

The tenants' guide

Information for Camden Council tenants



Welcome to your new home

We hope you find this guide useful.

If there are any questions about your tenancy which are not covered in this guide, please call us on **020 7974 4444** and our customer service officers will either help you or transfer you to the right person if you need more specialist advice.

From time to time, our services may change. This could be because we are improving the way we do things or because of legal changes which we must comply with.

It's always a good idea to check our website **camden.gov.uk** for the latest information about our services, or call us on **020 7974 4444**.

Contents

	Chapter
How to contact Camden and other useful information	1
Introductory tenancies	2
Your rent	3
Welfare benefits and help with finding work and training	4
Extra support for tenants	5
Security and safety	6
Gas, electricity, water and saving energy	7
Parking on your estate	8
Taking part and being involved	9
Harassment and domestic violence	10
Nuisance	11
Housing repairs	12
When a tenant dies or moves out	13
Lodgers and subletting	14
Your tenancy conditions	15

How to contact Camden and other useful information

How to contact Camden	7
Support to access council services	8
The Camden account	9
Tenancy fraud	10
Not happy about something?	10
Independent advice agencies	10
Credit Union	11
Right to Buy	11



How to contact Camden

By phone

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm:

Phone: **020 7974 4444**

Text phone: **020 7974 6866**

You can also use these numbers for emergencies outside office hours

Online

Many services are offered online at **camden.gov.uk**

In person

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm at:

Contact Camden reception

5 Pancras Square

London N1 4AG

Services available include:

- housing tenancies and rents
- council tax
- housing benefit
- housing advice

We advise you to book an appointment in advance. To see someone with specialist knowledge about a particular service, you may wish to phone first on **020 7974 4444**. We may be able to help you over the phone, or you can book an appointment which may save you having to queue and wait.

Support to access council services

If you need extra help to contact us or access our services, see the summary below or visit camden.gov.uk/accessibility.

British Sign Language (BSL) subtitled videos

Available for eight of our most popular services, including housing, at camden.gov.uk/accessibility.

BSL translation

An online BSL interpreter can communicate with you over a webcam. Available at Contact Camden, Registrars, Camden libraries and Children's Centres.

BSL translation service on our website

Click on the BSL logo symbol on any of our webpages to get connected. Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Face-to-face interpreter

Book in advance.

Visually impaired residents

Documents are available in large font, Braille and audio formats.

Texmee app, and Texbox on the website

Deaf and hard of hearing customers can contact us on their smart phone by downloading the Texmee app at camden.gov.uk/accessibility.

Minicom

You can also use minicom by calling **020 7974 6866**.

The Camden Account

The Camden Account allows you to manage some services online, in one place and with one log in. You can

- report a repair
- pay rent and view bills
- view housing benefit claims and payments
- pay and manage council tax bills
- apply for parking permits and purchase visitor parking permits
- check bin collection days
- report a missed bin collection
- request new recycling equipment.

To register, go to **camden.gov.uk/camdenaccount**. We will send you an email to confirm that your account is set up.

To use housing services, you will need your payment reference number. For council tax services, you will need your council tax account reference.

Tenancy fraud

If you think a Council property has been abandoned or has people living in it who are not the tenants, you can report this:

- online at **[camden.gov.uk](https://www.camden.gov.uk)**
- email **tenancyfraud@camden.gov.uk**
- phone **020 7974 5848** and leave a message (anonymously if you wish).

Not happy about something?

- contact the manager of the service you are not happy with
- complete the online form at **[camden.gov.uk](https://www.camden.gov.uk)**

How we look after information ('data') we hold about you

- You can find details about this at **[camden.gov.uk/privacystatementanddataprotection](https://www.camden.gov.uk/privacystatementanddataprotection)**

Independent advice agencies

You can contact us about any matter concerning your tenancy and we will do our best to help you. For independent advice you may find the following contact details useful:

Camden Citizens Advice
0300 330 1157
citizensadvice.org.uk

Mary Ward Legal Centre
020 7831 7079
marywardlegal.org.uk

Camden Community

Law Centre
020 7284 6510
cclc.org.uk

Age UK Camden

Advice for people over 50
020 7239 0400
ageukcamden.org.uk

Credit Union

A credit union offers financial services to local people but does not make a profit. As a Camden resident you can join the London Mutual Credit Union. They charge less interest than payday or doorstep lenders and there are no hidden fees or penalties.

London Mutual Credit Union is independent and not part of Camden Council.

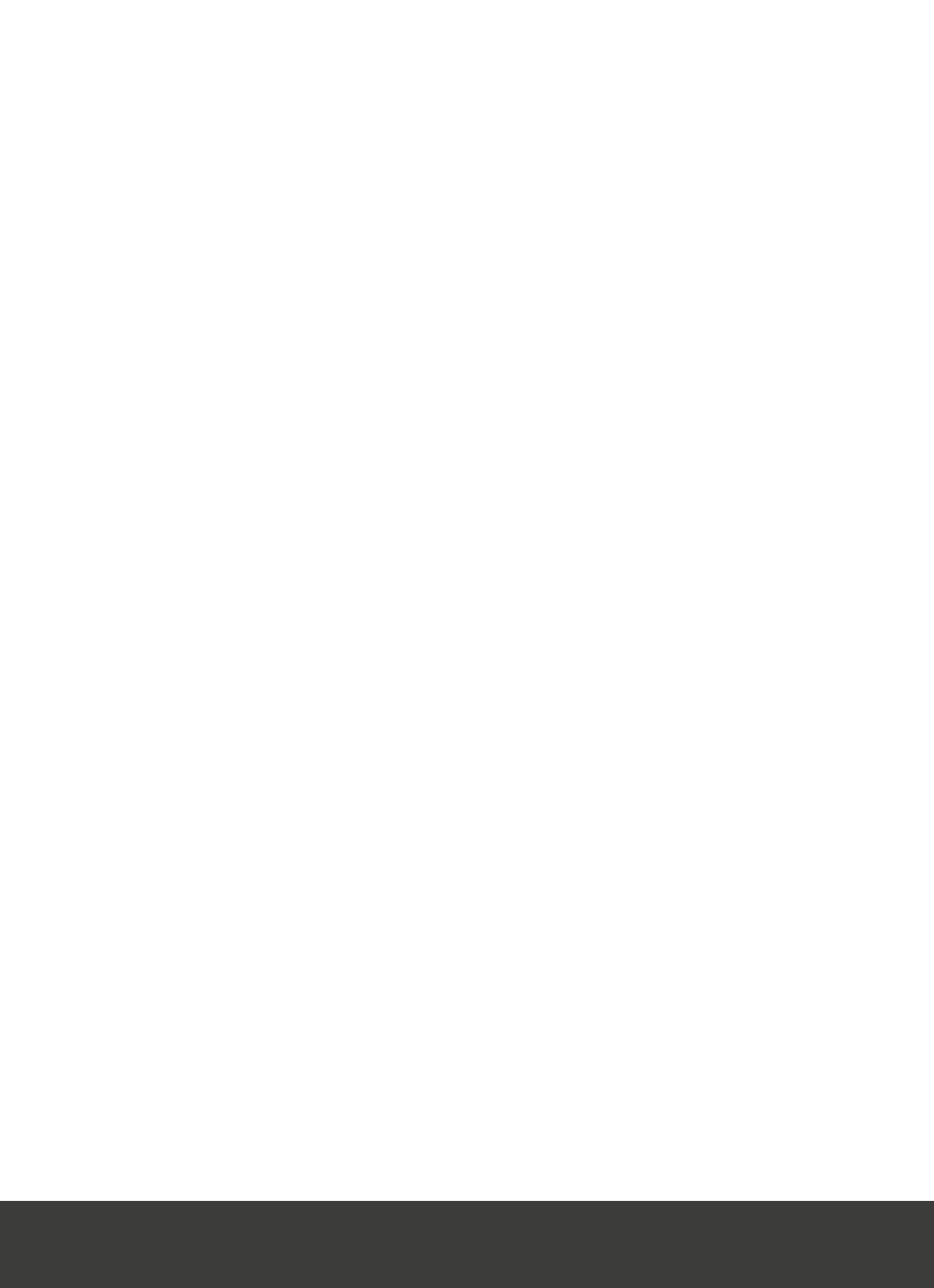
Find out more at www.creditunion.co.uk or

Camden London Mutual Credit Union

347 Royal College Street
London NW1 9QS
Tel: 020 3773 1751
Open Monday-Friday 9.30am - 4.30pm

Right to Buy

Most council tenants have a right to buy their home at a discount from their landlord. For up to date information on the scheme contact us on **020 7974 4444** or at camden.gov.uk/leaseholders.



Introductory tenancies

What is an introductory tenancy?	15
What is the difference between the rights of secure and introductory tenants?	16
What if you don't agree with our decision to end or extend your introductory tenancy?	17



What is an introductory tenancy?

If you are joining Camden Council as a new tenant, you will be an 'introductory tenant' for at least the first year.

This doesn't apply to you if you are already a council or housing association tenant who has a secure or assured tenancy, and you are moving from one home to another.

An introductory tenancy is a trial period before you become a secure tenant. Introductory tenants have fewer rights than secure tenants, and their tenancies can be ended more easily if they break their tenancy conditions.

The Council can add an extra six months to an introductory tenancy if any of the tenancy conditions have been broken. If we do this we will write and tell you.

Your introductory tenancy will automatically become a secure tenancy one year after the date it began, unless we have started legal action to end your tenancy or we have extended your trial period.

If we extend your introductory tenancy to 18 months we will write and tell you.

What is the difference between the rights of secure and introductory tenants?

Secure tenants also have to keep to their tenancy conditions but they have more security and more rights. If we want to repossess a secure tenancy we must prove a legal 'ground' or reason for possession, and in most cases have to show that it is reasonable to repossess the property.

To repossess an introductory tenancy we only have to show that we have followed the correct procedure.

Secure tenants also have the legal rights to:

- exchange homes
- sub-let part of their home
- improve their home
- buy their home after five years
- take in lodgers.

Introductory tenants do not have these legal rights, but our tenancy conditions say that we will consider requests from disabled introductory tenants for a carer to live with them.

Chapter 15, sets out the tenancy conditions for introductory and secure tenants. The responsibilities of introductory and secure tenants are the same.

If we decide to end an introductory tenancy we will write to you and warn you before we take legal action. We will send you a 'notice of possession proceedings' which will explain our reasons for ending your tenancy.

We will also tell you the date we can start court action. We cannot evict you without a court order and we have to show the court that we have followed the correct procedure.

What if you don't agree with our decision to end or extend your introductory tenancy?

When we send you a notice of possession proceedings or a notice of extension we must also tell you that you have a right to ask for the decision to be reviewed. If you ask for a review you have a right to be at the review and speak or ask questions. You also have the right to have someone with you to represent you.



Your rent

What does your rent pay for?	21
How to pay your rent	21
If you have a low income	24
Housing Benefit	25
Universal Credit	25
Rent charges and statements	26
Do you owe rent?	26
Paying for a garage, car space, shed or insurance	28
Other bills	28

To set up a direct debit to pay your rent call **020 7974 1486**
or email **rentservice@camden.gov.uk**.



What does your rent pay for?

We use your rent to pay for the housing services you receive such as repairs and caretaking. Every pound we don't collect is one pound less to spend on services.

Your rent is due every Monday in advance unless you make different arrangements with the rent service. The amount you pay may also include a service charge and a charge for water rates, insurance, heating and hot water, and a garage, estate parking place or shed if you rent one. These separate amounts (which make up the weekly amount we charge you) are shown on the notification we send you.

When you sign a new tenancy we give you a temporary swipe card for rent payments. We will send you a permanent swipe card soon after you move in with your name and rent account on it.

How to pay your rent

There are several ways to pay your rent:

By direct debit

If you have a bank account this is the easiest way to pay and the cheapest way for us to receive your payments. Call **020 7974 1486** or email **rentservice@camden.gov.uk** for a direct debit form. Direct debits are paid monthly, and you can choose to pay on 15th, 22nd or 28th of the month.

Direct debit payments change automatically when your charges do. This means it is important to tell us if your circumstances change, for example if you stop working. If you already owe rent, an extra direct debit needs to be set up to pay your arrears unless you pay that debt in full before your direct debit starts.

Make sure you have enough money in your account when the direct debit is due otherwise your bank may charge you.

Online

It is easy, quick and secure to make an online payment with any major credit or debit card. Visit **camden.gov.uk/payment** and follow the instructions on the screen. You will need your reference number, which is on your swipe card.

You can also check your balance and download a rent statement by creating a secure online Camden account. (See chapter 1).

If you wish to let us have your email and mobile number details for current and future rent-related communications such as payment reminders and confirmation of repayment agreements, call Contact Camden on **020 7974 4444**.

By phone

Phone the payments line **020 7974 6104**, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can pay with any major credit or debit card. You will need your reference number, which is on your swipe card.

By electronic bank transfer (BACS or CHAPS)

These are both easy ways of transferring money electronically. BACS is free but your payment may take several days to reach us. CHAPS is a quicker system, but your bank may charge for this service. To pay by electronic bank transfer contact your bank and quote the following:

Account name: LB Camden Rents Account

Sort code: 50-30-03

Account number: 24312827

Bank name: National Westminster Bank

Branch name: Hampstead Village Branch

At any shop or outlet with the 'Paypoint' sign

For cash payments only. Take your swipe card with you. You will get a receipt for your payment.

At any post office

Take your swipe card and the post office will give you a receipt for your payment. Cheques should be made payable to Post Office Ltd.

Payments may take several days to reach your rent account. During this time, it may look as if you are behind with your rent.

By standing order

Ask us for a standing order form which you should fill in and send to your bank.

Ensure you include your seven digit rent account reference (shown on the bottom right hand corner of your rent card).

The bank will take the same amount from your account each month and pay it to us. Your bank may make a charge for this service. Your rent must be paid in advance, so contact us to check the correct date to start your standing order.

If your rent changes, we will write and tell you. It is important that you tell your bank the new amount. If you do not do this, the bank will continue to pay the old amount and you risk falling behind with your rent. Please tell us if you cancel your standing order.

Direct from your wages

If you work for Camden, you can have your rent taken straight from your wages. Ask the rent service about this.

If you have a low income

If you receive benefits you should claim housing benefit to help pay towards your housing costs. You will still have to pay any charges for water rates, heating, hot water, insurance or a garage or shed. If you work and have a low income, you may still be able to get housing benefit.

Housing benefit

Housing benefit could mean pounds off your rent. Many people who could get benefit miss out because they think they will not qualify and don't bother to claim. For example, child benefit does not count as income and you may qualify even if you have savings.

Never delay applying as the government's rules on backdating it are strict.

To apply, fill in the form at [camden.gov.uk/housing](https://www.camden.gov.uk/housing) and follow the link 'apply online'. The online form has helpful notes and guides you through the questions. At the end of the form you can choose to:

- submit the form online and visit us to show us your documents
- submit the form online and post the documents to us.

If you have any queries about housing benefit, phone us on **020 7974 4444**.

Universal Credit

If you get Universal Credit (UC), some or most of your housing costs will usually be included in your monthly UC payment. This means you will be responsible for paying your rent and any other charges, for example heating costs.

If you make a claim for UC you will be asked what your housing costs are. Call us on **020 7974 4444** and ask for a letter listing your housing costs. You should also show this letter when you go to the Job Centre.

For more information see [camden.gov.uk/payingyourcouncilrent](https://www.camden.gov.uk/payingyourcouncilrent)

Rent charges and statements

Changes in charges

We will write to you at least four weeks before your rent or heating charges are due to change. The changes in your weekly charge are shown on the notification slip we send to you. You should keep this.

Rent statements

We will send you a rent statement every three months. This tells you the account balance, the charges due and the amount you have paid for the last three months. When you read your statements, please remember that some payments are not credited to your account the same week you make them. You can also view your account statement and charges on line at **contact.camden.gov.uk/en_GB**

Do you owe rent?

If you have problems paying your rent, the rent service team can help you. We may offer advice on benefits, debts or other issues which make it hard for you to cope financially. We have a responsibility to collect rent but we will treat tenants sympathetically.

What you should do

Tell the rent service or get advice before the debt gets too large.

Your first step should be to contact us on **020 7974 4444**. We can make an appointment for you to speak to someone in person if you wish. You may also contact the rent service by email at **rentservice@camden.gov.uk**.

You should also check if you can claim housing benefit by asking the rent service or the benefits service.

What we will do

The rent service usually contacts you if you are more than one or two weeks behind with your rent. If this happens, you should pay what you owe straight away. If you do not, and if the amount continues to grow, a rent service officer will contact you. If you wish we can arrange to discuss matters at home or at Contact Camden, 5 Pancras Square, London N1 4AG. You will be asked to settle your debt, either by paying it in one go or by paying weekly or monthly instalments on top of your rent. If you contact the rent service and make an arrangement to pay the rent, we will not usually take court action.

Court action

If you do not contact the rent service, or do not keep to the agreement you have made to pay the rent, we may take court action against you.

If we take court action, we will always offer to meet you first to explain what will happen and what your rights are. The next step will be to serve you with a 'notice of intent to seek possession'. This notice tells you the amount of rent you owe and gives you four weeks' warning that we may apply to the county court for a possession order. A possession order gives us the right to end your tenancy, meaning you could lose the right to live in your home. Going to court could also mean that you have to pay large court costs and it may affect your chances of getting credit in the future.

Paying for a garage, car space, shed or insurance

If you rent a council garage, car space or shed, or join our household contents insurance scheme, you must keep your payments up to date. If you get behind you must contact the rent service straight away.

If you do not bring your account up to date, we will write to you, giving you notice that we are taking your garage, car space or shed away, or ending your insurance cover.

Other bills

If you have trouble paying any of your bills, you can ask for help at one of the advice centres listed in chapter one of this guide. Or you can contact the rent service on **020 7974 4444**. Electricity and gas companies run schemes which let you spread the cost of bills. You can get more details of these schemes from your electricity and gas suppliers.

Welfare benefits

We may also refer you for advice and help with benefits if you:

- are having problems paying your rent and are in danger of losing your home; or
- find it difficult to deal with benefit matters and need help with this.

We give priority to tenants who need more support. Your housing officer or other council staff can refer you.

See the next chapter for more information.

Welfare benefits

Important information for new tenants	31
Welfare benefits advice	32
Debt advice	32
Help with finding work and training	33
How to get advice	33

Housing Benefit and/or

Please return this form and
all attachments to:
Benefits Service
Camden Borough of Camden
Town Hall
100 High Street
London
WC2N 6JL

Information

020 75950

Our telephone lines are open
9.00am to 5.00pm.
Email: benefits@camden.gov.uk
Website: www.camden.gov.uk

For office use only:
Date we received a request:

Issue date:

Reason

Customer Letter

Request on behalf of customer:

Claim no:

Telep

Important information for new tenants

As a new tenant, we know you will be very busy settling into your new home, but please note this important information about managing your income and paying your rent:

- If you receive any benefits let the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Tax Credits Office know that you have changed address
- Make a new claim for Housing Benefit for your new address. You can do this by filling in the form at **[camden.gov.uk/housing](https://www.camden.gov.uk/housing)** and follow the link '**apply online**'. Your housing officer can help you.
- If you claim housing benefit it can only be backdated for 1 month, so make sure you claim as soon as you sign your tenancy agreement.
- Let Council Tax know that you have moved to your new home. If you are single apply for the single persons 25% discount.
- If you pay your rent and council tax by standing order or direct debit, you should update your bank with the pay reference number for your new home
- Check you have a rent card to pay your rent for your new home.
- If you need help with grants for furniture you may be to apply to Camden's local social fund for assistance, further information can be found at **[camden.gov.uk/camdenslocalsocialfund](https://www.camden.gov.uk/camdenslocalsocialfund)**

For more help, email **moneyadvice@camden.gov.uk** or contact one of the advice agencies in chapter 1 of this guide.

Welfare benefits advice

We provide specialist advice and aim to maximize your income and help to prevent you getting into rent arrears. We can:

- check if you can claim work-related, health and disability benefits
- help you to get all the benefits you are entitled to and help you complete forms
- contact benefit agencies for you
- help you review and appeal benefit decisions and represent you at tribunal
- refer you to other support services.

Debt advice

We know that some tenants on a low income can suffer financial hardship due to multiple debts, which can cause a great deal of worry and put tenancies at risk. We can:

- help set up debt repayment plans by negotiating with the people you owe money to
- provide budgeting advice
- help you apply for grants and interest-free loans if you are on a low income
- explain what to do if you face eviction due to rent arrears or have been sent a bailiffs letter
- advise and help you deal with credit card debts and bank loans
- help you if you are struggling with fuel debt or cannot afford to heat your home or pay bills.

We can help you look for work or training

Whether you're looking for part time, full time or voluntary work, we can refer you to services that can help steer you in the right direction.

To find out more about how we can help you to find employment, please email **jobsandskills@camden.gov.uk** or speak to your rent officer who can refer you.

How to get advice

- ask a housing, rent or support officer to refer you to the welfare rights team.
- call **020 7974 4444**
- email **rentservice@camden.gov.uk** or **moneyadvice@camden.gov.uk**



Extra support for tenants

The caretaking visiting service	37
Floating support service	37
Mediation Service	38
Camden Children's Centres	38
Families in Focus	40
Wish Plus	41
Severe weather: help for tenants	41
CarelineTelecare	42
Power cuts: extra support	42
Safeguarding – making sure you are safe from abuse and neglect	43

Support

Contact

Assistance

Extra support for tenants

We offer a number of support services to tenants. If you think that you, someone who lives with you, or a neighbour could benefit from extra support, please talk to your housing officer.

Caretaking visiting service

This is a home visiting service for older tenants or tenants with support needs who have no other help.

A caretaker will call round every two weeks to check on you, and will keep a record of each visit. We will only visit you if you want to be included.

If you think that you or someone you know may benefit from this service, please call **020 7974 4444** for more details.

Floating support service

The service is for residents who need support and help because they may be at risk of losing their tenancy, or their quality of life is affected.

We can help you deal with urgent problems such as claiming benefits or tackling rent arrears. It may also look at the reasons you are having problems, which might be mental health issues, substance misuse, lack of training or employment, or problems using local services or amenities.

If you are referred to the service, a support worker will visit and assess you and write out a plan for working with you. The support worker will keep in touch with your housing officer while they are working with you.

If you feel you need floating support, talk to your housing officer or contact **020 7974 5366**.

Mediation service – supporting difficult conversations

Sometimes, no matter how hard you try to get on with your neighbours, there can be problems. If you find it hard to speak to your neighbour about a dispute, mediation may help.

The mediators will talk to you and your neighbour separately first. They won't tell us what you say but they will tell us if they are working with you or not.

If you would like to be referred to our free mediation service ask your housing officer or call **020 7974 4444**.

Camden children's centres

Camden Sure Start supports Camden families expecting a child or with children under five. You can drop-in to your local children's centre. Services include:

Free healthy start vitamins

- Collect these from Camden children's centres or health centres.

Stay and play

- Free stay and play drop-ins. See the current programme at camden.gov.uk/childrenscentres

Help for families

- Midwifery and health visiting
- Baby feeding support and advice
- Family support (home visiting and 1-1 advice)
- Parenting support (1-1 and groups) and child psychotherapy
- Mental health services for parents

- Children's speech and language therapy
- Help to find volunteering, training and work
- Benefits advice
- Housing advice
- Family learning courses
- Support for disabled parents and parents with children who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The team offers parenting advice and practical support. You can visit your local children's centre or a family support worker can visit you in your own home to offer emotional support and help you access the services you need. Family support teams have access to interpreters.

Childcare

- Free places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds
- Childminders

Camden Parents Council

The Parent Council is a place where you can:

- Meet other Camden parents and carers
- Find out more about how Camden Council works
- Share your views on local issues and help influence service priorities.

For more information see **<http://www.camden.gov.uk/parentcouncil>**

To start using any of these services, fill in the registration form at **[camden.gov.uk/ childrenscentresregform](http://camden.gov.uk/childrenscentresregform)**.

For more information visit [camden.gov.uk/childrenscentres](https://www.camden.gov.uk/childrenscentres) or phone:

1a Children's Centre (Kings Cross and Holborn)	020 7974 7024
Regents Park (Euston)	020 7974 8934
Harmood Children's Centre (Kentish Town West)	020 7974 8961
Agar Children's Centre (Kentish Town East)	020 7974 4789
Kilburn Grange Children's Centre (Kilburn)	020 7974 5080

Families in Focus

Families in Focus is a free support service for Camden families with school age children.

Services offered include:

- activities for dads and male carers and their children
- help with parenting, one to one practical and emotional support
- help with improving family relationships and communication
- help with managing children's behaviour and school attendance
- arts and crafts, sports activities, weekly kids' clubs and family trips.

For more information:

- visit [camden.gov.uk/familysupport](https://www.camden.gov.uk/familysupport)
- phone **020 7974 1957** (if you live in the south of the borough)
- phone **020 7974 8926** (if you live in the north of the borough).

Wish Plus

WISH Plus can help you to improve your health and well-being by putting you in touch with a range of services including:

- advice on how to keep warm and lower your energy bills
- advice on managing your money, sorting out benefits issues and dealing with debts
- help to make your home safer, such as safety gates and secure locks on doors and windows
- access to a handyperson service to do minor repairs (there is a charge for this service)
- access to a range of health services.

WISH Plus is open to all residents. Some services are available depending on your age, disability, whether you are receiving certain benefits or if you have young children in the home.

If you are interested in any of the above services:

- email **wish@camden.gov.uk**
- call **020 7974 3012**
- complete a referral form at **www.camden.gov.uk/wishform**

We will call you back to discuss your requirements and match them with the services best able to meet your needs.

More information about **WISH Plus** is available at **camden.gov.uk/wishplus**.

Severe weather: help for tenants

In bad weather conditions such as snow and ice, and in other emergencies, we can offer extra help to tenants on our register. This is a list of council tenants who might need extra support at these times.

We will try to contact tenants on the register in bad weather or emergencies to check what help they need. We can also contact social care services and voluntary groups for tenants who need more help with day to day activities during this period.

If you think you could benefit from this service you need to contact us to have your name added to the register or ask someone else to do this for you. We will not add your name without you asking us to do this. You can add yourself to the list by visiting our website **camden.gov.uk** or by phoning **020 7974 4444**.

Careline Telecare

Careline Telecare is an alarm service which allows you to get help in an emergency at home. Special equipment can be installed in your home which is triggered by a sensor or when you press an alarm. There is a charge for this service.

To find out more call **020 7974 1491** and choose **option 4** or visit **camden.gov.uk/careline**.

Power cuts: extra support

You may wish to join the Priority Services Register, a free service providing help during a power cut. For vulnerable residents including those with disabilities or chronic ill health, people of pensionable age, households with children under five.

For more information and to register, go to **camden.gov.uk/power-cuts**

Safeguarding - making sure you are safe from abuse and neglect

All adults and children have the right to live a life free from abuse, harm and neglect.

Abuse is when someone says or does something that hurts you, frightens you or takes advantage of you. It can take many forms, including physical, emotional, and financial. The person who carries out the abuse may be a stranger or someone you know.

Some people are more at risk than others. This may be because they are less able to take care of themselves or because they depend on others for their care.

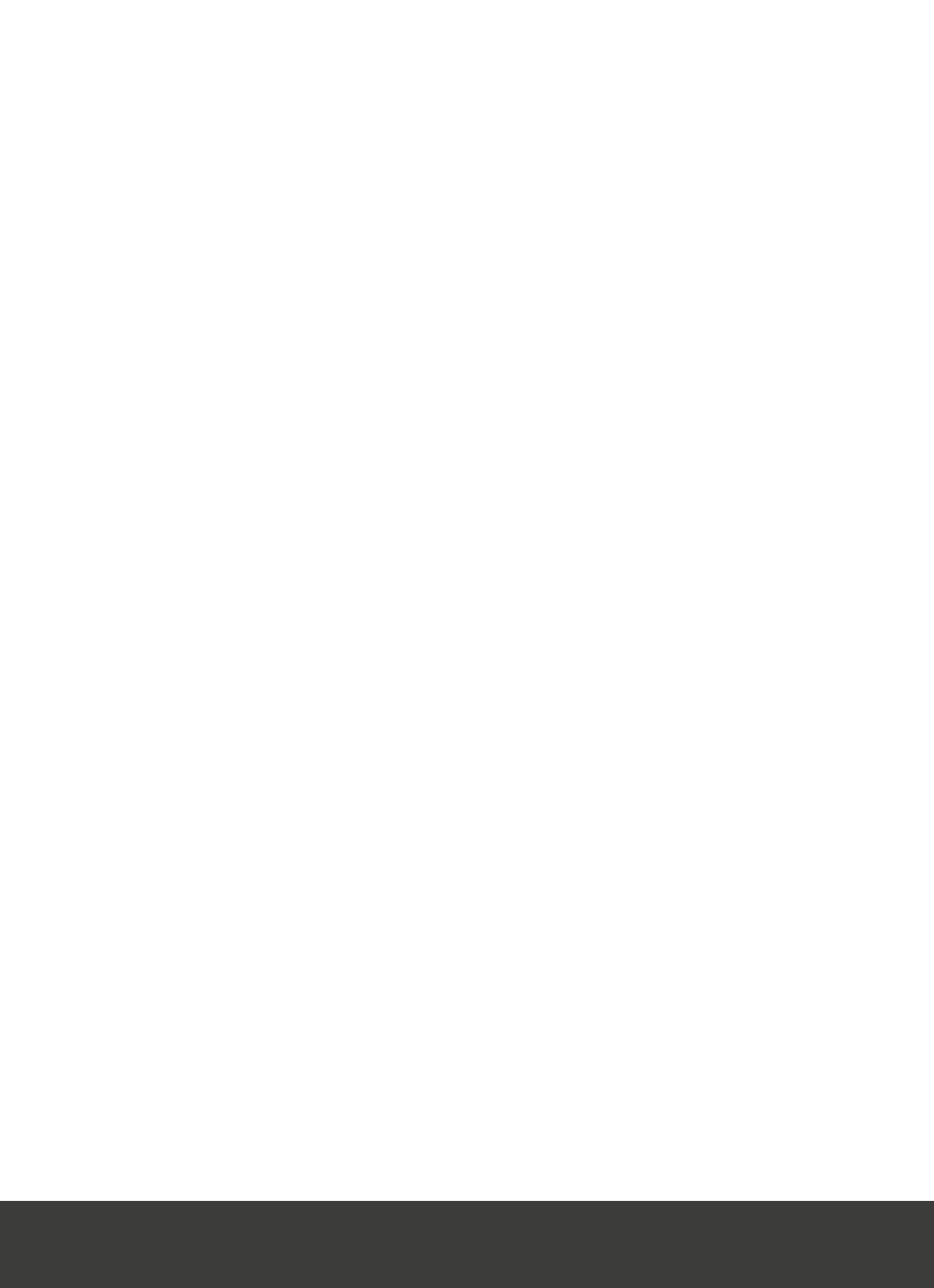
Who to contact if you, or someone you know, suffer abuse

You can do any of the following:

- tell someone you trust and ask for help
- call Camden on **020 7974 4444**
- deaf and hard of hearing customers can contact us on their smartphone via the Texmee app (download and select Camden Council) or on line at **[camden.gov.uk/accessibility](https://www.camden.gov.uk/accessibility)**
- tell a doctor, teacher, social worker or support worker
- contact the NSPCC **www.nspcc.org.uk** in the case of a child or young person
- contact **The Silver Line** - **www.thesilverline.org.uk** - a confidential helpline for older people.

If you think your own or someone else's immediate safety is at risk, including a child who may be in danger, call **999**.

For more information see **[camden.gov.uk/safeguarding](https://www.camden.gov.uk/safeguarding)**



Security and safety

Security

47

Fire safety advice

50



Security and safety

This chapter is about keeping you, your home and the things in it safe and secure. It has important advice about fire safety.

Security

Crime prevention

For concerns about crime prevention officers contact your safer neighbourhood team. For details go to **beta.met.police.uk** or call **101**, the police number for non-emergencies.

You may also find the following advice useful:

Burglary

Protect yourself by making sure you don't give anyone the chance to burgle your home. Often homes get broken into because people have forgotten to do very simple things, such as closing windows or locking doors.

Property marking

You can deter burglars by marking your possessions with your full postcode followed by the number of your house or flat. If marked property is stolen from you and recovered, the police can give it back to you and prosecute the thief more easily.

You can also register anything with a serial number on the national database immobilise.com. This includes mobile phones, laptops, MP3 players and bikes. If something is stolen, there is a better chance of getting it back if you have signed up to immobilise, as the police check stolen property they find against the database.

Keys

We do not keep spare keys to your home. If you lose your keys you are responsible for getting new ones. If we have to change the locks or force the door, we will charge you.

If you lose your keys at the same time as other possessions that show where you live, you should change the lock.

Doors

To ensure that you can escape easily in an emergency, make sure you can get out of the door quickly if you lock it while you are at home. Many insurance policies are invalidated if the front door is not deadlocked or if you leave the key in the lock overnight. Check with your insurer to see what security measures they say you must take. Always keep your keys in a place where you can get at them easily when you are at home but do not leave them in a place that someone can reach by putting their hand or a tool through the letterbox.

It is important that you take any security measures you need to, but you must be able to escape if there is a fire.

Security doors and grilles

You must not fit security doors or grilles or carry out any other alterations to your home without our permission. We will not give our permission unless security measures comply with fire brigade advice.

Front doors to flats

Front doors are an integral part of fire safety in your building. Front doors must not be replaced, altered or modified as this could affect its fire resistance and lead to the rest of the building being put at risk if there is a fire in your flat.

Answering the door to strangers

Council officers, contractors and utility company employees all carry identity cards. If you are unsure about callers, ring their office before you let them in.

Windows

Close your windows when you go out. You can fit window locks but you must normally pay for them yourself. For fire safety, keep the key to hand but out of reach and sight of anyone outside.

Going away

If you go away:

- do not leave notes on your door
- do not leave an answering machine message that suggests you are away
- arrange for someone you trust to make sure that your home doesn't look as though you are away. For example, you might ask them to take mail out of the letter box, close the curtains at night, open them in the morning, and turn lights on and off
- use time-switches on some table-lamps so that they come on at times when you would normally be home (make sure they are kite marked to European Standards).
- cancel any deliveries
- check your insurance policy to see what it says about this. Your tenancy conditions say you must tell us if you are going to be away from home for more than three months.

Fire Safety Advice

Most fires start within the home and are preventable. You can do a great deal to improve fire safety in your home:

Reduce the risk

Fit smoke alarms

- Smoke alarms give you an early warning of fire. Make sure it carries the current British Standards or European (CE) safety mark. Remember to change the battery according to the instructions and clean the inside at least once a year with a vacuum cleaner. Test smoke alarms every week.
- Some of our properties have a hard wired smoke alarms, CO2 and heat detectors fitted. You must not tamper with or disconnect these alarms.
- You can get a free home fire safety assessment and free 10-year battery operated smoke alarm by calling the London Fire Brigade on **0800 028 4428** or by visiting **[london-fire.gov.uk/HomeFireSafetyVisit](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/HomeFireSafetyVisit)**
- You must still check the battery in the alarm each week. When the battery stops working, you will need to get the whole alarm replaced.

Make sure you have a fire escape plan

- In the event of a fire in your home, an escape plan can mean the difference between life and death.
- Plan your escape and talk through your escape plan

with everyone who lives in your home, especially children and teenagers, older people and lodgers

- Choose the best escape route; this is normally your usual way in and out of your home.
- Choose a second escape route in case the first one is blocked and always aim to keep them both clear at all times.
- Tell everyone where the keys to doors and windows are kept.
- Go through what to do in the event of a fire.

If a fire breaks out in your home:

- Act quickly and calmly
- Alert everyone – shout
- Get everyone out, using your escape route.
Do not stop to collect valuables
- Check closed doors with the back of your hand.
Do not open the door if it feels warm, as the fire may be on the other side of the door
- Smoke can kill; get down as low as possible where the air can be clearer
- Once you've escaped, call **999** (calls are free)
- Don't go back in for anything – if there is still someone inside, wait for the Fire Brigade to arrive to help them.
- Find somewhere safe to wait. When the Fire Brigade arrives, give as much information as possible about the fire and the building, and if anyone is still inside.

If you live in a tower block

- It is normally safest to stay within your flat if there is a fire elsewhere in the building. This is because blocks are designed in compartments to prevent the spread of smoke and fire, keeping you safe until the Fire Brigade arrives. There is a risk of being overcome by smoke if you leave your flat without knowing you have a safe escape route. Call **999** to tell the Fire Brigade about the fire and advise them of your location.

Keep communal areas and escape routes clear

- You must not let clutter collect in passages and stairwells as this is a fire risk. All communal areas should be free of combustible items. Do not store personal belongings – including items like bicycles and prams – in shared areas as this could prevent you and others getting out safely.
- We will remove any flammable materials from communal areas or where items are obstructing escape routes.
- Motorbikes should never be stored in communal areas or inside your home. They should be parked in designated areas outside.
- If you have large items to dispose of, find out how to do this at camden.gov.uk/recycling or call **020 7974 4444** (select option 4).

Reduce your risk of fire at home

- Take care in the kitchen and when cooking with hot oil. Hot oil can catch fire quickly. A chip pan should never be more than 1/3 full. Never throw water on a chip pan fire.
- Consider using a thermostatically controlled deep fat fryer.
- Never leave pans unattended

- Ensure cigarettes are stubbed out and disposed of carefully
- Never smoke in bed
- Keep matches and lighters away from children
- Keep clothing away from heating appliances and do not dry or air clothes around heaters or cookers.
- Take special care when you are tired
- Switch off electrical appliances when you are not using them and pull out plugs, especially before you go to bed. Some electrical appliances such as video recorders, fridges and freezers are designed to be left on all the time; check with the manufacturer's instructions if you are unsure.
- Don't overload electrical sockets.
- Faulty electrical items can be a fire hazard to your home. You can view a list of current electrical products being recalled at the Electrical Safety First website.
- Close doors and windows to prevent any fire from spreading, especially when you go to bed.
- Never block, tie or wedge open fire doors in your home or communal areas.
- Do not fit key opening locks on your front door as this could impede your escape route.
- You must not use or store flammable substances in your home such as liquid petroleum, paraffin containers or cylinders (for example Calor gas), dangerous chemicals, gases or materials.
- Remember that it is illegal to burn fuels such as wood, coal and anthracite in open fires in Camden. Some stoves and fuels are exempt from this. For more information visit smokecontrolareas.co.uk or call **020 7974 5613/5623**. If you want to use this kind of fuel or stove, heater or boiler, you must get our permission.
- Make sure that open fires have a fireguard.

For more advice contact your local fire station:

Euston fire station

020 8555 1200 extension **84746**

Kentish Town fire station

020 8555 1200 extension **84750**

West Hampstead fire station

020 8555 1200 extension **84751** Or

Camden Borough fire safety team

020 8555 1200 extension **34326**

www.london-fire.gov.uk

Gas, electricity, water and saving energy

Your gas supply	57
Gas safety	58
Your electricity supply	60
Electrical safety	60
Water supply	61
Saving energy	63

Energy

More efficient

A

B

C

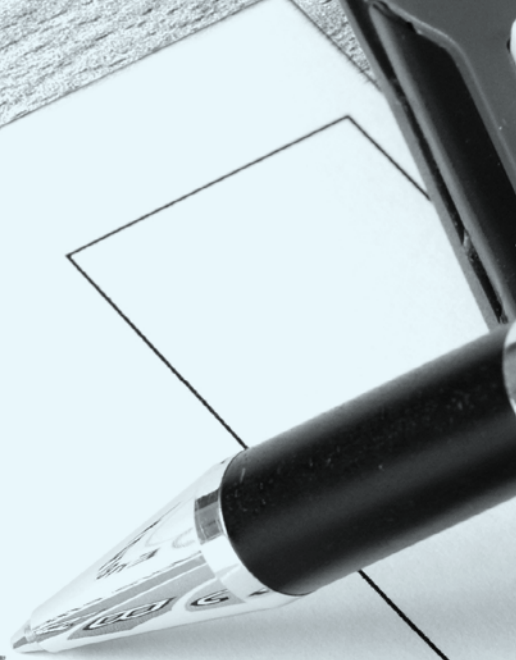
D

E

F

Less efficient

Energy consumption
kWh



Your gas supply

Your gas supply will either be from Camden's own gas network or from your own chosen gas supplier.

If you are bringing your own cooker to your new home you will need to arrange for a Gas Safe Registered engineer to install it **after** the gas has been reconnected. We strongly recommend you do not buy a second hand gas appliance.

If your gas is supplied by Camden

On some estates heating and hot water are supplied to each flat from a communal boiler. If your home is connected to a communal boiler, you will pay a heating charge as well as your rent. Residents in the heating pool pay a set amount, depending on the size of property and the heating service provided. You also pay a heating charge if a separate boiler in your flat uses gas from Camden's own gas network.

If your gas is not supplied by Camden and you require a gas supply.

If you are moving into an empty property, the gas and electric will be provided by British Gas. Your Housing Officer will give you a leaflet about how to set up the account in your name. Please note that you can switch supplier at any time.

We recommend that you take the meter readings at your new home as soon as you move in and give them to your supplier.

Once you have collected the keys to your new home, you will be contacted by an officer to arrange for your gas supply to be connected.

If heating and hot water is supplied by Camden (your housing officer can tell you this) and you don't want to fit a gas cooker, you do not need to contact a gas supplier.

Heat meters

If you live on an estate you may have a heat meter and monitoring display screen installed in your property. The meter measures the heating and hot water you use. We have installed heat meters so that residents pay only for the energy they use.

If you have a heat meter you can find out more at see **camden.gov.uk/heatmeters** or call **020 7974 2044** if you need advice.

Gas safety

We recommend getting a carbon monoxide detector for all properties that have gas.

Installing gas appliances

By law, gas appliances must be fitted by a qualified person who is a member of the Gas Safe Register and has the qualifications that allow them to carry out that specific type of gas work.

Gas servicing

By law, we must carry out a gas safety inspection in your home every 12 months. At the same time, our gas contractor will service any gas appliances we have provided.

You must let us in to do this as part of your tenancy conditions. A Gas Safe Registered engineer will carry out the safety check and give you a copy of the gas safety certificate. If you don't let us in to do the safety check, we will take legal action.

If the engineer finds any problem with gas appliances provided by housing they will carry out all necessary repairs to ensure the appliance is safe.

The Council is not responsible for servicing appliances which belong to you, such as your own gas cookers. We recommend that you arrange to have your appliances serviced regularly in line with the manufactures guidelines, and by a Gas Safe Registered engineer with the qualifications that allow them to carry out that specific type of gas work.

You must never

- try to do gas or electrical repairs yourself. Do not block any airbricks, louvred vents or appliance terminals, and clear away plants or leaves that might block them
- alter or disconnect the heating system without our approval.

What to do if you smell gas

If you smell gas, think you have a gas leak, or are worried that fumes containing carbon monoxide are escaping from a gas appliance:

- call the free Gas Emergency Services line immediately on **0800 111 999** or Camden on **020 7974 4444** (If you know that Camden supplies your gas, call us first).
- open doors and windows to ventilate the property
- Turn of your gas supply at the emergency control valve this is normally located near the meter, put out all naked flames, do not smoke, strike a match or do anything else which would cause ignition, including turning electrical switches on or off

Your electricity supply

When you move in, the electricity will be provided by British Gas. You will need to arrange for the account to be put into your name. A leaflet will be given to you by your Housing Officer explaining how to do this.

Make sure that you know how to turn the electricity off safely at the mains, in case there is an emergency.

Electrical safety

- switch off all appliances that are not in use and pull out any plugs, especially before you go to bed or go out
- never take an electrical appliance into a bathroom
- do not touch an appliance with wet hands
- do not plug too many appliances into one socket

You can get more advice on electrical safety from electricity suppliers.

Fuses

You are responsible for replacing blown fuses. If you are not sure how to do this, you should ask someone who does know to help you.

Circuit breakers

Instead of fuses, your home may have circuit breakers, which are switches that automatically turn off when an ordinary fuse would have blown. Unplug the appliance that has caused the problem and reset the switch to 'on'. If the circuit breaker keeps

switching off, phone us on **020 7974 4444** as there may be a fault in the socket or electrical wiring.

Plugs

Different appliances need different fuses.

For example a radio or table lamp will usually need a 3 amp fuse. A fridge, iron or washing machine will need a 13 amp fuse.

If you are unsure, contact the dealer or manufacturer of the equipment.

Water supply

Stopcocks

Make sure you know where the main stopcock is for turning off the water supply. It is usually under the kitchen sink. There are likely to be other stopcocks in your home.

These shut off particular stretches of pipe. You should know where they are, in case there is an emergency. Turn the stopcocks two or three times a year just to keep them from getting stuck. If a stopcock is stuck, try using WD40 (lubricant).

Do not try to force it. If it still won't turn call us on **020 7974 4444**.

Overflows

Storage tanks and toilet systems have overflow pipes to prevent flooding. If a system is overflowing, you will notice a constant flow of water either from an outside pipe or from one into your bath or washbasin.

If you cannot stop the overflow, call us on **020 7974 4444** to get the tank or toilet system repaired. If for any reason your water supply goes off, turn all the taps off and leave sinks, basins and baths clear with the plugs out. This stops any flooding when the water comes back on.

Frozen pipes

If your pipes freeze, turn the water off at the main stopcock and drain the system by turning on all the taps. When the pipes thaw out, turn the water supply back on. Don't heat the frozen pipe as this will make it burst. If you have a burst water pipe, call us on **020 7974 4444**.

If you have a water leak, find out where the water is coming from. If it is a faulty joint, or a hole or split in the pipe, tie a rag around the leak and put a bucket under it.

If water has been dripping through an electric light or switch, do not turn it on. **Call 020 7974 4444**.

Water Hygiene

To maintain good water hygiene in your home and control the normal build-up of bacteria in the water supply, it is highly recommended to clean shower heads with a suitable

household cleaner every three months. This also applies to shower hose attachments on bath taps.

If you have been away from home for a few weeks or more, run the shower for five minutes before use, avoiding inhaling the water spray.

Saving energy

The average UK household wastes £250 per year by not being energy efficient. With just a few small steps, you can stay warm and save money.

If you need advice on saving energy contact Green Camden at camden.gov.uk/greencamden or call **0800 801 738**.

Tips

Heating

- turning down a thermostat by only 1°C can reduce heating bills by up to 10% a year
- save energy by turning your radiator valves down to the temperature you need and consider setting the timer on your heating so it comes on when you need it
- close your curtains when it gets dark to keep the heat in
- putting aluminium foil behind radiators with outside walls will reduce the amount of heat escaping.
- consider taking a shower instead of a bath

Electricity

- save money by not leaving electrical items on standby
- don't leave rechargeable items, such as toothbrushes or telephones charging for longer than necessary
- switch off the lights when you leave a room
- use energy efficient light bulbs
- keep internal doors closed to reduce draughts

Cooking

- put a lid on saucepans where possible, so the contents heat up faster and use less energy. This can also help with condensation.
- only boil as much water as you need
- limescale affects the efficiency of kettles so descale regularly.

Fridges and freezers

- don't leave the fridge door open longer than necessary
- defrost regularly if your appliance doesn't do it automatically.

Washing machines

- use a low temperature setting where possible and only wash full loads, or use a half-load economy programme.

Parking on your estate

Parking on housing estates	67
Controlled hours	67
Exemptions	68
What if someone else is parked in your car space?	68
How to apply for a car parking space or garage	69
Permits	70



Parking on housing estates

Parking on Camden's housing estates is controlled. Residents are only allowed to park in numbered and marked parking spaces and only if they have a valid estate parking permit. All access roads must be kept clear for emergency vehicles. Roads and access roads on housing estates are private property and not part of Camden's highways.

This means the rules for parking on housing estates are not the same as the rules for parking in the controlled parking zones on the streets. The parking services team controls street parking. You can contact them on **020 7974 4444**.

Controlled hours

Parking restrictions apply at all times. Our contractors enforce the parking restrictions and aim to visit estates between 8am and 8pm, seven days a week except bank holidays and public holidays. They may patrol outside these hours. A small number of estates have different patrol hours to these. The contractors will issue parking Charge Notices (PCNs) to vehicles without a permit, or vehicles with an invalid permit (one that is out of date, altered or has the wrong registration number). This includes cars, vans, motorbikes and mopeds.

Exemptions

The following vehicles are not covered by the parking restrictions:

- emergency vehicles (fire, police and ambulance)
- doctors and nurses who are on call and whose vehicles display their health emergency badge
- any vehicle displaying a Fire Brigade notice
- funeral vehicles
- milk floats and post office vehicles.

What if someone else parks in your car space?

Sometimes you may find someone has parked in your space. If you rent a parking space and your vehicle has a valid permit, you may park temporarily in another bay or park considerately somewhere else on the estate.

If someone keeps parking in your space, report this to us on **020 7974 4444**. Your permit does not allow you to park on another estate or block.

How to apply for a car parking space or garage

You can apply for parking and see copies of the full terms and conditions for parking at **[camden.gov.uk](https://www.camden.gov.uk)**.

There is a weekly charge for parking spaces and garages. Charges are usually added to your rent. We will not give a parking space or garage to a tenant who is behind with their rent.

Charges for parking spaces are based on vehicle CO2 emissions. Low emission vehicles attract lower charges. This is because Camden is encouraging residents to use less environmentally damaging vehicles.

Garages are charged at a set rate of £12 per week for tenants and leaseholders and can be used to store a vehicle or other belongings. The prices are higher for private tenants and commercial users.

If you are a blue badge holder, you are entitled to one parking space or garage free of charge. Your vehicle must be registered with the DVLA in your name and at your address. You may be asked to produce the vehicle registration document (V5) and blue badge.

Permits

You must display the permit clearly in your vehicle windscreen at all times. If you do not display the permit, your vehicle may be issued with a PCN.

The permit must not be altered in any way. Any alterations will make the permit invalid.

If you change your vehicle, you must inform us in order to obtain a new permit. Please call us on **020 7974 4444**.

Taking part and being involved

Taking part and being involved

73

How to find out more

73



Taking part and being involved

We actively encourage Camden tenants to get involved to improve the lives of themselves and each other. We leave it to you to decide what you are able to contribute.

As a minimum, you will regularly be informed and consulted about the things we do in your neighbourhood and about how we deliver housing services across the borough.

For those interested and are able to do so, there are opportunities to volunteer your time. We offer engagement opportunities to people who want to:

- make their neighbourhoods great places to live
- improve the lives of others living in Camden's communities
- influence the decisions we make
- help us improve services
- ensure that we recruit the best staff

How much time you commit is entirely up to you. This might be as little as filling in a survey or talking to your housing officer on your doorstep, to joining one of Camden's tenant and resident associations, setting up a gardening club or even helping us to run your local housing service.

How to find out more

Ask your housing officer about opportunities to get involved in your area or you can:

- email the tenant and leaseholder engagement team at **tp@camden.gov.uk**

- visit [camden.gov.uk/tenantparticipation](https://www.camden.gov.uk/tenantparticipation) or
- call **020 7974 7932**.

If you would like to talk to your councillor, contact councillor services on **020 7974 4444** or visit [camden.gov.uk/democracy](https://www.camden.gov.uk/democracy)

Harassment and domestic violence

Types of harassment	77
Ways to stop harassment	77
What the Council can do	78
What to do if you are harassed	78
Domestic and sexual violence: Camden Safety Net (CSN)	79
Hate crimes	79
Who to contact	80



Harassment and domestic violence

We aim to deal with harassment quickly and sensitively and will offer you advice and practical help.

Types of harassment

Harassment and hate crimes are aimed at someone because of their disability, gender, race, faith or sexual orientation. People who harass others often make no direct contact (for example, they may send anonymous threatening letters instead). Their aim is to cause stress or fear.

Ways to stop harassment

1 If the person harassing you is a council tenant or lives in a council leasehold property, we may be able to take action. This is because they have signed a tenancy agreement or a lease. One of the conditions of the tenancy agreement is that they must not do (or allow) anything that may cause harassment or annoyance to anyone else. We may be able to take action against someone even if they are not a council tenant. Taking early action, which can include verbal or written warnings, is often the most effective way to prevent problems continuing or escalating.

2 You may wish to get legal advice and consider taking the person harassing you to court. The court may give you an injunction against them, which might say that the person should not contact you or come within a certain distance of you or your property. If someone breaks an injunction, they can be arrested.

3 The Council or police can apply to a court for an injunction or order which forbids specific acts of harassment or antisocial behaviour.

4 Harassment may also involve a criminal offence. If so, with your agreement, we may work with the police to see if there is anything we can do to make you feel safer.

What the Council can do

We can give you help and advice. If there is enough evidence, we can take court action against tenants who harass others. We can also try to make you feel safer in your own home and can refer you to agencies who may be able to provide support. In very serious cases, we can also help you move to another area if you think this is the only way you will be safe. However, this could take a long time as spare properties are in short supply.

What to do if you are harassed

If you are being harassed, call **0207 974 4444** and tell your housing officer.

Keep a record of all incidents of nuisance, with the date, time and details of what happened. We will:

- make sure that someone visits or interviews you
- make sure any emergency repairs to your home are done as soon as possible and consider whether extra work should be done to make your home more secure.

Do not be afraid to contact us. We will treat your case sympathetically. Any information you give will be kept confidential but in many cases the most effective help might only be possible by engaging directly with those alleged to be responsible.

Your housing officer can give you the addresses and phone numbers of organisations that help people suffering from harassment or contact them directly on your behalf.

Domestic and sexual violence Camden Safety Net (CSN)

Camden Safety Net offers a service to people who experience domestic and sexual violence and abuse. CSN will listen to your views on how you can be made safer and advise and support you.

If you are, or have been, a victim of domestic or sexual violence or abuse, CSN can offer help and services for you and your children. CSN also offers services such as a men's group for people who want to change their abusive behaviour. Phone **020 7974 2526**. Monday-Friday 9am-5pm. For more information see **camden.gov.uk/domesticviolence**

Hate Crimes

A hate crime is any crime felt by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice.

Hate crimes are mainly directed at people due to race or ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation, disability - including physical disability, learning disability and mental health - and a person who is transgender or thought to be transgender.

We always encourage people to report hate crimes to the police as well as the Council. There is a wide range of agencies that can assist people who are victims of hate crime.

For more advice on these options contact your housing officer or look at the information at **camden.gov.uk/hatecrime**.

Who to contact

We encourage residents to report harassment and work closely with other partners, such as the police and the community safety service, to tackle problems in your area. Information will be treated as confidential and can be provided anonymously.

- **999** for serious incidents, including a crime that is about to happen
- **101** or **beta.met.police.uk** to contact your local safer neighbourhood team
- **020 7974 4444** for:
 - Security and parks patrol. Operates daily and can intervene, witness activity or contact the police.
 - Camden community safety service. For wider antisocial behaviour in your area
 - Your housing officer
- **020 7974 2526** for Camden Safety Net

Nuisance

Noise	83
Reducing noise in your home	83
Anti-social behaviour and nuisance	83
What to do if you are suffering nuisance or anti-social behaviour	85
Mediation	85
Taking your own action	86
Who to contact	86

Mediation

Dispute resolution process



Nuisance

We will offer advice if you suffer from noise or anti-social-behaviour and aim to respond quickly and sensitively.

Noise

You must keep noise to a reasonable volume at all times. Please consider your neighbours' comfort. You must not allow noise to be heard at all outside your property after 11pm and before 8am.

Reducing noise in your home

Noise can lead to neighbour disputes which can be stressful and upsetting. Some noise may be unavoidable when you live close to others but there is a lot you can do to help reduce it:

- Keep your television, radio and music volume down. Place audio equipment away from walls that are shared with a neighbour, use stands for speakers and keep the bass low.
- Avoid moving heavy furniture or using washing machines and vacuum cleaners at night.
- Fitting felt, rubber or cork pads under chair legs can prevent them scraping noisily.
- If you live in a flat or maisonette keep floors covered with carpet and a good quality underlay or something with similar noise reducing qualities.
- If you own a dog and need help managing its behaviour, ask your housing officer if you can get support from the **Dog Hub service**.

- Try not to let the main entrance door slam.
- Let your neighbours know beforehand if you have to do something noisy like DIY. If people know in advance they are usually happier to tolerate some noise.

If someone complains to you about noise try and listen to their point of view. They might be hearing noise you are unaware of making.

Antisocial behaviour and nuisance

You must not behave in any way which causes a nuisance to neighbours or a nuisance on any Council property.

You are also responsible for the behaviour of family or friends living in or visiting your home. Examples of anti-social behaviour and nuisance include youth disorder, graffiti, irresponsible dog ownership, leaving clutter or smoking in communal areas or parking irresponsibly or illegally.

Mediation

Mediation has been proven to work in many disputes between neighbours, whatever the cause. If you would like to be referred to our free mediation service ask your housing officer or call **020 7974 4444**.

You will not be expected to meet the other person involved unless you agree.

What to do if you are suffering nuisance or antisocial behaviour

If you are being disturbed, report the details to your housing officer who can advise you. We will treat your case sympathetically. Any information you give will be kept confidential but in many cases the most effective help might only be possible by engaging directly with those alleged to be responsible.

Sometimes problems can be nipped in the bud, or problems solved through agreement. Where mediation or agreement has not worked, verbal or written warnings may be given.

In more serious cases and where problems persist, we may take legal action where there is enough evidence. If we do this we will ask you to keep a record of the time and date of all incidents and details of what happened. Your housing officer can advise you about our witness support scheme, a confidential process that supports residents through the court process.

In some cases, either you, the Council or the police can apply to the court for an injunction. This usually means the person causing the nuisance must not contact you or come near your property.

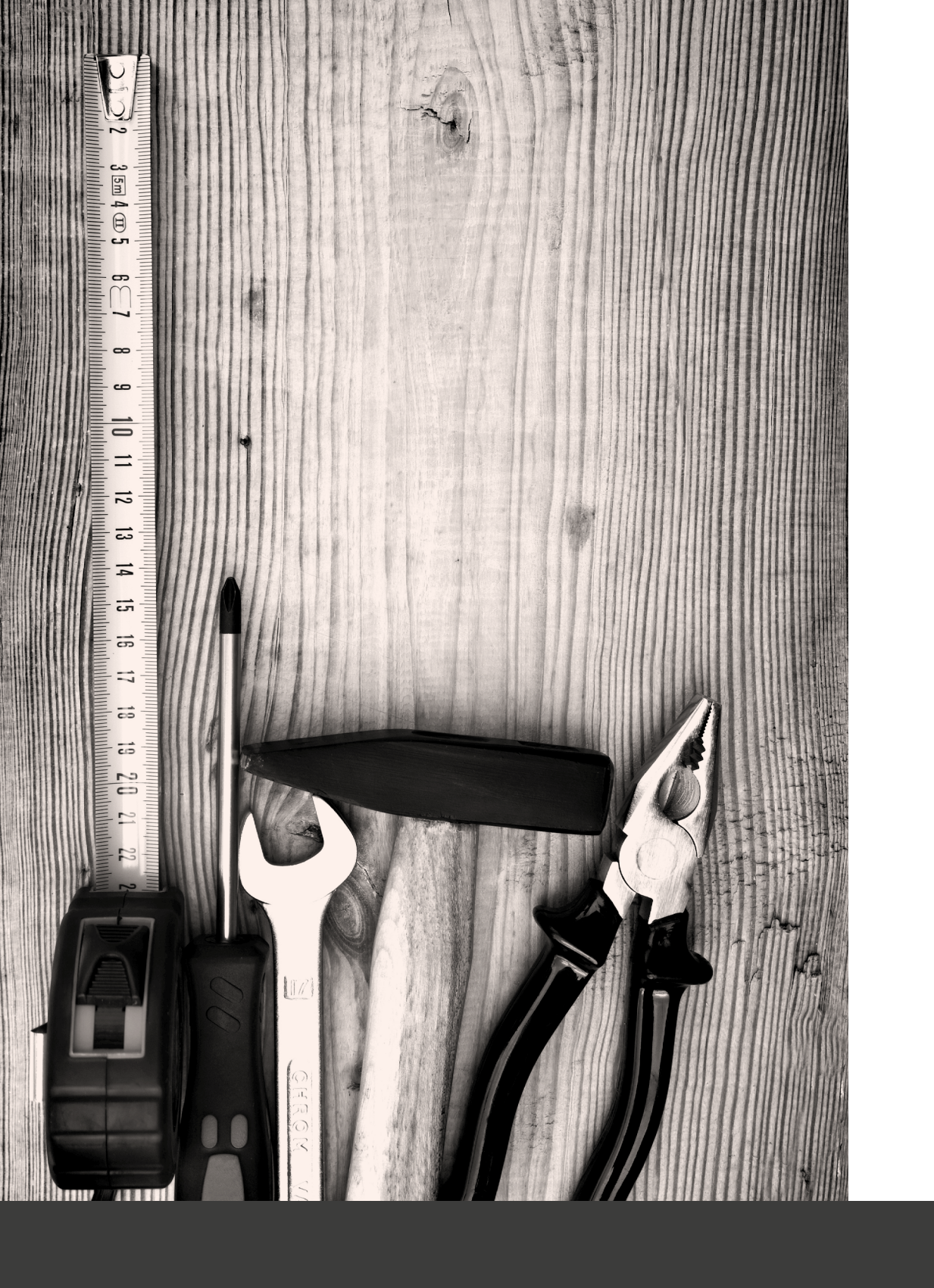
In the most serious cases, and when there is no alternative, we may seek to evict the person from their home.

Who to contact

- **999** - for serious incidents, including a crime that is about to happen
- **101** or **beta.met.police.uk** to contact your local safer neighbourhood team
- **020 7974 4444** for:
 - Security and parks patrol. Operates daily and can intervene, witness activity or contact the police.
 - Camden community safety service. For wider antisocial behaviour in your area
 - Your housing officer
- **020 7974 2526** for **Camden Safety Net**
- to report rough sleeping and other street activity including begging or street drinking call **0808 8000005** or download the reporting App by visiting **camdensst.com**
- if you have been affected by a dog related incident contact the Dog Hub at **hub@btopenworld.com**. You can find out more about Dog Hub services by visiting **thedoghub.co.uk**
- if the issue relates to wider antisocial behaviour in your area you can contact the community safety service on **020 7974 4444**.

Housing repairs

Reporting repairs	89
Repair responsibilities	90
Access and appointments	93
Repairs in communal areas	95
Heat meters	95
Decorations	96
Insurance	96
Attempted break ins and burglaries	97
Condensation and mould	97
Extra support	99
Improvements and alterations	100



2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23

CHECK 1/2

Reporting repairs

You can report some of your routine repairs 24/7 online through your Camden Account. Chapter 1 of this guide tells you how to set up a Camden Account.

You can also report repairs between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday on **020 7974 4444**.

Emergency repairs:

If your repair is an emergency please call **020 7974 4444**.

Examples of emergencies are smelling gas, uncontrollable leaks and any repairs which risk the health and safety or security of yourself or anyone else in your home or around your estate.

Repair responsibilities

The table below lists which repairs we are responsible for and those which are your responsibility:

We will ask you to pay in advance for repairs caused by misuse within your home.

We will tell you as soon as possible if you have to pay for a repair. You may arrange for it to be carried out using a suitably qualified and insured tradesperson. We may wish to inspect the work once it is done to check the standard.

Our duties and repair responsibilities	Your repairs responsibilities
Doors and windows	
Front door and frame. Front and back door locks.	Replacing lost or damaged keys.
Repairs following criminal damage – remember to report this to the police and to obtain a crime reference number.	Additional security locks. Reporting criminal damage to the police to obtain a crime reference number. False reporting of crime is a criminal offence. Getting back into your home if you have lost or damaged your keys.
Door entry systems.	Internal doors, locks, hinges and handles. Letter boxes, door numbers and security chains.
Window frames.	Window catches and stays, security locks or replacement keys.

Doors and windows

Boarding up broken glass in external windows and doors.	Replacing broken glass or glazing, if you cannot provide a related police crime reference number.
	Installing secondary glazing, or repairs to secondary glazing not installed by Camden.

Walls and floors

Internal walls, skirting boards, and plasterwork.	Surface cracks to wall and ceiling plaster.
Replacing internal wall tiles, floor boards and panels, and plasterwork that has not been damaged through misuse.	<p>Ceramic tiles on splash backs around sinks, worktops, basins and baths.</p> <p>Remember not to tile over access panels.</p> <p>We will not repair or install laminate flooring. We will not be responsible for damage to laminate flooring if this has to be removed to repair plumbing or electrics or other building elements.</p>
	<p>Sealant around baths.</p> <p>Replacing or repairing damaged kitchen units, including cupboard doors, shelves, handles, drawers and work tops.</p>
	Floor coverings, such as carpets.
Replacing or repairing bath panel if damaged during course of repairs.	Internal decoration.

Outside

Clearance of rainwater goods where damage is being caused.	<p>Keeping drainage outlets and gullies clear.</p> <p>Remember not to dispose of fat and oil down drains.</p> <p>Please do not use chemicals to clear drains and when requesting a repair, notify the repairs team if chemicals have been used.</p>
Roof repairs.	Removing minor drain blockages.
Repairing brickwork.	Maintaining private gardens.
Damp-proof work.	Clearing rubbish from gardens or balconies.
<p>Repairs and maintenance for Camden installed Integrated Reception System (IRS).</p> <p>Repairs and maintenance of gullies and drains.</p>	Keeping shared space and walkways clear.

Communal or shared areas

Estate roads and paths.	Maintaining access routes for emergency services – remember to keep corridors and shared areas clear for emergency services and repairs staff that may need to access in emergency circumstances.
Estate lighting.	
Communal hallways and staircases.	
Boundary walls and fences.	
Rubbish chutes and bin chambers.	
Communal lifts.	

Heating, hot water, electrical and plumbing

<p>Annual gas safety checks, maintenance and repair of appliances we have installed to provide heating and hot water.</p> <p>Call 020 7974 4444 immediately if you suspect you smell gas – this is an emergency.</p>	<p>Changing light bulbs and fluorescent tubes or starters.</p> <p>‘Pay as you go’ payment methods such as electricity/gas keys.</p>
<p>The gas supply from the gas meter to the appliances it supplies.</p>	<p>Electrical plugs, including fuses.</p>
<p>The electricity supply between the meter and the electrical sockets in your home.</p>	<p>Failure of gas or electricity suppliers to provide the agreed services or maintain their equipment.</p>
<p>The water supply from the meter or stopcock outside your home, to fittings that use water inside your home.</p>	<p>Faults or connections on domestic appliances such as fridges, cookers, resident installed equipment such as light fittings.</p>
<p>Hot and cold water pipework. Maintenance of heat metering equipment.</p>	<p>Plugs and chains to baths, sinks and wash hand basins, shower heads, and toilet seats.</p>
<p>Unblocking main drains and soil pipes connected with your home.</p>	<p>Cleaning stains on sinks, wash hand basins, baths, showers and toilets.</p>
<p>Unblocking communal waste pipes.</p>	<p>Unblocking kitchen sinks, wash hand basins and bath waste pipes. Please do not use chemicals to attempt to unblock sinks and when requesting a repair, notify the repairs team if chemicals have been used.</p>
<p>Maintenance of cold water tanks and hot water cylinders.</p>	<p>Boxing in pipe-work.</p>
	<p>Damage to plumbing installation such as toilets sinks or showers, which is a result of misuse or accidents.</p>

Access

Your tenancy conditions say you must give access to your property for inspections and repairs. We'll normally give you reasonable notice except in the case of an emergency, such as a burst water pipe.

You must let us in to your property to carry out work that may affect your health and safety, or that of other residents. This includes: annual gas safety inspections; essential repairs to your home or those next to it; electrical wiring; gas and water pipes or drainage and heating systems.

If you do not allow access, we may take legal action and you may have to pay costs.

If we have to force entry to your home in an emergency, we will leave it secure. If you have caused us to force entry, for example if you overflow your bath and flood the property below, we will charge the cost to you.

Appointments for repairs inside your home

When you report a repair we will ask you information which will help us determine if the repair is an emergency.

For emergencies we will attend as soon as we can on the same day and it is important that you help us get to the repair as soon as possible by remaining in your home to allow us access unless we advise otherwise for safety reasons.

Examples of emergencies include but are not exclusive to gas leaks, uncontrollable leaks, electrical faults, or no water to your home.

If the repair is not an emergency, we will be able to book an appointment for a tradesperson or engineer to visit at a date and time which is suitable to you and when the right person for the job is available.

Repairs in communal areas

We will attend as soon as reasonably possible for the following repairs, and others can also be logged online or by calling our call centre:

- Electricity supply and installation
- Emergency work such as communal heating and hot water
- Lift installations
- Door entry system
- Communal lighting – failure of lighting on communal landing/lobby areas and staircases

You can check progress of communal repairs at:

<https://contact.camden.gov.uk/communal-repairs-statuses-subscription/>

Please note: If you live in a flat in a house where you share the main front door, you must not change the front door lock.

Heat meters

If you live on an estate you may have a heat meter installed in your home. A heat meter measures the heating and hot water you use and will help you monitor and control your energy consumption. For more information on heat meters see **[camden.gov.uk/heat meters](https://camden.gov.uk/heat-meters)**.

Decorations

Decorations are generally your responsibility to maintain, repair or replace, including, for example, when there is a leak from a flat above. This is why we encourage all our tenants to take out contents insurance cover.

We only redecorate in exceptional circumstances, such as for elderly or disabled tenants when there is no one in the household who is capable of doing so. Redecoration in other circumstances will be at our discretion.

Insurance cover

We strongly recommend that you take out an insurance policy to protect the contents of your home.

Camden is responsible for the structure of your home. We are not responsible for damage to, or loss of, your belongings from theft, vandalism, fire, flood, storm, water damage or other household risks.

This means that if you are not insured and the contents of your home are damaged, you may have to pay for the repair or replacement of your belongings and decorations. It is therefore a good idea to have insurance.

You may wish to make your own insurance arrangements, or use a scheme Camden runs with Allianz Insurance plc.

This allows tenants to pay for insurance weekly, along with the rent. All you have to do is decide how much you want to be insured for, based on the value of your household contents. Allianz will write and tell you how much to pay each week. You then pay this sum to Camden at the same time as you pay your rent. You can download an application form from **camden.gov.uk**.

You must keep up to date with payments. If you fall behind, the insurance policy will be cancelled.

Making a claim

If you are insured privately, contact your insurance company immediately. If you have taken out insurance through Camden, call **020 7974 2390** for a claim form. Give full details of what has happened and don't throw anything away unless the insurance company says you can.

Repairs following attempted break-ins and burglaries

Where damage has been caused following an attempted break-in or burglary, you must:

- report it to the Police and obtain a crime reference number
- contact us by telephone to report the incident and any damage caused, including the crime reference number from the police

Where damage has been caused to doors or windows we will treat this as an emergency repair and aim to ensure the property is secured and any health and safety risks are made safe the same day. Any follow up repairs required will be carried out as soon as possible thereafter.

Condensation and mould

What is condensation?

Condensation tends to appear on cold surfaces and places where there is little or no movement in the air, for example in the corners of rooms near windows or behind cupboards and wardrobes.

Some ordinary domestic activities produce a lot of moisture very quickly.

Preventing condensation

Living style	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When cooking, close the kitchen door, open a window and put lids on saucepans.• Dry clothes outside or at a launderette – do not dry clothes on radiators.• Put a small amount of cold water in the bath before you turn on the hot tap.• Do not run your shower longer than you need to.• After showering or bathing, open the bathroom window and close the door.• If using a tumble dryer, make sure it is vented to the outside.• Mop and wipe up any condensation, everyday.
Heating your home	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the thermostat to control your heating – it will assist you to heat your home more evenly, using low level heating all day, rather than quick blasts. This should also reduce your heating bills.
Ventilate your home	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep small windows or trickle vents open at all times.• Use extractor fans if you have them.• Close kitchen and bathroom doors when in use.• Make sure other doors are closed, especially bedrooms doors as these rooms are normally slightly cooler and will attract moisture.• Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes and avoid putting too much in them, as this stops air circulating.• Do not put wardrobes against colder external walls.

How to treat mould

If mould affects your property it can be cleaned off with a fungicidal spray, available from most DIY shops and larger supermarkets. Please read the instructions carefully and you wear the appropriate personal protection.

Extra Support

We know that some residents may need extra help to complete repairs. If we believe that you meet one of the conditions below, we have a policy that allows us to carry out some of the repair work that you are responsible for without charging you.

These include:

- tenants who receive a care package from our social care services
- tenants in receipt of the state pension who are physically unable to carry out the repair themselves and have no other member of their family or household who can help with the repair.

Other discretionary repairs may include: security work carried out under our harassment policy and repairs needed because you have experienced antisocial behaviour.

To help us apply the discretionary repairs policy fairly, we will hold information on our database about you which lets us know that you qualify and how we can best support you.

Improvements and alterations

Tenants can make minor alterations and improvements to their homes. You must always get our written permission before doing so and it would be your responsibility to maintain improvements and alterations.

For details of the information you must give us in any request to carry out improvements or alterations see **camden.gov.uk** or speak to your housing officer.

If a tenant dies or wants to pass on their tenancy

When a tenant dies	103
Joint tenants	103
What if there is more than one person who can succeed to a tenancy?	103
When the property is bigger than the person succeeding needs	104
Rents and other charges	104
Can a council tenant give their tenancy to anyone else?	105

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When a tenant dies

We are often asked if people who live with council tenants can take over the tenancy when the tenant dies. This is called 'succession'.

Your 'tenancy conditions' at the back of this guide set out the rules about succession for spouses, partners, other household members.

This chapter looks at some other questions you may have.

Joint tenants

If more than one person has signed a tenancy agreement, this is called a 'joint tenancy'. If one joint tenant dies, the other joint tenant(s) keeps the tenancy in their sole name. This counts as a succession.

The remaining tenant is responsible for paying the rent, including any arrears.

Young people under 18 and children

A young person under 18 or a child can succeed. Although legally too young to be a tenant, the tenancy can be held by a 'trustee' until they reach 18.

Tenants can say in their will who they want the trustee to be. If an adult moves into a council property to look after a successor who is under 18, the adult cannot be granted the tenancy; it has already passed to the young person.

What if there is more than one person who can succeed to a tenancy?

Only one person can succeed. A spouse or partner would be first in line. Next in line would be other qualifying family members, who can decide between themselves who the

successor is going to be. If they cannot agree, the Council must decide.

What happens if the property is bigger than the person succeeding needs?

Successors who were joint tenants, spouses or partners can stay in the property after the tenant dies, but if they do wish to move to a smaller property we can give help and advice. They may qualify for a payment under our incentive scheme.

Other family members who qualify to succeed will usually be asked to move to a smaller home if they have more bedrooms than they need under our allocations scheme.

For example, if you have always lived with one parent, and they never had a joint tenancy with anyone else, it is likely that you will succeed to their tenancy if they die. But we might ask you to move to a smaller home.

Rent and other charges

Successors

If you succeed to a tenancy, you must start paying the rent on the Monday after the tenant died and pay weekly in advance.

If the tenant owed any rent when they died, we will ask that this be paid from any money they left.

What to pay while you are waiting to find out if you can succeed

We have to carry some standard checks to ensure the right person succeeds, but we will give you our decision as soon as possible. We know this can be a worrying time.

In the meantime, you must still pay for use of the property. Please ask us if you do not know how much to pay or how to

pay us. We will not consider giving a tenancy to anyone who does not make these payments.

If your succession application is refused

You must continue to pay a use and occupation charge until you move out.

When we ask someone who was living with a council tenant to move out, we can give advice about finding somewhere else to live. Phone on **020 7974 4444** or visit **camden.gov.uk/housing** for more information

Can a council tenant give their tenancy to anyone else?

A secure or introductory tenancy can only be given to someone else if certain conditions are met. This is called 'assignment'.

Tenants can only assign their tenancy to someone who would be able to succeed to the tenancy if they died.

You should get advice from your housing officer or a solicitor before an assignment can take place. You must also ask our permission, but we will not refuse it unless we have a good reason.

A court can also decide to give a tenancy to someone else. This could happen in divorce proceedings or under the Children Act or Civil Partnership Act.

More information

Contact **020 7974 4444** or see the 'frequently asked questions' at **camden.gov.uk**. You should always seek advice about your own situation.



Lodgers and subletting

Lodgers	109
Renting out or subletting part of your home	111
Renting out or subletting all of your home	112
Can I leave my home for a short period of time?	112

A black and white photograph of a wooden signpost. The signpost is made of light-colored wood and has a horizontal beam at the top. A sign is attached to the beam with two metal clips. The sign is rectangular with a white border and a black background. The words "FOR RENT" are written in large, bold, white, sans-serif capital letters. Below the text is a white, rounded rectangular area, likely a placeholder for contact information. The background is a sky with scattered white clouds.

**FOR
RENT**

Lodgers

Who is a lodger?

A lodger is someone who rents a furnished room in your home. They have use of the bathroom and kitchen, but do not have sole use of any part of your home and cannot exclude you from their room. You may provide services such as cleaning or meals.

Can you take in a lodger?

Secure tenants have a right to take in lodgers as long as it does not cause overcrowding.

You do not need permission, but we would prefer you to tell us so that we can explain the pros and cons.

Introductory and demoted tenants do not have the right to have lodgers.

Will a lodger affect your benefits?

If you are of working age and get Housing Benefit, the first £20 of weekly income you get from a lodger won't affect your benefit.

If you are of working age and get Universal Credit, any rent your lodger pays you is not treated as income. However if you have bedrooms that are not being used by you or your immediate family, including the one that your lodger rents, your housing allowance that you receive with Universal Credit will be reduced.

You must tell us and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) if you take in a lodger. If you don't, you may be given too much benefit, which you will have to repay. Failure to declare extra income may also be regarded as fraud and you could risk prosecution.

If the person living with you is an adult relative (parent, parent-

in-law, son, daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepson or stepdaughter, brother, sister or partner) they will not be classed as a lodger, but you must still tell us. You may get less housing benefit or disability benefit.

Housing benefit rules say you will get less benefit if you have one or more spare bedrooms and you are under pension credit age. Taking in a lodger may avoid this problem but take advice first if you are thinking of doing this.

If you are the only adult in your home, taking in a lodger could affect your single person council tax discount.

If you are working, your tax could be affected.

You do not have to pay tax on rent you get from a lodger up to £7,500 a year. Any child tax credit or working tax credit will not be affected. If you earn over £7,500 a year from your lodger's rent, you must tell your tax office.

Always seek advice if you are not sure. There is more information at citizensadvice.org.uk or see chapter one of this guide for places to go for help.

You are responsible for your lodger

You are responsible for checking whether a lodger is suitable for your household. If you have children or vulnerable adults in your home you can ask for a police check.

If a lodger causes any damage to your property or causes anti-social behaviour, we will hold you responsible under your tenancy conditions.

It is your responsibility if you need to redecorate or replace any furnishings between one lodger and the next.

You should inform your home contents insurer to check your cover is still valid. Your lodger should insure their own contents separately.

Renting out, or subletting, part of your home

Secure tenants may rent out or sublet **part** of your home but **must have our written permission first**. Introductory and demoted tenants do not have this right.

There is a lot to think about before letting out any rooms in your home to paying guests. There are websites (for example Airbnb) which help arrange short term lets, but if you are thinking of doing this, you must get our permission first.

We can refuse to give permission if we have good reasons. We will tell you what these reasons are. You have a right to appeal.

Is a sub tenant the same as a lodger?

A sub tenant has more rights. A sub-tenant is a person who has been given sole use of a room or part of the home, and who normally lives separately from the household under a more formal arrangement.

Benefits and tax

Extra rental income may affect your benefits and the amount of tax you pay. You should declare any extra income to the housing benefit team, the DWP and tax office.

Your responsibility for the conduct of your sub tenant is the same as that for a lodger (see section above).

Seek advice if you are not sure.

Renting out or subletting all of your home

Renting out the whole of your home is against your tenancy conditions. This means that you will lose your secure tenancy and we will take legal action to repossess your home.

Subletting and profiting from subletting are also criminal offences and could lead to a fine, imprisonment and an order that the profit made from subletting is repaid.

Can I leave my home for a short period of time?

You are allowed to go away on a temporary basis for up to six months and have someone else live in your flat on an informal basis. You must have our written permission first. We must be satisfied that your tenancy will remain your main home. You must give full contact details of the person looking after your home. You will be responsible for ensuring the conditions of tenancy are maintained while you are absent.

Further advice

Contact us on **020 7974 4444** or visit **www.camden.gov.uk**

Or **see chapter 1** of this guide for places to go for independent advice.

Your tenancy conditions

Introduction	115	Animals	130
Introductory tenancies	115	Parking	131
Joint tenancies	116	Insurance	132
Photographs	116	Shared areas	132
		Fire safety	133
[A] Your rights	117		
Security of tenure	118	[D] Ending your tenancy	133
Your right to improve	118		
Your right to be consulted	119	[E] Passing on the tenancy when a tenant dies (succession)	135
Your right to see information we hold about you	119		
[B] Our duties	120	[F] Accepting the tenancy conditions	137
Security of tenure	120		
Repairs	120	[G] Changes to the tenancy conditions	137
Services	121		
Quiet enjoyment	121	[H] Serving notices	138
Anti-social behaviour	121		
Major repairs and improvements	121	[I] Grounds upon which we may seek possession	139
Data Protection	121		
[C] Your duties	122	[J] Sheltered housing tenancies	142
Rent	122		
Anti-social behaviour	122	[K] Properties where the council does not own the freehold	143
Living in your home	125		
Relationship with council officers	128		
Repairs	129		
Gardens	129		



Terms & Conditions

Introduction

This booklet sets out the tenancy conditions of a Camden Council secure and introductory tenant. It explains your legal rights, the duties the council has as your landlord and the duties you have as a tenant.

If you accept a tenancy with Camden we expect you to:

- keep to these conditions
- pay your rent on time
- take good care of our property
- have consideration for those living around you.

We want our services to be available to everyone who needs them. We aim to tackle discrimination, promote equality and comply with the Equality Act.

Introductory tenancies

New tenants have introductory tenancies for a trial period of one year before gaining the rights of a secure tenant. Unless we take action to end or extend a tenancy during a trial period, it becomes secure one year after it began.

This does not apply to you if you are already a secure tenant moving from one tenancy to another or if you are an assured tenant of a registered housing association.

This booklet is the tenancy conditions for both introductory and secure tenants. Most of the tenancy conditions are the same for both although introductory tenants have fewer rights. Please read this booklet carefully or ask us to explain it to you.

Joint tenancies statement

When a new tenancy begins we will normally offer joint tenancies to all married couples, couples with a registered civil partnership and couples who live together.

Photographs

We may take photographs of all new tenants including: when a tenancy changes to a joint tenancy, when there is a succession or assignment, and when tenants move home. Photographs help identify people living in our properties without our permission.

[A] Your rights

[1] Security of tenure

[a] Secure tenants

If you are a secure tenant you have 'security of tenure' as long as you remain a secure tenant under the terms of the Housing Act 1985. This means that we can only take possession of your home:

either

- by going to court to get a Possession Order on one or more of the grounds set out in Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985, as amended, which include breaking any of the tenancy conditions. These are summarised in Section I.

(We must tell you if we are going to apply for a Possession Order, and give our reasons, before we apply for a court hearing. The court will only grant an order if we prove one or more 'grounds for possession').

or

- if we accept your surrender of the tenancy

or

- you serve us with a valid Notice to Quit

or

- if a court has made an order to demote your secure tenancy because you have behaved anti-socially.

[b] Introductory tenants

If you are an introductory tenant we must go to court to get a Possession Order to repossess your home but we do not have to prove a ground for possession to get one; we only need to prove that we have followed the correct procedure.

We will consider repossessing your tenancy if you have broken your tenancy conditions or if any of the grounds for possession that apply to secure tenancies as set out in Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1985 apply to you. A summary of the grounds for possession of a secure tenancy is contained at section 1.

[2] Your right to improve

Secure tenants have the right to carry out improvements to their homes. However, we must first give our permission in writing and you must get the relevant planning permission.

If you are an introductory tenant you do not have this right.

An improvement includes:

- Adding anything to, or altering, your home, the council's fixtures and fittings, or the provision of services
- Putting up a radio or television aerial
- Decorating the outside of your home.

We will not unreasonably refuse our permission.

You must not put up a satellite dish on any of our properties without first getting our written permission. We will only give this in exceptional circumstances.

Security grilles and gates can be unsafe. You must not fit security grilles to your windows, or security doors or gates, unless we have given our written agreement. In considering whether to give permission we will take into account whether:

- the door, gate or grille meets London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority safety guidelines;
- you have received planning permission and building control approval when necessary;
- the door, gate or grille is likely to damage the structure or outside of the property.

[3] Your right to be consulted

All tenants have the right to be consulted and have their views considered on how we manage their homes.

This includes:

- managing, maintaining, improving or demolishing homes
- providing services or amenities
- changes in the practice or policy of the council likely substantially to affect a number of tenants. Also, tenants have a right to be informed about our allocation policies.

[4] Your right to see information we hold about you

Under Data Protection law you have the right to see information we hold about you. If you ask us to make a copy of your records we can ask you to pay £10 towards the cost.

[B] Our duties

[1] Security of tenure

We will grant security of tenure to all tenants who are secure tenants under the Housing Act 1985. We will only seek possession against secure tenants through the courts on one or more of the grounds set out in Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985. (These are summarised in Section I.)

[2] Repairs

We will keep in repair and in good working order:

- the structure and exterior of the premises;
- the services supplying water, gas, electricity, sanitation, and space and water heating; and
- appliances for delivering these services which we have installed.

We will not be responsible for carrying out work or repairs for which you could be liable due to your duty to use the premises in a tenant-like manner.

We will repair and keep in good working order shared boilers and heating mains. If a breakdown lasts for 7 days or longer in any financial year, we will repay your charges for that time, unless you caused the breakdown. Extra compensation for heating breakdowns will be paid to tenants over the age of 65.

This clause aims to describe in simple language the provisions of Section II of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985. We accept only the duties given to us by the Act, no more and no less.

[3] Services

We will provide any services we think are needed, and maintain them to a reasonable standard. These may include door entry systems, lifts, and caretaking and cleaning services. We will not be responsible for any failure in our services beyond our reasonable control.

[4] Quiet enjoyment

We will not interfere with your right to the quiet enjoyment of your home during your tenancy.

[5] Antisocial behaviour

We will investigate complaints of antisocial behaviour and we will give you help and advice if you are affected.

[6] Major repairs and improvements

We will ask for and consider the views of all tenants affected by any proposed major repair or improvement schemes. We will try where possible to make sure tenants are able to return to their original homes, unless they would be under occupied.

[7] Data protection

We process personal data to carry out our work and to meet our duties under these tenancy conditions. Data is processed in a way that keeps to the duties we have under the data protection laws.

[C] Your duties

[1] Rent

- a] You will pay the weekly rent and other charges for your home regularly and on time.
- b] Rent is due weekly in advance every Monday. You may pay every 2 weeks or monthly in advance, if you want to.
- c] If we change the rent and other charges, such as heating, we must give you at least 4 weeks' written notice, and let you know you have the right to end the tenancy.
- d] For most tenants water rates are included in the rent. This means that if the water rate for your home changes we may change your total rent.
- e] You will also pay as rent any amount you owe us for any current or past tenancy. We will write to you within 90 days of the start of the new tenancy, or send you a formal notice, to tell you how much extra you will have to pay.
- f] If you need help in paying your rent, or think you may be entitled to benefits to help with your rent or council tax, contact us on **020 7974 4444** or at **benefits@camden.gov.uk**.

[2] Antisocial behaviour

- a] You or anyone else living with you or visiting your home, must not do, cause, encourage or allow to be done, anything which causes or is likely to cause nuisance, or may cause harassment or annoyance to anyone else. This applies in your home, on your estate, on any of our property, or in the locality of your home.

b] If anyone else lives with you, or visits your home, you are responsible for how they behave in and around your home, on any part of the estate, on any property belonging to the council or in the locality of your home.

Examples of anti-social behaviour include:

- harassment, including racial harassment and domestic violence
- noise nuisance
- dumping rubbish or furniture
- failing to control children who are causing a nuisance or damage to property, including graffiti
- criminal activity
- throwing things off balconies or out of windows
- breaking shared security, for example allowing strangers to get into the building
- not keeping pets under control, including excessive barking of dogs and dogs fouling in communal or shared areas
- drug dealing in properties or on estates
- spitting or urinating anywhere in the communal areas of the block or on the estate.

c] You must not do or allow anything to be done that is harassment. This applies in your home, anywhere on our property or in the locality. It includes abusive behaviour, verbal or otherwise, based on race, religion or faith, disability, sexuality or gender.

d] You must keep noise, including televisions, radios, record players, musical instruments and so on, to a reasonable volume at all times.

You must not make any noise which can be heard outside your home between 11pm and 8am.

e] The following condition applies if you live in a flat or maisonette and we inform you in writing that we are aware of noise nuisance coming from your property:

You must keep all your floors, including hallways and stairs, covered with carpet and a good quality underlay or with a suitable other floor covering that has similar noise reducing qualities. This does not apply to kitchens and bathrooms where floor coverings have been supplied by the council.

f] The following condition applies to all tenants:

You must not put down laminate floor coverings or other types of wooden or artificial floor coverings without written permission. We will not give you permission unless we are satisfied that you have done enough to reduce noise nuisance to other residents.

g] You must not keep any firearms unless you are legally entitled to hold them. Examples of firearms include air-weapons, shotguns, replicas and de-activated weapons. If you have a legal firearm you must use and store it only in ways the law allows.

If you, a member of your household, or a visitor cause a nuisance or annoyance or otherwise break any of these conditions, the Council can take legal action against you, for example:

- We can ask a court for an injunction. This is a court order to stop behaviour that causes a nuisance or annoyance. If you break the order you can be fined or imprisoned or both. You may also be banned from a property or area.
- We can ask a court to give us possession of your home and evict you and anyone living there.

- We can ask a court to demote your secure tenancy so that you lose your security of tenure for a period of time.
- We can ask the court for possession if you or anyone living with you or visiting your home has been convicted of a serious offence in the local area, such as drug dealing or actual bodily harm, or because you have broken certain types of court order. If we do this, the law says that the court must order possession. We will consider carefully whether possession is appropriate in each case.

The Council will consider all the legal remedies available to us to deal with nuisance and antisocial behaviour. At the same time we will, if we can, give you advice about what to do to keep your tenancy.

If we take legal action we can ask the court to give us an order against you for our legal costs.

[3] Living in your home

- a] You must use the property as your only or main home.
- b] We have the right to stop you using your home, or any part of it, for anything other than living in.
- c] During your tenancy you must not (either solely or jointly) own or rent any residential property which it would be reasonable for you to live in as your home. You must tell us if you own a residential property or have another residential lease or tenancy.

If you inherit a property this condition can only be broken once you have owned the property for more than 12 months.

In deciding whether you have broken this tenancy condition we will consider:

- whether the property is fit to live in
- whether you have acquired the property for use as a holiday home only and whether it is only suitable for that purpose

- whether the property is suitable for your household, taking into account the size of the property, your income and employment, any disabilities or medical problems you have and any other relevant circumstances
- whether it would be reasonable in all the circumstances for you to sell the property.

d] You must not assign the tenancy unless:

- It is by court order under the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973; Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act; Children Act 1989 or Civil Partnership Act 2004.
- You do it under the right to exchange (introductory tenants do not have this right); or
- It is to a person who would be legally entitled to succeed to the tenancy. In this case, you must first get our written agreement. When we are deciding whether to give our agreement, we will look at:
 - whether your home would have more bedrooms than you need;
 - whether your home has any special services or adaptations designed to make it suitable for a disabled person; or
 - anything else which we think is relevant to the assignment.

e] You must not give up possession of or sub-let all of your home. Subletting and profiting from subletting are criminal offences and could lead to a fine or imprisonment and an order that the profit made from the sub-letting is repaid.

f] You must not give up possession of or sublet any part of your home without our written agreement (introductory tenants do not have this right). We will not refuse permission unreasonably.

g] You must tell us if you will be away from home for more than 3 months (this is so we know that you have not abandoned your tenancy). If you don't use your property as your only or main home, or you don't tell us when you will be away for more than 3 months, we will consider taking action to end your tenancy.

You will not have broken this tenancy condition if you have been in hospital.

h] You are allowed to be away from your home for up to 6 months and have someone else live there and act as your agent. But you must first tell us and get our written agreement. If you do not get our written agreement you could put your security of tenure at risk.

In certain circumstances (for example if you are working or studying away from home temporarily) we will consider agreeing for you to be away for more than 6 months as long as we are satisfied that your tenancy address remains your main home.

i] You may take in lodgers, as long as you do not give up possession of all your home. Introductory tenants do not have this right but we will consider requests from disabled introductory tenants for a carer to live with them.

j] You must not overcrowd your home.

k] Joint tenants are not allowed to pass their share in the joint tenancy to any of the other joint tenants. The only exception to this is where their share is assigned in one of the ways allowed by these conditions.

l] The Council will set aside an annual quota of homes for foster carers. If you are allocated a home to be a foster carer and later on don't need as many rooms, or stop fostering, we may take possession action.

[4] Relationship with council officers

You must not obstruct, abuse, harass, threaten or assault anyone working for the Council. This applies whether or not they are carrying out their duties for the council. You must not cause, allow or encourage anyone else to do so. This rule also applies to anyone living with you or visiting your home.

You must do anything reasonable we ask you to do in connection with the way you use your home and our property. We have the right to gain access to your home at all reasonable hours through our housing staff, or any other authorised person. You must give us access if we make a reasonable request. Reasons why we may wish to gain access to your home include to:

- a] inspect the state of repair and condition of your home or those next to it;
- b] carry out gas safety inspections;
- c] repair, alter or improve your home, or those next to it. This includes electrical wiring, gas and water pipes or drainage and heating systems;
- d] make sure no-one is breaking these tenancy conditions or Health and Safety regulations.

If we need to get into your home very urgently and you do not agree, or we cannot contact you, we have the right to force entry to your home without a court order. Examples of when we could do this include when there is a serious leak of water from your home or we urgently need to repair something that poses a health and safety risk to you or your neighbours.

You must not offer, or give, any gift to anyone working for the Council. Do not let anyone into your home unless you are sure who they are. Anyone representing the council will show their identification card if you ask them.

[5] Repairs

- a] You must tell us at once about any damage to your home and any defects likely to cause injury or damage to people or property.
- b] If there is any damage to, or neglect of, your home or the Council's property and it is caused by you, anyone living with you or visiting your home or by your animals you must put it right at your own expense.
- c] You must keep your home clean and free from rubbish. If you do not, we will charge you for any work we need to do because of this, such as removing rubbish.
- d] We will normally send you a bill for the cost of lost keys, repairs or damage for which you are responsible.
- e] You (or anyone living with you or visiting your home) must not interfere with security and safety equipment in communal blocks. Doors should not be jammed open and strangers should not be let in without identification.
- f] You must not tamper with any meters in your home, whether they belong to the council or to other statutory bodies.
- g] If the heating or hot water services break down, tell us straightaway.

[6] Gardens and other areas let with the tenancy

- a] Any gardens or other areas (for example balconies, patios or yards) let as part of the tenancy are covered by this contract.
- b] You must not, without our written permission, remove, plant or put up, any hedges or fences, or remove or prune any trees.
- c] You must keep your garden, patio, balcony, fitted window box or other area let with the tenancy, neat and tidy.

d] If you would like to garden any of the communal areas on your estate or outside your block please get our agreement first. The council wants to encourage people to improve their environment and will agree reasonable requests (this condition is not intended to cover pot plants or hanging baskets).

[7] Animals

a] You, people living with you and people visiting you, must not cause, encourage or allow any animal to do anything which causes, or is likely to cause:

- a nuisance; or
- harassment or annoyance to anyone else on any property belonging to us.

This includes persistent barking, and mess caused by dogs fouling our property.

b] If you own or keep a dog you must make sure:

- i** it does not foul any property belonging to us;
- ii** it is kept on a lead and with a responsible person whenever it is outside and on any of our property;
- iii** any mess caused by the dog fouling any of our property is cleared up (unless you are a blind person and it is your guide dog);
- iv** it does not enter any children's play area or other dog-free zone (unless you are a blind person and it is your guide dog).

c] Neither you nor anyone living with you is allowed to cause, encourage or allow more than 2 dogs to be kept in the premises at any one time.

d] You must not keep, or allow your visitors to bring onto council property, any breed of dog classed by law as dangerous.

- e] We may, if we decide, ban you and anyone living with you from causing, encouraging or allowing any animal to be kept on any of our properties. This ban will automatically be a new condition of your tenancy.
- f] If you are a tenant of the Alexandra Road estate you must not allow any dog, except guide dogs for the blind, to be kept on the premises. We will seriously consider taking action, for breach of these tenancy conditions, if a tenant on that estate takes in a dog.
- g] You must not have more than 3 cats in your home unless you have obtained our written agreement to have more. We will only agree in exceptional circumstances and in considering whether to agree we will take into account:
- the size and location of your property;
 - whether we have received any complaints about any animals you already have.
- h] Do not feed pigeons or any other animal likely to become a pest, outside the building or on the balconies.

[8] Parking

You must not, without our written agreement:

- a] park a vehicle, or allow anyone living with or visiting you or your home to park a vehicle, on any part of the estate other than on your own parking area or on a visitors' parking area;
- b] park a vehicle, or allow anyone living with or visiting you or your home, to park a vehicle that can carry more than 8 passengers, or that either does not fit in a parking space or is more than 2.3 metres high.

You are not allowed to sublet a car parking space which is our property.

You are not allowed to use a garage for any purpose other than to store a roadworthy motor vehicle.

[9] Insurance

The council's buildings insurance does not cover tenants' possessions. We strongly recommend that you take out household insurance with a reputable insurer to include cover for contents and broken windows (this condition does not affect your legal right to claim compensation from the council if the damage was caused by the negligence of the council or its agents).

If you have arranged household insurance through us and do not pay your insurance charges, we will cancel the insurance policy.

You must tell us in writing if you want to stop paying your weekly household insurance charge. We will only cancel it from the Monday after we get your notification.

[10] Shared areas

- a] This clause only applies if you live in a street property and we do not provide a caretaking and cleaning service. You, and the other tenants of the building, are responsible for keeping all shared areas in the building and the grounds clean and tidy.
- b] All tenants must make sure communal stairs and walkways outside their home are kept tidy and free of clutter.
- c] You must not leave rubbish outside your property unless the council provides a collection service. When a collection service is provided you must not leave rubbish bags or bins anywhere other than the designated area. These must not be put out any earlier than the evening before collection is due unless you are going to be away or unless we have agreed a different arrangement for your property, street, block or estate.

[11] Fire Safety

You, or anyone living with you or visiting you, must not do anything that might cause a fire hazard.

[D] Ending your tenancy

- i** Your tenancy may only be ended by a court order, a Notice to Quit from you, or if you surrender it. If you surrender your tenancy you must give us full 'vacant possession'. You, and everyone else living there, must move out. You must give us back all the sets of keys before your tenancy can be ended.
- ii** If you want to end your tenancy, you must give us 4 weeks' notice in writing ending on a Monday. If you do not give this notice, or you give less than 4 weeks' notice, you will be breaking this condition and you may be charged an amount for damages of up to the equivalent of 4 weeks' rent. (This does not apply if you are moving to another council property.)
- iii** You must leave the property and garden in a clean and tidy condition. All your belongings must be removed unless we have given you written agreement to leave some belongings in the property. If you do not, we may assume you have abandoned these items and may dispose of them without contacting you although we will keep to our legal duties under Section 41 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982. We will also charge you a reasonable cost for removal, storage or disposal and a sum for lost rental income for the period we are unable to re-let the property due to having to clear the items.

- iv** Once you have given us written notice of ending your tenancy, you must allow any future tenants we send to come in and look around your home. You, us, and the people wishing to view the property will agree a reasonable time for this. This also applies if you accept an offer of another home from us.
- v** If you are a sole or joint tenant and accept an offer of another council home this means you have surrendered your tenancy.
- vi** Tenancies start and end on a Monday. You must return the keys to us by 12 noon on the Monday your tenancy ends. This includes all keys to your home, keys to communal areas and door entry key fobs. If you do not do this, you will have to pay an “occupation charge”. (This will be equal to the full rent up to the Monday following the day you return the keys.)
- vii** When you leave, you must give us a forwarding address. If you do not, we may not contact you to refund any money due to you, for example overpaid rent or heating refund.

[E] Passing on the tenancy when a tenant dies (succession)

1.

There can be one succession.

2.

If a sole tenant dies a tenancy can pass to their husband, wife or civil partner (or to someone living with the tenant as if they were a husband, wife or civil partner) as long as they were living together in the property when the tenant died and the property is their only or main home.

3.

If a sole tenant dies and they were not a successor, a close relation may succeed if they lived with the tenant continuously before their death for at least 12 months.

4.

a) If the property is bigger than the successor needs according to the Council's allocation scheme, we will usually expect them to move to a smaller property unless they are the tenant's husband, wife or civil partner.

or

b) If the property is designed or adapted for a person with physical disabilities or special needs and the successor is not such a person, we would expect them to move to a different property.

5.

Council policy allows us to grant a new tenancy to a member of the household who would qualify to succeed had there not already been a succession. We will consider granting a new tenancy when a household member was living with the tenant continuously before their death for at least:

- 12 months where the tenancy began before 1 October 2007, or
- 5 years where the tenancy began after 1 October 2007.

6.

We will not grant a tenancy if there are good reasons for not doing so, for example antisocial behaviour or failure to make payments for use and occupation.

7.

We will look sympathetically at the position of carers wanting to be granted a tenancy when the tenant dies. Carers must have been living at the property with the tenant as their only or main home for at least 12 months up to the date of the tenant's death.

8.

If we grant a new tenancy under this policy it may be of a smaller property. There will also be no further successions apart from those the law says we must allow.

[F] Accepting these tenancy conditions

If you 'enter into possession' of one of our homes, this means that both you and we agree to keep to these tenancy conditions. You enter into possession of one of our homes if you, for example:

- move in
- move your belongings in; or
- collect the keys.

[G] Changes to these tenancy conditions

It is a condition of the tenancy that we may alter these conditions any time by your agreement or by serving you with a 'notice of variation'.

We will tell you before we serve you with a notice of variation. We will write to you and tell you about any proposed changes.

[H] Serving notices

By us

i If we have to give you written notice we will do this by

- delivering it to you personally; or
- delivering it to your home; or
- sending it by post to your home; or
- sending it to you by email; or
- any other method approved by law.

This condition applies to any Notice of Seeking Possession, Notice to Quit and other notices, whether or not under these conditions.

By you

ii If you want to serve a notice on us (including notices in legal proceedings), it must be served at:

London Borough of Camden
Housing Management Service
Town Hall
Judd Street London
London WC1H 9JE

[I] Grounds upon which we may seek possession of a secure tenancy and reasons why we may seek possession of an introductory tenancy.

A summary of the **main** grounds for possession is given below:

Ground

1

If you are behind with your rent or have broken your tenancy conditions in some other way.

2a

Conduct causing a nuisance to people living, visiting or going about their lawful business near your home.

2aa

Conduct causing a nuisance to the landlord (or anyone working for the landlord) which impedes the landlord carrying out its housing management functions.

2b

Conviction for using the premises for immoral or illegal purposes or committing an offence in or near your home that is serious enough to be tried in the Crown Court.

2A

Domestic violence, or the threat of domestic violence, which causes a partner to leave your home.

3,4

Damage to the premises, or shared areas, or to any furniture we provide, by the tenant or lodger or sub-tenant.

5

If you got the tenancy by making a false statement (including another joint tenant making a false statement).

6

You got the tenancy through the right to exchange and paid a premium.

8

The tenancy was a temporary one while work was being done to your previous home and that previous home is now fit for you to move back into.

9

The premises are statutorily overcrowded.

10

We need your home to be empty, because we intend to demolish, rebuild or carry out work on the premises or the building in which premises are situated.

10A

The premises are in a redevelopment scheme and the Secretary of State agrees.

Your home has been designed for letting to people with disabilities, there is no one with a disability living there, and we need to relet your home to such a person.

We intend your home to be let to people with special needs (for example, sheltered housing), there is no one with special needs living in your home, and we need to relet your home to such a person.

Your home is bigger than we consider is reasonably needed. If you took over the tenancy as a family member other than the spouse or partner of a tenant who died, we can take possession action between 6 and 12 months after we learn of the former tenant's death.

If we seek possession on any of points 9 to 15A above, we will offer secure tenants suitable alternative accommodation.

The above list is a summary of the main legal grounds that the council can use to gain possession. For the full list see Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985, as amended.

The council can also seek automatic possession against a secure tenant if any of 5 grounds (listed in section 84A of the Housing Act 1985) have been proved such as if you or a person visiting the dwelling-house has:

- committed a serious criminal offence;
- breached an injunction granted to prevent anti-social behaviour;
- breached a criminal behaviour order;

- had your home been made subject to a closure order lasting more than 48 hours;
- breached an abatement notice under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to, for example, noise.

If you lose your security of tenure the council can also seek possession by serving you a Notice to Quit.

The council can seek possession on any of the above legal grounds or on any other grounds that the law may introduce in the future. However, we will follow any relevant policy in deciding whether to take action. If you have any questions, please contact us.

[J] Sheltered housing tenancies

- i** This applies only if you live in sheltered housing.
- ii** The tenant must agree to all reasonable requests by us, for example:
 - a.** requests for regular contact at least once a week, to check on your well-being. (In most cases, contact will take place at least twice weekly.)
 - b.** keeping to the proper hours and conditions of use for shared facilities (such as laundry rooms, and so on).
 - c.** using alarm equipment properly, and allowing access for repairs to facilities, including alarm equipment.

[K] Properties where the Council does not own the freehold

- I. This applies only if you live in a property where we do not own the freehold. If this condition applies to you we will have told you when we offered you the tenancy.

- II. You have to keep to certain conditions that are imposed on us by the freeholder in their lease. The conditions are those that were set out in the offer of tenancy letter and they form part of your conditions of tenancy.

If you would like **the tenants' guide** or a summary in large print or braille, on audiotape or in another language please contact your housing officer on **020 7974 4444**.

Supporting Communities

London Borough of Camden

Town Hall

Judd Street

London WC1H 9JE

Telephone: 020 7974 4444

Textphone/minicom: 020 7974 6866

Website: camden.gov.uk