

Tenant handbook



**Full Version
2021**

Introduction

Welcome to Active Prospects

A warm welcome to your new home! We hope you will be very happy.

This handbook has important information about your tenancy and living in an Active Prospects property. It has been co-produced with Active Prospects tenants.

If you want to get involved in the work of Active Prospects and in the local community, you can join the Pro-Active Community, become a Active Prospects Ambassador or join the Surrey People's Group. You will find more information about getting involved on page 7 of this handbook.

Contact details:

Head Office Open 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday

1 Castlefield Court, Church Street, Reigate, Surrey RH2 0AH

01737 924084

info@activeprospects.org.uk

Repairs : 01737 924236 or 01737 924238

Emergency On Call 07412 037474

www.activeprospects.org.uk



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Section 1 – Your tenancy agreement

Your tenancy agreement is a written contract between **you (the tenant)** and the landlord, Active Prospects.

It's an important legal document that sets out:

- The amount of rent you need to pay
- What the landlord needs to do
- Details of services provided as part of your tenancy
- What you, as a tenant need to do
- What you, as a tenant must not do



Your rights as a tenant

- To live in your home peacefully and free from harassment
- To not be evicted without a court order
- To be given information about your rent and other tenancy issues

Housing Services provided by Active Prospects:

Active Prospects may provide services such as heating, lighting, hot water, furniture, and communal gardening as part of your tenancy.

Information about the services provided by Active Prospects and how much they cost are set out in your tenancy agreement.

Paying your rent

It is very important to make sure rent is paid on time. The money we receive is used to pay for repairs, any loans on the property and housing staff.

You can pay your rent by:

- Standing Order through your bank
- Cash at our offices during office hours



Staff can support you to set up arrangements to make bank payments.

If you have problems paying your rent, please let staff know as soon as possible. Staff can support you with budgeting and to claim benefits.

If you get behind with your rent, you can pay a lump sum to clear the debt, or we will set up a repayment agreement to gradually pay off the arrears. It is very important that you keep to any repayment agreements as, if you do not, we may take legal action, which could lead to you losing your home.

Rent Statement

To help you keep track, we will send you a rent statement every 3 months. We can also send an up-to-date statement on request. The rent statement shows the balance on your account and details of payments received from you and from Housing Benefit. Ask staff if you need help understanding your rent statement.

What Active Prospects must do:

(in properties where we are responsible)

- maintain the property and carry out repairs
- make sure the plumbing, heating, and lighting are in good order
- carry out regular health and safety checks and maintain any fire alarm / firefighting equipment

What you must do as a tenant:

- pay your rent on time
- live in the property as your main home – usually at least 5 nights per week
- keep your home clean and tidy and dispose of your unwanted furniture
- report repairs
- allow access to our contractors/handypersons to carry out repairs and health and safety checks. We will usually give you 24 hours' notice, unless we need access in an emergency
- obtain written permission from us before keeping a pet
- keep to the house rules, especially the rules about health and safety



What you, or your visitors, must not do

- not cause a nuisance or annoyance in or near your home
- not cause damage to the property or furniture
- not carry out any alterations to the property without our permission
- not use the property for illegal or immoral purposes
- not take or store illegal drugs at the property
- not leave rubbish or block fire exits
- not let anyone else move in without our permission
- not run a business from your home

It is important that you keep to the rules of your tenancy agreement as if you do not, you could lose your home.

Changes to the tenancy agreement

We can only make changes to your tenancy agreement with your agreement **unless** the changes are about the rents and service charges.

Section 2 - What we will do

What you can expect from us:

Treat you fairly and with dignity and respect

We will not treat you differently because of your age, disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion. Please speak to a member of staff if you think you have been treated unfairly.

Keep your personal information safe

We will ensure that personal information is up to date, stored securely and relevant to the service we provide. We will not share your information unless you give us permission, unless it is required by law.



You have the right to request a copy of the information that Active Prospects holds on you. You can make such a request in writing to the Director of Care or by asking a member of staff.

Support to maintain your tenancy:

You have been offered supported housing as you need support to live independently. As your landlord, Active Prospects provides tenancy support which includes:

- Support to understand the tenancy agreement
- Support to claim housing benefit
- Support to be safe and secure in your home
- Support with budgeting, managing your money and arrangements to pay bills
- Support to resolve disputes with your neighbours

Active Prospects may also be your care and support provider. As a tenant, you have the right to choose an alternative care and support provider. Please ask a member of staff if you want more information about changing your provider.

How to make a complaint



We welcome all feedback and complaints. You can make a complaint by completing a complaint form, writing a letter, or speaking to a member of staff.

If you make a complaint, it will be passed to the Quality Team who will arrange for a response to be sent to you **within 4 weeks**.

If you are not happy with the response you receive, you can complain to the Director of Care. They will respond to your complaint **within 4 weeks**.

Further information can be found in our 'Feedback and Complaints' leaflet. Staff can also support you to make a complaint.

Feedback

You can tell us what you think about our services by completing a feedback form or speaking to a member of staff. We will also send you a survey each year.

How you can get involved

Our tenants and People We Support are at the forefront of everything we do. There are a number of ways you can get involved:

The Pro-Active Community www.proactivecommunity.com is run by People We Support. They meet every two weeks and consider key developments, new policies, future strategies, service performance and improvements. They also facilitate:

Tenant Consultation

We hold house meetings at least every 3 months and will always consult you about any changes to your home or tenancy.

Recruitment and selection

You can get involved in staff recruitment by, for example, getting involved in interviews.

Strategic Planning

You can take part in strategic and business planning events, policy making and activities about our future plans.



Employment and volunteering

We run a Supported Internship and volunteer programme and provide some opportunities for paid work within our business and community. Please ask a member of staff if you want more information about this.

Involvement in support planning

We will involve you in the development and review of your support plan. We will support you to participate in all decisions about your support including access to an independent advocate, if appropriate.

Co-Production

All our new services are developed in partnership with potential users of the service, their families, or advocates. Your service manager will talk to you about opportunities to get involved.

Section 3 - Staying safe in your home

Security in your home

Always ask for ID. All our contractors and handypersons carry ID. If you are not expecting the caller, telephone us or the company they are from.



Always lock your door and fasten all your windows when you go out.

Never leave cash or valuables lying around and do not give your keys to anyone else. Keep your bank card safe and never give out the pin number, even to staff. If you see anything suspicious, **dial 101** or in an emergency call **999**.

Managing your finances

If you have capacity to manage your own finances then staff **will not** handle your money, they cannot touch your money or your cashcards. They **must** not have your Pin number or have any details of where you keep your money safe. They cannot get any money out the bank for you or pay for anything on your behalf.

They **can** support you to complete a budget or help you understand your bank statement. You **Must** tell someone if you are concerned.

If you lack the capacity to manage your finances, a support plan will be put in place, which will clearly identify how and when staff will support you to manage your money. For further information refer to the people we support monies policy and easy read financial abuse.

Hoarding

Having too much clutter in your home is dangerous. Staff will support you to reduce clutter but, if your home can not be made safe, this could lead to you having to move out.

Preventing a fire

To prevent fires, avoid using candles and, if you smoke, put cigarettes out properly. Take care when cooking. Avoid using deep fat fryers and always watch over your cooking. Check that the cooker is turned off.

Please keep all fire doors closed. Do not prop fire doors open and keep fire exits clear. Regularly check Fire and Carbon Monoxide detectors are working.



What to do if there is a fire

If you discover a fire, sound the fire alarm (if there is one) and leave the building. Tell a member of staff if you can.

If a member of staff is not available, call the Fire Brigade on 999 and go to the agreed meeting point. Never go back into the property because you have forgotten something.

If you cannot leave the building, keep the doors closed. The fire doors will delay the fire spreading. Open the window and shout outside to raise the alarm.

What is abuse?

Abuse is anything that hurts or injures you or another person. Abuse includes discrimination against a person, financial exploitation, physical, emotional, sexual, verbal harm, domestic abuse, modern slavery, and neglect (including self-neglect).

If you see or experience abuse, please report it to a member of staff. If your complaint, is about a member of staff, please contact the Director of Care on **01737 924084**.

You can also report abuse to your local Social Services department. For more information, please ask a member of staff.

Antisocial behaviour and harassment

What is harassment?

Harassment can be verbal abuse, threatening behaviour, graffiti, damage to property and physical assault. It is different from other incidents of nuisance because it is based on prejudices against race, colour, disability including mental health issues, gender, or sexuality.

Examples of harassment include:

- Actual violence or threats of violence that may be verbal or physical.
- Attacks on property or people.
- Insulting and offensive graffiti, which is racist, sexist or generally offensive or insulting to minority groups.
- Insulting and offensive remarks which are racist, sexist or generally offensive or insulting to minority groups.

What is antisocial behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour involves any behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, an upset to other people in or around your home. Examples include:

- Playing music, radio, or TV very loudly
- Shouting or having loud arguments
- Harassment
- Threatening to harm or actual violence
- Not disposing of rubbish and obstructing communal areas

We will take action against any tenant who is causing, or allowing their visitors to cause, antisocial behaviour. We will also report any criminal acts to the police.

If the antisocial behaviour continues, the tenant responsible could lose their home.



Section 4 - Living in your home

Repairing responsibilities

In properties where we are fully responsible for repairs, we will keep the following in good repair and proper working order:

- The structure of your home (for example, the roof, windows, and doors)
- Heating and hot water
- The supply of gas, water, and electricity (but not power cuts and burst gas/water mains)
- Common entrances, halls, stairways, lifts, and entry phones
- Any furniture or fittings provided by us

As a tenant you are responsible for:

- Replacement of lost keys and/or calling out a locksmith
- Replacing light bulbs and personal items of furniture
- You may also be responsible for other things such as decorating your room, damage to the property and keeping the garden tidy. Please refer to your tenancy agreement or ask a member of staff.

Repairs: how to report a problem

You can report a repair by telling a member of staff, writing it in the message book or by telephoning the housing team on **01737 924236 or 01737 924238**.

If there is an emergency at night or at weekends which cannot wait until staff are available, you should telephone the On Call service on **07412 037474**.

Target times to complete:

We categorise repairs according to their impact on you and the property. We use these categories to set the following target times:



Emergency repairs – complete within 24 hours

Emergency repairs are any repair to avoid risks to health and safety or further damage to the building. Examples include:

- Gas Leaks
- Blocked toilets (if you are unable to clear them)
- Total loss of heating and hot water
- Dangerous structures
- Exposed wiring
- Fire alarm system fault or failure
- Burst pipes
- Door / Window repairs where security is at risk

Urgent Repairs – complete within 7 days

Urgent repairs are any repair which affects the comfort of tenants or which are needed to re-let the property. Examples include:

- Blocked sinks or drains
- Minor electrical faults
- Loose masonry
- Water leaks
- Defective central heating

Routine Repairs - complete within 14 days:

Unless the repair will be carried out as planned repairs (see below), non-urgent or emergency repairs will be completed within 14 days. Examples include:

- Blocked gutters and rainwater pipes
- Loose/missing roof tiles
- Broken kitchen units
- Defective floor
- Minor roof leaks
- Easement/adjustment doors / windows

Planned Repairs - within 30 days:

- brickwork and external joinery
- repairs caused by trees
- subsidence
- defective DPC
- chimney repair



- ceiling repairs
- damaged wall plaster

Compensation

If we do not carry out a repair within a reasonable amount of time, you may be entitled to compensation. Please speak to a member of staff if you think you are entitled to compensation.

Living in your home

You need to live in the property as your main home (usually at least 5 nights per week) and let us know if you are going to be absent for more than a few weeks.

Insurance

We are responsible for building insurance, but you need to take out your own contents insurance to cover the loss, theft, or damage of your belongings. Please ask a member of staff if you need support to set up contents' insurance.

Visitors

You are responsible for the behaviour of your visitors when they are in or near your home.

It is therefore important that they do not cause a nuisance or annoyance to other people or damage to the property. Please ask for our support if you are having difficulty managing the behaviour of your visitors.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed in any of Active Prospects buildings. Please refer to your tenancy agreement or ask a member of staff if you need further information.

Utility Bills

You may be responsible for paying your own bills or you may pay for these through the service charge. Please refer to your tenancy agreement or ask a member of staff.

Pets

You need our written permission to keep a pet in your property. Please ask for our permission first by writing to us or speak to a member of staff.

Leaving your home

You will need to give us at least **4 weeks' notice** in writing if you want to leave your home.

You are responsible for arranging to move your belongings to your new property.

Please leave the property clean and tidy and dispose of all rubbish and unwanted furniture. We may charge you for disposing of any items left behind.

Please hand in your keys to us on the day you leave. Please redirect your post and provide us with a forwarding address.

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Community Benefit Society No.: 26618R

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