

Making Bath & North East Somerset
an **even** better place to live, work and visit

HOUSING SERVICES

Tenant Manual

Information for private tenants

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Introduction

Welcome to the Private Rented Sector

1. What is the private rented sector?

The term 'private rented sector' means properties that are owned by private individuals, companies or organisations and rented out to single people and / or families. This is different from owning your own home, or 'social rented housing' which refers to properties that are owned and rented out by housing associations or the council.

2. Why rent a property from a private landlord?

There are many reasons why you may choose to live in the private rented sector. A few of the main ones are listed below:

- Choice
There are a wide range of properties in different areas available to you, and the private rented sector is expanding, which means there are more and more properties available in a wider range of areas.
- Affordability
Renting can be considerably cheaper than buying your own house
- Mobility
When renting in this sector you can usually get into and out of a tenancy fairly quickly, which means you can move around more easily should you need to do so.
- Lack of social housing
There are a very limited number of properties to rent through housing associations, and they might not be the type of property, or in the area, that you want. In Bath and North East Somerset the Council does not own any social housing.

Section 1: How to find a property

1.1 What sort of properties should I look at?

First of all you need to decide what sort of property you need, and where it should be. Think about things like the type of property (bedsit, flat or house), what floor (e.g. ground floor, first floor etc), which areas of Bath and North East Somerset you would like to live in, and how much you can afford to pay in rent.

If you are planning on claiming Local Housing Allowance to help you with your rent payments you will need to think about the level that you could be entitled to.

With Local Housing Allowance your benefit is not usually based on the property you live in, but instead on the number of bedrooms you need, how much money you have coming in, and, what savings you have.

Housing Benefits can be complicated so it's a good idea to contact the Housing Benefit department to find out more information before you decide to move house.

You will also need to think about how much time you have to find somewhere to live, and how long the moving process might take. If you don't have much time to find somewhere new and move, you may want to widen the areas you'd be willing to live in to give yourself more choice and a better chance of finding somewhere suitable.

1.2 Where do I look for properties?

- Local Press

The Bath Chronicle, Trade It and the Western Daily Press regularly advertise rented properties.

- Noticeboards

Local shop windows / community notice boards / supermarket notice boards or anywhere where people may advertise. Landlords often advertise available properties here.

- Letting and Management agents

Agents manage properties on behalf of private landlords. Agents should not charge you to just to look for a property. If you find a property through an agent you will often be charged a fee - for example one third of a month's rent plus VAT. This fee may be non-refundable. They will normally require a deposit and may also ask for rent in advance.

Bath and North East Somerset Council cannot recommend individual letting & management agents. However some letting agents are voluntarily regulated by professional letting agents associations which have a code of conduct for all member agents, and they can give you a list of their members. Three of the associations in the Bath area are: The Association of Residential Letting Agents*, the National Association of Estate Agents* and the National Landlords Association Wessex*.

- Websites

There are also lots of websites that advertise properties and rooms to let in the Bath and North East Somerset area.

- If you are a student

Information is available on University* & Student Unions' websites* and also at University accommodation fairs.

- Free Advertising for Private Landlords

Private Landlords can also advertise private rented properties on the Bath and North East Somerset 'Homesearch' website*. This service is available to landlords who are willing to accept tenants in receipt of Local Housing Allowance. For further information please contact the Homesearch Team*.

- Preventing Homelessness Promoting Independence: Homefinder Scheme

The purpose of the Homefinder Scheme is to prevent homelessness by assisting eligible and willing household's to secure private rented accommodation. The scheme has been expanded to include households who are now ready for independent living, that are currently in supported housing, or in receipt of support that is funded by Supporting People Services. Contact Housing Services* for details.

1.3 How do I decide if it's the right property for me?

a) Affordability

One of the first things to think about is 'can I afford to pay the rent and bills?' If you are intending to claim Local Housing Allowance, make sure you have checked how much benefit you will be eligible for before you move in. It is recommended that if this amount is lower than the actual rent that you do not take the property unless you are sure you can make up the difference. This is because you as the tenant would be contractually liable to make sure the rent is paid in full. You can get more information about Local Housing Allowance from Council Connect or the Bath and North East Somerset Council website*.

- Deposits, Fees and Rent in Advance.

Most landlord / agents will ask you for a deposit (usually the same amount as one months rent), and will often ask for rent in advance to be paid as well. You will need to think about whether you can afford this, and remember that Local Housing Allowance is paid, normally directly to you, in arrears - so you will not be able to use this to pay any rent in advance.

You may also be asked to provide a guarantor. This is someone who is expected to guarantee paying the rent if the tenant, for any reason, does not pay. A guarantor is legally responsible for the payment of any rent outstanding and can be taken to court by a landlord where a tenant has failed to meet any rent payment. Make sure that your guarantor reads the agreement they are asked to sign - this is a legally binding

document. In the absence of a guarantor it might be possible to negotiate with a landlord about this and secure alternative guarantees about rent payments where you can provide references from employers and a credit reference check.

b) Visiting the property & meeting the landlord/agent

One of the first things you should do is visit the property and meet the landlord/letting agent. You are not obliged to take the property just because you have visited it - this is a chance for you to look at the property and decide if it is somewhere you would be happy to live. It is also a chance for you to meet the landlord / agent, and see if you would be happy to deal with them. Likewise, it is a chance for the landlord / agent to meet you and see if they want you as a tenant. Remember that the landlord / agent is meeting you for the first time, and first impressions count!

c) Health & Safety

To help you decide if the property is right for you, you may want to complete the health and safety checklist included in the back of this booklet. This is not a guarantee that the property is safe - it is just a guide of things to look for.

- i. If the property is furnished you should check that any soft furnishings are fire resistant. All new furniture will comply with current fire standards, and you can check for labels on second hand furniture. You should check items such as settees, chairs, bed bases, mattresses, headboards, dining chairs, sofa beds, cushions and pillows. If you cannot find the labels, talk to the landlord / agent about this.
- ii. It is a good idea to try and view the property in the day time, so that if there are any faults and disrepair you will be able to see them more clearly. Also try and take someone with you. It's safer than going on your own and means you've got someone else's opinion as well.
- iii. It is recommended that every property has Smoke detector(s) and if there is gas supplied to the property it is a good idea to have a Carbon monoxide detector. If your property does not have a smoke detector or if you are concerned about fire safety you can contact Avon Fire and Rescue Service* or your local fire authority for a free home fire safety visit.
- iv. If the property has gas appliances, it is a legal requirement that the landlord / agent arranges to have them inspected once a year by a qualified Gas Safe Registered engineer to make sure they are safe. You can ask to see a copy of the Landlords Gas Safe certificate to make sure this has been done. If they won't let you see this certificate you can contact Housing Services* or the Health and Safety Executive Gas Safety Advice Helpline*. It is also good practice for your landlord / agent to arrange safety checks for electrical installations and appliances (if provided), you can ask if this has been done and ask to see the certificate (but remember there is no legal requirement for the landlord / agent to do this.)

d) Energy Performance Certificate

If your tenancy started after the 1st October 2008, your landlord / agent is obliged to let you see the Energy Performance Certificate for the property before you move in. This certificate shows the energy efficiency rating for the property - the higher the rating the more energy efficient the home is and the lower the fuel bills will be. If your landlord / agent does not give you a copy of this certificate you can contact the Trading Standards Team* for advice.

e) Location, Affordability, Furnishings & Contracts

You may also want to make your own checklist to help you decide. This could include things like:

- Location - is the property in a suitable area for me? Are there shops and bus stops near by?
- Affordability - can I afford the rent? (or will Housing Benefit cover the rent) and can I afford the bills? This is hard to know before you've moved in, but you may be able to ask the landlord or agent or even ask the existing tenants
- Furnishings - is the property furnished or unfurnished? Can you fit any furnishings you already own in the property? If it's unfurnished, can you afford to buy what you need to furnish it? You may be able to get help to purchase furniture and items such as fridges etc. (see 'What to do when you first move into a new property' section).
- Type of contract – it's a good idea to ask your landlord / agent whether you will have a single or joint tenancy. If you sign a joint tenancy, you need to be aware that you will be “jointly and severally liable”. This means that you could be held liable for the actions of the other tenants, in particular the non-payment of rent. You also might have a fixed term contract, which means that if you move in with a group of people (joint tenants) you need to be confident you can all live together for that fixed term - it might be very difficult to leave part way through the contract. It's a good idea to check before you sign the agreement what might happen if one person decides to leave - will you have to cover their rent? Are you or the landlord responsible for finding a replacement tenant? All these issues are important to consider. Your new tenancy will probably have a minimum fixed term, which means there will be a minimum amount of time that you will have to live there.

f) Smoking

Find out if there is a smoking clause in the tenancy agreement. Your new landlord may not want tenants to smoke in their property for health and safety reasons. Where there is a clause, the tenant is usually obliged not to smoke anywhere within the building. Non-smokers may also prefer smoke free properties. As well as the many health risks from smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke, smoking can lead to a discolouration of upholstery and paintwork on doors, walls and ceilings. As tobacco is designed to stay alight, cigarettes can easily start an accidental fire, and is one of the main causes of fires in the home. If you choose to smoke in a non-smoking property, you may be responsible for professionally cleaning or replacing

curtains, furnishings, upholstery and carpets, and redecorating ceilings, walls, skirting boards and doors. You could also be asked to leave the property if you continue to smoke in the premises. If you are a smoker, you can always set up a smoking area outside in an area away from doors and windows.

g) Discrimination & Accessibility

It's worth knowing that a Landlord / agent is not allowed to discriminate against you because of your gender, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, or disability. Private landlords / agents are obliged to make 'reasonable adjustments' to the property for disabled people. It's hard to say exactly what would constitute a 'reasonable adjustment', as this will depend on the type of property and the adjustment. You can get advice about this, and advice if you think you have been discriminated against, from the Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline*. Disabled private tenants may be able to apply for help with making adaptations to the property to enable you to live there - you would have to get the landlords agreement before arranging for any works to be done. You can contact the Community and Health Access Team* for more information.

h) Accredited Properties

When it comes to renting you can save yourself a lot of hassle by choosing an Accredited Property. The Accreditation scheme is Bath & North East Somerset Council's seal of approval for properties that meet current housing standards and which are safe for people to live in.

Choosing an Accredited Property means you can be sure its good standard of accommodation, which has adequate space and amenities for the number of people living in it, is well managed and meets legal requirements for gas, electrical, furniture and fire safety. The accreditation scheme is a voluntary scheme and by joining the scheme your landlord has shown he/she cares about the conditions in which you will live. The scheme is supported by the Police, Fire Service, local universities and local landlords associations.

All Accredited properties have been inspected by an officer from Housing Services prior to becoming accredited. Accredited landlords also have to adhere to a Code of Good Management Practice (accessible from www.bathnes.gov.uk) and your landlord will have submitted a copy of the current gas safety certificate and electrical safety certificate to the Council.

It's a good idea to check with the Housing Improvement Team* that the property is on their list of accredited properties, and also have a look at the accreditation information on the council website so you can see in more detail what standards should be met.

i) Licensed Properties

If you are thinking of moving into a property and there are: three or more storeys *and* five or more occupants sharing facilities with you - the property may need to be licensed by the council. The Housing Standards Team* can let you know if the property already has a licence, or if it should have one. If the property is licensed this means that it must meet certain standards and the landlord or managing agent has

signed a Code of Good Management Practice. If the property is licensable and the landlord has not applied for a licence they may be liable for prosecution. You can also contact the Housing Standards Team* if you think your property is licensable but the standards are not being met.

If the council decide to prosecute the landlord for not having a licence in some cases tenants may be able to reclaim rent. You will need to speak to the Housing Standards Team* to find out more information about this.

1.4 What do I do when I've chosen my property?

If you are happy with the property and are confident you can afford it, contact the landlord or agent and arrange the next steps with them. Don't forget that if you are already in rented accommodation you will need to give notice, usually one month (check your tenancy agreement and read the Section 'Moving Out Of Your Property' for help). This means you will need to think about when you can move out of your old property and into your new one. If you are unsure about this please contact the Housing Options and Homelessness Team*

Section 2 - What to do when you first move into a new property

2.1 Tenancy agreement, inventory & deposit

Just before moving in, most landlords will present you with a written tenancy agreement to sign. It will detail your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. You should read it carefully before signing. You will have to pay rent and bills from the start date on the tenancy agreement. It's a good idea to check with your landlord if there are any charges contained in the agreement - for example to replace carpets or cleaning the property when you move out.

Types of Tenancy

Assured Shorthold tenancies

The most common type of tenancy agreement is an 'Assured Shorthold Tenancy' (AST) which is a fixed period tenancy - usually for 6 or 12 months. When the fixed period runs out if no action is taken the agreement will become a statutory periodic tenancy, which means it will continue to run on a monthly or weekly basis (depending on how and when you pay your rent).

You can have variations to this type of agreement. The landlord may prefer to offer a verbal tenancy or a written tenancy agreement without a fixed period. Both these examples would create contractual periodic tenancies, meaning the tenancy runs from rent day to rent day i.e. week to week, or month to month, depending on the rental arrangement. Again you need to be sure of your rights and responsibilities, and don't be afraid to get advice if you need to from the Housing Options and Homelessness Team*

Excluded Lettings

Under most circumstances if the landlord lives in the same accommodation as you, this would not be an assured shorthold tenancy, and will instead be an excluded letting. Again, you will need to read any written contract presented to you and understand your rights and responsibilities.

Regulated and Assured tenancies

If you moved in to your property before 15th January 1989 you might be a Regulated Tenant, and if you moved in between 15th January 1989 and 28th February 1997 you may be an assured tenant. Different rules apply to you if this is the case, and it's a good idea to make sure you understand what rights you have. More information about these types of tenancy can be found on the Shelter website*, or through the Housing Options and Homelessness Team*.

Inventory

It is recommended that you sign an inventory. This is a document which describes the condition of the property and any contents. It will be important for you to check against this inventory when you move out of the property. By signing the inventory you are agreeing with everything that is written there, so make sure that you agree that the inventory is correct before you sign it. If your landlord / agent does not provide you with an inventory it's a good idea to take one yourself, and then send it to them to sign. It can be a good idea to take photographs when you complete the inventory, for evidence of what condition the property was in when you first moved in. You may want to get the photographs printed with a date and time to prove when the photographs were taken.

Deposit

You will normally be asked for a deposit the equivalent of between one and two months rent. If your tenancy starts on or after the 6th April 2007 your landlord/ agent is legally required to protect your deposit in a Tenancy Deposit Scheme. Your landlord / agent is obliged to tell you which scheme is being used. If you do not think your deposit has been protected, you can apply to your local county court. The court can order the landlord or agent to either repay the deposit to you or protect it in a scheme. For more help you can contact Shelter* or Housing Services* for more information.

2.2 Rent, Housing Benefit & Council Tax Benefit

If you need to claim benefit to assist you in paying your rent and or council tax, this needs to be done either before you move in or during the 'first' week of your tenancy at the very latest. If you need advice on any housing benefit related matters or want to make a new claim please call the Housing Benefit Team* or call into one of the Council Connect Offices*.

If you are moving from one home straight to the other and are already claiming housing and council tax benefit this is treated as a change in circumstances and your claim will need to be reassessed.

Benefit is payable from when you actually take up residence in the property, so you need to consider this if you take on a tenancy but do not move in straight away.

Housing Benefit in the form of Local Housing Allowance is now paid in most cases to you, the tenant, directly into a bank account. You will then have to make an arrangement to pay your rent to the landlord.

How to claim or change your address for benefit

The quickest and easiest way to make a claim for benefit or change the address of your claim is to visit one of the Council Connect Offices* and see a Benefit Officer in person. They will complete the necessary forms, you will just need to take evidence of your identity, tenancy, income and savings.

If you are unable to get into one of Council Connect Offices* you can complete a new application or change of address form and send it to the Housing Benefit Team*. These are available to download from the council's website or they can be sent by post if necessary. A home visit may also be possible, please discuss your needs with the benefit team.

Please remember if you will be relying on housing benefit to assist in paying your rent, it is essential that you make your claim on time and supply all the necessary supporting evidence. Failure to supply all the necessary information will delay payment.

2.3 Telling people you have moved into a new property

- Personal Benefits and Allowances

If you claim Income Support (IS) Jobseekers' Allowance (JSA) or Incapacity Benefit (ICB) you need to ring the Department for Work and Pensions* (DWP)

If you claim Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) or Child Tax Credit (CTC) telephone the Inland Revenue*.

- Utilities

You will need to register with Wessex Water*. Be aware that your water bill may be seem quite high as you are usually billed for the whole year. Check if you are on a water meter, as you will need to provide Wessex Water* with a meter reading when you first move in.

You will also need to let your electricity and gas suppliers know you have moved into the property and give them your meter readings. If you are not sure who your supplier is you can contact National Grid* and Western Power*

Contact the supply companies with the readings and arrange for the account to be put in your name. It's a good idea to take these readings with your landlord / agent,

and make a note of them on your inventory.

If there are key meters you will need to contact the supply companies and arrange to have the meters re-set. If you don't have a key you will need to ask the supply company to provide one for you. Don't use a key that's been left by the old tenant until you've spoken to the utility company - they may have left a debt on the key, and it can be complicated to sort this out after you've started using it. It's a good idea to ask the landlord or agent where the stopcock for turning off the water supply and fuse box are in case of emergencies.

- Bath and North East Somerset Council

You will need to tell Council Connect* that you have moved house. If you live on your own make sure you tell Revenues and Benefits this as you may be eligible for a reduction in Council Tax (single person allowance). Some people, such as full time students, are exempt from paying council tax, make sure you let the Revenues and Benefits* department know if you think you should be exempt.

The Revenues and Benefits* department will send you a bill and should also send you a form to register with Electoral Services. If you do not receive this you can call Electoral Services* directly to request one. If you are eligible to vote, filling this form in will mean you are registered on the electoral roll.

If you are claiming Housing Benefits you will also need to let the Revenues and Benefits* department know that you have moved, and let them know your new address.

- TV licence

If you have a TV licence for your old address, you need to contact the TV Licensing Authority* and ask them to transfer your licence to your new address. If you do not have a TV licence, you will need to purchase one for your new home if you wish to use a television. If you live in a shared house and have a joint tenancy you may only need one licence for the whole house, but if you have separate tenancy agreements you may need more than one licence. Failure to have the correct licence(s) may result in a fine.

- Insurance

It is your responsibility to arrange contents insurance if you want to cover your personal belongings against damage or theft. If you had insurance at your old home, then you will need to contact your insurers to tell them you've moved. Your insurance premium may change depending on what area you live in.

2.4 Furniture

If your property comes part or unfurnished, and you do not have enough furniture, the Genesis Trust* or SOFA Project* may be able to assist you. They collect good quality items of furniture and household appliances free of charge at their discretion and

provide low cost furniture and safety-checked appliances to people on a low income. You could also try joining reuse organisations such as <http://www.freecycle.org/> to find items you need for free.

If you receive Income Support or Income-Based Job Seekers' Allowance, you may also be able to receive financial assistance from the Social Fund at the Department of Work and Pensions*.

2.5 Waste Collection

It is your responsibility to put your waste and recycling out at the correct place, day and time to ensure it is collected. You can find out your rubbish/recycling and garden waste collection day by contacting Bath and North East Somerset Council directly via Council Connect* or by logging onto the homepage on the Council website*.

The Bath and North East Somerset Council website will give you full information as to what items can be recycled, changes to collection days over Christmas and New Year holidays, locations of local Recycling Centres where you can take your recycling and waste and advice to help you reduce your waste.

Kerbside Collections

The Council collects your recycling (including food waste and cardboard) and rubbish (black sack) **weekly**, on the same day of the week but with different vehicles. Garden waste is a chargeable service and is collected in Council wheeled bins or prepaid sacks on the same day but every fortnight.

As a resident of Bath and North East Somerset you have a legal responsibility for the waste you produce. This means that you are responsible for:

- Storing it on your property during the week
- Putting your waste in the correct containers
- Putting your containers on the edge of your property by **7am** on your collection day
- Moving your containers from the kerbside as soon as possible after your collection

If you are not capable of moving your waste to the edge of your property and there is no-one else living with you who can help, Council Connect* can arrange an assisted collection.

Every property with a kerbside collection should have a free green box for dry recyclables, black food waste bin, kitchen caddy and blue bag for cardboard.

If you live in a flat you may have a mini recycling centre - this is a communal facility that gets collected every week from wheeled bins. You will not need a container for this, however we can offer you a durable bag to store your materials. If you are unsure if you have a mini recycling centre please contact Council Connect*

If you need to report a missed waste collection, order one of our containers or have any other problems or questions regarding your waste collection service, please contact Council Connect*.

Collection of larger items (bulky waste)

The Council can collect larger household items such as sofas or fridges from outside your house but there is a charge for this. There is a discounted rate for those on certain benefits. Prices are on our website or contact Council Connect. You could also try getting rid of reusable items for free to charities or by using <http://www.freecycle.org/>

Recycling Centres

The Council has three Recycling Centres where you can take larger unwanted or broken household items or extra recycling or rubbish. We recycle as much as we can from these centres. These sites are for private household use only and should not be used for business purposes.

Locations and Opening Times

Bath	Midland Road (off Upper Bristol Road), Bath, BA1 3AT
Keynsham	Pixash Lane (off main A4 Bath Road), Keynsham, BS31 1TP
Midsomer Norton	Old Welton, Wheelers Hill (off Radstock Road A362), Midsomer Norton, BA3 2AA

Opening Times

Monday – Friday	8am - 4.15pm
Weekends and Bank Holidays	8am - 3.45pm
25th, 26th December, 1st January	Closed

Section 3 - While living in the property

3.1 Paying Bills and rent

You are responsible for paying the rent and bills from the date on your tenancy agreement. If you do not keep up to date with payments you may be putting your tenancy at risk. You should never withhold rent from your landlord / agent for any reason. If you do withhold rent your landlord / agent may take you to court.

If you are joint tenants and one person does not pay their rent the other joint tenants will be liable to pay that rent.

If you live in a shared house you need to think carefully about whose name is on each bill, and how you're going to make sure that the bills are paid in full and on time. If one tenant does not pay their share then whoever's name is on the bill is liable for ensuring that payment is made. If you have guarantors they may be liable for paying bills if you do not.

If you are claiming Housing Benefit you need to remember that this benefit is to help you pay your rent - it will not cover the cost of any of your bills.

3.2 Keeping your home warm and dry

Problems with condensation can often start when the air inside a property contains a lot of moisture. When warm air comes into contact with a cold surface - such as a wall or window, this will lead to condensation. The formation of condensation can often also be a contributing factor in the development of mould.

Surfaces that are wet should be wiped dry with a cloth and mould treated with either a weak bleach solution or an antifungal. Further advice on condensation and mould may be found on the council website.

Condensation/mould can also lead to things like rotting window frames. Remember that you are responsible for maintaining the property while you live there, and you may be liable for any repairs needed to the property if the landlord or agent thinks you helped cause this damage.

There are lots of simple things you can do to keep condensation to a minimum:

- **Produce less moisture**

Kitchen

Put the lids on saucepans. Do not put more water in than you need to, and turn the heat down once the contents are boiling.

Keep the kitchen door closed when you are cooking to stop the steam escaping into the rest of the property.

If there is an extractor fan make sure it is on when you are using the room

Bathroom

Make sure you do not get water on the floor of the bathroom or toilet. Any water left on the floor will penetrate beneath the covering and cause damage, this can be very expensive to put right and your landlord / agent might charge you for this.

When you are having a shower make sure the shower curtain hangs inside the bath. Use bath mats on the floor and try not to splash water outside the bath or shower.

Keep the bathroom door shut, and open a window so the damp air can escape.

If there is an extractor fan make sure it is on when you are using the room

- **Heating**

A lot of condensation is caused by a lack of heating. It will help if you can heat unused rooms to a low level, and / or keep internal doors closed.

If you do not have central heating, try not to use portable gas heaters as they give out a lot of moisture. Portable heaters should never be left on when you are not at home.

If you are in receipt of certain benefits, you may be able to have central heating or insulation installed free of charge. Warm Streets is the government funded scheme providing heating improvements.

- **Insulation**

Having insulation in your home will help keep your home warmer. In turn a warmer home can cope with more moisture which may help to reduce condensation as well.

Regardless of your circumstances, you or your landlord may be entitled to some form of financial assistance towards insulation and energy efficiency improvements in your home. For information contact the Warm Streets Scheme*.

- **Ventilation**

Try and keep a window open in kitchens and bathrooms when using them, and for at least 20 minutes after you have finished. Keep windows slightly open in any rooms you are using, including your bedroom at night, so that the air can circulate. Only do this if it does not cause a security problem.

- **Drying clothes**

Whenever possible, dry your clothes outside. If you have to dry clothes inside do not hang them directly on radiators. Where possible dry clothes in the bathroom on a clothes horse and keep the room ventilated.

- **Other things you can do**

If condensation and damp do become a problem and the above ideas do not help, you should talk to the landlord / agent. Devices such as dehumidifiers may help, and your landlord /agent may have other ideas to help stop the problem.

3.3 Security

You are responsible for keeping your home secure while you are living there. It is your landlord / agents responsibility to make sure that you have suitable locks on any doors and windows that need them.

Crime reduction advice

- Basic though it sounds, the best advice is to make sure that doors and windows are kept locked. Have a quick check before you leave the house. Even when you are at home, keep doors locked and do not leave windows open in rooms that you are not in. 'Walk in' burglaries rise dramatically in the summer when people leave doors and windows open.

- Do not leave a spare key hidden outside. The standard places that they are hidden are the first places that a burglar would check.
- You might want to ask for new locks to be installed when you move in as you do not know who was given a copy of the keys by the previous tenant.
- Roughly 2/3 of burglaries are via rear ground floor windows and doors. Take extra care to secure them. Windows above flat roofs are also very vulnerable.
- To make the front of your house less vulnerable, make sure that your doors and windows are easily visible from the street. Keep walls and vegetation down to under 1 metre in height.
- Install a viewer in the front door. Do not open the door if you are in any doubt as to who is knocking.
- Do not leave keys close to doors as burglars can use fishing rods or magnets to reach them through the letter box.
- Gravel is noisy to walk on and can deter burglars if used around the perimeter of the home. Prickly shrubs planted alongside rear walls and fences give good added protection.
- Low wattage, energy efficient, dusk to dawn lighting is preferable in most case to 'security' lights activated by sensors.
- Use timer switches to turn on lights, radios etc while you are away from the house. Ask a trusted neighbour or friend to check on your home while you are on holiday and to make the place appear occupied by removing the mail, opening curtains etc.
- Ensure that sheds and outbuildings are secure. Even if they contain little of value, tools and ladders stored there can be used to break into the main building.
- You can register all uniquely identifiable property [i.e. property with serial numbers] at <http://www.immobilise.com/>. If recovered by the police, the owner of the property can then be traced by searching the database.
- Vehicles are safest if parked in a locked garage or on a drive, if there is one.
- You might want to insure the contents of your house, in case anything is stolen.
- For more advice, you could contact your Neighbourhood Watch scheme*, or visit the Crime Reduction website*

3.4 Energy efficiency

If your property is not energy efficient, this isn't only bad for the environment it also increases your fuel bills.

Contact the Warm Streets Scheme on 0800 512 012* for information about any discount schemes available in your area to make your property warmer, and to get advice about how to make your property more energy efficient.

You will need to get permission from your landlord or agent before you have any works carried out.

3.5 Gas safety

It is the landlord's responsibility to make sure that gas appliances are safe by arranging a Gas Safe engineer to inspect the gas appliances in the property every year. If you are not sure if this has been done contact your landlord / agent and ask for a copy of the inspection certificate. If you want to make sure that an engineer is registered you can check their I.D number online at <http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/>

You need to make sure that you report any problems with any gas appliances supplied by the landlord or agent straight away. If you find out that any gas appliances are not safe you must not use them.

3.6 Neighbours and being a good neighbour

If you have any problems with your neighbours while you are living in your new home, the best thing to do at first is to talk to them and see if you can find a way to resolve the problem. If this does not work, or you are not able to talk to your neighbours, there are agencies which may be able to help you. Your local Council Connect* may be able to help you work out who you need to contact.

You also have a responsibility to be a good neighbour, so make sure you think about how your behaviour might affect your neighbours. Keep noise down - especially in the evenings and at night. If you are planning on having a party or know you will be making a lot of noise then let your neighbours know first.

3.7 Your Responsibilities

As a tenant, you have certain responsibilities, most of which should be stated in your tenancy agreement. The list below gives an idea of the main things you need to be aware of:

- You must pay your rent and bills when they are due. Advice with Money Management and Budgeting can be sought online at the Advice guide website* or with the Citizens Advice Bureau*;
- You must report repairs to your landlord / agent as soon as possible;
- You must not deliberately cause any damage;

- You must not carry out any changes or decorate without your landlord's / agent's permission (it's best to get this in writing). If you do cause any damage to the property the landlord / agent is likely to withhold money from your deposit to cover the cost of putting this right.
- You may also be responsible for the maintenance of the garden if you have one. Check your tenancy agreement to see whose responsibility this is.
- You are responsible for the behaviour of any guests you have, so you must make sure that they do not breach any of the terms of your tenancy agreement.
- Follow any other reasonable conditions as mentioned in your tenancy agreement; for example, not keeping pets and not allowing anyone else to live in the property without your landlord's / agent's written permission. If your landlord / agent does agree that someone else can live in your property with you and you are claiming Housing Benefit this may affect your entitlement.
- You should co-operate with your landlord / agent if they give you reasonable notice that they wish to visit to inspect the premises/facilities.

3.8 Your landlord's/agent's responsibilities

Your landlord/agent also has responsibilities, many of which are outlined in the tenancy agreement you both signed. The list below gives you an idea of the main things you need to be aware of:

- They are not allowed to enter your home without written notice (24hours) except in emergencies.
- They must follow the correct legal procedure if they want you to leave:-

The correct legal procedure will depend on the type of tenancy you have. If you have an Assured Shorthold Tenancy and they want you to leave during the fixed term they need to establish "grounds" for eviction (grounds 2, 8, 10 to 15 or 17 apply). If you are issued with a 'Notice to Quit' this will be a written document telling you that your tenancy is going to come to an end. The minimum notice period is normally 2 months. You do not have to leave your home straight away if you have received a notice to quit as your landlord will also have to get an order from the court and may have to order a bailiff before you may have to leave. If you have an ongoing written tenancy agreement such as a Periodic Contractual Tenancy or Statutory Periodic Tenancy the Landlord has a right to repossess the property without giving any grounds for possession. This also applies to Assured Shorthold Tenancies after any fixed term of the tenancy has ended providing it is 6 months since the start of the original tenancy. More information is available upon request from Communities and Local Government* in the booklet Assured and Assured Shorthold Tenancies.

It is illegal for your landlord or agent or any other person to harass you into leaving without following the above notice procedure which could then only be enforced by a County Court Possession Order. If you're not sure if the correct procedure is being followed or you think you are being harassed, you can contact the Council's Housing Options and Homelessness Team*, The Swan Advice Network*, or the Citizens Advice Bureau* for help. You may also want to get legal advice.

The Legal Services Commission* can give you information about organisations and solicitors in your area that may be able to help. You may have to pay for a legal service, so try to make sure that you have a case before employing a solicitor.

3.9 What to do if your property is in poor condition

The agent / landlord must make sure your property meets certain safety standards. There is a safety checklist at the back of this booklet to help you work out if those standards are being met. You can report any problems to Housing Services*, but it's a good idea to talk to your landlord / agent first to try and arrange for any repairs to be done.

Your agent / landlord should arrange for repairs to be carried out within a reasonable time. Repairs that present a danger to health and safety should generally be carried out within one to three days. Non-essential repairs might take up to a month. If this does not happen, you can contact Housing Services* for further advice.

3.10 Relationship between you and your landlord / agent

If you don't think your landlord / agent is keeping to their side of the tenancy agreement, or you wish to seek other tenancy information and advice you may want to get advice from the Housing Options and Homelessness Team*, the Citizen Advice Bureau* or Shelter*. However, it's in your best interests to maintain a positive relationship with your landlord / agent if you can.

If you are a student you may be able to get help from your Student Union*.

Section 4 - Moving out of your property

4.1 Giving Notice

If you wish to end your tenancy, you should firstly check your tenancy agreement to see if there is a clause stating how much notice you should give. If there is not a clause, then the standard rule is that you should give at least 1 month written notice. If you are in a fixed term contract you are contracted to stay in your tenancy for the period of time stated on the tenancy agreement. You cannot leave before this

(without still paying rent), unless there is a 'break clause', or if your landlord / agent agrees this in writing (the landlord should try to recover costs by re-letting).

If you are in a fixed term contract you will probably not be able to give notice before that fixed term ends. When you give notice you should keep a copy of your notice letter, and send it by recorded delivery so you have proof that it's been sent.

You are responsible for rent and bills until the last date of your tenancy.

It is a good idea to speak to your landlord / agent to check they have received your notice letter, and also to speak to them about arrangements for you moving out.

You will need to agree when to hand over the keys - this will usually happen on the day you leave.

If you have to move at short notice, and as a result you are liable to make payments for both your old and new property, (due to the previous landlord requiring payment for a notice period), you may be eligible for Housing Benefit payments in respect of both homes for up to 4 weeks. In some situations, for example domestic violence, this period could be longer. If you need further information about payments please contact Housing Benefit Team*.

4.2 Final meter readings

On the day you move out you will need to take final meters readings and let your energy suppliers know. You will need to give them your new address or a contact address where your final bill can be sent. Try and take these final readings with your landlord / agent and make a note of them on your inventory.

If you have key meters you should tell your energy suppliers that you are moving so that they can re-set the meter for the new tenants. Make sure you leave the energy key with the landlord/agent so it can be given to the new tenant.

4.3 Other contracts

If you have other services in your property, such as cable or satellite TV, you may have to give notice to these companies. If you have entered into a contract for a fixed period of time you will need to check with the provider how you end the contract.

4.4 Changing address and re-directing post

You will need to tell several agencies that you are moving:

a) Personal Benefits and Allowances

If you claim Income Support (IS), Jobseekers' Allowance (JSA) or Incapacity Benefit (ICB) you need to ring the Department of Work and Pensions* to tell them you are

moving and tell them your new address. If you claim Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) or Child Tax Credit (CTC), you will need to contact the Inland Revenue*

- b) Water:
Call Wessex Water Billing and Customer Services* to tell them that you are moving and what your new address is.
- c) TV licence:
If you have a TV licence, contact the TV Licensing Authority* to tell them you are moving and to ask them to transfer your licence to your new address. Failure to do so may result in a fine.
- d) Insurance:
If you have contents insurance then you will need to contact your insurers to tell them you're going to move.
- e) Bath and North East Somerset Council
You will need to tell the Revenues and Benefits department, that you are moving house. If you claim Housing and Council Tax Benefits* you will also need to let them know that you are moving.
- f) Redirection of Mail
You can ask Royal Mail to automatically forward your mail to your new address, there is a charge for this and you can find out more at <http://www.royalmail.com/portal/rm>
or a local branch of the Post Office.

4.5 Getting your deposit back

If you gave a deposit to your landlord / agent when you moved in, then you should be able to get some or all of this back when you move out. Money can be deducted from this if you have caused damage to the property that will cost the landlord money to put right. You cannot be charged for reasonable wear and tear to the property or contents.

You will need to make sure that the property and any outside areas are in the same condition as when you moved into the property. You can use the inventory to check this, and to make sure that anything provided by the landlord / agent as part of your tenancy is still there. You should leave the property and any outside areas clean and tidy and you must take all your belongings and rubbish with you.

You may have to wait to get this money back until the landlord / agent has inspected the property. The inventory you signed when you first moved in should be used by the landlord / agent to compare the current condition of the property or contents against how they were originally. If you can, it's a good idea to go through and agree the inventory with the landlord / agent when you move out.

If your tenancy started on or after the 6th April 2007 your deposit should have been protected by a government authorised tenancy deposit scheme. If you disagree with your landlord or agent about how much of your deposit you should get back at the end of your tenancy, you can ask the scheme to help you. Your landlord / agent should have given you the contact details of the scheme when you first moved in to the property. If your deposit has not been protected you can apply to your local county court. If your landlord or agent has not protected your deposit, they can be ordered to repay three times the amount of the deposit to you. You can get more information from Communities and Local Government* or you can contact the Housing Options and Homelessness* team for advice.

4.6 During the notice period

During the period of your notice your landlord / agent may want to show prospective new tenants around the property. Your landlord / agent must ask your permission and give you reasonable notice of a visit. It is a good idea to try and keep the property tidy and presentable for when this happens.

4.7 Rent and bills

You are responsible for the rent and bills at the property until the final day of your tenancy. If you are claiming Housing Benefit you cannot normally claim on more than one property at once, if you wish to move before your notice expires you will need to contact Housing Benefit* for advice.

Directory

Bath and North East Somerset Council Contacts

Housing Services Contacts

Housing Services <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/Housing/Pages/default.aspx>

Bath and North East Somerset Council Email: housing@bathnes.gov.uk

PO Box 3343, Bath, BA1 2ZH

Main Switchboard: 01225 477000

HomeSearch

For people on the housing register; we give you advice and help with your application to join the housing register and assist in the use of the Council's choice based lettings system. Housing Association properties that are available for rent will be advertised every week, you can then register an interest as long as your application has been accepted. **For more information call: 01225 396118 or go to**

<http://www.homesearchbathnes.org.uk>

Housing Improvements

We can provide financial assistance to people on income related benefits and to people over 60 to carry out essential repairs to their homes. We provide disabled facility grants to eligible applicants. We also offer advice on radon gas and home energy efficiency measures. We also run the landlord Accreditation scheme and the Homefinders Scheme. **For more information call: 01225 396444**

Housing Options & Homelessness

The council has a responsibility for anyone who is involuntarily made homeless. The team offers a free and confidential service on a wide range of housing matters for people who live in the district; this is dependant on a fair and reasonable assessment of each person's circumstances. Advice includes tenancy and illegal eviction, sheltered accomodation and housing benefits. **For more information call: 01225 396296**

Housing Standards

We can offer advice for private and social tenants as well as landlords. We can assist with issues including disrepair, fire safety, and management of properties and gas and electrical safety. The team provides inspection services and enforcement of the regulations. We also licence Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs). **For more information call: 01225 396444**

Supported Lodgings Team

We arrange lodgings in private homes for young people who are homeless or leaving care, to help them prepare for independent living. Our Lodging Providers work with young people to develop skills and confidence around cooking, cleaning, budgeting and managing independently. Young people in the scheme must be in education or employment. **For more information call: 01225 477802 or 396005**

Other Council Contacts

General enquiries http://www.bathnes.gov.uk Tel: 01225 477000 email: enquiries@bathnes.gov.uk

Benefits (Revenues and Benefits)

Housing and Council Tax Benefit Team

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/advicebenefits/benefits>

Tel: 01225 394959 (or 01225 477777 to speak to an advisor)

Email: revenues_benefits@bathnes.gov.uk

PO Box 2797, Bath BA1 1WF

Blocked Drains <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk>

Tel: 01225 477551

Email: environmental_protection@bathnes.gov.uk

9-10 Bath Street, Bath BA1 1SN

Community and Health Access Team

Tel: 01225 396000

Email: access_team@bathnes.gov.uk

PO Box 3343 Bath BA1 2ZH

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/healthandsocial/helpforadults/adulthoodservice>

Council Connect

The Council Connect contact centre deal with telephone, text and email enquiries. All the contact details are available below:

- Web: <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/reportit/>
- Email: councilconnect@bathnes.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01225 39 40 41
- Text (SMS): 07797 806545

The contact centre is open:

- Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri: 8am - 6pm
- Wednesdays: 9.30am - 6pm
- Sat & Sun: closed

Office Locations

If you prefer to speak to someone in person, then you can visit our Council Connect Offices listed below

- The Guildhall, High Street, Bath, BA1 5AW
- The Hollies High Street, Midsomer Norton, BA3 2DP
- Riverside. Temple Street, Keynsham, Bristol, BS31 1LA

Electoral Services email: elections@bathnes.gov.uk

Tel: 01225 477333

The Guildhall, High Street, Bath, BA1 5AW

Noise Pollution

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/environmentandplanning/Pollution/Pages/NoiseNuisance.aspx>

Tel: 01225 477551

Email: environmental_protection@bathnes.gov.uk

9-10 Bath Street, Bath BA1 1SN

Pest Control

<http://wwwi/environmentandplanning/environmentalhealth/pestcontrol/Pages/default.aspx>

Tel: 01225 477563

Email: environmental_protection@bathnes.gov.uk

9-10 Bath Street, Bath BA1 1SN

Rubbish (Household Waste and Street Maintenance)

Tel: 01225 394041

<http://wwwi/environmentandplanning/recyclingandwaste/householdwasteinfo/Pages/default.aspx>.

Trading Standards

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/advicebenefits/tradingstandards/Pages/default.aspx>

email: trading_standards@bathnes.gov.uk

Tel: 01225 396753

Consumer Direct (for consumer enquiries)

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/Consumerrights/index.htm>

(local rate call) 08454 040 506

Other Contacts

Advice Services:

Advice Guide Website <http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/>

Online service; (Free, independent and confidential advice on legal, money and other matters. Also provides welfare rights and money advice services)

Citizens Advice Bureau <http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/bathcab.htm>

Tel: (premium rate line) 0844 499 4718

Address: 2 Edgar Buildings, George Street, BATH, Somerset BA1 2EE

Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/>

Tel:(free phone number) 0800 512 012

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline info@equalityhumanrights.com

Postal address: 3 More London, Riverside Tooley Street, London, SE1 2RG

Helpline: (Local rate number) 0845 604 6610 - England main number
(Local rate number) 0845 604 6620 - England textphone

Fire Safety advice - Avon Fire and Rescue Fire Safety

www.avonfire.gov.uk/ 0117 926 2061

Statutory Fire Safety, Cleveland Bridge, Bath BA2 6PU

Legal Services Commission <http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/>

(Website helping to access legal advice, information and legal aid)

Tel: (local rate number) 0845 345 4 345

NHS Direct Advice on staying healthy <http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/>

Tel: (local rate number) 0845 4647

Shelter www.shelter.org.uk

(Free, confidential advice for those in housing need)

Free housing advice helpline

Tel: (free phone number) 0808 800 4444 (8am - midnight)

SWAN Advice Network <http://www.swan.btik.com/>

Independent advice network that serves the whole of Bath and North East Somerset.

Leigh House, 1 Wells Hill, Bath, Radstock BA3 3RN

Tel: 01761 437176 Fax: 01761 432445

Associations

The National Landlords Association Wessex
<http://www.wessexlandlords.org.uk/> 0845 230 4150

The Association of Residential Letting Agents
<http://www.arla.co.uk/> 0845 345 5752

The National Association of Estate Agents
<http://www.naea.co.uk/> 01926 496 800

Communities and Local Government

Assured and Assured Shorthold Tenancies Booklet
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/assuredassuredlandlords>
Tel: 0870 1207 405
Email: communities@twoten.com

Communities and Local Government (Information about tenancy deposit scheme)
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/communities.gov.uk/housing/rentingandletti ng/privaterenting/tenancydepositprotection/>

DirectGov (Information about Public Services provided by the government)
<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/index.htm>

Crime & Security

Avon and Somerset Police
http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/community_safety/
Tel: (local rate number) 0845 456 7000
Or in an emergency Dial 999

Your Local Neighbourhood Policing Team at;

- **Bath Police Station, Manvers Street, Bath.**
 - **Keynsham Police Station, Bath Hill East, Keynsham.**
 - **Radstock Police Station, Wells Road, Radstock.**
- Telephone number (all teams) 0845 456 7000
Website Address – www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/

Bath and North East Somerset Anti Social Behaviour Team
Tel: 01225 842462
Email: asb@bathnes.gov.uk

Crime Reduction Website

<http://www.crimereductionunit.org.uk/>

Neighbourhood Watch Administrators

Tel: (local rate number) 0845 456 7000

Furniture

The SOFA Project

For good quality items of furniture and household appliances suitable for reuse, please contact The SOFA Project (Tel: 0117 954 3567).
(info@sofaproject.org.uk) <http://www.sofaproject.org.uk/>

The Genesis Furniture Project

For good quality items of furniture and household appliances suitable for reuse, please contact The Genesis Furniture Project (Tel: 01225 421111)
(furniture@genesistrust.org.uk) www.genesistrust.org.uk

Gas Safety

Gas Safe Register

<http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/>

Tel: 0800 408 5500

Health & Safety Executive Gas Safety Advice Helpline

www.hse.gov.uk/gas/

Tel: (free phone number) 0800 300 363

National Gas Emergency Service

<http://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/Gas/Safety/Emergency>

If you can smell gas or believe a gas pipe has been damaged, please call the freephone National Gas Emergency Number: 0800 111999

Income Support, Jobseekers' Allowance, or Incapacity Benefit

Department of Work and Pensions

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Tel: (free phone number) 0800 0556 688

Social Fund (financial assistance for those on benefits)

Tel: 0117 953 6000

Utilities

National Grid

www.nationalgrid.com/uk

(local rate number) 0845 605 6677

Wessex Water Billing and Customer Services (Water)

www.wessexwater.co.uk

Tel: (local rate number) 0845 600 3600

Email: customer.services@wessexwater.co.uk

Western Power

www.WesternPower.co.uk

(free phone number) 0800 052 0400

TV Licensing

<http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/>

(local rate number) 0845 7289 289

Universities

Bath University

Student Accommodation:

Students Union:

www.bath.ac.uk/accommodation

accommodation@bath.ac.uk

union@bath.ac.uk

01225 383111

01225 386612

Bath Spa University

<http://www.bathspa.ac.uk/services/shs/>

Accommodation Office:

01225 875843

Students Union:

01225 875588

email: accommodation@bathspa.ac.uk

email: bathspasu@bathspasue.ac.uk

Warm Streets (Warm Streets is a county-wide project which is aimed at tackling the problem of cold, damp homes by installing loft and cavity wall insulation)

<http://www.cse.org.uk/>

email: warmstreets@cse.org.uk Tel: (free phone number) 0800 512 012

Working Families Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit

Inland Revenue

www.taxcredits.inlandrevenue.gov.uk

Tel: (local rate number) 0845 300 3900

Winter Fuel payments for people over 60:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DI1/Directories/DG_180121

(local rate number) 0845 915 1515

Housing Health and Safety Checklist for Tenants

This checklist has been written to help you find out if the property you are looking at is safe and suitable for you to live in.

Some things you will have to ask the Landlord about, and some you will be able to find out by looking around the property.

If the answer to any of the questions is no, it doesn't mean you can't move in, but you may want to get advice from someone at the council, or you could speak to the Landlord.

	Question			
Fire	Is there a fire alarm system or smoke detectors in the hallways?	If they are battery operated make sure that there are working batteries in them.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Gas	Is there a current Gas Safe safety certificate?	You should ask the Landlord to provide this.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Electricity	Is there a current NICEIC, or similar, certificate	You should ask the Landlord if there is one.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Heating	Is there a heating system that means you can heat the bed-sit or bedrooms and any lounges?	Look for central heating, or heaters fixed to walls.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Hot Water	Is there running hot water in the bathroom and kitchen?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Insulation	Is there loft insulation and double glazing?	You might need to ask the landlord about this. If there is no insulation, you may be able to get a grant to pay for this - call Warm Streets on 0800 512 012	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Security	Are there locks on the doors and windows and do they look secure?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Condensation	Can you ventilate the bathroom and kitchen?	This could be an extractor fan, or windows that can be opened.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Hygiene	Is there a kitchen, shower and/or bath, toilet and wash hand basins with hot and cold running water?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Trips & Falls	Are there serious trip hazards, steep stairs, low window sills or raised areas without handrails / guards	Look for things which you think might be dangerous and cause you to fall, like stairs without a handrail.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
General	Is the general condition of the property good?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

This is not an official Environmental Health check - it is just a guide to help you think about things to look for before you sign a tenancy agreement.

This document has been produced by Housing Services. If you would like to contact us by post all letters should be sent to:-

Adult Social Services & Housing
Bath & North East Somerset Council
PO Box 3343
Bath BA1 2ZH

Thank you to all the tenants and landlords who have responded to the surveys.

Your comments and responses have informed this manual.

For additional copies of this booklet or further information about the tenant's manual please contact: Housing Services

Tel: 01225 396444 Email: housing@bathnes.gov.uk

or download further copies from <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk>

This information can be made available in a range of languages, large print, Braille, on tape, electronic and accessible formats.

Contact the Information Officer on 01225 477983 or email information_officer@bathnes.gov.uk