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Welcome to Your Tenant Handbook

This handbook contains lots of information to help you with your tenancy.

It explains your rights and responsibilities, as well as the Council's responsibilities as your landlord. It also gives details of the housing services the Council provides. This handbook is only a guide to our services and aims to answer the general queries you may have about your home and tenancy. We have lots more information on our website

www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/counciltenants or if you don't have access please call the Tenancy Services team.

Contacting Us

The key contact numbers for Great Yarmouth Borough Council

For tenancy issues and general enquiries

- South Yarmouth Area Housing Office:
01493 846825
- Gorleston Area Housing Office:
01493 846839
- Email: **Tenancy@great-yarmouth.gov.uk**

To report a repair (service provided by GYN) including for out of hours emergencies (5pm to 9am)

- Call: **08082 644444**
- Email: **GYNRepairs@ncsgrp.co.uk**

Income team: 01493 846726 or email: **rentincome@great-yarmouth.gov.uk**

Benefits and Council Tax support: 01493 846291 or email: **benefits@great-yarmouth.gov.uk**

Council Tax: 01493 846244 or email: **ctax@great-yarmouth.gov.uk**

Customer Services for non-tenancy related enquires and reports: 01493 856100 or email: **enquiries@great-yarmouth.gov.uk**



Moving In

Firstly, we hope you enjoy living in your home and the wider community. Moving into a new home is exciting as well as there being lots to do. This section provides some information on the things that you can do to make sure you settle in quickly and easily. We are here to make sure any problems are sorted out without any fuss. The information in this handbook tells you how to get the best out of our service. We also have a Tenancy Support Team that may be able to help with advice and guidance. It is also a good idea to introduce yourself to your neighbours especially if you are new to the area, they may be able to offer advice and information.

Getting connected - your gas supply is usually uncapped on the day you move in with our contractor attending your sign up meeting or an appointment arranged for them to meet you at your new home. You should let both the gas and electricity companies know that you have moved in. Give them the meter readings from the day you move in. If you are on a key meter we will show you at the viewing its location; (if there is any debt on the meter, this should be cleared when you sign up.

Furnishing your home – if you are on a low income and need help with furniture please contact us. There are organisations that offer furniture at reduced prices and grants you might be eligible to apply for.

Rubbish and recycling – as a new tenant please observe the local information or ask about disposing of your waste and recycling. If you have individual wheeled bins for your home they must be placed outside your gate or the refuse crews will not empty them. If you use communal bins, please dispose of your rubbish correctly and considerately. GYB Services offers an assisted collection service if you are unable to present the bin at the curb side due to medical reasons. Please contact GYB Services on **01493 742200** for more information.



Your Tenancy

Your tenancy agreement is an important legal document, so you should keep it in a safe place. The agreement sets out our rights and responsibilities as your landlord and your rights and responsibilities as one of our residents. The type of tenancy you have is printed on the front of the tenancy agreement.

Types of Tenancies

Secure Tenancies (lifetime)

If you become a secure tenant, you have full legal rights as a Council tenant. This means you keep your home for as long as you choose as long as you keep to the conditions set out in your tenancy agreement. We can only take your home away from you if you give us good reason to do so, or where we are carrying out a redevelopment of a scheme. For example if you do not pay your rent or if there is legal ground for possession under the Housing Act 1985, the Housing Act 1996 or any other law.

Secure Tenancies (Fixed term)

For certain properties we issue a 5-year fixed term secure tenancy. We will tell you about this at the viewing and before you sign your tenancy.

Demoted Tenancies

If you do not keep to the conditions of your secure tenancy, as example cause anti-social behaviour, we may apply for a court order to remove some of your rights as a secure tenant. A demoted tenancy has less security and fewer rights, similar to an introductory tenancy. A demoted tenancy lasts for one year. If we are satisfied with your behaviour during that time, you go back to a secure tenancy.

Introductory Tenancies

The introductory tenancy is for a trial period of one year. During that time, you must show that you are responsible enough to keep your home and can keep to the conditions set out in the tenancy agreement. If you break any of these conditions, we can extend the introductory period or take steps to end your tenancy.

We will provide support during this 12-month period including completing a 6-month review where you have an opportunity to raise any concerns about your home and tenancy. However, please do contact us at any time for support or advice if have any concerns about your tenancy.

Introductory tenancies can be ended more easily than secure tenancies if conditions are not adhered to.

As an introductory tenant you have fewer legal rights than a secure tenant. The differences are:

- You cannot mutual exchange
- You do not have the right to buy your home
- You cannot take in lodgers or sublet any part of your home
- You cannot use your home for business purposes
- You cannot make any permanent alterations to your property (other than decorating, laying carpet and minor improvements such as putting up shelves)

For more information about your tenancy or any queries please contact the Tenancy Services Team or read our Tenancy Policy which can be found on our website.

Joint Tenancies

Tenancies may be held on a sole basis or jointly by two or more tenants. Joint tenancies may be awarded at the time of application or, an existing sole tenant may apply for an

additional tenant to be added later. There is no legal right to a joint tenancy and GYBC will consider each application upon its merits.

Consideration will be given to awarding a joint tenancy where the partner or prospective joint tenant is:

- A person who is eligible and qualifies for an allocation under the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme
- The applicant's spouse, registered civil partner or partner who has continuously resided with the applicant in the previous 12 months and lived in the borough for 3 years
- The applicant's carer where a medical need for a residential carer exists and the carer has either:
- Surrendered a tenancy from a Registered Provider in order to move in with the tenant to provide care or lived with the



applicant or not sought independent accommodation for a period of 12 months or more due to undertaking caring responsibilities of the applicant.

- The exceptional circumstances of the case mean that awarding a joint tenancy will substantially increase the likelihood of that tenancy being sustained.

Termination of Joint Tenancies

If you have a joint tenancy, you are both responsible for the whole tenancy. If there are rent arrears or another condition of the tenancy is broken, either of the tenants can be held responsible. A joint tenancy can be ended if either person serves a termination notice. The joint tenant who has not submitted the notice to terminate can apply for the tenancy, which will be considered in accordance to their housing need

Succession – Passing on Your Tenancy

Sole tenants may have the right for their spouse or, civil partner to take over the tenancy when they die. For tenancies that started before 1 April 2012 a qualifying family member may also take forward the tenancy, called succession. After April 2012, succession is limited to the tenant's spouse or registered civil partner, as long as they were living

together at the time of their death (or, if the tenancy is a demoted tenancy, for at least a year beforehand) and it must be their only home. You cannot pass your tenancy on to friends who live with you. If more than one person is eligible to take forward the tenancy, we will give preference to the tenant's partner. A succession can only take place once. Where a joint tenant becomes a sole tenant (this may happen on the death of one of the joint tenants) this counts as the one succession allowed.

If the property is not suitable for the needs of the person succeeding to the tenancy (for example the property becomes under occupied) we may request them to move to a more suitable property. We can only use this reason between 6 and 12 months after the previous tenant's death. A possession order may be needed if the successor refuses reasonable alternative offers of accommodation.



Your Home

Repairs Guide – What We Do And How It Works

Following the instructions in this guide will help us to arrange and resolve your repair as soon as possible.

Before you report a repair, check whose responsibility it is. If it was caused by criminal damage, please call once you have obtained a crime number from the police.

Have your contact details ready and any arrangements as to how we can gain access to carry out the repair?

You can report a repair by phoning or emailing us:

Contact us on freephone **0808 264 4444** during our normal office hours of 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, or emailing **GYNRepairs@ncsgrp.co.uk**. Calls are normally free of charge from all consumer landlines and mobile phones. If you are calling from a business phone, you may wish to check with your provider whether there will be a charge for calling.

To report an emergency outside of our normal office hours please contact us on 08082644444.

The Out of Office Hours Service is in operation for emergency repairs from:

- 5pm until 9am, Monday to Thursday
- 5pm Friday evening until 9am Monday morning
- All bank holidays

When you contact us, please provide the following information:

- Address
- Contact telephone number
- Details of the repair (location, type)
- Access details

Who is responsible for what repairs?

We are responsible for the main fixtures and fittings installed to your home i.e. not those added by yourselves, and the structure of the building. These include:

- The structure and fabric of your home, i.e. roof, walls, doors, window frames and glazing, ceilings and plaster work, drains, gutters etc
- The services and main components within your home, including water, gas, electricity, kitchen units, baths, sinks, toilets, heating and water heating (installed by the Council or where we have accepted responsibility)

- Shared areas; which include common entrance doors, entrance halls, stairs, landings, lifts, communal TV aerials, shared gardens, parking areas and entry phones

What Are You Responsible For?

All tenants are responsible for any damage that you or your visitors cause, in addition to any alterations you have or have not sought permission for. These include:

- Any additional fittings (e.g. toilet roll holders, towel rails, curtain rails)
- Minor repairs such as replacing sink and bath plugs, replacing light bulbs (except fixed units), internal door handles, unblocking sinks and cleaning windows
- Internal decoration (if you move into a new home and we provide a decoration kit – you are asked to use this within 6 months)
- Maintenance and clearance of your garden
- Deliberate or accidental damage by yourselves, other members of the household and your visitors. As an example, broken glass, damage to internal doors, etc.. This does not include criminal

damage where this has been reported to the police and a crime reference number has been obtained and passed to us

- Lost security entrance door keys including fobs which can only be purchased from the Council
- Your own items including cookers and their connections
- The supply of gas and electricity to your home
- Your own flooring including carpets and lino and any other types
- Tv aerials and internet connections except those installed by GYBC in communal areas
- Minor repairs to plaster work and subsequent decoration
- Additional security, for example, window locks and keys where not supplied by GYBC



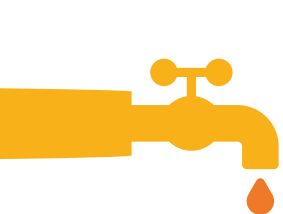
Tenant Alteration and Improvements

In line with your tenancy agreement, you have the right to make alterations and improvements to your home, but you need prior written consent. Whilst you remain the tenant you will be responsible for the repairs and maintenance of these items.

Examples of improvements often carried out are:

- Electric showers
- Sheds
- Fire surrounds
- Kitchens
- Bathrooms
- Additional lighting
- Outside tap

Before you make an improvement, you must request permission through completing the application form. Dependent upon the request, we may need to visit your home. There will be occasions where we are not able to grant permission if the alteration impacts upon the structure of your home or causes a health and safety concern.



Communal Improvements

We have a programme of communal improvements and encourage all residents to suggest ideas that would make a difference to where you live.

Tenant Improvements

When you move into your new home, GYBC may consider leaving the previous tenant's improvements in place should they be in good operational condition. In these instances we will gift these to you. You will be responsible for any future repairs as outlined within the gifting form. We will not repair or replace non-standard fixtures. These could include:

- Sheds
- Carpets, lino and floor tiles
- Alarms
- Showers

We will also consider leaving previous tenant improvements such as bathrooms, kitchens and doors in an empty property. When these items fail or reach the end of their useful life, they will be replaced by standard or available items.

Fencing

Where your rear garden borders communal or public land (e.g. car park or passageway) we will install a 1.8m closed board wooden fence. In all other circumstances we will install a 1.8m closed board wooden privacy panel plus 0.9m chain link fence to mark the boundary of your rear garden as per our fence replacement policy. You can contact GYN and contribute to extend the privacy panel.

Emergency Repairs

These are repairs that affect the health and safety of your household and those in neighbouring households. We will carry out these repairs or make safe within 24 hours or sooner, depending on the nature of the repair. Examples of emergency repairs are:

- Loss of all electrical power or dangerous wiring
- Blocked main drain
- Blocked toilet if only one available
- Burst pipe
- Dangerous structure
- Complete heating failure where no back up heating is available (winter months only)
- Gas Leaks
- Lack of security to the property

This service provides out of hours emergency repair cover and is only available where the repair poses a serious health and safety risk or

where there is danger to people or property. We may only be able to make safe on the first visit and may need to return to complete the repair work.

When reporting an emergency, please provide as much information as possible about the nature of the emergency. Where the repair is your responsibility, but qualifies as an emergency, it may still be possible to call out an operative, although you may be charged for this service.

Routine Repairs

We aim to complete these within 28 days. These are generally jobs that can be left for a reasonable period without causing serious inconvenience.

These include:

- Indoor carpentry work and repairs to door frames, kitchen units
- Small plumbing jobs such as dripping taps or an overflow running
- Fencing & external works
- Electrical works

Charging For Repairs

Sometimes there may be a charge for carrying out a repair. Repairs that we will charge you for include:

- When we carry out work that is your responsibility, e.g. replacing lost keys
- When we undertake additional work at an extra cost, e.g. additional fencing
- When we carry out work that is your responsibility but has been caused by your negligence, e.g. replacing damaged doors
- When we are unable to gain access to carry out a repair on a day agreed and arranged with yourself

We will always tell you about any charge before we carry out the work if this is possible and try to give you a rough estimate of the cost. For emergency repairs, you will receive the bill after completion. For other types of work, we may ask for payment before the work is undertaken.



Full details relating to recharges including the Council's and tenant's responsibilities and what to do if you cannot pay for a recharge can be found in the Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

Servicing – Gas and Electric

Every year all gas, oil and renewable energy heating appliances as well as the electrics every 5 years, are serviced for your safety. It is important that you allow access for these checks to take place. These are checks we must make as your landlord, and they are for the safety of you and your household. Failure to allow access to complete the checks may result in us taking further action.

Planned Maintenance

As part of maintaining your home, we carry out planned maintenance and upgrade programmes. From time to time, worn out items will need to be replaced. These include replacing kitchen and bathrooms to central heating and external painting. These plans depend on the condition of the properties, their age and the facilities they need to meet modern living standards. Each year we develop a programme to make the best use of the money we have available. The money is very limited, so we will prioritise the

improvements to make sure the work most important to safety is carried out first.

Meeting the Decent Homes Standard – these are internal improvements to your home to meet the government standard.

Improvement programmes typically include:

- Replacing roofs on properties
- Electrical upgrades and rewiring
- Installing new heating
- Structural repairs
- Fitting new kitchens
- Fitting new bathrooms
- Installing new windows and doors

Improvements to communal areas – these can include upgrading door-entry systems, fire safety works and improving open spaces. Improving life on our estates is about more than just bricks and mortar.



Before starting any work, we will:

- Write to you to let you know we are coming
- Visit your home to carry out a survey before deciding what work needs to be done
- Tell you:
 - what work we are going to do
 - the name of the contractor
 - the arrangements for carrying out the work
- You will have a choice of wall tile and floor covering colours when we renew bathrooms
- When we fit new kitchens, you will also have a choice of kitchen unit and worktop colours

When we are carrying out major work in your area, we will make sure we keep you fully involved and up to date from start to finish. We will communicate with you regularly and invite you to meet contractors on our larger schemes.

Please note that major improvements may take several days or even weeks to complete and may involve erecting scaffolding around your home. We may also need to inspect the works several times during the work and again after the work has been completed.

Your Rent

It is important that you pay your rent, and any service charges, on time. This money pays for the cost of providing you with your home and the services you receive, including repairs and maintenance. Your rent is due weekly in advance, payable on a Monday. You can pay weekly, fortnightly or monthly, but the payment must be in advance.

Normally there are two non-rent payment weeks at Christmas.

What is included in my rent?

Your rent is a weekly charge for the property you live in and reflects the size and type of property you have. Service charges may be included within your rent. They are normally paid to help maintain shared areas. These could include:

- Estate caretaking service
- Garden maintenance (grass cutting and gardening)
- Communal heating
- Garages
- Digital TV aerial
- Sewerage



Other charges included in our rent if you have signed up to them:

- Tenant Content insurance scheme
- Community Alarm service

VAT may apply to some of the above charges

Can my rent change?

Changes take place on the first Monday in April. We will provide details of new rent costs to secure tenants giving one month's notice in writing, and to non-secure tenants giving one week's notice in writing.

When we change the rent, we will send you a letter together with information showing how your rent is made up.

How can I pay my rent?

You can pay your rent in a number of different ways:

- By Direct debit or standing order – these are the quickest, easiest and safest ways of paying your rent. You can choose to pay on any day of the month. With direct debits there is no need to adjust the amount you pay when the rent is reviewed each year. To set up direct debits you can complete our form online or contact the Income Team

- You can make payments online through our 24- hour secure Internet payments service
- Telephone our payment line, open 24 hours a day, on **01493 846117** using your 190- reference number (displayed on your Rent Payment Card or Rent Income Letter)
- Speaking directly to the Income Team on **01493 846726** using your 190- reference number
- Payment card - you can order a payment card and use it to pay at any Post Office or shop displaying the PayPoint logo where these facilities are open

Help to pay your rent

If you have a low income, you may qualify for help with your rent and your Council Tax. You can get an application form from our office or complete an online application. If you qualify for benefit, your rent and your Council Tax will be reduced.

If you get into difficulties paying your rent, please do speak to the Income Team who will help. The tenancy agreement you have signed is a legal contract, which means that you must pay your rent regularly. Your rent is one of the most important bills that you have to pay. If you do not pay your rent, you may lose your home.

Debt management and benefit advice

Being in debt can be scary and it often feels that it's much easier getting into debt than it is to get out of debt. But there is help available. If you have problems with your rent please do speak to us, we will listen and support you.

If you are having problems paying your rent because of other bills and debts, an Income Officer can arrange for you to get help from an independent debt counselling service. This can help by looking at all the debts you may have, including things like gas and electricity, credit cards, loans or catalogue companies, and negotiating manageable repayments with each of them. This will ensure that you can gradually clear your rent arrears and safeguard your home. Don't ignore the problem. It won't go away and the longer you leave it, the worse it gets.

Your Neighbourhood

Community Safety and Anti-social behaviour

We believe that everyone has the right to live the way they want to, provided that this does not interfere with or disturb others. It is part of your tenancy agreement that you do not cause a nuisance to your neighbours. We do not tolerate anti-social behaviour (ASB) and have set procedures to follow when you report an incident to us. All reports are treated seriously regardless of whether immediate action is taken.

What Is ASB?

The term ASB is used to describe a whole range of behaviour that upsets other people. This can include criminal activity and serious nuisance as well as less severe but frequent and annoying behaviour. It can be quite difficult to agree on a definition of ASB as we all have different lifestyles, expectations and tolerance levels. However, we believe that every person has a right to enjoy life in their own way providing they do not adversely affect the lives of those living and working around them.

Examples of ASB may include:

- Noise nuisance
- Vandalism and graffiti
- Intimidation and harassment
- Using our properties to sell or use illegal

- substances
- Violence
- Racial harassment
- Domestic abuse



Common issues that occur on our estates that may NOT constitute ASB include:

- Children playing
- DIY activities
- Smoking
- Lifestyle clashes
- Noise caused by normal living

How Do I Report ASB?

If you are affected by ASB, please do not hesitate to contact the Tenancy Services Team by:

- Calling **01493 846825** or **846839**
- Via an online form on our website
- You can also contact us via email at **tenancy@great-yarmouth.gov.uk**
- If you witness loud noise nuisance please also use the Noise App that can be downloaded from App stores for your phone/mobile device. The evidence collected will go straight to the Tenancy Services Team to investigate and where appropriate take reasonable actions to support change of behaviour by the perpetrator

- If you notice environmental crime you can report this through the 'Love Clean Streets App Which is also available to download from App stores

What We Will Do?

We will identify the most appropriate solutions to your problems. We look to develop an understanding of what triggers the perpetrators behaviour before considering what appropriate action to take. Informal actions can include:

- Mediation offered to resolve neighbour disputes
- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts
- Joint visits and working with partner agencies
- Community Protection Warnings

We have a wide range of legal powers and effective tools at our disposal that will be used where other alternatives have failed including:

- Community Protection Notices to deal with problems or nuisance that has a negative effect on your community
- Working with the Environmental Health team issuing Noise Abatement Notices to control statutory noise pollution
- ASB Injunctions to protect you from an individual who acts in an anti-social or

threatening manner

- Closure Orders where a property and its persons are causing a continual nuisance
- Possession Orders where it is reasonable and proportionate

We work in collaboration with the Early Help Hub which includes representation from the Police, Social Services, and other voluntary organisations to prevent and reduce ASB.

Action You Can Take

Sometimes people do not realise that their actions are upsetting others. If you feel comfortable, please speak to your neighbour and explain why their behaviour is upsetting you; listen to their point of view; try not to lose your temper and reach a mutual agreement; walk away from an argument.

Domestic Abuse

If you, or someone you know, are a victim of domestic abuse and you live in one of our homes, please contact us. We can help you. We will give you advice and details of specialist organisations that can help. We will keep the details of your case confidential. Remember, domestic abuse is a crime. Always phone 999 in an emergency.

Looking After Communal Spaces

These are the shared areas of a block of flats or an estate which all residents and visitors can use or have the benefit of looking at. This includes:

- Lifts/stairs
- Balconies/landings
- Bin areas
- Drying areas
- Car parks
- Footpaths
- Grass areas
- Shrub beds
- Hedges

Caretaking

We have Estate Caretakers who keep the communal areas and grounds of the estates clean and tidy. Their responsibilities include:

- Cleaning of communal areas on estates including in and around flats and maisonettes.
- Reporting and supporting issues that impact the environment including rubbish and recycling
- Carrying out site inspections
- Removal of rubbish and health hazards such as syringes as quickly as we can

- Arranging the removal of graffiti: if graffiti is racist or sexist we aim for this to be removed within 24 hours of being reported
- Reporting unauthorised, badly parked, abandoned or untaxed vehicles
- Reporting communal repairs and monitoring until completed
- Supporting the work of the Tenancy Services Team along with residents to reduce and tackle anti-social behaviour
- Developing the service to make sure we are meeting all our tenants' needs (we welcome views and suggestions on how we can improve)
- Testing communal lighting and fire alarms

Safety In Communal Areas

You must not store or leave any items in communal lifts/stairwells as this could be a potential hazard:

- People may not be able to escape quickly enough from a fire or any other incident particularly if the lighting fails due to power issues linked to the emergency.
- Young children or people with sight or mobility problems may hurt themselves

tripping-up, slipping on or falling over obstacles

- Children could be injured playing with dangerous materials
- Can restrict the service and cleaning of the shared communal space

If you see anything that you feel we should know about please report this. You can report a problem where you live through the Love Clean Street App or make your caretaker aware. A example, this could be faulty landlord lighting, fly-tipping or communal repairs.

Gardening

We call gardening of communal areas grounds maintenance. This is provided for us by an approved contractor. They mow the grass; prune hedges; tidy flower/shrub beds and ensure paved areas are free from leaves and weeds. How often we maintain these areas depends on the type of plants and the need not to disturb nesting birds or other wildlife. We aim to keep these areas free of litter and will ensure that shrubs and hedges do not obstruct paths, windows and roads.



Road verges are not owned by us and are the responsibility of Norfolk County Council Highways Team who maintain them. Therefore, they may be mown at different times to other grass areas. If you need to report any verges, please do so using the Love Clean Streets App.

Trees

We regularly inspect trees to ensure they are in as safe a condition as reasonably possible and undertake any safety and structural work required. We will not prune or remove a tree just because it:

- Blocks light or a view
- Affects television or satellite reception
- Has fruit or leaves falling from it

Parking

Some estates have very little provision for non-adopted parking areas which can lead to conflict and frustration for people living in those areas. We ask everyone to be considerate in how and where they park as many estates were developed prior to the increase in vehicle ownership.

Some problems are:

- Obstructive parking – vehicles blocking dropped kerb access or in front of garage doors
- Untaxed/abandoned vehicles

Generally, we rely on everyone being considerate to their neighbours. However, when needed and if possible, we will take action. For example, where there are vehicles parked on grass areas causing damage or impacting the community or untaxed/abandoned vehicles on any GYBC land.

Gardens

You are responsible for maintaining your garden to a satisfactory standard ensuring you:

- Keep any garden area regularly trimmed, well maintained and free from rubbish
- Trim boundary hedges at least once a year so as to keep them below two metres high and not to restrict access to communal areas
- Not remove any trees or boundary hedges unless and until you get the Council's written permission to do so
- Not plant any trees, hedges or large shrubs which are likely to become dangerous, cause nuisance to your neighbours or damage to property. If you are in doubt, please seek the Council's advice
- Grass is regularly mown



- Hedges & shrubs are regularly pruned so they do not overhang over the road/pavement and are not exceeding 2 metres
- Borders are regularly maintained and free of weeds

Scheme Improvements

If you have an idea about improving the outside environment where you live, please get in touch with the Estate Services Team.

Garden Maintenance Scheme

If you need help with your garden, you can apply to join the Garden Maintenance Scheme. For a small weekly cost, we will cut your grass and prune hedges and shrubs. For more information and to apply please visit our website or speak to the Estates Services Team.

Responsible pet ownership

There are many benefits to owning a pet, but animals can cause a nuisance to others if they are not looked after properly. You are responsible for their care and control inside your home and within communal areas. If your pet is using the communal areas please ensure you are with your pet and in control at all time, please do not let dogs run freely in communal shared areas and please always pick up after fouling.

Getting Involved

We welcome your views and involvement in our work. It is important to us to make sure that all tenants and residents have an opportunity to have their say in what we do.

We want residents to be involved in how their homes and communities are managed, maintained and improved. We want you to feel well informed and be able to challenge us when you feel we can improve our services.

Getting involved is a great way to express your views and work with us to improve our services to you. There are different ways you can do this to fit in with your lifestyle. You can learn new skills and be part of your community or take part from home and online.

There are various ways you can make a difference:

- **Your Area:** being involved locally - influence what we do by becoming an Area Voice, take part in estate monitoring or attend one-off local discussion groups
- **Your Voice:** complete surveys, share ideas and suggestions and be involved in reviewing and improving our communications
- **Your Services:** face-to-face (borough-wide) - be part of our decision making through Task and Finish groups (work with us to take an in-depth look at a

specific area and make recommendations for improvement), specialist interest groups (sign up to be involved in one-off meetings or projects addressing the things that matter most to you), and performance challenge (hold us accountable for how we are delivering services)

Community Reps

Many residents volunteer to be Community Reps, the local link to us in your community. We ask you to provide feedback on what we do so we can improve the services we provide through:

- Feedback to us on things that matter to your community to help shape and improve the services we provide
- Work with us to resolve issues in your community
- Talk with and listen to other tenants and pass information on
- Use the 'Love Clean Street' App to tell us about issues in communal areas
- Help monitor communal services e.g. grounds maintenance and cleaning
- Complete communal/estate services surveys
- Take part in wider discussions with other community reps

To find out more you can:

Read our Resident Engagement information online or Email:

residentengagement@great-yarmouth.gov.uk

Making a Complaint

We make every effort to keep our standards high. However, there may be times when our services do not meet your expectations. Your opinions are very important to us and we want to hear from you if you feel that we have got something wrong or failed to provide a service to a high enough standard. By using our complaints process, you can give us the opportunity to put things right quickly and effectively. You can also tell us where we have done well through a compliment

How Do I Give My Comments; Compliments And Complaints?

You can:

- Phone either area office on:
 - South Yarmouth: **01493 846825**
 - Gorleston: **01493 846839**
 - Or telephone our customer service number on **01493 856100**
- Letter – write to Complaints, Democratic Services, Town Hall, Hall Plain, Great Yarmouth, NR30 2QF
- In person – Visit us during office hours at the Town Hall or Greyfriars House. We will also accept complaints from another person on your behalf.
- Email – send your email to **complaints@great-yarmouth.gov.uk**

- Website – visit **www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/commentcomplimentsandcomplaints** and complete the online form

- Contact your Borough Councillor

Help With Making A Complaint

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to make a complaint and will support you with translation, interpretation and home visits, if you find it difficult to leave your home.

What Is A Complaint?

We define a complaint as: the concern or dissatisfaction of a customer regarding the service, action or lack of action taken by the Council. Customers are not necessarily required to quote the words 'complain' or 'complaint' in order for the Council to recognise their dissatisfaction as a complaint. A service request would not be registered as a complaint.

Your opinions are very important to us and help us improve services.



Moving Out

If you wish to move home, this is what you need to do and how we might be able to help.

Ending Your Tenancy

If you would like to end your tenancy, we ask for a 4-week notice period provided in writing (any notice period starts from the Monday after your notice is handed in). Please send this into an Area Housing Office or complete the online form. We will contact you and arrange to complete a visit before you move out to support you avoiding recharges being made due to the condition of the property.

Before moving out:

- Please check how much rent you will need to pay
- Complete any repairs that are outstanding as well as contacting your utility providers
- If you claim any benefit, notify universal credit and or the Housing Benefit and Council Tax teams to let them know you are moving out
- Remove anything you own or installed in communal areas

Exchanging with Another Tenant

You can also move by exchanging your home with another Council or a Registered Provider tenant subject to your landlords written permission. This could be anywhere in the UK. This is called a 'mutual exchange'. We



are a member of an online mutual exchange scheme called House Exchange. You can register for free at www.houseexchange.org.uk and this provides details of tenants wishing to exchange and an opportunity to inform others of your circumstances.

If you want more information about mutual exchanges, please contact the Tenancy Services Team.

Sheltered Housing

Sheltered housing is for older persons and sometimes for people with support needs. We have many sheltered housing schemes across the borough. You will need to register by filling in an application form with the Housing Options Team. Please contact them on **01493 846140** or email **housingoptions@great-yarmouth.gov.uk** for a form. Once you are registered, you will be contacted if a suitable vacancy arises. Alternatively, do speak to a member of the Tenancy Services Team.

