police confirm glass broken as result of vandalism.
Immersion heaters	SUHA	
Internal and external doors and frames	SUHA	Where fault is due to misuse.
Internal plaster cracks on walls	Tenant	Large cracks in new properties repaired by SUHA at end of defects period.
Internal decoration	Tenant	
Kitchen cupboards and worktops	SUHA	Where fault is due to misuse.

REPAIR	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?	EXCEPTIONS
Letterboxes	SUHA	
Maintenance of communal landscape areas	SUHA	
Oil Boilers	SUHA	Airlocks caused by tenant running out of oil.
Pest control	Tenant	
Pipes	SUHA	
Radiators	SUHA	Bleeding air locked radiators.
Repair to walls	SUHA	
Repairs to electrical appliances not installed by SUHA	Tenant	
Repairs to solid fuel fires	SUHA	Replacement of glass panels and fire bars.
Replacement of bins	Tenant (even if stolen)	SUHA will replace at commencement of tenancy, if missing or damaged.
Replacement of fireplace tiles	Tenant	
Replacement of rotary dryers	Tenant	
Replacement of toilet seats	Tenant	
Roof repairs	SUHA	
Showers	SUHA	Where fault is due to misuse.
Sinks	SUHA	Where fault is due to misuse.
Skirting boards	SUHA	
Smoke detectors (mains operated only)	SUHA	
Smoke alarm batteries (if fitted)	Tenant	SUHA will replace at tenancy commencement.
Stair cases	SUHA	
Stair rails	SUHA	
Sweeping chimney	Tenant	Blocked flues causing fire hazard.
Taps	SUHA	Replacement of dripping tap washers.
Toilet bowl and cistern	SUHA	Where fault is due to misuse.
TV aerials	Tenant	Communal TV aerials on block of flats.
Unblocking drains, sewers, waste pipes	SUHA	SUHA will recover cost from tenant if due to misuse.
Wall tiling	SUHA	
Wash hand basins	SUHA	Where fault is due to misuse.
Washing lines	Tenant	Replacement of post.
Window sills	SUHA	
Window frame, handles, hinges etc	SUHA	Where fault is due to misuse.

GAS SERVICING POLICY

SUHA has a statutory duty to ensure that all gas appliances, flues and gas pipe work installed by SUHA are serviced and a gas safety check is carried out annually in accordance with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 and the requirements of the Health and Safety Executive. SUHA will take all reasonable steps to comply with the requirements by appointing CORGI registered contractors to carry out annual gas servicing.

SUHA carries out annual servicing and safety checks to all of its properties with gas central heating. The servicing is carried out to an agreed programme. A notification letter is sent to all tenants informing them of the date of the gas service and the importance of allowing the contractor access to the property. Contractors carry CORGI identity cards.

The work is only issued to CORGI registered contractors who will;



- Ensure that all SUHA installed gas appliances flues and gas pipe work are maintained and operate in a safe condition.
- Ensure that an annual gas service is carried out on all gas appliances, flues and gas pipe work installed by SUHA. If the appliances are new then they will be checked within twelve months of their installation date.
- Ensure that a record is kept of each annual service.
- Ensure that SUHA and the tenant receive a copy of the CORGI Gas Service Record within 28 days of the service being completed.
- Ensure that if the appliance is faulty and cannot be repaired at the time then SUHA and the tenant will be instructed not to use it until remedial work is completed.

It is a Condition of Tenancy that reasonable access must be permitted to enable SUHA to undertake the annual service (and any repairs). If the tenant fails to provide reasonable access then it may result in legal proceedings commencing under the Grounds for Possession (Ground 1) in order to obtain access or end the tenancy.



ADVICE AND GUIDANCE ON MAINTAINING YOUR PROPERTY

BURST PIPES

If you have a burst pipe:

- Turn off the water immediately at the stop-cock and ensure electrics are not switched on in the affected area.
- Turn on all taps in order to drain the water tank as quickly as possible.
- If you have a coal fire with a back boiler, damp it down immediately and let it go out.
- Try and find the water leak.
- Contact the Association.

CONDENSATION

What is condensation?

Condensation occurs when moist air reaches a cold surface. This moisture is usually caused by steam from cooking, washing, bathing, drying clothes etc.

Why is condensation a problem?

If unchecked, condensation can damage your clothes, bedding and decoration by causing mould growth or dampness.

Tips on reducing condensation:

- Make sure kitchens and bathrooms are properly ventilated after cooking, washing, bathing etc by opening windows or using an extractor fan (if one is fitted).
- Ensure kitchen and bathroom doors are closed, preventing steam from spreading through your home.
- Dry clothes outside.
- Ensure the central heating system is maintained at a constant temperature. This will reduce cold areas where steam can accumulate, causing condensation.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

SUHA is committed to Energy Efficiency and reducing our Carbon footprint.

Below are some examples that will not only help you be energy efficient, but will also save you money.

1. Close curtains at night to keep heat in.
2. Switch electrical appliances off at the mains. Leaving the appliance on standby wastes money.
3. Switch lights off in rooms not in use.
4. Fill the kettle only with as much water as is required.
5. Turn down central heating thermostat by one degree centigrade.
6. Fit energy saving light bulbs.
7. When replacing electrical appliances such as a fridge or washing machine, ensure they are AAA-rated.



ALTERATIONS

You should not make any alterations to your property without requesting the Association's permission first. This should be done in writing, addressed to the Director.

Permission will not be granted if the alterations

1. Make the dwelling less safe.
2. Reduce the value of the property.
3. Do not comply with current Building Regulations or Planning Requirements.
4. Increase maintenance costs for the Association.
5. The proposed improvement could create unacceptable annoyance or nuisance to neighbours.
6. The proposed improvement could create future letting problems.



AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

The Association is committed to ensuring that it provides a service which is responsive to the needs of all its tenants. It is particularly concerned that the needs of people with disabilities are recognised and met.

The responsibility for assessing and advising on the housing needs of people with disabilities lies with the Occupational Therapy department of the Health and Social Care Trusts. The Occupational Therapist will provide aids and recommend any adaptations to be made.

TRANSFERS

South Ulster Housing Association may be able to arrange a transfer for you if you have been a tenant for at least two years. (You may apply earlier on medical or social grounds).

You can also transfer to a property owned by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive or another Housing Association in accordance with the Common Selection Scheme.

How do you apply for a transfer?

You should complete a transfer form and forward it to the Association. A Housing Officer will make arrangements to visit with you within two weeks to assess your circumstances and to inspect your present accommodation. However you will not be placed on the transfer list if;

1. You have rent arrears over four weeks or owe recoverable charges.
2. Your home is not in a satisfactory condition.
3. You are under investigation for anti-social behaviour or we are taking action to end your tenancy for causing anti-social behaviour.
4. We are taking action against you for a breach of your conditions of tenancy.

LODGERS

You have the right to move in a lodger provided that you inform South Ulster Housing Association in writing of the person's name, age, sex and the rent that you may be charging. You may take in lodgers provided this does not result in overcrowding. Before taking in a lodger you should remember;

- Your benefits will be affected.
- Your lodger will have no tenancy rights.
- You are responsible for the behaviour of your lodger. It will be your tenancy at risk if your lodger causes a nuisance or breaks any of your tenancy conditions.
- If you want your lodger to leave, it is up to you to get them out lawfully.

SUCCESSION

Succession simply means passing the tenancy on to someone else when you die, like a form of inheritance. A tenancy can only be succeeded once. Therefore as long as your tenancy was not passed on to you, your partner or member of your family can succeed your tenancy.

- The tenancy can be succeeded by your wife, husband or partner, step-relative, parents, child, grand-parents, grand-child, niece, nephew, brother, sister, aunt or uncle.
- If one joint tenant dies, the other joint tenant succeeds the tenancy. Joint tenants do not have to be related. This counts as one succession.
- If you are getting divorced and the Court allows you to live in the house instead of your husband or wife, this does not count as succession. A member of your family can still succeed the tenancy.
- The successor must have lived with you for 12 months before your death.
- The property must be their only or main home.
- The successor must be 18 yrs of age or older.
- The person wishing to succeed the tenancy must inform SUHA in writing within one month of the tenant's death.
- If there is a dispute about who should succeed the tenancy, SUHA will decide whom the tenant will be.
- If you succeed a property which is much larger than you need, (eg if a single person succeeded a 3 bedroom house) then South Ulster Housing Association may require you to move to a more suitable property.
- If you succeed to specialist accommodation, (such as a disabled bungalow), SUHA may ask you to move to another property to make that property available for re-letting.
- A succession can only occur once, however SUHA will consider giving a tenancy to someone after a successor's death if that is their only home.

For further information, contact our office.

EXCHANGES

What is an exchange?

A direct or mutual exchange is when you change properties with another tenant living in South Ulster Housing Association, Housing Executive or another Association's property.

How do I get an exchange?

Many tenants arrange exchanges by placing notices in local papers, shops or community centres etc. You may have already identified a tenant with whom you wish to exchange. If so, we will require their name and address.

You should also complete a transfer form and forward it to the Association. It is not necessary to have been a tenant for two years in order to be considered for a direct exchange.

You and the tenant with whom you wish to exchange must obtain the written consent of South Ulster Housing Association and the other landlord in order for the exchange to be legal.

If we do not approve the exchange we will inform you of the reasons.

Please note that it is the Association's policy not to undertake normal change of tenancy repairs following an exchange unless they are required for health and safety reasons.

ENDING YOUR TENANCY

The tenant must give 4 weeks notice in writing of their termination of the tenancy, which should end on a Monday. The keys must be returned to our office by 12.00 noon on the Monday of termination. The tenant must leave the property in a clean and good state with vacant possession. On receiving the keys, the Association will inspect the property and, if necessary, will charge the tenant for the repair of any damage to the property or the removal of any items left behind.

CONSULTATION

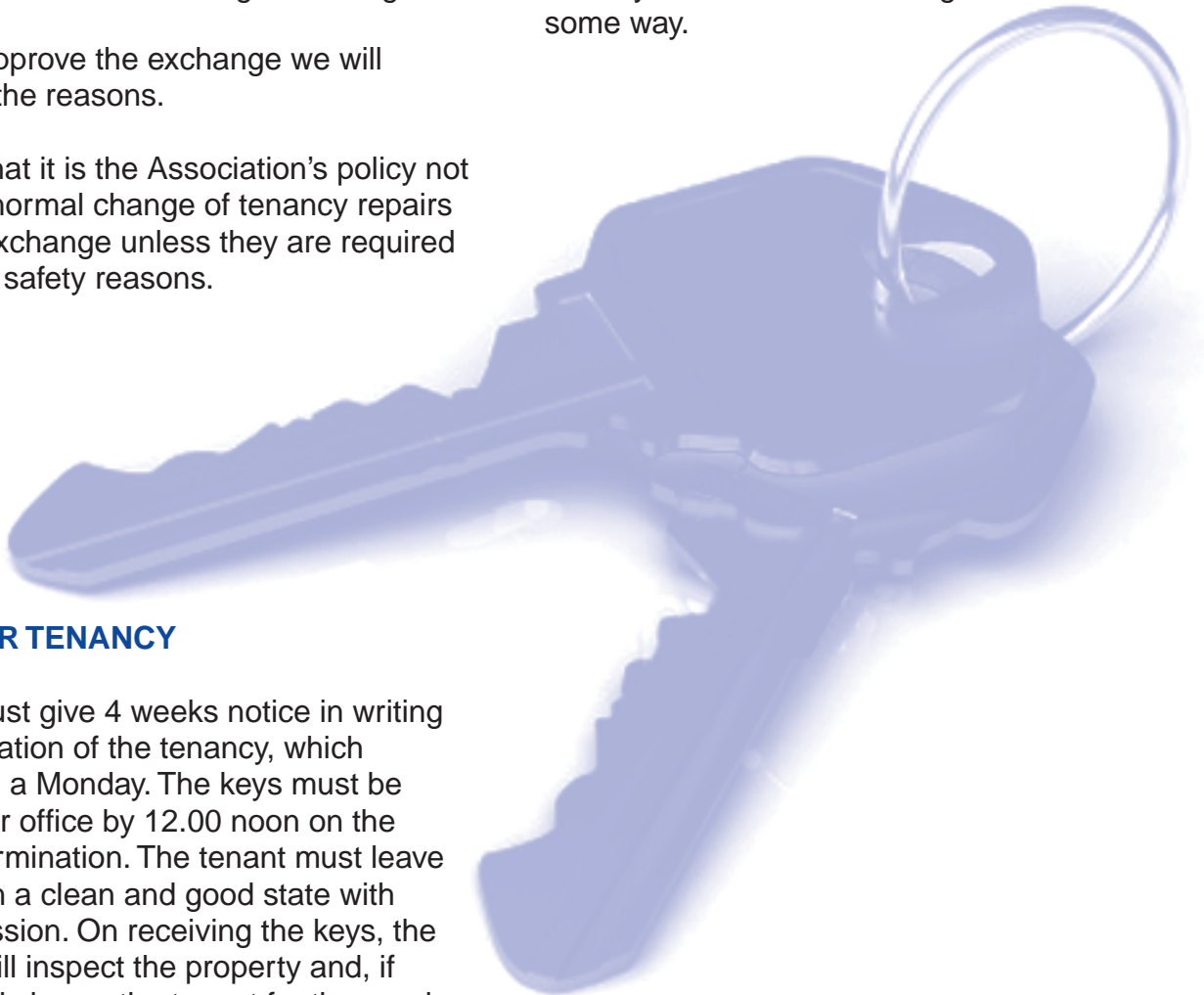
South Ulster Housing Association is legally obliged to inform you and consider your views about building work, improvements and maintenance matters whenever these effect your home.

It may concern the services that we provide directly to you or the effect of our activities in the area in which you live.

We aim to fulfil our legal obligations by consulting individuals or groups who are affected by our activities.

This consultation may have the form of individual letters, local or general newsletters, public meetings or any other method that seems appropriate.

However there is no need for you to wait until we approach you. You should feel free to approach us, individually or as a group, about any aspect of our activities affecting you or which you would like to change or influence in some way.



TENANT PARTICIPATION

South Ulster Housing Association is committed to providing a quality service that has a high performance standard. Tenant involvement is an essential element for this to succeed.

South Ulster Housing Association therefore is committed to the following principals:

- Providing information to tenants.
- Consulting tenants on all matters concerning their tenancy, home and area in which they live.

These principals are supported by our strategy to:

- Encourage and support the establishment of a Tenant Association in its areas of operation.

You can help by becoming involved in:

- Tenants Associations.
- Attending meetings.
- Contributing towards tenant's surveys.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

If you would like more information on how to become involved or how to set up a Tenant's Association, please contact the Assistant Director.



COMPLAINTS POLICY

SUHA is committed to providing an efficient and effective service to all its tenants. If there are problems with any aspect of our service, it is important for us to be made aware of these so that we can improve our service delivery. We welcome comments and suggestions from our tenants about how we can improve our service.

We hope you will not have any complaints about the service you receive from the Association. However, if you do, SUHA hopes to resolve them informally and as quickly and efficiently as possible. If it has not been possible to resolve complaints by informal means, the Association has a formal complaints procedure.

The stages are as follows:

Stage 1

If you have a complaint about the service that SUHA provides or its treatment of you either as a tenant or applicant, we would ask you to contact the office verbally and we shall try to resolve the matter immediately.

Stage 2

If the matter is not resolved and you again make a complaint, it shall be referred to Senior Management who shall liaise with the relevant staff member to obtain all necessary information. You shall receive a reply within 10 working days.

Stage 3

If you are unhappy with the response you can write to the Chairman who will review the complaint. A reply will be sent to you within a reasonable period.

Stage 4

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome, then you may take your complaint to the Commissioner for Complaint NI (The Ombudsman). His office can be contacted for advice on freephone 0800 343 424 or by writing to;

The Ombudsman
Freepost BEL1478,
Belfast
BT1 6BR

HOUSE SALES SCHEME

SUHA's House Sales Policy follows the guidance provided by the Department for Social Development in Northern Ireland. The House Sales Policy has been prepared under the Housing (NI) Order 2003 and has been given approval by SUHA's Board of Management.

SUHA House Sales Policy provides secure tenants in certain circumstances with the opportunity to purchase their property as the sitting tenant.

Further information on buying your property is available from SUHA and the notes below should provide you with a brief guide to the process.

To purchase your property you must have a minimum of 5 years as a secure tenant, either with the NIHE or a registered Housing Association. For the purpose of the House Sales Scheme, time spent as an introductory tenant will count towards this.

Properties exempt from purchase;

- A group home.
- A bungalow with two bedrooms or less.

To make an application to purchase your property, you can request an application form from SUHA office. If you want to proceed with an application to purchase your property, return the completed form. SUHA will then make the decision as to determine eligibility to proceed with the purchase of your property. If you are successful, you are required to send a cheque to cover the valuation fee for your property (contact our office for cost details).

The valuation of your property is valid for six months.

SUHA will endeavour to have an offer of sale to you within 6-8 weeks of receiving your completed application. SUHA will provide guidance and assistance to you, to enable you to become a homeowner.

The purchase price of your property cannot be determined until the market value is requested. It is only then that SUHA can calculate your discount entitlement and advise you of the offer of sale price. If your property is less than ten years old, or has been purchased and rehabilitated at a cost to the Association, then the property will not be sold to you for less than it cost SUHA to provide it, i.e. Historic Cost.

