

**Sligo
County
Council**



**Comhairle
Chontae
Shligigh**

TENANT HANDBOOK



YOUR INFORMATION GUIDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	Page 3
MOVING IN CHECKLIST	Page 4
RENT	Page 5
TENANCY CONDITIONS	Page 7
ESTATE MANAGEMENT	Page 8
MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS	Page 10
FIRE SAFETY IN THE HOME	Page 17
SECURITY IN THE HOME	Page 19
NEIGHBOURHOOD RELATIONS	Page 20
CARING FOR YOUR ENVIRONMENT	Page 27
YOUR HOUSING OPTIONS	Page 29
MOVING ON	Page 32
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	Page 33
CONTACT TELEPHONE LIST	Page 35

Date issued: June 2017

INTRODUCTION

The Council is pleased to provide you with a copy of their tenant handbook. As your landlord, the Council would like to remind you of the wide range of services available to you as one of our tenants. This handbook is an important element in the provision of information to you as our tenant. Our aim in providing this handbook is to give you updated additional information about the Council and how it operates.

In addition to the handbook, there are a range of leaflets, circulars, public information notices and annual publications available to you for your information. The Council would like to welcome you as a tenant, and hope that your tenancy with us will be pleasant and adequate to meet your housing need.

RELATIONSHIP

We want to hear your views!

We want to ensure that there exists a two-way flow of information. If you have something to say, we will listen. We provide a comprehensive customer service for this purpose.

We can be contacted at:

**Sligo County Council
Housing Section, County Hall, Riverside, Sligo**

Tel: (071) 9111206/ 9111207 / 9111213 / 9111215

Email: housing@sligococo.ie

Opening Hours: Monday—Friday 9:30 am to 1:00 pm
(excluding bank holidays)

Logging Repair Requests:

Tel: (071) 9111324

Email: housingrepairs@sligococo.ie

You can call to the Housing Section during normal office opening hours. Interview rooms are available where matters of a confidential nature may be discussed with experienced housing staff.

We encourage you to give your views on the services that we provide. We will take your views into account when making a decision affecting your home or estate. We may not always be in a position to meet all of our tenants' requests but we will do our best to provide quality housing services.

MOVING IN CHECKLIST

- Please arrange connection with phone and TV service providers (if applicable)
- Contact ESB Networks to check that you are connected and that the account is in your name
- Notify An Post and other relevant persons that you have changed address
- Tenants are required to take out house contents insurance in their own name. This policy should cover your belongings for fire and accidental damage, such as flood, water damage, and theft. Many insurance companies offer easy pay options for contents only cover.
- Notify refuse company to arrange collection of your bins.
- If transferring from a local authority house, please liaise with the Housing Section to arrange an inspection of your current home and return the keys to same.



RENT

Tenants are encouraged to pay their weekly rent through the Household Budget Scheme which is a simple method for paying your rent. Tenants should be aware that allowing your rent account to accrue arrears will prevent the Council from dealing with maintenance and repair requests or transfer applications.

The Council will assess your rent and deal with any queries you may have about your account, methods of payment, arrears etc. Some general questions are answered below, however you can contact the Council's Finance Section with more specific queries in relation to your account.

What payment options are available to me?

It is the Council's policy to provide its tenants with a broad range of payment methods. Options include:

- Household Budget Scheme – deduction from certain Social Welfare payments via An Post
- Standing Order
- In person at the Council's finance desk: Mon—Fri 10am—4pm (*excluding Bank Holidays*)
- Cheques or postal orders (no cash) through the postal system
- Through your local Revenue Collector (if applicable)

How is my rent determined?

Your rent is determined using the Council's Differential Rent Scheme.

Rents are assessed on total household income in a manner which ensures that the amount charged in rent is reasonable and does not lead to undue financial difficulties.

What if another person in the house is in receipt of income?

Rents are assessed having regard to the income of all persons residing in the property.

How often does the Council review its tenants' rents?

The Council reviews tenants' rents as required. We charge rent based on the most recent information available regarding your household's income and circumstances.

What if my circumstances change?

You should keep the Council informed of any change in household circumstances. For example, you should let us know when:

- A person in your household gets a job
- A person in your household becomes unemployed
- A person with an income joins the household
- A person in the household starts claiming social welfare
- There is a death in the household
- There is a birth in the household
- A person in your household vacates the property

You should notify us of these changes by contacting the Housing Section and your rent will be reviewed accordingly upon submission of updated details.

What if I don't notify the Council when my circumstances change?

When changes in your circumstances become apparent, your rent will be re-assessed and your rent account will be backdated to reflect the change.

What can I do if I am unable to pay my rent?

If for any reason you are unable to pay your rent you should contact the Council immediately. Try to avoid allowing your rent account fall into arrears. The earlier you deal with the problem the better. Council staff will assist you and will help work out a reasonable repayment plan for you to clear off any arrears. Once you make an agreement you must stick to it, your arrears will reduce, and the Council will be satisfied with the efforts being made. You may wish to contact Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS) for advice in managing your budget.

Can I be taken to Court for Rent Arrears?

Yes, if you refuse to come to a reasonable agreement or if you do not keep to the agreed plan, this may lead to court action and possible eviction. At the eviction stage of the legal process you are still responsible for the arrears including the legal costs. When you are evicted you render yourself homeless and you will have no automatic right to supplementary welfare allowance or social housing accommodation for the homeless. If you have children, Túsla will be informed about the termination of your tenancy.

TENANCY CONDITIONS

The conditions of your tenancy are set out in detail in your Tenancy Agreement. For your convenience the main points are summarised below:

- The dwelling must be used as your main home.
- You must not cease to reside in your dwelling for more than six weeks in any period of fifty-two weeks without the consent of the Council.
- The dwelling must not be used for business purposes of any kind.
- Rent must be paid in full every week.
- You must provide the Council with full details of income and household circumstances.
- You must return your household details form when requested.
- Only one domestic pet is allowed and it must be properly cared for and kept under control at all times.
- You must give 4 weeks' notice when surrendering the tenancy.
- You must look after the dwelling responsibly.
- You cannot make any alterations to the property without written permission from the Council.
- Authorised officers of the Council must be allowed to enter and inspect the dwelling at reasonable times or to carry out necessary work.
- You must not take in lodgers or sub-tenants.
- You and your household, including visitors, shall not cause nuisance, annoyance, or disturbance to neighbours including:
 - harassment or violence or threats of violence
 - unreasonably loud noise of any kind

Please note that you, as a tenant of the Council, are responsible for the behaviour of visitors to your tenancy.

Tenants evicted for breach of these conditions will be regarded as having deliberately rendered themselves homeless and will NOT be re-housed.

ESTATE MANAGEMENT

When you are allocated a dwelling by the Council, you become not just a tenant, but a member of the community in which you live. The Council encourages you to become actively involved in your estate. We are eager to hear your views and suggestions on how your estate can be improved. To help you become involved the Council has a dedicated Estate Management Team.

The Estate Management Team seeks to provide a comprehensive level of service in its estates, and to encourage tenant involvement. We hope to improve the overall co-ordination of services in estates, while also improving communications between tenants and the Council.

The Estate Management Team will also conduct assessments and inspections of estates to help identify problems and develop plans for each estate. This will lead to an improvement in living conditions with tenants working together with statutory and voluntary bodies for the good of the community. Only in this way can the social, recreational and environmental needs of the estate be achieved.

We want you as a tenant to participate and have a say in the day to day running of your estate. Don't leave it to the Council, join in by participating in your local tenants'/residents' association, and help make your estate a better place to live. Tenants are also encouraged to become involved in the maintenance of green areas and planting schemes.

For further information or assistance please contact your Estate Officer.

CREATING A COMMUNITY

The Council is very keen to support residents in housing estates who wish to set up residents' associations and groups and get involved in their community. Please contact your Estate Officer for further assistance.

The word “community” means a group or collection of people who have something in common – in this case, the place that they live. Try to make everyone feel a part of your community by including those who may feel left out by other sections of society in your activities, such as older people, those of different race, culture, religion, those with a disability or a health problem.

A Resident’s Group or Association is elected by the residents of an estate and can benefit you and your family by providing a way for residents to liaise with the Council about housing issues. A Resident’s Group can help you and your neighbours to co-operate on projects that improve your living environment and make you feel more involved in your community.

Sometimes Residents Associations also set up and run the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in estates. It may be necessary from time to time to involve a wider group of residents to discuss and resolve a serious issue that has arisen on your estate. This is a working group and is task-focused, disbanding when the task is finished e.g. traffic calming, tidying estates etc. The key point about the community that you live in is that everyone has something to offer – maybe you have an interesting hobby or special skill that you could bring to a community event or estate fund raiser? Children and young people should be seen as contributors to a community, with their energy and motivation.

Initiatives for Residents’ Groups

From time to time, the Council may invite groups to participate in special projects or initiatives for their estates such as the “Best Kept Estate Awards” and the annual community & voluntary grants. These projects help to increase tenant participation and offer incentives for environmental and community development work on housing estates.

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS

Housing Maintenance and Tenants' Charter

Important Notes

Prior to requesting maintenance/repairs, tenants should check this handbook to ensure that the specific maintenance/repair request is the responsibility of the Council

- Each tenant on the signing of his or her tenancy agreement assumes responsibility for maintenance of the property.
- The Council is responsible for repairs of a **structural nature and those caused by normal wear and tear.**
- The Council shall only carry out maintenance and repairs for which it has responsibility **provided your rent is paid up to date.**
- The Council will carry out, upon discovery or notification and without delay, maintenance and repairs which pose a health and safety risk to the tenant or the general public regardless of responsibility.
- The tenant is responsible for the costs incurred regarding any repairs carried out by the Council deemed to be the tenant's responsibility (including those repairs deemed to be a health and safety risk).
- Tenants must obtain the Council's approval in writing before starting any improvements or alterations to the property. Planning permission may be required for certain works. The Council will not be responsible for the maintenance of any unauthorised alterations to the property made by the tenant.
- In the case of certain unauthorised alterations carried out to the dwelling, the Council may require full reinstatement of the property to its original condition.
- In the event of water leakage or other faults, the tenant is responsible for minimizing damage to the property pending repair work being carried out.

- All tenants must familiarise themselves with the location of water mains, stop cocks, valves, fuse boards, circuit breakers and gas mains (if applicable), AJ's and inspection chambers.
- It is at the discretion of the Council to decide who is responsible for repair or maintenance works not specified in the tenant handbook.
- All tenants, upon termination, or transfer of a tenancy, may be responsible for the cost of repair and decoration of walls and ceiling surfaces including the re-fixing of electrical switches and fixtures following the removal of timber cladding, dado railing, etc, which was erected by the tenant.

The dedicated contacts for request for works /services are as follows:

Sligo County Council	
Tel:	(071) 91 11324
Email:	housingrepairs@sligococo.ie
Counter:	Monday—Friday 9:30 am to 1:00 pm (excluding bank holidays)

Note: These three modes of communication are the only way in which a valid repair request will be accepted.

TENANT RESPONSIBILITY Maintenance and Repairs

General Internal Maintenance

1. Maintenance of internal and external wall finishes.
2. Maintenance of cupboards, wardrobes, kitchen units, kitchen unit doors, hinges, handles, locks and catches.
3. Ventilation of all rooms and attic.
NB: Please ensure permanent ventilation is unobstructed
4. Maintenance of all tiled floors.
5. Maintenance of internal woodwork such as floors, doors, doorframes, window boards and skirting boards.
6. Maintenance of smoke alarms and heat sensors.
7. Cleaning and maintenance of cooker extract hoods and fans.

General External Maintenance/Repairs

1. Maintenance of gardens and hedges.
2. Maintenance of fences, garden boundary walls and gates.
3. Maintenance of fuel sheds or outhouses.
4. Maintenance of gutters and downpipes.
5. Maintenance of footpaths, driveways and entrances.
6. Repairs of damage to roofs caused by tenants or their assigns.
7. Cleaning of moss or any debris on roofs.
8. Cleaning and maintenance of Chimneys.
9. Maintenance of all electricity and telephone cabinet doors.
10. Maintenance of ventilator covers.

Refuse should only be stored in a suitable covered bin for collection.

Doors and Windows

1. Maintenance of internal and external doors (including letter boxes, door numbers, door bells, keys, locks, handles and hinges.)
2. Maintenance of window stays, catches, hinges, glazing and restrictors.
3. Maintenance of perma-vents where fitted in windows.
4. Maintenance of draught proofing of doors and windows.

Plumbing

1. Maintenance of water tanks and ball cocks.
2. Maintenance of taps.
3. Maintenance of sanitary ware.
4. Maintenance of electric showers.
5. Releasing of air locks in pipes.
6. Maintenance of sinks and baths.

Heating

1. Maintenance and cleaning of stoves, dampers, ranges and back boilers.
2. Maintenance of fire grates, fire bricks and fire seals.
3. Maintenance of oil fired burners including jets, flues, bleeding of systems and annual servicing.
4. Maintenance of oil tanks and oil lines.
5. Maintenance of radiators, radiator valves and pipe work.
6. Maintenance of circulating pumps and time clocks.
7. Maintenance of external frost stats.
8. Maintenance of valves and pipe work at manifold.
9. Maintenance of solar panel heating systems.
10. Maintenance of heat recovery ventilation systems.
11. Maintenance of geo-thermal heating systems.

NB: Please ensure that only kerosene is used as fuel for oil boilers

Drainage

1. Maintenance and unblocking of all waste drainage from house to the public sewer or septic tank/proprietary effluent treatment system.
2. Maintenance of gully traps, aj's and inspection chambers.
3. Maintenance of septic tanks and proprietary effluent treatment systems (including percolation areas).
4. Annual servicing of proprietary effluent treatment systems.

Please ensure proprietary effluent treatment systems and associated pumps are maintained in accordance with manufacturers guidelines as maintenance certificates must be produced in the event of system failure, prior to repair being considered.

Electric

1. Maintenance of all electrical circuitry and fittings.
2. Maintenance of electric storage heating.
3. Maintenance of electric immersion heaters.
4. Maintenance of electric supply to all heating boilers.

Please ensure that any electrical alterations undertaken must be carried out by a qualified electrician and certified with appropriate certification

No temporary or permanent connections or alterations shall be made to the electrical supply without the prior written authorisation of the Council

THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITY

Maintenance and Repairs

1. Structural repairs to foundations due to normal wear and tear.
2. Structural repairs to floors (excluding floor finishes) due to normal wear and tear.
3. Structural repair to waste pipes, gullies, AJ's, manholes and septic tanks due to normal wear and tear.
4. Structural repairs to roofs including tiles/slates, ridge cappings and barges, fascias and soffits, battens and felt, roof vents, rafters and joists, purlins and collar ties due to normal wear and tear.
5. Structural repairs to ceilings and ceiling joists due to normal wear and tear.
6. Structural repairs to solid block/brick or partition walls including plastering due to normal wear and tear.
7. Structural repairs to Chimneys due to normal wear and tear.
8. Repairs or replacement of windows, external doors and external door frames caused by normal wear and tear.

The tenant is responsible for structural repairs caused by wilful or malicious damage to the dwelling, *regardless of who caused the damage*. If the Council undertakes repairs as a result of such damage, the cost of such repairs will be charged to the tenant.

The tenant is responsible for the security of the dwelling.

General Housing Maintenance Tips

- Notify the Council immediately should a problem arise. (Please first check the responsibility list as set out in this tenant handbook)
- You should be aware that an electric live underground cable is laid from an ESB pole or mini pillar to the meter cabinet in your dwelling.
- Avoid damaging roof tiles by not permitting TV aerial /satellite dish installers to walk on the roof. Insist that installers use gable mounted brackets instead.
- Take all reasonable care when you are required to walk in the attic space and do not allow children in this area.
- Check smoke detectors on a weekly basis.
- Read all the instruction manuals carefully especially those which relate to showers, cookers, smoke detectors etc.
- Keep the wall ventilators and window sashes open as often as possible. Avoid generating excessive amounts of steam in the kitchen and shower areas (i.e. in wet rooms in the dwelling), as this type of moisture can lead to dampness and mould damage.
- Fit door stoppers to prevent wall/studding damage.
- Lubricate internal and external door locks and hinges annually.
- In open fireplaces of new dwellings light small fires in the first instances to avoid cracking the fire back.
- Clean cooker, stove and chimney flues regularly.
- Identify all stopcocks and wheel valves and label.
- Operate water stop valves in your hot press and under your sink regularly to prevent premature failure.
- Check hot press pipe work, valves, cylinders etc for leaks, removing linen regularly if necessary.
- Operate circulating pump fortnightly (i.e. when not in use for a long period such as summertime), by turning thermostat to zero and returning it to its correct setting after the pump has run.
- Run cold water through electric shower after using.
- Do not discharge foul wastewater from washing machine, sink etc to the storm water system.
- Paint or varnish external woodwork regularly to prevent premature weathering.

FIRE SAFETY IN THE HOME

Fire Prevention – 12 Key Points

1. Young children must never be left alone in a house, caravan, mobile home or car.
2. Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach.
3. Take extreme care when cooking chips/fried food. Never leave a chip-pan unattended.
4. Check electric blankets regularly for wear/damage and ensure they are used according to instructions.
5. Use an effective spark guard on open fires especially before going to bed or if children are around.
6. Do not leave newspapers, clothes or flammable material too close to a fire or heaters.
7. Switch off and unplug all non-essential appliances when not in use, e.g. Mobile phone chargers.
8. Provide stable ashtrays – a burning cigarette end can smoulder for hours before igniting and spreading.
9. Never smoke in bed.
10. Check all leads and plugs for fraying or burning and replace if necessary. Do not overload sockets.
11. Get a qualified electrical contractor to carry out installation and repairs to electrical appliances and fittings. Don't take chances.
12. Take special precautions during holiday periods e.g. Halloween and Christmas.

In the event of a fire in your house:

- Close all doors behind you as you leave
- If your clothes catch fire - **STOP, DROP & ROLL**
- Keep low to the ground (air is fresher)
- Decide on a meeting point outside the house
- **DO NOT RE-ENTER THE HOUSE FOR ANY REASON**
- Telephone the fire brigade from a neighbouring house or mobile phone. Call 999 or 112
- Do not re-enter the house until advised to do so by the fire brigade

To Summarise

- Identify risks around the home and eliminate hazards
- Fit smoke alarms
- Plan escape routes & practice fire drills

Most Important to Remember

Prevent a fire from happening in your home in the first place!

SECURITY IN YOUR HOME

Please be advised that tenants are required to take out house contents insurance in their own name. You should ensure that the policy will cover your belongings for fire, accidental damage, such as flood and water damage, and theft. Many insurance companies offer easy pay options for contents only cover.

Reduce the risk of your home being broken into by following these guidelines:

- Leave a light on if you are going out at night
- If you are going on holidays do not let milk, post or letters build up. Ask a neighbour to open or close your windows or ask them to park their car in your driveway
- Ask your neighbour to keep an eye on your house if you are going away on holidays and to report anything suspicious to the Community Garda
- Let your Estate Officer know if you are going to be away from your home for longer than 2 weeks
- Lock all the windows and doors
- Never leave keys under your doormat or plant pots
- When answering the door make sure your back door is locked and ask to see the caller's identity
- Change your locks if keys are lost or stolen
- Mark your electrical goods with a UV pen or get them security coded. Contact the crime prevention officer at your local Garda station for further information.
- Never leave outbuildings or sheds unlocked
- Never throw out personal documents, which have your bank account or identity details on them. Dispose of them by shredding
- Never leave valuables lying around where they can be spotted through a window
- Consider installing a house alarm—prior consent of the Council is required.

NEIGHBOURHOOD RELATIONS

YOU AND YOUR NEIGHBOURS

Getting on with your neighbours is your responsibility and common sense plays a large part in making it happen. To ensure that our understanding of common sense is similar, we have compiled the following suggestions as identified at our pre-tenancy courses as to what this means:

- Residents and visitors respect each others right to live peacefully
- Residents and visitors do not engage in behaviour that offends and upsets others
- Tenants shall maintain their houses and gardens
- Residents and visitors drive and park their cars in a way that doesn't endanger or interfere with others
- Residents and visitors take responsibility for their children and pets.
- Residents keep an eye on each others property
- Residents are responsible for the behaviour of visitors to their homes.

WHEN DIFFICULTIES ARISE

There will be occasions when difficulties will arise between neighbours. Before approaching your neighbours, stop and ask yourself:

- Are you being reasonable?
- Have you all the facts?
- Are you willing to listen to what they have to say?
- Are your expectations of your neighbourhood reasonable?

Explain to your neighbours how their behaviour is affecting you. Try to resolve the problem amongst yourselves and don't get other neighbours involved if they are unaffected. If the problem persists and interferes with your peace and quiet then contact the Estate Officer or the Housing Section and they will suggest a course of action i.e. mediation by mutual agreement. However, any issues considered to be anti-social behaviour will be dealt with by the Council and where appropriate, the Gardaí.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR INCLUDES:

- The sale, supply and possession of illegal drugs
- Intimidation and/or harassment including domestic violence
- Behaviour which results in the deliberate damage of property
- Dumping of rubbish
- Loitering
- Graffiti
- Cruelty to animals
- Vandalism
- Keeping of pets which causes danger or nuisance to residents in the estate

PLEASE NOTE THAT TENANTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BEHAVIOUR OF THEIR CHILDREN, VISITORS AND PET.

WHAT IS ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

According to legislation, anti-social behaviour includes the following:

- The manufacture, production, preparation, importation, exportation, sale, supply, possession for the purpose of sale or supply, or distribution of a controlled drug (within the meaning of the Misuse of Drugs Acts, 1977 and 1984),
- Any behaviour which causes or is likely to cause any significant or persistent danger, injury, damage, alarm, loss or fear to any person living, working or otherwise lawfully in or in the vicinity of a house provided by a housing authority or a housing estate in which the house is situate and, without prejudice to the foregoing includes:
 - i. violence, threats, intimidation, coercion, harassment or a serious obstruction of any person
 - ii. Behaviour which causes any significant or persistent impairment of a person's use or enjoyment of his or her home or,
 - iii. Damage to or defacement by writing or other marks of any property including a person's home

DO NOT ASSUME SOMEONE ELSE HAS REPORTED IT

All complaints are strictly confidential. The identity of the person making a complaint is kept confidential. It requires your help as a resident, the Council and other state agencies, such as the Gardaí, to work together to ensure your neighbourhood is a safe and peaceful place to live. The Housing Investigations Officer will accept complaints in confidence and keep you informed of the on-going investigation.

The Council has adopted a very strong position where acts of anti-social behaviour are proven. In the most serious cases, offending tenants and their families may have their homes repossessed.

Evictions may be conducted in cases where tenants OR members of their household are involved in drug dealing or allow their dwellings to be used for drug dealing. Tenants evicted will be regarded as having deliberately rendered themselves homeless and will not be re-housed by The Council.

Criminal Activity

Do you have a Neighbourhood Watch in your area? If not, contact your Community Garda for information on this matter.

If you have suspicions of any criminal activity call the Gardaí immediately and also inform your Estate Officer, Housing Investigations Officer or the Housing Section. All information given will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Abandoned Vehicles

If there is a vehicle abandoned in your estate, contact your Estate Officer or the Housing Section with details of the make of the vehicle, registration number and location of the vehicle.

Noise Nuisance

This is persistent loud or excessive noise, which causes disturbance especially during unsociable hours i.e. 10 pm to 8 am. Keep noise at a minimum.

If you have taken steps to try and speak to your neighbour regarding noise and the problem persists, contact the Housing Section or your Estate Officer.

Application can also be made by you to the District Court in relation to noise giving reasonable cause for annoyance under the Environment Protection Agency Act 1992. Ask your Estate Officer or Housing Section for more information on Noise Regulations.

What happens if I disturb my neighbours?

You must make sure that you do not cause damage or become a nuisance to your neighbours (e.g. Excessive noise levels)

In particular this means:-

- No drugs.
- No criminal activity.
- No violence or threats of violence.
- No late night parties, loud music etc.

If you are the subject of a complaint from your neighbours, the matter will be fully investigated and if proven, appropriate action will be taken to institute legal proceedings. This may result in you and your family being evicted from your home, with little or no chance of being re-housed.

CHILDRENS CHARTER

As a member of the community in which you now reside it is your responsibility, as a tenant of the Council, to create a safe and caring environment for your children to play in. Families are asked to note the following:

- Reckless ball games are not allowed, where residents' property or persons are put at risk.
- Children should not climb on cars or walls; or enter resident's gardens unless they have been given permission to do so
- Children should not cause nuisance or disturbance to other residents or visitors (including Council staff)
- Toys or bikes should not be left on the main road area at any time
- Children are not allowed to build fires on or near any green areas, including neighbouring fields
- Children should not carry implements with intent to harm property or persons
- Children who are proven to have damaged property will be the sole responsibility of their parents and therefore parents will be liable for the cost of any damage done either to public or private property
- All children where possible should be encouraged to participate in estate clean ups and estate activities
- Children who are proven to have verbally/physically abused other children will be asked with their parents to come to a meeting with the Estate Officer to discuss their behaviour.

Should your child breach any of the terms mentioned above we will contact the Estate Officer or where necessary the Gardaí.

YOUR PET

You are not allowed to keep any pets without the prior consent of the Council. There is a limit of one dog or cat per household. The property will not be used under any circumstances for the breeding of any animals, birds, fish, insect or reptile.

You may keep one domestic pet such as a cat or dog, as long as it doesn't become a nuisance to your neighbours. You are absolutely prohibited from keeping horses in gardens or open spaces in housing estates. Horses, poultry, pigs, and non domestic birds are not classified as pets. Keeping any of these is a serious breach of your Tenancy Agreement.

Under the Control of Dogs Act 1986, every dog should have a valid licence. You may purchase a licence at any post office.

Failure to have a dog licensed or to keep a dog under proper control may result in on the spot fines. Remember your pet is your responsibility!

If you have a problem with stray dogs, please contact the Dog Warden on (071) 9163320.

How do I get permission to keep a pet?

When you are offered accommodation you will be asked if you wish to bring a pet to the house. You must provide details of the pet you wish to keep at your home and show evidence of any licence held, if requested to do so.

You are responsible for your pet and you must ensure it does not cause nuisance to other residents in the area.

- If you find a stray dog contact the Dog Warden or Estate Officer.
- If there are any incidences in your estate involving pets causing harm to other residents, contact the Dog Warden or Estate Officer immediately.
- It is an offence under the Litter Pollution Act to allow dogs to foul green areas, footpaths or any other public spaces.

There is legislation with regard to control of dogs, which gives powers to the Dog Warden to provide shelter for stray dogs, to seize stray dogs, to impose on the spots fines and to take court prosecutions when dogs are not on the premises of the owner or another person in charge of the dog. The dog must be under the effective control of the dog handler.

What dogs are not allowed in our dwellings/estates?

The following breed of dogs and other strains or crosses of these dogs are the types of dog commonly known as “Banned Dogs” as listed in the Control of Dogs Act (Restriction of Certain Dogs) Regulations, 1998 and are not permitted in your home/estate. This list is subject to change.



American Pit Bull Terrier



Bull Mastiff



English Bull Terrier



Japanese Akita



German Shepherd



Japanese Tosa



Rhodesian Ridgeback



Rottweiler



Staffordshire Bull Terrier



Austrailian Bandog



Doberman Pinscher

CARING FOR YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Regardless of where we live – the environment is an issue for us all!

As well as being a tenant you are also a new member of a community. This can be an ideal time to reconsider your impact on your surroundings. Maybe the following will give you some new ideas on the small changes that you can make in your life for a better environment.

THE ENVIRONMENT

ITS EASY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

10 easy steps to a better environment

1. Shop for the environment. Cut down on packaging. Buy goods and packaging that are made from recycled materials or are recyclable.
2. Do the right thing. Recycle.
3. Buy reusable shopping bags.
4. Compost your waste and get growing.
5. Don't tolerate litter.
6. Water is life. Think about it and conserve.
7. Dispose of old paint and waste liquids properly. Don't pour them down the drain.
8. Leave the car at home from time to time.
9. Save energy. Turn down and switch off.
10. Choose energy efficient labels A and B when purchasing appliances.

WASTE

Prevention is the only solution.

Make an effort not to generate waste.

This is the most environmentally friendly way of helping to reduce the growing mountain of waste.

KNOW THE 3R 's — Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

RECYCLING

Use the recycling facilities to recycle glass, aluminium and plastic bottles.

Remember

- Do not leave any materials outside the bottle banks (leaving material is dumping not recycling)
- If your local bottle bank is full, call the Council to arrange an emergency collection
- Separate glass by colour
- Remove lids from all bottles (glass or plastic)
- Squash cans and plastic bottles
- Transport recyclables to the bottle banks in a box or bag for life (this way you won't be tempted to leave rubbish)

SHOP FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

- Don't leave home without your reusable shopping bag
- Do the right thing—choose glass and recycle
- Rolls, tissue, kitchen paper—Buy recycled and make a difference
- Cardboard boxes and egg boxes make great compost. Start composting today
- Do you really need all those layers? Cut down on excess packaging
- Detergents—Use your head and buy refills instead

For further information on ways to protect the environment including composting, contact the Environment Section, County Hall, Riverside, Sligo on **071 9111 457 / 071 9111 465** or email enviro@sligococo.ie.

YOUR HOUSING OPTIONS

YOUR HOUSING OPTIONS

The Council provides suitable accommodation to qualified applicants, in accordance with its Allocation Scheme. We allocate dwellings in a fair and reasonable manner. In doing so we hope we have satisfied your housing need. However, changes in your household circumstances may mean you have to review your housing need, and you should therefore be aware of all the housing options available to you.

1. Housing Transfers

Council tenants may apply to transfer to alternative accommodation. The Council's reasons for having a transfer policy are:

- To make best use of dwellings
- To eliminate overcrowding
- To satisfy the special needs of tenants or household members where possible

1.1 How soon can I apply for a transfer?

Applicants must hold a tenancy in their existing dwelling for at least two years before an application for a transfer can be made. Other conditions must also be met.

1.2 Can the Council refuse to make a transfer offer?

Yes. The Council may refuse to make a transfer offer should any of the following circumstances apply:

- Rent Arrears—tenants must have a clear rent account for at least 12 months prior to application
- Non-compliance with the conditions of your Tenancy Agreement
- Anti-Social Behaviour associated with your household
- Non-Disclosure of Information
- Unavailability of suitable accommodation
- It is considered that your housing need has been adequately met

1.3 When I am applying for a transfer can I choose the area?

Yes. Transfer applicants may select up to three areas for which they wish to be considered for re-housing as per the Areas of Choice form.

1.4 When transferring to your new home

When leaving the house, the property should be left well maintained and free from rubbish, furniture and personal possessions. The Council will inspect the property for satisfactory compliance with the tenancy agreement before the transfer of keys. The Council is not responsible for clearance costs and if there are items left to be cleared from the house by the Council, you will be charged for this cost, and held liable for its payment.

2. House Purchase

2.1 Can I purchase the dwelling I am renting?

Most dwellings that are rented can be purchased through the Tenant Purchase Scheme. Certain exclusions apply. Please check prior to completion of your application form.

2.1.1 Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme

You may buy your dwelling in accordance with the Council's Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme provided you have been a tenant for at least 12 months and meet certain other criteria. The price of the house will be its market value, as determined by the local authority, through a valuer, in its existing state of repair and condition, less discounts. Details of the current scheme are available from the Housing Section

2.2 How do I get a mortgage to purchase the dwelling I am renting?

If you are buying outright, you have the choice of applying to a bank or a building society for a mortgage.

2.3 What if I get refused funding from other financial institutions?

If you are unable to secure a mortgage from other financial institutions you may apply to the local authority for assistance. You must provide the local authority with two mortgage refusal letters from other institutions. A House Purchase Loan Scheme is available from the local authority:

2.3.1 House Purchase Loan Scheme

The purpose of this loan scheme is to enable those who cannot secure a mortgage with other financial agencies to have the option to purchase their own home. Details are available from the Housing Section.

3. Other Housing Supports

3.1 Mortgage Allowance Scheme

This scheme is for tenants or tenant purchasers of local authorities and tenants under the Voluntary Housing Scheme who surrender their house in order to build a home or purchase a home on the open market.

The allowance is available to help with mortgage repayments and is repayable over five years on a reducing balance.

For further details on this scheme, please contact the Housing Office.

MOVING ON

Leaving your House

If you decide to leave your house and surrender your tenancy, you must give at least 4 weeks notice in writing of this decision to the Housing Officer. A process will then be started which includes:

- The Council will arrange to carry out an inspection of your house to see if there are repairs necessary and to explain the procedure to you.
- You will be asked to make good any unauthorised changes to the dwelling.
- You will be asked to leave the house empty of all rubbish, furniture and possessions as the Council is not responsible for clearance costs. If there are items left to be cleared from the house by the Council, you will be charged for this cost.
- At the time of your departure, you will be asked to sign a "Voluntary Surrender Form" in which you give up all rights and entitlements to the house and your future housing need will not be the responsibility of the Council.
- You will also be asked to give up all keys, copies of keys and access cards to the house and you will be required to leave a forwarding address for any items of post that may arrive after your departure.
- Arrange for post to be re-directed to your new address from your departure date.
- Your rent account must be clear and up to date. Rent will be payable until your keys are handed back to the Housing Section.
- You shall be responsible for the electricity bills up to the time of vacation of the property. The Council's Estate Officer will take a meter reading in your presence on the day you vacate the property and any outstanding balance for electricity will be forwarded to you directly for payment.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Must I insure the dwelling?**

You are **STRONGLY** advised to insure the contents of your dwelling against fire, theft and accidental damage such as flood and water damage, as dwelling contents is not covered under Council insurance. Your contents cover should include floor coverings such as wood or carpets. The Council only insures what it owns - namely the structure of the dwelling, against fire, storm and frost damage.

2. **Am I responsible for the gardens or just the dwelling?**

Yes. You are responsible for both, and for any laneway/walkway adjoining your house. Laneways should be kept clean and not used for dumping. You are also responsible for garden walls, gates, and fences.

3. **Can I make alterations to my dwelling?**

You must obtain the Council's approval in writing before starting any improvements, alterations or additions to your home. You may need planning permission for certain works. In the case of certain unauthorised alterations carried out to the dwelling, the Council may require full re-instatement to its original condition.

4. **Am I responsible for repairs to property due to damage caused in the event of a break-in?**

Yes. You are responsible for all repairs to the dwelling due to damage caused as a result of a break-in.

5. **Is there an option for succession of tenancy?**

Those interested in succeeding a tenancy must be a member of the existing household for a minimum of one year and be declared for rent purposes. The Council must be satisfied that the applicant has a housing need before an application for succession of tenancy can be considered. Decisions will be made by the Council on the merits of each case, in accordance with the provisions of the Housing Allocation Scheme.

6. What is meant by a Joint Tenancy?

Where a dwelling is allocated to a household that includes a spouse or partner, joint tenancies will be created unless the Council decide otherwise. In cases other than spouse or partner, joint tenancies may be created where it is considered appropriate by the Council.

7. What happens if my spouse/partner is the sole tenant and he/she dies or leaves?

Where death or departure of a tenant occurs, the tenancy will normally be given to the remaining spouse or partner, subject to the Council being satisfied that doing so would be consistent with the Housing Allocation Scheme. In the case of departure, the departing spouse/partner must surrender their part of the tenancy. A new tenancy agreement will need to be drafted and signed to reflect the change in circumstances.

8. What happens to the tenancy if my parents are the tenants and they die or leave?

On the death or departure of both parents, the tenancy will normally be given to a son or daughter, provided that he/she has been living in the dwelling for at least one year. This person must also be declared a member of the household for rent purposes. The Council must be satisfied that this person has a housing need. Each case will be examined on its merits and the decision will be made by the Council.

Vacant Dwellings

Vacant dwellings in an estate can become a target for anti-social behaviour. If you intend surrendering your dwelling, you must give the Council four weeks notice. We can then make arrangements to have it re-let, and avoid any problems associated with vacant units. If you become aware that a dwelling is not being lived in, it is in your interest to report this to the Council to avoid attracting instances of anti-social behaviour to the area.

CONTACT TELEPHONE LIST

General Housing Enquiries	(071) 9111206/ 1207 / 1213 / 1215
Parks Office	071 9111471
Litter Warden	071 9111128
Road Section	071 9111488
Dog Warden	071 9163320
Sligo Garda Station, Teeling Street, Sligo	071 9157000
Emergency Services – Gardai, Fire, Ambulance	999 /112
Health Service Executive (Markievicz House)	071 9155100
Sligo University Hospital	071 9171111
Citizens Information Service	076 107 6390
ESB Networks (re faults, connection)	1850 372 999
Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)	076 107 2730
Sligo Credit Union, Stephen Street, Sligo	071 9145149
Sligo Social Service Council, Charles Street, Sligo	071 9145682
Department of Social Protection	071 9148200
Community Welfare Officer	071 9113768
Waste Disposal Providers for Sligo:	
Barna Waste	091 771619
Greenstar	1890 500 800
Domestic Violence and Advocacy Service (DVAS)	071 9141515
Samaritans, The Mall, Sligo	(free) 116 123
Family Mediation Service	071 9154260
Relationship Counselling	071 9145641
CURA (unwanted pregnancy)	071 9143659
Family Planning Advisory Service, Social Services	071 9145641
Rape Crisis Centre, 42 Charles St. Sligo	071 9171188
	(free) 1800 750 780

For further information contact:



Housing Section
Sligo County Council
Riverside
Sligo

Tel: (071) 911 1206
(071) 911 1207
(071) 911 1213
(071) 911 1215

Email: housing@sligococo.ie