

LEASEHOLDER'S HANDBOOK





CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
About Acis Group	1
The lease and your legal obligations	2
Rent and service charges	2
Sinking fund	3
Repairs and maintenance	4
Buildings insurance	5
Buying further shares in your home	6
Selling your home	6
Keeping in touch	7
Complaints	7

INTRODUCTION

This brochure explains your rights and responsibilities as a leaseholder. Please keep it in a safe place for future reference. If you need more information, do not hesitate to contact Acis Group where our staff will do their best to help you.

Please do not treat this brochure as a substitute for the lease.

ABOUT ACIS GROUP

Acis Group is a not-for-profit company and has been providing quality, affordable housing since 1999.

We currently own and manage around 4,950 properties within Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire with our customer base covering all age ranges, from families to supported accommodation.

Acis Group has established a substantial development programme and is continuing to increase the properties available for shared ownership and market rental across a large, geographical area.

THE LEASE AND YOUR LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Your lease is a legally binding contract which sets out the rights and responsibilities of you the lessee or leaseholder and Acis Group the lessor or landlord. The terms of the lease can only be changed by agreement between both parties or by Act of Parliament.

This section of the Handbook outlines the main features of your lease.

What You Agree:

- **To pay the rent and/or service charge**
- **To pay all outgoings on the property such as Council Tax, water charges, gas and electricity bills**
- **To keep your home in a good state of repair**
- **Not to carry out alterations or improvements to your home without written permission from Acis Group**
- **Not to sell or sublet your home without written permission from Acis Group**
- **To allow Acis Group staff to inspect the condition of your home**
- **Not to do anything which may affect the Association's building insurance policy**

What Acis Group Agrees:

- **To allow you to occupy your home without interference unless you breach the terms and conditions of your lease**
- **To insure the building (but not its contents)**
- **To maintain the structure of the building, in the case of blocks of flats**
- **To maintain communal gardens and facilities where these are provided**
- **To maintain internal communal areas where these are provided**
- **To consult you on the way your service charge (if any) is spent if requested**

RENT AND SERVICE CHARGES

How Your Rent Is Set

Your rent is based on the share of your home that still belongs to Acis Group. Your lease will tell you how much your rent is at the start of your lease and how the rent is reviewed.

Housing associations are required to set shared ownership rents which are affordable to people in low paid work and who cannot afford to buy a property outright.



Rent Increases

Acis Group will review your rent every year, usually in April. You will be given at least four weeks notice of any increase in your rent. Your lease sets out the maximum increase that Acis Group can make to your rent.

Methods of Payment

You are required to pay your rent monthly in advance by Direct Debit or Standing Order through your bank. If your rent is increased, Acis Group will change the Direct Debit to the new amount.

SERVICE CHARGES

You may be charged an amount for services provided by the Association. This will include the cost of the following services where they are provided:

- **Buildings insurance**
- **Maintenance of communal gardens**
- **Cleaning communal areas**
- **Repairs and maintenance of the structure of the building, in the case of blocks of flats**
- **Electricity charges for communal lighting**
- **Reserve fund for the long term repair and replacement of major items in the building, in the case of blocks of flats**
- **Acis Group's management charges**

Acis Group will consult you in advance of any proposed increase in your service charge. You will also be consulted before any major work is carried out which affects the service charge, and copies of estimates for the work will be provided.

Each year Acis Group will send you accounts detailing the income and expenditure on services.

RESERVE FUND

If you live in a flat, you will pay into a reserve fund for major repairs and replacements to the building and any communal facilities. This payment will be included in your service charge. A reserve fund is needed to ensure that there are sufficient funds set aside to carry out major work when it becomes necessary in the future.

By contributing now for work that may not be done for many years, leaseholders spread the cost and avoid the risk of Acis Group having to present them, or future generations with large bills for major repairs. An adequate reserve fund will help maintain the value of your flat. If you sell your property, your buyer's solicitor will probably want to check whether there is sufficient money in the reserve fund.

The money in the reserve fund is held on your behalf in an interest - bearing account, and any interest is added to the fund. The amount held in the sinking fund is shown in the service charge accounts that are presented to the leaseholders each year.

The sinking fund will cover the repair or replacement of items such as the following:

- **External doors and windows**
- **Roofs and guttering**
- **External walls**
- **Sewers and drains**
- **Car parks**
- **Bin stores**
- **External decorations**
- **Fire and security door systems**
- **Communal Gardens**

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

Your lease explains the responsibilities of the landlord and leaseholder for repairs to your property.

Generally speaking, if you live in a house, you will be responsible for arranging and paying for all your repairs.

If you live in a flat, you will usually be responsible for repairs inside your home, and Acis Group will be responsible for getting repairs done to the structure of the building and any communal areas. These repairs will be paid for out of the service charge.

Acis Group Responsibility (flats only):

- **Roofs**
- **External walls**
- **Windows (but not the glazing)**
- **External doors**
- **Sewers and drains**
- **Car parks**
- **Bin stores**
- **Fire and security door systems**
- **Communal Gardens**
- **Communal heating/lighting**

Leaseholder's Responsibility:

- **Glazing**
- **Interior walls**
- **Internal doors**
- **Heating and sanitary appliances (internal)**
- **Internal pipework**
- **Electrical installations**

Decorations

If you live in a house, you will be responsible for decorating your home, both inside and out. Acis Group will arrange to redecorate the exterior of flats and any communal areas, and this work will be charged to the service charge. Flat owners are responsible for their own internal decorations.

Alterations and Improvements

If you want to carry out any alterations or improvements you must write to Acis Group for permission before beginning any work. A member of our technical staff may visit your property to assess the proposed work. You must have our written approval before starting the work.

If your improvements increase the value of your home, the value of the improvements will be disregarded if you buy another share in the property.

BUILDINGS INSURANCE

Your home is included on the buildings insurance policy that the Association takes out on all its properties. Acis Group will include an amount within your service charge to cover the insurance premium. The policy insures the structure of the building and its fixtures against accidental damage from fire, flood or subsidence. The policy document gives full details of what is covered, and a copy is available from Acis Group on request.

You are responsible for insuring the contents of your home and your personal possessions.

If any damage occurs to your property you should contact Acis Group straight away to check whether the damage is covered and if so to make a claim.

If you are covered, you would have to obtain at least two written quotations for the repairs or replacements.

Usually you would not have to pay an excess on your claim, that is, the full cost of the repair will be covered.

BUYING FURTHER SHARES IN YOUR HOME

Your lease may allow you to buy more shares in your home until you own it completely. This process of increasing your share is known as "staircasing." You will usually have had to live in your home for at least a year before you are allowed to buy further shares. Shares can be bought in 10% portions, but you are able to buy a larger share if you can afford to.

The price you pay for each share depends on the value of your home at the time you want to buy another share. This price is normally held for six months from the date your home is valued. You will have to pay for the valuer, but Acis Group will arrange this at a fixed fee. You will also need to ask a solicitor to act for you.

If your home is a house, you will usually get the freehold once you buy 100% of the shares. There will be a legal fee to pay to Acis Group when you buy the final share and acquire the freehold. Flat owners will probably be tied to a lease which runs for a fixed period of time.

If you buy 100% of your home you will stop paying rent, although you will still have to pay a service charge if services are provided.

SELLING YOUR HOME

You are able to sell your home whether you own a share or own the property outright. This process is known as "assignment." It is important to write and tell Acis Group before you sell the property, as in some cases the Association will be able to put forward a buyer, and this could save you money in estate agents fees.

If you own a share of your property you may be able to buy the remaining share and sell the whole property at the same time. Your Housing Officer will be able to advise you about this.

You will have to get your property valued, arranged by Acis Group and paid for by you, and if you plan to employ an estate agent you will be able to choose which one to use. You will need to contact your solicitor to act for you.

When you have found a buyer you must again write to Acis Group giving details of the proposed sale and the person you wish to sell to. The buyer will have to complete an application form.

Acis Group will write to you to say whether it gives you permission to sell. You will have to pay the Association's legal fees for arranging the sale. Acis Group can tell you the amount of the fees before you sell.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Consultation

Acis Group will consult you if it is considering changes in the management and maintenance of your home, major repairs (if you live in a flat,) or if it plans to sell the freehold of your home.

Acis Group will consult flat owners before carrying out any major repairs or improvements which affect the sinking fund. This will include providing copies of estimates for proposed work.

You will be consulted every year about proposed changes to the monthly service charge.

Newsletter

You will receive a copy of our newsletter "Home News," which is a quarterly publication.

COMPLAINTS

If you have a complaint about the way you have been treated or about the service you have received, please contact the Shared Ownership Coordinator on **FREEPHONE 0800 027 2057**.

If your complaint has not been resolved, please contact our Customer Contact Team on **FREEPHONE 0800 027 2057** for further guidance on our complaints procedure.

Acis Group Limited

Acis House
Bridge Street
Gainsborough
Lincolnshire
DN21 1GG

email: info@acisgroup.co.uk
web: www.acisgroup.co.uk
tel: **FREEPHONE 0800 027 2057**
text: **07800 002270**