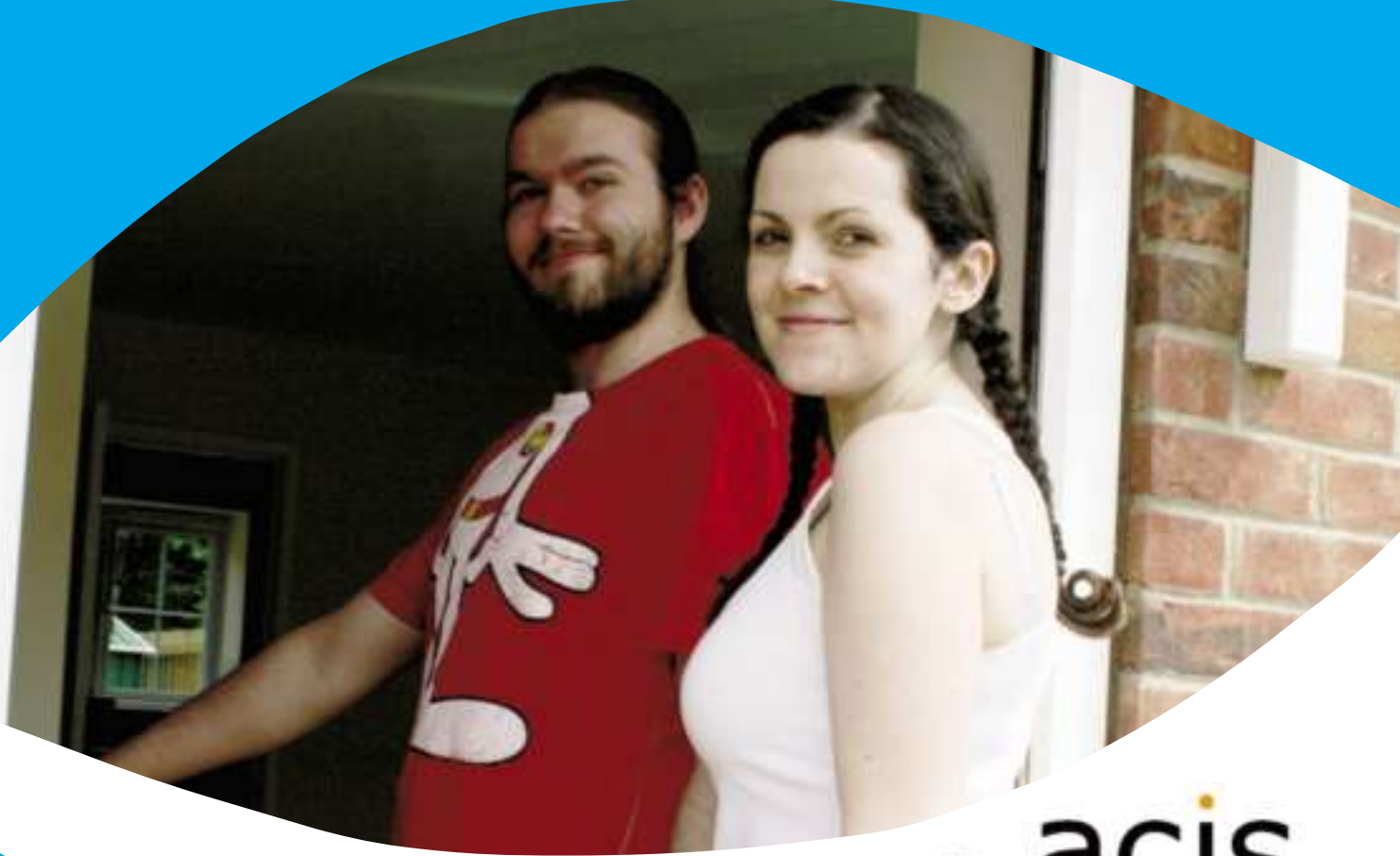


# Your tenancy



**Freephone 0800 027 2057**

**"Better homes and better services for better lives"**

## Your tenancy

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We are pleased that you are an Acis tenant. The tenancy that you have is a legally binding agreement and this part of the handbook is intended to help you to identify the main rights and responsibilities that go with it.

### What type of tenancy?

Most tenancies with Acis are Assured. We will confirm the type of tenancy you have and what it means when you sign up.

### Sole and joint tenancies

A sole tenancy is where only one person is named on the tenancy agreement. A joint tenancy is where two or more people are named on the tenancy agreement.

Joint tenants are both individually and jointly responsible for meeting the conditions in their tenancy agreement.

We would only change a joint tenancy to a sole tenancy if both tenants agree to this, if there is a court order or if one tenant dies and there are succession rights (we will confirm succession rights on enquiry).

You can request to have a sole tenancy made into a joint tenancy by writing to us. We will then confirm whether we can meet your request, and if not, why.



### Can my tenancy be passed on?

Your tenancy can only be passed on (assigned) if:

- A court orders you to do so in matrimonial proceedings
- You exercise your right to exchange with another tenant with our consent
- An eligible person takes it over if you die (we will advise you further as to who is an eligible person on enquiry)

**As an Assured tenant you have tenancy rights. Key rights are summarised as follows:**

**Right to occupy** - You can stay in your home as long as you like, providing you keep to all the conditions of your tenancy agreement.

**Security of tenure** – You have security of tenure so long as you use the dwelling as your main home.

**Right to take in lodgers and sublet** - You can take in lodgers, although you should be aware that may affect your entitlement to Housing Benefit. Providing that you have our written permission you can, under certain circumstances, sublet part of your home (we will advise you further on enquiry).

**Right to make improvements and to receive compensation for them** - You can make certain improvements to your home provided that you ask for permission first. If you leave your home, you may be able to claim for improvements you have made.

**Right to repair** - Please see our 'Right to Repair' leaflet.

**Right to consultation** - You have the right to be consulted on housing management and maintenance issues, which are likely to have a major effect on you. We will do this by writing to you. You may be interested to know that there are a number of ways that Acis consults with tenants and opportunities for tenants to get involved in different activities (please see our 'Get involved with Acis... Make a difference' leaflet).

**Right to information** - You have the right to information about the terms of your tenancy agreement, our repairs obligations, policies on tenant consultation, allocations and transfers, equal opportunities, and how we set rents. Most of this will be contained in your handbook and/or routinely sent out to you.

**Right to exchange** - If you want to move home, one way of doing this is to exchange your tenancy with another of our assured tenants, or a council or housing association tenant. You can only do this if you have permission from us and from the other tenant's landlord (we will advise you further on enquiry).

**Preserved Right to Buy and Right to Acquire your home** - Tenants who previously had secure tenancies with the council have the Preserved Right to Buy (PRTB) their home, provided that they live in an eligible property. The Right to Acquire (RTA) also applies to tenants who have the PRTB and to new assured tenants, as long as certain criteria are met. The RTA is not the same as the PRTB, and does not apply to all properties (we will advise you further on enquiry).

## Your responsibilities

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We want you to have a long and happy tenancy in your Acis home. To support this, it is important to recognise that there are responsibilities that go with being a tenant. There are key responsibilities relating to both your home and the surrounding neighbourhood and environment.

### Key responsibilities - your home

**Rent** - It is obviously most important rent and any service charges must be paid promptly and in accordance with your tenancy agreement.

**Occupation** - You must move into your home at the start of the tenancy. If you do not it may affect your ability to claim Housing Benefit. You must occupy and use your home as your only or main home. If there is a joint tenancy, at least one of you must occupy your home as your only or main home.

**Use of your home** - You must not run a business from your home without asking for permission first.

**Overcrowding** - You must not allow more people to live in your home than the law allows. Rules about overcrowding are in your tenancy agreement.

**Improvements to your home** - It is recognised that you might want to improve your home. Before you do so you must get our permission, and it may also be necessary to get planning permission. Any improvement work must meet all required regulations and standards (we will advise you further on enquiry).

**Internal decoration and minor repairs** - You are responsible for keeping the inside of your home clean and tidy and in a good state of repair, and for decorating it. As set out in your tenancy agreement you are also responsible for carrying out minor repairs (please see our 'Guide to the Repairs Service' leaflet).

**Damage to property** - You must take reasonable steps to prevent damage to your home by frost, flood, fire or damp. You and your family, or persons living at or visiting your home, must not damage or vandalise it, or put graffiti on any part of your home or anywhere in the locality.

**Gardens** - You are responsible for the condition of your garden and any hedges, which we will routinely inspect. If you are having difficulty in tending your garden for health reasons please contact us, as we may be able to put you in touch with someone who can help you.

**Hazardous and inflammable materials** - You must not keep or use paraffin, petrol, bottled gas or any other hazardous, inflammable or dangerous material in your home, unless permission is granted.

**Parking and vehicles** - Please be considerate about where you and your visitors park. You should not park a caravan on your garden, drive or any communal parking area without getting our permission first. You should not carry out repairs to or park unroadworthy cars on any Acis land.

**Access to your home** - There are occasions when it will be necessary and important for Acis staff, or contractors working on our behalf, to be given emergency or prompt access to enter your home. Advance notice will normally be given unless this is not practical or possible.

**Your neighbourhood** - One of Acis's strategic aims is 'Creating better places to live' and your responsibilities as a tenant relate not only to your home, but also to others and the neighbourhood and environment around you.

**Disposing of rubbish** - Please do not make your neighbourhood untidy by dumping rubbish. In addition to the regular domestic refuse collection service provided by your council, there are other ways of disposing of rubbish, particularly bulk items such as old furniture, carpets and kitchen appliances. Please contact your local council or call us for advice.

**Nuisance** - You are responsible for the behaviour of everybody (including children and any lodgers) living in or visiting your home. If you cause a nuisance, you are breaking the terms of your tenancy agreement. There are also some commonsense things that you can do to make sure you have good relationships with your neighbours (please see our 'Being a good neighbour' leaflet).



**Harassment** - You must not harass or threaten to harass anyone living in, visiting or working in the locality of your home. We will take action against people who harass others and support tenants who are harassed.

Examples of harassment include:

- Racist behaviour or language
- Using or threatening to use violence
- Using abusive or insulting words or behaviour
- Stalking someone
- Damaging or threatening to damage another person's home or possessions
- Writing threatening, abusive or insulting graffiti

**Illegal activities** - You must not use your home, or anywhere on the estates, for any criminal, illegal or immoral activity.

Examples of such activities include:

- Bringing in, storing or selling illegal drugs
- Storing or distributing racist material or pornography
- Storing or selling stolen goods

Acis takes anti-social behaviour of any kind very seriously and is committed to taking decisive action in response to it.

**Living in flats** - Special consideration for your neighbours is needed if you live in a flat, particularly in relation to noise. One noisy neighbour in a block of flats can make life miserable for the other residents. When you turn on your radio, TV or stereo, think about your neighbours and adjust the volume to a level that will not disturb them. Please also keep communal areas free from obstructions at all times. If there is a communal door entry system, please use it properly and do not leave doors wedged open.



## Estate services

Acis has responsibilities to ensure that neighbourhoods are kept clean and safe. This will involve us taking direct action and working with councils and other relevant organisations to deal as quickly as possible with issues such as fly tipping, graffiti and abandoned vehicles.

We are responsible for grounds maintenance including grass cutting, hedges and shrubs in open space areas. We carry out regular estate inspections with tenants and residents to identify issues requiring action or attention. Details of when these will take place are contained in newsletters and contained on our website, and attendance is welcomed.

## Remember... we are here to help

Please tell us at once regarding anything that we are responsible for that needs to be repaired, replaced or put right, or contact us if you require any further information.



**If you would like to have this information in large-print, another language or any other format, please contact us to let us know about your needs.**

Our aim is to give you the information you need as quickly and as clearly as we can. We therefore have a target of arranging suitable personal communication for you within one working day (for example by talking things through verbally, by using signing, language interpretation, etc).

Please be aware that some large documents may take some time to convert into the format you need and other agencies are often involved in reproducing our published materials. This means that it can take up to eight weeks to convert a large document into some formats.



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