

A regular gas service and safety check helps to keep you safe. It also means that your heating system will work efficiently (which should save you money), and is less likely to break down. It is very important that you allow us into your home to carry out this inspection. If you do not let us in we may take court action to gain access to your home, we will apply to the County Court for either possession or an injunction.

These regulations are in place for your safety – **gas can kill - don't put yourself and others at risk.**

### **IF YOU SMELL GAS, CALL TRANSCO FREE ON 0800 111 999**

Use a phone outside of your home (using a phone inside, even a mobile, could spark an explosion)

**DON'T** create a flame or operate electrical switches.

**DO** put out cigarettes/naked flames, open doors and windows, keep people away from the area and turn the gas off at the control valve.

### **Asbestos in the home**

There are asbestos-containing materials in many buildings and homes in the UK, and there will be asbestos in a number of properties owned by us. We are committed to making sure that all materials containing asbestos in your home are safe. We have undertaken surveys to check for asbestos in a representative sample of homes and taken action where necessary to remove or make safe any asbestos found. We have produced a leaflet called **Asbestos in the Home**. You should have been given a copy when you moved in. The leaflet provides basic information about what asbestos is, where it might be found, and why it should not be a problem.

If you would like a copy of any of the leaflets mentioned in this section please contact us on **01452 529 255** or **08456 044 529** (local rate), or look on our website at **[www.glosha.co.uk](http://www.glosha.co.uk)**



## **SECTION 4**

Living in and around your home



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#### Home contents insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out home contents insurance cover to protect your belongings. We arrange buildings insurance for all our properties but this does not include loss or damage of your belongings due to theft, fire or flooding.

We offer a Home Contents Insurance scheme specifically for our residents. A **My Home Contents Insurance** leaflet was enclosed in your pack when you moved in.

#### Keys

When you get the keys for your property, please make sure that you have spare keys cut. Please be aware that we do not keep spare keys. If you get locked out it is your responsibility to get the locks replaced and to cover the costs. Please do not fit extra locks on your front door without our permission.

#### Working from home

Please refer to your tenancy agreement for your responsibilities about working from home. If you need any further information please contact your Housing Officer on **01452 529 255** or **08456 044 529** (local rate).

#### Using your heating system

Many people run up large heating bills because they don't know how to work their heating systems properly. If you want someone to come to your home to explain how your heating system works, please ask us. When you move into, or leave, your home don't forget to read the gas and electricity meters. This means that you will not be paying someone else's bill!

#### Saving energy

For advice about how to reduce your energy bills, please contact us for a copy of our **Want to wake up to more savings?** leaflet.

We have set up an energy saving initiative in partnership with Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA). They can give you advice on saving energy in your home. Useful tips, such as how to use storage heaters efficiently, or how to stop condensation, are all available from SWEA advisors who will be happy to come to your home to assess your needs and give you advice. This service is free of charge.

#### Aids and adaptations for independent living

If you are a tenant of a home owned by us, and you (or someone in your household) is elderly, or has a long-term illness or disability, we may be able to help. Aids and adaptations can be arranged for people who need their homes to be altered to help them live more independently. Mobility problems can often be overcome by carrying out alterations, and other changes can be made to improve accessibility, remove hazards or increase safety and security in your home.

Often, simple changes can make a big difference, for example minor works such as grab rails, flashing doorbells, stair rails, lever taps and ramps. However, our aids and adaptations service can also include more major changes to your home such as level access showers and stair-lifts. If you would like to find out more contact us for a copy of our **Aids and Adaptations for Independent Living** leaflet.

## Keeping pets

Please refer to your tenancy agreement for the rules on pets. You will need to obtain written permission from your Housing Officer to keep any pets. You are not allowed to keep a dog in a flat.

## Pest control

Please try to prevent a build-up of rubbish in and around your home, because this can lead to pests such as rats and mice coming into your home. If you suspect you have a problem with pests, please contact the environmental health department at your local council, who will give you advice and help you deal with this. Your local council may make a small charge for this service.

## Household rubbish

You should store household rubbish carefully and safely. In the interests of hygiene, you should put rubbish out for collection in the appropriate bags or bins on the day the refuse collectors are due.

For large items of furniture, the local council may offer a collection service (there may be a charge). Please do not dump large items outside your property, or in and around shared areas, as this is illegal and can be dangerous.

Along with the council and the Environment Agency, we will take action against anyone caught dumping rubbish, under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The maximum fine is £2,500.

## Recycling

Doing your bit for the environment can save you money on your water and fuel bills. Most local councils operate a recycling box collection scheme for recyclable household waste. Some councils also operate a recycling scheme for garden waste. If you live in a flat, please use the recycling facilities available. We encourage you to use these schemes, which help to reduce pollution and prevent rubbish that could end up in landfill sites.

## Gardens

If you have your own garden, it is your responsibility to keep it tidy and free from rubbish, and to regularly maintain it, including cutting grass and looking after hedges and shrubs. Any trees you plant are your responsibility. Please do not plant fast-growing conifers.

We are responsible for maintaining shared gardens, and will make arrangements for an independent contractor to carry this out regularly. The cost of this is included in your service charge.

## Open spaces and play areas

We own some of the open spaces around your home and are responsible for maintaining them. The local council may also own some and will be responsible for maintaining their own.

Some neighbourhoods have play areas with play equipment. Parents are responsible for supervising their children and encouraging them to use these areas sensibly. Any damaged equipment must be taken out of use. We own and maintain some of the play areas, and the local council owns and maintains others. Please contact us if you need further details.

## Parking and garages

Always use the authorised areas for parking your vehicles. Parking in the wrong place may cause problems for emergency services, refuse collectors, neighbours or visitors. You can only park your car in your garden if there is a proper car-parking space. It is illegal to drive a motor vehicle across a footpath or verge without the kerb being dropped. You can only lower kerbs with permission from us and the local council. You must not park any vehicle on paths or shared grassed areas on our estates.

We will tow away any untaxed and abandoned vehicles on our land, and there will be a charge to the owner of the vehicle for the cost of doing this. You are not allowed to park large vehicles, caravans or boats on any of our parking areas, or in front of your home as this is breaking your tenancy conditions. You are not allowed to carry out repairs to any vehicle in shared car parks, on roads, drives, footpaths or other shared areas. We understand that you may need to carry out minor car repairs to your own vehicle when it is parked on your property, but please make sure that this is not on a regular basis and does not disturb your neighbours. We have some garages available for rent in certain areas. Please contact us for more information.

## Shared entrances and stairways

All flats with a shared entrance have a door-entry system to improve security. They will only be secure if you close the door properly when you enter or leave the building. Do not let anyone in unless they are visiting you and you know why they have called. Keep the shared doors secure at all times and never prop doors open, even if it's just for a short time. Please make sure that any shared stairways, entrances and landings are not blocked with personal belongings such as bicycles, pushchairs or unwanted items such as old fridges and armchairs.

You must not keep motorised scooters and wheelchairs in shared areas without asking us first. Under no circumstances should you keep any petrol-operated vehicles or machinery in any shared area.

We are responsible for cleaning many of the shared areas of flats and maisonettes, such as the stairways and entrance halls. We employ cleaners to carry out this work, and our own Housing Officers monitor the cleaning to make sure that it is carried out well. The cost of this service is included in your service charge.

## Keeping your home secure

The following are some simple ways in which you can help keep your home secure:

- Always check the identity of callers before you let them in
- Lock your doors and close your windows, including those in garages or sheds, whenever you go out
- If you have them, use your door chain and spy-hole
- Do not leave ladders or steps visible in the garden
- When you are away from home try to make it look as if someone is there by leaving a light on in the evening. Arrange for a neighbour, friend or relative to collect papers and post, and to keep an eye on your home while you are away. Move valuable items away from windows so that they cannot be easily seen and hide small valuable items.

**Remember** – All of our staff and contractors carry ID cards. You can ask to see their ID before you let them into your home.

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