

Tenants Handbook

2013 – 2015



St Albans
City & District Council

Welcome

Welcome to the latest handbook for tenants of St Albans City & District Council.

This handbook, which has been put together with the help of our Tenants Forum, is designed as a guide to your tenancy.

It includes information to help answer questions you may have about being a tenant of the Council.

It also explains your rights and responsibilities as a tenant and our responsibilities to you as your landlord.

The information about repairs and maintenance is now published in a separate book and will be available shortly.

We don't expect you to read the whole handbook at once but please keep it available so you can refer to it easily.

If you have any questions or concerns about your tenancy you can contact your Housing Officer on **01727 819414 / 819417 / 819383 / 819498 / 819404** to discuss them. If your Housing Officer is not available then you can speak to the Duty Officer who will either deal with your query or pass your details onto your Housing Officer to call you back.

If you would like to receive this information in an alternative format such as Braille, or in another language, please call the Housing Management Service on one of the numbers above.

I hope you find this handbook useful. If there is any information which you feel should be included in future editions then please contact my office on **01727 819400**.

Karen Dragovic – Head of Housing.



The handbook is divided into sections which cover the following areas:

- 1. Contacting Housing Services**
- 2. Your Tenancy**
- 3. Rent and Housing Benefits**
- 4. Moving home**
- 5. Working together**
- 6. Services for retired or vulnerable people and people with a disability**
- 7. When things go wrong**
- 8. Estate management**
- 9. Useful contacts**



1. Making contact with Housing Services

Office visits

The Customer Services Centre is in the Civic Centre and is open:
Monday to Thursday 8.45 am – 5 pm and Friday 8.45 am – 4.30 pm.

Useful telephone numbers

You may contact Housing Services on the normal Council number **01727 866100**. This will put you through to the Council switchboard. The following direct dial numbers will enable you to get straight through to the correct extension.

Housing Management

Rent accounts, arrears and tenancy matters:

01727 819415 / 417 / 383 / 498 / 404 / 421 / 567

Resident Involvement: **01727 819499**

Garages: **01727 819483 / 485**

Housing options (rehousing)

Transfers, housing register
and lettings:

01727 819480 / 262 / 585 / 412

Housing options and
homelessness:

01727 819277



Repairs and Improvements

Reporting repairs

Daytime Monday to Friday: **01727 819256**

Evenings and weekends

Non urgent repairs: **01727 819493**

Out of hours emergencies: **01727 811155**

Council home improvements: **01727 819497**

Email: **h.repairs@stalbans.gov.uk**

Correspondence

All letters for the Housing Department should be addressed to:

**Housing Department
Civic Centre
St. Peters Street
St. Albans
Hertfordshire
AL1 3JE**

We aim to respond to all letters within 10 working days of receiving them.

In person

The Customer Service Desk can deal with housing management issues which include tenancy and rent matters. If your enquiry requires a detailed discussion, private interview rooms are available by appointment.

If you wish to speak to a specific Housing Officer, or discuss a complex issue, it is advisable to make an appointment.

Housing Officers can also visit you in your home by appointment.

Email

Your Housing Officer will have his / her own email address. It is in the format **firstname.lastname@stalbans.gov.uk**

Alternatively you can send an email to **housingmanagement@stalbans.gov.uk** and your email will be passed on.

Internet

To find useful information you can visit our website at:
<http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/housing>

Fax

01727 819377

Interpretation

If English is not your first language, we can arrange for an interpreter to help you access our services.



2. Your Tenancy

Tenancy agreement

This is the agreement under which your tenancy is given. A copy of your tenancy agreement is given to you when you sign for your tenancy. Please keep this safe as you may need to refer to it and to this handbook if you have any questions about your rights and obligations.

The type of tenancy you are granted will depend upon your individual circumstances, the property you are moving into and the date your tenancy begins.

The table overleaf shows the three types of tenancy and who is eligible for each.

| 2 Year Flexible Tenancy | 5 Year Flexible Tenancy | Lifetime Tenancy (Secure) |
|--|--|---|
| A tenant who has been housed following eviction by the Council or Registered Landlord in the last 10 years. | The default tenancy for all tenants new to social housing. | All current tenants who remain in their current home or transfer, except where the transfer is to a property let at an 'affordable rent'. |
| In some circumstances, a tenant who has broken the terms of their current 5 year flexible tenancy when the tenancy is due for renewal. | An existing lifetime tenant on transfer to a property let at an 'affordable rent'. | All new tenants moving into sheltered housing or elderly designated bungalows. |
| Where a property is earmarked for demolition, redevelopment or disposal. | | |
| Where a tenant has carried out a mutual exchange and has less than 2 years outstanding on their existing flexible tenancy. | | |

Introductory Tenancies

If your tenancy began after 6 April 1998, you will have started with an Introductory Tenancy for the first year. Provided you keep to the terms of your tenancy agreement in the first year the tenancy will automatically convert to a secure tenancy as outlined in the table on page 9.

An Introductory Tenancy is for a one year trial period. If there are no problems with your tenancy, you will automatically become a Secure Lifetime or Flexible Tenant after 12 months.

However, if there are issues surrounding your tenancy and we decide not to extend your Introductory Tenancy, we will give you notice in writing before the tenancy is due to convert.

An Introductory Tenancy gives you similar rights to those held by Secure Tenants. These are listed in 'Your rights' on page 12. However, some other rights do not apply and so in the first 12 months you cannot:

Take in lodgers;

Sublet the property;

Carry out improvements;

Exchange your tenancy;

Exercise the right to buy.

Fixed Term Tenancies

If your tenancy started after 1st April 2013, you may have a Flexible (or Fixed Term Secure Tenancy) this will last either 2 or 5 years. If you are a new tenant you will also have a 1 year introductory period at the start.

As a flexible secure tenant you have the same rights as an Introductory / Secure lifetime tenant but your tenancy will be reviewed periodically and you will be advised whether or not your tenancy can continue, whether you will need to move to alternative housing or if you will need to make your own arrangements.

The Council's Tenancy Strategy has details on fixed term tenancies and the review process as the tenancy comes to an end. The factors we take into consideration when deciding whether or not to renew a tenancy are detailed in the table below.

| Circumstances | Outcome |
|--|--|
| Is the tenant under-occupying by one bedroom or more? | If under-occupying, their tenancy will not be renewed at the current property. Tenants may be offered alternative housing dependent upon their circumstances. |
| Is the household income above the level at which we would accept them on the housing register. | If the income is above the Council's qualifying level, the tenant will need to make alternative arrangements to meet their housing need. |
| Is there a current breach of tenancy or is there a valid court order against the tenancy? | If the answer to either of these questions is yes then there are two scenarios. If the tenant has not done anything to resolve the breach, then the tenancy will not be renewed. If the tenant has taken consistent action* to resolve the breach then a two year Flexible Tenancy may be granted. |

*The tenant has kept to the terms of any court order or any agreement to repay rent arrears for 26 weeks at the point of review or there have been no complaints of Anti Social Behaviour for 26 weeks or they have commenced action to remedy the breach if it relates to the condition of the property or garden. Any other breaches will be considered on an individual basis.

Your rights

1. Security of tenure

Your tenancy with us is an Introductory, Lifetime Secure Tenancy or a Flexible Secure Term Tenancy. Secure tenancies can only be ended by a court order for a breach of the terms of the tenancy or if the tenant abandons the property. Flexible tenancies will end at the conclusion of their fixed term period or by a court order if the tenant breaches the terms of the tenancy before the fixed term period has expired.

2. Joint and several liability

There is no legal right to a Joint Tenancy. If your tenancy is in the name of more than one person, all the tenancy conditions will apply to each person jointly and severally. This means that each person is responsible for keeping to the terms of the agreement, and each person is responsible for the whole of the rent, not just their 'share' of it for conduct of the tenancy.

3. Right of succession

If the tenant dies, the tenancy of their home will pass to a joint tenant or to the partner of the tenant, unless it has already been passed to another person (see below). This is called a succession. If the tenant has no partner or joint tenant the tenancy can pass to another close member of the family. To qualify, the close family member must have lived with the tenant in their home for either 12 months or 3 years if the tenancy began after 1st April 2012 and must be able to provide satisfactory evidence that they have lived at the property as their only home.



Only one succession is allowed. Where the surviving partner or joint tenant takes over this will count as a succession.

After one succession, there are no more automatic successions to children or close family members. If the successor is not your spouse or partner we may require them to move to an alternative property in accordance with their housing need.

4. Right to take in lodgers

You have the right to take in lodgers provided you have a spare bedroom but

- you must get written permission from us first;
- you must remain living in the property yourself.

If you are getting Housing Benefit, then it may be affected. You must tell the Housing Benefits team on: **01727 819405 / 426 / 429.**

You do not have the right to let the whole of your home and you will lose your tenancy if you do so.

5. Right to exchange

You have the right to exchange your home with another tenant provided that you and the other tenant follow the agreed procedure and obtain written consent prior to moving from us. This is called a mutual exchange and is explained more in the section 'Moving Home'.

There are some circumstances where we will not give permission for a mutual exchange e.g., if either party has rent arrears or has broken the terms of their tenancy agreement, or if there are disabled adaptations in one of the properties.

For more information please contact your Housing Officer.

Traditionally a mutual exchange was an exchange of tenancies. This has now changed following the introduction of Flexible Tenancies and each tenant will keep their own tenancy but move it to the other address. This will be explained to you when you apply to exchange.

6. Right to buy

You may have the right to buy your home. In order to qualify you must have been a Council or Housing Association tenant for at least 5 years. There are further details of the Right to Buy in the leaflet 'Your Right To Buy Your Home' available from the Customer Services Centre, or by telephoning **01727 819420**.

7. Right to repair

This is explained in more detail in the Repairs Handbook.

8. Right to improve

While you have the right to improve your home you must obtain our consent beforehand and we will not unreasonably withhold consent. You may also need to apply for planning permission or building regulations consent before and during any work you carry out. If you do not get our permission beforehand we may ask you to alter the changes you have made and we will not be able to compensate you for your improvements.

9. Right to consultation and involvement

This is explained in more detail under Working Together (section 5).

10. Right to information

We must give you a tenancy agreement and information on your rights. If you have any queries about your tenancy agreement you should, in the first instance, discuss these with your Housing Officer.

12. Right to view personal information

You have the right to view the personal information on our records relating to your tenancy. This is in accordance with the Data Protection Act and Housing Act. We will charge £10. for copies of any information. You will need to make a written request to your Housing Officer with a cheque for £10.

You're responsibilities

1. To live in your home

As a tenant you must occupy your property as your main home.

This is referred to as your only or principal home. If you fail to do so, this will be a breach of your tenancy conditions and you may lose the tenancy.

2. False statement

If, when applying for housing, you have withheld relevant information or provided information which you know to be false, we may seek a Court Order to take the property back. We may also prosecute under the Housing Act or the Fraud Act.

3. Payment of rent

You must pay the rent shown on your tenancy information card, each Monday, for the week ahead. Section 3, gives more details about paying your rent and about housing benefits.



Using your property

1. Insuring the contents of your home

If something happens to your home, e.g., flood or fire, we will repair the physical damage to the property but we cannot replace your decorations or belongings. You should arrange your own insurance to cover this. To help, we have a low cost insurance scheme available for our tenants to join. If you would like to know more about this, please contact your Housing Officer.

Please note that if you fit laminate flooring to your property, this will not be covered by the Council's building insurance, so you must ensure it is covered under your contents insurance. You will normally have to mention this to your insurer.

2. Damage

If you, or people who live with you, or visitors, damage your home you will be responsible for the repairs or replacement items.

In some circumstances we will do the work and charge you. You will then be responsible for making any payments to cover the cost of the repairs.

4. Gardens

You will be responsible for keeping your garden, and any fences or trees, in a reasonable condition and free from rubbish. You must also ensure that no nuisance is caused to your neighbours.

5. Pets

We do allow some tenants to keep one or more pets in their homes. This will depend upon the type and size of the property. Permission should be sought to keep a pet. If permission is given, the pet is your responsibility and you must not allow it to cause inconvenience or annoyance to anyone living in, or visiting, the area.

There is a list of conditions we apply to the keeping of pets in your tenancy agreement.

You are not allowed to keep or care for any dog as described in Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, or any animal described in the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976, or any farm animal.

6. Business

You must not carry out any business from your home, garden, shed or driveway as this is considered a breach of your tenancy.

In some circumstances we may agree for you to work from home provided it doesn't cause any disruption to your neighbours. Please contact your Housing Officer for more information.

7. Nuisance



As a tenant you are responsible for the actions of your family, people who live with you, and your visitors. This applies to nuisance and antisocial behaviour in the local area as well as in your home.

You must behave in a reasonable manner. This includes not doing things that are likely to cause nuisance or harassment. Examples of this behaviour include violence or threats of violence, abusive or insulting behaviour and damage or threats of damage to property belonging to another person. Including behaviour to your neighbours, Council staff and contractors or anyone legitimately working in the area such as postal workers.

8. Right to assign

A secure tenant is allowed to assign to a 'potential successor'. You must contact us before assigning your tenancy as we will have to sign a tenancy agreement with the assignee.

If you do not do this but just try to give your tenancy to another person we will consider you to have abandoned your property and take legal action to repossess the property from you and the person you have passed the tenancy on to.

9. Allowing access to your home

You must allow our staff and contractors to enter your home if we need to. We will give you reasonable notice beforehand.

However, in an emergency we may enter your home without telling you beforehand. We would do this if a situation arose which could cause you or your neighbours injury, or damage to the property.



10. Ending your tenancy

Tenancies with St Albans City & District Council currently start on a Monday and end on a Sunday.

If you wish to end your tenancy you must give the Council four weeks' notice in writing. A form enabling you to do this is available by calling **01727 819480**, or online at **<http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/housing/library/forms.aspx>**

We do not have to accept your notice and if there is any breach of tenancy e.g. unpaid rent we will not allow you to end the tenancy.

All the keys to your home shed, and any communal areas, must be returned to the Housing Options team at the Civic Centre by midday on the Monday at the end of your tenancy. If they are not, we will charge you for use and occupation of the property, equivalent to the weekly rent until they are returned.

You must leave your existing home clear of all items and in a clean and tidy condition. If you leave rubbish, furniture or carpets for us to remove we may charge you for their removal.

You must also ensure that the rent is paid up to the date your tenancy ends. If this is not done we will contact you and ask for payment and may use a collection agency to trace you and collect payment.

11. Ending a tenancy when the tenant has died

If a tenant dies, relatives or friends should tell the Housing Management team as soon as possible. Housing Benefit is automatically cancelled in these circumstances and a full charge made until the tenancy is ended.

A tenancy does not end till the Executors of the estate will have served 4 weeks' notice. If there are no next of kin or executors then we will serve Notice on the Public Trustee. Rent will continue to be charged on the estate of the deceased person until the Notice period has expired.

We understand that 4 weeks notice may be difficult at such a time. Please contact the Housing Options team on **01727 819480** to discuss any problems relating to clearing the property and returning the keys.

It will be necessary to provide a death certificate and next of kin details.

3. Your rent and Housing Benefits

1. Rent

Your rent is your responsibility.

Your rent is due every Monday for the week ahead (in advance). The weekly amount that you have to pay is shown on the Tenancy Information Form which is sent to you at the beginning of your tenancy. If there is a change to the amount which is payable, for example because you claim Housing Benefit, a new Tenancy Information Form will be sent to you. If you pay your rent monthly you should also pay in advance so that you do not have arrears on your account toward the end of the month.

We can take direct debit payments for rent. These are usually taken on the 1st or 15th of each month. If we collect rent by direct debit we will work out 12 equal monthly payments.

The rent on your home is set using a formula based on the property value, the number of bedrooms and average local earnings. Each property also has an annual rent increase linked to inflation based on figures supplied by the Government.

There is provision within the Localism Act for landlords to set rents using an 'affordable rent' formula. This rent is based on 80% of the private rental value of the property.

At present St Albans City & District Council have no plans to use affordable rents, however housing association partners operating in the District may use them.

2. Service charges

In addition to your rent you may also have service charges. These are the costs of additional services carried out or provided by the Council. This can cover caretaking, grounds maintenance or heating. The service charges are all listed on your Tenancy Information

Card. Some service charges may be paid through Housing Benefit but there are some charges e.g. for heating, which you are responsible for.

We charge for the following services:

| Name of charge | Rationale / method of calculating |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Electricity | Electricity for communal lighting – based on actual bills. |
| Assisted garden maintenance | A charge to tenants who have their grass and hedges cut by Council contractors. Based on contract price. |
| Heating / hot water | Charge for heating and hot water to individual flats in blocks where there is a communal boiler. Based on actual heating bills. |
| Grounds maintenance | Charge for contractors to carry out grounds maintenance e.g. grass cutting and shrub maintenance. Negotiated as part of the Council' grounds maintenance contract. |
| Caretaking | Charge for cleaning and maintaining communal areas. Based on budgeted service costs. |
| Communal facilities | Charged in sheltered housing and based on costs of communal heating and lighting, any laundry, and furnishings. Based on actual bills and budgeted service costs. |
| Water / sewage | Where there are no individual water meters, a charge is made for water used through the communal water main. Based on actual bills. |

3. Where and how to pay

You can pay your rent in a number of ways:

By Standing Order / Direct Debit

You can pay by Standing Order. Our details are:

Account Number: **01403818**

Sort Code: **40-40-01**

Bank Address: **HSBC PLC, 31 Chequer Street, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3YN**

You will also need your tenancy reference number.

You can also pay by Direct Debit through a bank or building society. You may request a direct debit mandate by telephoning: **01727 819230** in office hours or by e-mailing **finance@stalbans.gov.uk**. In the subject heading, enter 'direct debit for rent' along with your name, address and tenancy reference number and a form will be forwarded to you.

Online / Internet

You can pay by credit or debit card over the internet.

To make a payment please use our website **www.stalbans.gov.uk**. Click the pay tab. When you register for the first time, you will receive a password and user number.

You will need your debit or credit card, your tenancy reference number, as well as the amount that you need to pay.



At a Post Office

You can pay at any Post Office in the District, by cash, cheque or debit card. You will need your rent swipe card to make a payment and you will be given a receipt.

By Cheque or Postal Order

You can pay by cheque or crossed postal order payable to **St Albans City & District Council**. Please put your name, address and tenancy reference number on the back of the cheque. We do not accept cash.

Send to: **Housing Management Department, Council Offices, Civic Centre, St. Peters Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3JE.**

By Telephone

By telephone on the Auto Pay line **0161 785 3880** (24 hours using credit or debit cards). Please follow the instructions given. You will need your tenancy reference number. This can be found on your rent statement.

If you pay before 6pm, your payment will show on your account the next working day. If you pay after 6pm, it will show in two working days.

Council Offices

At the Council Offices, **Civic Centre, St Peters Street, St Albans.**
(Tel: **01727 819221**) The Opening times are:

Monday to Thursday: 9 am – 5 pm.

Friday: 9 am – 4.30 p.m.

You may pay by credit / debit card or by cheque (not cash).

You will need your rent swipe card to make a payment and you will be given a receipt.

4. Rent increases

Rent increases are made in April. You will be notified in writing at least four weeks' in advance. Rent increases take into account changes in costs of managing and maintaining your home.

The proposed rent increase is considered at the council meeting in January / February as part of the overall budget setting process and a letter is sent out to all tenants at the end of February giving a minimum of 4 weeks' notice and details of rent and service charges are for the following year.

5. Rent arrears

If you are having difficulty in paying your rent please contact your Housing Officer. If there are rent arrears, your Housing Officer will write to you or phone you about your outstanding rent.

If an agreement to make regular payments to reduce your arrears is made and this agreement is maintained, no further action will be taken.

If your arrears continue to increase, we may take legal action against you which could result in a hearing at the County Court. We will ask the Courts to grant a Possession Order and if an Order is made it is usual for the Courts to instruct you to pay a weekly amount to clear the arrears outstanding in addition to your current rent. Any court costs awarded are added to your rent arrears, although held in a separate account. Provided that you pay the amount ordered by the court, we will not enforce the order.

If you do not keep to the terms of the order we will ask the County Court Bailiff to evict you.



We do try to help you deal with rent arrears and we can refer you to the Money Advice Service provided by the Citizen Advice Bureau at the Civic Centre or to the Housing Support service provided via Hightown Praetorian and Churches Housing Association. Please ask your Housing Officer for details.

6. Rent statements

We are legally obliged to send you a statement of your rent account every three months. We may also send you statements of other accounts e.g. court costs. Additional statements can be provided on request.

7. Housing benefit

If you are on a low income, you may be entitled to Housing Benefit to help with some or all of your rent.

The amount of benefit you can get will depend on your current income and any savings. It may be reduced if you are 'under-occupying' your home i.e., you have more bedrooms that you need.

If you would like a claim form please visit our website **www.stalbans.gov.uk/adviceandbenefits/benefits** where a form can be completed on line or downloaded.

You can also telephone **01727 819427** or send an email requesting a form

Private interviews and appointments

If you would like a private interview or an appointment to discuss your claim, please telephone the Benefits Service on **01727 819456 / 427** or tell the member of staff at the Customer Service Centre that you would like a private interview.

Discretionary housing payments

The Benefits Service may be able to make a discretionary housing payment in special circumstances to give you extra help with your rent.

For more information about claiming a discretionary housing payment you can download a leaflet from our website at **www.stalbans.gov.uk/living/benefits** or telephone **01727 819427**.

Changes of circumstances

If you are claiming housing benefit you must let the Benefits Service know in writing about any change of circumstances for you, or anyone living with you, which could affect your claim. The Benefits Service needs to know about any change of circumstances, for example:

- If someone moves in or out
- If your income or benefits change
- If anyone living in your home has a change of circumstances.

This is not a full list. If you are not sure whether you need to tell the Benefit Service something, it is best to advise them of the changes.

4. Moving home

Moving home covers the following topics:

- **Transfers**
- **Mutual exchanges**
- **Moving at our request**
- **Moving to smaller accommodation**

Transfers



Introduction

A transfer is when you move to a different, more suitable property. This is usually following a request from you. We accept transfer applications from Council and Housing Association tenants living in the District.

All our empty properties available to let are advertised for bidding using the Choice Based Lettings Scheme and administered by Herts Choice Homes. Once your transfer is assessed you will be given a priority band and password so that you can bid on properties using the Herts Choice Homes website.

How to apply

If you would like to apply, you will need to complete a transfer application form. You can only join the transfer list if you have a housing need or wish to move to a smaller property (downsize). If we assess your application and find you are adequately housed, you will not be placed on the transfer list. You can still apply for a mutual exchange, however.

A transfer form can be completed at:

<http://www.hertschoicetohomes.org.uk/register.aspx>.

If you do not have internet access or If you require help to complete a form, please telephone the Housing Options Team on **01727 819293**.

Is your home too big for you?

If you are living in a home that has two bedrooms or more and has more bedrooms than you need, we will give you a higher priority to help to find you a one-bedroom home. We can also put bids on vacant properties on your behalf; this is called 'assisted bidding'. Housing Options will pay and arrange for your removals and will pay you a grant to help cover some of the expenses of moving.

Assessing your application

When Housing Options have received your application form, they will assess whether your application meets the qualification criteria for a transfer. If you have been accepted they will write to tell you what 'housing needs band' you are in, what size of property you can bid for, and your unique Herts Choice Homes number. They will also send you a copy of the Scheme User Guide and some postal bidding coupons.

You must keep the Housing Options team informed of any changes to your circumstances, for example changes to your household size or address. This is very important, as it could result in a change to your banding or the type of property you are eligible for.

The housing needs bands are designed to reflect the level of housing need that you have. It takes account of factors such as:

- Overcrowding
- Under occupation
- Medical need
- Urgent management / social reasons

Once your application has been assessed

Properties are advertised every week on the Herts Choice Homes website. **www.hertschoicetohomes.org.uk**. The adverts will give you information about each property, for example number of bedrooms; rent levels; whether there is a garden; and details of local amenities. A photograph of a similar property will be included where possible.



Each week there is a 5 day period when you can place bids for properties you would like to live in. This is called the 'bidding cycle'. Each bidding cycle runs from Friday at 9am to the following Tuesday, closing at 12 noon. Bids must be received by the closing time or they cannot be counted. You can bid for up to three properties per cycle.

Housing Options can give you help to bid if you need it. You can also ask a friend, family member, or support worker, to bid on your behalf.

Moving arrangements

If you are moving as a result of a transfer, you will normally need to make all of the removal arrangements, including notifying gas, electricity and telephone providers. You will also need to meet the full removal cost yourself.

You will need to ensure that your existing home is cleared of all items and is in a clean and tidy condition. The waste management team provides a collection service for domestic and garden refuse including unwanted furniture and carpets.

If you leave rubbish or furnishings behind you will be charged for their removal. If you leave the property in a poor condition you may be charged by us for restoring the property to the lettable standard.

You must return all keys of your old home to Housing Options by noon on the Monday of your new tenancy start date.

Points to remember

If you transfer to an alternative property you must give vacant possession of your former property. This means that all your family must move with you.

Your application may be made inactive if you have rent arrears or owe any money to the Housing Department e.g. court costs or rechargeable repairs.

Demand for some accommodation, for example a property with a garden and those in certain areas of the district, is high. You may therefore wait a longer period of time if you want a particular area and / or an area where there are few Council or Housing Association properties.

Mutual exchanges

A mutual exchange is when two or more tenants swap their homes. It is possible for Council tenants to exchange with a Housing Association tenant, either within the local area or in another part of the country.

There are special provisions in place for when a Lifetime Tenant exchanges with a Flexible or Fixed Term Tenant. You can get more information about this from your Housing Officer.

How to find someone to swap with

If you wish to find someone to swap with, you can register with Homeswapper at **www.homeswapper.co.uk**. Alternatively you may wish to advertise locally to find an exchange partner. If you do not have internet access, the site can be accessed via the information points found in the reception area of the Council Offices.

How to exchange

When you have found an exchange partner, you should always visit and inspect the property (and the area) very closely to make sure that it is what you want. The person you are exchanging with will be expected to do the same.

You will need to remember that you will have to accept the new property in its existing condition. The Council will not carry out repairs because of the previous tenants' damage or changes they may have made to the property.

When you are sure that you would like to proceed, please ask your Housing Officer for the mutual exchange application forms and return them with the required documentation. In the case of joint tenancies both tenants should sign the forms.

A visit will be carried out to inspect your home, and if everything is acceptable you will be sent a letter approving the exchange. You must not move or make any removal arrangements before you have received written approval from us.



We are able to refuse exchanges in certain circumstances, for example, if a property will be over crowded or under occupied, or if there are adaptations for disabled tenants or there is a possession order against the tenant. We may delay an exchange if there are repairs we think need to be carried out before we can allow it to go ahead.

When you have received the approval letter you can agree your moving arrangements and date of the move with the person with whom you are swapping with. It is a condition of the mutual exchange that access is provided to the gas contractor to carry out a safety check as soon as possible after the exchange has taken place.

An appointment will be arranged for you to come into the Council Offices with the person you are swapping, with to sign the paperwork which legally transfers your tenancy, before the exchange takes place. You should contact your Housing Officer to arrange this.

Breach of tenancy conditions

You may be required to remedy any breach of tenancy conditions before you are able to move, for example, by paying off any rent arrears or putting good any damage or repairs that are your responsibility.

Housing association tenancies

If you exchange into a property owned by a Housing Association, you may be offered an 'Assured Tenancy' which may be either a Lifetime Tenancy or a Flexible Tenancy. This is similar to a Council tenancy but there are two major differences:

- A.** you will not have statutory right to buy
- B.** there may not be a statutory right for sons and daughters to 'succeed' to the tenancy after the tenant's death.

If either of these two matters is important to you, make sure you discuss them with the Housing Association before going ahead, or get independent advice from one of the organisations listed in Section 10 of this handbook.

Moving to another area

You can apply directly to any council in the country for housing but they are not obliged to accept your application. If you wish to move to another area, please contact the local council directly for further advice.



Moving at our request

Occasionally we have to carry out extensive repairs, modernisation or demolition to our properties. If you have to move out of your home because of this, we will make all the arrangements for you and meet some of the costs involved in the removal, e.g. the disconnection and reconnection of cookers, washing machines and telephone and the redirection of mail.

Moving to sheltered accommodation

We have several sheltered housing schemes across the district which aims to provide accommodation for older people who are independent.

All accommodation is self-contained one bedroom or studio flats.

Applicants for sheltered housing should be at least 60 years of age. Some applicants aged over 50 may be considered, if they have physical needs which necessitate moving into sheltered housing.

Please contact the Housing Options team for more details if you are interested in applying. Applicants requesting bungalows should be aware that these are extremely popular and there is often a long wait.

Our sheltered schemes are visited regularly by Housing Support Officers who are able to assist with a range of queries covering repairs, rents and other tenancy issues.

5. Working together

Tenant participation – ‘Have your say’

It is important to us that we involve our tenants in shaping our services and helping us identify priorities. This section tells you how we will provide information, how tenants can get involved in decision making, and how they are delivered.

You can ‘have your say’ in shaping our policies that may affect your home and neighbourhood. There are lots of opportunities and different ways for you to influence and help shape our services.

Keeping you informed

Housing Times

Housing Times is a quarterly newsletter which is sent to all our tenants to keep them informed of developments, articles of interest and information on our performance. If you would like to get involved in providing articles for the newsletter, or in editing the newsletter, then contact your Housing Officer for more information.



The Annual Report

This is published in October each year and a copy is sent to all tenants. It gives information on how the service is performing and also details on what improvements we are planning to introduce. If you are a new tenant and would like a copy of the most recent Annual Report please contact your Housing Officer.

Website

The Council's website plays an ever increasing role in keeping you informed and offers opportunities for you to comment on our services.

Getting involved

From the comfort of your home you can join:

1. Postal consultation group

For postal survey / questionnaires on a variety of issues.

10 – 15 minutes per survey, maximum 3 – 4 times a year.

2. Telephone survey

We will call you to ask for feedback on a range of our services. This will be carried out by a member of staff or by a resident representative.

5 minutes per call, maximum 3 – 4 times a year.

3. Email consultation group

We will email you questionnaires and other information seeking your comments.

Maximum 3 – 4 times a year.

4. Neighbourhood services monitoring

We can send you a 3 monthly monitoring tick box sheet for you to use to report on the standard of work.

1 survey every quarter to update regularly through the quarter.

6. Attend a local meeting

We may invite you to join us to discuss specific issues which may relate to your local area or there may already be a local Residents Association in your locality.

7. Estate inspections

This could be a invitation to a Walkabout around your local area, or Housing Officers may door knock and conduct a one to one satisfaction survey of the local area.

8. Focus group or contractor interviews

When we need feedback on specific issues or tenant involvement in selecting contractors we invite tenants to participate.

2 – 6 hours by prior arrangement (payment available).

9. Neighbourhood services forum

Every 6 – 8 weeks we meet with residents to discuss and review the work of neighbourhood services e.g. grounds maintenance, caretaking and refuse / recycling services.

Approximately every 8 weeks.

10. Tenants forum

Monitors and review all areas of tenant involvement and participation.

Approximately every 8 weeks.

11. Asset management forum

An opportunity to meet the Asset Management Team, and some of our contractors, to discuss housing repairs and improvements.

Approximately every 8 weeks.



If you are interested in getting involved please contact the Tenant Consultation and Communication Support Officer on 01727 819463.

We can help with travel costs and offer a range of training skills to help you get involved in our services.

6. Services for older or vulnerable people and people with a disability

Sheltered accommodation

We have several retirement schemes within the District. These provide accommodation for predominantly retired people who are independent. Each scheme receives regular visits from a housing support officer and provides other facilities to make being independent easier.

If you transfer to bedsit or one bedroom accommodation you may qualify for a grant under the Removal Support Package.

Community alarm system

The alarm system provides help in an emergency to elderly or vulnerable people, or those with a disability. Your alarm can be used 24 hours a day on every day of the year. It is linked to the Central Control system where staff will get help for people, if required. A weekly charge is made for this service, which is included in your rent as a service charge if you are a tenant.

All that you need is

- a plug-in telephone point
- an electrical point
- to provide the names of at least two people as contacts / key holders who would be willing to respond at any time of night or day if you made an emergency call.

If you would like further information about the Community Alarm system please telephone Housing Support Services on **01727 819231** or ask for a copy of our leaflet on the community alarm.

Help for people with a disability

If you or someone in your family is having problems at home because of a disability, for example, difficulty in climbing the stairs or using your bath, please telephone Herts County Council on **0300 123 4040**.

They can arrange for an occupational therapist to visit you to see what can be provided. If work can be carried out to help you, the occupational therapist will request us to do this.

They may recommend:

- **Providing mobility aids** – these are minor improvements such as grab rails and handrails to make it easier for you to move around your home. Most of this type of work can be done with minimum delay.
- **Larger adaptations** – these may include more major changes to your home such as a stair lift, or a shower. This work will require more time to complete and will involve a visit from one of our surveyors. Sometimes it may not be possible because of the design of your home, to carry out the adaptation at your existing property. We will look at possible solutions including transfer to more suitable accommodation.

There is a specific sum of money set aside for adaptations each year. Demand for this work is high and you may have to wait before we are able to carry out the work.

There are strict criteria under which your requested adaptation is considered and unfortunately it is not possible to carry out every request that is received. If your request is turned down, you will be given guidance and full details as to the reason why.

Assisted garden maintenance

You may be able to apply to have your garden maintained by the Council, on payment of a service charge. Please note that this charge is not covered by Housing Benefit.

This service is only available if you:

- are over 65 years of age and / or suffering from a disability and you are physically unable to carry out the work yourself
- have no other person living with you, or within a reasonable distance, to help you to maintain your garden.



Garden maintenance covers the cutting of grass and any hedges. We have a fixed budget every year to carry out this work so sometimes there may be a waiting list.

If you would like more information about this, please telephone **01727 819485**. A leaflet including an application form is available.

7. When things go wrong

1. Feedback

We strive to provide you with the best possible service, but we know that sometimes things can go wrong and if they do, we want you to tell us so we can sort them out as soon as possible.

We want to hear your views –

Making a complaint, compliment or comment

St Albans City & District Council is committed to listening to its customers and dealing with any feedback promptly and effectively. We aim to use feedback to improve and develop the services we provide.



Whatever the outcome of a complaint, our aim is to stop similar problems happening in the future. All complaints are monitored so that we can spot problem areas and learn from mistakes.

We will publish information on the numbers and types of complaints we receive.

If you wish to complain about any aspect of the housing service you can contact the complaint administrator on **01727 819400** or ask to speak to a section manager. Alternatively you can e mail us at **customerservices@stalbans.gov.uk** or write to us. There are more details about how to make a complaint on our website.

How to make a complaint about a Freedom of Information or Data Protection Act request

Complaints about the way in which a request was handled, or the decision whether to release information, will be dealt with under this complaints procedure. Complete the online feedback form on our website or send your complaint to the Corporate Complaints Monitoring Officer. The complaint will be raised with the appropriate Head of Service or the Chief Executive.

Compliments

We are also pleased to receive your compliments, which are used to develop services by sharing praise and good practice with individuals and teams.

2. Anti social behaviour

The Council believes that, where it is practical to do so, the complainant should make the initial approach to their neighbour. Our aim is to encourage tenants to resolve their problems amicably between themselves without using a third party as this could make the problem worse. Often people are not aware that their actions are causing a nuisance to their neighbours and a quiet word may resolve the problem. However, the Council recognises that there may be some exceptions to this depending on the circumstances of the case.

You should take into account that the Housing team can only deal with complaints where the issue relates to a breach of tenancy. Therefore we are only able to deal with complaints that relate to a Council property.

It may be possible for other Council teams to help and in this case we will advise you who to contact or we can pass your concerns on. This may include referral to the Principal Protection Officer in the Environmental Health team.

How can your Housing Officer help?

If you have made an initial approach to your neighbour and there is no improvement, you can contact your Housing Officer. Your Housing Officer will act on a complaint made in writing, by email, over the telephone or in person at the Council Offices.



To take complaints forward, a diary form will be issued to you for completion so that we can be quite clear about the nature and frequency of the incidents causing you to complain. This should be returned as soon as possible. If you are unable to maintain a diary sheet you can telephone us or email us with details of your complaint and a record of these will be kept by your Housing Officer.

What happens next?

You will be asked to record details of further incidences over a two week period. If there is evidence of nuisance we can contact your neighbour if you agree to this. If further complaints are received the case will be reassessed and you will be kept informed of decisions made.

The emphasis of our actions at this stage will be advisory and we will attempt to obtain co-operation from other parties so that the nuisance is resolved or reduced. Experience demonstrates that problems of this nature are more likely to be resolved by discussion between neighbours. In very serious cases, especially where there is a risk of violence, we may commence legal action at an early stage.

In most cases low-key intervention will lead to an improvement in the situation. However, in a small number of cases there will be no improvement or things will get worse. If necessary the housing department will take stronger measures that might involve legal action.

If legal action is to be taken it is necessary to have evidence on which to base a case and you may be asked to provide further information. This might involve you completing diary sheets for a period of several weeks in order to demonstrate the severity and frequencies of the problems. It is also helpful if similar information comes from other neighbours who are affected by the nuisance in order to show that the nuisance is not just one person's word against another's.

If this action is required it will be necessary for complainants to continue to keep diary sheets. You will be asked if you are willing to attend court to give evidence. The judge may not be willing to take action if we rely upon anonymous information. Legal action could result in possession proceedings (eviction) or obtaining an injunction against the alleged perpetrator. If you do attend court to give evidence then support will be given. We may also obtain an injunction to protect you and members of your household if we are concerned about possible retaliation or we may be able to help you obtain suitable and more appropriate housing elsewhere in the District.

There are other sources of help available and we may, with your permission, refer the matter to other services. This could be to the environmental health noise monitoring service and you may be asked if you are willing to have noise monitoring equipment installed in your home for a week to assess whether any noise you have complained about is causing a statutory nuisance. If so, then this evidence can be used in court.

In many cases, people say they want their neighbours to be moved or evicted. The Council cannot do this without a Court order and evidence from those affected by the nuisance.

Throughout this process you will be kept informed by your Housing Officer, however you should be aware that most cases involve a lengthy process.

Can we resolve all disputes?

There are many types of nuisance complaint and some are easier to deal with (e.g. noise from TVs or stereos) than others (e.g. noise of children running / playing around inside their home). When dealing with complaints between two parties it is necessary at all times for the Housing Management Department to be impartial and unbiased in our actions, particularly when the main cause of these complaints can be a clash of lifestyles and noise attributed to every day living.

Other actions

In resolving any dispute, the Council will offer a range of actions and may not necessarily have to resort to legal action. These include liaison with other agencies, i.e. Police, Social Services and other Council departments, such as the Community Protection team which can consider taking action against offending neighbors. We may undertake joint visits or arrange meetings between parties.

You may also be asked if you are willing to discuss the matter with the Mediation Service. At this stage you will not be expected to have a face to face meeting with your neighbour, but will just discuss the problems with a trained mediator to explore whether mediation is appropriate for the nuisance you are experiencing and how you would like the case resolved. If you think that mediation might help in your case, or want more details, please contact your Housing Officer.

3. Relationship breakdown

If your relationship has broken down, you will need to decide who continues to live in the house. Your legal rights to stay in your home may depend upon whose name is on the tenancy and whether you were married, in a civil partnership, or co-habiting. It will also depend upon whether there are children in the relationship and who will be the main carer for these children. If you need more advice on this, your Housing Officer will be able to offer initial advice but it is likely that you will need to obtain independent legal advice, especially if there is a joint tenancy or children in the relationship.

You should be aware that your Housing Officer cannot become involved with providing any kind of legal advice where a joint tenancy is in dispute. If you are unable to agree with a partner who of you should remain in the property, you must seek independent legal advice or contact the Housing Options Service for housing advice.



4. Domestic violence

Domestic violence is defined by Hertfordshire Police as ‘any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are, or who have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality’.

If you are suffering domestic violence the most important thing you can do is tell someone you trust. Never be afraid to ask for help and in an emergency ring **999**.

Other numbers which may be useful:

Hertfordshire Sunflower Helpline **08 088 088 088** (10 am to 10 pm)
Women's Aid **0808 2000 247** (24 hour).

5. Hate crimes

St Albans City & District Council believes that every individual has a right to be treated with dignity and respect and to live without fear of discrimination.

Anyone can be a victim of a hate crime; the victim does not have to be a member of a minority group or someone who is considered vulnerable.

Any incident or crime which is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate should be reported to the police, and to the council. We take these complaints extremely seriously.

If you would like more information, please contact your Housing Officer for information and advice, contact the Police Harm Reduction Unit on **01438 757340** or e mail **HarmReductionUnitStevenage@herts.pnn.police.uk**

6. If you need more help and advice

If you need more help and advice about any issues in this handbook, or with your tenancy, contact your Housing Management Officer.

However in some circumstances, such as if you are ending a joint tenancy, we would recommend that you get independent legal advice. You can contact a solicitor for advice, or an advice agency may be able to give you guidance free of charge.

There are a number of advice agencies working in the St Albans area:

Citizens Advice Bureau

St Albans

Civic Centre, St Peter's Street,
St Albans AL1 3JE.

Enquiries: **01727 811118**.

Herts Adviceline: **08444 111 444**.

Monday – Wednesday 10 am – 1 pm. Thursday 10 pm – 4 pm.

Friday 10 am – 1 pm. Services: Drop in.



Harpenden

Town Hall, Leyton Road, Harpenden AL5 2LX.

Enquiries: **01727 811118**. Herts Adviceline: **08444 111 444**.

Monday, Thursday and Friday 10 am – 1 pm. Services: Drop in.

London Colney

Caledon Road Community Centre, Caledon Road,
London Colney AL2 1PB.

Enquiries: **01727 811118**.

Friday 10 am – 12 pm. Services: Drop in.

Wheathampstead

Memorial Hall, Marford Road, Wheathampstead AL4 8AY.

Enquiries: **01727 811118**.

Thursday 10 am – 12 pm. Services: Drop in.

To speak to an adviser call Herts Adviceline, **08444 111 444** open 10 am – 4 pm Monday to Friday (5p per minute from a BT landline) or **0300 3300 650** from a mobile (same as 01 or 02 included in free minutes). If the Bureau is closed try **www.adviceguide.org.uk** for general advice.

All advice given is confidential.



Shelter

Shelter

Shelter aims to prevent and alleviate homelessness. It gives free, confidential, impartial and independent housing advice, assistance and advocacy to anyone who is homeless or has a housing related problem.

You can call the national helpline for more information.

Phone(s): **0844 515 1944** or **0207 505 1944**.

0808 800 4444 (Shelter – National Helpline).

Web pages: **www.shelter.org.uk**

Housing support services

St Albans Housing Department works in partnership with Hightown Praetorian and Churches Housing Association to provide a resettlement and tenancy support service for people who need support and help because they may be at risk of losing their tenancy or their quality of life is affected.

You may need help when first taking on a new tenancy. Or you may be an existing tenant who is be having difficulties e.g. due to bereavement, sudden illness or a change in circumstances, and need a little extra help through your difficulties.

This service can help tenants deal with urgent problems such as claiming benefits or tackling rent arrears or dealing with debt. It may also look at the reasons you are having problems. Such reasons sometimes include mental health issues, drug and alcohol use, lack of training or employment, or problems using local services or amenities.



You can be referred to the service by your Housing Officer. On receipt of the referral, a member of the support team from Hightown Praetorian and Churches Housing Association will contact you. They will work with you to assess what your immediate problems are and what help they can give. They will also develop a help plan. The Support Workers will keep in touch with your Housing Officer while they are working with you.

If you feel you would benefit from some extra support, please talk to your Housing Officer about a referral.

We also work with Aldwyck Housing Group who provide a similar service for vulnerable tenants aged over 18 years, including those with mental health issues, who need assistance to maintain their tenancy and live independently. It is a short term service for housing related support. Most people using this service require support for a maximum of two years.

Those who may need the service will need to be willing to undergo a needs and risk assessment and undertake a support programme.

If you wish to be referred to the service, please contact your Housing Officer who will complete a referral assessment with you.

8. Estate management

We undertake various activities to help make your estate a pleasant place to live.

1. Estate walkabouts

We carry out estate walkabouts at the request of local tenants and councillors. These involve walking around an estate or area and discussing any issues or concerns that residents may have.

The estate walkabouts are an opportunity for you to meet your Housing Officers and sometimes your local councillors to discuss any concerns you may have.

2. Caretaking

We provide a caretaking service for the communal areas of some of our blocks and caretakers visit on a weekly or fortnightly basis, depending on the area you live. They will:

- Sweep and mop the stairs, landings and entrance halls
- Clean bin cupboards
- Replace light bulbs
- Pick up litter around the blocks
- Report dumped items for collection
- Report abandoned or untaxed vehicles
- Monitor grounds maintenance and report back as required.



If you have any concerns or comments about caretaking in your block please contact the Estate Services Officer on **01727 819599**.

3. Communal areas

St Albans City & District Council as a landlord has to conform to Fire Regulations these include:

- No furniture, chairs or loose carpeting is permitted in communal areas (doormats are permitted)
- Only plants sitting securely on window sills are permitted.

These regulations exist to keep people safe. Items that block hallways can be hazardous if the building has to be evacuated quickly.

Should a fire break out in any part of the building, you and your neighbours may have to get out through the corridors and stairs. The communal areas may be dark or filling with smoke and people may not see obstacles which could cause injury and prevent them leaving the building safely. This could also endanger the lives of firefighters.

For this reason you must not leave any items, including bikes or push chairs in communal areas. If they are left they will be removed by the Council.

4. Grounds maintenance for communal areas

Through our contractors, John O'Connor, we aim to cut grass in communal areas regularly throughout the year. We also maintain shrub beds monthly, trim hedges twice a year and clear leaves during the autumn.

John O'Conner will clear main paths of grass cuttings and clear pavements within 6 hours of finishing the cut. They do not collect other grass cuttings as it is too costly.

If you are concerned about any aspect of grounds maintenance, please contact John O'Conner directly on their free telephone number: **0845 125 8000** or Community Services on: **01727 819366**.

5. Trees

The Council is responsible for the management of dead and diseased trees on our land, including trees in gardens of Council properties (except those which have been planted by you).

You are responsible for trees which you have planted and for the removal of self seeded trees in your garden.

If you have concerns about a tree in your garden (other than one you have planted) please contact your Housing Officer.

If the tree appears dead, damaged, diseased, is dangerous or likely to cause structural damage to a property, it will be assessed. In case work is required. This may include pruning, removal of branches or removal of the tree.

We will not carry out work for aesthetic reasons, for instance because the tree is large and blocking out light.

If a tree is damaged by you, for instance by hanging a swing from a branch or fixing items to the trunk or branches, responsibility for dealing with the tree rests with you.

6. Parking

Many estates were built at a time when fewer people owned cars. Car parking is frequently a cause of disagreement between residents.

Under your tenancy agreement, vehicles must only be parked on approved parking areas. It is illegal to park a vehicle on the grass verge, which can cause access problems for emergency vehicles. Churned up grass verges are also unsightly and costly to repair.

You may only park your car in your garden if a proper hardstanding and curb crossover have been built. If you wish to build a hardstanding, please contact your Housing Officer for details.



There are some garages available to rent, however there is a waiting list in some areas. Please call Housing Services on **01727 819256** if you are interested in renting a council garage.

7. Dumped rubbish, vandalism and graffiti

We want our estates to be attractive places to live in. If you have complaints about rubbish, vandalism or graffiti on your estate then please contact your Housing Officer. We may be able to take legal action against offenders if we have evidence of the offence.

8. Rubbish in communal areas

The costs of collecting rubbish dumped in communal areas of flats, is reflected in increased service charges for the following year. If you see residents dumping waste, please let the Housing Officer know and we will charge the resident responsible rather than the whole block; we will also take action against their tenancy.



The council operates a bulky rubbish collection service for up to 6 items. There is a charge for this service although this may be waived if you receive certain benefits. Please contact Waste Management Services on: **01727 819285**.

9. Street lighting & potholes

Maintenance of street lighting, and of most roads within the District, is the responsibility of Hertfordshire County Council. Please report problems (with the lamp post number and street name for lighting) on: **0300 123 4047** or online at **www.hertsdirect.org**.

10. Refuse collection

Please contact **01717 819285** if you have problems with waste or recycling collection or e mail Waste Management services at **www.stalbans.gov.uk**.

11. Pest control

In general the only pest control the Housing Department will deal with is the removal of wasp nests from communal areas. For all other pest control concerns, please call Pest Control on: **01727 819440**.

12. Water meters

We do allow tenants to have water meters installed but you do need to be aware that the supply of water to your home is based upon your contract with the water company and not with the Council.

If the supply pipe on your side of the meter becomes damaged and there is a leak of water you will be responsible for paying the bill for any water wasted as a result of the leak. With a serious leak this could be several hundred pounds. While we cannot refuse to allow you to have a meter we would ask you to think carefully about the implications for you should a leak develop.

9. Useful contacts

Customer Services and complaints monitoring

Head of Housing

Karen Dragovic

Tel: **01727 819400**. Email: karen.dragovic@stalbands.gov.uk

PA to Head of Housing

Eva Radkowska

Tel: **01727 819494**. Email: eva.radkowska@stalbands.gov.uk

Other key contacts

Customer Contact Centre

Tel: **01727 866100**. Email: contactus@stalbands.gov.uk

Housing out of hours service

Tel: **01727 819493**. Email: housingmanagement@stalbands.gov.uk

Fraud investigation

Tel: **01727 819236 / 238 / 269**. Email: CAFT@stalbands.gov.uk

Principal Community Protection Officer

Tel: **01727 819416**. Email: neil.kieran@stalbands.gov.uk

Refuse Collection and Recycling

Tel: **01727 819285**

Email: wastemanagementservices@stalbands.gov.uk

Housing Benefit

Tel: **01727 819456**. Email: benefits@stalbands.gov.uk

Council Tax

Tel: **01727 819204 / 205**. Email: counciltax@stalbands.gov.uk

Housing Department

St Albans City & District Council
St Peter's Street
St Albans
AL1 3JE

Telephone: **01727 819600**

Email: **housing@stalbans.gov.uk**

If you need this information in an alternative format, such as Braille or in another language, please call **01727 819494**.

The Council's textphone number is **01727 819570**.
This service is for people with a hearing impairment.



St Albans
City & District Council

www.stalbans.gov.uk