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Tenant Handbook

Meath County Council Welcomes
You to Your New Home



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Welcome to your new home



Section 1: Welcome to your new home



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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

As a tenant of Meath County Council, we want to welcome you to your new home where you can enjoy being part of the community and live in a safe and comfortable environment.

This handbook is an important document which tells you about the conditions of your tenancy. It outlines our responsibility to you as the tenant and what we expect of you. It provides information on everything from how you can pay your rent to issues relating to maintenance of the property. It also includes useful contact numbers which you may need in the future.

We hope that this tenant handbook answers any questions you may have in relation to your tenancy and services provided by Meath County Council.

You should keep this handbook in a safe place where you can easily access it.

Our Contact details

If you wish to contact Meath County Council, our main point of contact is our Customer Service Desk. Your query will be dealt with by a Customer Service representative who will log your query and you will receive a response from the relevant section.



Ph: 046 909 7000
Fax: 046 909 7001



Emergency Contact Outside Office
Hours 1800 445 335



customerservice@meathcoco.ie



Meath County Council,
Buvinda House,
Dublin Road,
Navan,
Co. Meath
C15 Y291

Tenancy Conditions

Section 2: Tenancy Conditions



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SECTION 2

TENANCY CONDITIONS

Tenancy Agreement

When you accept a tenancy with Meath County Council you must sign a tenancy agreement. The tenancy agreement is a contract between the tenant (you) and landlord (Meath County Council) where you are given the right to occupy the property and live in it while it remains in the ownership of Meath County Council.

The tenancy agreement sets out the terms and conditions of your tenancy and is a legally binding document. If the agreement is broken, action may be taken by Meath County Council and this may lead to eviction.

Your Tenancy – What you need to know

What is a joint tenancy?

A joint tenancy is where a household which includes two adults, normally a couple are allocated a dwelling where they must permanently reside. The tenancy agreement must be signed by both proposed tenants. If circumstances change and the couple separate or divorce, one tenant must surrender their right to the tenancy.

Must I live in the house at all times?

Yes, the property must be used as your main home. If you intend leaving the property for more than six weeks in any period of fifty-two weeks, you must inform Meath County Council.

What are my obligations as a tenant?

When you sign a tenancy agreement with Meath County Council, you have certain obligations as set out in the tenancy agreement. You are making a commitment to adhere to the agreement and to be truthful and honest at all times.

Why is the tenancy agreement so important?

The tenancy agreement is a legal and binding document. You need to know the details of the agreement so you know what you are committing to before you sign the document. If the agreement is not kept, it can result in Meath County Council taking legal action which may lead to eviction.

Can I take in a lodger?

No, you are not allowed to take in lodgers or sublet any part of the premises.

Can I add another person to my tenancy/household?

No, not without permission from Meath County Council. If another person is coming to live, you must first complete a Permission to Reside form and send it to the Housing Section for approval. If the person applying is granted permission to reside, they must then submit their income details so that

they can be assessed for rent. If another person is staying at the property even one or two nights per week on a regular basis, Meath County Council considers the person to be residing.

Only those named on the Housing Application have permission to reside. You will be responsible for rent arrears if it's discovered that a person is residing without permission.

Can I keep a pet?

Tenants can keep pets if they wish as long as they are supervised and do not become a nuisance to neighbours. Before being allocated a property, you need to inform Meath County Council if you have a pet or if you intend getting one. **If you have a dog, it must have a licence.** You are not permitted to keep certain dogs and other animals like poultry, pigs or horses are not permitted. You are not permitted to keep any more than two domestic pets.

No more than two domestic pets are permitted!

You are NOT permitted to keep the following breed of dog or any other breed deemed to be unsuitable by Meath County Council.



- American Pit Bull Terrier
- Bull Mastiff
- Doberman Pinscher
- English Bull Terrier
- German Shepherd (Alsatian)
- Japanese Akita
- Japanese Tosa
- Rhodesian Ridgeback
- Rottweiler
- Staffordshire Bull Terrier
- and every dog of the type known as a Ban Dog or Ban Breed.



Can I purchase the house I rent from Meath County Council?

You may apply to Meath County Council to purchase your home. Under the current Tenant Purchase Scheme, you must have been the valid tenant in the property for a minimum of ten years and there must not be any arrears on your rent. You must also have maintained the property to an acceptable standard. You can contact the Housing Department and ask for the relevant application forms which will be sent to you.

Can my children inherit the tenancy?

It is possible, but the decision is at the discretion of Meath County Council. If he/she is over 18 years of age and is included as an occupant at the property and has genuinely been living there, then it is possible for a child to inherit the tenancy. However, Meath County Council reserve the right to take back the property when the original tenant dies. For example, Meath County Council will take back properties purpose built for disabled persons so that they can be allocated to people with a disability.

Can Meath County Council refuse to sell the house to me?

Yes, Meath County Council can refuse to sell the dwelling to a tenant where it considers there is good reason for doing so for example, on the grounds of *estate management*.

Tenant Incremental Purchase Scheme (2016)

If you are an existing tenant, you may be eligible to buy your home from Meath County Council at a discount, based on your income under the 'Tenant Incremental Purchase Scheme' (2016).

If approved, you must continue to live in the house for as long as you own it. A charge called an 'incremental purchase charge' will also be placed on your house. This charge will be equal to the discount you get on the price of the house. The charge will remain in place for 20, 25 or 30 years (depending on the discount given). Each year, the local authority will reduce the charge by 2%. At the end of the agreed period, the charge will be zero as long as you abide by the terms and conditions of the scheme.

You will be able to resell your house at any time if Meath County Council agrees. However, if you sell before the end of the 20, 25 or 30 years of the incremental purchase charge, you will have to pay back the value of the outstanding charge on your house to Meath County Council.

Who can apply?

In order to apply you must:

- Be a Local Authority housing tenant for at least two years.
- Have minimum [reckonable income](#) of €12,500 per annum - tenants/joint tenants. Private pension income is also eligible.
- Have a [reckonable income](#) that comes mainly from regular employment and not solely from social welfare.
- Not have purchased a house under a previous tenant purchase scheme.

- Have a satisfactory rent record, and all payments must be up to date.
- No-one living in your house can be engaged in anti-social behaviour (this will be checked with the Gardai).

Tenant responsibilities

As a tenant of Meath County Council, you have responsibilities which are outlined in the tenancy agreement. It is important that you are aware of these responsibilities as action may be taken by Meath County Council if the tenancy agreement is breached or broken.

What you must do as the Tenant:

- If you are currently renting a property, you must inform your landlord in advance of your move - and give the required notice depending on how long you are residing at the property.
- Keep to the terms of the tenancy agreement.
- Pay your rent when it is due, rent arrears will not be tolerated. Preferred payment method is by **Household Budget** or **Standing Order**.
- Give full and accurate details of your household income every year and return your Rent Review form when requested to do so.
- Ensure you have bins (domestic/recycling/glass/compost) in place.
- Maintain the property and garden.
- Replace any original fixtures and fittings where necessary.
- Complete repairs which are your responsibility.
- Allow Meath County Council access to the property to carry out inspections, repairs, etc.
- Wait for approval in writing from Meath County Council before making any alteration to the property other than painting and decorating.
- Do not carry out a business from your home, garden or shed.
- Do not cause disturbance or engage in behaviour that affects your neighbour's peaceful enjoyment of their home and estate.
- Insure all your belongings against accidental damage, fire and theft.
- Live in the property at all times and notify Meath County Council if you intend moving out for a period of 6 weeks or more in any block of 52 weeks.
- Give notice to Meath County Council if you are moving out – 4 weeks is required.



IMPORTANT - Do not alter the structure of the property!

You must not carry out any works or alterations to the property without written permission from Meath County Council. You must never interfere with the structures of the property including, building or removal of internal walls, attic conversions etc. If you do so, you will be breaking the conditions of your tenancy agreement which may lead to legal action and you will have to pay for the costs of repair.

Meath County Council's responsibilities as your landlord

Meath County Council also has obligations when signing a tenancy agreement. It's important to know what you can expect from Meath County Council as a tenant. You should read the tenancy agreement carefully and be clear about our commitments to you. The following is a list of our responsibilities to you as the tenant.

What Meath County Council must do for you:

- Adhere to the terms of the tenancy agreement.
- Provide sufficient notice of rent increases – 1 week is required.
- Provide 4 weeks' notice if ending your tenancy.
- Insure the structure of the dwelling (remember, you are responsible for insuring the contents).
- Carry out repairs and deal with maintenance issues which are the responsibility of Meath County Council.
- Investigate all complaints in a fair and impartial manner (anonymous complaints will not be investigated).

Complaints Procedure

Making a Complaint

Initial complaints are accepted by telephone, complainants are then requested to complete a Housing Investigation Incident Report form. All complaints are responded to within 15 working days.

Remember - NOTIFY YOUR LANDLORD!

If you are currently renting a property, you must inform your landlord of your move. You are required to give minimum 4 weeks' notice.

Customer Care

Meath County Council is committed to delivering the best possible service to you in an effective and caring manner and will be as helpful and informative as possible. We respect your privacy and ensure that all matters are dealt with in a confidential manner.

If you have a query in relation to your rent, a maintenance issue or any other matter you wish to discuss with a representative of Meath County Council, you can contact our Customer Service Centre where your query will be logged and responded to in a timely manner.

Meath County Council aims to ensure that any issues you may have are resolved in an efficient and timely manner so that you can continue to live in a peaceful and comfortable, good quality home. In doing so, we rely on your co-operation to help us provide you with the best service possible.

Customer Care - Our commitment to you and what we expect from you.

What you can expect from Meath County Council:

- Treat you in a courteous and respectful manner.
- Deal with you in a fair and open manner.
- Be as helpful and informative as possible and respond promptly to any issues you may have (all issues responded to within 15 working days).
- Meet with you at agreed times and keep you informed of developments.
- Listen and take all matters you report seriously.
- Discuss any aspect of your dealings with us.
- Explain how a decision was reached.
- Explain documents and procedures to you in a straightforward manner.
- Help you complete forms for Meath County Council if necessary.
- Ensure equal treatment irrespective of your age, gender, religion, ethnic background, disability, marital status or sexual orientation.
- Respect your privacy and confidentiality wherever possible.

What Meath County Council expects of you:

- You must at all times treat Meath County Council employees with courtesy and respect.
- You must respond to phone calls, calling cards or correspondence. Failure to do so will be deemed to be uncooperative and time wasting.
- You must be honest and provide us with correct information about household members, your income and any other information which is legitimately required by Meath County Council.
- You must attend appointments when requested or give advance notice if you cannot attend.

- You must allow us entry to the property where there is a legitimate reason (all Meath County Council employees are expected to show identification before entering a property, if a person cannot show identification, you can refuse entry and contact our office to arrange an appointment).

Data Confidentiality

Meath County Council will treat all your personal information as confidential and any personal data given in accordance with paragraph three of the tenancy agreement will be subject to our responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1988.

Any information kept on file is secure and will not be given to a third party without your consent unless in exceptional circumstances.

For example:

An Garda Síochána if they are investigating a serious crime.

HSE and TUSLA, Child and Family Agency if there is a serious risk to an individual such as a child.

Moving in and Managing your Finances



SECTION 3

Moving in and Managing Your Finances

Moving into a new home can be very stressful. There are a lot of costs associated with moving so it is very important you are prepared.

Once you are allocated a property, you will need to start making arrangements for the move. A checklist is useful to help keep you organised and make sure the move runs smoothly.

Budget for the move and know what you can afford to spend. Ensure that all essential costs are covered and decide what can wait.

The following are some tips about costs you will incur as a part of the move and organisations you should notify:

Expenses

- Having bins in place is essential, ensure you set up an account with a recognised refuse collection company.
- You are responsible for all utility bills including phone, heating and electricity.
- You are responsible for providing electrical appliances, furniture and possibly floor coverings (if you are in receipt of social welfare payment, you may be entitled to an assistance payment from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection).
- All internal decorations such as curtains, rails, blinds etc. must be provided by you.
- You must insure all household contents.
- You may have to pay for furniture removal costs.

Managing your Finances - Five Golden Rules



Pay your rent on time by Standing Order or Household Budget. Do not allow arrears to accumulate.



If there is a change to your household income, contact the rents section without delay.



Budget for weekly spending and ensure all utilities bills and bins costs are covered.



Don't ignore it – it won't go away. If you are struggling financially, contact the rents section immediately.



Honesty is the best policy – be open and honest at all times with representatives of Meath County Council. If you are struggling we will do our best to help.

Preparing to Move

Organisations you may need to notify:

- Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
- Tax Office
- Schools
- Bank, Credit Union etc.
- An Post (re-direct post to new address)
- Motor Tax Office / NDLS (National Driver Licence Service)
- Insurance Company
- Doctor/Dentist
- Health Care Provider

Managing Your Bills – Help is Available

MABS

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) is a free and confidential service for people who are having problems with money management and debt. MABS money advisers will provide you with advice and practical help on how to manage your bills and will work with you to find solutions if you are finding it difficult to stay in control of your finances.

There are various bill payment services which you can avail of such as Household Budget Scheme, Direct Debit, BillPay etc.

MABS will offer you advice on how to:

- Organise your bills.
- Make a budget to pay your bills.
- Pay your bills at regular times both weekly and monthly using bill payment services.

Rent and Rent Assessment



SECTION 4

Rent Section
046 9097450

Rent and Rent Assessment

When you sign a Tenancy Agreement with Meath County Council, you make a legal commitment to pay rent on a weekly basis. All household income is assessable for the purposes of determining the amount of rent; this means that the income of each person living in the house must be declared. The person in the household with the highest net income is considered to be the Principal Income Earner whether he/she is the tenant or not. If there are Subsidiary Income Earners, the rent is increased accordingly. The Rents Department located in Buvinda House, Dublin Road, Navan will assess your rent and deal with any queries you may have about your account, methods of payment, arrears or evictions.

Paying Your Rent

There are a number of ways of paying your rent, the most convenient options are by Household Budget or Standing Order, both are easy to set up and are a stress-free way of paying your rent.

Paying by Household Budget

You can pay your rent by Household Budget if you collect a social welfare payment in the Post Office. This is a very easy way to pay your rent as the rent payment comes directly from your social welfare payment every week.

The scheme is operated by An Post and is free of charge. In order to qualify for the scheme, you must be paid through your local post office. If the amount you pay needs to be altered, it can take a number of weeks for adjustments to be done.

Paying by Standing Order

Standing Order is an ideal way of paying your rent if your income from employment or social welfare is paid into your bank account. To set up a standing order, you must complete a form giving authorisation to have the rent deducted from your bank account on a weekly basis. Paying your rent in this way will save you time and you won't have to worry about remembering to pay.

Always ensure there is enough money in your bank account or the deduction cannot be made. If this happens, you will need to pay your rent using your Meath County Council payment card or use an alternative payment method. If your rent isn't paid, you will accumulate rent arrears.

Your rent will be reviewed on an annual basis and it may be altered – the Rent Section will inform you if there is a change and will remind you to contact the bank and have the deduction altered.



*Contact the Rent Section to request a **Household Budget Form** or a **Standing Order Form***

Other Payment Methods

- Direct Debit: This is a monthly payment and must be approved by the Rent Section.
- Online Payment: This can be arranged by contacting the Rent Section.
- Customer Service Payment: You can make a payment in person at the Cash Desk in Buvinda House or at the Councils Municipal District offices. You can also pay over the phone by telephoning the Cash Desk on 046 9097468.
- Salary Deduction: This payment method is only possible in some cases. Contact the Rent Section for more information.
- Meath County Council Payment Card: This can be used at the Post Office or at Payzone outlets.

Statement of Account

You will be issued with a rent account statement twice a year. You can also request a statement at any time during the year if you need one. It is recommended you keep receipts and bank statements as a record of your payments.

Your statement will include the following information:

- Your name, address and rent account number.
- Details of your rent account and whether it is up-to-date, in credit or in arrears
- If your rent account is up-to-date, your statement will show a balance of zero (0)
- If your balance shows a minus sign (-), this means your account is in credit.
- If your rent account does not have a minus sign (-), this means your account is in arrears and payment is overdue.

Calculating Your Rent

Your rent is calculated using the Meath County Council's Differential Rent Scheme. This means the amount you pay is based on the total household income. It is calculated in such a way that the amount you pay is reasonable and will not lead to financial difficulties.

Annual Rent Review Form

Every year you will receive a Rent Review Form requesting details of all persons living in your house and their incomes if they have any. It is a condition of your tenancy that you furnish Meath County Council with up-to date income details at all times.

If there is a change to the household, don't wait to receive the Annual Rent Review Form, contact the Rent Section immediately.

What should I do if circumstances within my household change?

It is a condition of your tenancy agreement that you must inform Meath County Council immediately of any change in circumstance which takes place within the household. A new rent assessment will be carried out and your rent will be adjusted accordingly.

Changes which may occur:

- A person in your household gets a job.
- A person in your household becomes unemployed.
- A person with an income is granted permission to reside at the property by the Housing Authority.
- A person in the household starts claiming social welfare or their benefits are changed or cancelled.
- There is a death in the household.
- There is a birth in the household.
- A person in the household leaves home or reaches 18.



Contact the Rent Section immediately. Failure to do so may result in penalties.

What happens if I don't tell the council about a change in circumstances?

When Meath County Council finds out about changes, your rent will be re-assessed and your rent will be backdated to the date of the change. Depending on the nature of the change, you could owe a substantial amount of back rent known as arrears and the Council will pursue you for those arrears.

What happens if I miss a payment?

Failure to pay your rent will not be tolerated. When you sign a tenancy agreement you make a legal commitment to pay rent on a weekly basis and in advance. Meath County Council recommend paying by Standing Order or by Household Budget which ensures your rent is paid weekly. If for some reason you do miss a payment, contact the Rent Section immediately and explain why the payment was missed and when a further payment will be made. If you are experiencing some difficulty paying your rent, the Rent Section will discuss with you how best to resolve.



If you do fall into arrears the sooner you tackle the problem the better.

What happens if I miss more than one payment and my Rent Account is in arrears?

Meath County Council will take immediate action if you fail to pay your rent. You will be contacted by the Rent Section either by phone or in writing. If you fail to respond to correspondence, a member of the Tenant Liaison Team may call to see you and you will be advised to make arrangements to have regular payments deducted by Standing Order or Household Budget. You will be advised to repay the arrears as quickly as possible and the Rent Section will monitor this closely.

What happens if I don't stick to the payment plan and rent arrears continue to accumulate?

Rent arrears should never be ignored, if you are having financial difficulties you must inform the Rent Section who are there to help you. However, if you fail to engage with the Rent Section and make no effort to address arrears, Meath County Council will serve a Tenancy Warning Notice and will proceed to court seeking to evict you and take possession of the property.



Don't ignore rent arrears or any other debts you may have – they don't go away. The earlier you deal with debts the better. If you are having difficulty managing your money, contact your local Money Advice & Budgeting Service (MABS), who offer free and confidential advice.

What if I have difficulty paying my rent?

The way in which your rent is calculated means that you should be able to afford your weekly rent. Failure to pay your rent is considered a serious breach of your tenancy agreement and may result in legal action.

If for any reason you are unable to pay your rent, contact the Rent Section of Meath County Council immediately. It is much better that you address any financial difficulties immediately and avoid allowing your rent account fall into arrears.

Maintenance and Repairs



SECTION 5

Maintenance and Repairs to your Home

You the tenant and Meath County Council as your landlord, have different responsibilities in relation to maintenance and repairs to the property. Meath County Council is responsible for structural repairs and maintenance issues such as electrical, plumbing and heating. Where there is wilful or malicious damage to the property, the costs will be charged to the tenant.

You as the tenant are responsible for non-structural repairs such as all internal decorations, windows, doors and floors etc. The property must be maintained in a clean condition and good state of repair. You must ensure that all repairs for which you are responsible for are carried out without delay and to the satisfaction of Meath County Council. You are also responsible for ensuring the plot including the garden and hedges are well maintained and regularly cut back.

Customer Service
046 9097000

What you need to know:

Who is responsible for repairs to my house?

Both Meath County Council as your landlord and you as the tenant have different responsibilities, some of these are set out in the tenancy agreement. Basically, the Council is responsible for structural and maintenance repairs, you are responsible for internal decoration, fixtures, fittings etc. (*See Service Level Agreement for Housing Maintenance document - Appendix 2*).

What are structural repairs?

Structural repairs include repairs to the basic fabric of the house such as:

- Roof, walls, floors, window frames (not glass), external doors, fascias/soffits.

Do I have to pay for structural repairs?

No, provided the defect is through normal wear and tear and not willful or malicious damage. If you damage the property wilfully or through neglect, you will have to pay the cost of repairs.

What do I do if I have a problem with my main services such as electric supply, heating system or plumbing?

These are considered maintenance issues and must be reported to Meath County Council. A technical staff member will decide how the problem should be addressed. Never attempt to fix the problem yourself or employ a contractor to carry out repairs. All work has to be approved by Meath County Council and certified by a recognised contractor.

Any work that is not authorised by Meath County Council will have to be undone and you will have to pay the cost.

[What is the Service Level Agreement for Housing Maintenance document?](#)

This is a document which clearly outlines your responsibilities as the tenant and Meath County Council's as your landlord. If you are unsure who is responsible for carrying out a repair, check the document. If the issue is not listed, contact Meath County Council (Appendix 2).

Reporting Repairs

[How to report a problem](#)

If there is a problem and something in your home needs to be repaired, you must contact Meath County Council Customer Service representatives and report the problem. A technical person will contact you and decide how urgent the problem is and when it can be fixed.

Repairs fall under three categories and are prioritised according to how serious the problem is. Meath County Council will respond to maintenance issues and/or requests submitted by the Tenant within the following time frames:

High Priority	Within 24 hours
Medium Priority	Within 3 working days
Low Priority	Within 12 weeks

Remember, always give your contact number when reporting a problem – the contractor will need to be able to contact you!

For further information, refer to Service Level Agreement for Housing Maintenance document.

You must allow all reasonable access to Meath County Council staff to inspect the property and carry out repairs. Always ask for identification!

[Can I erect a shed if there isn't an existing one or I want a larger shed?](#)

No, you are not permitted to erect a shed, wall or any other building. Basically, you are not permitted to carry out any additions, alterations or improvement works without first applying to Meath County Council for permission. If you proceed without permission, you will be asked to undo the work and you will have to pay the costs.

[Can I work from home if required by my employer?](#)

Yes, in some circumstances you are permitted to work from home. You will be required to show evidence from your employer before permission is granted. Meath County Council reserves the right to refuse permission if the documentation submitted is not satisfactory.

Can I run a business from the house?

No, the house can only be used for dwelling purposes and can not be used for business purposes such as a shop, garage, hair salon etc. Under no circumstances are you permitted to run a business from your home or erect any sort of trading-signs or advertise a business from the dwelling. You are not permitted to store items relating to a business at the property including materials or vehicles such as vans, trucks, lorries etc.

If I get approval from Meath County Council to carry out structural changes to the house, am I entitled to funding or compensation if I leave?

No, if you get approval from Meath County Council to carry out changes, you are responsible for the costs. If you move, all changes stay with the house and you will not be compensated in any way. You should consider this carefully before applying to carry out work.

Who is responsible for cleaning the chimney?

You are responsible for cleaning chimneys on a regular basis. If there is an open fire or stove at the property, you must always ensure to use the correct type of fuel as inappropriate fuel or materials can damage the chimney or stove. Only approved coal or kiln dried wood is permitted in stoves.

Who is responsible for cleaning the gutters, soffit and fascia?

The tenant is responsible for cleaning gutters, soffit and fascia. It is recommended that this is done at least once a year and twice if necessary.

Who checks the water levels in the roof tank?

You are responsible for checking there is adequate water in the roof tanks, if you go on holiday or leave the property for a number of weeks, make sure you turn the water off at the main so as to minimise damage in the event of a burst pipe.

Am I allowed to erect an aerial or dish?

Yes, provided you apply to Meath County Council and permission is granted. An aerial or dish must never be erected on the roof, chimney or front of the house. An aerial or dish must be affixed to the rear of the house only.

Can bottled gas be stored at the property?

Bottled gas or any type of flammable material such as white spirits must be stored outside the property whether you live in a house or flat complex where there are multiple units. Bottled gas poses a real risk and should never be stored in the stairwell of a flat complex or indeed any part of the building.

Can I keep a caravan, campervan or mobile home at the property?

You are not permitted to keep any of the following vehicles at the property - caravans, campervans, mobile homes or any other type of vehicle deemed to be unroadworthy and not displaying a tax, NCT or insurance disc must be removed from the property and disposed of in the correct manner.

Your Responsibilities – Maintenance & Repairs

If you or any member of the household including children, damage any part of the property, you are responsible for the repairs. This includes damage to the structure, installations, fixtures and fittings. It also includes damage to the exterior of the house and the plot. Repairs will be carried out by Meath County Council and you will have to pay the cost.

You are responsible for the upkeep to the property both internally and externally, always keep it in good condition. An inspection can be carried out at any time by a representative of Meath County Council.

What you must do:

- Keep the inside of the house clean and well maintained, you are responsible for decorating and painting. Don't hang clothes from windows, balconies or fences etc.
- Maintain and keep the garden area associated with the property in good condition.
- You are responsible for weeding, cutting the grass and trimming the hedges regularly.
- You must ensure fire alarms and carbon monoxide alarms are working at all times (replace batteries when necessary or contact Meath County Council if an alarm is defective).
- Maintain and repair all fixtures, fittings and replace glass in windows and doors if broken.
- Prevent condensation by keeping a suitable level of heat and ventilation in the house.
- Prevent pipes from freezing or bursting by keeping a suitable level of heat in the house.
- Always pay your rent on time to ensure low level maintenance/repair work is carried out by Meath County Council.
- Take all necessary action when dealing with vermin control and always ensure household waste and bulk waste is disposed of appropriately. If you have an issue with vermin either at the property or in the general vicinity, it is the responsibility of the tenant and residents to deal with the issue. Meath County Council are not responsible for vermin control.
- Take action to prevent drains becoming blocked.
 - The Tenant is responsible for preventing drains becoming blocked and for clearing blockages when they occur. This includes:
 - all internal drains (to sinks, basins, baths, toilets, etc);
 - external drains from the dwelling to the public sewer or on-site septic tank/treatment system;
 - roof gutters and down pipes.

To help reduce the likelihood of blockages, fats, oils, and greases (FOG) should not be disposed down the drains. Similarly, no sanitary products (other than toilet paper) should be flushed down the toilet. Appendix 3 gives guidelines on what should not be flushed down the toilet.

For further information, refer to the Service Level Agreement for Housing Maintenance document.

To prevent condensation, which can lead to mould growth, the following is advised (further details are available in Appendix 1):

DO:

- ✓ Keep a suitable level of heat in the whole property;
- ✓ Keep the property well ventilated;
- ✓ Regularly air the whole property by opening windows;
- ✓ Wipe away condensation that can build up on windows and bathroom surfaces (particularly in bedrooms each morning and bathrooms after a bath or shower);
- ✓ Use the extractor fan at maximum when cooking and open windows during/after cooking where required;
- ✓ Use the bathroom extractor fan during a bath or shower;
- ✓ Open the bathroom window after (and ideally during) a bath/shower to fully air the room.

DON'T:

- ❖ Block up vents or close trickle vents on windows;
- ❖ Dry clothes indoors. If unavoidable use a clothes horse in a well-ventilated room. Never dry clothes on a radiator;
- ❖ Place large furniture tightly against a wall as this can restrict air circulation, leading to mould growth.

Repairs and Maintenance - Meath County Council's responsibilities

- Repair the structure and outside of the property including drains, gutters and external pipes.
- Maintain and repair footpaths, driveways and entrances.
- Maintain and repair windows and doors damaged by normal wear and tear.
- Maintain and repair main services such as electricity, heating and water supply, plumbing and drainage.

(Works or alterations that may be exempted from Planning still require prior written approval of Meath County Council).

You are NOT permitted to make any alterations to the plumbing, electrical or heating services at the property.

Air to water heating systems are very complex, do not interfere with the system in any way. Access to the attic space is restricted in properties housing this system.

Attic conversions are not permitted under any circumstances in any Meath County Council properties.

For further information in relation to maintenance and repairs, please refer to Service Level Agreement for Housing Maintenance document.

Making changes and alterations

Get permission first.

We understand that you may want to make changes to your home when you have been living there for a period of time. Everybody has their own individual taste and you may want to make alterations that are more suited to you.

Before you make any changes or alterations to the property or plot you must first put your request in writing. Meath County Council will ensure the alterations are safe and don't detract from the property or the estate. An inspection will be carried out and you will receive a written response.

Applying for permission to carry out alterations to the property – What you must do!

- Write to Meath County Council, Housing Section and give details of the changes you wish to make.
- You will be contacted by a representative of Meath County Council who may wish to arrange an inspection of the property and discuss further the proposed alterations.
- You will then receive confirmation in writing from the Housing Section advising you if the alteration has been authorised or not.
- Do not carry out alterations without permission, the work will have to be undone and you will have to pay the costs. Attic conversions are not permitted under any circumstances.

Disposing of Waste

Household waste can accumulate very rapidly so it is essential that bins are in place from the time you move into your new home. It is essential that you register with a recognised waste collection company and organise regular collection of bins. Ensure you have 3 bins (domestic, recycling, compost) in place and separate your waste accordingly.

Always recycle where possible!

Household waste must be disposed of on a regular basis and in the proper manner. Separating your waste will ensure your bin charges are kept to a minimum. Always place items in the correct bin, you will save yourself money and you will also be doing your part for the environment.

You are responsible for any waste that accumulates at the property including in the garden. Use of the garden as a dumping ground for items such as refuse sacks containing rubbish or items of furniture will not be tolerated.

Useful Contact Numbers	
OXIGEN Environmental	042 9330789
Panda Waste	046 9024111
AES Environmental	1890 650655 or 045 580060
Allied Recycling	1890 255433
Mahon Waste	046 9481488
Kells Recycling Centre	046 9293436
Navan Recycling Centre	046 9066170
Trim Recycling Centre	046 9486775
Thorntons Recycling Facility Dunboyne	01 6235133

Safety in Your Home

Section 6: Safety in Your Home



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

SECTION 6

Safety in your Home

Fire Safety

Every fire has a cause and most often, there's a common sense, simple method of prevention. Careless attention to or use of cigarettes, lighters and matches, smoking, electricity, fireplaces, heaters, candles and cooking equipment are leading causes of fire-death and injury.

The best way to prevent a fire is to keep fuel sources away from potential heat sources. With that in mind, look around your home to spot any possible fire hazards. Do not allow rubbish to build up in your living room or anywhere else inside your home as this will act as fuel in the event of a fire.

The three Golden Rules to follow to make sure that you and your family are safe from fire are:

- **Prevention:** The best way to be "fire safe" is to make sure that fires never happen.
- **Detection:** A fire alarm that works will give you time to get everyone out of the house.
- **Evacuation:** Help very young, old or sick people to leave the house. Get out and stay out.

Prevention is the key but in the knowledge that all fires will not be prevented, it is essential every household have an effective system to detect fire outbreak at an early stage, make safe evacuation a simple task.

Detection is essential so make sure smoke alarms are installed, maintained and regularly checked to ensure early warning. By having a smoke alarm which is mains operated with battery back-up or a "long life" alarm, you will have early warning devices which give you time to act before you and your family are overcome by dangerous fumes and smoke.

Evacuation - Often, when a fire breaks out, confusion and errors follow. If you have a well-practised fire drill you will be better able to deal with an emergency situation.

A rehearsed fire escape drill can make all the difference:

- Family members should plan two escape routes to get out of the house;
- Decide one meeting point outside the house;
- Close all doors behind you as you leave;
- The stairs are the primary escape route – keep them clear;
- Do not re-enter the house for any reason;
- Phone the fire brigade from outside the house.

Smoke alarms are a family's indication of a fire. But once that alarm sounds, a fire can spread quickly, leaving only a minute or two to escape. That's why it's so important to have a plan and practice it.

Gas Safety

Meath County Council will service gas central heating boilers and any other gas appliances on a regular basis. If your heating system is not working, contact Meath County Council. It is illegal for anybody other than a Registered Gas Installer to service your boiler.

If you smell gas, contact Bord Gáis immediately (even if your supplier is Airtricity or Electric Ireland).

**Bord Gáis Emergency Number
1850 205050**

- You should never attempt to alter, repair or service the boiler or heating system.
- You are not permitted to store gas cylinders in the property for safety reasons.
- Always switch off cylinders at the regulator when they are not in use.

Alarms

Ensure all alarms installed in the property are working including, smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms and heat detecting alarms. It is your responsibility to carry out regular checks to ensure alarms are working. It is recommended that alarms are tested every week, this can be done by pressing and holding the test button until the alarm sounds.

Electrical Safety

Never interfere with the electrical system in your home, if there is a problem or you wish to make a change such as, installing an electric shower, contact Housing Maintenance.

- Unplug any appliances that are not in use.
- Don't overload sockets or have trailing extension leads. Don't put nails or fittings in a wall near a socket, switch or light fitting as there may be electrical wires behind the plaster.
- Don't under any circumstances run power cables from the house to an external building.
- Never carry out electrical alterations or improvements to the property.



All electrical work must be carried out by a Registered Electrical Contractor (REC) who will issue a Completion Certificate for all electrical works.

Building Communities and Combating Anti-Social Behaviour



SECTION 7

Building Communities and Combating Anti-Social Behaviour

When you are allocated a house by Meath County Council, it is important to recognise that you become more than just a tenant, you also become a member of the community in which you live, with responsibilities as well as rights. Residents will have invested time and energy in maintaining the estate and it is important to respect the efforts of residents and to support any developments which further enhance the estate.

You can start by ensuring your home is well maintained and gradually, it is likely you will become more involved in the community as a whole and will become increasingly conscious of the general up-keep of the estate. By taking pride in the estate and establishing good relations with your neighbours, you will be doing your part to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour.

You are responsible for your home and ensuring that all other occupants of the property including children and any visitors to your home do not damage your neighbours' property or cause nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to your neighbours. Meath County Council takes incidents of antisocial behaviour very seriously and will not tolerate behaviour which adversely affects its residents and estates.

What you can do to ensure good relations with your neighbours

Having a good relationship with your neighbours is very important and will add to your quality of life and benefit the community in general. Be mindful of the following and consider your neighbours and their right to the peaceful enjoyment of their home:

- Always respect your neighbours right to peace, don't make noise or play loud music especially late at night.
- Keep the property tidy and don't hang clothes to the front of the house or on balconies.
- Ensure your bins are collected on a regular basis and under no circumstances, allow household waste or any type of rubbish to accumulate at the property (always ensure skips are collected without delay).
- Do not keep vehicles which are not in use on a public road at the property, they are considered abandoned and should be disposed of in the correct manner.
- Maintain your garden and boundary fence, cut grass and foliage on a regular basis.
- You are responsible for your pet, ensure it doesn't become a nuisance to your neighbours.
- Always be respectful to your neighbours and do not engage in behaviour that offends or upsets others.
- Do not get involved in disputes between children which are soon forgotten. Parents getting involved only further exasperates matters and can lead to bad relations between neighbours.

Having a good relationship with your neighbours will benefit both you and your family. It will also benefit the community in general – always consider the impact your behaviour might have on your neighbour and ask yourself: -

“what kind of behaviours lead to good relations with my neighbours?”

Consider the following:

- Is my property well maintained?
- Do I put my bins out for collection when required?
- Do I cut the grass on a regular basis?
- Is the television/radio/music system too loud, will it disturb my neighbours?
- Is my car parked in such a way that it doesn't obstruct others?
- Do I behave in such a way that negatively affects both my family and neighbours?

Don't allow minor issues come between you and your neighbour, think before you act!

How do I broach the subject with my neighbour while ensuring we remain on good terms?

What should I do if I have an issue with my neighbour?

Most people are reasonable and disputes between neighbours can often be resolved without the intervention of Meath County Council. We would always encourage discussion and mediation if necessary when trying to resolve problems. Depending on the issue, you may be able to seek support through the Residents Association if there is one.

What happens if the issue persists and can't be resolved through discussion?

Meath County Council will investigate all complaints. You will be asked to complete a "Housing Investigation Incident Report Form" and you will be expected to provide specific information including dates, times and a comprehensive outline of the issue or incident. If a complaint is found to be malicious, vexatious or trivial, Meath County Council will cease its investigation immediately.

Are tenants made aware of their responsibilities before being allocated a property?

Yes, Meath County Council organises pre-tenancy training for all prospective tenants which they must attend. Tenant responsibilities are clearly outlined at the training and all tenants must sign a standard letting conditions lease which contains specific clauses prohibiting tenants from engaging in anti-social behaviour.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Meath County Council recognises the adverse effect anti-social behaviour can have on the quality of life of Council tenants, their families and on communities in general.

We take anti-social behaviour very seriously and will not tolerate it in any form.

Early intervention is essential to tackling ASB and in order to deal with issues, we rely on you to provide accurate information including details of the incident, the date and time it occurred and who was involved.

You will be asked to complete and submit an Incident Report Form which is available for download, on Meath County Council's website. Alternatively, you can write to Meath County Council and provide the necessary information.

ABS Conduct

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is any action that can cause nuisance or annoyance to a person. ASB can impact on some people more than others so each case is dealt with individually. Behaviour which constitutes ASB includes:

- Threats and actual violence;
- Verbal abuse, intimidation and harassment;
- Drug use or dealing;
- Nuisance or dangerous dogs;
- Rowdy or drunken behaviour;
- Gangs or group disorder;
- Domestic abuse;
- Noise nuisance;
- Environmental anti-social behaviour.

What should I do if I witness or experience ASB?

Serious incidents of ASB should be reported to An Garda Síochána immediately. You should also contact Meath County Council and provide accurate information including:

- Exact time and date of incident;
- The location;
- What happened and who was involved (names and addresses required);
- If the incident was reported to Gardai;
- When and if the Gardai responded;

- Name of Gardai who attended the incident;
- What action was taken by Gardai.

You should complete a Housing Investigation Incident Report Form and forward to Meath County Council. The information you provide will be treated as confidential and will not be shared with a third party.

How does Meath County Council deal with complaints of anti-social behaviour?

Meath County Council's Tenant Liaison Team will investigate complaints provided enough accurate information is given. If the complaint is found to be malicious or trivial, no further action will be taken. Where a complaint is found to be substantiated, Tenant Liaison Officers will speak to the person involved and take the appropriate action which may include issuing Warning Notices either Verbal or Written. In cases of extreme anti-social behaviour, Tenant Liaison Officers will liaise with An Garda Síochána if necessary and the perpetrator may be issued with a statutory Warning Notice which in turn may lead to court action and eviction.

Residents Associations - Your Involvement



SECTION 8

Residents' Association – Your Involvement

A Residents' Association is a group of people within an estate who meet on a regular basis to promote and enhance the living environment of the area and to discuss matters relating to their estate. The association also represents all members of the estate in working closely with the Local Authority and other agencies.

How is a Residents' Association established?

All it takes is a few interested residents to get started. The group will meet and decide on a date and venue for all residents of the estate to meet and elect a committee. A Residents' Association must have an elected committee and a constitution or framework on which it works. A committee will normally comprise of a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. The role of the committee is to guide the residents and carry out business of the association.

What are the benefits of starting a Residents' Association?

Forming a Residents' Association has many benefits. The following are some activities that can benefit your estate and its residents:

- Working together to maintain/improve communal areas.
- Organising clean ups.
- Organising social events for adults and children i.e. sporting events and barbecues.
- Representing residents of the estate on matters affecting them.
- Working with Meath County Council staff on matters that affect residents.
- Traffic calming measures.
- Setting up Neighbourhood Watch Schemes.

What if I do not wish to be part of the Resident's Association?

You are not obliged to join the Resident's Association. However, all residents should contribute to the up-keep of the estate by paying annual fees and should not oppose decisions made by the Residents' Association that benefit the estate and its residents.

Are there grants available to the Residents' Association?

Yes, first you must register with Meath Public Participation Network (PPN). Meath PPN is a network to bring community groups together in Meath. You can find more information on the PPN at www.meathppn.ie.

When registering, log on to www.meathppn.ie/join-now or contact the **PPN Resource Officer at 046 9097407**.

Grant schemes are advertised in local newspapers, Meath County Council's social media accounts and through the PPN website www.meathppn.ie/grants.

You can apply for assistance with general maintenance costs and projects that will benefit your community such as grass cutting or planting of public spaces, purchase of equipment such as lawn mowers and assistance with costs for family fun days.

The Resident's Association must have a valid BIC & IBAN led current Bank or Credit Union account in the name of the association to which the approved grant aid will be paid.

**PPN Resource Officer
046 9097407**

Transfers and Surrender of Tenancy



SECTION 9

Transfers and Surrender of Tenancy

Transfers

Tenants who wish to move to another home can apply for a transfer. In order for a transfer to be considered, in accordance with Meath County Council's Housing Allocations Scheme, there must be a material change in the household's housing need which can be demonstrated.

This change in need should not have been a factor in the first allocation of housing support to justify a transfer.

Transfers will not be considered within two years of an allocation of housing support.

Under what circumstance will a transfer be considered?

Meath County Council tenants will be considered for a transfer to other Council dwellings under the following circumstances:

- Overcrowding;
- Where elderly and other small households wish to surrender family type accommodation and move to smaller accommodation;
- Medical/compassionate reasons;
- Exceptional circumstances.

As well as the above, tenants seeking a transfer must fulfil the following requirements to the satisfaction of the housing authority: -

- Hold tenancy in their present dwelling for a period of at least two years.
- Have a clear rent account for at least six months (tenants who have arrears will not be eligible for transfer).
- Have all service and other charges paid up to date and confirmation of same submitted with application. i.e. receipts for water, power supply, fuel (gas/oil).
- Have kept their dwelling in satisfactory condition.
- Have complied with all conditions of their Letting Agreement, and;
- Have no record of anti-social behaviour.



Transfers are dependent on vacancies arising in your area of choice. If you are successful in your application for a transfer, it may be a number of years before a suitable property becomes available.

Mutual Transfers

This is where two households make an application to Meath County Council to swap dwellings. The transfer must be like for like (tenure, property type etc.) and the housing unit must be appropriate to the housing needs of both parties with no cost to the Local Authority for maintenance to both properties. Each Tenant must agree in writing to accept the other house in its present condition and no repairs will be considered for the first year following the granting of the transfer.

It will be the responsibility of the Tenant to find a suitable exchange as Meath County Council does not maintain a waiting list for Mutual Transfers.

Applications for inter transfer between a Council tenant and another Housing Authority tenant are subject to the approval of both Meath County Council and the other Local Authority. Applications for inter transfer between a Meath County Council tenant and an Approved Voluntary Housing Association tenant are subject to the approval of both the Council and the Association.

If you are considering a mutual transfer, you should contact your Housing Officer for more advice and find out what the conditions and requirements are. Approval must be granted by the Housing Officer before a Mutual Transfer can take place.

Surrendering your Tenancy

If you intend leaving, contact your Housing Officer immediately. Tenants who wish to move out of their Meath County Council property must give four weeks' notice in writing to the Council. If the required notice is not given, you will have to pay rent up until the date you leave the property. You will be asked to sign a 'Surrender of Interest' document and ensure all rent is paid up-to-date. If there are arrears on the account, you will be expected to enter into a payment plan and ensure all arrears are cleared. If arrears are not cleared, it may lead to legal action being taken against you and/or you may not be eligible to apply for a housing need in the future.

You must ensure the house is in good condition and all belongings including furniture are removed from the property. An inspection of the property will be carried out by a representative from Meath County Council before surrender documents are signed and keys returned.

Vacant Properties – Let us know.

If there is a vacant property in your estate, please don't assume we know. Vacant properties can become a target of antisocial behaviour so please contact Meath County Council as soon as possible and let us know. The sooner we find out about vacant properties, the sooner we can arrange to have them re-let.

If you suspect a property is vacant please report it.

If you see people interfering with a Meath County Council property that you know is vacant, please let us know to avoid any damage or possible danger.

Abandonment of Property

If you are away from your home for more than six weeks in any fifty-two-week period, we may consider your property abandoned by you. If after making all reasonable efforts to contact you, we are satisfied that the property is abandoned, we have the right to repossess the property and secure it by changing the locks and boarding up the property if necessary. Any items remaining in the property will only be stored for a maximum period of two months. If we cannot contact you or you don't remove your belongings within this period of time, all items will be disposed of.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1

A Guide to Condensation

What is condensation?

Condensation is by far the most common cause of dampness in buildings, probably accounting for most dampness problems reported. It affects both old and new properties.

Condensation is directly associated with mould growth and it is this that the occupier first sees and gives an idea as to the potential scale of the problem. The mould is usually found on decorative surfaces. The mould and its spores cause the 'musty' odour frequently associated with a damp house.

The obvious places for condensation to occur are on cold walls and floors but sometimes it can occur in roof spaces. Timber in roof spaces can become susceptible to damage by dry rot or wet rot.

While condensation is obvious when it occurs on impermeable surfaces – most commonly window glass, cold water pipes and ceramic tiles – it will also form on any surface which is at, or lower than, dew point.

The presence of condensation on more absorbent surfaces (such as paint, plaster, wallpaper) becomes obvious when disruption, damage or mould growth forms on that surface.

Mould growth is a typical sign of chronic condensation and occurs as spores which are always present in the air. Mould is a health risk to asthmatics, anyone with other respiratory conditions, the very young and elderly people. The high humidity levels associated with condensation also allows dust mites to flourish. The droppings from these microscopic creatures as well as spores can cause allergic reactions which are also linked to the onset of asthma.

What is the main cause of condensation?

It is a fact that warm air can hold more water as vapour than cool air. So, quite simply, condensation is caused when moisture-laden air comes in contact with a cold surface – the air is cooled to a point where it can no longer hold its burden of water vapour. At this point, (DEWPOINT), water begins to drop out of the air, and is seen as condensation on surfaces. On impervious surfaces such as glass and paint, beads or a film of water collect, but on permeable surfaces such as wallpaper or porous plaster the condensing water is absorbed into the material. Therefore, the problem is initially not obvious.

If you do not take steps to reduce condensation it can lead to some of the problems associated with damp such as mould on walls and furniture. Damp housing encourages the risk of mould.

What is the main cause of condensation?

Double glazing and improved insulation mean we have warmer homes, but unless a property is adequately ventilated it can become damp.

We ask all tenants to ensure that our properties are sufficiently ventilated by taking a few precautions stated below in order to avoid condensation and the build-up of damp.

All Rooms	Never block up vents
Bedrooms	Ensure trickle vents are always left open. If required, wipe the condensation off windows first thing in the morning, but please do not put the cloth you used on the radiator to dry as this will only create more condensation
Shower/Bathrooms	Ensure full use of extractor fans. Wipe windows, walls and mirrors to remove condensation (a microfibre cloth is the most efficient means of doing this) and dry the shower tray or bath. Keep the door closed while the bathroom is in use to prevent the steam escaping to other parts of the house
Living Area	If a wall appears to be damp, do not put furniture up against it; allow some circulation behind furniture
General	Make sure that ventilation bricks or openings in the building are not obstructed
Windows	Keep glass clear of condensation as much as you can. Wipe away any moisture that has formed using a soft cloth. Leave open any 'trickle' vents in double glazed units. Get into the habit of opening windows to keep the moisture content of the air down and to air the property whenever you can
Laundry	Never dry clothes on radiators. Avoid drying clothes inside the house. Tumble driers should be vented to the outside or fitted with a condenser
Heating	Provide a reasonable level of heating (no less than 10 degrees Celsius in unused areas and 16 degrees Celsius in areas in use). Cold rooms are susceptible to condensation. Remember the best way to heat a room and avoid condensation is to maintain a low level of warmth throughout the day, rather than to turn the heating off while you are out and put it on to a high level when you get home

Remedies

Mildew may be removed from clothes by using a dry-cleaning process.

Remove and kill mould from surfaces by wiping the affected area(s) with a fungicide precisely following the manufacturer's instructions. Alternatively, a mild bleach solution will have the desired effect, but do test a small area first. If redecorating after mould removal, apply a stain block to the affected area prior to painting.

Remember!



It's cheaper to reduce the production of condensation than compensate for it by turning up the heating.

In Habitable Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Air the house a couple of times a day by opening windows.• Do not turn heating off completely in rooms which are not in use.• Do not place large items of furniture completely up against external walls; the air in the room must be allowed to circulate behind them to prevent the formation of mould spots on the wall.• Never block up wall vents.
In Bedrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Air the room and make sure the bedding is aired every morning.• Turn the mattress occasionally.• Don't leave bedrooms completely unheated.• If the windows steam up, ensure better ventilation to the external air or to other rooms in the house.• Never block up room vents.
In the Kitchen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Never block or close vents.• Use extractor fan at maximum when cooking.• Putting lids on pans during cooking limits the amount of moisture when cooking.• Open windows during and after cooking.
Laundry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Never block up vents.• Use extractor fans during showering/bathing. Never turn off humidistat- controlled fans.• Avoid drying clothes within the house. If this cannot be avoided, ensure ample ventilation.• Air rooms after showering/bathing.

APPENDIX 2

Service Level Agreement for Housing Maintenance

This Agreement represents a Service Level Agreement (“SLA” or “Agreement”) between Meath County Council and Social Housing Tenants for the provision of Housing Maintenance services.

The agreement applies to residential properties which are owned and managed by Meath County Council. The leaflet aims to clearly outline the responsibilities of both you as a tenant and of Meath County Council as your landlord.

This agreement covers the following types of Maintenance;

1. Response Maintenance; this type of maintenance is usually a one-off maintenance or repair request and is sub-divided into High, Medium or Low Priority, e.g. electrical faults, plumbing repairs etc.
2. Preventative Maintenance; this type of maintenance is generally concerned with servicing, repairs or with large structural maintenance and is often carried out on an estate-wide basis, e.g. boiler servicing, window and door replacement etc.

Tenant Responsibilities and Requirements

Tenant responsibilities and/or requirements in support of this Agreement include:

- Tenants must provide a contact number which may be issued to any contractor who will carry out the work.
- Tenants must cooperate with the appointed contractors carrying out the work.
- The tenant or adult representative(s) must be available to allow maintenance to the property.
- Tenant is responsible for the removal of any carpets, laminates or wood flooring to enable the works to be completed if necessary.
- Completion by the tenant of any maintenance issue deemed to be their responsibility as outlined in this leaflet.

General Tenant Responsibilities/Requirements

- Keeping the inside of the house clean and well decorated.
- Tenants are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of any garden area associated with the property. Grass to be cut and kept weed free. Hedges to be trimmed regularly.
- Advise Meath County Council if smoke alarms or carbon monoxide alarms are defective or require replacing (other than simple battery replacement, which is the tenant’s responsibility).
- Taking action to prevent waste pipes (from sinks, baths or toilets) or drains becoming blocked.

- Repairing and maintaining any fixture, fitting or appliance, including washing machines dishwashers and tumble dryers provided by the tenant.
- Taking action to prevent and control condensation by keeping a suitable level of heat and ventilation in the house.
- Taking action to prevent pipes from freezing or bursting, by keeping a suitable level of heat in the house.
- Making sure that no-one who lives in or visits the house causes any damage.
- Payment of rent on time to avoid the possibility of the Council refusing to carry out Low Priority Maintenance or Preventative Maintenance.
- The tenant will be responsible for the costs incurred for any repairs which are carried out by the Council and are deemed to be the tenant's responsibility.
- The Tenant assumes responsibility for maintenance and repairs to the property or a non-structural nature and maintenance and repairs not caused by normal wear and tear on the signing of the tenancy agreement.
- The Tenant is responsible for minimising damage to the property pending repair work being carried out.
- Tenants must familiarise themselves with the location of turn-off valves on water mains and gas mains, and the location of fuse boards, circuit breakers, access junction's and inspection chambers.
- **The construction of extensions or alterations to the property is expressly prohibited.**
- The Tenant is responsible for maintaining all elements of the heating system. The costs of repairs to any part of the heating system (e.g. by tipping up an oil tank) will be charged to the Tenant.
- The Tenant or anyone acting on behalf of the Tenant shall not interfere with the electrical system of the property (other than the replacement of bulbs and fuses). **It is an offence to allow anyone who is not a qualified electrician to carry out electrical work in a council owned property.**
- Maintain attics clear of storage. (Attics are insulated to a high degree and are unsuitable for storage of household items).
- Tenants shall ensure that the following systems within the house are maintained in good working order, for health and safety reasons;
 - Vents (for ventilation and to provide air to any heating appliance).
 - Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide alarms.
 - Bathroom and kitchen ventilation systems.



Please consult this leaflet before making a repair request. If you are unsure about your responsibility or if the issue of concern is not listed in this leaflet, please contact Meath County Council.

Customer Service – Housing Maintenance
Phone: 046 9097000

Responsibility of Meath County Council

As your landlord, Meath County Council is responsible in certain areas for the maintenance and upkeep of the property.

It must be stressed that the Council's ability to carry out repairs is largely dependent upon available funds. The Council will respond to Response Maintenance incidents and/or requests submitted by the Tenant within the following time frames.

High Priority	Within 24 hours
Medium Priority	Within 3 working days
Low Priority	Within 12 weeks

The following are examples of repairs/maintenance

Description	Priority
Structure	
Missing roof tile or slate – not dangerous	Low Priority
Missing roof tile or slate – potential hazard	Medium Priority
Leaking roof and water entering into house	Medium Priority
Floorboard repairs	Low Priority
Dangerous floors	Medium Priority
Stairs	Medium Priority
Steps to entrance	Low Priority
General External Maintenance/Repairs	
Repair of gutters and downpipes	Low Priority
Maintenance and repair of footpaths, driveways and entrances	Low Priority
Repairs of damage to roofs caused by tenants or by persons erecting aerials or satellite dishes. (Tenant must pay for this)	Low Priority
Doors and Windows	
Maintenance and repair of windows and doors where damage is due to normal wear and tear	Low Priority Maintenance or Preventative Maintenance (as budget permits)
Maintenance and repair of windows and doors where damage is caused as a result of a burglary. A Garda report confirming that a burglary has occurred must be provided	Medium Priority Maintenance
Electrical	
Total loss of electrics	High Priority
Partial loss of electrics	Low Priority
Damaged sockets or pendants caused by normal wear and tear	Low Priority
Unsafe electrical fittings	High Priority
Maintenance, replacement and repair of all electrical circuitry and fittings	Medium Priority
Maintenance and repair of electric storage heating	Medium Priority
Maintenance and repair of electric immersion heaters	Medium Priority
Maintenance of electric supply to all heating boilers	Medium Priority

Plumbing	
Maintenance and repair of water tanks and ball cocks	Low Priority
Maintenance and repair of electric showers	Medium Priority
Total loss of cold-water supply	High Priority
Partial loss of cold-water supply	Medium Priority
Major leaks and burst pipes	High Priority
Minor leaks	Medium Priority
Taps cannot be turned on or off	Medium Priority
Heating	
Maintenance and repair of fire grates, fire bricks and fire seals	Low Priority
Maintenance and repair of oil tanks and oil lines	Medium Priority
Maintenance and repair of radiators, radiator valves and pipe work	Low Priority
Maintenance and repair of circulating pumps and time clocks	Low Priority
Maintenance and repair of solar panel heating systems	Preventative
Maintenance and repair of heat recovery ventilation systems	Preventative
Total loss of hot water and heating	Medium Priority
Partial loss of hot water and heating	Medium Priority
Gas Boiler Service	Preventative
Oil Boiler Service	Preventative
Drainage	
Maintenance of Septic tank and proprietary effluent treatment systems (including percolation areas)	Preventative
Annual servicing of proprietary effluent treatment systems	Preventative

Description	Responsibility
General	
Maintenance, other than normal wear and tear, of internal wall and ceiling finishes and of internal woodwork such as floors, doors, doorframes, window boards and skirting boards.	Tenant
Maintenance, other than normal wear and tear, and repair of doors cupboards, wardrobes, kitchen units, kitchen unit doors, hinges, handles, locks and catches.	Tenant
Maintenance and repairs arising from condensation damage and poor ventilation.	Tenant
Maintenance and repair of all floor finishes and coverings whether provided by the Council or the tenant.	Tenant
Maintenance and repair to cooker extract hoods and fans (excluding electrical).	Tenant
Maintenance of chimney by sweeping at least once per year.	Tenant
Maintain house and surrounds litter free	Tenant
Maintain attic clear of storage	Tenant
Maintain and test Smoke and Carbon Monoxide alarms	Tenant
General External Maintenance Repairs	
Maintenance and repair of external wall finishes	Tenant
Maintenance, including painting and repair of external windows and doors including door furniture and all external woodwork	Tenant
Maintenance of gardens and hedges	Tenant
Maintenance and repair of fences, garden boundary wall and gates whether provided by the Council or the tenant	Tenant
Maintenance and repair of fuel sheds or outhouses	Tenant
Cleaning out of gutters and downpipes	Tenant
Doors and Windows	
Maintenance and repair, other than normal wear and tear of internal and external doors (including letter boxes, door numbers, door bells, keys, locks, handles and hinges).	Tenant
Maintenance and replacement of broken glass	Tenant
Maintenance and repair, other than normal wear and tear of window stays, catches, hinges and restrictors	Tenant
Maintenance and repair other than normal wear and tear of permavents where fitted in windows	Tenant
Maintenance and repair of draught proofing of doors and windows.	Tenant
Maintenance and repair of electric storage heating	

Electrical	
All repairs to electric appliances, fires and heaters and their plugs not installed by Meath Co. Council	Tenant
Replacement of light bulbs	Tenant
Fuses	Tenant
Provision of TV aerial or satellite dish	Tenant
Plumbing	
Maintenance and repair of seats, chains , handles, washers and stoppers for toilets, baths, sinks etc	Tenant
Maintenance and repair of sanitary ware, toilet bowls, baths, sinks and wash hand basins except where defective through wear and tear	Tenant
Internal blockages to sinks, basins, baths or toilets	Tenant
Connecting washing machine/dishwasher etc	Tenant
Heating	
Maintenance, repair and cleaning of chimneys, stoves, dampers, ranges and back boilers	Tenant
Cleaning of filters for heat recovery ventilation systems	Tenant
Heating appliance fitted by tenant	Tenant
Drainage	
Maintenance and unblocking of all waste drainage from house to the public sewer or septic tank/proprietary effluent treatment system	Tenant
Pest control	Tenant

APPENDIX 3

THE DIRTY DOZEN

These items should NEVER be flushed down the toilet

When these items are flushed down the toilet they can cause problems in our homes, wastewater treatment network and the environment

 Cotton Buds	 Baby Wipes	 Facial Wipes
 Cleansing Pads	 Toilet Roll Tube	 Medicines
 Cigarettes	 Plasters	 Nappies
 Tampons	 Tampon Applicator	 Sanitary Pads

Please put these items in the bin and NOT down the toilet

Help to beat

THE DIRTY DOZEN
and support **Think Before You Flush**

Join the campaign at www.thinkbeforeyouflush.org



Think Before You Flush is operated by An Taisce's Clean Coasts Programme in partnership with Irish Water



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council