

# WHITMORE VALE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

## Tenants Handbook – Turner Court

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## **About Whitmore Vale Housing Association**

This is your copy of Whitmore Vale's service user's handbook which aims to help you enjoy living in your home. It contains useful information about the services we provide and your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. This does not form part of your tenancy agreement which is a legal document covering the terms and conditions of your tenancy.

If you have any queries which are not covered in this handbook, or wish to know more about any of the topics covered, please contact us.

### **Introduction**

We provide good quality affordable homes for people with learning disabilities in a supported living environment.

### **Who are we?**

Whitmore Vale Housing Association is a charity registered as a charitable and industrial provident society and a member of the national housing federation.

We are governed by a voluntary management committee. Management is the responsibility of our chief executive.

We have 5 registered care homes, each managed by a service manager and a team of support workers.

We also provide supported living services to people who live in their own flats/houses or in accommodation based services owned by the company.

## **Living at Whitmore Vale Housing Association**

### **Moving in**

The following is a list of things you might need to sort out when you move in.

### **Gas, Electricity, Water and Telephone**

Let the suppliers of all these services know that you are the new tenant. The staff will support you to do this.

### **Letting people know**

Make a list of people and organisations that should know you have moved. This may include your employer, benefit office, banks and building society, GP and Dentist.

## **Redirecting Mail**

You can get the post office to redirect your mail from your old home to your new one but you may be charged for the service.

## **Keys**

Whitmore Vale Housing Association will keep spare keys to your home so however if you lose your keys we will have to replace the locks for your safety and security.

## **Insurance**

Whitmore Vale Housing Association only insures the fixtures and structures of your home. We advise you to insure your own possessions against fire, theft, flooding and accidental damage.

## **Smoke Alarms**

Your home is fitted with a smoke alarm to give you an early warning if fire breaks out. You should never try to disconnect it. If a fire does start you should:

- Leave the building as quickly as possible, closing the doors behind you,
- Phone 999
- Inform Whitmore Vale by ringing the on call telephone

The staff will support you in familiarising yourself with the fire safety instructions.

## **Getting Benefits**

If you are entitled to benefits, you should contact your local benefits office as soon as you move to ensure you do not miss out on any payments. You may be able to get housing benefit to help pay some of your rent. Your councils housing benefit office will give you a form. Staff will support you in applying for benefits.

## **Tenancy**

All tenants will be issued with an Assured Shorthold tenancy agreement. This is the document that you will sign on the first day you move in. It gives the details of the contract between you and Whitmore Vale Housing Association. Your rights are set out in your tenancy agreement.

## **Breach of Tenancy**

This is the term used when you fail to keep to the terms of your tenancy, for example not paying your rent. If you break the agreement we will discuss with you how to correct it. Your main responsibility is to keep the property clean and tidy and free from damage.

We have the right to carry out inspections or repairs or to service appliances or to carry out improvements. We will give you at least 24 hours warning unless it is an emergency.

### **Rent Payment**

It is very important you pay your rent on time .Your rent is due in advance and should be paid weekly. If you have problems paying your rent you should let us know. You will be given a receipt each time you make a payment.

### **Rent Arrears**

If you have problems paying your rent we will do everything we can to help you catch up. Hopefully we can work out a regular repayment agreement based on how much you can afford to pay back.

Rent levels are reviewed once a year, if your rent goes up, we will write to you at least 4 weeks before it must be paid.

### **Maintenance/Repair Service**

We know that tenants consider high quality repairs and maintenance of their home as a very important aspect of the service we provide. We will monitor our contractor's performance. We must by law keep in good repair the structure and exterior of your home and ensure services are in good condition. Your rent includes payments towards the cost of repairs and maintenance to your home

You can report any maintenance/ repair problem 7 days a week. You can do this by telephoning us or completing a job sheet and giving it to the staff.

When you report a repair, we will put the work into a response time category.

Urgent repairs – 2 working days

Routine repairs – 28 working days

Programmed repairs – plan in place

We must by law carry out an annual gas safety check in every property.

### **Safety and Security at Home**

Make sure you know where the following may be found in your home,

Gas Meter and Gas Tap

Cold water stop cock

Electricity meter

Fuse board and isolation switch

If you smell gas or have a water leak you must ring the on call immediately

National gas emergency service **0800 111 999**

### **Use of your Home**

Your home must not be used for any immoral or illegal purpose, for example storing stolen property or dealing in drugs or any controlled substances. We will seek to evict any service user who is using their property for the above.

### **The Bills you will be responsible for:**

Rent (you may be eligible for housing benefit)

Gas

Electric

Water

Council Tax

Telephone (for personal use)

TV Licence (Residential - which is £7.50 per year)

*The Council that deals with your housing benefit is :*

### **Waverley Borough Council**

The address is:

The Burys

Godalming

Surrey

GU7 1HR

01483 523333

## **Moving On**

If you want to move from your current home, we will try to help you. Whatever the reasons we will arrange to find another housing association or local council or you may want assistance to own your own home through schemes such as Homebuy, shared ownership.

## **Moving Out**

Before moving out you must give Whitmore Vale Housing Association four weeks notice in writing.

During this period you will be contacted to arrange an inspection of the property. This is to ensure that the property has been maintained in a satisfactory manner.

You must return your keys to the Service Manager.

## **Service User Participation and Consultation**

### **Person Centred**

We aim to deliver an excellent care and support service by putting tenants at the centre of everything we do.

We are committed to encouraging tenants to take part in decision making to make sure we provide the service you want. We will assess your needs with you and support you to draw up a support plan to meet your needs. We will endeavour to be as flexible as we can about how and when you would like your support to be delivered.

We believe in the right of tenants to influence decisions about their home. You will be informed of any plans that directly affect your home, which will include any changes in tenancy conditions or changes in rent. We will consult with you by the following,

Visits by staff

Letters

Meetings

Telephone communication

Whatever form of consultation we use, we will ensure that any explanatory information is easily understood.

We will ask for your comments and look into what you say before a final decision is made.

### **Comments, Compliments and Complaints**

#### **Satisfaction Surveys**

We carry out surveys from time to time and would very much value your feedback. If you have any ideas that will improve our service please let us know. If you are dissatisfied with our actions or omissions or there has been a failure in our provision of service or an employees has been discourteous you may want to make a complaint.

#### **How to make a complaint**

If you experience a failure in service you should talk to your service manager or alternatively complete a complaints form which you will find at the back of this folder. If you are not satisfied with our response you are invited to make a formal complaint by letter, telephone, face to face, email or through your Care Manager or relatives written on your behalf.

We are committed to resolving problems as quickly as possible.

#### **Service Reviews**

We continuously look at how we can improve our service to our tenants in terms of cost and quality.

A critical part of the review process is to involve our service users through meetings with service Managers and the senior management team.

## **The Service**

Turner Court provides housing related support and social care for people with learning disabilities.

#### **The office address for staff is:**

Turner Court  
60 - 64 Ockford Road  
Godalming  
Surrey  
GU7 1RF

The telephone number is: 01483 425992

On call: 07587 135411

An on-call service operates over 24 hours per day

**There is also a senior on-call provision.**

They are as follows:

Heidi Beech                    07425 626946

Felicia Yarborough        07587 135419

Claire Gatcum                07425 626964

**Turner Court** is made up of flats and bedsits for 18 people with a communal lounge, kitchen and conservatory.

**Who pays for the support you get?**

The money for the staff to support and empower you will come from supporting people and /or Adult Social care. Supporting people provide funding for the housing related support element and Adult Social care provides funding for the Social care needs. The service manager will carry out a needs assessment along with you to determine the support you require per week. From this you will be supported to develop a support plan and any risk assessments if required.

### **Staffing**

All staff are carefully selected through our recruitment and selection procedure, and prior to appointment are subjected to a Disclosure and Barring service check and an occupational health check, and a requirement of two references.

On appointment all staff participate in an induction. This induction encompasses the philosophy of an ordinary life and safe working practices. The staff team have a suitable range of experience to provide the services needed by the tenants.

They are not allowed to accept gifts from you or to borrow anything from you. They are not allowed to accept money from you and should never borrow money from you. They are not allowed to benefit from you by you paying for things for them.

**What do the staff do?**

Every tenant has a support structure which is agreed between the tenant and the Service Manager.

Staff will provide the support necessary to meet your needs. This may include some or all of the following

Support to claim benefits

Support to pay rent

Support to manage finance and set up a financial plan

Support to monitor health and Safety issues

Support around healthy eating

Support to pay bills

Support around health, GP appointments etc.

Support with managing post and paperwork

Support to set up a and maintain external structure i.e. to find a job

Support to monitor personal safety and emotional support.

Support to maintain keeping the flat clean and tidy.

Support to maintain personal hygiene

Staff are based at Turner Court. Staff work from 7.30am in the morning to 10pm at night. At weekends staff work from 8am to 10pm.

At night there is an emergency on call telephone so you can speak to the Manager or Deputy Manager in an emergency for example if someone is very sick or there is a fire or if the Police need to be called. Staff will show you how to telephone the on call number.

The on call number is:

**07587 135411**

### **Who are the staff?**

Manager - Jacqui Davison

Deputy Manager - Ian Hurt

Deputy Manager - Petya Ivanova

#### Community Support Workers -

Daniel Adams

Shirley Brooker

Alicia Hardcastle

Gregory Johnson

Heather Moorey

Riandra Moynihan

The telephone number of Surrey Disabled Peoples Partnership is: 01483 750973

#### **Visitors**

You can have visitors or guests to come and see you whenever you like. You can spend time with them in your room. Your tenancy agreement says you are not allowed a lodger or anyone to live with you. You can have someone to stay the night in your flat for no more than 7 days. Please tell staff you are having someone to stay. You can have friends and family to visit you at any time. Staff will support you to make arrangements to see your family if you need help to see them.

## **Company Values**

#### **Equality and Diversity**

We are committed to equality and diversity and our equality and diversity strategies are an integral part of all our activities.

We will ensure that no person or group is treated less favourably than any other person on the grounds of Age, Disability Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race ,Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation. In all its operations and services Whitmore Vale Housing Association will not discriminate against anyone.

#### **Safeguarding Adults**

Whitmore vale Housing Association endorses fully the Surrey Multi Agency Procedures for Adults at risk. A company policy has also been developed to protect all our tenants from all forms of abuse. Training is provided for all staff in the recognition of abuse and the procedures to follow when abuse is suspected.

A Whistle blowing policy is in force for the protection of staff who feel that there may be any matter of concern in this respect.

## **Responsible Risk Taking**

Risks exist in all aspects of daily living. In the process of providing a service where tenants are offered opportunities to participate in a wide range of activities there will inevitably be some element of risk. Where it is determined that the risk factor is too high a risk assessments will be undertaken.

## **Quality Assurance**

Whitmore Vale Housing Association operates a comprehensive system of monitoring and assessment for the operation of its services. The Deputy Chief Executive is assigned specifically to ensure that all the care and support services consistently meet the high standards set out in our policies and procedures and working instructions.

We also comply with the Care Quality Commissions “Essential standards of quality and Safety” and the Supporting People standards of the “Quality Assessment Framework.”

## **Confidentiality**

We treat anything you say to us with discretion. All information you give us is confidential, however we may have to share certain essential details with other public bodies. We will make you aware of what information is likely to be passed on.

# **Useful Information**

## **What there is in the Godalming Area**

### **Doctor / Dentist / Optician**

If you need to see a Doctor staff will help you register with the local Doctor’s Surgery. There are a number to choose from.

If you need an eye test there is an Optician in Godalming. Staff will help you to make an appointment. If you need to go to the Dentist staff will help you to find a local dentist and will help you to make an appointment.

### **Medication**

The Service Manager will assess what support you will require if you are on medication. You may be able to administer your own tablets and only need us to remind you or you may need us to administer your medication or help you with your repeat prescriptions to ensure you receive the correct amount of medicines from the Doctor.

We will encourage you to store your medication in a dosette box.

We use the local chemist in Godalming to get our medication. There are a number to choose from.

### **Local Shops**

There are two supermarkets in Godalming, Sainsbury's and Waitrose. There are restaurants and you can get a takeaway if you would like to. There is a Post Office, WH Smith, Boots, a bakery and several clothing stores.

### **Clubs**

There are night clubs in Godalming if you wish to go. The Harbour Discos are once a month with live bands and The Petersfield Society for Special Needs has monthly discos and outings. Link Leisure has events in a night club in Woking. Haslemere Hall has a pantomime once a year.

### **Things to do in Godalming**

There is a library, coffee shops, restaurants and pubs. There are lots of banks and a leisure facility.

There is a leisure centre in Farncombe

There are some lovely walks around the outskirts of Godalming.

Godalming is only a five minute train ride away from the city of Guildford where there are lots to do - shopping, entertainment, leisure etc.

### **Places of Worship**

There are churches in Godalming. You will be supported to pursue your faith or belief. There is a list of Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Hindu and Jewish places of worship on the tenants' noticeboard. Staff can show you how to get to your chosen place of worship.

### **Sexuality**

Everyone is welcome to come and live at Turner Court whatever your sexual preference whether you are homosexual, lesbian, transgender or heterosexual. Staff can help you find groups to meet people of your sexuality and can show you how to get there.

**Review**

This handbook will be periodically reviewed, taking into account the views and opinions expressed by tenants.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Reviewed Jan 2015

Next Review Date Jan 2016