

Tenant Information Pack – Table of Contents

Plastic pockets booklet – Tenant Information Pack for SEAL Member tenants

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SEAL Membership Number: _____

Tenant Welcome

Welcome to your new tenancy which is managed by a member of 'SEAL' – the South East Alliance of Landlords, Agents & Residents – in partnership with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council. This information pack is to help make your tenancy with us as straightforward and hassle free as possible. Please take the time to read the information on this cover page and useful leaflets within this pack to ensure that should you have any questions, or should problems occur, you are aware of where you should go for assistance.

More useful contact telephone numbers and emails are provided on a separate sheet, however the two following numbers are of particular importance:

To find out who currently supplies the **electricity**, call: **0845 601 5467**
To find out who currently supplies the **gas**, call: **0870 608 1524**

Important Information for Tenants

Check in, Inventory & end of Tenancy

An inventory & photographs are provided and your signature(s) of acceptance of the condition of the dwelling will be required. It is in your interests to ensure you are fully aware of the condition & contents of the property at the commencement of this tenancy. Please report any damages, repairs or replacements immediately. We recommend you take out contents insurance.

The inventory will be thoroughly checked at the end of the tenancy. Any furniture or property belonging to the landlord should be in the position as indicated on the inventory.

Where applicable, tenants must arrange to close accounts in respect of gas/electricity/water/landline services & we are happy to assist in this process. We request that you provide us a forwarding address for correspondence.

Your Deposit

The deposit will be held and returned in accordance with a tenancy deposit protection scheme, either the Deposit Protection Service (DPS), MyDeposits or Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDS). For more information, visit www.direct.gov.uk

Repairs

Do not attempt to undertake repairs yourself! Except in a real emergency (for example burst pipes or blocked drains), you must contact your landlord or the managing agent to arrange repairs. If you do need to contact emergency services, please also inform your landlord/agent. You must not contract your own repair work nor withhold rent for the costs of such unauthorised work. Once you contact your landlord or agent, they will make the necessary arrangements to ensure works are completed in a timely manner.

The Property

You are responsible for keeping the dwelling clean and tidy. Should any cleaning be required at the end of the tenancy it will be undertaken by a professional cleaning service and charged to your deposit. Any damage to furnishings will be recompensed in the same manner.

Cold Weather Conditions

Cold weather & insufficient heating & ventilation of the property can result in condensation, damp and mould problems. Please ensure you adequately ventilate and heat the property, especially during the colder months.

Garden Areas

If garden areas are included within this tenancy, you the tenant are expected to maintain the garden in a tidy condition similar to that which existed at the commencement of this tenancy. If this tenancy applies to a shared house or house in multiple occupation, your landlord or agent is responsible for garden areas and will make arrangements for the maintenance & upkeep of these areas.

Inspections

Property inspections will be made on a periodic basis. Notice will be given in writing a minimum of 48 hours in advance and we will always aim to arrange the inspection at a mutually convenient time.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	Number	Email / Website
General Enquiries	01702 215000	council@southend.gov.uk
Out of hours enquiries	01702 466550	
Parking, Highways & Transport	01702 215003	
Report fly-tipping, graffiti, abandoned vehicles	01702 215006	
Report noise nuisance	01702 215005	
Enquiries re sports facilities, museums & parks	01702 215011	
Enquiries re housing benefits & Council tax benefits	01702 215001	
South Essex Homes	01702 0800 833 160	www.southessexhomes.gov.uk

Emergency Services	Number	Email / Website
Police, Fire or Ambulance Emergency	999	
Essex Police: Non-emergency	101 or 01245 491491	www.essex.police.uk
Neighbourhood policing teams:		
Eastwood/St Lawrence:	07816 661693	
Blenheim/Belfairs/Prittlewell:	07817 968093	
Leigh/West Leigh/Chalkwell Marine:	07866 545291	
St Lukes/Southchurch/Thorpe:	07710 086590	
Kursaal/Victoria/Milton:	07817 968114	
Shoeburyness/West Shoebury:	07710 086590	
Essex County Fire & Rescue	01376 576000 01702 614433	www.essex-fire.gov.uk

Report Anti Social Behaviour	Number	Email / Website
SMAART – Southend Multi-Agency ASB Response Team	01702 423504	smaart@southend.gov.uk
Report ASB from South Essex Homes Properties	Free: 0800 833 163 Text: 07769 931359	antisocialbehaviour@seh.southend.gov.uk

Other General Useful Numbers	Number	Email / Website
Anglian Water	0845 791 9155	www.anglianwater.co.uk
Essex & Suffolk Water	0845 782 0111	www.eswater.co.uk
Trading Standards consumer direct	0845 404 0506	
HandyVan Scheme	0845 026 1055	
Neighbourhood Watch enquiries	01702 464199	southendnhw@aol.com
Domestic Abuse Partnership Officer	01702 423190	
Homeless Action Resource Project (HARP)	01702 343040	www.harpsouthend.co.uk
Find your local GP surgery		www.nhs.uk
Papworth Handyman Service	0300 333 6543	homesolutions@papworth.org.uk www.papworth.org.uk



Taking your own legal action

Section 82 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 allows you to take your own action against a person causing an alleged nuisance. Brief guidelines on what to do follow below, however you are advised to seek professional advice from your own solicitor.

Once your evidence has been gathered you should go to the local Magistrates' Court.

At the Court you should go to the Clerk's Office and explain that you wish to make a complaint under Section 82 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. You will need to be able to produce evidence of the nuisance as detailed above to show that you have an arguable case.

The Clerk will tell you that you must give three days written notice to the person responsible that you intend complaining direct to the Magistrates Court. Ensure that your records, and those of any other witnesses, are kept up to date and that these witnesses will support you in Court.

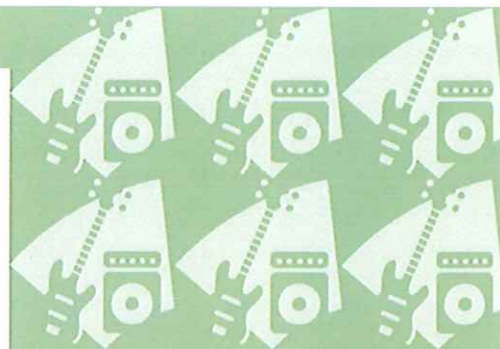
The Clerk to the Court will set a hearing date and will serve a summons on the 'offender' (you may have to pay a fee for this). In Court you will be required to explain your case, produce your diary and any witnesses. The 'offender' will be able to cross examine you if he wishes.

If the Magistrates are convinced that you have a case, they will make an order requiring the nuisance to be abated, and prohibiting its recurrence. The Court can also impose a fine on the 'offender'.

If the Order is ignored, you must keep further records and if necessary return to Court with your evidence.

ehrc.org.uk

13 Oak Lodge, Eversley Park Road, London N21 1JL
tel. 07802 349581 fax. 0871 6611321 email. info@ehrc.org.uk



Noise Nuisance

Environmental Protection

What is a noise nuisance?

Many people are completely unaware of the effect their enjoyment of loud music or other noisy activities may have on their neighbours. They might well act in a more responsible and considerate way if the facts are politely brought to their attention.

A noise nuisance would be a significant and unreasonable emission of noise, that affected you in a significant and unreasonable way.

It is more than 'annoyance' and much more than the mere detection of a noise.

Many other factors determine whether or not a noise is a statutory nuisance and these can be:

- The time of the day
- Your location e.g. urban / rural
- The duration of the noise
- The volume of the noise
- The character of the noise

A noise nuisance may be caused by many activities including music, DIY, fans and motors and barking dogs.

Unfortunately, noise from road and air traffic cannot be dealt with.

Informal action

Rather than resort to the law, you may wish to try the following:

- Discuss and resolve the matter directly with the person responsible for the noise (how would you feel if the situation was reversed and your neighbour made a complaint to the council?).
- Use a mediation service.

Making a complaint

Before the council can take legal action on anyone's behalf, it must be satisfied that a "statutory nuisance" exists and that evidence (suitable for a Court) has been gathered to support the case. In most cases, the following procedure will be followed:

- An informal letter will be sent to the person complained of to inform them of the problem.
- You will be asked to keep an accurate diary, detailing when the noise occurs and how the noise affects you.
- Noise monitoring equipment may be installed in your premises if the diary indicates a nuisance exists.

- An Officer of the Council may visit when the noise occurs to make an assessment.
- If a statutory nuisance is found to exist, an 'Abatement Notice' may be served to prohibit or restrict the noise.
- If the noise continues, you will be asked to maintain a nuisance diary and an officer will make another visit when the noise is alleged to occur.
- In some cases the Council may obtain a warrant to enter premises and seize nuisance making equipment.

The final option is to take the 'offender' to a magistrates court where a fine may be imposed and their equipment forfeited.

The Magistrates court serving the area is:

Magistrates Court Details

Keeping those **Damp & Mould** Problems away Information for **TENANTS**

Produced by the Private Sector Housing Team

Is your home damp? Damp can cause mould on walls and furniture & make timber window frames rot. Dampness encourages growth of mould and mites, & can increase the risk of respiratory illness. Some damp is caused by condensation. This sheet explains how condensation forms and how you can keep it to a minimum, reducing the risk of dampness & mould growth.

What is condensation? There is always some moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it. When air gets colder, it cannot hold all the moisture & tiny drops of water appear. This is condensation. You notice it when you see your breath on a cold day, or when the mirror mists over when you have a shower.

Where does condensation occur? Mainly during cold weather but it does not leave a 'tidemark'. It appears on cold surfaces and in places where there is little movement of air. Look for it in corners, on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards. It often forms on north-facing walls.

Is it condensation? Condensation is not the only cause of dampness. It can also come from:

- Leaking pipes, wastes or overflows.
- Rain seeping through the roof where a tile or slate is missing, spilling from a blocked gutter, penetrating around window-frames, or leaking through a cracked pipe.
- Rising damp due to a defective damp-course or lack of damp course.
- If your home is newly built it may be damp because it is still drying out.
- If you do not think that the damp comes from any of these causes then it is probably condensation.

3 STEPS TO PREVENT CONDENSATION:

1. Produce less moisture

- Cover pans and do not leave kettles boiling;
- Avoid using paraffin and portable flueless bottled gas heaters as these put a lot of moisture into the air;
- Dry washing outdoors on a line, or put it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on;
- Vent any tumble dryer on the outside, unless it is the self-condensing type.



2. Ventilate to remove moisture

- Ventilate without making draughts by keeping a small window ajar or a trickle ventilator open when someone is in the room.
- Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when in use by opening the windows wider.
- Close the kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use, even if your kitchen or bathroom has an extractor fan.
- A door self-closer is advisable, as this helps prevent moisture reaching other rooms.
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes. Avoid putting too many things in them as this stops the air circulating.
- Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls.

3. Insulate, draught proof & heat your home

- Ask your landlord if your loft is Insulated, if not, ask if this is possible
- Ask your landlord if it would be possible to install cavity wall insulation as this would make your fuel bills lower and your home warmer.
- Cavity wall & loft insulation can be FREE to many on benefits! Help your landlord out by visiting www.healthywarmhome.org.uk to see what you could be entitled to.

First steps against mould

- To kill and remove mould, wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash. Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets.
- After treatment, ask if your landlord can redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring. This paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper.

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For information on any changes to your collection day, please visit www.southend.gov.uk or telephone 01702 215006. Please remember that your scheduled collection day may vary around bank holidays – please visit www.southend.gov.uk for further information.

Bank Holidays
Please remember that your scheduled collection day may vary around bank holidays – please visit www.southend.gov.uk for further information on any changes to your collection day.

Your Recycling & Waste Collection Day
To help ensure that you do not experience any problems with these collections please ensure that:

- your sacks and blue bin are presented by 7.00am on your scheduled collection day
- they are presented in a visible location – preferably on the edge of your property (but not on the public footpath or verge please)
- they do not contain materials that we are unable to collect (for example food contaminated material in the pink recycling sack or carrier bags in the blue food waste collection bin)

This leaflet provides details of your scheduled collection day for household waste (black sack), recycling (pink sack), clothing and textile recycling (clear bag) and food waste (blue bin).

Garden Waste Collections

The collection day for garden waste may vary from other waste and recycling collections. Once you have registered for the garden waste service with our contractor you will be advised of the scheduled collection day.

For information on the garden waste services offered by our contractor please visit www.southend.gov.uk/recycling or telephone 01702 215006.

Extra Pink Recycling Sacks

Additional recycling sacks may be collected from either the Civic Centre, Cory Environmental Depot (Eastern Avenue) or the Leigh-on-Sea Town Council Office. They are also available from all Library branches. For further information please telephone the number above.



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Your Recycling & Waste Collection Day

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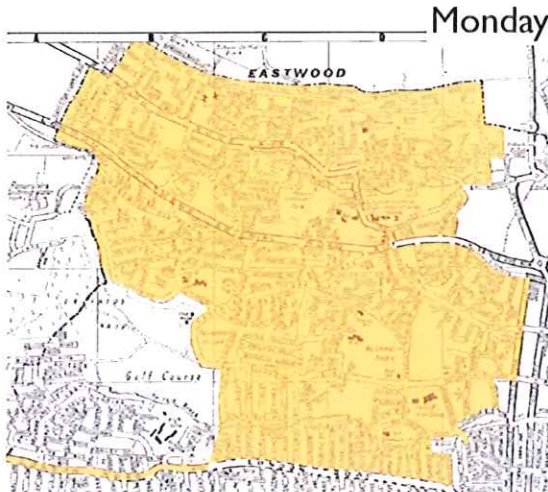
Please use these bins to recycle materials whenever you see them!



- plastic bottles
- glass bottles and
- drink cans

These bins can be used to recycle the following:
To make it even easier to recycle Southend-on-Sea Borough Council has installed dual litter and recycling bins in a number of different locations.

Don't forget you can recycle 'on the go'.....



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Assisted Collections
In certain situations assistance is available to help disabled and elderly people participate in waste and recycling collections. For example, alternative collection locations may be agreed between the resident and our waste contractor. For more information please contact Southend Borough Council on the number shown above.

Collection Day Maps
If after checking the maps, you are still uncertain about your collection day, please telephone us on the number shown above with your address and postcode. Alternatively use the 'Where I Live' facility at www.southend.gov.uk to search for your collection day.

Missed Collections
If you have followed the list opposite and you experience a missed collection please report it to Southend Borough Council on 01702 215006.

The following materials can be placed in the pink recycling sack (all clean - no food waste)

Paper - All paper including wrapping paper, junk mail, envelopes, shopping catalogues, holiday brochures, newspapers, magazines, leaflets and telephone directories.

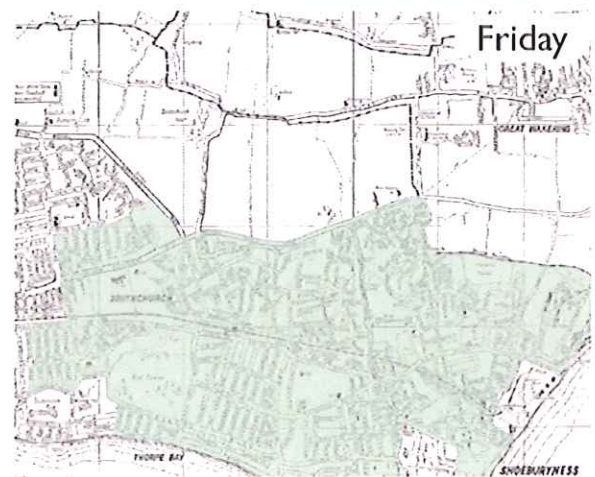
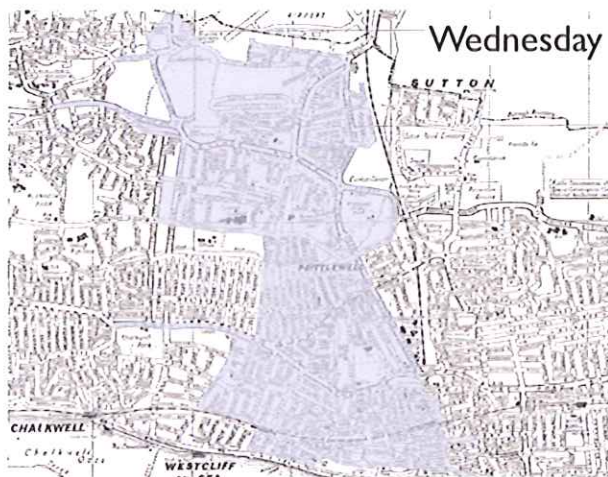
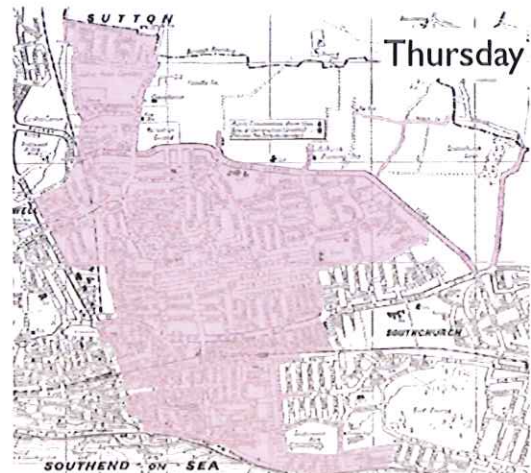
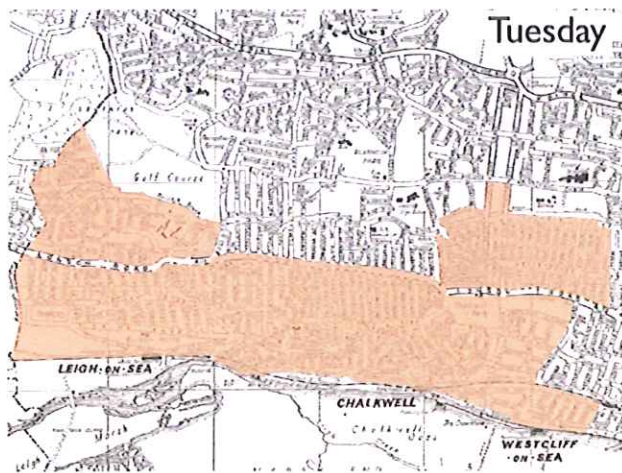
Cardboard - Sleeves for ready meals, cereal boxes, drink cartons and "Tetra Paks", greetings cards, small pieces of packing cardboard, confectionary boxes, toilet roll tubes. Flatten large cardboard boxes and place next to or under your pink sack.

Steel and Aluminium - Food and drink cans (no need to remove labels), ready meal and pie foil trays, takeaway containers, cooking foil, metal jar lids.

Plastic - All food and beverage containers/packaging, including bottles, tubs, film wrap, trays, bubble wrap, carrier bags (NO degradable/biodegradable please). Lids can be removed and included.

Glass - Unbroken glass bottles and jars (all different colours). No need to remove labels.

Clothing and textiles MUST go in the clear (textile) recycling sack. Clothing placed in the pink sack will not be recycled.



Recycle for Southend

What can go in the pink sack?

All these materials CAN be recycled in the pink sack!

Note: All containers and materials should be clean of food and drink residues

Household plastic packaging including:

- ✓ Drinks bottles
- ✓ Milk bottles
- ✓ Toiletry bottles
- ✓ Bottle lids (either on bottles or loose)
- ✓ Cling film, film wrap, plastic film
- ✓ Plastic bags (no biodegradable or degradable bags)
- ✓ Plastic meat/fish trays
- ✓ Yoghurt pots
- ✓ Fruit punnets
- ✓ Bubble wrap
- ✓ Takeaway containers
- ✓ Margarine/ice cream tubs
- ✓ Cake/pastry trays
- ✓ Soup/sauce containers
- ✓ Cleaning product bottles

Cartons (e.g. Tetrapak) including:

- ✓ Milk/juice cartons
- ✓ Fabric conditioner cartons
- ✓ Soup/chopped tomato cartons
- ✓ Custard cartons

Steel and aluminium including:

- ✓ Aluminium cans
- ✓ Steel cans
- ✓ Cooking foil
- ✓ Ready meal and pie foil trays
- ✓ Foil takeaway containers
- ✓ Metal jar lids
- ✓ Sweet/biscuit tins

All paper and card including:

- ✓ Newspapers and magazines
- ✓ Shredded paper
- ✓ Junk mail, leaflets and brochures
- ✓ Letters
- ✓ Envelopes (including window)
- ✓ Shopping catalogues
- ✓ Telephone directories
- ✓ Toilet roll tubes
- ✓ Greetings cards
- ✓ Wrapping paper
- ✓ Soft backed or paperback books
- ✓ Cardboard packaging (large boxes should be flattened and left next to the pink sacks)
- ✓ Ready meal sleeves
- ✓ Cereal boxes
- ✓ Paper bags
- ✓ Egg boxes
- ✓ Confectionary boxes

Glass bottles and jars including:

- ✓ Drinks bottles
- ✓ Jam jars (all different colours, no need to remove labels)
- ✓ Broken glass bottles and jars (these should be wrapped in thick newspaper or put in a cardboard box before placing in the pink sack)



For more information about recycling in Southend visit www.southend.gov.uk/recycling



Working together to recycle 60% by 2015



Recycle for Southend

What can't go in the pink sack?

Examples of items that should be placed in the black sack:

- Polystyrene/ Styrofoam
- Coat hangers
- Flower pots
- Crisp packets
- Sweet wrappers
- Pens and pencils
- Cassettes, tapes and CDs
- Kitchen roll, tissues and wipes
- Dual materials (such as Pringles packs)
- Hard plastics (such as children's toys)
- Sanitary waste (such as nappies)
- Medical containers (Don't forget unused medicines must be returned to the chemist)
- Pet bedding and faeces and cat litter
- Carpet and underlay
- Light bulbs (wrapped in newspaper)



Don't forget some items may be reused or donated to a charity shop, or sold on an auction website for example.

Items that can be recycled at the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) or elsewhere:

For guidance on using HWRCs visit www.southend.gov.uk/hwrc

- Wood – take to the HWRC or put small items in black sacks
- Ceramics – take to the HWRC
- Waste electrical and electronic items such as TV, phone, kettle and hairdryer – take to the HWRC
- Toner cartridges – where possible refill these, otherwise take to a charity or specialist toner recycling organisation
- Furniture – take to the HWRC
- Batteries – take to the HWRC or local retailers displaying the 'Be Positive' sign
- Food waste – put in the food waste bin, or some can be home composted
- Garden waste – home compost, put in the garden waste sacks or bin, or take to the HWRC
- Stone, rubble, soil – take to the HWRC, limited to one car boot load (with seats up) per occasion
- Cooking oil or engine oil – take both to the HWRC
- Scrap metals (other than those listed overleaf) – take to the HWRC
- Energy saving light bulbs and fluorescent tubes – take to the HWRC
- Textiles – take to charity shops, put in the mini recycling banks or in the clear textile recycling sacks



For more information about recycling in Southend visit www.southend.gov.uk/recycling



Working together to recycle 60% by 2015



Kerbside Recycling- Blue Food Waste Bin Scheme

What can go in my blue food waste bin?

- ✓ Bread, biscuits and pastries
- ✓ Cheese
- ✓ Fish (including bones)
- ✓ Meat (including bones)
- ✓ Tea & coffee grounds
- ✓ Fruit & vegetables (including peelings)
- ✓ Noodles, rice and pasta
- ✓ Eggs (including the shells)
- ✓ Leftovers and plate scrapings
- ✓ Out of date food (please remove packaging)



Using your blue food waste bin

The most environmentally friendly way to dispose of your food waste is to wrap it in sheets of newspaper to create individual 'parcels'. These can then be placed directly into the bin. If you prefer to use bags then please ensure that these are compostable liners. Please see the separate information sheet 'Keeping your food waste collection bin tidy' for specific details. Please ensure that out of date food is removed from all packaging before being placed in the bin.

Rejected Bins

Blue food waste bins are occasionally rejected (i.e. left uncollected) because they contain items which cannot be composted, such as:

- | | |
|--|---|
| x Plastic shopping carrier bags of any kind | x Polystyrene |
| x Garden waste | x Liquids such as cooking oil, milk, etc. |
| x Cat, dog or other animal faeces & pet litter | x Any materials suitable for recycling |

If your blue bin is rejected and a hanger placed on it, please remove the unwanted item(s) and the hanger, and present your blue bin again on your next scheduled collection day.

Missed Collection

If your blue food waste bin was correctly presented but was not collected please let us know as soon as possible. You can report a missed collection using the online form at www.southend.gov.uk/recycling or by calling us on 01702 215006.

Kerbside Recycling – Garden Waste Scheme

How does the garden waste scheme work?

For residents who are unable to home compost, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (through its contractor Cory Environmental) offers **two options** to register for a chargeable kerbside garden waste collection:

- A compostable sack collection these can be purchased from a number of outlets in the Borough (please see www.southend.gov.uk/recycling for a list of stockists or call 01702 215006). Once you have registered your address with Cory Environmental on 01702 617766, your sacks will be collected on a weekly basis.
- A wheeled bin garden waste collection service - running for 39 or 52 weeks depending on your gardening needs. After the purchase of a wheeled bin there is an annual fee for the collection service. For current prices and information please visit www.southend.gov.uk/recycling or call 01702 215006.



Once registered, residents are provided with a weekly collection - wherever possible this will be on the same day as the kerbside recycling and refuse collections. Where this is not possible, Cory Environmental will provide you with details of your alternative collection day.

You need to present your garden waste wheeled bin or compostable sacks at the edge of your property by 7am on your scheduled collection day. The wheeled bins and sacks must be easily visible and accessible from the road but must not cause an obstruction to the public highway.

What can be collected for composting?



- ✓ Grass cuttings & weeds
- ✓ Leaves
- ✓ Tree, shrub and rose prunings
- ✓ Branches (up to 12 inches long and 1 inch diameter)
- ✓ Cut flowers

For further information regarding the garden waste schemes and the composting process please visit our website at www.southend.gov.uk/recycling

Kerbside Recycling - Clear Textile Recycling Sack Scheme

What can go in my clear textile recycling sack?

The clear textile recycling sack scheme provides residents with a weekly kerbside collection of textiles. All the materials listed below can be included in the clear textile recycling sack. Please ensure that items are clean and dry before presenting them for collection.



Worn and torn clothing can be recycled using the clear textile recycling sacks.



Handbags
Curtains
Pillow cases and sheets
Unsoiled duvets



Please ensure shoes are paired

My clear textile recycling sack was not collected

Clear textile recycling sacks are occasionally rejected (i.e. left uncollected) because they contain items which cannot be recycled. Examples of incorrect items include:

- Wet or soiled clothes, textiles and shoes
- Food waste (please use the blue food waste bin - please see the *Kerbside Recycling – Blue Food Waste Bin Scheme* information sheet)
- Garden waste
- Polystyrene
- Nappies and sanitary products

If your clear textile recycling sack is rejected and a sticker placed on it please remove the unwanted item(s) and the sticker, and present your sack again on your next scheduled collection day.

Missed Collection

If your clear textile recycling sack was correctly presented but was not collected please let us know as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements for it to be collected. Missed collections can either be reported online at www.southend.gov.uk or by calling 01702 215006.

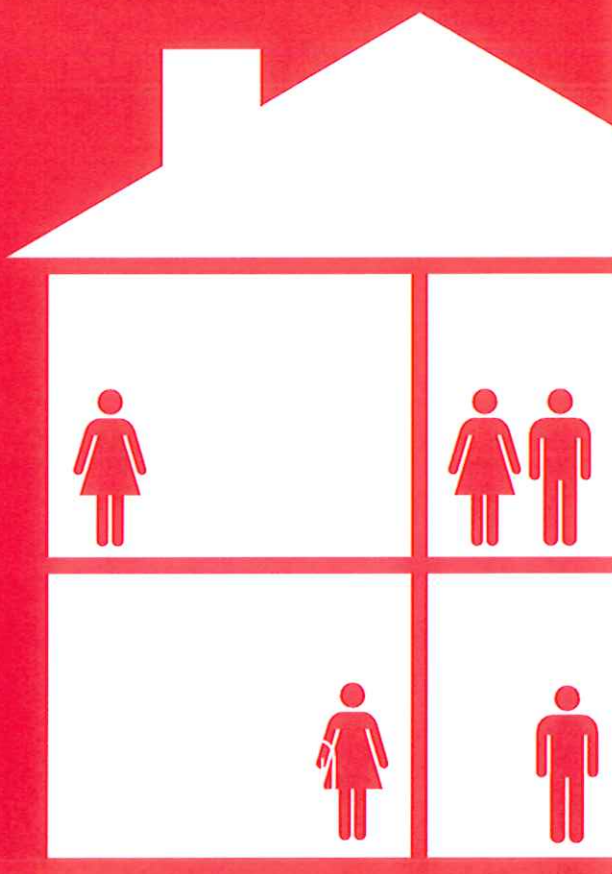


Waste and Street Scene
Enterprise, Tourism & the Environment
Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6ER
Email: council@southend.gov.uk Tel: 01702 215006
www.southend.gov.uk/recycling
Information Sheet KR03/Mar11



FIRE SAFETY

IN SHARED OR RENTED ACCOMMODATION



Did you know?

- People living in rented or shared accommodation are seven times more likely to have a fire.
- About 400 people a year die in accidental house fires.
- Not having a working smoke alarm doubles your risk of death.
- Faulty electrics cause around 7,000 house fires a year.
- Candles cause more than 5 fires a day.

This leaflet has been put together for people in shared or rented homes who are at greater risk from fire. The advice and tips provided here supplement our main *Fire Safety in the Home* leaflet.

Landlords' obligations to keep your home safe from fire

- If you live in privately rented accommodation, your landlord has to meet certain safety obligations under the law. This includes making sure all gas and electric appliances are safe and in good working order.
- Gas appliances must be checked by a Gas Safe registered gas fitter every year.
- Electrical appliances must carry the British Safety Standard sign.
- Your landlord must also ensure furnishings are fire resistant and meet safety regulations.
- Your landlord must show you safety certificates so you can see when gas and electrical appliances were last checked.
- Your landlord should supply a carbon monoxide detector and test it regularly. You can't see, feel or smell carbon monoxide, but it can be fatal if you breathe it in. A detector will let you know if any carbon monoxide is present in your home.

If you are worried your landlord isn't doing enough to ensure your safety contact the environmental health officer at your local council for advice. You can find their contact details at www.direct.gov.uk

Make sure you recognise these symbols – they show your appliances and furnishings are safe



Electrical items



Gas fitting and repair



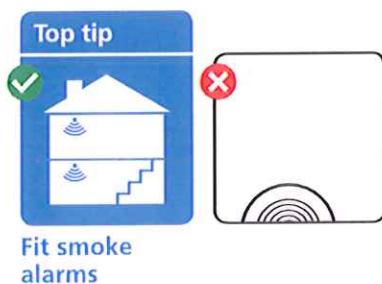
Soft furnishings

Smoke alarms save lives

You are personally responsible for making sure that the smoke alarm fitted in your rented property is working.

Test batteries every week. Never cover, remove, or disable a smoke detector. NEVER remove the batteries. Tell your landlord as soon as the smoke alarm stops working.

Your local fire and rescue service will be able to check your home for fire risks, and may install a smoke alarm for you. You'll be able to find the number of your nearest fire station in the local phone book.



Be extra careful with electrics

Avoid overloading sockets. Keep to one plug per socket.

- Use a proper adaptor when using a non UK electrical appliance. Never put two prong plugs into three prong sockets.
- Don't use heaters for drying clothes and keep them a safe distance away to avoid them catching fire.

- Inform your landlord immediately if you are concerned about the electrics in your property. If you notice burn marks around plugs or cables for example.
- Don't fix faulty electrics yourself. Inform your landlord or call a qualified electrician.

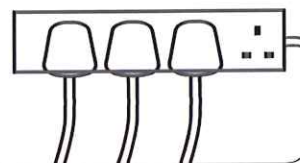
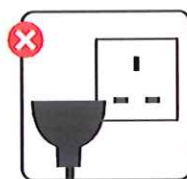
An extension lead or adaptor will have a limit to how many amps it can take, so be careful not to overload them to reduce the risk of fire.

Appliances use different amounts of power – a television may use a 3 amp plug and vacuum cleaner a 5 amp plug for example.

Know the limit!

$$5 + 5 + 3 = 13$$

AMP AMP AMP AMP



Stay safe with candles and cigarettes

Make sure cigarettes are put out properly after you have finished with them.

- Be extra careful if you have been drinking alcohol or taking medication which may make you drowsy.
- Be careful with candles and tea lights. Avoid placing them on or near materials that could burn or catch fire – like curtains



Put them out.
Right out!

Plan an escape route

Plan an escape route and make sure everyone knows how to escape. It could save your life.

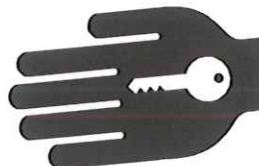
- Establish where the fire exits and alarms are if you live in a large or high level building.
- Count how many doors you might need to go through to escape. It can be hard to see in smoke and you might become confused about where you are.

- Keep all exits clear, even communal areas.
- Keep fire doors closed. They help to slow down the spread of fire and will give you extra time to get out.

Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them



Plan an
escape route



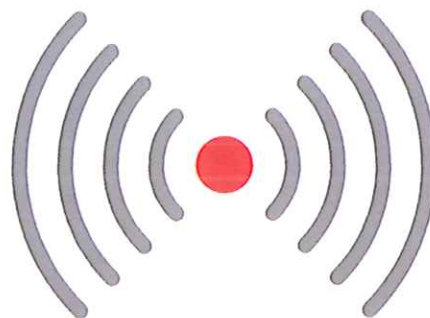
Remember these general tips from our *Fire Safety in the Home* leaflet to stay safe from fire.

- Fit smoke alarms on every level of your home. ☒
- Test your smoke alarm batteries every week. Change them every year. Never remove them. ☒
- Avoid leaving children in the kitchen alone when cooking is on. Keep matches and saucepan handles out of children's reach. ☒
- Take care when cooking with hot oil – it sets alight easily. ☒
- Extension leads and adaptors have a limit to how many amps they can take. Be careful not to overload them. ☒
- Dispose of cigarettes carefully. Put them out. Right out. ☒
- Make sure candles are always secure and away from materials that may catch fire – like curtains. ☒
- Plan an escape route and make sure everyone knows it. ☒
- If there's a fire, get out, stay out and call 999. ☒
- Close inside doors at night to stop fire from spreading. ☒

www.direct.gov.uk/firekills

FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST

These general tips are taken from our *Fire Safety in the Home* leaflet. For a copy, visit www.direct.gov.uk/firekills or contact your local fire and rescue service.



SMOKE ALARMS
SAVE
LIVES

For more information on
general fire safety visit
www.direct.gov.uk/firekills

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Local Government, May 2008.
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than 75% post-consumer waste.
ISBN 978-1-4098-0037-8

Your Benefit Notification Explained

This shows your Housing Benefit entitlement as a weekly figure

If you have an outstanding Housing Benefit Overpayment this is the amount that will be deducted from your weekly Benefit award

This shows your weekly Housing Benefit entitlement less any overpayment deductions

This figure shows your rent, converted to weekly i.e. the amount you would have to pay weekly if you had no Benefit entitlement

The difference between your rent and your Benefit award i.e. your top-up, shown as a weekly figure

This is the date from which the above entitlement is effective

You will receive the above payment by the day given here. Please note that if you are paid by BACS your payment will usually clear sooner than if you are paid by cheque

This shows and deductions made for non-dependants in your household as a weekly amount. This is based on the income of any non-dependants

This shows your Council Tax Benefit entitlement as a weekly figure

Your annual Council Tax demand converted to a weekly figure

The difference between your Benefit entitlement and your Council Tax bill. Please note your Council Tax will not be billed in weekly instalments, your Council Tax demand will show your instalments if applicable

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, Revenues and Benefits Division, PO Box 21, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6AN. Tel 01702 215000
Email benefits@southend.gov.uk

BENEFIT DECISION NOTICE
Please read the notes overleaf carefully. A more detailed explanation of this calculation can be provided on request

TERESA WOOD
11 EVERGREEN TERRACE
WOODFORD
NEW FOREST
AB1 2CD

12345678
1234567

Claim Reference
Council Tax
Landlord
Rent Reference
Date
Benefit Enquiries

17 Oct 2008
01702 215001

REASON FOR CALCULATION: New Claim

HOUSING BENEFIT
The Weekly Benefit Award is:
Less Overpayment Recovery:
Net Benefit Payable:
Weekly gross Rent/Council Tax is:
Amount you must pay weekly:
The Benefit Starts on:
Weekly Eligible Rent/Council Tax:
Weekly Ineligible Service Charges:
The first payment will be:
This will be paid on:
Payment will be made by:
Future Payments will be made:

£130.38
£0.00
£130.38
£115.38
£0.00
21 Sep 2008
£130.38
£0.00
£279.39
06 Oct 2008
Crossed Cheque
Cheque 4 weekly in arrears
£0.00

COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT
The Weekly Benefit Award is:
Less Overpayment Recovery:
Net Benefit Payable:
Weekly gross Rent/Council Tax is:
Amount you must pay weekly:
The Benefit Starts on:
Weekly Eligible Rent/Council Tax:
Weekly Ineligible Service Charges:
The first payment will be:
This will be paid on:
Payment will be made by:
Future Payments will be made:

£18.33
£18.33
£0.00
21 Sep 2008
£18.33

Credited to your Council Tax Account
£0.00

NON DEPENDANT DEDUCTIONS:
The Weekly Benefit Award is:
Less Overpayment Recovery:
Net Benefit Payable:
Weekly gross Rent/Council Tax is:
Amount you must pay weekly:
The Benefit Starts on:
Weekly Eligible Rent/Council Tax:
Weekly Ineligible Service Charges:
The first payment will be:
This will be paid on:
Payment will be made by:
Future Payments will be made:

continued onto next page.

Applying for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

What are Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit?

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit is a government scheme that local authorities run to help people on low incomes pay their rent and their council tax.

How are Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit worked out?

To calculate Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit the following are considered:

- The money coming into your household.
- Your savings and investments.
- Your circumstances.
- The number of people living in the property.
- The amount of rent you are charged (for Housing Benefit only).
- The amount of Council Tax you are charged (for Council Tax Benefit only).

Who can claim Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit?

You can claim if you:

- Are on a low income.
- Are responsible for paying rent (for Housing Benefit only).
- Have a savings less than £16,000 (this rule is different for people over 60).
- Have to pay Council Tax on your home (for Council Tax Benefit only).

How do I claim these benefits?

If you wish to make a claim for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit you need to complete our online application form. Please see the Do it Online section on our website. The application form covers both Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit, so if you want to claim both benefits you only need to complete one form.

- If you are of working age and you make a claim for Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance or Incapacity Benefit you can also claim Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit at the same time using the Customer Management System (CMS) managed by the Job Centre.
- If you are over 60 and you make a claim for Pension Credit you can also claim Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit at the same time via the Pension Service. If you apply via the CMS or the Pension Service you will not normally have to complete a separate Council application as well. We may however have to contact you to gather further information.

How do I fill in the application form?

You must answer all the questions on the claim form. If you leave any questions blank we will return the form to you to fill in fully. This could delay your benefit. You must send us evidence to confirm any information you give on your claim form.

If you need help filling in this form, have any questions, or if you are disabled or you cannot leave your home, we may be able to visit you at home please call 01702 215001 and speak to an advisor. Someone else can fill in this form for you as long as:

1. You check the information is true and complete and sign the declaration (part 17); and

2. The person who fills in the form for you signs the declaration (part 17) to say that they have completed the form on your behalf.

What supporting evidence will I need to provide?

It is important that you provide all necessary documents to prove your income, identity and National Insurance Number and proof of your partners National Insurance Number if applicable. We will also need to see proof of income for any other adults you have in your property excluding boarders, sub tenants or joint tenants.

The evidence you need to support a claim for benefit is proof of:

- Identity;
- Income and earnings;
- Capital;
- Rent if you are renting privately unless you are a council tenant;
- National Insurance number;
- Details of who lives in your household and their income.

If you are already receiving State Pension Credit, the Pension Service will send us details of your income and savings. We accept original documents, photocopies of original documents or scanned documents. Please note we reserve the right to request to see the originals if the copies supplied are not of a satisfactory standard.

You can send the evidence in the post or bring it into the Customer Service Centre, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue. If you do not have all the evidence we ask for, return the form anyway. If you delay returning your application form, you may lose benefit. You must provide any missing evidence within 1 calendar month.

What happens next?

When your claim has been assessed we will send you a letter telling you:

- How much (if any) benefit you are entitled to;
- When your benefit will start; and
- The details that have been used to work out your benefit.

If you are not entitled to Council Tax Benefit you may be able to get Second Adult Rebate. Second Adult Rebate is for help with your Council Tax if you share your home with one or more adults who:

- Are over 18;
- Do not pay rent;
- Do not pay Council Tax; and
- Are on a low income.

You can qualify for Second Adult Rebate regardless of your income, savings and investment. If you think you may qualify for Second Adult Rebate contact the Revenues and Benefits Department by calling 01702 215001 and ask to speak to an advisor.

When will my benefit start?

Benefit will normally be awarded from the Monday after we receive your claim form. You can however have your claim start from an earlier date if you fulfil certain criteria. For example if you are moving into a property and become liable for the first time or if you have claimed Income Support or Jobseekers Allowance.

How can Housing Benefit be paid?

If you are a council tenant your Housing Benefit is automatically credited to your rent account. If you are a Housing Association tenant and entitled to Housing Benefit your rent can be paid in one of the following ways:

- Straight into your bank or building society account; or

- Direct to the landlord.

If you would like us to pay your Housing Benefit direct to your landlord or agent you must complete the form 'Direct Payment of Housing Benefit'. If you are a private tenant renting from a private landlord your Housing Benefit is normally paid direct into your bank account. It is your responsibility to pass the rent onto your landlord when your rent is due. If you feel that you cannot manage handling your rent we can consider paying direct to your landlord, however, we will need you to complete a Direct Payment to your Landlord form and we will also need to see sufficient proof to back up your claim.

How can Council Tax Benefit be paid?

If you are entitled to Council Tax Benefit we will use it to reduce the amount of Council Tax you will have to pay.

Can my benefit be backdated?

In certain circumstances we can backdate Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. We will only backdate your benefit if we think you had a good reason for not making your claim sooner. We will consider each claim individually. If you want us to backdate your claim, please write to us or use the extra information box on the application form giving the reasons why you did not claim earlier. We do have limits on how much we can backdate. Please contact us for further information on 01702 215001.

Changes in circumstance

You must tell the Revenues and Benefits Department of all the changes in your circumstance as soon as the change happens. You can use our online changes in circumstances form, alternatively you can tell us about the changes in writing.

If you do not tell us about a change within one month of it happening your benefit will be affected. You may either lose benefit you would have been entitled to, or have to pay back benefit you were not entitled to. Deliberately failing to tell us of a change is a criminal offence and you could be prosecuted. You must provide original documents to prove any changes to your circumstances.

The following list gives examples of the type of changes that may happen. This is not a complete list of changes that you should tell us about.

- Any of your children leave school, home or stop getting child benefit.
- The number in your household increases or decreases. For example anyone moves into or out of your home (including lodgers and subtenants) or a new child is born.
- Your income or the income of anyone living with you changes.
- Your capital/savings and investment increase.
- You, or anyone living with you, become a student, go on a youth training scheme, go into hospital or a nursing home, go into prison or get/change/leave a job.
- Your rent changes.
- You move home.
- You or your partner are going to be away from your home for more than a month.
- You receive any decision from the Home Office.

What happens if I think your decision is wrong?

If you think the benefit start date or the details we have used to assess your claim is wrong you can write to us for further information of how your benefit was calculated. If you still disagree with our decision, you have one calendar month to write to us asking us to look at your claim again. We will write to you to tell you the result. For more detailed information on the appeals procedure. Please refer to the 'Reviewing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit decision' leaflet.

Claiming a Discretionary Housing Payment

This leaflet contains information and advice on claiming extra help to meet your Council or housing costs. This extra help is called a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP).

What is a discretionary housing payment?

A discretionary housing payment (DHP) is an extra payment that the council can make if the Council believes that you need extra help with your housing costs. DHP's are not payments of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit. The council cannot give DHP's for the following:

- Service charges not covered by Housing Benefit (such as electricity or water).
- Any rent that you owe.
- Rent, if you are only entitled to Council Tax Benefit.
- Council Tax, if you only get Housing Benefit.
- Second Adult Rebate.

Who can apply for a discretionary housing payment?

You can apply if the amount of benefit you get is less than the rent or council tax you have to pay. (This includes council tenants, council tax payers and people whose Council Tax Benefit has been restricted because of the council tax band their property is in.) The council will only award a DHP if we think that you are suffering exceptional hardship.

How do I apply?

In order to claim you will need to complete our online application form, go to www.southend.gov.uk and go to the Do it Online section, then select Make an Application.

How does the Local Authority decide who is entitled to a discretionary housing payment?

When we decide whether to make a DHP, we will consider:

- The money you have coming into your household;
- The money that you are spending, including living costs, bills, debts; and
- Your personal circumstances.

An officer from the Revenues and Benefits department may contact you to discuss your application or to invite you to an interview.

How much will the payment be and how long will I receive it for?

The amount of the DHP will depend on how much we think you need to help you pay your housing costs. A DHP is intended to help in the short term. We will give you a payment for as long as we think is appropriate to help you pay your housing costs.

If we decide to give you a payment, we will write to you and let you know the amount and how long you will receive it for. If awarded DHP's are usually paid alongside any Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit that you get. This is to keep any extra payment costs for the council down. It is important to remember that DHP's are not benefit payments.

I've had a discretionary housing payment before – can I apply for another one?

A discretionary housing payment is paid for a set period of time. At the end of that period you can reapply for discretionary housing payment if you think that you still need extra financial help. The council will consider each application for a discretionary housing payment individually. We cannot guarantee that you will receive a discretionary housing payment, even if you have received one before.

What if I disagree with the decision about my discretionary housing payment?

If you think that our decision is wrong, you should write to us and ask us to reconsider our decision. You have one month from the date of our decision to write to us asking for your application to be looked at again.

If I get a Discretionary Housing Payment what do I do if my circumstances change?

If your circumstances change, you must tell us in writing straight away. Your benefit claim for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit and DHP will be looked at again to see if it needs to be changed. If the change means that the amount of DHP or benefit we have paid you is too much then you will have an overpayment that you will have to repay.

For further information and advice on all aspects of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit contact us Housing benefit on 01702 215001.

Reviewing Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit Decision

What to do if you have any questions about your Housing Benefit and / or Council Tax Benefit decision.

If you do not understand how your benefit was worked out or if you disagree with the amount of benefit you have been awarded you should contact the Revenues and Benefits Department at the Council on 01702 215001. Please note we can only deal with queries in regards to your Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claim. We cannot deal with any decisions made by the Pension Service, The Rent Service or the Department for Work and Pensions.

Who can contact the department about a decision?

The following people can contact us:

- The person claiming the benefit.
- An appointee (this is someone who is appointed to act on behalf of someone who cannot act for themselves).
- A landlord, if it is regarding a decision about whether Housing Benefit will be paid direct to you, or if you are querying an overpayment.

What can I do if my application is refused?

You can do any of the following. You can ask for:

An explanation

An explanation can be asked for at any time. You can either

- Phone the department on 01702 215001.
- Email your query.
- Write to us. Send the letter to Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, Support Services Directorate, Revenues and Benefits Division, PO Box 21, Southend on sea, Essex SS2 6AN.

We shall endeavour to explain our decision to you. If you email or write to us please include a contact number. In some cases it might be easier to speak to you.

A Written Statement

A written statement will be sent explaining exactly how the department made its decision on your claim. The written statement will include all the relevant regulations the decision was based on. You must ask for a written statement within one month of the date of the decision letter.

Reconsideration of the decision

If you disagree with the decision on your benefit claim, or if you do not believe we have taken all your circumstances into account you can ask to look at our decision again. A reconsideration must be requested in writing within one month of the date of our decision. In order to reconsider our decision a separate member of staff will look at the claim and the decision. If it is decided that the original decision was wrong we will change it and write a letter to you telling you what the new decision is. If it is decided that the original decision is still correct we will write to you to confirm that our original decision still stands.

Appeal

You can ask for the Tribunals Service (an independent organisation) to consider your case at an appeals tribunal. You must write to us within one month of the date on our decision letter. If we have already

reconsidered your claim and have not changed the decision, you must write and ask for an appeal within one month from the date of the letter confirming our original decision.

What happens if I do not contact you within the one month time limit?

If you contact us late we can only deal with your request if you have special circumstances which meant that you could not contact us sooner. If you are contacting us late you must tell us the reasons why you did not contact us sooner.

Further information and advice

You can find further information and advice about claiming Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit at:

Directgov: www.direct.gov.uk

The Department for work and Pensions: www.dwp.gov.uk

Jobcentre Plus: www.jobcentreplus.co.uk

The Citizens Advice Bureau: www.citizensadvice.org.uk or www.southendcab.org.uk

(The contact number for the Citizens Advice Bureau for Southend on Sea is 01702 610610).

Or you can contact the Revenues and Benefits Department on 01702 215001.

Remember to contact us as soon as you have a problem with a decision. If you do not contact us straight away, you may lose your right to dispute the decision.

Housing & Council Tax Benefits:

A Guide to Overpayments & Repayments

A guide to Overpayments

This leaflet is designed to explain the following:

- What an overpayment is.
- How you will know whether you have an overpayment.
- The process involved in repaying the overpayment.
- What happens if the overpayment is not repaid.
- How to repay your overpayment.
- Contacts for further advice.

What is an overpayment?

An overpayment of benefit happens when you are paid benefit to which you are not entitled. An example of when this happens is when you have not told us straightaway of a change in your circumstances.

How will I know if I have been overpaid?

The Council can recover all overpayments under Housing Benefit Regulations unless they are caused by an official error and we could not reasonably expect you to know you were being overpaid. All money owed to the Council affects the services we can offer with the budgets we have and ultimately the level that our Council Tax is set at each year. The Council is committed to the collection of overpaid Housing Benefit. We will take all necessary recovery action to ensure the money owed is repaid.

If you have been overpaid, the Council will write to you and let you know if you have been overpaid. In the letter we will give you full details of the overpayment including:

- The reason for the overpayment;
- The period that the overpayment covers;
- The total amount of the overpayment;
- Information about your appeal rights;
- Who the overpayment is to be recovered from; and
- The method of recovery.

How are overpayments recovered?

If you are still eligible to receive Housing Benefit, we will make deductions from your weekly entitlement to reduce your overpayment, this is known as clawback. With effect from 1st April 2012 claimants receiving Income Support or Jobseekers Allowance, the basic recovery rate is £10.65 per week.

For working claimants we can take a minimum deduction of £10.65 per week. For fraud overpayments the minimum rate of recovery is £17.75 per week.

Where we are making deductions from your Housing Benefit entitlement and you feel the deduction is causing you extreme hardship, you can request us to reconsider the level of deduction we are taking by completing an income and expenditure form.

If you no longer receive Housing Benefit we will send you an invoice for repayment. If you cannot afford to clear the overpayment in one lump sum you are invited to contact us to discuss repayment by instalments. When coming to an arrangement to repay the overpayment with you, we will consider your household incomes and outgoings and other debts you are repaying or commitments you have. We may ask you to complete a financial statement to tell us about your circumstances.

Landlord Recovery

If you are a landlord that owes an overpayment and you receive Housing Benefit for any other tenants, we will recover your overpayment from the benefit payable in respect of another. Where recovery is made from another tenant's benefit, that tenant will be deemed to have paid rent to the value of that recovery.

How to pay back your Housing Benefit Overpayment

• Direct Debit

Direct Debit payments can be taken on the 1st, 10th, 15th 20th or 25th of each month. A direct debit mandate must be completed and returned to us. Note: if you wish to pay by direct debit a downloadable form can be found on our website www.southend.gov.uk/benefits or by calling the overpayment team on 01702 215241.

• Allpay Card

You can use the Allpay swipecard to repay your overpayment at any shop displaying the Paypoint logo or at a Post Office. Contact the Overpayments Team on 01702 215241 to request a card.

• Online

Payments can be made on line via our website www.southend.gov.uk Please quote your invoice number. Note: with effect from 2nd April 2012 there will be a 1.5% surcharge on all credit card transactions.

• Internet banking

To use home banking service with you will need to quote our bank account number 20145904, our sort code 20-79-73 and your invoice number.

• Standing Order

To set up a standing order please quote our bank account number 20145904, our sort code 20-79-73 and your invoice number.

• Telephone using a Credit or Debit Card

Call 01702 215241 during normal office hours or call 08702 406650 24 hours a day and use our automated system to make repayment under the Housing Benefit Option number 6. Note: with effect from 2nd April 2012 there will be a 1.5% surcharge on all credit card transactions.

• Post

Cheque or postal order (no cash) made payable to Southend-on-Sea Borough Council. Please include your invoice number with the payment.

• Post Office Giro Using the form on your Invoice.

• Bank Giro Using the form on your invoice, free at any Barclays Bank within the Borough.

What will happen if I do not make an arrangement to repay?

You will be contacted by telephone or visited by a member of the Overpayments team. Your debt could be passed to an outside agency for them to collect the debt on our behalf.

The Council can apply to the Department for Work and Pensions to make deductions from certain State Benefits you may receive. From some Benefits we can deduct up to a third of your income to recover our overpayment.

We are also able to register your overpayment in the County Court. Once registered, we will hold an order to recover against you, which can be enforced by the Court. Enforcing the Judgement can mean you will be summoned to Court to examine your finances and to fix an appropriate instalment arrangement. Failure to comply with the Court order will result in the Court Bailiff being instructed under a warrant of execution. We can apply for an attachment of earnings which means we will recover this debt from your salary / wages.

We can also apply for a charging order on your property or a third party order to recover money from your bank or building society account. If we register your overpayment in the County Court and then proceed to enforce the Order to recover, you will be liable for the extra costs incurred. These will be added to your original debt.

Please note that failure to repay or make an arrangement to repay your Housing Benefit overpayment may result in CCJ's (County Court Judgements) and this will adversely affect your credit rating.

REMEMBER

- Do not ignore any letters sent to you.
- Inform the council of any changes in your circumstances immediately.
- If you cannot afford the repayment speak to a member of staff who will happily discuss other options with you.

Benefit cap factsheet

DWP Department for Work and Pensions

The benefit cap was announced in Spending Review 2010

“Cap household benefit payments from 2013... so that no workless family can receive more in welfare than median after tax earnings for working households”.

Background

The cap will be introduced from April 2013 and will apply to the combined income from the main out-of-work benefits, plus child benefit and child tax credits.

Working assumption is that the cap will be:

- £500 p/wk for couples and lone parents
- £350 p/wk for single adults

Exemptions

The following households will be exempt from the cap:

Those entitled to:

- **Working Tax Credit**

Those in receipt of:

- **Disability Living Allowance**
- **Personal Independence Payment (from April 2013)**
- **Attendance Allowance**
- **The support component of ESA**
- **Industrial Injuries Benefits**
- **War Widows and War Widowers pension**

Claimants who have been in employment for 52 weeks or more when they claim benefit will be exempt from the cap for up to 39 weeks.

Findings from the latest Impact Assessment

(published 23/01/12)

- **67,000** households will be affected by the cap in 2013/14 (75,000 in 2014/15)
- The average benefit reduction is **£83** a week per household
- **17,000** households will be subject to both the local housing allowance cap from Jan 2012 and this cap from April 2013
- **44%** of households affected by the cap are in the social rented sector
- **56%** of households affected by the cap are in the private rented sector
- **69%** of households affected by the cap have 3 or more children
- **27%** of households affected by the cap have 5 or more children
- **52%** of households affected are lone parents
- **39%** of households affected receive jobseekers allowance
- **22%** of households are in receipt of ESA
- **38%** of households are in receipt of Income Support

Locations of Households affected

Latest modelling suggests:

- 54% of affected households are in Greater London
- 9% of affected households are in the South East
- 6% of affected households are in the North West
- 5% of affected households are in Scotland
- 3% of affected households are in Wales

Where the benefit cap would not apply

Claimants will not be capped where someone in the household (claimant, partner or any children they are responsible for and who live with them):

- Obtains work and becomes entitled to Working Tax Credit;
- Receives one of the benefits that exempt recipients from the cap.

People could also:

- Move to cheaper accommodation or negotiate a rent reduction to one which is more affordable.

Delivery phases

- **Phase 1** - from April 2012, Jobcentre Plus and Local Authorities will be providing support to those households claiming out-of-work benefits that will be impacted by the Benefit cap in April 2013
- **Phase 2** - implementation of the Benefit cap for new and existing claimants from April 2013, via a deduction from Housing Benefit
- **Phase 3** - New claims to Universal Credit (UC) will be subject to the cap from October 2013.



Housing Benefit BACS Payments



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Please complete all the questions on the form and write the answers in block capitals using black ink.

Name:

Address:

Housing Benefit Reference Number:

If you wish for your Housing Benefit to be paid direct into an account please provide the following details:

Name / Names the account is in:

Name of bank or building society:

Sort Code:

Account number:

Declaration: Please read this carefully before you sign and date it.

- I declare that the information I have given on this form is correct and complete.
- I understand that if I give information that is incorrect or incomplete you may take action against me. This may include court action.
- I know that I must let you know in writing about any changes in my circumstances which might affect my claim

Signature:

Date:

For Claimant's Only:

If this form has been filled in by someone other than the person claiming please tell us why:

Name of person who filled in the form:

Signature:

Relationship to person claiming:

Date:



These tips are for people who are or who are thinking of becoming an **assured shorthold tenant**.

You are likely to be an assured shorthold tenant if:

- your landlord is a private landlord
- the tenancy began on or after 28 February 1997
- the house or flat is let as separate accommodation and is your main home.

If you are not an assured shorthold tenant or are not sure what sort of tenancy you have, see the further information section at the bottom of this leaflet.

DO:

- **Look for the SAFE kitemark** if you are using an agent – all SAFE agents have client money protection. This means that your money will be protected if the agent goes out of business.
- **Ask whether the agent is a member of a professional body** such as the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, the Association of Residential Letting Agents, the National Approved Lettings Scheme or the Property Ombudsman – agents who belong to such organisations have to sign up to certain standards of practice and you will have access to an independent complaints procedure should things go wrong.
- **Check what fees the agent charges** – it is important to be clear up front what you will be charged for and how much.
- **Ask for a written tenancy agreement** as this will help ensure you know what you are responsible for, such as who pays utility bills, how long the tenancy is for and arrangements for paying the rent.

- **Agree an inventory with your landlord** at the start of the tenancy. This will make things easier if there is a dispute over the return of the deposit at the end of the tenancy.
- **Check that your deposit is protected** in one of the three government-authorised Tenancy Deposit Protection schemes. This is a legal requirement if you have an assured shorthold tenancy agreement.
- **Ask to see a gas safety certificate** if there are gas appliances in the property. It is a legal requirement for landlords to have an annual gas safety check carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer and to provide the certificate to you within 28 days of each annual check. For more information see the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) frequently asked questions page:

www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic/faqtenant.htm

or contact its Gas Safety Advice Line on: **0800 300 363**

- **Ask to see the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)** – this shows you the energy performance of the property which will have an impact on the gas and electricity bills.
- **Ask the landlord whether there is a record of any electrical inspections.** There is no legal requirement to have an electrical safety certificate but the landlord does have a duty to keep electrical installations in proper working order and to ensure that any electrical equipment supplied with the property is safe.
- **Look after the property** and keep it in a good condition. You have a duty of care to use the property in a responsible way and keep to the terms of the tenancy agreement.
- **Think about your own safety** and ask your landlord to install and maintain a smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector (this is not a legal requirement but is regarded as best practice).
- **Seek advice** if your landlord refuses to repair or properly maintain the property. Your local authority has powers to make the landlord take action if the property contains serious health and safety hazards.

- **Pay your rent on time** – your landlord may decide to seek possession of the property if you fail to pay your rent. You may be entitled to help with paying the rent. Contact your local authority for more information about this.

DON'T:

- **Stop paying rent if something goes wrong** – your landlord can seek possession of the property on grounds of non-payment of rent and you could be evicted.
- **Be a nuisance to the neighbours** – your landlord can seek possession of the property on the grounds of anti-social behaviour and you could be evicted.
- **Leave problems to fester** – speak to your landlord at an early stage and if relationships break down contact your local authority who may be able to mediate for you.
- **Do repairs to the property** without permission from your landlord.
- **Sub-let the property** unless you have permission from your landlord.

Further information

Directgov - the Government's website provides further information on private renting at:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/HomeAndCommunity/PrivateRenting/index.htm

Citizen's Advice Bureau - provides free, independent advice on housing and other issues through local advice centres and online. You can find your nearest centre online at:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/

or by telephone on: **08444 111 444**

Shelter - provides free, independent advice and information on housing issues. Shelter can be contacted via their helpline on: **0808 800 4444**. Their website provides further information at:

<http://england.shelter.org.uk/>

Community Legal Advice – can provide free independent legal advice if you are eligible for legal aid. Their helpline number is: **0845 345 4345**. Their website is at:

www.legalservices.gov.uk

‘Assured and Assured Shorthold Tenancies – A guide for tenants’ - this booklet is available on our website at:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/assuredassuredtenants

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ISBN: 978-1-4098- 3100- 6

GAS SAFE TOP TIPS FOR WINTER

Winter weather highlights how much we rely on gas to keep us warm, cook our meals and provide hot water. It's important that gas appliances are working properly and safely and don't break down just when we need them most.

Stay safe and don't be left out in the cold this winter. Remember these top gas safety tips and help protect yourself, your family and your home.

ALWAYS USE A GAS SAFE REGISTERED ENGINEER

Prepare for the winter by making sure your gas boilers, cookers and fires have been serviced by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

By law, all gas engineers must be on the Gas Safe Register. It is the only official list of qualified gas engineers and is there to help keep you safe.

HOW TO FIND A GAS SAFE REGISTERED ENGINEER

Finding a Gas Safe registered engineer in your area is quick and easy.

- Visit: www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk
- Freephone: 0800 408 5500

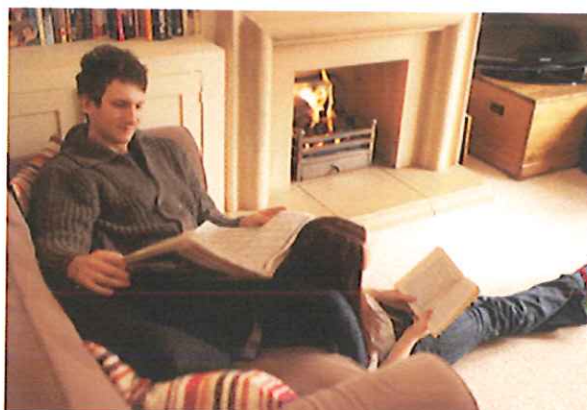
DID YOU KNOW?

- Having your gas appliances serviced every year will help keep them working safely and efficiently
- Badly fitted and poorly serviced gas appliances can produce deadly carbon monoxide
- A survey of gas engineers showed that most problems with gas appliances are caused by lack of annual servicing

GET YOUR GAS APPLIANCES SAFETY CHECKED EVERY YEAR

Make sure you get your gas appliances regularly serviced and safety checked once a year. This includes your gas boiler, gas cooker and gas fire.

REMEMBER – Only use a Gas Safe registered engineer. Dangerous gas work can be deadly. Badly fitted and poorly serviced appliances can cause gas leaks, fires, explosions and carbon monoxide poisoning.



ALWAYS CHECK THE GAS SAFE ID CARD

All Gas Safe registered engineers carry a Gas Safe Register ID card. Always check the front and back of the card before letting them into your home.

GAS SAFE CHECKLIST

- Is your gas engineer on the Gas Safe Register?
- Have you checked they are qualified to work on the specific job you require?
- Have you checked the front and back of their Gas Safe Register ID card?



Switching tariffs and other ways to get the best from your energy supplier

According to the energy industry regulator, Ofgem, you could save £130 per year by switching supplier or by changing your tariff.

The process of switching suppliers is very easy, and can usually be done with a phone call and/or a letter. And you will often make savings because the new energy company wants your custom and will offer you a good deal. An easy way to make the switch is by using one of the price comparison and switching services listed below.

www.uswitch.co.uk | 0800 404 7908
 www.moneysupermarket.com | 0845 345 1296
 www.saveonyourbills.co.uk | 0800 055 3800
 www.switchwithwhich.co.uk | 0800 533031
 www.theenergysshop.com | 0845 330 7247
 www.simplyswitch.com | 0800 011 1395

However, before doing this, you should check if your existing gas or electricity supplier has a cheaper option for you. You may find that an offer from your new supplier is only temporary, and that you'll be put on a more expensive tariff in due course. The thing to remember is that it is not only **who** supplies your energy that matters, but **how** you are billed as well.

1) Dual fuel?

If you buy your gas and electricity from the same supplier it is usually cheaper, but not always, so you should bear this in mind when making your comparison.

2) Paying by monthly direct debit

Energy companies like it if you pay a fixed amount each month and will offer discounts of 5-10% to customers who do this. If your direct debit is not covering the bill or you are being charged too much, you can call up and request that the amount you pay is changed.

3) Switch to an internet tariff

This can save you another 10%. The only thing that will change is that you will get your bill by email.

4) Do a meter reading every time

Every time you receive a bill, check your meter. Most bills are based on estimates, and these are often inaccurate. If your supplier has under-estimated, you'll have to pay the difference at end of the year. If they have over-estimated, you'll get refunded, but not for several months.

5) Avoid pre-payment meters if you can

Some people like pre-payment meters because they do make budgeting easy. But pre-payment customers don't benefit from direct-debit discounts, online discounts or prompt-payment discounts. So it usually pays to switch to a billed meter, though there may be a charge to do this. Compare pre-payment tariffs at www.energyhelpline.com

6) Do you qualify for a 'social' tariff?

Some energy companies offer special, cheaper tariffs to those who are in financial hardship. But, oddly enough, these aren't necessarily the cheapest tariffs (people paying by direct debit and on-line often pay less). If you think you may qualify, ask your supplier.

The Priority Services Register

If you are of pensionable age, disabled or have long-term health issues you can ask to be put on the Priority Services Register and receive extra help from your energy supplier. This might include:

- Quarterly meter readings to keep on top of bills
- Free gas-safety check
- Relocation of meters to a more accessible place
- Advance notice of disruption to supply
- Special controls for appliances and meters
- Password protection scheme to deter bogus callers
- Bills sent to friends, relatives or carers
- Services for hearing/vision impaired customers



You can save money by saving gas and electricity. Turn the page to find out how

Turn over for energy saving tips ▶

Most UK households get their gas and electricity from one of the 'big six' energy suppliers



Tips for lower energy bills

Happy paying your gas and electricity supplier more money than you need to?

Thought not. Here are 15 ways to cut your bills ...

1) Keep the oven door shut as much as possible; every time you open it, nearly a quarter of the heat escapes.



2) Give your clothes a day in the sun; and give your tumble drier a break. Clothes dried in the fresh air feel great, and there are drying days in winter, too.

3) Food in the oven cooks faster when the air inside flows freely, so avoid putting foil on the racks.

4) Don't leave your phone on charge all night. It only needs three hours – and try not to leave the TV and other kit on stand-by.

5) Be a friend to your freezer. Defrost it regularly to help it run more efficiently.

6) Catch 'em young. Encourage your children to switch off electric toys and lights that they're not using. They'll soon get the hang of saving energy.



7) Dodge the draught! Fit draught-excluders to your front door, letter box and key hole, and draw your curtains at dusk to keep the heat in.

8) When boiling water, only fill the kettle with as much as you'll actually use (but make sure you cover the metal element at the base).

9) Buying a new TV, washing machine or dishwasher? Look out for the Energy Saving Trust 'recommended' logo, and remember: the bigger the TV, the more energy it'll use.



10) Dimmer is smarter. Use your dimmer switches to reduce the amount of energy used to light your room.

11) Wait until you have a full load before putting on a wash. Two half-loads use more energy (and water) than one full load.



12) Sleep tight. Make sure all the lights are turned off when you go to bed, or use a low-wattage night light if you do need to leave one on.

13) Turn your heating down by 1 degree. You'll hardly notice the change in temperature, but it'll make a big difference to your heating bill.

14) Put your fridge in a good spot. Somewhere the air can circulate behind it, but not next to a cooker or radiator.

15) New computer? Remember a laptop typically uses around 85% less energy than a new desktop PC.

For free domestic energy advice, call **0800 512 012*** or go to **www.cse.org.uk/advice**



Centre for Sustainable Energy

3 St Peter's Court
Bedminster Parade
Bristol
BS3 4AQ

0117 934 1400
info@cse.org.uk
reg charity 298740

We are a national charity that shares our knowledge and experience to help people change the way they think and act on energy.



More energy advice at **cse.org.uk/advice**

* This is the phone number of the National Energy Advice Service an independent and impartial body that offers a wide range of advice on energy water and transport to the domestic sector | Photos: top to bottom: LSI Robert Corbett/Stock.com, Grafism/Stock.com, Don O'Connell/Stock.com



Central heating controls

Making the most of the system

Getting a grip on your central heating controls will help heat your house more effectively and cut your fuel bills.

Timer or programmer

The timer or programmer allows you to control when your heating and hot water comes on and when it goes off.

This is handy because it means you can programme your **central heating** to fit around the way your home is used. If you're not at home or are in bed asleep, then the heating doesn't need to be on. The trick is to set your heating to come on half an hour before you get home or get up, and set it to switch off half an hour before you no longer need it. This is because an average home takes around 30mins to heat up when the heating comes on and 30mins to cool down when it goes off.

So, say you get up at 7.30am, leave for work at 8.30am and get home at 6.00pm. It would make sense to set the heating to turn on at 7.00am, off at 8.00am and on again at 5.30pm. In the evenings you should set the heating to turn off half an hour before you go to bed.

Your programmer may also have the option of setting different on/off times at the weekend, or even more than two cycles during the day.

What do the different settings on my central heating controls mean?

'Auto' means the heating will go on and off during the day at the times it has been programmed to do so.

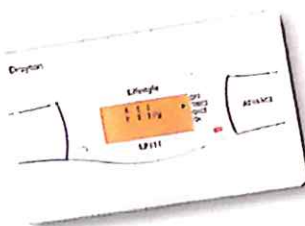
'24hrs' or **'On'** means the heating stays on all the time.

'Off' means the heating will remain off all the time.

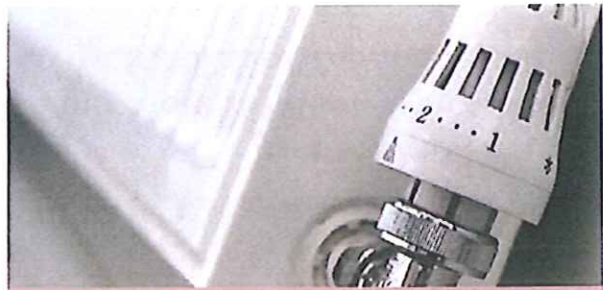
'All day', means the heating will switch on at the first 'on' setting you have programmed and then remain on until the last 'off' setting of the day.

'Boost' or **'+1hr'** switches the heating on for a one hour 'boost' of heat.

'Advance' moves the programmer to the next 'on' or 'off' setting in the daily cycle.



Images: TRV: www.istock.com / Mike Sligh
Illustration: www.istock.com / fox brush

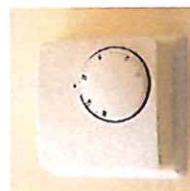


Radiator valves put you in control and save money

Setting the **hot water** timing depends on the type of boiler you have. If you have a hot-water tank the water in the tank will need to be heated up periodically during the course of the day. The amount of times the water needs to be heated up depends on how big and how well insulated the hot-water tank is, and how much water your household uses.

Room thermostat

A room thermostat is usually found in a hallway or sitting room. Its job is to monitor the temperature in the house and send a signal to the boiler telling it to switch off when the house is warm enough. Thermostats are normally set between 18 and 21°C. This is a comfortable temperature for most people, and warm enough to minimise the risk of 'flu and other 'winter' illnesses. Some people need to keep their home warmer due to their age or health problems.



Thermostatic radiator valves

Thermostatic Radiator Valves or TRVs (see photo above) allow you to control the temperature of a room by regulating the flow of water through the radiator. If, for example, during the day you spend most of the time downstairs you could set the TRVs on the downstairs radiators at to medium or high, whilst leaving the upstairs radiators low, or even turning them off altogether.

Turn your room thermostat down by 1°C. You'll barely notice the difference in temperature, but you could cut your heating bills by around £55 a year.



Turn over for energy saving tips ➤

Night storage heaters

A simple guide

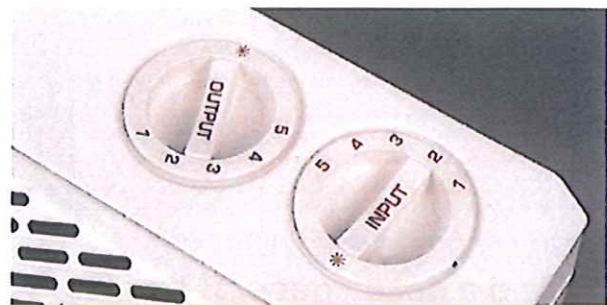
Night storage heaters can be a good option for households who use electricity to heat their home

Most storage heaters are wall-mounted and look a bit like radiators. They work by drawing electricity over the course of a few hours at night, and storing it as heat in a 'bank' of clay or ceramic bricks to use the following day. The advantage is that they can consume electricity at night, when it's cheap, and give out their heat many hours later.

As a consequence they work best if the household is on an **Economy 7 tariff**. This is an arrangement with an energy supplier by which the electricity that a household uses at night is much cheaper than that used during the day – typically about a third of the price.

The hours of cheap electricity are normally from 12 midnight until 07.00 in winter, and from 01.00 to 08.00 in summer, although this can vary. For more information about Economy 7, please see our other leaflet.

Every storage heater has a set of simple controls. An **input** setting allows you to regulate the amount of heat that the heater stores during the night. This is important because, even though night-rate electricity is cheap, there's no point paying for more than you need. If it's not particularly cold, or you'll be out of the house for most of



All storage heaters have input and output controls

the day, you don't need to set the input to maximum because there's no point storing so much heat. Most storage heaters will **only** charge up at night, so there is no danger of using expensive day-rate electricity.

The controls also have an **output** setting that allows you to regulate the amount of heat that the storage heater gives off. It means you don't have to use up all the stored heat at once, but can let it out gradually, saving some for the evening if you want to.

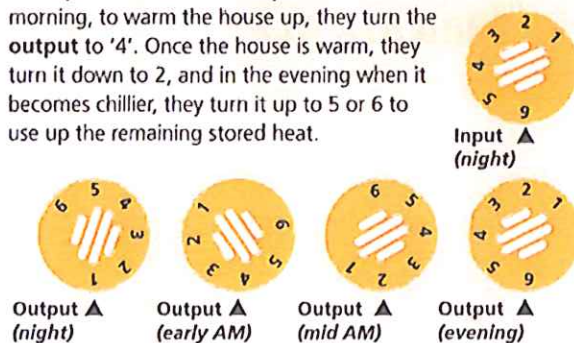
Some storage heaters have a timer that gives you even more control over the output. It allows you, for example, to programme your heater to come on at a time that suits you, for example when you get up in the morning or just before you get back from work. Others include a control that regulates the amount of charge the heater draws at night, depending on the temperature.

Some storage heaters have a 'boost' setting. This doesn't use 'cheap-rate' stored heat, but uses 'peak-rate' electricity directly from the mains, so it should only be used if the stored heat has run out.

Jack and Gwen's storage heater

Jack and Gwen are a retired couple living in a rural area. They are off the mains gas network and use electricity for their heating and hot water. They have **storage heaters** to take advantage of the Economy 7 tariff that they have chosen.

In winter, they are in for most of the day. This means they want the storage heater to charge fully at night, so they set the **input** to '6' and the **output** to '1' or 'off'. In the morning, to warm the house up, they turn the **output** to '4'. Once the house is warm, they turn it down to 2, and in the evening when it becomes chillier, they turn it up to 5 or 6 to use up the remaining stored heat.



Storage-heater controls vary from model to model. If you have a question about yours, give us a call.

Find out more ...

Contact us for free information and advice about your domestic energy use

Call free on **0800 512 012***
or go to **cse.org.uk/grants**



* From the phone number of the Energy Saving Trust advice centre, a free and impartial advice helpline offering advice on saving energy in the home, and transport advice. Both on 0800 512 012 or [cse.org.uk](http://www.cse.org.uk)

Storage heater tips for lower bills

The output setting of your storage heater should be turned off at night and also turned off when you are out of the room or out of the house

Don't use the boost setting except when you really need the extra heat

Avoid using supplementary plug-in heaters. It's better to turn up the input on your storage heater and store more heat

And a dozen general tips for keeping your energy bills low ...

1) Keep the oven door shut as much as possible; every time you open it, nearly a quarter of the heat escapes.



2) Tumble driers are expensive to run, especially if you're on a high day-rate with Economy 7. So why not dry your clothes in the sun on the line outdoors?

3) Put your fridge in a good spot. Somewhere the air can circulate behind it, but not next to a cooker or radiator.

4) Don't leave your phone on charge all night. It only needs a couple of hours.

5) Be a friend to your freezer. Defrost it regularly to help it run more efficiently.

6) Buying a new TV, washing machine or dishwasher? Look out for the Energy Saving Trust Recommended logo.



7) Catch 'em young. Encourage your children to switch off electric toys and lights that they're not using. They'll soon get the hang of saving energy.

8) Dodge the draught! Fit draught-excluders to your front door, letter box and key hole, and draw your curtains at dusk to keep the heat in.

9) When boiling water, only fill the kettle with as much as you'll actually use (but make sure you cover the metal element at the base).

10) Sleep tight. Make sure all the lights are turned off when you go to bed, or use a low-wattage night light if you do need to leave one on.



11) If you're on Economy 7 consider investing in a 'slow cooker'. And think about whether you could run other appliances at night to take advantage of cheap-rate electricity.

12) Wait until you have a full load before putting on a wash. Two half-loads use more energy (and water) than one full load.

For free domestic energy advice, call **0800 512 012**
or go to **www.cse.org.uk/advice**



Centre for
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Energy

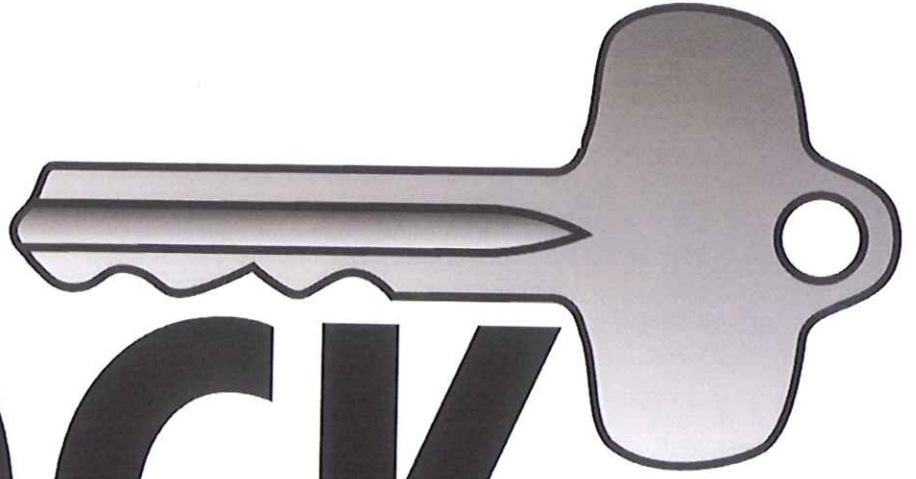
3 St Peter's Court
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We are a national charity that shares our knowledge and experience to help people change the way they think and act on energy.



More energy
advice at
**[cse.org.uk/
advice](http://cse.org.uk/advice)**



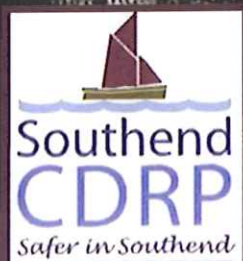
LOCK YOUR DOOR WHEN YOU'RE OUT

Even if you're just going to
the kitchen or the toilet, less
than a minute is long enough
for a thief to enter your room
and steal your property...
Don't make it easy for them.

Burglars are active in your area



- When you go out, even for a short time, **always** lock all doors and close and lock the windows.
- Window locks and inexpensive window alarms, especially on older windows, will help deter a burglar. (A burglar is less likely to break in if they have to smash a window).
- If you have deadlocks, **use them**. They make it harder for a thief to get out again. But **don't** leave the key near the door in an obvious place.
- **Don't** leave keys in locks or visible from the outside. Keep all keys, including car keys out of sight in the house. A burglar will smash a window if he can reach the key to unlock the window.
- **Avoid** advertising your new valuables to thieves by leaving the empty packaging outside your home. Recycle it or keep it out of sight until the day your rubbish is collected.
- **Don't** 'hide' spare keys outside or in a garage or shed.
- Use timers for lights and radios if you are away from home overnight. They will create the impression that someone is in.



**DON'T MAKE YOUR HOME AN
EASY TARGET FOR THIEVES**

What is Warm Front?

Warm Front is a government-funded scheme which provides grants to make your home warmer, healthier and more energy efficient. Each year we help more than 50,000 people across England make their homes warmer. The Warm Front Scheme is managed by Carillion Energy Services.

What does the Warm Front Scheme provide?

The scheme provides energy efficiency advice and a package of insulation and heating improvements tailored to each property up to the value of £3,500. Some homes that need oil or LPG central heating may receive a grant of up to £6,000. There is a full list of the improvements on the back of this leaflet.

Do I qualify?

Warm Front is designed for people who own their home or rent it from a private landlord and are on certain benefits. There is a full list of the benefits on the application form.



How do I apply for Warm Front?

To find out if you qualify and to apply for the Warm Front Scheme:

- fill in the application form, seal it and return it to us (you do not need to use a stamp);
- call us free on **0800 316 6011** and quote MK764, or
- apply online at www.warmfront.co.uk

Lines are open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm and Saturdays from 9am to 5pm. If you need this information in another format, please call a Warm Front advisor free on 0800 316 6011.



Could your home benefit from Warm Front? If so, get in touch with the Warm Front team.

We approve all work before asking our registered contractors to carry it out. Any improvement work you arrange yourself will not be covered by the Warm Front Scheme, and you cannot claim costs through the grant.





If you have received a grant before, you may qualify for extra insulation and heating work, depending on the improvements you originally received.

If, at any stage, you have any questions, please get in touch with one of our team on **0800 316 6011**. Lines are open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm and Saturday from 9am to 5pm. Or, you can visit **www.warmfront.co.uk** for more details.

Improvements that the Warm Front Scheme can provide



Loft insulation

This is one of the most effective ways to make your home more energy-efficient. We fit two layers of insulation in the loft.



Draughtproofing

We fit plastic strips to all windows and outside doors. Doors will have plastic strips on the top and the two sides, and a brush on the bottom.



Cavity-wall insulation

We fill the space between your cavity walls with insulation.



Hot-water-tank insulation

We check the insulation around your hot-water tank, and fit a jacket if necessary.



Gas, electric, LPG or oil central heating

We install a combination boiler and up to six radiators, including all valves and pipework. We may also repair your existing heating system. In the case of electric heating we will install up to three storage heaters.



Glass-fronted fire

We can convert your solid-fuel open fire to a glass-fronted fire.

the warm front team
A GOVERNMENT FUNDED INITIATIVE



You could receive a grant up to £3,500 to make your home warmer

DEPARTMENT OF
**ENERGY
& CLIMATECH**

SOME SIMPLE RULES FOR YOUR SINKS AND LOOS

When you put things like food, fat and sanitary products down the drain, they don't disappear. They all meet up in the sewer, get stuck together and cause blockages.

From wipes to paper towels, vegetable peelings, rice and pasta to cooking fat, at any one time there are

1,000s OF TONNES

of waste clogging the sewers under Southend-on-Sea.



Avoiding blocked pipes and bad smells is easy!

Avoid a stink – put only water down the sink

Used water is the only thing that should go down your plughole!



Avoid blocked pipes – bin pads, tampons and wipes

Use your black bags for sanitary waste and only ever flush wee, poo and toilet paper.



To help keep things clear, put food waste in here

Food scraps and small amounts of cooled, solidified cooking fat go in the caddy. Clear used oil goes in a sealed plastic bottle and then to the Household Waste Recycling Centre for recycling.

LITTLE IDEAS TO SOLVE A BIG PROBLEM

IN THE BATHROOM

Use a bin – keep it next to the loo, so nobody's tempted to flush rubbish.

Wipes and cotton wool – chuck them in the bin along with floss and cotton buds.

Sanitary products – use bags for discreet disposal in the bin.

Then... put all of these in your black bin bags.

IN THE KITCHEN

Food scraps and grease – put food scraps and small amounts of cooled solidified fat in the food waste caddy.

Use sink strainers – they'll catch all the tiny bits of food that could clog your pipes. Empty them into the food waste caddy or bin when they get full.

Clear used oil – wait until it has cooled, put in a sealed plastic bottle and take to the Household Waste Recycling Centre for recycling.

GET HELP AND IDEAS TO KEEP YOUR PIPES CLEAR

Learn more and get a free sink strainer at keep-it-clear.co.uk

love
every
drop
anglianwater

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA!
PLUGHOLES AND
TOILET BOWLS
ARE FOR WATER,
NOT WASTE

HELP STOP
BLOCKAGES AND
SMELLS WHERE
YOU LIVE

KEEP IT CLEAR



Smoke Control Areas

Smoke arises from industrial and commercial chimneys, domestic chimneys and bonfires. Over the past 30 years there have been continual improvements in air quality which can be directly related to smoke control.

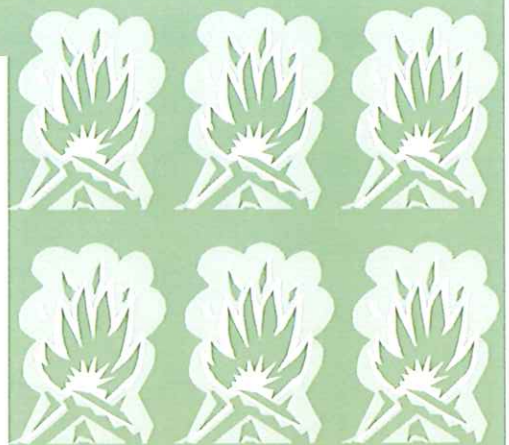
Details of smoke control area / bylaw

Industrial and commercial boilers and incinerators are subject to strict controls. These relate to the type and nature of fuel being burned, the operation of the boiler or incinerator, the treatment of the waste gases and the construction of the flue. It is now possible to operate these processes without causing any smoke, except at certain times such as start-up

The Pollution Control Officer will investigate complaints of smoke which cross a boundary and cause problems within neighbouring properties.

ehrc.org.uk

13 Oak Lodge, Eversley Park Road, London N21 1JL
tel. 07802 349581 fax. 0871 6611321 email. info@ehrc.org.uk



Bonfires and Smoke Nuisance

Environmental Protection

The law

Every year the Council's Environmental Health Division receive a large number of complaints about bonfires causing a repeated nuisance. Such nuisances need never arise if due consideration is shown to our neighbours. This leaflet explains the law and gives some suggestions to help prevent a nuisance being caused.

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 allows the Local Authority to take offenders to court should their bonfires cause a nuisance to neighbours (i.e. have an unreasonable effect on their enjoyment of their home or garden). Moreover any bonfire on trade premises which causes **dark** smoke is an offence regardless of whether anybody else is affected (section 2, Clean Air Act 1993). The fines could be up to £20,000 for each offence. Persons complaining to the Council will likely be asked to keep a diary of events to assist officers investigating the matter.

Currently there are no byelaws which allow or prohibit burning.



Do's and don'ts

Should you decide though to have a bonfire, kindly note these recommendations:-

- **DO NOT** burn damp grass clippings or 'green' material as this creates thick smoke
- **DO NOT** burn any oily rags, rubber, plastics, damp garden waste or other materials which would inevitably create heavy smoke or toxic fumes.
- **DO NOT** light a bonfire when your neighbours have washing drying, or are out enjoying their gardens or have windows wide open.
- **DO NOT** light bonfires one hour before dusk, or leave them burning overnight. Choose the time of day and weather conditions that will cause the least inconvenience to neighbours.
- **DO NOT** leave your fire to smoulder for long periods. Never leave a fire unattended. Hose it down until cold before you leave it.
- **DO** advise your nearest neighbours before you light a bonfire so they can be prepared for any minor inconvenience that may arise.

- **DO** burn material quickly in small quantities so the minimum amount of smoke is created. An incinerator makes this much easier.
- **DO** choose your bonfire site carefully, well away from trees, fences and windows. Beware of attempting bonfires on very windy days as it can so easily get out of control. Have a hose-pipe and buckets of water handy just in case.

The ashes, when cold, can be raked into the soil as a useful fertiliser. Small pieces of charcoal can be included, but larger pieces should be picked out first.





The Responsible Dog Owner

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Dog Information

What is a responsible dog owner?

A responsible dog owner is a person who before purchasing a puppy asks himself the following important questions:-

HAVE I GOT THE TIME?

Most dogs require 40 minutes a day walking, time spent playing, visits to the vets for check ups and grooming, whether short or long coated. Bedding must be washed regularly. Obedience and toilet training is a must.

CAN I AFFORD IT?

It is estimated that a medium sized dog will cost £3,000 per year to keep. This includes, food, Vets bills, inoculations, flea and worming preparations and poop-scoops. Neutering to prevent an unwanted litter should also be considered.



IS MY HOME SUITABLE?

The size of house is important when deciding the type of breed. Small breeds can live quite happily in a smaller property. Larger breeds such as Rottweilers, Dobermans and German Shepherds clearly will not.

A garden is essential for all types of dog. Freedom to play with its own toys prevents boredom and a safe corner with its own bed and private space is also needed.

A dog will make a mess. The family must be willing to accept accidents and muddy paws and be willing to help teach the dog right from wrong in a controlled and kind manner.



AM I PREPARED TO 'CLEAN UP' AFTER IT?

Current local dog byelaws in parks and open spaces require owners to remove dog faeces and place it in bins provided. Street footpaths and verges are also included. It is therefore important to use a poop-scoop when out walking the dog.

New owners must be prepared to do this at all times. Many people are now training their dogs to 'go at home' which is acceptable and much easier for the dog owner as well.

If you can answer YES to these four questions, then you should make a good owner and have a dog that is socially acceptable.





Constant barking can be avoided

If you leave your dog outside all day:

- Try not to put his kennel near a neighbours fence where the dog may be tempted to bark.
- Ensure the garden is completely secure, to prevent your dog from straying locally and causing problems to neighbours.
- Don't blame the dog and think that you will solve the problem by replacing him with another. All dogs bark and unless you change your lifestyle at the same time, the problem will still be there.
- Considering a second dog for company may help. But think about this carefully. Do you have the space and can you afford it? A second dog could result in more, not fewer problems.

Nothing you have tried works

- Old dogs can be taught new tricks. Contact the dog warden or your vet for advice.
- The Dog Warden is always available to give advice and help. If necessary a visit can be made to advise you on the best methods available to you.



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Barking Dogs

Dog Information

Constant barking can be avoided

Barking comes naturally to dogs, but the constant barking or whining of a dog can be very disturbing or annoying for your neighbours. Often this problem occurs when you are out of the house and you do not realise that someone has complained.

In law, a barking dog can be a noise nuisance. You as the owner could be taken to court if you do nothing to stop the nuisance. This information note will suggest some simple things you can try.

Why Dogs Bark

Dogs are not by nature solitary animals, they need the security of a family group. Pet dogs regard their owners as a substitute family and can soon become distressed when left alone for long lengths of time.

Some of the reason why a dog may bark:

- Loneliness
- Boredom or frustration
- Attention seeking
- Defending his territory
- Medical problems



Training

Training is important so that your dog does not bark at anything that moves. A well-trained dog should be able to distinguish between visitors allowed into the house and who are intruders. Good training is essential at an early age. This combined with affection and companionship should mean that your dog will not develop these bad habits. Always start as you mean to go on.

Some Simple Things to Try

Some dogs just don't want you to go out. Get your dog used to the idea using some of the following ideas:

- Leave at differing times during the day. That way he may not be so concerned each time you leave. Don't make a fuss of your dog when you leave him.
- Try putting the dog on his own in another room for a few minutes, then gradually build up the time you leave your dog alone. Do not return to the dog until he is quiet for a period. When you return praise him.
- Some dogs bark because they want to join in with what's going on outside. If this is the problem, try leaving your dog where he cannot see outside.

- Some dogs will settle only if they can hear a human voice. Leaving the radio or television on at a low volume may help.
- Try not to leave your dog for long periods, but if you have to, see if there is someone who can look in during that time. Maybe that person could take the dog for a walk or let him out into the garden, if you have one. A dog door is very useful to allow the dog access to the garden when you are not there.

If you do have to leave your dog for long periods:

- Feed and exercise him before you go out and leave him fresh water to drink.
- Make sure his bed or basket is comfortable and not in a draught or direct sunlight.
- Leave him a large marrow bone to chew and some of his favourite toys to play with.
- Make sure that the room is not hot or too cold and that there is adequate ventilation.

If you are not returning until after dark, either leave a light on or use a night light that comes on automatically when it gets dark.

Urban foxes

The adaptable nature of the red fox *Vulpes vulpes* has made it a very successful resident of many British towns. Although many people enjoy seeing foxes around their homes or in parkland, foxes can be a nuisance and sometimes cause damage. Foxes are not a protected species as such, but they are protected against abuse and ill-treatment.

Biology and behaviour

Foxes eat a wide range of foodstuffs. Their diet includes small mammals, birds (including eggs), reptiles, insects, earthworms, fruit, vegetables and carrion. In urban areas, about a third of their diet is scavenged waste or food deliberately provided by householders. Foxes readily store their food, usually by burying it in the ground. Foxes are predominantly nocturnal, but in urban areas the sight of a fox active during the day is not unusual.

Urban fox

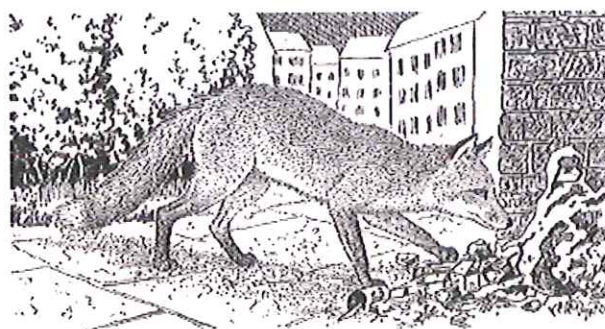
Foxes usually shelter and breed below ground in an 'earth' or 'den'. They prefer well-drained soil and sometimes use burrows made by rabbits or badgers. In urban areas, they also live underneath sheds and outbuildings, even under the floorboards of houses.

Urban foxes tend to live in family groups comprising one dog (male), a dominant vixen (female) and subordinate vixens which may be the young of the previous year. The group defends a territory located within a larger home range (foraging area) which may overlap with that of other groups. Territories in urban areas are typically much smaller than in the surrounding countryside.

Foxes breed once a year, with cubs being born during March and April. The average litter size is 4 or 5. The cubs start venturing in the open from late April onwards, and will normally stay with the vixen until the autumn, with some remaining until January. Urban fox cubs usually disperse between 3 and 8 km (2–5 miles) of their

birthplace. Foxes born in towns rarely move into rural areas.

Foxes can live for over 8 years, but this is rare; the average life span of foxes in towns is only 18 months. Most urban foxes are killed on the roads.



Urban fox

Problems with urban foxes

Domestic animals

Given the opportunity, foxes will kill small domestic pets and livestock such as rabbits, guinea pigs, ducks and chickens. Unlike many predators, foxes have the habit of killing more than they need to eat immediately. They may subsequently return for any uneaten corpses. Foxes are unlikely to be a danger to adult cats or dogs, although there are occasional reports of foxes fighting with a cat or small dog.

Nuisance

The digging, defecating, and bin-raiding habits of foxes can cause considerable nuisance and disturbance in urban areas. Gardens can be spoilt as foxes establish an earth, dig

Urban foxes

for invertebrates, bury food, or help themselves to fruit and vegetables. Complaints of 'unearthly screams' at night are also common during the mating season between December and February.

Spread of disease

Foxes can carry a range of parasites and diseases relevant to the health of domestic pets and people. Despite this, there is scant evidence that foxes are actually an important source of infection. Instead, domestic pets and particularly dogs, which are susceptible to a similar range of diseases as foxes, are probably a much more important source of infection for humans.

Foxes are susceptible to sarcoptic mange. This is a skin condition caused by a mite resulting in extensive hair loss and it can be fatal. It is highly contagious among foxes, and can be passed to domestic pets such as dogs and cats, especially if they use the same areas as foxes such as holes through fences and hedges.

Foxes carry a number of internal parasites. For people, the most important are probably the roundworm *Toxocara canis* and tapeworm *Echinococcus granulosus* which causes hydatid disease (the formation of fluid-filled cysts in organs such as the liver). These parasites also occur in dogs and are transferred between hosts through the ingestion of worm eggs passed in the droppings of an infected animal.

Foxes are also susceptible to Weil's disease (Leptospirosis), which can be passed on to other animals and humans through contact with their urine. Distemper has not been recorded in wild foxes in this country.

Britain is currently rabies-free, but in countries where rabies occurs, foxes can contract and pass on the disease.

Prevention of problems

Dealing with fox problems is the responsibility of the owner or occupier of the property where the problem occurs. A realistic expectation of what can be achieved is essential when considering options to deal with a fox problem.

Foxes are now established residents of many urban areas and are likely to remain so. They are attracted to gardens by the food and shelter that they offer. Furthermore, some people enjoy seeing foxes in their gardens, and actively encourage them by providing food. This may cause problems, and the interests of neighbours should be considered.

Unfortunately, there is no simple solution to the problems that foxes cause. The most effective deterrent is a suitable perimeter fence, but fox-proof fence can be expensive to install and unsightly. There are however, a number of alternative measures that will minimise, if not eliminate, fox problems.

Do not feed foxes, either intentionally or unintentionally. Ensure that foxes cannot access food put out for other wildlife or pets. Make bird tables inaccessible for foxes to climb onto, for example, by erecting a covered table at a height of at least 1.5 m (5 ft). Always clear away spilt food from under any bird feeder. These measures will also reduce the vulnerability of feeding birds to predation by foxes and help prevent rodent infestations, which can also attract foxes.

Store rubbish, especially food waste (including composted waste), in fox-proof containers made of materials such as metal or plastic. Ensure that dustbin lids are secure, eg by having a clip-on lid or expanding 'bungie' straps which secure the lid, and avoid leaving rubbish sacks unprotected. Clear away wind-fallen fruit.

Damage to lawns is sometimes caused by foxes attracted by the presence of invertebrate turf pests such as leatherjackets and chafers. Removal of these pests using a pesticide approved for the purpose or a biological control product (eg nematode worms) may alleviate the problem; however, the effects on other invertebrates (and those species which feed on them) should be fully considered before doing so. The costs of preventing this type of damage can sometimes outweigh the benefits; in fact, some gardeners tolerate it as damage is often seasonal, occurring for limited periods of the year.

Urban foxes

Provide secure, fox-proof accommodation for vulnerable pets and livestock, especially at night. Foxes can bite through ordinary chicken wire; welded mesh provides a much stronger alternative. Foxes climb well, have strong jaws and are powerful diggers. They can be very tenacious, especially when they have had a 'taste' of what is available. Do not underestimate the determination and intelligence of a fox.

Human interference will often encourage foxes to leave a site. Filling in excavations as soon as they appear can prevent foxes from moving in where they are not wanted. This can be done by light blocking with loose soil. This will help to ensure that no animals become trapped below ground. Care must be taken to check that the hole is not part of an active badger sett; blocking or interfering with a badger sett without a licence is illegal. Advice on distinguishing badgers setts is available from Natural England (see 'Further information').

Health and safety

Remove and dispose of all fox, as well as dog and cat, droppings. Fox droppings are distinguishable from those of a cat or dog by their musty odour and often twisted shape. Do not handle droppings with bare hands and ensure that children (and adults) always wash their hands after spending time in the garden.

Ensure that cats and dogs are regularly wormed and are vaccinated against Weil's disease.

Should a problem with foxes persist despite taking these precautions, you may wish to consider installing fencing or using a chemical repellent.

Fences

Foxes can be excluded from areas such as gardens by wire mesh or electric fences, but as previously mentioned, a fox-proof fence can be expensive to install and unsightly. Additionally, electrified fences may not be suitable if you have children or pets.

A suitable mesh fence needs to be at least 2 m (6 ft 6 in) high, buried to a depth of at least 45 cm (1 ft 6 in) and with a sheet of smooth material at the top of at least 30 cm (1 ft) depth. The

addition of an electric wire will improve the security of this fence.

For guidance on the use of electric fences contact Natural England's Wildlife Licensing Unit (see 'Further information').

Chemical repellents

These compounds have an unpleasant odour or taste, which makes an area or particular substrate unattractive to foxes. Only compounds that are approved as animal repellents may be applied and they must be used in accordance with the instructions on the product label. 'Renardine', a bone oil product that previously could be used, is no longer approved. Other repellents are available from garden centres or agricultural suppliers.

Repellents should not be placed down a fox hole, and the use of anything other than an approved product as a repellent may be illegal. Care should be taken to avoid getting repellents on the skin or clothing.

The efficacy of a repellent depends on the determination of a fox to enter the area to be protected, and this will be affected by the availability of alternative food and shelter.

Methods of fox control

Legal methods

There are a number of methods of fox control that may legally be used. These include baited cage trapping, shooting and snaring. Fallen livestock, including dead poultry, should not be used as bait in cage traps due to the potential risk of spreading disease.

Prohibited methods

It is illegal to use self-locking snares, any bow or crossbow, any explosive other than ammunition for a firearm, or a live decoy. It is also illegal to poison foxes. No fumigant compounds are currently approved for the gassing of foxes.

The Hunting Act 2004 makes the hunting with dogs of wild mammals, including foxes, illegal. This includes deliberately using dogs to chase foxes away from gardens, allotments etc. It does not include cases where the dog chases the fox when its owner does not intend it to do so. The Act contains a few tightly drawn exemptions

Urban foxes

intended to allow certain necessary pest control activities to continue, but these are very unlikely to apply in urban areas.

Fox control in urban areas

Fox control is not generally recommended in urban areas. Killing or relocating foxes usually provides only transient relief from the problems foxes cause, as vacant territories are rapidly reoccupied once the control measures cease. This is particularly true in urban areas where fox densities are high.

The capture of urban foxes and their release into rural areas is not recommended on welfare grounds and this practice could be an offence under the Animal Welfare Act (2006).

In addition, shooting and snaring are unlikely to be appropriate methods of control in urban situations for reasons of safety, and in the case of shooting, public disturbance. The relocation of foxes is also not recommended mainly due to their territorial nature.

If you decide to undertake fox control you are advised to employ a professional pest controller.

Foxes as pets?

Foxes do not make good pets. Sometimes young cubs are found apparently abandoned; these are best left alone as more often than not the vixen is close by and will soon find them.

Foxes are wild animals and, even if hand-reared, readily revert to their wild habits. Few people have the space to accommodate adult foxes adequately and owing to their territorial nature it is very difficult to release a hand-reared fox into the wild.

Releasing a hand-reared fox into the wild may also be an offence under the Animal Welfare Act (2006) if the animal is not capable of fending for itself.

Further information

In England, further advice on dealing with fox problems, as well as problems caused by other mammals and birds can be obtained by contacting Wildlife Management and Licensing at: Natural England, Wildlife Licensing Unit, First Floor, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Bristol, BS1 6EB Tel: 0845 601 4523 (local rate) Email: wildlife@naturalengland.org.uk

A range of leaflets on wildlife topics is available online at: www.naturalengland.org.uk

The full text of the Hunting Act 2004 can be obtained from The Stationery Office (Tel: 0870 6005522) or from the HMSO website: www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk.

In addition, a leaflet about the Act and a short summary of its provisions are available from the Defra website (www.defra.gov.uk) or the Defra publication centre (Tel: 0845 9556000).

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