

About Langstane

Langstane Housing Association was founded in 1977 to provide low cost rented accommodation for single households. We now provide homes for over 2,800 households in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray. We also provide affordable offices and accommodation to organisations which work in your communities.

We are a not-for-profit organisation and we reinvest our funds into improving services, maintaining properties and building communities.

Our Board of Management is composed of volunteers who are elected from the Langstane members at the Annual General Meeting.

Our purpose is to provide good quality, affordable homes that meet your needs and services that make your neighbourhoods better places to live.

Building homes is not all that we do in our communities. We support local charities and agencies by helping with funding, providing affordable office and residential accommodation and giving staff time and advice. We also host the WorkingRite Employability Project at our Aberdeen office.

We hope that you will enjoy living in your Langstane home. If you have any questions about the information in this handbook or would like it in another format, please contact Support Services on 01224 423000.

Tenant Handbook

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME

This handbook is a guide to help you with your tenancy. It contains useful advice such as how to pay your rent and how to report a repair and important information about your responsibilities. If you have any questions please contact us.

How to contact us

Our offices are at:

680 King Street	7 North Guildry Street
Aberdeen	Elgin
AB24 1SL	IV30 1JR



01224 423000

Email info@langstane-ha.co.uk

Website www.langstane-ha.co.uk



www.facebook.com/Langstane

Association's Out-of-Hours

Emergency Repair Cover:

Please contact **Orbis Protect:**

0151 343 2906 (Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire & Moray) 

Gas (Heatcare): 01343 842 042

Gas emergency: 0800 111 999

Power cut: 0800 300 999

Loss of water supply: 08000 778 778

Ending your tenancy

Your rent

Your rent should be paid in full before you leave and all keys and/or fobs must be returned to us. Your property must be cleared of all furniture, belongings and rubbish. Failure to do this will mean that you will be recharged for removing these items.

Compensation for Improvements

Tenants have a right to claim compensation for certain improvements made to the property, provided the Association's permission to carry out the work was granted. Compensation is payable at the end of the tenancy.

The Corporate Services Team calculates compensation. Tenants who claim compensation will receive a copy of the calculation. Calculations will take into account the expected lifecycle of the components.

Ending your tenancy

You must give us 28 days notice that you wish to end your tenancy.

A signature is needed to end your legal contract. We can send you a termination form, or you can download a copy from our website.

Ending a joint tenancy

If you have a joint tenancy then all the joint tenants must sign the form.

If you are married or in a civil partnership and your spouse is not a joint tenant, you will have to send in written confirmation from them that they agree to the tenancy being ended.

If you are a joint tenant and the other joint tenant is remaining in the property, you must tell them that you are giving up your share of the joint tenancy.

End of tenancy inspection

Your tenancy should be handed back to us in the same condition you received it. When you give us your notice to end your tenancy we will arrange to visit your property. We will discuss the condition of your tenancy and whether there is any work to be done before you leave your home. If you do not complete the work before you leave we will recharge you. Examples of the type of work you will have to pay for are:

- Holes or dents in door or walls
- Damage to kitchen and bathroom fittings
- Removing alterations made without permission

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Starting your tenancy

Your Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement is a legal contract. Please keep it safe.

Your responsibilities as a tenant

- Make sure your rent is paid
- Live in the property as your only or main home
- Keep the property in good condition
- Report repairs
- Make sure you, your family and visitors treat the property and neighbours with respect
- Get our permission for changes to your tenancy (see page 9)
- Get our permission for changes to your property such as laying laminate flooring

Our responsibilities as a landlord

- Give you a property that is wind and watertight and suitable to live in
- Keep the structure of the property in good condition
- Carry out repairs to an agreed timescale
- Consult with you before we make changes to your rent or the services you get from us

Data protection

What we do with your personal information

We keep information about our tenants in order to help us make decisions and provide and improve our services.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) governs the way we use your personal data. It aims to make sure that your personal information is protected and used as you would expect. For example, we must make sure that access to your details is limited to those people who need to use it so that you can have the services you need.

All the data we hold about you should be accurate, so we ask you for regular updates. We also have to make sure that we don't keep your information after we don't need it any more.

The law gives you the right to request a copy of the information we hold about you. Recent changes to the law also allow for you to request to be forgotten in some circumstances. This means that your records may be deleted sooner than we would normally do this.

For further information regarding data protection and your rights please visit our website to look at some frequently asked questions, or visit the website of the Information Commissioner's Office.

<https://ico.org.uk>.

The Association is committed to promoting equality and diversity across all areas of its work and discrimination or harassment of any kind is not tolerated.

Complaints handling procedure

We value complaints and use the information to help improve our services. If you are dissatisfied with the service we provide, we want to hear from you.

There are two stages to the complaints process. Stage one involves our staff working to resolve your complaint quickly, within 5 working days if we can.

If you do not agree with our decision at Stage 1, you can ask us to consider your complaint at Stage 2. We will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days and give you a decision within 20 working days, unless there is a good reason to take more time.

If you are still dissatisfied after Stage 2, you can make a complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

In person **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman**

Bridgeside House

99 McDonald Road

Edinburgh

EH7 4NS

By post **Freepost SPSO**

Phone **0800 377 7330**

Online **www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us**

Website **www.spsso.org.uk**

Mobile site **<http://m.spsso.org.uk>**



Moving in

Paying your rent

Your rent is due on the 1st of each month. You can choose to pay by:

Allpay All tenants get an Allpay card. You can use the card at any PayPoint or Post Office.

Online Use your Allpay card at allpay.net

Direct Debit You can pay weekly, fortnightly, 4 weekly or monthly.

Phone Call 01224 423000 between 9 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday and pay by any debit or credit card.

At the office You can pay by cash, cheque or card at our Aberdeen or Elgin offices.

Keys:

You are responsible for lost keys or fobs and for paying for lock changes. If you lock yourself out, you can ask us to use the master key, but you will be charged in advance for this service.

Things to remember

- Tell Council Tax you have moved in
- Arrange your electricity and gas supplier
- Insure your home contents
- Make sure you have a TV licence

Customer Care Charter

The Customer Care Charter forms the foundation for all Langstane staff providing a service to any customer. Staff and tenant groups worked to develop the customer care standards.

What we will do:

- Show respect and listen
- Apologise when we make a mistake, or things go wrong
- Recognise the needs of individuals, and take reasonable steps to meet them
- Reduce barriers that prevent tenant involvement by offering a wide choice to suit as many people as possible
- Communicate regularly about what we do using a range of different approaches
- Provide clear timescales for responding to enquiries. Where we are unable to meet them, we will explain why
- Ensure that we direct phone calls to the most appropriate person to deal with it, or arrange a call back as soon as possible
- Make sure our letters provide contact details of a team member who can assist with enquiries
- Ensure that staff and contractors identify themselves and will provide identification upon request
- Be open and transparent when dealing with issues such as complaints
- Publish our performance information and provide information about how we plan to improve services
- Raise awareness of services we do not provide, and where appropriate, give you details about how to access them through other organisations

Getting Involved

Join Langstane for Life

You can buy a lifetime membership share in Langstane for £1. Members can:

- Be nominated to stand for election to the Board of Management
- Attend the Annual General Meeting
- Vote in the election of the Board of Management

To find out more or apply please contact us on 01224 423000 or info@langstane-ha.co.uk

Getting involved

We want you to be involved in making decisions about the services we provide and the way we manage your neighbourhood. We offer a range of options so you can take part in a way that suits you.

Tenant groups

We can help tenants set up groups to discuss local issues. Help may include funding, materials and advice.

Your Voice Counts



If you do not want to join a formal group you can choose one of our options designed to fit in with how much time you have to offer:

Register of Interested Tenants

We will send you documents to review or a questionnaire to complete.

Tenant Panel

We will contact you occasionally to ask you a few questions.

Reader Panel

We will send you printed items or publications for your comments.

Focus groups & Home Visits

We get together with tenants to discuss particular issues and get information and feedback.

What we expect from you:

- Respect our staff as individuals and listen to information provided
- Understand that sometimes things go wrong, or mistakes are made
- Do not use abusive or threatening language or behaviour. This includes any speech that attacks, threatens or insults a person or group on the basis of national origin, ethnicity, colour, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability
- Keep to appointments, or let us know if you need to rearrange the date or time
- Provide us with full and accurate information to help us to deal with issues effectively
- Where possible take steps to resolve minor problems for yourself
- Understand our responsibilities as a landlord, and what your responsibilities are as tenant
- If we provide a timescale for doing something then please allow us this time to complete the task

How you will know we have met our commitment:

- We will acknowledge general correspondence within 5 working days AND we will always provide you with a timescale for responding to you or completing a job
- You will always be told which member of staff is dealing with your inquiry
- You will regularly be asked for feedback about how we have performed
- Overall customer satisfaction levels will increase
- The number of complaints we receive regarding services that we provide will decrease
- You will be more aware of how you can help us make decisions, and the number of tenants getting involved will increase
- Regular updates will be available on the website/ newsletter highlighting changes that have happened following customer feedback or complaints

Living in your home

Rent

You must make sure you pay your rent on time even though you may be entitled to benefits. If you are having difficulty paying your rent it is important to tell us immediately so we can help. We can:

- Make an affordable repayment agreement which you must stick to
- Set up a direct debit
- Check you are getting the benefits you are entitled to
- Arrange for your arrears to be paid from your benefit

Health and Safety

We must make sure that your property is safe, so we have to check your gas boiler annually. We also check and maintain electrical goods provided by us.

We respond to Health and Safety issues. Please contact us if you see anything which is a potential accident risk and needs our attention. Health and Safety issues can include:

- Clutter surrounding electric and gas supply boxes. No items should be leaning against the meter box
- Chemicals, gas canisters and flammable liquids including petrol. These should not be stored in your property
- Disposal and storage of large items such as bicycles or prams. The outside of the properties should be kept free of clutter so that there is a clear exit in an emergency
- Unpleasant odours. Odours can affect the health of others and should be reported. If you smell gas, call 0800 111 999

Repairs and maintenance

Planned maintenance

Our major repairs and improvements include work to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. Our planned maintenance work includes:

- Kitchen replacement every 15 years
- Bathroom replacement every 30 years
- Redecoration of common areas on a 6 year cycle

If your home is part of a planned maintenance programme we will write to you in plenty of time before the works are due to start. We will ask your permission to carry out a detailed survey in your home to finalise what work needs to be done.

We will also introduce the contractor who will carry out the works for us and the Langstone Property Services Officer responsible for managing the works.

To find out if works are planned for your area, please contact us on 01224 423000.

Quality of your home

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) is the main measure of housing quality and is used to establish whether properties reach the minimum standard. The SHQS states that your property must:

- meet the Tolerable Standard (i.e. the basic legal minimum standard)
- be free from serious disrepair
- be energy efficient
- have modern facilities and services
- be healthy, safe and secure

The Scottish Government has introduced the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing. We must make sure your property meets that standard by 31 December 2020.

Repairs and maintenance

Damp and condensation

In most cases, mould in a property is caused by condensation. Condensation can be found in any home and is caused by warm, moist air making contact with cold surfaces, such as windows and walls.

It is impossible to prevent all condensation, but you can avoid problems with damp and mould by airing rooms several times a day e.g. morning, afternoon and evening for about twenty minutes. If you turn off the heating during these periods you won't waste any energy and condensation will be much reduced.

Pest Control

Pest control is the responsibility of your local Environmental Health Department and you may be charged for this service. We will only deal with pest control in communal areas.

Please contact your local authority for further information.

Regular maintenance

Cyclical maintenance

We have two maintenance programmes, cyclical and planned maintenance.

Cyclical maintenance covers checking essential equipment every year to make sure it is safe. We check:

- Smoke alarms in communal areas
- Lifts
- All gas appliances

The annual gas service is a legal requirement. If you do not arrange an appointment when you are contacted we will enter your property using the master key to make sure the work is done. **We will advise you of the date we intend to do this and you will be charged for use of the master key.**

Living in your home

Changes to your tenancy

You must tell us if someone moves into your home or moves out. You need to ask for our permission if you want to:

- Make alterations to your home (including laminate flooring)
- Add a joint tenant to your tenancy
- Transfer your tenancy to someone else
- Exchange your home with another tenant
- Get a pet

Joint tenancy

You have the right to ask for a joint tenancy. The joint tenant must not be a tenant or owner of another property and must intend to live in your property as their only or principal home. They must have been living at your home for a qualifying period of time. Some restrictions apply and you should ask us for further information.

Sub letting or taking in a lodger

You have the right to sub let your home or take in a lodger. You must intend to return to your property at the end of the agreed period. Restrictions apply and you must ask for permission first. If you sub let your home without permission you will breach your tenancy agreement with us.

Succession

If a tenant or joint tenant dies, the tenancy can be inherited by a spouse, partner, joint tenant, family member or carer. The successor must have lived in the property as their only or principal home for a qualifying period. You must let us know if this happens so we can give you appropriate advice and help.

Living in your home

Mutual exchange

You can apply to exchange your property with another Langstane tenant or a tenant of another Housing Association, Housing Co-op or Local Authority. Permission is granted by each landlord according to their exchange policy. You can apply for an exchange on the House Exchange website www.apply4homes.houseexchange.org.uk.

Assignment

You have the right to pass on your tenancy to someone else as long as your tenancy has been their only or principal home for a qualifying period of time. Other restrictions apply and you must ask for our permission first.

Transfers

If you are affected by overcrowding, under-occupation or your home is no longer suitable due to health conditions, you may wish to apply to transfer to another Langstane property. We allocate our transfer properties according to our Allocations Policy. Other conditions apply such as payment of rent and the condition of your home before a transfer can be agreed.

Repairs and maintenance

Repairs fall into three categories:

Emergency: must be made safe within 6 hours. This includes loss of electricity, blocked main drains or only toilet, total loss of water

Urgent: must be completed within 3 working days. This includes blocked drains, sinks, basins, baths and toilets, roof leaks, damaged stairs or handrails and repairs to communal TV aerials

Routine: must be completed within 15 working days. This includes general joinery repairs, repairs to doors, windows and floors, dripping or leaking taps or shower units

Reporting repairs

Call 01224 423000 to report a repair Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm or use the "Report a Repair" button on our website

For emergency repairs outside office hours or on a public holiday, please call **Heatcare Oil & Gas:**

- **01343 842 042** (Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire & Moray)
- Gas (Heatcare): 01343 842042
- Power cut: 0800 300 999
- Water: 08000 788 788
- Gas escape: 0800 111 999

Rechargeable repairs

You are expected to carry out minor repairs such as replacing toilets seats or changing light bulbs. You are also responsible for repairing something that you or someone in your home has damaged.

Repairs and maintenance

Your maintenance responsibilities

- Keep your home in good condition
- Report damage and repairs
- Repair damage caused by you, your household or visitors
- Report criminal damage or vandalism to the police
- Have contents insurance
- Test your smoke alarm regularly

If we carry out repairs that you are responsible for we will charge you the cost of the repair.

Making improvements

If you want to make improvements to your home you need our written permission. Changes made without permission may have to be removed or put back at your own expense.

Right to Repair Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

You have the right to have small urgent repairs carried out within a given timescale.

We will tell you if your repair qualifies, who our contractor is and when the repair should be completed. If the repair is not completed in time, you may have the right to compensation.

Adaptations

If you or a member of your family has a disability we may be able to help by making adaptations to your home.

You can ask an Occupational Therapist to arrange an assessment of your home and make recommendations.

Typical adaptations include grab rails, lever taps, level access showers and stair lifts.

Living in your home

Using your home

You must use your property as your main place of residence and ensure that it is looked after. You are also responsible for the behaviour of anyone living with you or your visitors. If you are going to be away from your home for more than four weeks you must let us know. If you don't let us know then we may think you are no longer living there.

If we believe that you are no longer living at your tenancy and the property is abandoned we have the right to give you notice and repossess your property.

We can help

If you need help settling into your new home or help following a change in your personal circumstances our Tenancy Sustainment Service can help you resolve problems. We can help you to access specialist help for health issues, debt management, or if you are affected by substance misuse or have a drug or alcohol dependency.

To find out more, contact our Social Justice Team on 01224 423000 or email wecanhelp@langstane-ha.co.uk

Living in your neighbourhood

Communal areas

We may make a charge for communal cleaning or gardening services. Where we don't charge you for this you and your neighbours will be responsible for cleaning the stairs. You must not leave personal items in the communal stairs.

Car parks

Car parking spaces in our schemes are available on a first come, first served basis. We issue one parking permit per tenant when you provide us with evidence that you own a car. This does not guarantee a parking space.

Bulky waste items

It is your responsibility to arrange for these items to be collected. The local authority may offer this service but there will be a charge. You must not dump these items in the communal areas or communal bin areas.

Pets

You must ask our permission before you get a pet. There are some restrictions on keeping a pet.

Neighbour disputes

Unfortunately there are occasions when disputes between neighbours occur. Even small problems can soon escalate into major issues. If problems arise and if you feel comfortable doing so you should speak to your neighbour and explain how their behaviour is affecting you. Your neighbour may not even realise that their behaviour is upsetting you.

If the problem persists or you do not feel that you can approach your neighbour you should contact your Housing Officer.

Living in your neighbourhood

Mediation

We can give neighbours the chance to meet with an independent mediator to talk about their issues.

Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour is persistent behaviour that can cause alarm or distress to tenants or their family members. Not all neighbour disputes are anti-social.

Anti-social behaviour can include:

- Noise
- Harassment
- Animal nuisance
- Vandalism
- Dumping rubbish

To report a neighbourhood issue or anti-social behaviour you can contact us in writing, by phone on 01224 423000 or through our website by using the "Report a Neighbourhood Issue" button. We will investigate and take action if appropriate.

Criminal behaviour must first be reported to Police Scotland on 101.

Contact numbers

Police Scotland	101 or 999 in an emergency
Aberdeen City Anti-Social Behaviour Investigation Team	0800 0510 434
Aberdeenshire	Police Scotland on 101
Moray Anti-Social Behaviour Helpline	08005 877 197
Anonymous reports	Crime Stoppers 0800 555 111