

KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL

TENANTS HANDBOOK

Introduction

Kerry County Council is pleased to provide you with a copy of the Tenant Handbook.

As your landlord we are taking this opportunity to introduce you to, or remind you of, the wide range of services available to our tenants. The handbook is also intended to clarify the responsibilities both of Kerry County Council as the landlord and you as the tenant.

The handbook is intended as a guide and does not go into detail about every aspect of the services available.

For your convenience I have provided a list of contact telephone numbers, including emergency numbers, which are included at the back of this handbook. Please keep this document in a safe place in your home as you may be asked to refer to it when making enquiries to the Housing Department.

Kerry County Council welcomes you as a tenant and wishes you and your family well in your home.

John Breen,
Director of Services
Sustainable Communities/Quality of Life

Tenancy Conditions

The Tenancy Agreement, which you signed when you were allocated your dwelling and received your keys, contains a good deal of information about your tenancy conditions. It is effectively a contract which you have entered into with your landlord, the Council. It is an important document so you should read it carefully and keep it in a safe place.

We have summarised and highlighted some of the main points of your tenancy agreement.

How does my tenancy operate?

- You must live in the dwelling as your principal residence.
- Failure to reside in the dwelling for a period of 6 weeks in any year may lead to the termination of the tenancy as per your Tenancy Agreement.
- You must not use the dwelling, garden or shed for business purposes.
- No change in occupancy of your home can take place unless you have **prior consent** from the Council.
- You must give the Council **four weeks notice** if you wish to surrender your dwelling.

What are my responsibilities in relation to rent?

- Rent is calculated based on the Council's Annual Differential Rents Scheme
- You must pay your rent **weekly** and in advance and any other charges when they are due.
- If you do not pay your rent as above, you run the risk of being issued with a Possession Order through the Courts for recovery of your home by the Council.
- You must give the Council full details of **all** household income.
- You must return your Rent Assessment form **annually** and any other time there is a change of income or circumstances in the household.

Please note that the breach of one or more of the conditions above will place your tenancy at risk and may result in you being issued with a Possession Order through the Courts for recovery of your home by the Council.

Can I take in lodgers or sub-tenants?

No. This would be in breach of your tenancy conditions.
You must inform the Council of any new occupants living in the property.

Am I responsible for the garden or just the dwelling itself?

You are responsible for both. You must make sure that you, other people living with you including children, and any visitors to your home, look after your home and your garden

in a reasonable manner. This also includes maintenance of walls, gates or fences, grass, hedging and trees.

Under the Litter Acts each householder is obliged to keep free of litter the footpath or pavement adjoining their property and also any road gutter on or at the side of such pavement. Refuse should be left for collection in a manner which ensures that it does not become litter or become a likely health hazard.

Any laneway/walkway adjoining your dwelling should be kept in a clean condition and should not be used for dumping.

Can I make alterations to my dwelling?

- You must get written permission from the Housing Department, Kerry County Council before starting any improvements, alterations or additions to your home. This permission shall not be construed as giving exemption for the necessity to comply with the provisions of planning or building regulations in force at the relative time.
- We are usually happy to agree, but we must check for safety and other structural reasons.
- You must be prepared to provide a certificate from a qualified architect/engineer on completion of the work certifying that the work has been carried out in accordance with proper building practice and Building Regulations.
- All works must be completed having regard to the Health and Safety Authority's Guide for Homeowners.
- In the case of unauthorised alterations carried out, the Council may require you to fully reinstate the property to its original condition.
- At the end of the tenancy no compensation is allowable for any improvements or alterations to the dwelling.
- Any changes to the heating system would be normally covered at the tenants own expense.

What happens if I disturb my neighbours?

You must ensure that you, or other people living with you in the home, including children, and any visitors to your home do not become a nuisance to your neighbours. In particular this means:

- No drugs for use, sale or cultivation
- No criminal activity
- No violence or threats of violence
- No harassment or abuse
- No loud music
- No vandalism.

If you or anyone in your home is involved in any of these activities you run the risk of losing your home. (**Please also see Page 11 - Anti Social and Nuisance Behaviour**)

Can I keep a pet?

- You may keep a domestic pet, such as a cat or dog, as long as it is kept under control, does not damage the property or does not become a nuisance to your neighbours. However, certain breeds of dogs are **NOT** permitted (see list hereunder)
- Horses, poultry, pigs and fowl are not domestic animals. Keeping any of these is a serious breach of your tenancy agreement.
- Under the Control of Dogs Act 1986 every dog should be licensed. A licence is available from any Post Office.
- Failure to have a dog licensed or to keep it under proper control will result in an on-the-spot fine.
- Dogs should not be allowed to roam free around housing estates. It is the responsibility of the pet owner to clean up after their dog/pet. Under the Litter Pollution Act 1997, it is an offence for a dog to foul in public spaces.

Remember: **Your pet is your own responsibility !**

The Following breeds of dogs are NOT permitted

American Pit Bull Terrier	Japanese Akita
Bull Mastiff	Japanese Tosa
Doberman Pinscher	Rhodesian Ridgeback
English Bull Terrier	Rottweiler
German Shepherd	Staffordshire Bull Terrier
(Alsatian)	Bandog

Any Cross breed of the above

If you have a problem with stray dogs please contact the Dog Warden at the Environment Department, Kerry County Council – 066/7183700.

The Council is not responsible for the control of rodents or pests. The Environmental Health Department, Health Service Executive Services, Tralee, may offer advice to you on the control of rodents or pests and should be contacted at 066/7184810 or 066/7184837.

Is my dwelling insured by the Council?

The Council insures the structure of all rented dwellings against fire, flood and storm damage. As a tenant, you are advised to insure the contents of your dwelling. Should you decide to buy your dwelling into the future, you then become responsible for both structural and contents insurance.

Where any wilful or malicious damage occurs in your dwelling or gardens, you, as tenants, are responsible for the repair. If the Council carries out the work, the cost of repair will be charged to you. Should any damage be caused to your dwelling, burglary,

house-breaking, larceny or theft, you as tenants are responsible for repairs to doors, windows, fixtures and fittings.

Council employees may call to carry out an inspection of the property or to carry out necessary repairs from time to time. You must allow employees of the Council to enter and inspect the property. Any other contractor employed by the Council must also be allowed to enter the property to carry out inspections or necessary work.

It is advisable that you seek identification from all callers, for safety reasons, prior to allowing access to your property.

Your Rent

The Council assesses your **weekly** rent payable based on the Councils Annual Differential Rent Scheme – this means that the rent is calculated and charged on the basis of your household income. Household income is made up of the income and/or earnings of every adult residing in your dwelling with you, the tenant, including yourself.

Your rent is payable weekly and in advance, in accordance with your Tenancy Agreement.

To calculate the weekly rent payable by you, you are required to disclose all household income to the Council. Failure to do so will result in the maximum rent being imposed and back dated. The Differential Rent Scheme is there to ensure that the rent charged is fair and affordable for each individual household.

All rents are reviewed annually when up to date household incomes and circumstances details are received.

Failure to return your Rent Assessment Form will result in maximum rent being charged.

If your household income increases or decreases at any time during the year, this fact must also be notified to Kerry County Council Housing Dept. and we will re-assess your rent in accordance with your changed circumstances/changed income. All income to household is assessable for rent purposes including most Social Welfare Payments.

You should let us know when:

- A person in your household either received employment or become unemployed.
- A person joins your household.
- A person leaves your household.
- A person in your household starts claiming Social Welfare.
- There is a death in the household.
- There is a birth in the household.

Methods of Payment

- Bill pay at any Post Office (a swipe card will be given to you from the Housing Department).

- At all County Council Offices.
- Through An Post Household Budget Scheme where your rent is deducted at source from your Social Welfare payment. (Details available from Housing Rent Department).
- Directly to the Rent Collector/Revenue Collector.
- By cheque or postal order through the postal system.
- By standing order through your Bank.
- By direct debit through your Bank.
- By wage deduction if you are an employee of the County Council.
- Deductions can be made through some Credit Unions.
- Through Kerry Money Advice & Budgeting Services (KMABS).

YOUR HOME

Maintenance and Repairs

Kerry County Council is responsible for some but not all repairs. When you sign your Tenancy Agreement you take responsibility, as the tenant, for any damage to the dwelling as this damage is your own responsibility. Any tenants whose account is in arrears will **not** be considered for repairs or improvement works to be completed by Kerry County Council.

If the Council has to rectify any works that arise from your interference with electrical installation, the cost of repairs by the Council will be charged to you.

It is important to note that Kerry County Council is not responsible for any appliances etc bought by the tenant themselves or work completed by the tenant themselves in and about the property.

The following are the responsibilities of the Tenant

Internal Items :

- Repair to or replacement of cupboard, wardrobes, kitchen units and doors, hinges, handles, locks, catches and drawers.
- Repair or replacement of solid fuel and/or electric heating installation or cooking appliances installed by the tenant themselves.
- Replacement of glass panels in doors or room heaters and their bars.
- Repair of damage caused to radiators, storage heaters by improper use.
- Repair or replacement of wall tiles.
- Floor tiles and floor covering.
- Repair or replacement of fireplace/hearth/tiled surround.
- Woodwork such as floors, doors and skirting boards.
- Ventilator covers.
- All internal doors, locks and handles.

- Window stays, catches, and restrictors.
- Draught proofing of doors and windows.
- Replacement of broken glass.
- All internal decoration/paintwork.
- Repair or replacement of fire grates.
- All boilers (solid fuel/gas/oil etc) to be maintained and serviced Annually

Electrical:

Please Note : The Council is **not** responsible for maintaining electrical goods or repairing electrical goods. Please also see hereunder list of electrical items that are the responsibility of the Tenant:

- Ceiling roses, lamp holders and plugs.
- Elements for electric fires. All repairs to electrical appliances, fires and heaters **not** installed by the Council.
- Replacement of light bulbs and any bulbs that may be required for pilot lights.
- The repairs of light switches (**see Note (1) hereunder**)
- Maintaining extractor fans and vents.
- Replacement of all batteries to smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
- Tenant is responsible for informing the Council where there are faulty switches and/or sockets.
- Under no circumstances are changes to electrical circuits (extra sockets etc) to take place without prior permission from the Council.

Note (1) :

Where it is the tenants responsibility to repair an electrical fitting or installation (incl. electric showers), other than the replacement of bulbs and fuses, the work should be carried out by a qualified and competent Electrical Contractor. Where such a Contractor carries out electrical work in a Council dwelling the name and address of the Contractor must be given to the Council's Housing Department together with a brief description of the work carried out.

You should also note that if the Council has to rectify any work that arises from your interference with electrical installation, the cost of repairs by the Council will be charged to you.

Sanitary:

- Sanitary work e.g replacement or repairs of bath, toilet, wash hand basin, showers etc..
- Repair or replacement of taps on sink units and wash-hand basins including leaking and dripping taps.
- Repair or replacement of stoppers and chains for baths, sinks and basins.
- Repair or replacement of ball cock or other water flotation control unit within the cistern. (**see Note (2) hereunder**)
- Repair or replacement of toilet seat, chain and handles.
- Repair or replacement of waste pipes inside the dwelling.

- Cleaning of air locks in pipes.
- Ensure that you do not cover over drains, manhole covers, armstrong junctions, shores, gullies etc.

Please note that it is a specialist job to clean drains – this work should therefore only be carried out by a specialist.

Note (2) :

Do not interfere with pipe work services unless you know what you are doing. For any major works it is recommended that you call a qualified plumber. Above all, do not interfere with the water tank in the attic as this could cause your dwelling and belongings to be destroyed, the electrics could be damaged and this could result in a fire starting in your property.

NB. You should also note that you are responsible for repairs arising from damage

External:

- All External doors, locks and handles.
- Letter boxes.
- All external decoration/paintwork.
- Cleaning of gully traps and drains and replacement of grids
- Annual cleaning of chimneys and the annual servicing of oil and solid fuel appliances.
- Cleaning of all chutes and down pipes.
- Gardens and hedging must be maintained and kept in a tidy condition.
- Fences and garden boundary walls: repair or replace where necessary (this applies whether they are erected or not by the Council) .
- Front gates, side gates, or doors leading to garden: repair, re-erect, or replace (this includes their supports and frames).
- Fuel sheds, or outhouses: repair roof, repair or replace doors, locks, door-handles or catches.
- Cleaning of silt, leaves or other deposits from gutters and rainwater gullies.
- Maintenance of all external boundary fences.

Provision of Ventilation

Condensation

Why?	Warm moist air in contact with cold surface.
When?	Usually during winter months.
Where?	For short periods in bathroom and kitchen, for long periods in unheated bedrooms and other un-ventilated areas such as wardrobes, cupboards or corners.

The simplest way of reducing moisture content in the air in your rooms is to provide ventilation. This removes the stale moist air and replaces it with fresh air which contains less moisture.

In older dwellings ventilation occurs through fireplaces and draughty windows. In newer modern dwellings and flats, sufficient ventilation does not occur unless a window or a vent is open for a reasonable time each day, and for as much time as possible while the room is in use. Too much ventilation in winter time may prove too cold and it will waste heat. A slightly open window or vent is usually sufficient. Ideally, the top part of the window should be open 10mm or half an inch. If more than two people sleep in a bedroom the window should be opened wider, particularly during the night.

If condensation occurs in a room where you have a heater connected to a chimney, you should have the installation checked as the chimney may have become blocked.

Prevention and Cure

The following four precautions are very important:

- Keep moisture low in your dwelling and confine it as much as possible to specific areas such as your kitchen and bathroom.
- Prevent the spread of moisture to other areas of your home, especially to rooms where clothes are drying.
- Provide some ventilation (e.g. open windows, extractor fans) to rooms where moisture is produced so that the moist air can escape.
- Provide heating.

Minimising Moisture Production

- Do not cover air vents.
- Dry clothes outside whenever possible.
- Provide venting if using a clothes dryer.
- Keep the use of mobile gas or paraffin heaters to a minimum as they release water vapour and increase the risk of condensation.
- Keep cooking steam to a minimum by using saucepan covers and lids and avoiding boiling for extended periods.
- Use an extractor fan when cooking where possible.

Prevention of Spread of Moist Air

- Your kitchen should be well ventilated. If you have an extractor fan, you should use it when cooking or washing/drying clothes. You should also use it when your windows mist up.
- If you do not have an extractor fan, open your windows and keep your kitchen door closed as much as possible.
- Extractor fans to bathrooms and wet rooms, where fitted, to be maintained in working order and used on a continuous basis.

- Always keep bathroom windows open after taking a bath or shower, at least until the bathroom dries off.
- If you have to use a gas or paraffin heater, make sure it is well ventilated.

Provision of Heating

Heating helps to prevent condensation as it warms the room's surfaces. It can take a long time for a cold room to heat up so it is better to provide a small amount of heating for long periods than to provide a lot of heat for a short period. If your dwelling or flat is unoccupied and unheated during the day, its surfaces can become very cold. It would be ideal if a small amount of heating could be provided for most of the time.

All rooms should be at least partially heated. Condensation most often occurs in unheated bedrooms. If you leave a room unheated you should keep the window slightly open and the door shut.

Rooms above a heated room benefit from the heat rising through the floor. Obviously in bungalows and in some flats, this cannot happen. Some rooms are colder as they contain gable or outside walls. These rooms are more likely to experience condensation. Some heating should therefore be provided in these rooms in particular. If a room's temperature is not kept at 12 degrees celsius or above, condensation is likely. If a room is being used, it should be heated to 18 to 20 degrees celsius if possible.

Insulation is important to reduce heat loss and raise the temperature. However, even in a well insulated dwelling, some heating may be necessary in cold rooms with no direct heat input.

Mould Growth

The start of mould growth can be seen through the appearance of small black spots on room surfaces such as walls, ceilings or even window blinds. Any sign of mould growth indicates the presence of moisture. The moisture will most likely be caused by condensation and is an indication that the level of moisture in the room needs to be reduced, or that the heating, ventilation or structural insulation, or even all of these, need to be improved.

New Homes

New buildings can take a while to dry out and special attention should be paid to heating and ventilation during the first winter. More ventilation and heating will be necessary than in subsequent winters. Extremes of temperature should be avoided to prevent warping of new joinery. You should not use waterproof décor (e.g. vinyl paper on walls or ceilings) unless you have been given expert advice.

Extractor Ventilation

If you propose to fit an extractor fan or change the ventilation of a room which has a gas or solid fuel allowance connected to the chimney, you must firstly get consent from the Council prior to any works commencing.

TENANT PARTICIPATION

A Partnership in Estate Management

When you are allocated a dwelling by the Council you become more than just a tenant, you also become a member of the community and a neighbour to others who live in that community. As such, the Council encourages you to become actively involved in your estate and is eager to hear your views and suggestions on how it can be improved. Do not leave it to the Council - get involved.

If you are in an area where a number of tenants are interested in setting up a Residents Association or Community Group we will be happy to help and to advise and to attend at your meetings where appropriate. If you move to an area where such a group is already established, we encourage you to take part and help to make your estate and area a better place to live.

To help you to become involved in your estate, Kerry County Council has employed Housing Liaison Officers who will deal with you should you have any query on your tenancy. The Liaison Officers also deal regularly with the local residents association or representative group for your area.

There is also a limited amount of funding available each year and grants may be allocated for such items as the purchase of tree, shrubs etc for the estate.

We will take your views into account when making decisions affecting your home and your neighbourhood. We may not be able to meet all the tenants/Residents' Association requests but we do our best to provide a quality housing service with the resources available.

Anti-Social and Nuisance Behaviour

The Council is committed to a strict code of practice to avoid, prevent and abate anti-social and nuisance behaviour as outlined in Council's policy of anti-social and nuisance behaviour. In doing so we maintain very close liaison with the Gardaí and other relevant Bodies to eliminate this behaviour from all our estates.

What is Anti-Social Behaviour and Nuisance Behaviour

The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997 and Residential Tenancies Act 2004 defines anti-social behaviour and the Tenancy Agreement includes a number of actions that constitute breaches of the agreements. Broadly speaking, the following are examples of the type of activity which are regarded as anti-social and nuisance behaviour.

- The sale and supply of a controlled drug
- Possession of a controlled drug for sale, supply or distribution.

- Any behaviour which causes or is likely to cause any significant or persistent danger, injury, damage, loss or fear to any person living, working or otherwise lawfully in the area.
- Harassment
- Excessive noise
- Assault
- Verbal abuse
- Joyriding
- Vandalism/criminal damage
- General disturbance in the estate
- Illegal dumping/littering
- Drinking alcohol in public
- Unreasonable holding of parties

It is important that you report any criminal activity to the Gardaí, not to the Council, as we have no remit with regard to criminal activity.

If you or anyone in your home is involved in any of these activities you run the risk of being issued with a Possession Order through the Courts for the recovery of your home by the Council. There is an obligation on all tenants to ensure that neither they nor any member of their household engages in anti-social and nuisance behaviour of any kind.

All complaints of anti-social and nuisance behaviour will be taken seriously and will be investigated fully. Where serious complaints are made and it appears that the complaints are well founded, the tenants or persons against whom such complaints are made may face eviction. The Council takes a strong proactive stance, where necessary, against the minority of tenants involved in anti-social and nuisance behaviour.

Littering

All residents must ensure their dwelling and gardens are kept in a tidy condition. Littering of your garden, alleyway or laneway is considered as anti-social behaviour and will not be tolerated by the Council. It is the responsibility of those tenants, served by a gated laneway, to ensure that it is kept clean and free of rubbish etc.

If you commit an offence under the Litter Pollution Act 1997 you could face an on the spot fine and may lead to a Court appearance with the result of a large financial penalty.

If you feel a neighbour is causing you a nuisance, you should try in the first instance to sort the problem out between yourselves. The Council has adopted the position that neighbourhood disputes are a matter for those involved. If however you cannot resolve the issue yourself, there is an option for you to put your complaint in writing to the Housing Liaison Officer, Housing Department, giving details of the nature of the complaint, the location, when it happened (times and dates) and names of those involved and it will be investigated.

Anonymous Complaints Will Not Be Dealt With

Anonymous complaints will **not** be dealt with. However, a person with a complaint can be assured that it will always be treated in the strictest confidence and that personal details will not be mentioned in following up on a complaint. The Council undertakes to

hold confidential any information provided to it, subject to its obligations under the Law, including the Data Protection Act 1988, as amended 2013 and Freedom of Information Act 1997, as amended 2014..

Anti-social and nuisance behaviour is a very serious matter and should not be allowed to develop in your estate.

Vacant Dwellings

A Tenant must notify the Housing Department if you intend to vacate your dwelling. Vacant dwellings in an estate can become a target for anti-social behaviour and squatters. The Council requires at least **four weeks notice** if you intend to surrender your dwelling. If there is a vacant dwelling in your estate, do not assume that we know about it already – tell us. Please make contact with the Housing Dept. with the details of the property. The sooner we are aware of the property, the sooner we can arrange to have it re-let.

Important Notice: When a tenant vacates a dwelling he/she must completely remove all personal belongings from the dwelling. In the event of personal items being left behind by a tenant, Kerry County Council will not take responsibility for any damage to or removal of such property by others and will not accept any liability attached to such an occurrence. Where the tenant vacates the property and has caused damage to the property or has left behind rubbish in and around the property, a charge for the repair and removal of same will be placed on the tenant who is responsible for these actions.

Protecting your Home

There are some steps hereunder you can take, which will help improve the physical security of your home.

When going out or away:

- Close and lock windows and doors, even if you are only going out for a few minutes.
- Do not forget to secure any side doors/gates as they allow entry to the back of your dwelling which is more vulnerable to a break-in.
- Never leave valuables lying around.
- Make sure you do not leave tools or ladders lying about in your back garden.
- Never leave cash or keys on the hall table and limit the amount of cash kept in the home.
- Ensure all electrical items have been unplugged.
- Consider leaving a light on at night time in appropriate places throughout the dwelling.
- Cancel any daily/weekly deliveries, e.g. newspapers, milk, etc.
- Check and note the serial numbers of valuable equipment, and take photographs of valuables where appropriate.

- Ask somebody trustworthy, known to you, to keep an eye on your dwelling for you.
- Ensure pets are adequately cared for.
- Advice on home security is available from your local Crime Prevention Officer. This service is well worth availing of and is absolutely free. Contact your local Garda Station and you will be put in touch with the Crime Prevention Officer for your locality.

Thieves may try to gain entry to your home by passing as officials or workmen. Never let a stranger into your home unless you are certain of his/her identity. Take the following precautions:

- Ask to see the caller's identity card. All officials carry one and will be pleased to show it.
- Take time to look at identity card, examine the photograph and ask the caller to spell his/her name.
- If the caller does not have an identity card ask them to call back later and use the extra time to check with the organisation they represent.
- Telephone the Gardaí if you are suspicious.

Items of High Fire Risk in the Home

The following are **some** examples of high fire risk items in the home: All electrical items, chip pans, open fires, chimneys, portable heaters, candles, matches, cigarettes, telephone chargers.

Some Fire Prevention Measures

Most fires in homes start in the living room and bedroom at night (approx 75%) when we are sleeping. The kitchen is the next place that fires have been known to start.

- Check room by room for dangers, especially before you go to bed.
- Be sure to keep matches, candles and lighters out of the reach of children and do not leave young children alone in the dwelling.
- Use secure fire guards with open fires.
- Never carry hot coals from one fireplace to another.
- Avoid banking fires too high.
- Be careful with sparking sticks when lighting fires.
- Do not smoke in bed.
- Switch off and unplug all appliances, not in use at night.
- Unplug all mobile phone chargers.
- Only one electric appliance should be plugged into any outlet.

- At night you should close doors to all rooms. Do not open a door if you suspect there is a fire in the room.
- All gas and electrical appliances should be used and serviced in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Christmas time – it is very important that particular care is taken with Christmas tree lights and any lighted decorations.

In the event of a fire in your dwelling:

- Your first priority is to get everyone out of the dwelling, as soon as possible, to a safe place.
- Call the Fire Brigade by dialling 999 or 112 and ask for Fire Service.
- When the Fire Brigade answers state clearly the address of the premises where help is needed.
- Do **NOT** re-enter the dwelling for personal belongings etc.
- If your escape routes are blocked by fire/smoke go into a room, close the door and stuff a blanket or carpet at the bottom of the door to help keep the smoke out. Call for help from the window and await the arrival of the Fire Brigade.
- Do not evacuate from an upstairs window except as a last resort.

In the case of chimney fire:

- Call the Fire Brigade. Close doors and windows to reduce draught, if possible move furniture and carpets away from the fireplace.

Smoke Alarms

- Ensure you have at least two in place and test them regularly
- Under no circumstances are they to be disconnected.
- Replace battery (standby) on a regular basis.
- Keep a fire blanket in the kitchen area.
- Keep a small fire extinguisher in the kitchen area.

Gas Cylinders

- Bottled gas cylinders for cooking should not be stored in the dwelling.
- Ensure that the gas cylinder is always standing upright.
- Switch off regulator when not in use.
- Never seal/cover up vents when using gas heater.
- Regularly check hoses and couplings for wear and tear.
- Keep away from furniture and especially curtains.

- If you smell gas in or around your home turn off gas and ring the Council immediately. (Do not assume that someone else will do it.)

Dangerous Liquids/Products

- Never store flammable liquids (e.g. petrol) in the dwelling or garage.
- Never leave poisonous liquids or substances in places within easy reach of children.
- Do not hold on to old medicines, take them to your nearest Pharmacy for disposal.

Electrical

- Never interfere with electrical wiring or fuse boards, or electrically powered household goods as the consequences can be fatal. Ensure that you call a Registered Electrician.

HOUSING OPTIONS

Extension to a Local Authority Dwelling

In some instances, where it would eliminate overcrowding, the Council may provide a bedroom extension to a tenant's existing dwelling. Applications will be considered in accordance with the Council's Allocations Policy. Please contact Kerry County Council, Housing Department at 066 – 7183500 for details.

Other Housing Options

If your income level increases to such an extent as would make you an eligible candidate to become a homeowner in your own right, the Council, as well as its role as your Landlord, also facilitates home ownership through various options such as:

- Tenant Purchase
- House Purchase Loan/Construction Loan
- Mortgage Allowance Scheme

Information and application forms for these Schemes can be obtained from Kerry County Council, Housing Department at 066 - 7183500. Every applicant will be assessed individually for these options and rules set down by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government will apply in all cases.

Tenant Purchase

Tenants who have rented a Council dwelling for a minimum of 12 months, may apply to purchase the property, provided there is a current Tenant Purchase Scheme in operation at the time, and provided they also **meet the qualifying criteria** for that scheme.

House Purchase Loan

A person who wishes to purchase or build a property and who cannot obtain a loan from a financial institution may apply for a Local Authority House Purchase Loan or a House Construction Loan. As with other schemes, the income eligibility test will apply. Loans are also available for home improvement.

Mortgage Allowance Scheme

Tenants who surrender their dwelling back to the Local Authority and take out a mortgage to purchase a private dwelling, may avail of a mortgage allowance, payable over a five year period. Other conditions also apply.

Housing Adaptation for person with a Disability

The Housing Department also deals with applications from persons who may require essential alterations to their homes to accommodate a particular disability of a person residing in that home. Medical evidence and other documentation will be required to accompany all applications. Information and application forms are available from Kerry County Council, Housing Department, Rathass, Tralee at 066 - 7183500.

TRANSFERS AND CHANGE OF TENANCY

Existing tenants who request a transfer from one Local Authority dwelling to another will have their applications considered in accordance with the Council's Transfer Policy. If existing accommodation is not adequate to meet the needs of the tenant or if there are other circumstances outlined in the transfer application, these will all be taken into account when assessing the application.

The Council will take the following circumstances into account when dealing with transfer applications:

- Where overcrowding is being experienced.
- Where the elderly, single person or small family households wish to surrender family type accommodation to move to smaller more suitable accommodation.
- Where mitigating medical and or compassionate circumstances are shown.

The Council can **refuse** to make a transfer for the following reasons:

- Rent arrears – if there are rent arrears or outstanding service charges.
- Non-compliance of Tenancy Agreement – compliance with the Council's Tenancy Agreement must be satisfactory and the dwelling being surrendered must be in good condition. Fair wear and tear allowed.
- Tenants or members of their household who engage in anti-social and nuisance behaviour will not be considered for transfers and may in fact be evicted by the Council.

- The Council may also refuse to offer a transfer to an applicant who has refused to disclose any information that is requested either for the purpose of assessing the application or on the grounds of good estate management purposes.

Succession of Tenancy of a Kerry County Council rented dwelling:

Persons applying for permission to reside in a Kerry County Council rented dwelling under Succession of Tenancy must fulfil a number of requirements in accordance with the Council Policy on Regularisation of Tenancy and the Councils Anti-Social and Behaviour Policy.

Information and application forms are available from Kerry County Council, Housing Department , Rathass, Tralee at 066 - 7183500.

Removal of a name from the Tenancy of a Kerry County Council rented dwelling :

Persons applying to remove a name from the tenancy of a Kerry County Council rented property must fulfil a number of requirements in accordance with the Kerry County Council Policy on Regularisation of Tenancy.

Information and application forms are available from Kerry County Council, Housing Department , Rathass, Tralee at 066 - 7183500.

Permission to Reside in a Kerry County Council rented property:

Should a person wish to reside in a Kerry County Council rented property, they must firstly apply to the Council for permission. They must also fulfil a number of requirements in accordance with the Kerry County Council Policy on Regularisation of Tenancy and the Councils Anti-Social Behaviour Policy..

Information and application forms are available from Kerry County Council, Housing Department , Rathass, Tralee at 066 - 7183500.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Kerry County Council, Rathass, Tralee 066/7183500

Libraries

Headquarters & Tralee Branch 066/7121200
Ballybunion 068/27615
Caherciveen 066/9472287
Castleisland 066/7141485
An Daingean 066/9151499
Kenmare 064/6641416
Killarney 064/6632655
Killorglin 066/9761272
Listowel 068/21491

Emergency

Garda, Fire Brigade, Ambulance 999 or 112

Garda Stations

Tralee 066/7102300
Killarney 064/6671160
Listowel 068/21000
Killorglin 066/9761113
Caherciveen 066/9473600
An Daingean 066/9151522
Castleisland 066/7141204

Health Service Executive, Rathass, Tralee 066/7184837

Kerry General Hospital 066/7126222
Killarney District Hospital 064/6630176
Listowel District Hospital 068/21022
Caherciveen District Hospital 066/9472100
Dingle District Hospital 066/9151455
Killarney St. Columbanus Hospital 064/6631018

Irish Wheelchair Assoc., 4/5 Maine St., Tralee 066/7180154

Kerry Citizens Information Service

Tralee 066/7123655
Caherciveen 064/6641000
Killarney 064/6632297
Listowel 068/22937
Castleisland 066/7143992

Kerry Counselling Centre

D17 Edward Court, Edward St., Tralee 066/7122931

Kerry County Childcare Committee, 1 Power's Court, Tralee	066/7181582
Kerry County Network of People with Disabilities	066/7180611
Samaritans	066/7122566
Cura	066/7127355
Kerry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre	066/7123122
Freephone	1800 633 333
Adapt Kerry Women's Refuge	066/7129100
Tralee Women's Resource Centre	066/7120622/7190766
Childline Freephone	1800 666 660
Kerry Travellers Development Project	066/7120054
Department of Social Protection	
Tralee	066/7121088
Killarney	064/6632117
Listowel	068/21677
Caherciveen	066/9473440
Credit Unions	
Caherciveen	066/9472711
Ballybunion	068/27685
Clanmaurice	066/713127
An Daingean	066/9151919
Killorglin	066/9761502
Listowel	068/21938
Milltown	066/9767777
Tralee	066/7122373
Castleisland	066/7141749
Killarney	064/6631344
Kenmare	064/6642111
MABS	
Money Advice & Budgeting Service	066/7129750
ESB	
Account Enquiries	1850 372372
Network Enquiries	1850 372638
Bus Eireann	
Tralee	066/7123566
Killarney	064/6630011
Legal Aid Board, Law Centre	066/7126900
Citizens Information Tralee	066/7123635

Tenant's Handbook
Table of Contents