

Leaseholder's Handbook

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One number 0161 968 0050, any language, any format, please ask.

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વાતચિત્ત કે સંપર્ક માટે મદદની જરૂર હોય તો પછી આપામાં કે સીતમાં મદદ માટે એક જ
ટેલિફોન નંબર: 0161 968 0050

यया यात-शीत करने में सहायता चाहिये? एक ही नम्बर 0161 968 0050, किसी भी भाषा, किसी भी
प्रकार में लेने के लिये, कृपया सम्पर्क करें।

ਕੀ ਗੱਲ-ਬਾਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਮਦਦ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ? ਇਕੋ ਨੰਬਰ 0161 968 0050, ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ, ਕਿਸੇ
ਵੀ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਵਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਪੁੱਛੋ।

بات چیت میں مدد چاہیے؟ ایک ہی نمبر 0161 968 0050 کوئی بھی زبان یا شکل میں۔ براؤ کر م پوچھیں۔

Introduction

This booklet has been developed by leaseholders for leaseholders.

The booklet includes information on:

- What is a leasehold?
- What are the rights and responsibilities of leaseholders?
- What are the Trust's responsibilities?
- What are service charges?
- How will the Trust consult with leaseholders?
- What happens when major improvements are undertaken to your block and how can the Trust help with this?





Welcome to Trafford Housing Trust and the Leaseholder's Handbook. We hope that you will find the information that it contains helpful.

Our aim is to provide homes that people want to live in, and to deliver the things you need as efficiently and effectively as we can.

Our Board is determined to provide an excellent service and meet all your expectations about the way your homes are managed and maintained.

To do this successfully, it is important that you let us know when we are getting it right - and more importantly, when we are getting it wrong. We also want to hear your ideas on how to improve things. We will give you every opportunity to tell us these things because we want to provide the very best service we can.

This handbook explains the services we provide and your rights and responsibilities as a leaseholder.

We have tried to include as much information as possible on issues that you may be interested in.

This handbook is only a guide though. If you want to know more about anything, please contact us.

Finally, welcome to Trafford Housing Trust.

Matthew Gardiner, Chief Executive

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About us



This section covers

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About us

Placing our customers at the centre of all that we do, we are passionate about making a real difference to the lives of our tenants and leaseholders and being at the heart of the neighbourhoods we serve.

A Registered Social Landlord that's open, honest, caring and innovative, we manage 10,000 quality affordable homes and leaseholds and provide housing advice and support to people in housing need, primarily in the Trafford area.

Delivering a £150 million improvement programme during a very exciting time of positive change, we are developing effective partnerships and a diverse range of high quality services to create strong, cohesive and safe communities.

A dynamic and fast-growing business, we are also a 'not for profit' organisation. This means that we constantly reinvest in new and improved homes, better customer service and the development of strong communities in safe neighbourhoods where people choose to live.



Our Board consists of voluntary members who do not get paid for their services but who do receive any out of pocket expenses.

We take great pride in improving our local communities, we are passionate about building a better borough and working together to generate new ideas that build better futures for all residents in the neighbourhoods we serve.

The Board of tenants and residents, independent specialists and representatives from Trafford Council who all share an interest in housing, are proud to be actively involved in some groundbreaking developments that are transforming our neighbourhoods and improving the quality of life for thousands of residents.

Every organisation has a mission statement and we are no exception. However not every organisation tells you how they will achieve their mission.

Our mission statement is:

'To be at the heart of neighbourhoods that are safe, clean, with strong communities and are places that people choose to live in.'

To achieve our mission, we will:

- Ensure that our homes are modern and meet the needs of communities
- Develop safe and clean neighbourhoods where diversity is celebrated and communities are empowered to make changes
- Enable our residents to choose flexible ingredients from a tailor-made package to keep them settled in their homes and neighbourhoods
- Work together with our partners to grow together
- Put residents at the heart of the decision-making process

Our corporate plan

Safe and Clean Neighbourhoods

Tailor Made Packages

Partnering Together To Grow

Support to Serve Customers

CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT

SERVICE DELIVERY

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

5 years

2010 Diverse Range of Services

Effective Partnerships

Dynamic Business

3 years

2008 - Two Star Organisation

1 year

Get Fit For Purpose

THT

At the heart of Neighbourhoods

Key Competencies

Culture

Infrastructure

Leadership

Corporate plan

Our corporate plan gives clear direction as we drive forward a £150 million improvement programme during a very exciting time of positive change.

Our values

Our values describe much more than the way that we would like to work. Passionate about making a difference to people's lives, we are proud to be open, honest, approachable and responsive to people's needs. We believe in being caring, fair and respectful to individuals and communities, we are truly innovative, always encouraging smarter ways of achieving excellence. Above all, we care about people. We believe in helping to turn lives around and supporting and celebrating residents and staff who have achieved extraordinary things.



What is a leasehold?

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Leasehold explained

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What your lease specifies

What is a leasehold?

Leasehold ownership is simply a long tenancy - the right to the use and occupation of a flat or maisonette for the remaining period of the lease.

The flat/maisonette can be bought and sold throughout the term of the lease.

Leasing of the flat/maisonette relates to everything internal within the four walls of the property, including floorboards and plaster to the walls and ceilings, but does not include the external or any internal load bearing walls (not beams and joists, windows and doorframes).

The structure and common parts of the building, and the land that it stands on are owned by Trafford Housing Trust who, as landlord, is responsible for the maintenance, repair and improvements to the structure and common parts of the building and land. The Trust provides services such as caretaking and ground maintenance to help maintain this.

What is a lease?

A lease is a contract between the leaseholder (you) and the landlord giving ownership of the flat/maisonette for a fixed period of time. Trafford Housing Trust's leases are generally for a period of 125 years.

The lease is an important document and leaseholders should have discussed the terms and conditions of the lease with their solicitor.

The lease sets out the obligations of the two parties: what the leaseholder (you) has agreed to do, and what the landlord has agreed and is bound to do.

Your lease will specify:

- **Lessee** (leaseholder or tenant). This will be the name of the original purchaser of the flat/maisonette - and any subsequent purchasers who take over the remainder of the lifetime of the original lease.
- **Landlord**. This will be either Trafford Borough Council or Trafford Housing Trust (who have taken over the landlord ownership and responsibility from 15th March 2005).
- **Flat/Demised**. A description and/or plan of the flat/maisonette and curtilage (land).
- **The Building**. A description of the building and grounds in which the flat/maisonette is situated. This is the basic unit for all service charge costs.

You will have to pay ground rent, insurance and a contribution towards the costs of maintaining and managing the building (the service charge). You will also have to keep to a number of conditions on the use and occupation of the flat/maisonette.

It is difficult to change the conditions of the lease after you buy, so make sure you understand your lease before you purchase.



Rights and responsibilities

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What are your rights and responsibilities?

Page 11

The Trust's responsibilities

What are leaseholder's rights...

Leaseholders have the right to peaceable occupation of the flat/maisonette for the term of the lease, this is also known as 'quiet enjoyment'.

Leaseholders have the right to expect the landlord to maintain, improve and repair the structure of the building, and to manage the common parts on their behalf.

...and responsibilities?

- Primarily, to keep the inside of your flat/maisonette in good order including: any service pipes or cables that only serve your flat/maisonette, internal plumbing, internal electrics, window panes and door furniture, water tanks and internal decorative finishes.
- It is your responsibility to have an annual gas safety check (where applicable) for appliances connected to the mains gas supply. You will be asked to provide an up-to-date gas safety certificate. You can contact the Trust to arrange this if you want.
- To behave in a neighbourly manner and not to do certain things without the landlord's consent e.g. make alterations.
- To allow the Trust access to your flat/maisonette, for example to trace a fault or effect a repair; usually upon reasonable notice, but immediately in an emergency situation.
- To pay ground rent, block insurance and a proportionate contribution to the costs of maintaining, improving and managing the building.

And the Trust's responsibilities?

- The Trust is responsible for managing and maintaining the structure of the building, the exterior and common areas (entrance halls and staircases, etc). Repairs will include work to roof structures, gutters and drainpipes, drains and damp-proofings, brickwork, windows and doors, joists and beams, utility cables and pipes, landscaping, paths and passages.
- The Trust is responsible for collecting the contributions towards the costs from leaseholders.
- The Trust will provide services which will include (where applicable) grounds/garden maintenance, communal lighting, caretaking, window cleaning, communal aerial, communal door and entryphone and fire safety equipment (high-rise).
- The Trust is also responsible for the insurance of the building and common parts and has the right to recover a contribution towards the premium through a service charge.

An administration charge of 15% is levied against all charges invoiced to cover the cost of providing specific leaseholder services such as banking and billing, records, consultation procedures and estate management.

Insurances

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Ground rent explained

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Block insurance explained

What is ground rent?

Because leasehold is a tenancy, it is subject to payment of rent. Trafford Housing Trust's ground rent is a nominal £10 paid annually in advance on 24th June.

Ground rent is a specific requirement of the lease and must be paid on the due date.

It may be possible for a group of leaseholders to purchase the freehold to the block in which their dwellings are situated to become the landlord themselves. This however, is a specialised subject and you should seek proper legal advice if you wish to pursue this option.



What is block insurance?

This is to provide indemnity against specified risks of accidental loss, destruction or damage to the block (fire, flood, earthquake). This is an annual charge based on the rebuild value of your property.

You must let Trafford Housing Trust know immediately if you sub-let your property. Sub-letting could affect your insurance.



What are service charges?

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This section covers

- Page 16 **Service charges explained**
- Page 17 **What will service charges cost you**
- Page 17 **Why service charges vary**
- Page 18 **Service charges after major improvements to your block**
- Page 18 **How we can provide support**
- Page 20 **Other things to know about service charges**
- Page 21 **What happens if you do not pay**

What are service charges?

Service charges are a proportionate payment by the leaseholder for all the services the landlord provides to the block in which a particular flat/maisonette is situated.

Details of what can and cannot be charged by the landlord and the proportion of the charge to be paid by the leaseholder, will be set out in the lease.

Why do I have to pay service charges on my flat or maisonette?

If you buy a house, you will purchase the freehold and will own the property outright. You become responsible for all the costs relating to its upkeep.

But if you buy a flat or maisonette, Trafford Housing Trust owns the block freehold. The Trust is responsible for the upkeep of the building as a whole and for any communal areas and facilities, therefore leaseholders will be responsible for service charges.

Under your lease:

- The Trust will be responsible for repairing the structure and outside of your flat and the rest of the building. This includes routine repairs and maintenance, and also major maintenance and improvement work, for example repairing the roof or replacing a lift, which can be very expensive.
- The Trust may also provide services like lighting, cleaning staircases and passageways and perhaps grounds maintenance.

You will have to pay a reasonable share of the costs for all these works and services.

You will also have to pay a charge towards the Trust's costs of managing the block.

How much am I likely to have to pay?

Usually, the total expenditure spent on the block is divided by the number of dwellings in that unit to determine the proportion due from each leaseholder:

Each year you will receive a certificate which provides a detailed breakdown of your service charge and what services you have been charged for.

Why do service charges vary?

Service charges can vary from year to year; they can go up or down without any limit, other than that they are reasonable.

In some instances, your service charge invoice may differ from that of your neighbour. There may be a number of reasons for this:

- Their flat/maisonette may have been purchased, or further assigned, part-way through the relevant accounting period
- The leaseholder may have certain costs restricted during the first five years following the purchase of the flat/maisonette
- Specific works may be individual to one, or more, flat/maisonette

Landlords can only recover costs that are reasonable. Leaseholders have rights to challenge any service charges they feel are unreasonable at the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal (LVT).

Service charges after major improvements to your block

The Trust will need to carry out major improvements to blocks to make sure that they are well maintained and provide a high quality environment for our tenants and leaseholders. This may include work such as roof renewal, lift replacement, building improvements and environmental and security improvements.

When these major works are undertaken the Trust will charge each leaseholder a proportion of the total cost. If the work undertaken is expensive the charge to the leaseholder will also be high.

The Trust recognises that some leaseholders may struggle to pay these amounts or may be concerned about these payments. The Trust therefore wants to provide support to leaseholders.

At present the Trust can;

- agree with you to repay the service charge over a set period of time and not to charge interest on the service charge amount during this time.

The Trust has a budget to support interest free loans each year, however there is a limit on how many we can support.

The Trust will agree to the following payback periods:

Level of service charge	Length of repayment period
< £1,000	12 months
£1,001 - £2000	24 months
£2,001 - £5,000	36 months
£5,001 - £10,000	48 months
> £10,000	60 months

- discuss with you whether you want to sell the property back to the Trust at the original right to buy price.

What are service charges?

The Trust is currently working with another Registered Social Landlord to offer more options than this. Future options may include:

- Shared equity - this is where rather than paying the Trust the service charge the Trust would own a proportion of your property and this would be repaid when you move
- A variety of loans managed through an agreed agency

The Trust will involve leaseholders in developing these options by communicating with them in more detail.



Other points on service charges

- If the lease says you must pay some of the costs of improvement, the estimate must cover these too. Once you have received this estimate, we cannot charge you more than that figure during the first five years of your lease, except to take account of inflation.
- There is no limit on charges for repairs or improvements done after the first five years.
- Some freeholders may also have to pay service charges for repairing and maintaining shared communal areas on an estate, such as pathways, play areas and gardens. This will be clearly stated in the lease.
- The estimate of service charges, provided before you buy, will also cover charges for building services such as caretaking or lighting. But these charges can change, even during the first five years of a lease. We will also tell you about any known structural defects affecting the building. If we want you to pay for work to put them right in the first five years, the estimate of service charges for repairs must cover this. But you may also have to pay for some of the costs of work done after the first five years.
- The law protects you from unreasonable service charges. Your rights are described in Housing Booklet 27, Long Leaseholders that you can get free from Communities and Local Government (address in the Useful Contacts section of this handbook).

What happens if a leaseholder doesn't pay?

It is the leaseholder's obligation to pay service charges, insurance and ground rent demands promptly under the terms of the lease.

If you are having problems paying service charges please do not ignore the problem but contact the Leasehold Service on 0161 968 0061. Appropriate arrangements can be made to resolve outstanding invoices.

If they are not paid and Trafford Housing Trust is able to show that the charges are reasonable, we can contact your mortgage lender directly or begin legal action to repossess the flat/maisonette. This will incur additional administration costs to the leaseholder. Starting legal proceedings of this nature would be a last resort after all other options have failed.

Major improvements to your block

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Major improvements to your block

Major improvements to your block

The Trust will undertake major work at blocks where there are leaseholders. You will be charged for this work, usually the total cost divided by the number of flats in the block. Please see page 18 for help paying these charges.

Windows

The Trust has developed a programme to ensure that all its properties have double glazing by 2010. When we are planning work to a block you will receive the following notice:

- 60 day notification outlining the need and scope of the work
- 30 day notification telling you who the contractor is and an estimated cost

Other work

The Trust may also undertake other major work such as improving security to buildings, re-roofing, maintaining the brickwork, balconies, communal and external areas. If we intend to do this work to your block the consultation process will include:

- Local meetings
- One to one meetings
- Open days
- Local newsletters and leaflets

We will write regularly to leaseholders to let you know future plans for your block.

What other rights do leaseholders have?

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What other rights do you have?

What other rights do leaseholders have?

Information

The landlord must provide their name and address within the UK which must be stated on every invoice for service charges. Leaseholders can request summaries of service charges, details of the insurance cover and have the right to inspect accounts and other documents.

Consultation on major works

The landlord cannot carry out major works to the building (costing in excess of £250 per flat/maisonette) without first consulting the leaseholders in the proper fashion. If the landlord fails to consult he may not be able to recover all of the costs.

Consultation on long-term agreements

The landlord cannot enter into agreements or contracts over 12 months whereby any leaseholder will have to pay more than £100 per year without first consulting the leaseholders. If the landlord fails to consult he may not be able to recover all costs.

Challenging service charges

Leaseholders can apply to the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal to seek a determination of the reasonableness of the charges, whether already paid or not. Contact details for the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal are at the back of this booklet.

Challenging administration charges

Leaseholders can apply to the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal to seek a determination of the reasonableness of other charges arising from the lease in addition to the service charge. For example, fees for providing information on resale.

Extending a lease

If an individual leaseholder satisfies certain conditions he/she can negotiate a new lease from the landlord, with a price to be agreed between the parties, or set by the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal.

Buying the freehold

Groups of leaseholders who satisfy certain conditions can get together and enforce the purchase of the freehold, again with the price being agreed between the parties, or set by the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal.



**Can I repair
or make
improvements
to my
property?**

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Repairs or improvements you may want to make

Can I repair or make improvements within the lease limits?

In order to permit greater flexibility for leaseholders, you may, with the Trust's permission, undertake individual works to your own flat/maisonette that are strictly the responsibility of the Trust, i.e. replacing window frames, front and rear doors, etc.

Permission will not be unreasonably withheld but we will need to make sure the work meets the Trust's specification for the works, does not conflict with the overall building management or where the works will not be completed within the Trust's established timetable.

In all cases, the full cost of the work will have to be paid by you and on completion, the physical structure becomes the property of the Trust for all future repairs and maintenance.



Can I sub-let my flat or maisonette?

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Sub-letting your flat/maisonette

Can I sub-let my flat or maisonette?

You can sub-let your home. If you wish to do so you must notify the Trust in advance before any renting takes place. Non-residence of the principle leaseholder could affect risk assessment for insurance purposes. Currently, there is no excess on the policy for sub-letting, but if any action by your tenant leads to an increased premium, you would bear the full cost of the excess.

You will also be required to provide an address to which future correspondence could be sent. As the owner of the flat/maisonette, it is your responsibility, not the tenant to who you sub-let, to ensure payment of any insurance, ground rent and service charges.

Consultation for matters affecting major repairs, improvement works and the provision of services is important and a right you are entitled to. It is important that we have a forwarding address to send you this information. You would still be liable to pay for your share of these costs even if you are sub-letting.

It will be your responsibility to ensure that any tenant you rent your home to abides by the rules of occupation contained in your lease. In particular, excessive noise or nuisance by your nominated tenant could, in extreme cases, lead to forfeiture by you or your flat/maisonette.

**Can I
sell my
property?**

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Selling your property

Can I sell my property?

If you wish to sell or re-mortgage your property, the Trust will, on written request, provide you or your solicitor with any relevant factual information as requested.

When requesting information, you should give the Trust as much notice as possible (minimum two weeks). You may find it helpful if your solicitor has a copy of your lease, together with any five year binding estimates of service charges, details of routine and major service charges over recent years and any consultation notices for work about to be carried out.

When you sell your property, all service charge arrears, including deferred repayment loans, and heating and hot water charges, where applicable, must be cleared on completion of sale. The Trust will not agree to the apportionment of outstanding service charges between a leaseholder and a subsequent purchaser.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your solicitor resolves this and having done so, retains sufficient monies for charges, if any, not yet billed.

You, or your solicitor, should contact the Housing Trust's Leasehold Services Section on 0161 968 0061, by letter or by email at terence.roache@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk.

Please provide your full name, the address and postcode of the leasehold property concerned, your address (if different) and your service charge account reference number, to help us identify you as the leaseholder concerned. A daytime telephone number will also be helpful.

I want to make a complaint about my service charge



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**How you can make a complaint
about your service charge**

I want to make a complaint about my service charge

Initially, you would address any complaint regarding the billing of charges to the Trust's Leasehold Services Section. If you are still not satisfied, please contact the LAS (Leasehold Advisory Service).

The LAS is an independent advice agency, funded by Government grants. They provide free advice to leaseholders, landlords, professional advisers and others on the law affecting residential leasehold property. Their details are at the back of this booklet.

If your complaint cannot be resolved by any of the above means, you have a legal remedy in making an application to the Residential Property Tribunal Service (address in the Useful Contacts section of this booklet).

The Residential Property Tribunal Service (RPTS) is an independent body which aims to provide a high quality, cost effective, fair and accessible tribunal service to help landlords, tenants and leaseholders settle disputes about rents and about leasehold property.

You may also be able to get assistance from a Rent Assessment Panel who have the power to deal with all types of disputes about rents and leasehold matters. They are quasi-judicial bodies, which mean that housing legislation has given them the powers to settle some disputes which would otherwise have to be dealt with by the Courts. They provide an easier and generally cheaper alternative to the Court system. The Panel does not charge for dealing with disputes about rents. Occasionally the scale of fees depends on the type of leasehold dispute.

Right to a loan

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Right to a loan explained

Right to a loan

You may be entitled to a loan if:

- You have bought your flat/maisonette from the Council/Trust within the past 10 years under the Right to Buy/Preserved Right to Buy
- Your loan is for repairs, not maintenance or improvements

For more information you should contact the Trust's Leasehold Service on 0161 968 0061.

These amounts are changed each year by the government based on inflation.



Getting on with your neighbours

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This section covers

- Page 38 **Being a good neighbour**
- Page 38 **Dealing with anti-social behaviour**
- Page 38 **Letting us know**
- Page 39 **What we can do**
- Page 40 **Racial harassment**
- Page 41 **What support you can expect**

Being a good neighbour

Every tenant has the basic right to be able to enjoy their home and the area where they live without fear or concern.

Nuisance and anti-social behaviour is unacceptable, and we will take action against those tenants or individuals that behave anti-socially.

The information set out below is a summary of our approach to anti-social behaviour. You can get more details of our policy and procedure from your Local Area Housing Office.

First things first

For most cases of anti-social behaviour, unless you are suffering from serious acts of violence or harassment, you should speak to your neighbour first to try to sort things out at an early stage.

Many problems only arise because people have not talked to each other or have not considered each other's point of view. Sometimes a neighbour just needs reminding that their behaviour is upsetting you.

However, if the other person is unreasonable, just walk away and tell us. Likewise, if you feel you cannot make personal contact with your neighbour for any reason, or if the issue is too serious, contact us straight away.

Letting us know

If you have spoken to your neighbour and the problem continues, or if it is a problem where this course of action is not appropriate, you can report your complaint at your Local Area Housing Office.

Report the problem as soon as reasonably possible so that we can take action quickly to stop a situation getting worse. If the problem is serious we can tackle it quickly and effectively. It also allows us to offer you advice and support as soon as possible.

You can make your complaint:

In **writing** by sending a letter to your Neighbourhood Housing Officer; by **phoning** or **emailing** your Neighbourhood Housing Officer; in **person** by **visiting your area housing office**; or through **someone else** (for example, a Councillor).

Confidentiality

We will always treat what you tell us in strict confidence. However, in some cases it may not be possible for you to remain anonymous as your neighbour may guess who has made the complaint.

Let us know if you are worried about the reaction of your neighbour. We will take this into account and do everything we can to help sort out the problem.

We will do the following:

- Contact you and aim to meet you as soon as possible
- Fill in any necessary paperwork with you and confirm the details of your complaint. We will not reveal your identity without your permission
- Agree an action plan with you
- Agree what direct action you want us to take and what action is appropriate for the type of problem you are experiencing
- Ask you to fill in diary sheets to help us collect information if this would be useful
- Agree timescales to monitor and review your complaint

We can take the following action

We may involve other agencies who work with us to sort out your complaint. For example, if you are reporting racial harassment or any other hate crime, we will involve the Police immediately.

We will work with the people causing the problem to identify and stop unacceptable behaviour. We prefer to discuss the problems with them from the start. Where necessary, and if it is reasonable to do so, we may have to take further action. We will consider the following to enforce good behaviour:

- Warning letters
- Notices of seeking possession
- Extra tenancy conditions being placed on a tenant
- Acceptable behaviour contracts being agreed and signed
- Anti-social behaviour orders
- Injunctions
- Demotion orders where a tenancy is 'downgraded'
- Possession orders
- Eviction

Racial harassment and other hate crime

The Trust, the Council, the Police and other agencies have developed a joint approach to reporting, tackling and monitoring racial harassment and hate crimes.

A hate crime is defined as any type of behaviour or action that is carried out against a person because of their race, sex, sexuality, disability or age.

We have a separate policy on racial harassment which aims to make sure that we:

- Investigate all reports of racial harassment
- Support victims and their families
- Take firm action against the people responsible for racial harassment

And finally

We are aware that there are many reasons why you may not want to report a problem, so we will make sure that we keep you informed, updated and fully supported throughout the process.

It is important for us to know that anyone who is the victim of any kind of nuisance and anti-social behaviour feels that they have our support throughout what can be a difficult process.

We will provide whatever support is reasonable and necessary to sort out a problem. This could include:

- Acting as a mediator
- Providing direct links to emergency support
- Installing and monitoring sound-recording equipment
- Providing support if you need to go to Court
- Providing emergency temporary accommodation

Most importantly, we will be there to listen to what you have to say.



Having your say

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Our commitment to how you can be involved in decision-making

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What issues you can be involved with

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What support you can expect

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The Trafford Tenants and Residents Federation explained

Trafford Housing Trust needs you!

No one knows your neighbourhood like you do. What's right with it, what's wrong with it, what's working well and what needs sorting out.

Which is why we really need your help. We want to put your thoughts and ideas at the heart of all our activities. We want to work with you and your neighbours to improve your neighbourhoods and make any changes necessary to help us achieve our goal of providing a better quality of life for everyone.

In return for your help, we are committed to giving you the chance to learn new skills, knowledge and abilities through various packages of FREE training and support that we can offer. So please contact us to see how you can take advantage of some of the opportunities available when you get involved.

We always welcome leaseholders and other residents to get involved in Tenants and Resident Associations or to get involved in issues affecting your neighbourhood. However we also recognise that leaseholders do also have some specific issues as leaseholders and the Trust is therefore keen to talk to leaseholders in particular.

If you would like to become involved, please contact Audra Brandy on **0161 968 0314**.

It's really easy to get involved

We have made sure that it is really easy for you to get involved in all areas of activities that affect your neighbourhood and quality of life. So if you can spare us the time, please let us know what you are thinking, as this is one way we will make sure we get things right.

And remember, we promise we will always let you know what has happened with your comments.

Pathways - Your guide to community involvement

This document tells you how you can influence the Trust and improve the neighbourhood where you live.

Pathways of Involvement

There are three different ways for you to get involved and influence what the Trust does and how we do it. All ways are equally important to us and all will allow you to have your say in the way you want to.

Pathway One

You want some answers or have some opinions - easy to get involved in and will only take a small amount of your time.

Most of the activities can be done from your own home or at places very close to you which means little or no travelling. So all can be done at times to suit you, for example:

- Phone your Local Area Housing Office, repairs hotline, Regeneration Team or any of our offices
- Talk to any of our staff in your home. This may be a repair operative or Scheme Manager in your home or you may want to make an appointment to see another member of staff
- Go online and email your query or concern at www.traffordhousingtrust.co.uk
- Fill in a comments card located in any of our offices
- Take photos or videos of problems in your area and send them in to us

Pathway Two

You want to help create the answer - this may need a couple of hours of your time and could last a few weeks. Here are just some examples of how you can get your voice heard.

- Attend focus groups on the repairs, lettings, anti-social behaviour or any other part of our service. Phone the Tenant Involvement Officer (find the number at the back of this book), if you want to be involved
- Complete questionnaires that tell us how happy you are with the service we are providing
- Undertake estate walkabouts with our Housing Officers to point out local issues or problems. Phone your Local Area Housing Office (find the number at the back of this book), if you want to do this
- Take part in our Trafford 500. This is 500 people who complete questionnaires for us on a quarterly basis about particular aspects of the Trust's work, such as repairs or how we let properties
Call 0161 968 0134
- Produce a video diary of your estate. **Phone 0161 968 0214**

Pathway Three

You want to create the answer - this will involve a longer time commitment from you, perhaps a couple of hours a month.

This is for people who have more time to get involved and may want to learn new skills, gain qualifications or improve their knowledge about the neighbourhood they live in. If you are involved at this level you will be working in partnership with the Trust's staff to help improve your neighbourhood and our services.

The main way to become involved at this level is to work within the Trust's formal decision-making structure. This has several different parts and you can be involved in one or more, depending on the level of commitment you can offer:

If you are interested in becoming involved, please contact Liz Wellington on **0161 968 0012**.

Pathways - What you can get involved in

You are welcome to become involved in any of the Trust's activities. Some of the areas you can get involved in are listed below:

- Improving the area where you live
- Creating safe and secure communities
- Creating quality homes
- Ensuring access for everybody
- Youth as part of the community
- Good quality of life for elderly people
- Living in a healthy neighbourhood
- Maximising jobs, training and personal finance
- The future for Trafford Housing Trust

For more details, please refer to your Pathways Guide. If you haven't got a copy, please contact the Tenant Involvement Officer for your area (you can find the numbers in the Useful Contacts section at the back of this booklet).

Core standards - What support you can expect when you get involved

When you become involved with the Trust we want it to benefit you and the neighbourhood where you live. Because of this we have the following Core Standards in place.

- 1 You will never be out of pocket
- 2 You will always receive training and support where requested
- 3 We will always ensure that your involvement is making a real difference

Please remember that these are the minimum standards. We are actively working to improve and add to these so you can become fully involved with the Trust and improve your quality of life and that of your neighbours.

To find out more about the standards we have set for the above issues, please pick up a copy of Pathways which is available from your Local Area Housing Office.



Trafford Tenants and Residents Federation

Trafford Tenants and Residents Federation (The Federation) is an umbrella group who represent residents' needs across the Borough. This includes individual residents, tenants and residents associations, community groups and forums. The aim of The Federation is to ensure service providers in Trafford are working together to improve neighbourhoods and those services provided to neighbourhoods.

How do I contact The Federation?

If you would like to become involved with The Federation, ask them a question about how they are working in your neighbourhood, or would like to know more about the work they do you can contact them on **0161 865 6892** or email them at info@traffordfederation.org.uk

How can I contact Trafford Housing Trust?

If you would like to know more about getting involved with the Trust, or have any questions about this document, please contact us using one of the methods below.

Telephone

0161 968 0214

Email

gettinginvolved@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk

In person at or via letter to our Head Office

Marshall House
2 Park Avenue
Sale
Cheshire
M33 6HE

Comments, enquiries, compliments & complaints

15



This section covers

Page 49 **Comments, enquiries and compliments**

Page 49 **How to complain**

Page 50 **The complaints procedure**

Comments, Enquiries and Compliments

If you want to comment on any aspect of the service you receive from us or if you want to compliment a team or member of staff, you can:

- Let us know by writing a letter
- Fill in a 'Comments, Enquiries, Compliments and Complaints' form and hand it in to any member of staff
- Write to the Head of Service
- Tell us in person so that our officers can accurately take a note of your comments. We will consider any suggestions you have about the service we provide, and may introduce them if this is possible and seems to reflect the views of most of our tenants

Complaints

Complaints usually fall into one of the following areas:

- Where you have received poor service from a member of staff
- Where we have not followed the published procedures
- Where we have done something badly or incorrectly

If you have a problem that we are not sorting out, please make a complaint. We may not know we are getting something wrong unless you tell us.

We aim to sort out complaints effectively and within published target times.

We will always try to sort out any problems at the first attempt and depending on their nature, they will generally be dealt with by either the Housing Officer or a local manager.

If you are not happy with the action taken at this level, or feel your complaint is too serious to be dealt with informally, you can make a formal complaint. The stages of the complaints procedure are explained on the following pages.

Stage 1

You can make a formal complaint in any of the following ways:

- Let us know in writing
- Fill in a 'Comments, Enquiries, Compliments and Complaints' form and hand it in to any member of staff
- Write to the Head of Service (contact 0161 968 0000 for details of who to contact)
- Tell us in person or by phone so that our officers can accurately take a note of your problem
- Through a third party such as a Councillor, Solicitor or MP
- Via email to tht@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk or see email address for your local office in the Useful Contacts section at the back of this booklet

We will pass your complaint to an officer whose name and contact details we will give you. The person will normally be the Team Leader. You will get an acknowledgement to the complaint within 3 working days. This person will write to you within 10 working days of the complaint being received with their suggestions/recommendations for solving your complaint.



If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken, you can move to the next stage.

Stage 2

The Head of Service will investigate the complaint fully upon a complaint progressing to Stage 2. You will receive an acknowledgement of your complaint within 3 working days and you will receive a response and any recommendations for sorting out the issue within 10 working days. If you are appealing against the decision at Stage 1 because you have new information, then the Manager from Stage 1 will also be involved.

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken, you can move to the next stage.

Stage 3

If after the Head of Service has reviewed the complaint, you are still not satisfied, you can request that your complaint is heard by a review panel on condition you can give reasons why you wish the decision to be reviewed.

You will be given the opportunity to talk in person to either the Review Panel (or at least one member as a minimum) or with the Chief Executive.

You will receive copies of all relevant information used to make a decision in advance of the meeting to give you the opportunity to respond or comment.

The Review Panel have 20 days to review your complaint and respond to your complaint.

If after this process you remain unsatisfied, you will be advised to contact the Independent Housing Ombudsman and you will be issued with all the necessary paperwork.

The address for the Independent Housing Ombudsman is

Housing Ombudsman Service
81 Aldwych
London
WC2B 4HN

Email

info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Telephone

0845 712 5973

Please note

To make sure we have been given every opportunity to identify your complaint and deal with the issues raised, the Independent Housing Ombudsman will only deal with cases that have gone through all the stages described on the previous pages.



Other services

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This section covers

- Page 54 **Aids and adaptations**
- Page 54 **Rubbish collection**
- Page 54 **Street lighting**
- Page 55 **Graffiti**

Aids and adaptations

We recognise that sometimes people need help to make the best use of their home.

This may be because you are getting older or because you are disabled and need things to be adapted so they are suitable for your needs.

You can apply to either us or the Council for help in providing aids and adaptations that will make life a little easier for you. If you contact the leaseholder EAA line on **0845 299 0798** and explain that you are a Trust leaseholder, this will make sure you fast track to our Trafford Housing Trust Occupational Therapist for assessment.

You will need to be assessed by an Occupational Therapist who will visit you at home to discuss your needs.

If you feel you need help, please contact your Neighbourhood Housing Officer who will be happy to give you any help you need.

Rubbish collection

The Council is responsible for collecting rubbish. They provide a wheelie bin collection service from the roadside for flat/maisonettes and houses, and collection from commercial bins in high-rise and low-rise blocks.

You can order a wheelie bin if you have just moved in and there is not one at your property by phoning **0161 912 2000**.

Trafford Borough Council can also remove some larger items from outside your home. The service currently costs £17 for up to five items, which you will need to pay for in advance with a valid Visa debit/credit card.

Please call **0161 912 4000** if you want to use this service.

Street lighting

Trafford Borough Council maintains all street lighting. If you spot a faulty light, you can report it directly to the Council on **0161 912 2000**. Please take a note of the number that is painted on the lamp column as this will identify where it is.

Or, you can contact us directly with the lamp column number and we will report it for you.

If the lamp column is on our land (for example, if it is in a car park or lighting up a garage forecourt), you will need to report it to us on **Freephone 0800 389 7595**.

Graffiti

Graffiti is unpleasant and can contribute to the decline of an area and its community.

If you see any graffiti, let us know immediately by ringing the Repairs Hotline on **Freephone 0800 389 7595**.

If the graffiti is of an offensive nature, we will remove it within 24 hours.



Useful contacts

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This section covers

- Page 57 **Head office**
- Page 57 **Area offices**
- Page 59 **How to find us**
- Page 63 **Useful contacts**

Useful contacts

Head Office/Sale Office

Marshall House, 2 Park Avenue, Sale M33 6HE

Tel: 0161 968 0000

Fax: 0161 968 0001

Minicom: 0161 969 0720

Email address (first name).(surname)[@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk](mailto:traffordhousingtrust.co.uk)
or tht@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk

Local Area Housing Offices

All area offices are now open 9.00am to 5.00pm every day. Each Local Area Housing Office closes for training at set times which are shown below.

Altrincham Local Area Housing Office

28 Stamford New Road, Altrincham WA14 1EJ

Tel: 0161 968 0320

Fax: 0161 968 0323

Email address

For general enquiries altrincham.housing@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk

Closed Thursday mornings until 10.30am. Last Thursday of the month closed until noon.

Old Trafford Local Area Housing Office

Old Trafford Community Centre, Shrewsbury Street, Old Trafford M16 9AX

Tel: 0161 968 0203

Fax: 0161 968 0234

Email address

For general enquiries oldtrafford.housing@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk

Closed Friday mornings until 10.30am. Last Friday of the month, closed until noon.

Sale Local Area Housing Office

Marshall House, 2 Park Avenue, Sale M33 6HE

Tel: 0161 968 0000

Fax: 0161 968 0001

Email address

For general enquiries sale.housing@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk

Closed Monday mornings until 10.30am. Last Monday of the month, closed until noon.

Stretford Local Area Housing Office

Unit U65-U66, Stretford Mall, Chester Road, Stretford M32 9BD

Tel: 0161 968 0210

Fax: 0161 968 0222

Email address

For general enquiries stretford.housing@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk

Closed Wednesday mornings until 10.30am. Last Wednesday of the month, closed until noon.

Urmston Local Area Housing Office

The Old Police Station, 4 Church Road, Urmston M41 9BU

Tel: 0161 968 0266

Fax: 0161 968 0275

Email address

For general enquiries urmston.housing@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk

Closed Tuesday mornings until 10.30am. Last Tuesday of the month, closed until noon.

Altrincham Area Housing Office



Opening Hours:
8.30am to 5.00pm
Monday to Friday,
closed for training
each Thursday until
10.30am.
Last Thursday of
each month closed
until 12noon.

Altrincham Area Housing Office, 28 Stamford New Road,
Altrincham WA14 1EJ
Tel: 0161 968 0320 Fax: 0161 968 0323
Email: altrincham.housing@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk

2 minute walk from
Altrincham tram station
2 minute walk from
Altrincham bus station

Old Trafford Area Housing Office

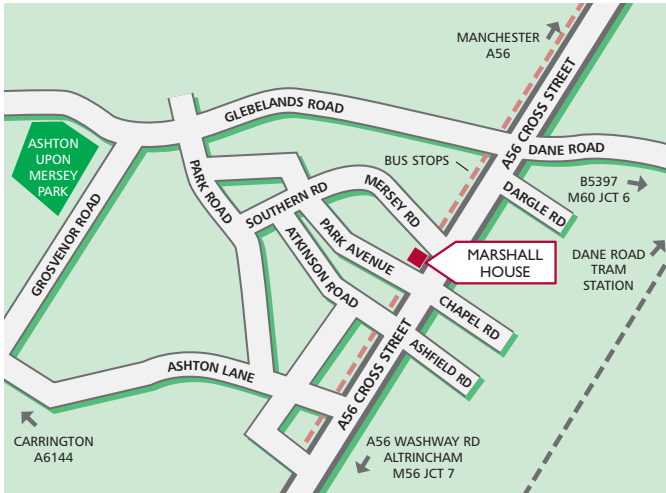


Opening Hours:
8.30am to 5.00pm
Monday to Friday.
Closed for training
each Friday
until 10.30am.
Last Friday of
each month closed
until 12noon.

Old Trafford Area Housing Office, Old Trafford Community Centre,
Shrewsbury Street, Old Trafford M16 9AX
Tel: 0161 968 0203 Fax: 0161 968 0234
Email: oldtrafford.housing@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk

5 minute walk from
nearest tram station
5 minute walk from nearest
bus stop (Seymour Grove/
Chorlton Street)

Sale Area Housing Office/Head Office



Opening Hours:
8.30am to 5.00pm
Monday to Friday.
Closed for training
each Monday until
10.30am.
Last Monday of
each month closed
until 12noon.

Sale Area Housing Office, Marshall House,
2 Park Avenue, Sale M33 6HE
Tel: 0161 968 0000 Fax: 0161 968 0001
Email: sale.housing@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk

5 minute walk from
Dane Road tram station
1 minute walk from nearest
bus stop (Cross Street)

Stretford Area Housing Office



Opening Hours:
8.30am to 5.00pm
Monday to Friday.
Closed for training
each Wednesday
until 10.30am.
Last Wednesday of
each month closed
until 12noon.

Unit U65-U66, Stretford Mall, Chester Road, Stretford M32 9BD
Tel: 0161 968 0210 Fax: 0161 968 0222
Email: stretford.housing@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk

5 minute walk from
Stretford tram station
5 minute walk from nearest
bus stop (Chester Road)

Urmston Area Housing Office

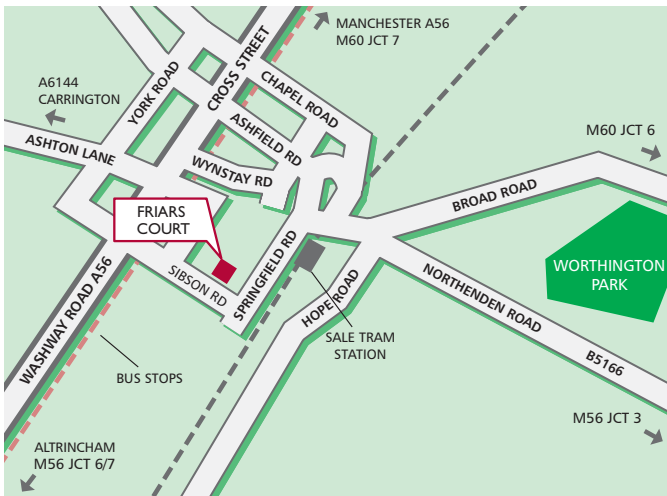


Opening Hours:
8.30am to 5.00pm
Monday to Friday.
Closed for training
each Tuesday
until 10.30am.
Last Tuesday of
each month closed
until 12noon.

Urmston Area Housing Office, The Old Police Station,
4 Church Road, Urmston M41 9BU
Tel: 0161 968 0266 Fax: 0161 968 0275
Email: urmston.housing@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk

2 minute walk from
Urmston railway station
2 minute walk from nearest
bus stop (Church Road)

Housing Options

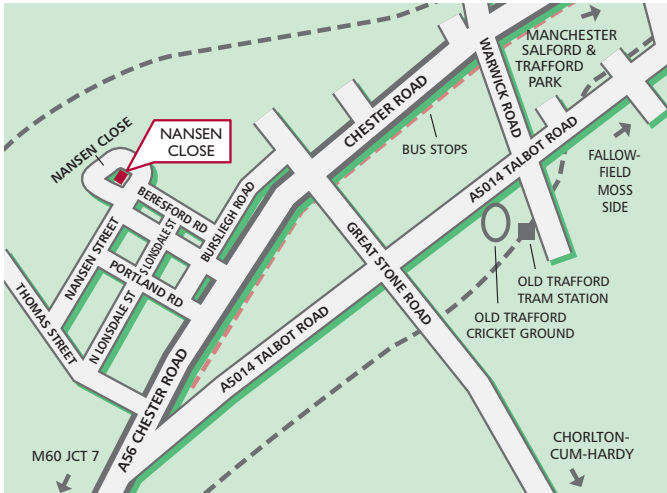


Opening Hours:
9.00am to 4.30pm
Monday to Friday.
Closed every Tuesday
from 1pm.

Friars Court, Sibson Road, Sale, Manchester M33 7SF
Tel: 0161 968 0343 Fax: 0161 968 0344
Out of hours Tel (Emergencies only): 0161 912 2020
Email: housing.options@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk

1 minute walk from
Sale tram station
5 minute walk from
nearest bus stop (Cross
Street/ Washway Road)

Nansen Close



49 Nansen Close, Stretford M32 0PY
Tel: 0161 968 0277 Mob: 07791 170 247

10 minute walk from
Old Trafford tram station
10 minute walk from nearest
bus stop (Chester Road)

Trafford Housing Trust

Leasehold Services

Marshall House

2 Park Avenue

Sale

M33 6HE

Tel: 0161 968 0061

Email: tht@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk

Northern Rent Assessment Panel

1st Floor

5 New York Street

Manchester

M1 4JB

Tel: 0845 100 2614

Email:

northern.rap@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Right to Buy Policy Team

Communities and Local Government

Eland House

Bressenden Place

London

SW1E 5DU

Tel: 020 7944 3427

Email: rtb@communities.gov.uk

LAS (Leasehold Advisory Service)

31 Worship Street

London

EC2A 2DX

Tel: 020 7374 5380

Email: info@lease-advice.org



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Head Office: Trafford Housing Trust Limited, Marshall House, 2 Park Avenue, Sale, Cheshire M33 6HE
Tel: 0161 968 0000 • Fax: 0161 968 0001 • Registered in England No. 04831118 • Charity Registration No: 1106967

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