

Supporting Independent Living

Salvation Army Housing Association

RESIDENTS' HANDBOOK



July 2007

SALVATION ARMY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

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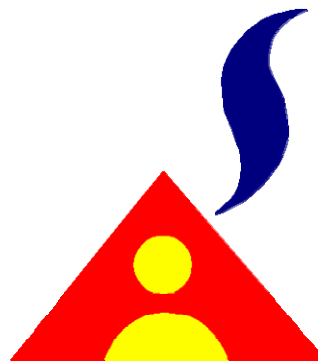
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1. WELCOME

Welcome to the Salvation Army Housing Association (SAHA). We hope you will enjoy and be happy in your new home. We also hope that you will find this handbook helpful and informative. It is full of useful information about the Association, about the services we provide to you and your rights and responsibilities as a resident of a registered social landlord.

We have tried to include as much information as possible, but if you would like to know more or you have difficulty in reading the handbook, please contact your Housing Officer, Housing Support Worker or a Customer Services Officer who will be pleased to help you.

We are also able to provide large print, or taped versions of this handbook, as well as translated copies for you if English is not your first language.

Please remember, if you need any assistance our Customer Service Centre (CSC) is there to help you. The phone number is charged at local rates, however if you wish to use our ring-back facility a customer services officer will get back to you as soon as possible on the same working day.

**The CSC opening hours:
9am to 7pm Monday, Tuesday and Thursday
9am to 5pm on Wednesday and Friday.
Phone 0845 300 0008 (local rate)**

SALVATION ARMY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

WHAT IS THE SALVATION ARMY HOUSING ASSOCIATION?

2. HISTORY OF SALVATION ARMY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Housing associations are mainly non-profit making independent organisations, partially funded by the government. Their aim is to build and improve homes for those who have poor housing conditions or are homeless and who cannot obtain a suitable home in any other way.

SAHA was established in 1959 with the initial aim of providing accommodation for Salvation Army Officers. During the 1970s the Association launched a development programme to provide housing and hostels for homeless people. The Association now concentrates primarily on the provision of rented accommodation for single people by way of foyers, residential centres, general needs and supported housing.

SAHA has charitable status and is registered with the Housing Corporation as a registered social landlord. The Housing Corporation is an organisation set up by the Government, which provides support for our work in the form of grants. The Housing Corporation regularly monitors our work and makes sure that our policies are effective and fair and that we are using public funds correctly and safely.

3. ABOUT OUR HOUSING STOCK AND SERVICES

SAHA manages over 3,000 properties, including over 1,200 permanent homes (236 of which are for the elderly), over 200 bed spaces of foyer and supported housing projects and over 1,900 bed spaces in hostels and shared homes for people who need various forms of support in addition to somewhere to live.

Most SAHA tenants are single people, but we do also house families with children and couples.

General Needs

SAHA has over 1,200 properties across England. These are mainly self-contained flats for single people, but there are some family houses and 236 properties that are specifically for the elderly. These stretch from Newcastle in the north to Kent in the south. SAHA aims to house people who are looking for accommodation and cannot afford to buy. The local authority nominates applicants for at least half of the vacancies which occur and SAHA also takes referrals from a number of agencies and other housing providers.

Foyers

SAHA has two Supported Housing Schemes, in Preston and Middlesbrough and four foyers located in Morecambe and Doncaster in the north and Lewes and Braintree in the south. Foyers are set up for young people aged eighteen to twenty-five years and provide temporary accommodation usually in a cluster setting where a communal kitchen is shared. Foyers provide residents with support in the areas of job search, education and training. Residents of Foyers must undertake a commitment to work towards an action plan in one or more of these areas with additional help provided with living skills to help them successfully move on into permanent accommodation.

Sheltered Accommodation for the Elderly

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As well as general family accommodation the Association has sheltered schemes for the elderly. Although each scheme is different in accommodation terms, the purpose of sheltered housing is to enable residents to live independently. In an emergency, the scheme manager is on call to assist them. Residents in sheltered accommodation are provided with additional information relating to their individual scheme.

Residential Centres

SAHA has worked for nearly thirty years to provide temporary accommodation for people who find themselves homeless. The Association provides approximately 2,000 bed spaces in thirty-nine residential centres (*hostels*) across England. A wide variety of services to promote independence are provided at male and female direct access centres, resettlement centres, elderly care homes, young people's projects, and an addiction centre.

SAHA works in partnership with other voluntary organisations to provide support and care services at these centres. Our main partner is The Salvation Army, but we also work with Watford New Hope Trust and the Crime Reduction Initiative.

4. OUR VALUES, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Values

Promoting Independent Living

SAHA is committed to providing affordable housing and support services (formally and informally) that promote independent living. Our pursuit is underpinned by the following values:

Respect – We respect our residents at all times as individuals, recognising that each has unique needs and aspirations.

Integrity – we are committed to a culture of openness, honesty and accountability throughout the whole association.

Quality – we aim to provide a high quality service and strive to continuously improve our standards and performance wherever possible.

Value – we are committed to providing value for money, ensuring our housing and services are affordable, efficient and responsive to our residents needs.

Prudent – we ensure our long-term viability through managed and sustained growth.

Our main Aims are:

- to provide good quality and affordable homes to a wide range of people in housing need who are unable to secure accommodation from other sources, and for our own residents who need a transfer because of changing circumstances;
- to provide a friendly, efficient, accessible and caring housing management service to our residents;
- to keep rents broadly affordable for those in low paid employment;
- to build further properties in order to offer housing to others who need our assistance;

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- to continue our commitment and development in the area of resident participation and community involvement;
- to develop our programme of maintenance and improvement that aims to keep our properties in good condition.

Our Main Objectives are:

- to ensure rent is collected which will enable us to repair and maintain your home to a high standard;
- to work towards keeping rent arrears below 5% which will help repay our loan commitments, and pay for the services we provide;
- to let empty properties as quickly as possible, usually within four weeks of becoming vacant;
- to ensure that 96%, at least, of all notified repairs are completed within target priority times;
- to make a full reply to formal complaints within the timescales set within our complaints procedure.

5. OUR SERVICE STANDARDS

- We will treat people fairly, with courtesy and respect
- We will provide clear and accessible information on the services we provide
- We will ensure our services are accessible to all sections of the community
- We will communicate clearly, swiftly and effectively in an appropriate manner
- We will regularly consult with our service users to ensure that the services we provide are relevant and meet needs.
- We will treat all personal information in a confidential manner
- We will make and keep mutually convenient appointments with our service users
- We will deal with complaints promptly, in a positive manner and learn from their outcomes.
- We will ensure that our staff are sufficiently resourced and trained to provide a high quality service
- We will ensure that all our staff can identify themselves as employees of SAHA.

6. HOW TO CONTACT OUR STAFF AND OFFICES

Customer Services Centre

The Customer Services centre is available to take your enquiries on weekdays from 9.00am to 7.00pm on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday and from 9.00am to 5.00pm on Wednesday and Friday. The centre deals with the day to day management of all the general needs housing and assists with any queries concerning rent or any other tenancy matter, such as reporting a repair. The contact number is a local cost rate number, 0845 300 0008.

Area Offices/Management Bases

There are area offices at Bolton and Dartford and management bases in Swindon and Nottingham where Housing Officers are based, however the role of our Housing Officers often takes them out of the office, therefore it is best to call a Customer

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Services Officer in the first instant when you have an enquiry. If they can't help you they will put you through to your Housing Officer if he/she is available and if not, be happy to pass a message on to your Housing Officer, who will contact you as soon as they are able.

Head Office

The Association's Chief Executive, Directors, Finance staff, Development staff and Agency Services are based at our offices in Barber Surgeons Hall, Monkwell Square, London, EC2Y 5BL. Opening hours are 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday.

7. COMMITMENT TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

SAHA is committed to equality of opportunity in access to our housing and in the provision of our housing management service. Where possible we will assist our vulnerable residents in obtaining appropriate care and support services.

We aim to ensure that our policies and procedures do not involve direct or indirect discrimination against any member of the community who may be disadvantaged because of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, gender, sexuality, marital status, appearance, mental or physical disability, mental illness, religion, age, or due to their vulnerability within society.

At the time of housing or re-housing we ask you for information about ethnic origin, age, and gender. These records are monitored and the Association will take corrective action if it is apparent that existing procedures do not allow equal access to housing for all sections of the community. The information you give us is treated as confidential.

SAHA will ensure all housing applicants are treated fairly and are not subjected to discrimination or harassment. If you would like further details of our allocation policy please ask our Customer Service Centre, on 0845 300 0008 and they will be happy to provide the relevant information.

8 HOW TO COMPLAIN

Salvation Army Housing Association Complaints

Salvation Army Housing Association aims to provide a high standard of service to its customers. However, if we get it wrong we want to know about it and will try to put things right. We welcome your complaints as we are keen to learn lessons when things go wrong.

How can complaints be made?

SAHA will accept complaints in whichever way you choose to make them. This can be verbally, in writing by post, fax, text or e-mail. Please ring Customer Services Centre on 0845 300 0008, or write or e-mail to the address on the back of this leaflet. If you would prefer a Customer Services Officer will complete the complaints form for you when you ring by just asking you a number of questions.

When making a complaint you may wish a relative, a friend or support worker to speak on your behalf, if so, please let us know the name of the person at the time of making your complaint.

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Sometimes a complaint may be about something we cannot change for example, the service charges are set in consultation with residents and approved by Board. These could not be altered within in the same financial year however in these circumstances we would give a full explanation to you.

What is the process?

In the majority of cases the complaint will be dealt with as stated in our procedure, however in very exceptional circumstances an individual complaint may be dealt with outside of the procedure, for example, if the complaint was extremely serious or if the complaint was anonymous, but in the majority of cases we have three stages to our procedure:

Stage One

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within one working day. Your complaint will be given a reference number and passed to a senior manager. He/She will ensure your complaint is thoroughly investigated and will respond to you in writing within ten working days.

If the senior manager needs longer than ten days to investigate your complaint they will contact you to set an alternative target date.

If you are not satisfied with the response you can progress to stage two by contacting SAHA Customer Services on 0845 300 0008.

Stage Two

Your complaint will be passed to a Director. The Director will look again at your complaint and go over the investigation, conclusion and response. He/She will think about any further information you may provide and, if appropriate, conduct another investigation. You will receive a response within 10 working days.

If the Director needs longer than ten days to investigate your complaint they will contact you to set a new target date.

Stage Three

If you remain unhappy with the response a complaints panel will consider your complaint. You will be invited to a panel hearing. You, or your representative, can attend and present your complaint in person; alternatively, the meeting can go ahead without you being present. The panel will consider the investigations, conclusions and responses from stages one and two and any other relevant information.

You will be notified in writing of the panel's decision about your complaint with ten working days of the meeting.

Housing Ombudsman Service & Housing Corporation

Following a response from the complaints panel, if you are still unhappy, you can contact the independent Housing Ombudsman Service. The Ombudsman will only investigate your complaint if you have gone through all the stages of the Association's procedure. The Housing Ombudsman Service can be contacted at:

Housing Ombudsman Service, Norman House, 105-109 Strand, London WC2R 0AA,
Tel: 0845 7125 973, Email: ombudsman@ihos.org.uk.

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If the complaint does not come under the ombudsman's control, you may write to the Association's regulatory body, The Housing Corporation, the Enquiries and Complaints Team, 1 Park Lane, Leeds L23 1EP.

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HELPFUL INFORMATION ON MOVING IN

After you have moved in, your Housing Officer will try to contact you during the first four weeks of your tenancy, to see how you are settling in and to answer any queries you may have. Also, within the first few weeks of you moving in, a Customer Services Officer will ring and ask you about your new home and the service you received to see how satisfied you were with our service. However, if you have problems prior to these contacts please get in touch with the Customer Service Centre and speak to an officer on 0845 300 0008.

Identification

Please remember that all staff who are likely to visit you at your home carry with them a signed SAHA identity card with their photograph on it. If you do not recognise a caller please ask to see their identification.

Furnishing and Decorating Your Home

SAHA do not provide furniture or carpets to general needs properties. If you wish to redecorate your home, this will be at your own expense.

It may be possible for you to apply for a loan from the Social Fund through your local social security office towards the cost of buying essential items for your home. You can ask the Benefits Agency for more information.

We also have close links with The Salvation Army and, whilst not all areas have furniture projects, we can enquire on your behalf. Please speak to your Customer Services Officer if you want further information on 0845 000 0008.

Heating and Hot Water

Make sure you know how your heating and hot water systems work. Your Housing Officer will assist if you are not sure. Make sure you know the location of the shut off valve.

Gas Leaks

If you smell gas:

- Put out all cigarettes and do not ignite a match or use any other naked flame.
- Avoid using electrical switches (*including light switches*).
- Open doors and windows to get rid of the gas.
- Check if a pilot light has blown out or a cooker ring has been left on.

If you think there is a gas leak, turn off the supply at the meter and telephone Transco immediately. They will visit the premises to stop the leak and ensure your house is safe. Also advise the Customer Service Centre at the earliest opportunity. Please note that we need to give authorisation for any additional repairs that are necessary.

For any Gas Emergency call Transco free on 0800 111 999.

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Water

Your Housing Officer will show you where the stopcock for your water supply is located. In the event of a burst pipe you should turn off the water supply at the stopcock, turn on all taps to drain the system, find out where the water is coming from and put a bucket underneath. Then report the burst to SAHA's Customer Service Centre, or if it is outside of normal office hours, please follow the prompts on the CSC message to report it to our out of hours service.

Frost Precautions

Water can freeze inside pipes during cold weather. This cracks the pipes and can cause damage to the building and your own decorations and possessions.

In the winter, when there is a risk of frost, always leave some heating on if you are going to be away from your home overnight or a few days. It only needs to be on a low setting, but this will ensure you don't suffer from frost damage.

Condensation

Condensation is moisture that is produced in all our homes by breathing, cooking and washing. An average household produces 21 pints of water vapour a day. However there is a limit to the amount of water vapour that air can contain – the warmer the air is the more water vapour it can hold. When warm air comes into contact with a cold surface, such as windows or a cold wall, the moisture turns to liquid and forms droplets of water, which is known as condensation. This frequently happens in warm, wet rooms like kitchens and bathrooms. It is seen on windows as steaming up and as patches of dampness on walls and ceilings.

Why is Condensation a Problem?

Small amounts of condensation can be found in most homes but, if it is not dealt with, mould growth will occur and in severe cases this can lead to unhealthy living conditions. If mould is allowed to grow on furniture, clothes or decoration, they will become damaged.

What Can You Do?

If you think you have condensation in your home there are a number of steps you can take to help the situation.

- Raising the temperature helps reduce condensation, so try to keep your home as warm as you can afford.
- Use central heating if you have it. It is best to have the heating on longer at a lower temperature. Try adjusting your thermostat if you have one.
- Use draught excluders where possible. If condensation does form on windows wipe it off.
- Open windows where possible to improve ventilation. This will allow the air to circulate and help stop condensation forming.
- Do not dry clothes inside if at all possible and certainly not on radiators. This will increase the moisture in the air.
- Try not to put furniture in front of radiators.
- Do **not** block air vents.
- **Never** use portable gas heaters.
- Keep internal kitchen doors closed when you are cooking and keep lids on pans and open the kitchen window slightly.

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- If you have a tumble dryer, ventilate it to the outside. If it is not possible try not to use it when you are cooking.
- When you are taking a shower or a bath, put cold water in the bath before you add hot water and always open a window afterwards.

Fire Safety

You can reduce the risk of fire by following basic safety precautions:

- Never dry clothes too close to heaters or cookers.
- Make sure all fires are guarded, especially if you have young children.
- Avoid overloading electrical sockets and make sure appliances are correctly fused.
- Do not interfere with the self-closing mechanisms on your internal doors and do not replace the fireproof doors we have provided without our consent. Report any damage to fire doors to us straight away.
- You may consider fitting a smoke alarm in your house. If you do make sure the alarm conforms to the British Standard BS 5839 and if it requires batteries they are changed regularly.

Electrical Safety

You should be familiar with the dangers of electricity. The following suggestions will assist you in this:

- Make sure you know how to switch off the supply at the mains - ask us if you don't know.
- Never take an electrical appliance into the bathroom.
- Do not run electrical wires under carpets or lino where you cannot see if they start to wear out.
- Get electrical appliances repaired by qualified electricians - do not try and fix them yourself.

If you are in doubt contact your local Electricity Company.

Security

We usually provide a Yale type lock for your front door but you may want to fit an additional five lever mortice lock for extra security, and to reduce contents insurance premiums. (Except on sheltered schemes where a support service is provided which allows access using a master key in an emergency.) If you do fit a mortice lock you should ensure you are able to unlock the door from the inside in the event of fire. Some residents also fit window locks where none are provided.

Please note that SAHA does not keep any spare keys. If you lose your key or get locked out you will have to arrange for someone to gain access and change the locks. If you have difficulties we may be able to arrange for a locksmith to let you in but we would have to charge you the full cost.

Make sure your home is securely locked up when you go out or away and remember to cancel newspapers and milk, to reduce the chance of burglary. Be careful about allowing unknown callers into your home. If you do not recognise a caller ask to see proof of identity. SAHA employees carry identification cards and so do employees of the council, gas, electricity and water companies. Builders sent by us to do repairs should have a works order with them.

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HIGH FUEL BILLS

If you receive a gas or electric bill that you can't afford to pay all at once, get in touch with the gas or electricity company straightaway. They will usually be happy to make arrangements for you to pay the bill by instalments and give you information on different ways of paying future bills, such as saving stamps, monthly budget savings schemes and fuel cards.

The gas and electricity companies also have consumer advisers who can tell you about ways of using fuel wisely to keep costs down. Check that your heating and hot water systems are set to a reasonable temperature level and that your hot water cylinder lagging is properly in place and in good condition. We will replace it if it is worn out.

Who Must You Inform About Your Move

The following is a list of things that you need to sort out when you move into your new home to make sure that everything goes smoothly. If you receive support from SAHA, then your Housing Support Worker can assist you with the necessary arrangements.

Gas and Electricity Companies

As well as arranging connection of new supplies you may need to arrange for meter readings and disconnections at your old address. You normally need proof of identity and your tenancy agreement to arrange new supplies and sometimes a deposit is required. If you don't know the name of the current supplier at your property, there is a local number which you can ring. This number can be obtained by following the web address http://www.energynetworks.org/spring/aboutena/connectionmap_electricity.asp. Your Housing Officer will be able to assist you with obtaining this number.

The gas and electricity companies offer a number of payment methods such as monthly budget payment schemes, saving stamps and key or card meters which may be easier for you to manage than quarterly bills. Ask for further details when you arrange for supplies to be connected. They also have consumer advisors who can give you advice about how to use fuel wisely and keep costs down.

Local Authority Council Tax

Tell the council (council tax section) that you are a new tenant. Payments to the local authority can usually be made by instalments and you may be eligible for benefit to reduce the cost if you are on a low income or in receipt of Income Support. It's better to sort this out quickly as you could face a large bill later, or even prosecution, if you do nothing.

Water Companies

Water rates are the resident's responsibility. You need to contact the water company to arrange payment. Again, you can normally pay by instalments. In certain schemes there is a central water meter, which is then subdivided by property. Again it's better to sort this out quickly to avoid big bills later.

Benefits Agency

If you are entitled to benefits, you should contact your local benefits office as soon as you move so that your claim can be altered and to ensure that you don't miss out on a payment. Don't forget to tell them how much rent you have to pay.

Housing Benefit Departments

Residents who either receive state benefits (*such as Income Support or Unemployment Benefit*) or those with low incomes are often entitled to help with their rent from their Local Authority through Housing Benefit. Contact your local council Housing Benefit department if you are already claiming to tell them of your change of address and rent, or if you want to make a new claim.

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The amount of benefit paid depends upon each person's circumstances and it is better to apply for help rather than assume you are not entitled to it. Your Housing Officer or Support Worker will be pleased to explain benefits in further detail and is able to offer a benefits calculation which will give you an idea of how much you are entitled to.

It assists us considerably if you ask the Council to pay your Housing Benefit direct to SAHA - ask our Customer Service Centre for more information.

Household Insurance

As SAHA is **NOT** responsible for insuring the contents of your home we advise you to contact your current insurance company to transfer or arrange for home contents insurance to cover your furniture, personal possessions and decorations etc. For example, if you have a leaking roof or a leak from a flat above you, SAHA will not be responsible for any damage caused to your furniture. Most insurance companies will provide you with free quotations and payment can be arranged by weekly or monthly instalments.

Redirecting Your Mail

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

Keys

SAHA does not usually keep spare keys to your home so, if you lose your key and the lock has to be forced, you will be charged for the damage. If possible, leave a set of keys with a close friend or relative rather than in your home.

Letting People Know

Make a list of people and organisations that should know you have moved. This could include your employer, benefit office, banks and building societies, credit card companies, Doctor, library.

Doctors and Dentists

Find out where your nearest doctors and dentists are. Your Housing Officer or Support Worker will be able to help you get this information. Please ensure you register with them straight away, rather than wait until you are ill.

TV Licence

You will need to update the address on your TV licence. Write to TV Licensing, Barton House, Bristol, BS98 1TL or phone 0117 937 7500.

Drivers Licence

Don't forget that the address needs to be updated on your drivers licence.

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2. YOUR TENANCY AGREEMENT

The majority of residents are normally offered an Assured tenancy. There are however other types of tenancy including Assured Shorthold Tenancies, Secure Tenancies and Licence Agreements. Your tenancy or licence agreement will be in writing and give details of your rights and conditions of tenancy and this part of the handbook explains them in more detail. The Housing Corporation has published a "Charter" for Secure, Assured, Assured Shorthold and supported housing residents and applicants. This booklet is to ensure that housing associations provide a good and fair service to residents and applicants for housing (***a copy of the "Charter" booklet is included with this Handbook***).

Secure Tenancies

Residents who signed their tenancy agreement before 15th January 1989 are "Secure tenants" and have rights under the 1985 Housing Act. There is also no time limit set on how long you may rent your home. "Secure tenants" who transfer to a new tenancy with SAHA after that date retain their Secure tenancy status.

The rents of "Secure" residents are "fair" rents set by Rent Officers who are independent of the Association - see section 3 for more details.

The terms of a Secure Tenancy agreement can only be altered by the Association after consultation with the residents.

Assured Tenancies

Since 15th January 1989 all new Housing Association tenancies are let under "Assured" tenancy agreements, because of changes introduced by the 1988 Housing Act.

"Assured tenants" do not by law have all the same rights that "Secure tenants" have. However, SAHA has incorporated as many of these rights as possible in our Assured tenancy agreement.

All Assured tenancies are subject to the "Charter". This document gives details of guidance from the Housing Corporation to Housing Associations about the rights and services that "Assured tenants" can expect.

The rents for "Assured tenants" are fixed by SAHA after in accordance with the Housing Corporation target rents which are new rent levels set by the government regulator.

The terms of an Assured tenancy agreement (***except for changes to the rent and service charge***) can only be altered if both the resident and the Association agree the change in writing.

Assured Shorthold Tenancies

Residents who have Assured Shorthold tenancies can rent their home normally between six and twelve months. However, each scheme is different therefore please contact your Housing Officer for further advice if you have this type of tenancy.

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The Association provides its "Assured Shorthold tenants" with the same housing service as other SAHA residents, although there are some minor differences in residents' rights. Please refer to the "Charter" booklet at the back of this Handbook.

The Association will try to ensure the resident is given the maximum period of tenancy possible. As an "Assured shorthold tenant" your rights are explained in the Housing Corporation's "Charter".

Security of Tenure

You have the right to stay in your home as long as you occupy it as your only or principal home and keep to the conditions of your tenancy. Assured shorthold tenants do **not** have long-term security of tenure beyond the set period. This means that your tenancy can only be brought to an end by an order from the court. We never want to evict residents but if there is a serious breach of your tenancy agreement and there is no alternative solution then we may have no choice but to start legal proceedings.

There are several key stages. First we have to serve you with a written Notice of Seeking Possession, which details the reasons why we are taking legal action. The grounds we can use are detailed in your tenancy agreement. The grounds include rent arrears, anti-social behaviour and damage to the property.

After the Notice expires we can then apply to the County Court for a possession order. In some cases this will be a suspended order, which means that if the resident keeps to the terms of the Court Order (*for example, by paying off the rent arrears owed*) no further action will be taken. Some grounds for possession are discretionary for "Secure tenants", but are obligatory for "Assured tenants", i.e. the court must give a possession order.

After obtaining a possession order from the court, if there is no other solution, the Association may seek authorisation from its Board or Committee to obtain a bailiff's warrant and evict a resident. We only evict as a last resort, where all other efforts to resolve the matter have failed.

Housing Officers always explain the terms of the tenancy agreement before you move in so you have a good understanding of what actions constitute a breach of contract that could lead to you losing your home. As soon as any areas of concern are highlighted, your Housing Officer will assist you by intervening early and giving advice and support to help you address the concerns.

Access to your Home

No matter what type of tenancy you have with SAHA, you have the right of access to your home 24 hours a day. The only exceptions are if you have shared facilities that may be open only at specific times during the day, or if we require access to carry out a repair.

Joint Tenancies

Joint Tenancies are usually granted where two adults have applied to us together for rehousing - usually this will be you and your partner.

Both joint residents have equal rights and are equally responsible (*both individually and jointly*) for keeping the conditions of tenancy. This means that the

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responsibilities and rights related to the tenancy cannot be split in half. Each person is therefore responsible for paying all of the rent even if the other person leaves.

If one joint resident decides to move out he or she should inform us in writing. Because of legal restrictions you are advised NOT to give up your tenancy straight away - please contact your Housing Officer for advice before doing so.

Relationship Breakdown

If a relationship breaks down, one partner may decide to move out of the home. Before doing so you might want to consider obtaining advice from a solicitor, or Citizens Advice Bureau, to make sure you receive proper advice. Our Customer Service Centre will be able to tell you the address and telephone number of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

When concerned with divorce or judicial separation proceedings the courts sometimes make an order stating which one of the joint residents should be given the tenancy. In deciding, the courts usually make an order giving the tenancy to the partner who has custody of the children. However, occasionally the courts are undecided which means neither partner can be given a sole tenancy unless, one of them no longer wishes to have a legal interest in the property and signs a "Deed of Surrender and Release" and leaves. This means SAHA will then be able to transfer the joint tenancy to a sole tenancy to the partner still living at the property, if the remaining partner agrees to take on all obligations and responsibilities relating to the tenancy, including arrears. Please contact your Housing Officer for more information as you may need additional help from a solicitor in this complex area of law in order to protect your interest in the property.

Domestic Violence

If your partner has been violent towards you and you are in danger, or have been forced out of your home, you will need independent advice as a matter of urgency. You can seek advice from a Citizens Advice Bureau, who may put you in touch with a solicitor, or a Special Advice Agency. The association will provide you with a sympathetic, supportive and no-judgemental service so please also talk to your Housing Officer in confidence. We are not able to fulfil the counselling or advice role of the specialist agencies, however we can give basic advice and assistance and give contacts of specialist agencies in your area. An interview will be offered to any person experiencing domestic violence within 24 hours of contacting their Housing Officer or Support Worker, and where this is not possible for example due to a weekend, we can refer to an appropriate agency. We will offer support to all members of a household and also to neighbours if they are affected by the incidents. The National Domestic Violence Helpline provides confidential support and advice to all victims, 24 hours a day, seven days a week on 0808 2000 247. In addition there is a national Victim Support line on 0845 30 30 900 which provides support whether the crime is recent or in the past, and whether or not you want to report the incident to the police.

Lodgers

A lodger is someone who lives with you as part of your family and in return for a charge that you make receives services from you such as meals or laundry.

If you are a resident with a Secure tenancy or Assured tenancy you have the right to take in a lodger, or invite other people to live with you. We ask you to let us know the person's name, age and sex. This is because we need to make sure that your home

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is not being overcrowded. **Please also let us know how much you intend to charge as this may affect your Housing Benefit.**

All members of your household and their visitors must abide to the terms of the tenancy agreement, otherwise this right to share your home will be taken away.

Sub-letting

A "sub-tenant" is someone who lives separately from your family, receives no services from you, has exclusive use of part of your home (*i.e. their own room*) and pays rent to you.

If you are a resident with a Secure tenancy or Assured tenancy and you continue to live in your home you can sub-let part of it so long as you ask our permission first. You need to give us the same information as for lodgers, together with a copy of the agreement. We will not withhold our consent unreasonably, however as this is a complex area of law you need to ask your Housing Officer for further information.

You do **NOT** have the right to leave your home and rent it to another person, nor to hand on the keys to someone else. The Association takes legal action to repossess homes where this happens as we have to ensure all properties are let to people in housing need according to our charitable objectives.

If you are claiming Housing Benefit and/or Income Support and decide to take in a lodger/invite a person to live with you or sublet, you must inform the council and/or Benefits Agency as this constitutes a change of circumstance. Your benefits may be reduced because of the income you receive.

SAHA is legally obliged to inform the local authority or Benefits Agency if we become aware of a change in a resident's circumstances that may result in a fraudulent claim in respect of benefits.

If you are thinking of taking in a lodger or sub-letting, because your home is too big for you, you may like to consider applying for a transfer to smaller accommodation instead. Please speak to your Housing Officer for more details.

Not Letting Your Property to Someone Else (Assignment)

You are not normally permitted to assign (*pass on*) your tenancy to someone else. Passing on your tenancy without our written consent will result in the Association treating the unlawful occupants as squatters and taking action to evict them.

There are two exceptions, when you may assign your tenancy:-

- (i) Following a Court Order as part of divorce or judicial separation proceedings (*but you will need to tell us about this*).
- (ii) Where the Association has given written consent for a Mutual Exchange to take place (*see Section 6*).

Absence From Your Property

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If you are absent from your home for 30 days or more you are required to notify your Housing Officer and provide a contact address, as this affects our building insurance. *(You can also contact our Customer Service Centre).*

If the Association has good grounds to consider that a property has been left empty and the resident is not returning, legal action will commence to repossess that property. Rent will continue to be due from the resident while proceedings are being taken until the property is repossessed by the Association.

The resident will also be charged the cost of any damage and neglect to the property.

Communal Areas

Residents who live in blocks of flats usually share halls and stairways and sometimes other communal areas and gardens. The Association arranges for contractors to clean shared areas and to maintain communal gardens. Residents usually pay for this in their service charge. Communal areas are for the benefit of all residents, so residents should feel free to make use of the gardens etc.

The Association is keen to support estate improvements by neighbours on communal gardens and may make a small contribution towards the cost of plants or equipment to encourage this. Please contact your Housing Officer if you would like more details.

Car Parking

Car parking spaces are sometimes provided outside blocks of flats, or on estates, for the use of residents and their visitors. Spaces are not usually allocated to individual residents.

Car parking areas should not be used to carry out extensive repairs to vehicles, as this is likely to cause a nuisance to other residents. The only exception is the allocation of car parking spaces for people who are registered disabled and use a vehicle.

When a vehicle, that is untaxed and/or in an unroadworthy condition is left in car parking areas, the Housing Officer will make enquiries and take appropriate action. If we believe that such a vehicle has been abandoned we will attempt to contact the owner. If the vehicle is still not removed then SAHA may make arrangements to have it taken away. Any costs we incur may be recovered from the owner.

Dustbins and Paladins

If you live in a block of flats you will have access to a paladin bin for disposal of your rubbish. If you live in a house, or a flat in a converted house, the local authority may provide wheelie bins or similar.

Please make sure that all rubbish is suitably wrapped or bagged and disposed of properly. Large items, such as old furniture, should be taken to a local council dump and not placed with general domestic rubbish, or you can ask the refuse department at the council to make a special collection.

Pets

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If you wish to keep a pet you must first obtain written permission from the Association, which will not be withheld unreasonably. We will ask you to complete a form so that you will have written evidence of permission to keep a pet. Please contact our Customer Service Officers for a copy of the form.

In certain circumstances we may not give you our permission; for example, we do not allow dogs to be kept in upstairs flats that do not have direct access to their own garden.

If you do have permission to keep a pet, then it should not be allowed to foul common areas of shared gardens and should not be exercised on shared grounds. If nuisance is caused to your neighbours you may be asked to find your pet a new home.

Business in your Home

You are not allowed to carry out a business from the property you occupy. This is because some trades will invalidate our building or public liability insurance. However we would not have any objections in principle if, for example, you wanted to carry out certain types of business from your home, e.g., telesales, internet-based business or registered childminding. In all cases, you must obtain some form of insurance.

We would only give you permission on the condition your 'trade' will not cause a nuisance to your neighbours. We would not allow any activity that creates dust, noise, vibration, fumes or which involves parking vehicles outside the property, deliveries, storing of equipment or visitors to the premises. Vehicle repairs or car breaking businesses are **NEVER** allowed.

Please contact our Customer Service Centre for more information, as you will need to ask our permission before you start.

TAKING OVER A TENANCY WHEN SOMEONE DIES (*Succession*)

The rights of a Spouse, or Partner Living as Spouse, of Sole Resident

In the case of residents holding Secure and Assured tenancies, your spouse, or partner living as your spouse, has the right to "Succession". This means that in the event of your death they can claim the tenancy, providing they were living with you immediately prior to your death as their only or principal home and providing you had not yourself already succeeded to the tenancy.

All claims to succeed to a tenancy must be made in writing.

Dependants

If the tenancy does not pass to a husband, wife or partner, then a same sex partner or close relative (*such as a son or daughter*) may have the right to claim the tenancy. This will be on the basis that they had lived with you for at least 12 months prior to your death as their only or principal home, and can either show they have been looking after you or have responsibility for your dependants. In some circumstances the Association has the right to offer alternative accommodation, for example, if the property is too large for the successors needs.

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Normally the Association operates a one succession policy, however in exceptional circumstances a further succession will be allowed. If you feel this applies to you, please write to the Association.

Other Members of the Family

If more than one member of your family qualifies for the tenancy they can decide between them who should succeed, but if agreement cannot be reached the Association will decide. Once someone has succeeded to a tenancy there is no further right to pass on the tenancy again.

Under-occupation

The Association may require any successor (*someone who takes over the tenancy*) to move to smaller accommodation if the existing property will be under-occupied.

HARASSMENT and ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Harassment

SAHA does not tolerate any form of harassment including racial harassment and will offer support to victims of harassment and, wherever possible, to take action against any resident who harasses others. Harassment can also include deliberate acts against a person because of their religion; whether they are male or female; because of their sexual preference; their physical disability; learning difficulties; ill health; level of education or age.

Every resident is entitled to live peacefully and enjoy their home without their safety being threatened by their neighbours or anyone else.

Racial Harassment

The Association will deal vigorously with all incidents of racial harassment. Contact your Housing Officer if you have been abused or attacked because of your race, or if your home has been damaged or defaced, for example by racist graffiti. Racist graffiti will be removed within 24 hours. Your Housing Officer will prioritise visiting your home to discuss the problem with you and see what we can do to help. Your Housing Officer will then report their concerns to a senior manager.

If your home is damaged or defaced or needs re-securing we will deal with this as an emergency. If you are a victim of racial harassment and in danger in your present home, we will try to find you alternative accommodation if you wish.

We will deal with you sympathetically if you feel you are being harassed. Please ask for help and please do **NOT** give up your tenancy without talking to your Housing Officer first.

Noise and Nuisance

It is a condition of your tenancy that you do not cause a nuisance or create a disturbance and we expect residents to show consideration for others, particularly in blocks of flats where there are shared entrances and often shared gardens.

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Noise from neighbours is the most common form of nuisance. Everyone can help alleviate this problem by being considerate to each other and by keeping unnecessary noise to a minimum, particularly late at night or early in the morning.

If you are **being disturbed by noise** from a neighbour the first step is to let the person concerned know. But you will first need to choose the right time to talk to them. They may not be aware that the noise they are making can be heard from another property and will often be happy to, for example, reduce TV or stereo noise.

If this does not stop the problem you might consider complaining to the Environmental Health Department of your local council. They have specific powers to deal with noise under the Noise Act 1996, and may in extreme cases take court action on your behalf.

You can also contact your Housing Officer, who will speak to the other residents and try and mediate. If the noise nuisance continues, it will be treated as anti-social behaviour and steps will be taken by the Housing Officer to remedy this.

Your local Citizen's Advice Bureau can tell you about any mediation service that might be operating in your area. Often these voluntary organisations can help neighbours to resolve problems of this nature amicably. The Citizen's Advice Bureau can also tell you about other legal remedies available.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Salvation Army Housing Association (SAHA) recognises that anti-social behaviour can have a damaging impact not just on the victim(s) of anti-social behavior but also on the community as a whole. It can lead to existing residents feeling isolated, frightened or unhappy in their homes and result in people feeling they have to move away.

What is Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour is behaviour which has caused or is likely to cause harassment, alarm, distress or serious on-going nuisance or annoyance to people..

What will SAHA do About Anti-Social Behaviour?

Salvation Army Housing Association has a 'zero tolerance' approach to anti-social behaviour and will use a full range of remedies to tackle any incidents. This will include warning letters, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC), Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO), injunctions, tenancy demotion and in very serious and persistent cases, eviction. We will work and share information with other agencies including (but not limited to) the police, local authority and social services in order to find effective ways of tackling anti-social behaviour.

The association takes a victim centred approach when dealing with anti-social behaviour. We support victims and we will, if appropriate, provide interpreters, women interviewers and involve the police, social services and/or Victim Support. We will investigate all complaints regarding harassment and anti-social behaviour thoroughly and quickly. If threats have been made we will contact victims within 24 hours. We will take effective action including, monitoring, mediation and applying for injunctions against the perpetrator, if necessary.

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If you would like further information on anti-social behaviour and the associations approach please call Customer Services Centre on 0845 000 0008 and they will send you additional information

CONSULTATION AND INFORMATION

The Importance of Consultation

The Salvation Army Housing Association recognises the importance of resident involvement and consultation, as all feedback enables us to improve our services to meet your needs. We provide opportunities for residents to become involved in our work in a range of different ways. For example, we have Tenant Board members who represent our tenants' interests at an organisational level. We have a Residents' Panel who are consulted on various issues and service areas. We also seek individual opinions and satisfaction levels via surveys and questionnaires. We will always consult with you prior to making changes to a current service. The various methods we use to consult our residents are set out within our Resident Involvement Framework and they enable us to listen to you and work with you to provide choices and improve our services. If you would like to be more involved in the tenant/landlord relationship and are interested in joining our Customer Panel or becoming a Tenant Board Member, please contact Customer Services Centre and they will be able to direct your enquiries to the appropriate member of staff. **Please see the section on page 51 which will provide you with more detail on how to get involved.**

Access to Information

You have the right to look at the details you have given to the Association. If you think the records are inaccurate, you can correct the information or record your disagreement. Information given in confidence by a third party will be excluded from this right.

Data Protection Act 1998

You are entitled to reasonable access to personal information and data held by us on computer about yourself or members of your family, unless the information was given to SAHA in confidence, by a third party.

Examples of some of the details we hold are:

Your name and address	Dates of Birth
Family composition	Details of rent you have to pay
Details of rent payments	Ethnic Origin

If you disagree with the information you have the right to correct it or have your disagreement recorded. If you wish to inspect your details, your Housing Officer will explain the procedure.

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SECTION 3

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YOUR RENT AND SERVICE CHARGES

The Salvation Army Housing Association aims to set rent that covers our costs but which you can afford if you are on a low income. In 2002, the Government introduced a new formula for setting a target for your rent and the association has 10 years to ensure that your rent meets the Government target. The target rent is set taking into account:

- The value of your home
- Earnings in the area that you live.

SAHA has set out a plan for how it will change rents to meet the Government targets. This means that your rent needs to go up each year by more than inflation, or it may mean that your rent does not go up at all or by less than inflation.

Before we change your rent, we have to give you a month's written notice. For the majority of tenancies the rent changes on the first Monday in April.

If you are a secure tenant, the Rent Officer Service sets a maximum rent every two years. We suggest the rent we want to charge and the Rent Officer decides if this is fair. If you think your rent has been set too high, you have the right to appeal to the Rent Officer Panel. Often SAHA sets the rent at less than the amount set by the Rent Officer Service and we cannot set a rent that is higher.

If you are an assured tenant, an assured shorthold tenant or a licensee, we set your rent. We will usually change your rent once a year. If you think we have set your rent too high, you can appeal to a Rent Assessment Committee, but you should always seek advice first. By law, the Rent Assessment Committee has to set a "market rent". This can often be higher than the rent we actually want to charge you.

You can get advice from a local law centre or Citizens Advice Bureau about making an appeal against a rent rise.

SERVICE CHARGES

Sometimes the Association charges a service charge in addition to the basic rent, usually if you live in a block of flats or on a small estate.

Service charges are set according to the cost of the services provided, which are listed on your tenancy agreement and may include, for example, communal garden maintenance, or cleaning communal parts of a block of flats or provision of a scheme manager in a sheltered scheme.

We aim to keep service charges as low as possible whilst providing an acceptable service.

Service charges are reviewed annually to take account of any change in costs. If a change is required, you will be consulted on the services that will be included in the service charge for the following financial year and you will be given four weeks notice in writing before any changes are made.

WATER RATES/COUNCIL TAX

With most types of agreements your rent does not include payment for water rates; this is an additional cost to you. The Customer Services Centre can advise you whether your rent contains an element for water rates. The water company will send

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you their demand for water charges each year. You can arrange to pay by instalments. Water rates are not eligible for Housing Benefit. With the exception of licence agreements, your local authority council tax department will send out your council tax bill each April and you should check whether or not you are entitled to a rebate. Again it is possible to pay by instalments.

PAYING YOUR RENT

Your rent is due weekly in advance, on the first day of each week.

You can pay your rent at other intervals but if you do so payments must be made in advance.

You can pay your rent in any of the following ways:

Different Methods to Pay

Allpay

You will be given a swipe-card at the beginning of your tenancy which you can use to make payments at any Post Office with cash, cheques or debit cards. You can also use the swipe-card to pay by cash at any local store displaying the PayPoint logo. Or you can pay using cash or debit card at any local store displaying the PAYzone logo.

Direct Debit

Contact the Customer Services Centre for a Direct Debit Instruction form, fill in all of the information requested and send it back to us to the address shown on the form and we can set this up for you.

Standing Order

You can also pay your rent by bank or building society standing order. Please ask us for a standing order form, which you will need to complete and send to your bank or building society.

We must make sure your resident reference number is quoted in order that your rent is correctly credited.

Postal Orders

If you do not have a bank account you can purchase postal orders from the Post Office and send them to our Head Office. Please remember to include your reference number together with your name and address to ensure that your account is correctly credited with the payment.

Direct to Staff

In exceptional circumstances you may be unable to pay rent through the bank and may want to give it to your Housing Officer or another member of staff. All staff who are authorised to take rent payments carry official receipt books and should show you their SAHA identification before taking payment. Please make sure that you are given an official receipt, bearing the SAHA logo, which states the date, your name

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and address, amount of payments made, whether by cash/cheque/postal order - and the name and signature of the member of staff.

Please keep the receipt safe because we may need to inspect it later if there is any query about your rent payments.

Occasionally cheques are sent through the post to the office. Please remember to include your name, address, and resident reference number. Cash should **NEVER** be posted.

Whenever possible residents are asked to pay through the bank, as, for security reasons, we are unable to handle large numbers of postal payments, or payments to staff.

Housing Benefit Direct

If you receive Housing Benefit you can ask the local authority to pay it direct to the Association. If your circumstances change, (*such as changes to your income*), you must inform the local authority immediately. If direct payments are agreed, you will receive a letter from the local council confirming the arrangement.

Difficulties in Meeting Rent Payments

Any resident who has difficulty paying the rent, or is worried about a rent increase, should contact his or her Housing Officer. Your Housing Officer will be able to offer you help and advice if you need to claim Housing Benefit to help with your rent. Your Housing Officer will be able to give you general information and advice about benefits to check that you are claiming benefits you are entitled to. If you need more professional advice and assistance with debts, your Housing Officer will be able to refer you to a local debt advice agency. The National Debt Line is an agency that can offer support and advice regarding debt. The number is 0808 808 4000.

STATEMENTS

Every three months we will send you a rent statement setting out the amount you should have paid and the amounts we have received. Please check your statements carefully to make sure all the payments you have made have been correctly credited to your account.

Your statement will show how much you have paid or how much you are in arrears at the end of the last week detailed on the statement. If you disagree with the balance, or have any queries, please contact us.

If at any time you would like to check the balance on your rent account please contact our Customer Service Centre on 0845 300 0008.

HOUSING BENEFIT AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT

If you are on a low income you may be entitled to some help with your rent through the Housing Benefit scheme. To make a claim, contact your local council who will ask you to complete a claim form.

Your Housing Officer can tell you whether or not you are likely to be eligible for Housing Benefit and will help you complete the claim form. Remember Housing Benefit is an entitlement - if you are eligible it is your right to claim it.

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If you are claiming other types of welfare benefit it is likely you will automatically be entitled to Housing Benefit.

Please request that the local authority pays your Housing Benefit direct to SAHA. This saves time and money and therefore directly benefits all residents.

Once you are told that you are entitled to Housing Benefit, you must let the Housing Benefit Department know about any changes in your circumstances, (*including rent increases*).

When it is time for your housing benefit claim to be renewed the Housing Benefit Department will send you a renewal claim form. It is extremely important that you complete this form and send it back immediately, otherwise your housing benefit could be stopped. If you need any help in completing this form please contact the Customer Service Centre.

There are sometimes lengthy delays before payments are made by the Housing Benefit Department. If this occurs it is important that you let our Customer Service Centre know that you are waiting for your claim to be processed and that **YOU** will chase the local authority yourself. Our Customer Service Centre may be able to help you, **but remember it is your responsibility to pursue your claim and make sure your rent is paid.**

You may also be entitled to Council Tax Benefit. Your Housing Officer can advise you about your claim, or help you apply.

RENT ARREARS

If you start to fall behind with your rent payments, or if you are finding it difficult to pay your rent, quickly get in touch with your Housing Officer. He/she will provide help and advice which, in most cases, will avoid legal action against you.

If you cannot clear the arrears straight away your Housing Officer will discuss with you an arrangement to pay off the arrears gradually.

Your Housing Officer will be sympathetic to any problems you may be experiencing and will be able to check whether you are entitled to any benefits that may increase your income, for example if you are sick, unemployed or on a low wage. If you have other debts we can offer advice about your household budget or put you in touch with someone else who can give specialist advice on dealing with debts. The National Debt Line also gives advice and assistance on dealing with debts. The contact number is 0808 808 4000.

If we cannot reach an agreement with you to pay the arrears, or if the arrears are not reducing, we will start legal action by serving a Notice of Seeking Possession. This means it is our intention to go to court after the Notice expires, unless the arrears are repaid or a suitable arrangement is made to pay them.

If we do have to proceed we will ask for a possession order, which could ultimately lead to you losing your home. We never want to evict a resident, but occasionally we have no alternative. Our policy is that at every stage we are willing to listen and try to come to some arrangement with you. Our aim is to help, so please contact your Housing Officer if you cannot pay your rent.

The service SAHA provides is confidential and vital if you wish to avoid the risk of eviction.

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No matter what the circumstances, an early call to us will help us help you.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE (For residents of sheltered housing/supported housing)

Residents of sheltered housing schemes or supported housing schemes normally receive some form of care and support to help them live as independently as possible in their own home.

The Government has, from 1 April 2003, introduced a new system called 'Supporting People', which separates out the cost of care and support from the rent. This means that in future, the care and support cost for residents who are on Housing Benefit will come from an organisation called the 'Administrative Authority', and will be paid direct to the landlord. For residents on Housing Benefit the rest of the rent, which is for accommodation costs, will be paid by the Housing Benefit Department.

This new system will mean that residents will have to sign a 'supplementary agreement', which is a separate agreement that will be added to the tenancy agreement (*some tenancy agreements will simply add in extra words to cover this point*).

Although this is a complicated system, in summary all that is happening is that the rent is being divided into two parts and for residents on Housing Benefit, one part will be paid for by the Administrative Authority and the other part by the Housing Benefit Department.

We are aware that this new system has caused a lot of confusion. Please contact the Customer Service Centre or your Housing Officer who will be pleased to help.

Some residents who are not on housing benefit may receive some form of support already, which is paid for by the local authority. Residents in these circumstances will still be able to claim funding for such support via the Administering Authority.

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SALVATION ARMY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

REPAIRS

You will find that from time to time repairs need doing to your home and we rely on you to report repairs to us. In this Section we will tell you which repairs are our responsibility and which are yours, how to report repairs and what to do in an emergency.

SALVATION ARMY HOUSING ASSOCIATION RESPONSIBILITIES

We are responsible for keeping the structure and exterior of your home in a good state of repair. This includes:

- Drains, gutters and external pipes;
- The roof;
- Outside walls, outside doors, windowsills, window catches, sash cords and window frames (*including necessary external painting and decorating*);
- Pathways, steps and other means of access;
- Plasterwork;
- Garages and stores
- Boundary walls and fences.

We are also responsible for keeping in good repair and working order any installations provided by the Association for space heating, water heating, sanitation and for the supply of water, gas and electricity. These include:

Basins, sinks, baths and toilets (*including plumbing*);
Electric wiring (*including sockets and switches*), gas pipes and water pipes;
Water heaters, fitted fires, fireplaces, central heating installations.

We also have to keep common entrances, halls, passageways, lifts and stairways in reasonable repair and to keep the exterior of premises and common parts in a reasonable state of decoration.

RESIDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

There are some repairs that are your responsibility for which you will have to pay. We will sometimes carry out these repairs on your behalf, but you will have to reimburse us. Vulnerable residents or those with disabilities may be able to obtain help from SAHA – please contact the Customer Service Centre for information. These include:

Clearing the waste to a blocked sink, bath, toilet or basin
Blocked drains - if you caused the blockage
Bleeding of radiators
Replacing lost or damaged keys
Replacing keys and locks to internal doors
Mortice locks (unless supplied by the Association)
Mending fuses/replacing batteries for door bells etc
Broken window panes resulting from resident damage
Repair of any damage caused by you, your family or visitors
Repair of any fittings and fixtures that you provided yourself
Repairs to TV aerials (except communal TV aerials, which are SAHA's responsibility)
Eradication of certain types of vermin - your local authority may perform certain services free of charge

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Eradication of wasps/bees
Eradication of ants
Removal of garden rubbish
Hairline cracks to plaster
Plumbing to washing machines (unless supplied by the Association)
Tap Washers
W.C. seats
Any appliances left by the previous residents
Residents' own improvements

Please tell us if you notice that any external repairs need doing, such as leaking gutters, water pouring from overflows and similar defects, even if you are not directly affected.

Please also let us know if repairs are needed to communal areas, such as loose stair treads, broken handrails or banisters, faulty door locks etc.

Infestations

If you discover infestations of ants, cockroaches, fleas, mice, rats, wasps or any pests in your home you should contact the Environmental Health Officer at your local council. Pest Control Officers are trained to investigate, advise and treat, where necessary, complaints about animal or insect pests. Some local authorities will charge for the service but others are free. Usually treatment for rats or mice are free and they only treat insect pests (other than wasps and hornets) inside a property. To get rid of ants yourself you can buy treatment from:

- Hardware stores
- Garden centres
- Supermarkets
- Some local authorities

What to buy: Treatment chemicals are supplied as gels, powders or sprays.

Do's and Don'ts

DO follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully

DO store chemicals safely away from children and pets

DON'T treat ants outside because they are more likely to move indoors

Reporting Repairs and Compensation

When you notice that something needs repairing, contact the office by telephoning the Customer Service Centre on 0845 300 0008. The centre is open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9.00am to 7.00pm and Wednesday and Friday from 9.00am to 5.00pm. A Customer Services Officer will make a mutually convenient appointment with the contractor when you ring. We will confirm the time and date of appointment by letter. Please keep this letter safe and to hand, to ensure that you are in when contractors arrive. If you are not able to keep the appointment please ring Customer Services Centre as soon as possible so they can inform the contractor and make another appointment. Please remember that a missed appointment costs the association and contractor money. Therefore, if you break an appointment with a contractor that has been agreed with you in advance, you will be charged £30 for a wasted journey

Emergency repairs can be ordered outside of the above hours by ringing the same number, 0845 300 0008, (charged at local rate) and following the prompts provided on the phone. Alternatively, you can ring the out of hours service direct on 0208 320 3444, however please note that this number is charged at premium rate and

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therefore we would always recommend that you ring the Customer Services number to keep your phone costs to a minimum.

When you are reporting a repair please provide the following information:

Your name, address and if possible a daytime telephone number.

Please tell us as clearly as possible what is wrong and the location and as much information about the problem as you can to assist our contractors in dealing with the repair at the first visit

Identifying a Repair

If you are not sure about the type of repair you need, our Customer Service Centre staff will try to help in identifying the type of repair you have by asking a series of questions when you call.

Giving Access

It is a condition of your tenancy that you give us and our agents (*i.e. contractors*) access to carry out any repairs or inspect the property. We try to give at least 24 hours notice, but this is not always possible in an emergency. For routine repairs our contractors try and call at a time convenient to you, but they cannot visit at weekends or evenings unless in exceptional circumstances.

REPAIRS SERVICE

Speed of Repairs

Some repairs are more urgent than others so when you report a repair we give it a priority grade. Repairs for residents in certain circumstances e.g. elderly residents or residents with disabilities will be given a higher priority grading according to their needs.

We aim to ensure that repairs are completed within the time shown at the end of this section

Target Repair Times

Listed below are some examples of the different types of repairs carried out by us and details of how quickly we will carry them out;

Emergency repairs are those that cause an immediate risk to safety, security, health or the building and those should be made safe within 24 hours. This may mean that the repair is temporarily fixed to resolve the emergency then further work needed at a later time to fully sort out the problem

Examples of these are:

- A burst pipe that you cannot stop by turning off the stopcock
- Total failure of your electricity supply
- A blocked drain or toilet if it is the only one you have in your house
- Major structural damage

Urgent Repairs are those which are likely to cause damage or difficulties if not attended to fairly quickly and these should be completed within 7 days

Examples of these are:

- Leaking radiators

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- Entry phone system not working
- Leaking roof
- Toilet not flushing

Routine repairs are less serious and can wait without causing major damage or inconvenience and should be completed within 28 days.

Examples of these are:

- Dripping gutters
- Repairs to internal doors
- Repairs to cupboards
- Plaster repairs

We aim to complete at least 95% of repairs within the above target times. These targets are very important to us and we monitor our performance against them. Each year we publish a report showing our performance in this service area.

Works Orders

We issue a works order to our contractors. A letter will be sent to you advising you of the work to be carried out, the contractor's name, the priority grading and the time by which the job should be completed.

We monitor the repair works carried out by our contractors in order that we can take any appropriate action to improve the service we provide.

We are confident that most repairs will be done within these times. In some cases a job may need to be inspected by the Asset Manager before an order can be issued to authorise the work. In other cases we may be waiting for a spare part, or sometimes exceptionally bad weather may affect the work. Whatever reason for any delay we will do our best to keep you informed. If you would like more information please contact the Customer Service Centre.

The Association will improve the target repair times or change them if residents have special needs or require a different type of service if they are elderly or have a disability that requires a more immediate response.

Repair Timescales

Priority Grade	Type of Repair	Target Response Time
Priority Emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board up for security including insecure windows where a repair will be completed within 5 days. • Uncontrolled burst to water supply/loss of supply • Total loss of electrical supply • Unsafe power, lighting, electrical fitting (<i>where there is immediate danger</i>) • Partial loss of water supply • Partial loss of gas supply • Blocked flue to open fire or boiler • Total or partial loss of space or water heating (<i>31st October to 1st May</i>) (<i>All year round for sheltered schemes</i>) 	Within 24 Hours

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blocked or leaking foul drain, soil stack or toilet pan (<i>where no other toilet in property</i>) (<i>There may be a subsequent recharge a blocked WC pan is as a result of inappropriate use, see 'tenant responsibilities'</i>) Uncontrolled leak from water or heating pipe, tank or WC cistern Leaking roof (<i>make safe in 24hrs/complete in 5 days</i>) Loose or detached banister or handrail Rotten timber flooring or handrail Fire door closing incorrectly Dangerous glazing in communal areas Failed entrance door locking/security system (<i>not lost keys</i>) <p>All suspected Gas leaks MUST be reported to Transco immediately</p>	
Priority Urgent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Door entry phone not working Extractor fan to internal kitchen or bathroom not working Externally leaking overflows Defective light fittings/sockets Minor plumbing leaks e.g. waste pipes/radiator valves Manhole covers (<i>make safe in 24 hrs/complete in 5 days</i>) Total or partial loss of space or water heating (<i>30th April to 1st November</i>) Tap which cannot be turned off Faults to water heaters 	Within 7 Days
Priority Non-Urgent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brickwork/Pointing where associated with a damp or structural problem, otherwise 'planned maintenance' Cupboard/sink units where use has been restricted by condition Internal doors/fittings Fencing/gates maintaining security Floor/wall tiling Garages (<i>significant repairs and security</i>) Guttering and blockages Outbuildings (<i>significant repairs and security</i>) Plasterwork Window adjustment 	Within 28 Days

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Damp proofing repairs• Roof and flashing repairs where no associated leak• Paving/pathway repairs where 'trips' may be present• Major Works, involving component replacement, or major repairs such as roof renewals will generally be incorporated in planned maintenance programmes	
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GAS SAFETY

To ensure your safety and to meet our legal obligations, we must service every SAHA- owned gas appliance each year. We must do this even if the appliance seems to be working properly. The contractor who visits to carry out the service and safety check will carry out a number of tests on the gas appliances and will give you a copy of the Gas Safety Certificate so that you know that all is well. The tests are designed to make sure that you are not at risk from carbon monoxide poisoning or unsafe appliances. The early symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include tiredness, drowsiness, headache, pains in the chest and stomach pains.

Remember you must never use a gas appliance if you think it isn't working properly. Signs of a faulty appliance include yellow or orange flames, soot or stains around the appliance, and pilot lights that frequently blow out.

Remember:

- **Never** cover a gas appliance or block any air vents
- **Never** block or cover outside flues.
- **Always** be available at the time when a contractor comes to service your appliance. **Not giving access to a contractor contravenes the terms in your tenancy agreement which could result in losing your tenancy.**

CONTRACTORS

The Association employs contractors to provide a day to day service to residents throughout the country. SAHA expects those who work for us to comply with a code of conduct whilst in your home. This means the contractor should:

- Arrange a convenient time to carry out the repair
- Introduce themselves and show proof of their identity
- Explain to you what they will be doing
- Not play radios or smoke in your home
- Treat you politely at all times
- Protect your belongings from damage while they carry out the works
- Keep your home secure while working there
- Work safely
- Leave you with all essential services at the end of each day even if they have not finished their work (eg water, electricity, gas etc)
- Clean up any mess they make and take away all rubbish and materials at the end of each day.

The Centre Service Centre carries out a number of satisfaction surveys each week with residents who have had repairs completed, to see if they were satisfied with the service. However, if you have had a repair and feel that the person carrying out your

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repair did not meet these standards please contact Customer Service Centre and let us know to enable us to improve your service.

DECORATING THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF YOUR HOME

Redecorating after Repairs

If we carry out repairs and, as a result, damage or disturb your decorations we will redecorate the area affected. For example, if a section of wall is repaired, we may have to redecorate by emulsifying the whole wall. Alternatively we may give you an allowance to cover the cost of materials, if you would prefer to do the work yourself.

Outside

We are responsible for redecorating the outside of your home and usually do this about every five years. Before painting we inspect the exterior of each property and carry out any necessary repairs to windows etc. We try to give at least two weeks notice before arranging access for inspections, repairs and painting. We ask for your co-operation in leaving windows open during painting.

Communal Areas

We are responsible for redecorating shared hallways, staircases and other communal areas. We usually do this every four/five years. Sometimes residents want to get together to paint shared hallways themselves, in which case we will give an allowance towards the cost of materials. Please discuss this with your Housing Officer **BEFORE** starting any work.

CARRYING OUT REPAIRS YOURSELF

If you have an Assured, Secure or Assured Shorthold tenancy you have the right to carry out certain repairs yourself and receive a refund from us. However this right only applies to some minor repairs and you will require the permission of the Association before you carry out any work. You also have a statutory right to carry out a repair if we fail to carry out a repair within a reasonable time.

If you feel that a repair is taking longer than it should, please contact the Customer Service Centre which will investigate the delay for you. Alternatively you may wish to contact your local authority's Environmental Health Department who will be able to offer advice and assistance to residents if their landlord fails to carry out a repair.

IMPROVEMENTS/ ALTERATIONS - Without Compensation

General

If you have an Assured or Secure tenancy you have the right to make improvements or alterations to your home, such as altering kitchen units etc provided you have our written permission **FIRST**.

As long as the proposed work would not, for example, make your home less safe (*such as fitting bars on windows which would prevent escape in cases of fire or flood*), reduce the amount of living space you have, or increase our costs in maintaining your home, we will usually give permission. We need to make sure that the work is done to a good standard and that you have any necessary planning permission or building regulations approval.

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The works would, of course, be done at your expense and we would want your agreement that if you move in the future you either leave the improvements in place, or remove them and make the area affected good. (*See below - Right to Compensation for an Improvement*).

Any improvements carried out by yourself will not affect your rent. However if an improvement to the premises has been carried out by SAHA or a previous resident this may affect your rent.

If you are thinking of improving or altering your home, please contact our Customer Service Centre **BEFORE** starting any work.

RIGHT TO COMPENSATION FOR AN IMPROVEMENT

Subject to SAHA's approval in advance, residents with Assured or Secure tenancies are entitled to compensation for an improvement to their home that is a benefit to the property and is one that the Association would normally provide e.g. central heating.

If a resident leaves the property and the improvement still has a value the resident will be entitled to compensation based upon a formula. Details of the scheme and the type of improvements that residents can undertake are available from our Customer Service Centre.

COMPENSATION FOR FAILURE OF SERVICE

We aim to provide a good repairs service and to carry out repairs within the Association's timescales.

If you have either a Secure, Assured or Assured Shorthold tenancy or a licence agreement and a repair is not carried out within the target repair period (*see page 38*) and as a result you are without a service (*such as heating or hot water, or unable to use a room*), then you may be able to claim compensation from us. If the contractor fails to keep an agreed appointment, you may be awarded a payment to compensate for the inconvenience caused. The amount of compensation you may be entitled to varies according to the severity of the problem. For instance, if a contractor does not carry out a repair within the specified timescales you may be entitled to £5 compensation. If you have no hot water for over 3 days you may be entitled to £20 compensation. If any room is out of use due to an ongoing repair you may be entitled to be refunded a percentage of your rent for the affected period. If you want further information on our Compensation Policy, please ring Customer Services Centre. Additionally, if you would like independent advice on repairs because you feel the Association is not doing what it should, you can speak to either the Environmental Health Officer or the Citizen Advice Bureau.

Please note that works that require estimates (*usually costing £1,000 or more*) are excluded from this compensation procedure, as it takes time to get two or more estimates.

NEW HOMES

If your home is newly built or has been newly converted, the builder is liable for most repairs for the first six or twelve months. Central heating and electrical appliances, such as extractor fans, are under guarantee for twelve months. Please do not redecorate your home during the first twelve months, as you need to allow the new

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plaster to dry out completely. Please also avoid making alterations as this may affect the builder's liability.

After twelve months we will make an appointment to inspect your home with the builder and make arrangements for any necessary repairs to be done. Please note that any major cracking will be dealt with by the builder. Hairline cracks are a natural consequence of plaster drying out and should be filled by you when you redecorate.

The Association will undertake design/service surveys at the end of the defects liability period (*i.e. after twelve months*).

AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

If you need improvements and adaptations to your home to help you live independently, you can ask social services to undertake an assessment of your home. Usually an occupational therapist will assess what adaptations are appropriate to meet your needs or the needs of a disabled person who lives in your home. If they agree that you need adaptations to your home, you will be awarded a disabled facilities grant.

Local Councils are required by law to give disabled facilities to eligible applicants to make housing suitable for disabled people. However, you may be expected to contribute towards the costs, depending on your financial circumstances. Disabled facilities grants are available to owners and tenants in both private and social housing to a limit of £25000. Grants can be used on any adaptation that will assist a disabled person to get into and around the home or for example to provide a suitably adapted kitchen and bathroom facilities or grab rails.

SAHA may also provide other sorts of assistance, for example helping people move to more suitable living accommodation if we are satisfied that this would provide similar benefit to improving or adapting the existing accommodation. Sometimes local councils may provide assistance such as low cost loan as well as grants to help renovate, repair or adapt their home.

If you are required to make a contribution towards the adaptation, disabled people do not have to pay VAT on the cost of some building work involved in the adaptations to their homes.

If you adapt your home so that you or another disabled person can live there, you may be eligible for a one band reduction on your council tax. This is particularly useful if the value of your property has increased as a result of the adaptation work, but it applies even if this is not the case.

To try to assist this process, SAHA can provide you with assistance and advice in adapting your home and will take into account your individual needs when improving your home. We are happy to give advice about what work needs to be done and provide assistance in arranging the necessary referrals. We will also offer support to tenants who want to adapt their homes by considering arranging to have small adaptations and equipment installed and considering providing future cyclical maintenance and repairs to adaptation equipment where required.

If you would like more information on Aids and Adaptations please contact our customer call centre on 0845300008

PLANNED MAINTENANCE

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Some repairs can be foreseen and planned. These include works such as replacement of all windows on an estate. Residents are consulted on proposals made within the planned maintenance programme so we can see what your priorities are. This information is used to ensure the programme meets your needs and expectations. We also write and give everyone advanced notice of our intention to carry out work and let you know how it will affect them. We will conduct a survey after the works have been completed to see how satisfied you were with the process and the improvements. All this information helps us to continually improve our services to you. SAHA does not normally charge for kitchen and window installations. It is unlikely that planned maintenance will increase your rent. However, if central heating is installed in properties where there are 'Secure tenants', the Rent Officer may increase the rent slightly for this service.

If you are in any doubt please talk to our Customer Service Centre.

Moving Out While Works Are Done

If the Association requires you to move out while work is carried out in your home, you will be offered alternative accommodation to live in for the duration.

You may also be able to claim disturbance allowance for the inconvenience. Your Housing Officer will be able to provide further advice.

Home Loss Payment

If due to extensive work you need to move out of your home permanently, and you have been a SAHA resident for at least 12 months, you may be entitled to receive a home loss payment. Please speak with your Housing Officer for further advice.

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SALVATION ARMY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

MOVING ON

Transfer Policy

SAHA appreciates that many residents may need or want to move to another home at some point in their tenancy.

SAHA operates a points transfer system.

You can apply for a transfer under the following categories:

- Emergency transfer (*including fire, flood and racial harassment*)
- General transfers
- Sheltered transfers/applicants
- Supported Housing

You will be awarded points based on your needs, circumstances and length of time on the transfer list.

You must, however, fulfil the following two conditions:

- (i) Your rent account must be clear and should not have been in arrears during the last six months (*emergencies will be considered separately*).
- (ii) You must have looked after your home properly and kept it in a reasonable decorative order.

Your Housing Officer will tell you if you are eligible to apply for a transfer and if you are, will ask you to fill in a transfer form. He or she will then visit your home to discuss your application in detail.

Because there is a shortage of accommodation available to let to residents who request a transfer, the Association aims to house those in the most urgent need. This means that each case is prioritised according to the points awarded. You may also be advised to look for a mutual exchange. Your Housing Officer will be able to give you advice and information, additionally you could ring Customer Services Centre and an officer will send you an Information Leaflet.

Moving to Another Area

If you need to move to an area where we do not have any properties, we may be able to ask another Housing Association or sometimes a local authority to help through one of the resident mobility schemes. This is through a special scheme called H.O.M.E.S (*Housing Organisations Mobility and Exchange Scheme*).

You usually have to have a relevant reason to move, such as obtaining employment in another area or wanting to support ageing relatives; and you have to be eligible for a transfer in the normal way. Only a limited amount of accommodation is available through these schemes. Ask our Customer Service Centre for more details.

Mutual Exchanges

If you have either an Assured or Secure tenancy, you have the right to exchange tenancies with another SAHA resident, a local authority resident or a resident of another Housing Association. This is provided both residents have their landlord's written permission.

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We will not withhold our consent unreasonably, but may do so in certain circumstances. The main reasons for withholding our permission are:

- There is a Court Order for repossession of your home or against the proposed incoming resident; or legal action has been started against the resident.
- The exchange would lead to one of our homes becoming overcrowded or under-occupied.
- The accommodation is not suitable for the needs of the incoming resident.

Maintenance Transfers

If the Association discovers that major maintenance works cannot be carried out with a resident in occupation e.g. major structural works to the premises; we will offer, according to availability, alternative or temporary accommodation to the resident and their family.

In such circumstances the resident will be entitled to a Disturbance Payment as detailed in the Land Compensation Act 1973. This payment will cover removal expenses and disconnection/connection of services. It will **NOT** cover the cost of items like new carpets.

If the move is temporary and to the same size or smaller accommodation, your rent will generally remain the same or less. If the move is permanent you will be charged the full rent for the new property.

Your Housing Officer will explain your rights in further detail if you are likely to be affected by major maintenance works.

ENDING YOUR TENANCY

Pre-Termination Inspection

The Association requires four week's notice in writing of your intention to vacate your property. Within the notice period the association will carry out a "pre-termination inspection" to inspect the property to ensure it meets the termination standard.

Incentive Scheme

SAHA operate an incentive scheme for all residents vacating their properties and will give the tenant £50 if the property is left in a clear and clean condition and the property is in good order.

Vacant Possession

Any outstanding arrears will still remain your responsibility.

You will be expected to get the electricity and gas meter read. If you do not, they may estimate the amount of money you will owe.

When you end your tenancy you will have to hand us back all the keys and give us vacant possession. Failure to hand in the keys will result in rent being charged until the keys are returned to the Association.

SALVATION ARMY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

When you leave you must not allow anyone else to occupy the property, or give the keys to anyone else. The Association would take immediate action to evict any unlawful occupant so that we can re-let your home to someone waiting on our transfer or nomination list.

HOME OWNERSHIP

Right To Acquire (Purchase)

Because SAHA has charitable status, you do not have the right to buy your home from us in the same way that most council residents do **UNLESS** you live in a house or flat built or bought with Social Housing Grant (*as opposed to Housing Association Grant*) as it is a condition of that grant system that residents have a statutory Right to Acquire. This system was introduced for houses built with grant after 1 April 1997. Customer Services Centre will be able to tell you if you qualify for this scheme.

How To Apply

Ring Customer Services and ask to claim a Right to Acquire. If you qualify, they will send you an application form for you to complete. When you send it back to us, we will check that you have a Right to Acquire and, if so, will inform you what the purchase price of the home you currently rent is. The discounts for this scheme are fixed amounts published by the Government. The discounts currently range from £9,000 to £16,000. The amount of discount you receive will depend on where you live. If you would like further information, please ring Customer Services Centre and ask for an information leaflet to be sent to you.

Homebuy (Replaces "Tenants Incentive Scheme")

As from the 1st April 1999 a scheme called Homebuy, which helps residents to purchase a home on the open market, was introduced. The areas where residents are allowed to purchase properties are limited. Please ask our Customer Service Centre for more information.

Under the new scheme the successful resident is entitled to an interest free loan of 25% of the value of the property, with the remaining 75% to be a conventional mortgage, ideally with a bank or building society or they can use their savings.

The amount of money available is limited and depends on the areas and the purchase price.

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RESIDENTS GETTING INVOLVED

What is Resident Consultation?

SAHA residents are asked for their views, suggestions and ideas on matters that affect the running of their home and the services they receive. This includes changes in the management of your home or where we are proposing to undertake improvements or major repairs.

What is Resident Involvement?

SAHA defines 'Resident Involvement' as:

"A two way process involving the sharing of information and ideas where residents are able to influence decisions and take part in the decision making process."

SAHA Ladder of Resident Involvement

Resident Board Members	Control
▲	
Resident Committee Members	Joint Management
▲	
Resident Working Group Members	
▲	
Resident Editorial Group	Participation
▲	
Customer Panel Workshops	
▲	
Customer Panel	
▲	
Residents Associations	Consultation
▲	
Day in the Life of.....	
▲	
Email Consultation Group	Information seeking & sharing
▲	
Resident Focus Groups	
▲	Information Giving
Scheme 'Vision of Excellence'	
▲	
Residents Meetings	
▲	
SAHA CSC Residents Surveys	
▲	
Annual Residents Survey	
▲	
Residents Newsletter / Website	

Above is the 'Ladder of Resident Involvement', showing the different ways in which residents can become involved and have an influence on the services they receive. From the methods listed in the ladder of involvement, residents can chose which best suit their needs.

SALVATION ARMY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

How can you be involved?

You can be involved in various ways at different levels. These include:

Residents Newsletter

SAHA publishes four resident newsletters per year.

The newsletters contain:

- Articles from residents, so if you would like to write something for the newsletter or you have a suggestion about what you would like to see in it, contact the Customer Service Centre or Resident Involvement Co-ordinator.
- Information about the Association and about other residents.
- A survey/questionnaire or information sheet in most newsletters which we appreciate residents completing, as this helps us to improve the services we can offer to residents.
- Information about any changes in the way we work.
- Reminders about action you may have to take.

Annual Report

An Annual Report is sent to each Resident.

Website

SAHA has its own website www.saha.org.uk which is continually updated and developed, providing information about all aspects of its services, including a dedicated area for Resident Involvement.

Annual Residents Survey

Each year we carry out a survey of all our residents to find out about what they think of their homes and of the service they received from SAHA. The information received from the survey will be used to improve our services.

SAHA CSC Residents Surveys

Customer Services Officers carry out additional surveys to monitor various aspects of our service to residents. These are:

Major Repair Surveys

Each year we survey all of our residents to understand what their priorities are as far as planned maintenance is concerned for their property and their estate. This information is used to inform our programme so it matches your needs.

When the major repairs, i.e. installation of central heating, new windows etc, are carried out to your home we send you a questionnaire to complete to provide SAHA with important information. The questionnaire will relate to the quality of the work carried out, the performance of contractors and the consultation and information given to residents prior to the work starting.

New Development Surveys

Questionnaires are sent to all residents who have moved into brand new homes.

SALVATION ARMY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

The purpose of this survey is to obtain feedback from residents about the homes that have been provided with particular reference to location, size of rooms, storage facilities and general standard of fixtures and fittings. Questions are also asked about the service residents have received from SAHA.

Residents are also given the opportunity of notifying SAHA of any defects to their home prior to the inspections that take place a year after residents have moved in. This is to ensure that the defects are dealt with by the contractors before the new development is handed over to SAHA for ongoing repairs and maintenance.

Other Satisfaction Surveys

Customer Services phone a percentage of our residents to get feedback on a number of service areas, such as the satisfaction of completed repairs, the satisfaction of resolved complaints, the satisfaction of service given to new tenants. Again this information is used to improve our service to you. Also, short postal questionnaires are sent to residents on various service areas

Residents Meetings

SAHA hold a number of resident meetings every year. This gives residents an opportunity to talk to a member of staff, usually the local Housing Officer, on specific issues and give one to one feedback. You can contact your Housing Officer to find out when these meetings are scheduled, normally an agenda is distributed to residents before the meeting and minutes are issued after the meeting, to inform everyone what has been discussed.

Scheme 'Vision of Excellence'

This involves the Housing Officer holding a meeting with residents, to identify what they think of the scheme 'now', and how they would see the scheme if it was, in their opinion 'excellent'. Together the Housing Officer and residents agree and agree on an action plan to work towards an 'excellent' scheme (with actions for both SAHA and the residents.) This is monitored and reviewed every 12 months.

Resident Focus Groups

Focus groups are held from time to time to gain feedback on particular service areas. These are one-off sessions, usually only a couple of hours long and held locally.

Email Consultation Group

The email consultation group can register their interest on the SAHA website, or by emailing the Resident Involvement Coordinator or CSC. Residents take part in the Email Consultation Group by providing their email address and tenant number, they should be informed that this is on their tenancy agreement, Allpay card, or can be obtained by contacting the Customer Service Centre. Each survey is short; 5-10 questions, requiring yes/no or 1-5 type responses, taking under one minute for residents to complete. This is a quick convenient method for resident consultation on various issues.

'A Day in the Life of...'

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The association provides a camcorder to residents to record their experiences of being a resident first hand. This allows residents to record what happens where they live on a day-to-day basis, and visually communicate how improvements could be made to the services they receive from SAHA.

Resident Associations

SAHA has a few residents' associations. They each have a constitution, which lays out the rules of the association and explains its objectives. Although residents' associations may have slightly different objectives, most include improving where they live and the surrounding area, bringing residents together socially and representing resident members when talking to people from the local authority or SAHA.

New residents' associations which meet the requirements suggested by the "Tenant Participation Advisory Service" will receive a start up grant of £25 plus £5 per resident member, up to a maximum of £250. After that, they may apply for further grants to help them meet their objectives. We have corporate membership with the "Tenant Participation Advisory Service", which provides excellent information and training for residents associations and the opportunity of meeting residents' groups from other associations and areas. Also, SAHA have established a link with InSTEP (Information Services for Tenants: Empowerment & Participation) which offers training and free information services for residents.

SAHA is keen to see more residents setting up associations and, if required, we will attend meetings and offer help and advice. Support is offered also to those residents who wish to have informal groups rather than formal associations.

Customer Panel

SAHA has a Customer Panel consisting of 90 residents who are consulted on a regular basis on various issues, such as potential policy or procedural changes. Their feedback is taken into consideration before any changes are made and their ideas are incorporated as much as possible. If you would like to join the Customer Panel, please contact Customer Services or the Resident Involvement Co-ordinator.

Resident Editorial Group

The group is made up of a small number of residents, approx 8-10, split between the north and south. Meetings are chaired by a resident and facilitated by the Resident Involvement Coordinator. Meetings occur alternately North and South on a quarterly basis to ensure all members get an opportunity to attend locally.

The group is responsible for reviewing all key documents that SAHA provides to residents to ensure that they are written in plain English and are presented in a user friendly way. Documents are provided to the members (max 3) in advance of the meeting so they can be reviewed at the resident's leisure before the meeting. At the meeting the language and presentation of each is debated along with issues such as corporate branding.

All documents that go through the group are branded '*approved by residents*' to demonstrate the group's valuable input.

Resident Working Group Members

SALVATION ARMY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Resident Committee Members

Resident Board Members

TRAINING GRANTS

Training grants are available to residents who are interested in becoming involved as Resident Representatives and/or who are involved in Residents' Associations. The grants pay for training programmes which will build on the residents' skills and knowledge and provide information about housing and housing associations. Training can be provided by InSTEP or TPAS.

THE FUTURE - COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AND RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

SAHA is keen to ensure that residents are able to influence decisions that the Association makes and take part in the management of their homes if they would like to. We are open to suggestions and encourage residents' groups that wish to play a more active roll in developing, improving and measuring SAHA's performance.

The Association is also interested in developing resident involvement in local areas as suggested by the Government through the Housing Corporation. This is part of the responsibilities of Housing Associations to provide 'Best Value' in services and management of their properties.

The Association works with a number of local agencies for the benefit of SAHA residents and the wider community. SAHA welcomes suggestions from residents and local residents for future community based schemes and events.

In addition, SAHA is keen to organise Residents' Conferences. This will enable residents and staff to get together to share ideas and information on the way forward for the Association and on the long term future of SAHA and its residents.

Customer Panel Workshop Days

In the future we are looking to run 'Customer Panel Workshop Days' at SAHA in order to provide a direct method of communication for any customer panel member and SAHA. The days will provide the opportunity to meet face-to-face with Panel members.

The Workshop Days would give residents the opportunity to:

- Provide feedback on the running & services offered by SAHA
- Discuss any recurring problems
- Suggest ways in which the SAHA services can be developed
- Suggest ways the Customer Panel & methods of Resident Involvement can be developed

The Workshop Days would give SAHA the opportunity to:

- Provide training for Panel members

SALVATION ARMY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

If you require any further information about becoming involved please visit SAHA's website www.saha.org.uk or:

Write to: Resident Involvement Co-ordinator
33-35 Chorley New Road
Bolton
Lancashire
BL1 4QR

Email: haveyoursay@saha.org.uk

Call: Customer Services on: 0845 300 008

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NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEMES

If you and your neighbours would like to set up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme the National Association will be able to give you further details and information on how to go about it. Contact details are:

The National Neighbourhood Watch Association
Schomberg House
80-82 Pall Mall
London
SW1Y 5ES
or telephone: 0207 772 3348
or fax: 0207 772 3460

TRANSLATION SERVICE

The Salvation Army Housing Association are committed to serving all members of the community and ensuring our services are accessible to everyone. We are members of "Language Line", which is the leading provider of language solutions which enables effective spoken and written communications with service users who do not use English as their first language. This enables us to access, **telephone interpreting, text translation, face to face interpreting and a facility that gives a verbal translation of text.** If you would benefit from this service please ring Customer Service Centre on 0845 300 0008

TRANSLATION SERVICE

IF YOU REQUIRE A TRANSLATION OF ANY OF OUR DOCUMENTS, SUCH AS OUR ALLOCATIONS POLICY, TENANCY AGREEMENTS AND CONDITIONS, TENANT INFORMATION LEAFLETS ETC., PLEASE ASK A MEMBER OF OUR STAFF TO GIVE YOU DETAILS.



Supporting Independent Living

BENGALI বাংলা

আমাদের কোন ডকুমেন্ট যেমন এ্যালোকেশন পলিসি (বন্টন নীতি), ভাড়াটিয়া স্বত্বের চুক্তি ও শর্ত, হয়রানি প্রচারপত্র ইত্যাদির অনুবাদের যদি আপনার প্রয়োজন হয় তবে দয়া করে আমাদের একজন কর্মচারিকে বিস্তৃত খবরের জন্য জিজ্ঞাসা করুন।

GREEK ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ

Αν χρειάζεστε μετάφραση οποιωνδήποτε εντύπων μας, όπως της πολιτικής απονομής, συμφωνιών στεγάσεως και όρων, φυλλαδίου παρενοχλήσεως κτλ., παρακαλώ ζητήστε από τα μέλη του προσωπικού μας να σας δώσει λεπτομέρειες.

GUJARATI ગુજરાતી

અમારા કોઈ પણ દસ્તાવેજો (કાયદેસર લેખિત સામગ્રી) જિયા કે વહેંચણી કાર્યનીતિ, ભાડૂતપણાની કબૂલાત અને શરતો, કનડગત ચોપાનિયાં વર્ગરે ઉપરનું ભાષાંતર તમને જોઈતું હોય તો મહેરબાની કરીને અમારા સ્ટાફના સભ્યને કહી કે તમને વિગતો આપે.

HINDU हिंदी

यदि आप हमारे किसी भी दस्तावेज़ जैसे कि हमारी निर्धारण योजना, प्रवृत्ति समझौता और शर्तों, उत्पीड़न से सम्बन्धित पर्चे आदि का अनुवाद चाहते हैं तो कृपया हमारे स्टाफ के किसी भी सदस्य से विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए कहें ।

Continued overleaf



PUNJABI ਪੰਜਾਬੀ

ਜੇ ਕਰ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼, ਜਿਹਾ ਕਿ “ਨਿਰਧਾਰਣ (ਐਲੋਕੇਸ਼ਨ) ਪੌਲਿਸੀ” “ਕਰਾਏਨਾਮਾ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ”, “ਪਰੋਸ਼ਾਨੀ” ਆਦਿ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਇਦਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਪਾਸੋਂ ਤਫਸੀਲ ਹਾਸਲ ਕਰੋ।

TURKISH TÜRKÇE

KONUT DAĞITIMI YÖNETİM TARZI, KONUT KİRA ANLAŞMASI VE ŞARTLARI, TEDİRGİNLİK BROŞÜRÜ GİBİ VESİKA VE BELGELERİMİZİN TERCÜME BİR KOPYESİNİ İSTİYORSANIZ LÜTFEN MEMURLARIMIZDAN BİRİNE SORUP DETAY İSTEYİNİZ.

URDU اردو

اگر آپ کو ہماری کسی بھی دستاویز کے ترجمے کی ضرورت ہو، مثلاً ہماری نامزدگی سے متعلق پالیسی، کرایہ داری کا معاہدہ دستاویز - خوف و ہراس و تشدد سے متعلق لیفلٹس، تو ہمارے اسٹاف کے کسی بھی ممبر سے تفصیلات کے لئے رجوع کریں۔

VIETNAMESE BẢN DỊCH

NẾU NHU QUÍ VỊ CẦN BẢN DỊCH VỀ NHỮNG TÀI LIỆU GIẢI THÍCH KHÁC, VÍ DỤ NHƯ QUI LỆ CẤP NHÀ CỦA CHÚNG TÔI, HỢP ĐỒNG VÀ ĐIỀU KIỆN VỀ KHÉ ƯỚC THUÊ NHÀ, TỜ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỐI XỬ TRƯỜNG HỢP BỊ KHUẤY RỐI V.V., HÃY ĐẾN HỎI NHÂN VIÊN LÀM VIỆC CỦA CHÚNG TÔI.

CHINESE 中文

如果你需要我們所有的任何翻譯文件，例如我們的房屋分配政策，住屋協議，房屋環境和條件，反對優待政策等等，請問我們的職員聯繫，他們將會給予詳細的解釋。

SOMALI

HOWSHA TARJUMADA.

HADII AAD U BAAHANTAHAY TARJUNAAD WAX KASTA IYO WIXII KU SAABSAN DUKUMENTIYADEENA SIDA HABKA GURYO BIXINTEENA, HESHIISKA KIRADA IYO SHURUUAHA, IYO QORAALADA WARBIXINTA KIREYSTAHA IWN FADLAN WEYDII XUBNAHA SHAQAALAHEENA INEY KU SIIYAAN FAAHFAHIN.

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