



THE NATIONAL TRUST

The Residential Tenants' Handbook

TANT

TENANTS ASSOCIATION OF THE NATIONAL TRUST



Welcome

Since being founded in 1895, the National Trust has taken on the care of some of the most treasured places in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This includes more than a quarter of a million hectares of our finest landscapes and at least 25,000 buildings ranging from great mansions and castles to field barns. We're charged under our Acts with the responsibility of looking after these special places 'for ever, for everyone'.

Among this diverse and daunting portfolio are nearly 5,000 houses and cottages which are mostly let to private tenants or staff. Many of these are of architectural merit or fine examples of the local vernacular style, and they contribute greatly to the character of the countryside, villages or hamlets. They are of course also people's homes, and we share our responsibility to look after them with you, their tenants.

The formal relationship between the Trust and our tenants is set out in tenancy agreements, but in practice we need to work together as partners, as joint stewards of these important buildings. We recognise that being a tenant of the National Trust can bring special demands, so we've prepared this booklet, with the help of the Tenants' Association of the National Trust, to help that partnership along.

This handbook is the first of its kind, and I hope you find it useful in your dealings with the Trust and our joint care of your home. Please let us know if you can suggest improvements, and thank you for your contribution to our vital conservation work.



Fiona Reynolds, Director-General

March 2009

About the National Trust as a landlord

This handbook has been prepared in collaboration with the Tenants' Association of the National Trust (TANT) to provide information to tenants to help you understand your rights and responsibilities and to help you get the best from your time living in a Trust property. Our aim is to be a good landlord, working with good tenants for the benefit of the properties in our care. We want to improve our service to tenants and hope this handbook will help us to achieve that.

The Handbook is a guide and is not intended to provide you with legal advice on the terms of your tenancy. You should always seek help from the Citizens Advice Bureau or a legal adviser if you are unsure about your rights and responsibilities.

The National Trust is Europe's largest conservation organisation and our purpose is to care for many of the finest historic buildings, collections and landscapes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for the benefit of the nation. In 2008 we were supported by 3.5 million members and nearly 14 million visitors who came to our 'pay for entry' properties, and these figures continue to grow. In addition we estimate that more than 100 million visits are made to our countryside sites, and nearly 50,000 volunteers help with many different aspects of our work each year.

Amongst the 25,000 buildings in our care are nearly 5,000 houses and cottages, the majority of which are occupied by tenants as their private homes. You and your families play a key role in helping us to look after these properties, many of which are of historic interest in their own right. You not only support our work financially through the rent you pay, which contributes to the income available for our conservation work, but you are also actively involved in the care of these special places, acting as informal custodians on our behalf.

The Trust is not a social landlord and we have a wide range of demands on the time and money available to us. As a charity we have an obligation to let properties on the best terms we can reasonably obtain. However, we do recognise that we have an important responsibility towards our residential tenants and we want to provide as good a service to you as we can.

Our overall objectives for housing are:

- To safeguard our houses and cottages as part of the historic environment
- To further the Trust's work through selection of tenants with suitable skills
- To generate rental income to support the Trust's work
- To help meet local housing needs where the Trust is a significant housing provider
- Where possible, to favour those making a contribution to the community.

Customer service standards

We aim to provide a good service to our tenants so we have developed a list of standards you should expect from us:

- We will treat all tenants as customers with dignity and respect
- We will deal with you in a professional and courteous manner
- We will ring you back if we are not available to take your call, or if you ask us to
- Wherever possible, we will visit you in your home, if you ask us to
- If we are going to be late or unable to keep an appointment we have made with you, we will contact you and explain why
- Any staff or contractor who may visit you in your home will be expected to carry identification to confirm who they are
- We will continually review and monitor our services, making improvements wherever possible
- We will investigate and report back to you on any complaint you make to us
- We will apologise if we get things wrong and do our best to put things right.

In return we will expect you to:

- Work with our staff in a courteous and co-operative way
- Let us know if you cannot keep an appointment
- Let our staff have access to your property to survey condition, carry out work or discuss matters with you as required
- Not abuse, threaten or harass our staff or contractors, and to prevent members of your household or visitors from doing so.

Your tenancy agreement

Your tenancy agreement is an important legal document. It sets out the terms and conditions of your tenancy and the rights and responsibilities of both Landlord and Tenant. If you do not keep to the terms of the agreement, you will be in breach of your tenancy and in serious cases could lose your home.

Your tenancy is likely to be one of three basic types, and your local National Trust contact will be able to tell you which type you have if you are not sure.

PROTECTED or STATUTORY TENANCY

If your agreement was signed before 15 January 1989, it is likely to be protected under the Rent Acts. This means that the rent will be set using the independent 'Fair Rent' system and your agreement cannot be ended unless certain legal conditions apply. Once you have a protected tenancy with the Trust it will remain protected even if you move to another Trust property and sign a new agreement, although the rent may vary according to the size of the property.

Usually agreements granted to a new tenant after 15 January 1989 are one of two types:

ASSURED SHORTHOLD TENANCY

Nowadays this is the most common type of tenancy agreement. It gives you a legal right to live in your property for a specified period of time. It also offers the landlord a right to take back the property at the end of the tenancy should he/she so wish. Normally, however, after the initial fixed period, they run on from month to month as long as the terms of the agreement are met.

ASSURED TENANCY

Assured tenants have greater security than Assured Shorthold Tenants. Such tenancies mean that as long as you don't break the terms of the Tenancy Agreement, you can live in the property for an agreed period and after that, continue to live there unless certain legal conditions apply.

Your tenancy agreement

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland the following types of tenancy apply.

RENT CONTROLLED or PROTECTED TENANCY

If your tenancy is a rent controlled tenancy, legislation controls the level of rent and duration of the tenancy. The law concerning Protected Tenancies is complex, and if this applies to your Tenancy we recommend that you seek advice about your rights, either from a solicitor or the Housing Rights Service, www.housingrights.org.uk

UNCONTROLLED TENANCY

This is the most common form of tenancy in Northern Ireland and is the one the National Trust will normally grant. It gives you a legal right to live in your property for a specified period of time. It also offers us, as landlord, a right to take back the property at the end of the tenancy should we so wish. Normally, however, an Uncontrolled Tenancy, after the initial fixed period, will run on from month to month as long as the terms of the agreement are met.

We will also:

- Provide you with a Rent Book (free of charge) containing the specific tenancy information prescribed by regulations specific to Northern Ireland and
- Where appropriate, provide a copy of a Certificate of Fitness in accordance with the Private Tenancies (NI) Order 2006 depending on the age of the dwelling and the commencement date of the tenancy.

Common conditions of your tenancy

The detailed terms and conditions of National Trust tenancy agreements vary widely from property to property. This is because our standard documents have changed over time, and they have also varied according to local custom and changes in the law. Some agreements were drawn up by previous owners before the Trust acquired the property. This means that the rights and responsibilities of landlord and tenant can be different from agreement to agreement which can be very confusing for all of us.

Since 2004 we have used the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) standard agreement for new Assured Shorthold Tenancies of less than seven years to ensure that our lettings are fair and are written in plain language.

In broad terms your and our responsibilities are as set out in the next column.

YOUR AND OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

We expect you:

- To look after the property in accordance with the terms of your tenancy agreement
- To pay your rent on time on the dates required by your agreement or any other dates agreed between us
- Not to cause nuisance or annoyance to your neighbours or other people.

In return we undertake to:

- Respect the fact that the property is your home and allow you to enjoy it without unnecessary interruption or disturbance
- Carry out repairs for which we are responsible in an effective and timely manner
- Insure the building (but not the contents) against normal risks.

Tenancy agreements will also set out procedures for things like rent reviews, handling of deposits and arrangements for ending a tenancy. The following sections give more detail.

Looking after the property

You should always check your tenancy agreement to confirm your and our responsibilities. If you are unsure, please contact us. Normally, for tenancies with an initial term of less than seven years that pay rent monthly, our obligations are split along the following lines:

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Keeping the property clean and in good condition, in particular maintaining the interior decoration, cleaning windows inside and out, cleaning out solid fuel appliances and sweeping chimneys or flues that have been approved for use
- Unblocking sinks, baths or showers, replacing bath or basin plugs and toilet seats
- Replacing fuses and light bulbs
- Not altering or changing the appearance or structure of the property in any way without our consent
- Not altering or changing the gas, electrical or plumbing installations nor installing external aerials or satellite dishes
- Letting us know of any repairs that need to be carried out
- Allowing us to have access to the property, with reasonable notice, to inspect condition or carry out work that is our responsibility
- Keeping the garden neat, tidy and well maintained and not cutting down any trees or significantly altering it without consent
- Looking after your own belongings and keys to the property
- It is very important that you ensure that any solid-fuel heating installations in your property are properly and safely used, that flues and chimneys are regularly cleaned and kept free from blockages and that associated ventilation is kept open and free from obstruction. Further advice is available from the Solid Fuel Association by calling 0845 601 4406 or 01773 835 400 or at www.solidfuel.co.uk which provides specific safety information.
- Open fires and solid-fuel appliances may only be used where the chimney or flue has been approved for use by the Trust
- We would urge you to consider installing battery-operated Carbon Monoxide detectors in your property and to test any installed detectors at the intervals recommended by the manufacturer.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

We will aim to meet our statutory responsibilities and provide decent homes for people to live in. We will normally be responsible for the following things:

- The structure and exterior of the building and outbuildings provided by us, including roofs, chimneys and walls
- External decoration, doors and windows (except glass)
- Internal plaster (except minor cracks)
- Drains, septic tanks, gutters and external pipes
- Repair and maintenance of heating and plumbing installations and appliances provided by us
- Paths and steps giving access to the property.

Getting repairs done

ROUTINE REPAIRS

Most of our repairs are carried out as part of a planned maintenance cycle. For example, we aim to do external decorations every five years and will often carry out a survey of properties prior to this so we can plan to carry out other maintenance works, such as woodwork repair or re-pointing, at the same time. Hopefully this will minimise disruption to you and reduce costs overall. You will be notified in advance of when such repairs are planned so you can agree access arrangements and highlight any maintenance work that you believe is required.

We aim to carry out repairs to a good standard and will try, as far as possible, to minimise disruption to you and your home.

SERVICING OF GAS AND ELECTRICITY INSTALLATIONS

If you have gas in your home, we will arrange for a gas safety test to be carried out every year by a Gas Safe Registered Engineer. Depending on the terms of your tenancy, we aim to carry out fixed wiring electrical tests every five years.

Where repairs become necessary outside this planned cycle, you should notify your local National Trust Office (see Local Contacts Sheet) and let them know the following:

- Your name, address and contact number
- The nature of the problem giving as much detail as possible
- An idea of urgency
- Convenient times for someone to come to inspect or deal with it.

When we receive a report of a repair we will allocate it to an appropriate member of our building team. We will agree the degree of urgency with you as well as the timescale for the work to be completed. We have three broad categories of repair as follows.

EMERGENCY

This would include defects that put the health, safety or security of the tenant or another person at risk, or which have a serious adverse impact on the building.

URGENT

This would include problems that cause serious discomfort, inconvenience or nuisance to the tenant or another person.

ROUTINE

This would include problems that can be deferred without serious discomfort, inconvenience or nuisance to anyone or the long-term deterioration of the building. If planned maintenance is due to be carried out within a reasonable time, it may be appropriate for such repairs to be dealt with then.

Getting repairs done

EMERGENCY REPAIRS OUT OF HOURS

Where possible we will provide out of hours emergency contact numbers, and if these are available for your property they will be given on the Local Contacts Sheet. If an emergency arises and you are unable to contact the Trust and have to instruct a local contractor, we would ask that you advise us as soon as possible. In the event of a genuine emergency, the cost of the call out and repair will be paid for by the Trust unless you are responsible for the work under the terms of your tenancy.

IF REPAIR WORK IS NOT CARRIED OUT AS AGREED

We will always try to carry out the work within the timescale agreed with you. If we find that it will not be possible as planned, we will let you know in advance, explain why and agree a revised time with you. If we have failed to carry out an agreed repair and have not informed you, you should contact your local office (see Local Contacts Sheet) which will investigate and rearrange as appropriate. If you have a problem which cannot be sorted out with your local office, you can make an official complaint using the complaints procedure set out in this handbook.

Rent and money matters

HOW TO PAY YOUR RENT

Rent for National Trust properties is collected by our central Transaction Processing Unit (TPU) based in Trowbridge. Rents for residential lettings are normally paid monthly on a day specified in your tenancy agreement. The TPU will send you an invoice about two weeks before the due day. Any rent unpaid on the due date becomes a debt and is dealt with through our credit control procedures.

You can pay your rent in a number of ways but monthly by Direct Debit from a bank or building society account is our preferred method. This is the most reliable form of payment: it saves you from having to remember to make payments on the right dates and can be automatically amended to reflect changes in rent. The Direct Debit Guarantee safeguards you if incorrect payments are made for any reason. There is a presumption for all new tenancies that rent will be paid by Direct Debit.

Existing tenants can pay by the following means but we would encourage all tenants to move to Direct Debit wherever possible:

- Standing order from a bank or building society account (good to ensure regular payment but needs to be renewed whenever the amount due changes)
- Cheques made payable to 'The National Trust' and sent by post to the TPU address shown on the rent demand
- Credit Card Payments by telephone to the TPU - the contact number is shown on your rent demand.

HELP WITH YOUR RENT

If you are an older person, unemployed or long-term sick or you have disabilities or your earnings are low, you may be entitled to claim assistance to help with your rent.

Payments are administered by your local council. You can get application forms and advice from the council or from the Citizens Advice Bureau. The new system of 'Local Housing Allowance' superseded housing benefit from April 2008 and under this scheme any allowance is paid to the claimant direct. Check with your local council for details.

It is very important that you claim any such assistance as soon as you feel you may be entitled to it. Any entitlement will only start from the day you submit your claim.

You are responsible for telling the local council of any changes in your circumstances that may affect your entitlement – for example, an increase in earnings, someone moving into your home or any changes in your other benefits. You are also responsible for repaying any overpayment of any assistance which the council demands back from us.

ARREARS

It is important that you pay your rent on time but we will deal with you fairly if you fall behind and will take account of any specific difficulties you may be facing. However, we will not ignore arrears of rent, because this would not help you and it would increase the cost of managing and maintaining our housing for everyone else.

Rent and money matters

If you know you are going to have difficulty paying the rent or you have received a letter from us saying you owe rent, you should contact us immediately on the number shown on your rent demand or arrears notice. If appropriate, we can put you in touch with professional, independent agencies that will be able to advise you on how to manage your debt and how to safeguard the 'roof over your head'.

COURT ACTION

If you do not pay off arrears on your rent account in an agreed way, particularly if they continue to grow, we will start legal proceedings to get back the money you owe in accordance with the terms of your agreement. In serious cases, where you make no attempt to clear or reduce the arrears at an agreed rate, we will ask the County Court for an order to repossess your home.

We tell you this so that you know what rent arrears can lead to and to encourage you to talk to us at an early stage so we do not need to take legal action.

If you are in debt because you are waiting for a decision on a claim for Local Housing Allowance, you should tell us and make sure you have sent your local council all the information they need to deal with your claim.

GENERAL ADVICE ABOUT DEBT

Don't ignore debt – it is always better to talk to someone about it. It may be difficult to face but becomes worse the longer you leave it. Details of free debt advice services are available from your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

You can also seek independent, free legal advice about any court action by contacting your local Citizens Advice Bureau, Housing Aid Centre, Law Centre or a solicitor under the Community Legal Service Scheme (formerly Legal Aid).

RENT REVIEWS

We usually review residential rents every two years, unless your tenancy agreement specifies a different period.

If you have a Protected Tenancy, a fair rent has to be set by the Government's Rent Service. We will usually arrange to meet you to look at the property and discuss any factors that might affect the rent. We will then apply to the Rent Officer for a new rent and we will let you know how much we are asking for. You will have the chance to let the Rent Officer know if you feel this is too much. The Rent Officer may want to visit your home to help decide what the rent should be. The Rent Officer will notify us both of what rent he/she feels is appropriate and both parties have a right of appeal if they do not feel this is reasonable. Once the Rent Officer has set the rent, it will be registered for the property and cannot be changed for two years, unless there is a significant change in the property during that time.

If you have an Assured Shorthold Tenancy, we can agree a new rent together without involving the Rent Officer. We will normally arrange to meet you to look at the property and discuss any relevant issues. We will then write to you proposing a new rent to be charged from the next review date. This will usually be based on rents for comparable properties in the area and will take account of any particular advantages or disadvantages that your property has. If you feel the proposed rent is too high, please speak to us. If we cannot agree a rent with you (which would be unusual), you have the right to appeal to an Independent Rent Assessment Committee. When we propose the new rent we will send you a legal notice, which initiates the formal process and gives you the opportunity to lodge an appeal if necessary. In the event of an appeal, the decision of the Committee is binding on both parties and could be more or less than the figure applied for.

The process for an Assured Tenancy is similar.

Rent reviews should not normally include the value of improvements that you have carried out to the property with our consent. So it is important that you always seek our consent to any improvements you would like to carry out and that you make sure that these are excluded when the rent is reviewed.

RENT REVIEWS – NORTHERN IRELAND

In Northern Ireland we usually review residential rents every year, unless your tenancy agreement specifies a different period. If you have a Rent Controlled or Protected Tenancy, the level of rent will be set by the Rent Officer. If you have an Uncontrolled Tenancy, we can agree a new rent together.

DEPOSITS

We usually take a deposit at the beginning of a tenancy which may be the equivalent to one or two months' rent. We hold this to cover the cost of any repairs or replacements which are your responsibility and are still outstanding when you leave. Any unspent amount of your deposit will be returned to you at your forwarding address.

In April 2007 the Government introduced a new Tenancy Deposit Scheme in England and Wales (not applicable in Northern Ireland). This requires landlords to register details of all new tenancies at their beginning and end with an approved body which has the responsibility to:

- Protect deposits during the tenancy
- Ensure deposits are returned promptly where there is no dispute at the end of the tenancy
- Where there is a dispute about the return of the deposit, arrange for it to be dealt with fairly by the Independent Complaints Examiner.

Being a good neighbour

USE OF THE PROPERTY

We expect you to live in the property as your principal home and not to use it to run any form of business or for any activity that is not consistent with a private domestic residence. A degree of home working is acceptable, but if you use the property as a registered business address or for a full-time business you will need our consent and it may require a different type of tenancy. You must not allow the property to become overcrowded or to be used for any illegal or immoral purpose.

BEHAVIOUR

You are responsible for the behaviour of people who live with you or visit you. This responsibility covers behaviour in your home, and in the locality. You, or they, must not:

- Behave in ways that cause nuisance, annoyance, harassment, alarm or distress to other people
- Create unreasonable noise
- Cause damage to the property or the locality
- Commit an arrestable offence in the property or locality.

PETS

We are not against pets being kept as a matter of principle, but we do need to be able to make sure they are appropriate in type and number and are not allowed to damage the property or disturb neighbours. If you want to keep pets, you will need our written consent. This will not normally be refused as long as the request is reasonable and compatible with the nature of the property. If animals become a nuisance or damage the property, we reserve the right to withdraw consent for them to be kept at the property.

Getting involved

We are keen to find ways to improve how we involve tenants in our work, both to improve our services as a landlord and to enhance the care of our properties, which we hold for the benefit of the nation.

We work closely with TANT centrally, and with its help and support an increasing number of village or estate tenants' associations have been established locally. We welcome these and see them not only as a valuable means of dealing with issues locally but also as a valuable social contribution to the communities we work with.

Tenants don't have to join a formal group in order to get involved, and we welcome feedback from groups and individuals alike. Opportunities will vary from property to property depending on the Trust's ownership in the area, but examples of how we would like to engage with tenants include the following:

- Providing information about your home such as its history or special features
- Communications about the Trust through local or national newsletters and an area dedicated to tenants on our website
- Visiting National Trust properties in your area – sometimes special local arrangements can be made for you to visit even if you are not a Trust member
- Volunteering – get involved in all aspects of Trust work. See the website www.nationaltrust.org.uk/volunteering.

GETTING YOUR FEEDBACK

We are interested in what you think and welcome your ideas for what else you want to know or what else you think we could do. Please let us have your feedback and your views on issues such as:

- Our policies and procedures
- Matters affecting a specific group of tenants and residents
- Improvements to service delivery
- Matters affecting individual tenants and residents, ie housing management and maintenance
- The services you require as tenants
- Service changes and improvements
- Anything else you can think of.

Changes to your household

SUCCESSION

If you die, depending on the type of tenancy you have, it is possible for a member of your family, who has been living with you, to take over the tenancy and become the new tenant if they meet certain legal requirements. If the person left in the property does not have a legal right to take over the tenancy, we will look at their circumstances and consider whether we can offer a tenancy. In some cases we might be able to offer them a tenancy in another home more suited to their needs.

ASSIGNMENT

Your tenancy will set out whether or not you can assign or transfer your tenancy to somebody else. Usually if it is permitted you would need to get our consent first.

RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN

Our tenancies are usually granted to a single named tenant but if your relationship with your partner breaks down, you will need to speak to us to discuss what this means for your tenancy. We will try to adopt a sympathetic approach depending on the circumstances.

MOVING HOME

If your family circumstances have changed and you no longer feel your property is appropriate for your needs, we may be able to consider offering you another National Trust property. We cannot guarantee to be able to help, as it will depend on what other housing we have in the area and whether anything suitable is available.

Leaving your home

When you plan to move out of your home, for whatever reason, your tenancy agreement will usually set out the period of notice you need to give us. If the initial fixed term of your tenancy has expired and you are occupying on a month-to-month basis, we will accept a month's written notice of your intention to move but it is helpful to us to have as much advanced warning as possible.

You must pay the rent for the final month and we ask that you give us a forwarding address.

When you leave your home, you are responsible for the following:

- Clearing your home including any loft spaces, sheds, garages and garden of all your personal belongings
- Ensuring everyone moves out with you
- Removing and disposing of floor coverings you have fitted unless they are in such good condition that we give you permission to leave them
- Putting right any damage that has occurred – for example, making good the walls where shelves, etc. have been taken down
- Ensuring decorations are left in good order
- Cleaning all surfaces, fixtures and fittings, including bath, toilet, basin, kitchen units, sink, etc. This may include professional cleaning where pets have been kept
- Leaving flues and chimneys in clean condition
- Leaving solid-fuel appliances in clean condition.

If you do not meet any of these responsibilities, we will re-charge you for any work that you should have done. We will normally try to meet you to inspect your home before you move out. Often a record of condition will have been made of the property at the beginning of the tenancy and we can point out anything you are responsible for putting right during this visit.

Before you leave your home for the last time you need to ensure you have:

- Read any gas, electric and water meters and sent the readings on to your suppliers so they can close your accounts with them
- Told the local council for the purposes of Council Tax
- Told other service providers such as telephone and television services
- Redirected your post to your new address. The Post Office can help with this.

You also need to ensure that your rent account is up to date. You are responsible for rent up to the last day of your tenancy and we will still seek outstanding rent after you have left the property.

Finally, please make sure you return the keys.

Your deposit will be returned to you less the costs of making good any outstanding items that were your responsibility when you left the property. For tenancies created since April 2007, deposit returns will be dealt with by an approved independent body under the Government's Tenancy Deposit Scheme.

Complaints

We will try our best to give the best service we can. However, we accept that things may go wrong from time to time. We take complaints seriously and encourage people to complain in as positive a manner as possible. We are committed to learning from the complaints received and to making changes to systems and procedures in order to prevent similar complaints from recurring. We will aim to investigate fully all complaints that are made about our service.

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

STEP ONE – if you are dissatisfied about lack of action, poor quality of service or the way in which issues have been handled, you should, in the first instance, try to sort it out with the person or local office you have been dealing with. If you do not already know who is dealing with the matter, your local NT Contact will be able to tell you who can best solve the problem. Most issues can be resolved at this stage without further escalation.

STEP TWO – if this is not successful, you can take the matter further by writing to the National Trust's Director for the Region or Country local to you. You can send this directly by post, fax or email or you can have someone else (for example an advice worker, solicitor, friend or relative) make a complaint on your behalf. You should provide as much detail as you can and explain why you are not happy with what has happened so far.

Your complaint will be recorded by us. The Regional or Country Director will then allocate a senior member of his/her staff to deal with the matter. Most complaints are usually resolved at this stage.

STEP THREE – if you remain dissatisfied, you can have your complaint raised to the next stage where it will be investigated by the Trust's Director of Operations at the Central Office in Swindon, or an appropriate Director nominated by him/her.

We will let you know who is handling your complaint and the likely timescale for a response. If the complaint takes a long time to investigate, we will keep you updated on progress.

STEP FOUR – if for any reason your complaint is still unresolved at this stage, then please address it to the Chairman at the Central Office address. He/she will ensure that it is passed to an external adjudicator who will provide a final decision on the matter.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

You have the right to see certain information which we hold about you under the Data Protection Act. You must make a written request giving full details of your name and address and the personal information to which you want access. If you disagree with any of the information, you have the right to have it corrected or to record your disagreement.

Useful information

A Local Contacts Sheet is available from the National Trust office that deals with your property. This should give:

- A key local NT contact for each tenant – someone you can rely on to tell you who you need to talk to about any particular issue
- Who does what for your property
- TANT national officials
- Local Citizens Advice Bureau.

TANT

TANT is the national body representing the interests of National Trust tenants. It is run by tenants and is independent of the Trust. TANT has been dealing with Trust tenants for some years and is familiar with many of the problems you may encounter. It can help to resolve them in many cases and is often the quickest and best solution. All of TANT's help is free and totally confidential.

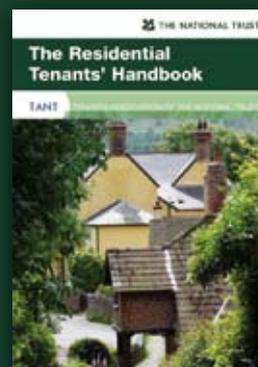
If you want help, please see the Local Contacts Sheet or go to the TANT website at **www.nationaltrusttenantsassociation.co.uk**

If you would like to be kept up to date with TANT activity, please supply your name, address and email to **info@nationaltrusttenantsassociation.co.uk**

Gas leaks

If you have a gas supply and suspect that there is a gas leak at your property, you **MUST** immediately:

- Turn off the gas supply at the meter
- Extinguish all naked flames and cigarettes
- Open doors and windows to allow ventilation
- Do not turn off or on any electrical equipment; this includes light switches, any intercom systems and mobile phones
- Phone National Grid immediately on 0800 111 999 to alert them of the problem
- Wait near the property to ensure that an engineer can get access. Do not wait inside the property as this would be dangerous, especially in the case of severe gas leaks.



If you require this information in alternative formats, please call

01793 817791

or email

**tenants.handbook
@nationaltrust.org.uk**

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www.nationaltrust.org.uk

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