



Section C

Your licence or tenancy agreement

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Your agreement

When you moved in to accommodation with Transform you will have been given a legal document which explains your rights and responsibilities in your new home. Depending on which property you live at, this document will have either been an excluded licence agreement or a tenancy agreement. If Transform is providing you with a floating support service, then we are not directly involved in providing you with accommodation and this section of the handbook will not apply to you.

Shared accommodation

If you are living in a property where you share the use of the kitchen, lounge or bathroom then you are likely to have been issued with an **excluded licence agreement**. Throughout this handbook, when we refer to 'licence agreement' we mean specifically an excluded licence agreement.

Self-contained accommodation

If you are living in a self-contained flat then you are likely to have been issued with either an **Assured Shorthold Tenancy** or an **Assured Tenancy agreement**. The majority of flats managed by Transform are under an Assured Shorthold Tenancy agreement.

Your agreement

Whichever type of agreement you were given when you moved in, whether licence or tenancy agreement, Transform staff will have explained this to you.

If you are unclear about anything in your agreement please speak to a member of Transform staff. Keep your agreement safe as it contains details of your rights and responsibilities as well as ours.

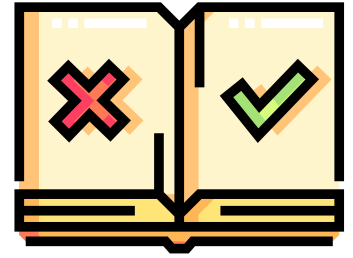
Pages 16-17 of this handbook cover some of the key aspects of your agreement with Transform.



Breaches of licence or tenancy agreement

Examples of breaches

The house rules and your licence or tenancy agreement explain your responsibilities as a Transform client. **If you breach your licence or tenancy agreement then Transform will need to take action to prevent any further breaches.** The action we take will depend on the seriousness. Some examples of breaches are:



- ✗ violent or disruptive behaviour
- ✗ storing or taking illegal drugs on Transform property
- ✗ anti-social behaviour including unreasonable noise
- ✗ non-payment of rent
- ✗ illegal activity.

Action Transform will take

As mentioned above, if you breach your licence or tenancy agreement or if you break the house rules, the action that Transform will take will vary depending on how severe the breach was. Some examples of action Transform might take are:

- a verbal warning – this might be for a first breach
- written warning – this might be for a second breach or for one serious breach
- final written warning – this might be for repeated breaches or for one very serious breach.

Once a warning has been issued we will work with to help prevent any further breaches and reduce the risk of you losing your home.

Grounds for eviction

In very serious cases we would consider ending a licence agreement or taking legal action to end a tenancy. This would only be as a very last resort where all other action had failed. Details on the eviction process are provided in your licence or tenancy agreement. The main grounds for ending a licence or tenancy are:

- you do not pay your charges
- you, or someone visiting your property, is causing a nuisance to other people
- you, or someone visiting your property, is causing damage, or
- you have broken any of the drug or alcohol house rules.

Your legal rights

Your licence or tenancy agreement explains your legal rights as a client of Transform and so it is important that you keep your agreement somewhere safe. Here are some important points about your rights as a Transform client.

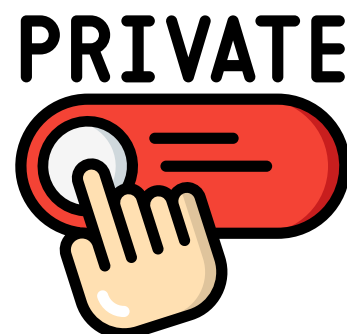
For more information regarding your legal rights you may also wish to seek support from your local Citizens Advice branch.

Privacy

You have the right to peacefully enjoy your home and Transform staff will respect your privacy. Spare keys for your property will be held by support staff but no-one will enter your property without your permission, unless they have extremely good reason. For example, we may do this in an emergency such as a serious problem with plumbing or electrics or if we think you might be ill or injured inside your home.

In order to comply with our legal obligations, we will also need to enter your home to carry out certain health and safety checks, such as an annual gas boiler inspection. Except in an emergency, you will be given at least 24 hours' notice of staff entering your property in your absence.

If an appointment has been made by you for a contractor to come to your home to do some work, it is very important that you are there to provide access, or that you give us permission to access it in your absence.



Confidentiality

Transform has strict rules on confidentiality which all our staff are committed to. If you would like a copy of our **Confidentiality policy**, please ask a member of Transform staff.

To ensure that we can provide you with an effective and consistent service, any information that you give a member of staff will be shared with other members of the team. You should therefore not give any information to a member of staff if you do not want that information to be shared with the rest of the staff team.

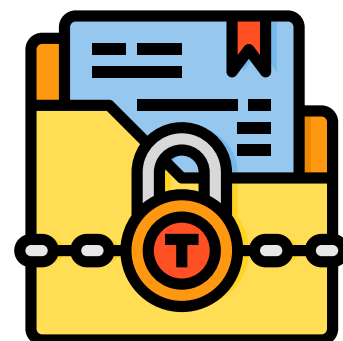
On occasion it may also be necessary to discuss a client with a member of Transform's Executive team. Other members of staff in Transform may be given some information about a client but only enough to enable them to carry out their duties professionally. No information about you will be given to other clients. Outside parties will only be given information about you with your permission.

While, under normal circumstances, all staff are bound by this policy on confidentiality, there may be some exceptional circumstances when the policy will be breached, for example, when there may be a risk of serious harm to someone or if the law has been broken.

Data protection

In order to provide you with support or housing, Transform needs to collect and process certain personal information about you. Transform complies with regulations such as the **Data Protection Act** and the **General Data Protection Regulation** (GDPR) when processing data. Here are some key principles we follow when collecting and storing information:

- We only collect personal information that is necessary to ensure we are able to provide a thorough and personalised service to you.
- We take great care to protect any personal information we hold to ensure it is kept safe and is accurate.
- We treat all personal information as confidential and only disclose personal information in line with our confidentiality policy.



Your responsibilities to Transform

House rules

Most Transform properties have house rules. These rules cover such things as not using violent or disruptive behaviour and not causing a nuisance to others. The house rules are there so that you know what is expected of you and to make life as comfortable as possible for all the people living in the accommodation.

Some properties which provide support to a particular client group may have additional rules which are specific to that property. For example, in our 'dry and drug free' accommodation there is a rule that no alcohol or drugs can be used at any time by clients.

You will be asked to sign a copy of the house rules so if there is anything you don't understand, please ask a member of staff before you sign them. You should also be given a copy of the house rules – please ask staff for another copy if you don't have one.

Noise

Noise is a common problem and you must be mindful about others living around you. In particular it is important to avoid making noise that can be heard outside your property at night or early in the morning.

If you are having problems with noise from someone else and they will not control it when you ask them, you should speak to a member of Transform staff. We will do everything we can to help you sort the problem out. Alternatively you can notify the local authority environmental health department who can give you further advice and support.

Drugs

Transform has a drugs policy which explains our rules regarding drug use and possession within our properties. If you misuse drugs, we will do everything we can to help you tackle your drug misuse, however we can only do this if you respect our rules which are set out below:

- ✗ Do not bring any illegal drugs, including cannabis, into our properties.
- ✗ Do not use any illegal drugs on or near our properties.
- ✗ Do not produce or supply any drugs on or near our properties.

If you breach any of these rules then we will take action. This action will depend on the specific circumstances. In particular, we will take firm action which may include the police being involved and you being evicted, if:

- your actions were placing yourself or others at risk
- your actions were causing others distress
- you were involved in supplying drugs.

If you would like more information, please ask staff for a copy of our drugs policy.

Rent and weekly charges

If you have a licence or tenancy agreement with Transform this will provide details of your responsibilities for paying rent and housing service charges. For ease we have also included a section explaining these charges on **page 22** of this handbook.

Visitors

When you have visitors, please remember that you are responsible for their behaviour and for ensuring that they show proper respect for the property, other clients and neighbours.

Some properties, particularly shared houses, may have rules about when visitors are permitted. Please speak to staff if you are unsure about the rules in your home.

Shared accommodation

If you live in a shared property, when a vacancy arises in the house, we will make every effort to ensure you can get on with the new person moving in. Please remember, however, that you cannot refuse to allow someone to move in with you. If someone moves in and you treat them badly to try and force them to move out, then action will be taken against you.

Subletting

You are not permitted to sublet your accommodation to someone else or to take in lodgers. If you do sub-let you will be evicted as this is a breach of your agreement.

Cleanliness

You are responsible for keeping your own accommodation clean. If there are any communal areas then you may also be responsible for doing your share of the cleaning in these areas. This is particularly important if you are living in shared accommodation where we would ask that you are thoughtful towards others and that you leave the kitchen and bathroom, in particular, in a clean and tidy condition.

Repairs

If you notice a fault within your home, please report this to Transform staff as soon as possible. The quicker a fault is reported, the easier it tends to be to fix. If you would like to know more about how to report a repair and what you can expect from Transform, then please see the repairs section of this handbook on **pages 52-54**.



Rent and weekly charges

Transform staff will support you with all your benefit claims, but you might want to read this page for a summary of key information.

What are you responsible for paying?

Your licence or tenancy agreement will make clear if you are responsible for paying rent to Transform. If you do pay your rent to Transform, what you are due to pay will depend on the property you live in:

Accommodation charges: This is made up of rent and housing services. You will be responsible for paying this, but if you are eligible for **Housing Benefit** or the housing element of **Universal Credit** (please see below) this will cover some or all of this charge.

Personal charges: These cover services like gas, electricity and water. Only properties where Transform pays bills on your behalf will have a personal charge and where this is the case, you will be responsible for paying this to Transform.

Housing benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit

If you are receiving **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)** benefits such as **Universal Credit**, or are on a low income, you may be entitled to housing benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit to pay part of your accommodation charges. A member of staff will help you to complete your benefit claim. In order to claim benefits you will need to provide:

- **two proofs of identity:** for example birth certificate, passport or citizen card
- **proof of National Insurance number:** for example DWP letter or National Insurance card

- **proof of income and savings:** for example bank statements.

Local staff can support you with getting the documents if you do not have them.

Direct payment

If you claim housing benefit or receive the housing element of Universal Credit, you should ask for this to be paid directly to Transform. Please discuss this with your keyworker.

Support charges

For those clients who receive support from Transform, the cost of your support is paid for by your local authority and is completely separate from your weekly charges.

Short-term: If you live in accommodation that is short-term (where the intended stay is under two years) then you will not have to contribute towards the cost of your support.

Long-term: If you live in accommodation that is long-term and you have savings, a trust fund or a pension worth over £20,000 then you may need to contribute to your support costs. If so, you will need to pay these costs to Transform in addition to your rent and weekly charges.

Please do remember, Transform staff are there to help you with your benefit claims. If you have any questions, please speak to a member of the team.

Rent – making payments

How to pay your accommodation and personal charges

Please pay your weekly accommodation and personal charges regularly to Transform staff. If you have a bank account, we would prefer that you pay by standing order; Transform staff can help you to set this up. Every three months we will send you a statement of your account so you can keep track of your payments and any rent owed or in credit.

Please let us know if you have any problems paying your rent. You may also want to seek support from the local Citizens Advice who can provide you with independent advice.

Changes in your circumstances

It is vital that you inform staff immediately if there are any changes in your circumstances, especially if they involve a change to your income.

This might be:

- paid employment ending
- changes to your benefits, including any sanctions
- carrying out any paid work
- attending an education or training course.

Transform staff will be able to advise you if the change in your circumstance is likely to affect the amount you pay each week and will support you if you need to complete a new benefit form.



What to do if you start work

If you start work, please inform staff immediately as this will affect how much you are due to pay each week. Some work is paid in arrears and this may lead to a delay in you paying your accommodation or personal charges. Where this is the case your keyworker will agree with you a plan to pay your outstanding charges. It is very important that you stick to this plan.

Arrears

If you fall behind with your weekly personal charges and/or accommodation charges, we will support you to try and find ways of resolving this so that you can stay in your accommodation. This normally involves agreeing, and sticking to, an arrears repayment plan.

Although staff will advise and support you, ultimately you are responsible for making these payments. If, even after agreeing a repayment plan, your arrears continue to grow, you may risk losing your accommodation.

Our commitment to you

- You are at the heart of all we do and we will respect your individual needs and preferences. We strive to be an inclusive organisation free from discrimination.
- We will treat you fairly, respectfully and with courtesy. You can expect the same service and opportunities as any other individual.
- We will consult with you and involve you in the development and delivery of your housing and support services to ensure we are providing services that meet your needs.
- Transform encourages and welcomes feedback and we are committed to listening to your voice and seeking your opinions. We also want to hear your views on how you wish to be consulted.
- We will treat complaints seriously and strive to resolve them to your full satisfaction.
- We will support and empower you to become more involved in developing and reviewing our policies, services and performance standards.



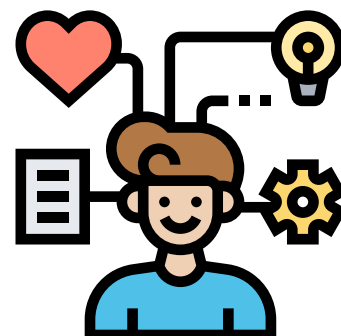
For those clients who receive support from Transform:

- We will allocate you a keyworker who will meet with you regularly (at times agreed with you) to support you with any issues. This will help you on your journey to greater independence and maintaining your home.
- We will provide a comprehensive support plan agreed by you and your keyworker. You will be offered a copy of your support plan which will be reviewed regularly and on request.
- We will give you information and support to help you make choices and decisions about your future.

What you can expect from us

Transform clients can expect the best possible service at all times. To help us achieve this we commit to the following:

- ✓ We will **support and encourage you** to become as independent as possible.
- ✓ We will make, and keep, **agreed appointments** with you and will **respond promptly** when you contact us.
- ✓ We will provide **clear and accessible information** on the services we provide.
- ✓ We will ensure that Transform colleagues **are trained and have the skills** to provide a high-quality service.
- ✓ Where required, we will **support you to talk to people and contact organisations** outside of Transform.
- ✓ We will be **respectful and responsive to those also supporting you**, such as outside professionals, your friends or family.
- ✓ We will ensure that **all our policies, procedures** and **staff comply with our equality, diversity and inclusion policy** (this can be found on our website at www.transformhousing.org.uk/resources).
- ✓ We will treat all **personal information in a confidential manner** and in accordance with the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**. For further information, please see our detailed privacy notice at www.transformhousing.org.uk/privacy.



If you feel that any of these commitments have not been met, please let us know.

You can:

Speak to any member of support or project staff, face to face or over the phone by calling your local office.

Speak to the local manager.

Email us: info@transformhousing.org.uk

Call a member of our Central Office team: 01372 387100