



Longford County Council General Information Handbook for Tenants



Revised 2022
This handbook should be read in conjunction with Longford County Council
Tenancy Agreement

1. About this handbook	1
2. Welcome to your new home.....	2
3. Know your rights and responsibilities.....	4
4. How we assess your rent	6
5. Keep safe at home	11
6. Be part of your community.....	13
7. Antisocial behaviour	16
8. How to apply for a housing transfer.....	18
Appendix 1	
Your fire safety checklist.....	21
Useful numbers	25
Emergency contacts	25
Restricted Breeds list	26
Notes	27

1: About this handbook

You are now a tenant of Longford County Council, the local Housing Authority for all of county Longford. We provide a wide range of housing services and supports, and we try to do this effectively and fairly.

This handbook outlines the services we offer, tells you how to access them and explains your role as a tenant.

However, it is only a guide to our services and is not intended to be a legal document.

Your tenancy agreement and housing legislation are the most important legal guidance more so than all the information in this booklet.

As a local authority tenant, you have agreed to a housing partnership with us. We hope that we can work together and will have an excellent relationship in the years ahead.

We're here to help

In this handbook, we have tried to cover all you need to know about housing services. There is information on issues like rent payments, repairs and maintenance. We also discuss how to develop good neighbourhood relations, how to become involved in your local community and what you can do about antisocial behaviour. Please keep this handbook in a safe place so you can refer to it for information.

Over time, our services and policies may change. When that happens, we will update you.

What do you think?

To deliver a quality service, we need your input. Please contact us and let us know your views.

- Write to us: Housing Section, Longford County Council, Town Hall, Market Square, Longford N39 C5F2
- Drop in to: Town Hall, Market Square, Longford.
- Phone: 043 3343499
- Email: housing@longfordcoco.ie

Your personal data

We promise that the personal data you provide to our Housing Section will be processed as set out in the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Acts.

You can find full details of Longford County Council's Privacy Policy on our website www.longfordcoco.ie

Follow us on    

2: Welcome to your new home

Longford County Council would like to welcome you as our new tenant. You are entering into a legal contract with us. By signing your Tenancy agreement, you are agreeing to become our tenant and be bound to the conditions of the agreement. This agreement gives you the right to live in the property.

We will not interfere with this right unless any of the following apply:

- If you break any of the conditions of in this agreement, we may take legal action to force you to meet the conditions or we may seek eviction through the Courts
- We need to carry out redevelopment or major repairs to the property which we cannot do unless you move out
- We can repossess the property if you (or someone on your behalf) has given any false information to secure the tenancy

Before you move in

Before we give you the keys to your new home, we need you to attend pre-tenancy training. At this meeting, we will explain your responsibilities as a tenant. We will also tell you about our responsibilities to you as your landlord.

All new tenants must attend pre-tenancy training. Tenants transferring to other local authority homes must also attend a pre-tenancy meeting. It is a good opportunity to meet with housing staff who will be able to assist you with any queries you may have. We are here to help.

Before you get your keys

Once you have taken part in the pre-tenancy training and we think your home is ready for you to move in, we will contact you and you will be asked to sign your tenancy agreement and collect the keys to your home.

However, there are a few more things you must do before you can move in:

- **Utilities (gas, electricity, TV, phone and bins)**

You are responsible for paying for all your utilities. You should make sure that you tell your various service providers, such as your electric, waste disposal, gas, TV cable and phone network utility companies, about your change of address. You are responsible for all the contracts that you have with your utility companies.

- **Gas and electricity supply**

We will make sure that your electricity supply is switched on when you move into your new home. We will give both you and your electricity provider a meter reading taken before you moved in.

Within a week of signing your tenancy agreement, we will tell your electricity provider that we are no longer responsible for account charges.

If your gas or electricity is disconnected because you did not set up an account, we will not be held responsible for arranging or paying for re-connection. You can only install a pre-pay meter if we give you written permission to do so.

- **TV satellite dishes**

If you want to put a TV satellite dish on your home, you must ask the Council for permission. We have to make sure putting up the dish does not cause structural damage to the property.

- **Waste disposal**

You must organise a method of waste disposal (bin collection) when you move in. You may be asked to give us proof that you have set up this collection. Any of the following 4 proofs will be accepted:

- Receipts from Waste Management Facility (with name or address of tenant)
- Details of your bin collection company
- Form signed giving consent to share a bin
- Receipts from a compactor (with name or address of tenant)

- **Home insurance**

The Council is only responsible for the structure of your property. You should take out insurance on the contents of your home. You will need a policy to protect your furniture and contents against fire, flood, water leaks, theft or accidental damage. The Council will not help you pay for this.

3: Know your rights – and responsibilities

What is a tenancy?

Your tenancy begins the moment the Council assigns a home to you. For your tenancy to be binding – that means recognised by the Courts– you must sign a tenancy agreement when you receive the keys to your home.

This binding agreement sets out your rights and responsibilities and the Council's rights and responsibilities. It is a contract between you and the Council. It is a legal document, and the contents of this document can be enforced in court.

Make sure that you read your tenancy agreement carefully, so you know your rights and responsibilities. Your neighbours will have the same rights and responsibilities as you. Your responsibilities apply to you, your friends and relatives and any other person living in or visiting your home, including children.

Joint Tenancies

Longford County Council usually gives joint tenancies to two adults who apply for housing together. Each tenant is equally responsible for keeping to the provisions of the Tenancy Agreement including the payment of rent and will be held equally responsible if these conditions are not adhered to.

Here are some of the most common questions about joint tenancy agreements:

Q: What happens if one of the joint tenants leaves or dies?

A: In most cases, the Council will consider letting the remaining tenant stay in the property if they have been living there and have been assessed for rent during the previous 12 months. **See page 6 for information about rent assessment.**

Q: If my parents are the tenants, what happens if they die or leave the property?

A: If you have been living at the property and it has been your home, the Council will consider switching the tenancy to your name if you have been assessed for rent at the property for the previous 12 months. **See page 6 for information about rent assessment.**

Q: What happens if the sole tenant moves into long-term care?

A: If the sole tenant moves to long-term care and will not be returning to their home, the tenancy must be surrendered, and the property returned to the Council. If this happens, you should contact the Housing Liaison Officer.

In all cases where the Council gets an application to amend a tenancy, we will not approve it if:

- rent is owed
- you as a tenant have breached (broken) your tenancy agreement
- there is evidence that you or a person you intend to share the property with have been involved in antisocial behaviour

Each case will be assessed on its own merits.

Breach of Tenancy

Breach of tenancy is the term used when you fail to keep to the terms and conditions of the Tenancy Agreement. The Council has a right to terminate a tenancy and repossess your home for breach of any part of your tenancy agreement. If you are evicted from your home for breach of any of the conditions in the agreement, the Council may deem that you have made yourself intentionally homeless as a direct result of your own actions. If this occurs, you will not be re-housed by the local authority or be eligible for rent supplement.

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

- Rent Arrears
- Damage to property
- Arrestable criminal offences, such as drug dealing
- Continuing to break the rules of the Tenancy Agreement in a minor way despite us warning you to stop
- Engagement in serious and/or persistent antisocial behaviour
- Abandoning the property

Longford County Council expects both staff and tenants to be courteous when engaging with each other

4: How we assess your rent

To assess and calculate your rent, we use what is known as the Differential Rent Scheme. If you would like more details of how this works, please go to our website, www.longfordcoco.ie or contact the Councils Income Generation Unit.

Your rent is charged weekly, but you can pay it monthly if that suits you better – just let us know. There are a variety of ways you can pay it. It is very important that you pay your rent on time.

How we calculate your rent

When we write to offer you a tenancy, we send you a rent assessment form. You must complete and sign this form and return it to us at the Housing Department. The form asks for details of all people who will be living with you and what they earn. You may need to include documents supporting the information you give.

The information you give about your family size and income is used to assess how much rent you must pay, as per Longford County Councils differential rent scheme.

We also take the income from other adults in the household into account when we assess the total rent you should pay. We will adjust your rent if your household income decreases or increases.

What to do if your circumstances change

Contact the rents section at rents@longfordcoco.ie and they will send you a change in circumstance form, like the rent form you filled out when your first took up the tenancy. You will need to send documents to support what you tell us. We will then adjust your rent to take account of the change.

You must get written permission from us before you allow an extra adult to move into and live in your home. To apply for permission, you must fill in a Permission to add household member form, which you can get from the Council Housing Department.

Always make sure that you tell us if either your household income or the number of people in your household changes. If you don't tell us about these changes, you may soon find yourself in rent arrears.

The changes you must tell us about include:

- starting a job
- becoming unemployed
- changes in your social welfare entitlement
- a new person moves into your home
- a cut in your unemployment pay
- an occupant or tenant dies or moves out
- a new baby is born
- a cut in your social welfare entitlement

Rent review

The Council carries out regular rent reviews of all tenants. When you sign your tenancy agreement, you must agree that you will fill in a Rent Review Form whenever we think you need to and send it back to us along with documents to show that the information you give is correct. If you don't, we can make you pay extra rent and you will have broken the tenancy agreement that you signed with us.

How to pay your rent

As a tenant, you are responsible for making sure that you pay your rent every week. If you prefer to pay your rent monthly rather than weekly, remember to multiply your weekly rent by 52 and divide this figure by 12 to work out how much you need to pay each month.

Household Budget Scheme

The Household Budget Scheme is compulsory for those in receipt of certain social welfare payments. If you are receiving a social welfare payment, Household Budget refers to a deduction of your rent amount before you get it.

To qualify for the Household Budget Scheme you must be in receipt of one of the following social welfare payments:

Types of payments that qualify for Household Budget Scheme	
✓ Back to work Allowance	✓ Back to work enterprise Allowance
✓ Disability Allowance	✓ Blind Pension
✓ Carers Allowance	✓ Carers Benefit
✓ Farm Assistance	✓ Invalidity Pension
✓ Jobseekers Benefit	✓ Jobseekers Allowance
✓ State Pension (contributory)	✓ State Pension (non contributory)
✓ One Parent family payment	✓ Pre-retirement Allowance
✓ Widows/Widowers Pension (contributory and non-contributory)	✓ Surviving Civil Partners pension (contributory and non- contributory)
✓ Back to education Allowance	✓ Supplementary Welfare Allowance (basic)

Tenants who do not qualify for Household Budget can pay rent by any of the following:

Standing order

If your rent cannot be deducted and paid to us through the Household Budget scheme, you must set up a bank standing order form. We will send you this form when you accept the offer of tenancy and you must return it to us at the Council rents section when you collect the keys to your home.

You can decide whether you want to pay your rent weekly or monthly, but don't forget that you will need to change the amount you pay if your rent changes.

Over-the-counter rent payments

The cash desk in Longford County Council, Great Water Street, Longford (same building as motor tax) accept rent payments.

Rent Collector

Our rent collectors call door to door on request for those Tenants who may have mobility issues and are unable to call to our offices. To find out who your designated Rent Collector is, you can call 043 3344218. It may be a good idea to note your Rent Collectors name and number in the area below for future reference.

Rent Collector	Number

Payments via Credit/Debit Card over the phone

Our Rent Collectors can accept Housing Rent Payments via Credit/Debit Card over the phone. You can find out who your designated Rent Collector is by calling 043 3344218.

Please note that we may change the way you pay your rent if we find a particular method works best.

What happens if I owe rent?

You will get into rent arrears (owe rent) if you:

- miss your weekly or monthly rent payments
- do not pay enough rent
- do not tell us about a change in your circumstance that should have led to a change in the amount of rent you pay

If you are in rent arrears, you must contact our income generation unit at 043 3344218 to arrange a repayment agreement so you can clear the arrears.

If you are in arrears, the sooner you come to talk to us the better.

Once you make an agreement to clear the arrears, you must stick to it. We will closely monitor your payments and may take you to court if you break your payment agreement with us.

If you are in rent arrears, or fear that you might be about to get into arrears, it's usually a good idea to contact your local Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS). This is an independent and confidential service that will help you to make a realistic plan. Phone MABS on 0818 072640.

In some circumstances, the Council's Housing Welfare Officer may be able to help and advise you if your family circumstances lead to rent arrears. Tell us if you would like us to arrange for the Housing Welfare Officer to contact you.

Remember: Do not ignore letters that we send to you about your rent account. If you fall into arrears, act quickly and talk to our staff – we are there to help.

Will I be taken to court for rent arrears?

Yes, you will be taken to Court if you refuse to come to a reasonable arrangement or if you do not keep to an agreed repayment plan. If we do have to take you to court, we may ask the judge to order you to pay all the costs of bringing the court case as well as all your rent arrears.

Longford County Council has zero tolerance for rent arrears. Under the tenancy agreement you sign with us, you accept that you will be evicted from your home if you do not pay your rent.

Remember: If you are evicted from a local authority house, you will not be eligible for rent allowance or to apply for local authority housing

5. Keep safe at home

Fire precautions

Fire is a danger in every home. Everyone is at risk, particularly the elderly and very young, so take the following steps to prevent fires.

Avoid	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">X Smoking when you are in bed, tired or on medicationX Leaving the room when there are candles burningX Leaving young children alone near an open fire or cookerX Leaving your mobile phone or laptop on your bed or couch. These devices heat up quickly when even slightly covered overX Using a heater or the cooker to dry clothesX Using petrol or paraffin to light a solid fuel stoveX Borrowing batteries from the smoke alarm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">X Leaving matches and lighters where children can get themX Leaving the room when a chip or frying pan is on even for a minuteX Overloading electric sockets – one socket, one plugX Using electric appliances that don't workX Running electrical appliances from a light socketX Having mirrors over fireplaces with real firesX Your clothes might catch fire if you stand too close to look in the mirror

Make sure to	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Check your house for electrical devices left on. Only leave on essential electrical equipment at night such as the fridge.✓ Charge or use devices like phones and laptops on a solid surface that will not burn easily.✓ Clean your chimney and service your heating system at least once a year.✓ Press the test button of all smoke alarms once a week to check they are working properly. Replace batteries as soon as you need to.✓ Store hot ashes in a non- combustible container outside	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Use a spark guard in front of open fires.✓ Keep your gas cylinder outside, on solid ground and away from anything hot.✓ Use a proper holder for candles.✓ Keep a suitable fire extinguisher and fire blanket in the kitchen.✓ Empty ashtrays before you go to bed. Run the contents under the tap before you bin them.✓ Repair or replace faulty electrical appliances immediately.✓ Do a fire safety check before you go to bed.✓ Close all doors at night. <p>Appendix 1 has more information on fire prevention</p>

Electricity

Know where to find your fuse board so that you can cut a circuit or switch the power off in an emergency.

Do not overload sockets or tamper with wall sockets, switches, the fuse board, or any other electrical installation in your home. Switch off the isolator switches on your fuse board before you move any electrical appliance, such as a fridge or washing machine.

Gas

Know where to find the shut off valve to your gas supply to the boiler and cooker. Do not tamper with the boiler or any other gas appliances. Make sure wall vents are always open in rooms with gas fires.

If you smell gas in your home:

- Make sure gas appliances haven't been left on and unlit
- Don't smoke or use a naked flame
- Don't unplug or switch anything electrical on or off
- Open windows and doors

If the appliances are off but the smell persists, turn off the gas supply at the meter and contact An Bord Gais – 1850 205 050.

Water leak

Do not use the phone in the immediate area of the leak. If possible, call from outside the property.

Plumbing

Know the location of the stopcock inside your home. It is usually beneath the kitchen sink. You should know how to turn off the water supply at the main stopcock. This is usually where the supply enters your property from the road or pavement.

Carbon monoxide

Carbon Monoxide is a poisonous gas that has no colour or odour. It is produced when any fossil fuel such as coal, wood or oil is burnt without enough oxygen. The symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are like the flu and include aches, drowsiness, weakness, headaches and nausea. If anyone at home has these symptoms while a gas appliance is being used, you should stop using the appliance until it has been checked by a qualified gas fitter. If the symptoms persist, talk to your doctor.

To prevent a carbon monoxide build-up:

- install a carbon monoxide detector
- make sure all heating systems are regularly maintained by a qualified fitter.
- check all your flues and chimneys. Clean them and remove any blockages at least once a year
- keep all permanent ventilation openings clear

6: Be part of your community

Keep and maintain your home in good condition, both inside and outside. Paint it whenever you need to, including any sheds walls, and piers. Regular upkeep of your home will reflect well on you and on the estate or community where you live.

Become actively involved in the running of your estate. To help manage our estates, Longford County Council have a dedicated Estate Management Unit. The aim of this unit is to improve the overall coordination of services in the estates.

Housing Liaison Officer

Our Housing Liaison Officer is employed to promote the interests of residents of estates and will help residents to establish a residents association. The Housing Liaison Officer will have a presence on the ground and will be available to meet the tenants and residents associations on a regular basis.

Housing Liaison Officers support community development initiatives and can deal with any queries you have about your tenancy and will work with you to help create a vibrant sustainable community where you live.

Estate Manager

Our Estate Manager ensures that all conditions of the tenancy agreement are complied with. You should bring any incidents of Antisocial behaviour or nuisance issues that are affecting the enjoyment of your home to the attention of our Estate Manager. All complaints are dealt with in a confidential manner.

More information on Antisocial behaviour is contained in the next chapter.

Housing Welfare Officer

Our Housing Welfare Officer is on hand provide support and guidance to tenants if they are struggling to maintain their tenancy. Sometimes, extra supports are necessary due to a change in the household income, illness/incapacity or other factors which affect the tenants ability to do so independently. Our Housing Welfare Officer will be able to advise tenants of the various supports that other services may be able provide to them during times of hardship.

Neighbourhood relations

It's your responsibility to get on with your neighbours. Common sense and respect for others plays a large part in living in harmony. When people are living close to each other, they may not realise their behaviour, or the behaviour of their visitors, children or pets, can disturb and annoy others.

By living as part of a community, it is your responsibility to uphold a safe and caring environment.

- Make sure your house contributes positively to the appearance of the area
- Welcome any new neighbours
- Alert someone if you notice a change in your neighbour or if you haven't seen them for some time
- Look out for neighbours who are elderly or disabled. Offer them help if you think they need it
- Tell your neighbours before you start any noisy work in your house (DIY) or before a celebration
- Make sure your children are aware of how their playing habits affect others

Parking

Poorly maintained and carelessly parked vehicles can spoil the appearance of a street or area. Careless parking across grass verges and footpaths can be dangerous and cause damage. Do not block access routes when you park your vehicle and be considerate to your neighbours' needs.

Pets

You may keep one dog at the property. Tenants of Longford County Council are not allowed to keep dogs defined as controlled breeds under the Control of Dogs Regulations 1998. Longford County Council will have the ultimate decision in whether a dog is to be removed from a property. **A list of prohibited breeds can be found at Appendix 1**

Under the Control of Dogs Act 1986, every dog must have a license. You are permitted to have a maximum of two domestic pets at the property if they do not become a nuisance.

- If you have a pet, do not leave it alone for long periods. Your neighbours will think it is a nuisance if it barks a lot and letting your dog do that can be considered as antisocial behaviour.
- Dogs in public places must always be accompanied or they could be considered as strays and be impounded
- You should clean up after your dog if it fouls in a public place

Council tenants are not allowed to keep horses or ponies. Poultry, pigs and non-domestic birds are not pets. Keeping any of these is a serious breach of your tenancy.

Common areas

Common green areas are for the benefit of all residents and tenants. You must never misuse or damage them. These areas should only be used for rest and quiet recreation.

They should **not** be used for:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Using drugs and drinking alcohol✗ Gathering in groups or holding impromptu parties✗ Developing situations which will intimidate other residents✗ Riding motorbikes, scooters or skateboards✗ Carrying out motor vehicle repairs✗ Playing loud music from portable stereos or vehicles | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Discharging fireworks✗ Illegal Dumping/burning✗ Pet release or pet / animal grazing✗ Parking of mobile homes or other vehicles✗ Marquees or inflatable play items✗ Washing lines or bin storage |
|--|--|

Abandoned Vehicles

If there is a vehicle abandoned in your estate, contact the housing department with details of the vehicle, registration number and location. Arrangements will be made for the Litter Warden to investigate.

7: Antisocial Behaviour

Antisocial behaviour seriously affects the quality of life for both individual residents and the wider community. It can be a source of distress for individuals and families and its effects can be felt throughout the neighbourhood. As a tenant, you have a responsibility never to engage in antisocial behaviour.

Neighbours are expected to be able to resolve any issues they have with each other in the first instance. Longford County Council become involved when the behaviour is persistent, impairing the Tenants enjoyment of their home or if the issue is unresolvable without intervention.

Definition of antisocial behaviour

The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014 states that "antisocial behaviour" includes either or both of the following:

1. The manufacture, production, preparation, importation, exportation, sale, supply, possession for the purposes of sale or supply, or distribution of a controlled drug (within the meaning of the Misuse of Drugs Acts, 1977 and 1984)
2. Any behaviour which cause or is likely to cause any significant or persistent danger, injury, damage, alarm, loss or fear to any person living, working or otherwise lawfully in or in the vicinity of a house provided by a housing authority under the housing acts 1966 to 2002 or Part V of the Planning & Development Act 2000 or a housing estate in which the house is situate or a site and without prejudice to the foregoing includes: violence, threats, intimidation, coercion, harassment or serious obstruction of any person.

Antisocial behaviour includes but is not restricted to:

- Behaviour which causes any significant or persistent impairment of a person's use or enjoyment of his or her home (this includes noise as set out in the tenancy agreement)
- Damage to or defacement by writing or other marks on any property, including a person's home

We treat antisocial behaviour seriously

Longford County Council takes all reports of antisocial behaviour seriously. Such behaviour can vary from serious acts of violence to more day- to-day issues like noisy neighbours or vandalism.

Longford County Council takes a strong position against antisocial behaviour. By taking preventative measures, such as early intervention and support, we can prevent the problem becoming even more serious. If you and your neighbours always report incidents of antisocial behaviour and serious breaches of the tenancy agreement, such as illegal dumping, we can tackle these problems together in the interest of good estate management.

Our Housing Team, including the Estate Management Unit, actively engage with residents following reports of antisocial behaviour and support all involved to bring about resolution.

However, if necessary, as local authority landlords we have powers to evict people involved in antisocial behaviour. We can also get an exclusion order against a family member, ordering them to stay away from a home or even the area near a home.

The goal is the cessation of the antisocial behaviour - Eviction is a last resort.

We may take legal proceedings

Where tenants or their families are involved in criminal acts, such as drug dealing or allowing their homes to be used to commit crimes, we will take legal proceedings which may lead to eviction or exclusion orders. Longford County Council works closely with the Gardaí and the HSE on such matters.

Where you can report anti-social behaviour

If you are aware of antisocial behaviour, you should tell us about the problem. Do not assume we already know. All calls and contacts are treated in strict confidence. You will need to complete an initial complaint form, giving full written details of your complaint and when the antisocial incidents happened. We will investigate your complaint and refer it to the Gardaí or relevant agency if we need to.

If you think a crime has been committed

If you think a crime has been committed, you must contact the Gardaí directly.

If you are evicted due to antisocial behaviour

If you are evicted as a result of antisocial behaviour, we will regard you as having made yourself intentionally homeless. This means you will no longer be considered for local authority housing supports.

For more details of our antisocial behaviour policy, check our website www.longfordcoco.ie

8: How to apply for a housing transfer

You can apply for a transfer to another local authority house if you meet certain conditions contained in the Councils transfer policy in operation at the time of application.

Complete a transfer application form

To apply, you must complete a transfer application form giving reasons for the transfer, with supporting documentation, such as medical reports. You will not normally be placed on a transfer list unless you have been a tenant in your present council home for at least ten years.

Transfers are considered on a 'need' rather than a 'want' basis and are most likely to be granted in cases of overcrowding, downsizing or disability.

The Council's reasons for having a transfer policy are to:

- make the best use of dwellings and to eliminate overcrowding
- satisfy the housing needs of the individual tenant where possible

Your home will have to be inspected as part of your application and your request will be turned down if:

- Your present property is not being maintained to the standards expected
- You are in rent arrears (you owe rent)
- There is a history of antisocial behaviour complaints made against you
- You are deemed to be adequately housed in your current accommodation

Longford County Council will not consider transferring a tenant because of unsatisfactory relations with a neighbouring tenant or because of dissatisfaction in general with the estate or the neighbourhood.

Buying your home

Council tenants can apply to buy their homes. Longford County Council also provides loans to first time buyers who meet the criteria to support home ownership.

For more information on either of these schemes, go to our website or contact the Housing Department at Longford County Council.

Adapting your home

Tenants can apply to have their home adapted to help people living there who suffer from physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual disability. We will consider the best housing

option for the whole family, and we may decide it would be better to transfer you to more suitable accommodation.

Major alterations and extensions

Before you carry out major alterations to your home, you must get written permission from the Housing Section. You will have to outline the changes you want to make and give details of an approved contractor who will carry out the work.

Under no circumstances should you begin to make any alterations to your property without written approval from the Council. This includes changes such as:

- Installing or converting heating systems, including stoves
- Installing electric showers
- Replacing kitchen units
- Electrical, Plumbing & structural alterations

If you need to extend your home, you should fill in a housing application form, making sure that you complete the section for extensions, and give it to our housing liaison officer. We will assess your need for an extension, and we will carry out a survey to see if the property is suitable for what you propose. In some cases, a transfer to another property may be a more suitable solution

Moving on and ending your tenancy

If you plan to leave your property and end your tenancy, you must tell the Council at least four weeks before you go. If you give less than four weeks' notice, or if you hand back your keys before four weeks' notice has passed, you must contact your Housing Liaison Officer.

Once you end your tenancy, the Council will no longer be responsible for your future housing needs. You will no longer be regarded as having a housing need and will not qualify for social housing supports. It might be best to take advice, so feel free to talk to a member of our housing team before you make your final decision.

If you do decide to end your tenancy with us, you must:

- Agree a time for us to inspect your home before you move out
- Arrange for repairs to any parts of your home that were damaged during your tenancy
- Remove all waste/rubbish from the house and gardens

You must also:

- Return all keys for front and back doors, windows and sheds.
- Pay all your rent and any other charges up to the end of your tenancy

The Council may take you to court to recover any outstanding debts. You will be charged if the Council must change the locks. You will be charged for the cost of any repairs or cleaning costs the Council must pay after you leave.

If you do not comply with these rules, or if you leave the property without telling the Council, this may affect any future housing application you make to Longford County Council or any other local authority, housing association or voluntary housing body.

Appendix 1

Your Home Fire Safety Checklist

Introduction

Nothing is more important than you and your family's safety. Using this helpful checklist will guide you on how to keep your home and family safe from fire. Read through the sections and if your answer is green, you're doing the right things. If it's not green, then you should take action to solve the problem. More information on where to look for advice is included at the bottom of the checklist.

Smoke alarms

1.	Do you have any smoke alarms fitted?	Yes	No
2.	Is there a smoke alarm fitted at each level in the house? (on the hall ceiling and landing ceilings upstairs)	Yes	No
3.	Do you have smoke alarms fitted in all or any of the following rooms?.....		
	Kitchen (A heat alarm may be more suitable)	Yes	No
	Sitting room/living room (A heat alarm may be more suitable)	Yes	No
	All bedrooms	Yes	No
	Attached garage or office or attic or other attached room	Yes	No
4.	Are all the smoke and or heat alarms interconnected ? Meaning, if one sounds, do they all sound?	Yes	No
5.	Do you test your smoke alarms once a week?	Yes	No
6.	How many rooms are in your house? Please include the attic as this may be the biggest room!		
7.	How many smoke/heat alarms are fitted?		

*** It is very good if the number of rooms matches the number of alarms.**

Kitchen

1.	What type of cooking appliances do you use?.....		
	Do you use a deep fat fryer instead of a chip pan?	Yes	No
	Do you use a gas cooker or an electric hob ?	Yes	No
	Are these appliances clear of clutter and cleaned regularly	Yes	No
	When someone is cooking do they stay at the cooker or in the kitchen area?	Yes	No
2.	Are all electrical appliances that are not needed unplugged at night or when leaving your house ?	Yes	No
3.	Do you clean out your toaster regularly? Are there no rusted parts?	Yes	No
4.	Have you checked your extractor hood filter and general condition recently?	Yes	No
5.	Can you switch off the gas or electricity supplies easily in the kitchen if a fire occurs without risking your own safety?	Yes	No
6.	Do you have a fire blanket and a fire extinguisher in your kitchen?	Yes	No
7.	Do you know how to use the fire blanket and extinguisher ?	Yes	No

Living room

1.	Is there an open fireplace in your house?	Yes	No
	Do you keep a spark guard in front of the fire after lighting it and when it is unattended?	Yes	No
	Are there mats or combustible items (for example, timber floor boards, paint thinner) near the fireplace?	Yes	No
	Is there a flat screen TV over the fire place or other electrical appliances near the fire? Electrical appliances may overheat easily if near a heat source!	Yes	No
	If you use an open fire , do you have your chimney cleaned twice a year?	Yes	No
2.	When you remove hot ashes , do you put them in a metal bucket and store them away from combustible items to cool down for 1 to 2 days?	Yes	No
	Is there a stove installed in the house?	Yes	No
	Is the flue installed into an existing chimney?	Yes	No
	Is the flue installed up through the house, through ceilings/floors or attics?	Yes	No
3.	Was the flue checked for any faults and cleaned recently?	Yes	No
	For heat producing devices in rooms, do you have a carbon monoxide detector?	Yes	No
4.	If candles are used, are they in a proper holder and never left unattended?	Yes	No
5.	Are all ashtrays emptied correctly, especially before going to bed?	Yes	No
6.	Are matches and lighters kept in a safe place away from children?	Yes	No
7.	Are all electrical appliances that are not needed unplugged?	Yes	No

Bedroom

1.	Do you use an electric blanket ? Is there any damage to the blanket ? Such as fraying fabric, scorch marks, exposed elements, creasing or folding, soiling, damp patches, tie tapes damaged or missing, worn flex or loose connections	Yes	No
	Does the blanket have thermostatic controls for safe all-night use?	Yes	No
	Do you switch the blanket off when going to sleep ?	Yes	No
2.	Do you unplug all unneeded electrical items?	Yes	No
3.	Do you leave devices such as laptops and phones charging and unattended?	Yes	No
4.	Is your floor area clear of toys and things in case you need to escape to safety?	Yes	No
5.	Are there dressing table mirrors facing the sunlight?	Yes	No
6.	Is there anything combustible near light bulbs of lamps ?	Yes	No

Hall

1.	Is there a clear path through the hallway if you need to make an escape?	Yes	No
2.	In an evacuation, can you and your family easily open the door ?	Yes	No
3.	If you need keys for the door , are they readily available?	Yes	No
4.	Do you have a working torch readily available?	Yes	No

Before going to sleep

1.	Does someone carryout a night-time routine safety check?	Yes	No
2.	Do you close all doors before going to bed?	Yes	No
3.	Does everyone in the family know the escape plan ?	Yes	No
4.	Does everyone in the family know where the keys are left at night ?	Yes	No
5.	Does everyone know where to meet outside the house in the event of fire?	Yes	No
6.	Do you leave on the washing machine/dryer when going to bed?	Yes	No

Outside and other actions

1.	Is your oil tank secure and not leaking?	Yes	No
2.	Could your oil tank catch fire ?	Yes	No
3.	Are the electrics at your property in good condition ?	Yes	No
4.	Are people allowed to carry out hot works (cutting or welding using gas) without your supervision ?	Yes	No
5.	Are all gas cylinders stored in a safe place away from combustibles?	Yes	No

Using the answers as a guide, please do everything you can to make your home safe.

Remember:

- **Keeping your family safe is a priority for all.**
- **Get into the habit of routine checks when going to bed and when leaving your home.**
- **It is far cheaper to replace faulty equipment than it is to replace your home.**

What should I do if there is a fire?

- get everyone to the planned safe place
- stay out
- dial 112/999, ask for the fire brigade
- stay on the line until the operator tells you to hang up

If you need further advice, please visit these helpful sites:

<http://firesafetyweek.ie/homes>

For fire safety leaflets and so on, go to www.housing.gov.ie and type in "fire safety" into search box.

www.electricireland.ie **see electrical safety around the home.**

Be aware of electrical appliance recalls by manufacturers.

Check on the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission website under Product **Safety at www.ccpc.ie**

For stove installation, please refer to Part J of the Building Regulations and follow the guidance rules.

Contact information:

Longford County Fire Service, Templemichael, Longford Avenue, Longford
Tel 043 3347136 or email firestation@longfordcoco.ie

Useful numbers

Housing Department	043 3343499
Environmental Services (for litter warden, dog warden, illegal dumping etc)	043 3343462
Citizen's Information Service	043 3341069
Money Advice & Budgeting Service (MABS)	0818 072640
St. Vincent De Paul	043 3346074
Irish Water	1890 278 278

Emergency contacts

Fire Brigades

Longford	043 3346200
Edgeworthstown	043 6671016
Granard	043 6686529
Lanesborough	043 33 21366
Ballymahon	09064 32326

Gardai

Longford	043 3350570
Edgeworthstown	043 6671002
Granard	043 6687660
Lanesborough	043 3321102
Ballymahon	09064 32303













Ambulance / Fire Brigade / Gardai

In case of emergency ring **999** or **112** if calling from a mobile phone

Samaritans	09064 73133
ESB Emergency	1850 372 999
Childline – Freefone	1800 666 666

Restricted Breeds List

Tenants are prohibited from keeping the following breeds of dog*:

 <p>American Pit Bull Terrier</p>	 <p>Greyhound/Lurcher</p>
 <p>Bulldog</p>	 <p>Japanese Akita</p>
 <p>Bull mastiff</p>	 <p>Japanese Tosa</p>
 <p>Doberman Pinscher</p>	 <p>Rhodesian Ridgeback</p>
 <p>English Bull Terrier</p>	 <p>Rottweiler</p>
 <p>German Shepherd (Alsatian)</p>	 <p>Staffordshire Bull terrier</p>

**Plus, every other strain or cross of any of the above breeds*

