

# Welcome Home



**Important information  
about your home and tenancy.**



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# Introducing NPH

## About NPH

Welcome to your new home and to Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH). This document has been designed to provide you with important information about your home and how to contact us.

NPH look after your home on behalf of West Northamptonshire Council. NPH is owned by West Northamptonshire Council.

NPH is managed by an Executive Management Team and led by a Board of Directors.

### **NPH is responsible for the following services:**

- Allocations and Lettings
- Repairs, Maintenance and Development
- Housing Management, including dealing with anti-social behaviour
- Tenancy Support
- Tenant Involvement
- Rent Collection
- and Ecton Lane Park traveller site.

## Our Opening Hours

NPH's offices are open from 9:00am - 5:00pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays)

## Get in Touch

### Call us

Customer Services: **0300 330 7003**

Emergency Repairs: **01604 837999**

### Visit the One Stop Shop

You can visit us at the Guildhall One Stop Shop on St Giles Street Monday - Friday.

The One Stop Shop is wheelchair accessible and is equipped with:

- telephones and computers
- hearing loops and type talk phones
- disabled toilets
- and baby change facilities.

### Online

You can find all the latest information about our services on our website. You can also pay your rent online, view your rent account and report a repair (non-urgent repairs only).

**[www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk](http://www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk)**

# Moving in

## What to expect

Before you move in we will make sure that your home is:

- **clean throughout;**
- **structurally sound and weatherproof;**
- **free from damp;**
- **free from any infestations;**
- **has an energy efficient boiler;**
- **has a valid Energy Performance Certificate;**
- **and meets gas, electrical & heating compliance standards.**

Any decoration you wish to add or any enhancements to the property are your responsibility. You must ask for permission in writing for any structural changes.

We may need access to your home to complete essential works after you move in.

## Talking to your Housing Officer

If you want to make any changes to your home, you can discuss this with your Housing Officer. You can find out who your Housing Officer is by visiting:

**[www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/your-housing-officer](http://www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/your-housing-officer)**

## What you need to do now

### **Uncap the Gas**

If you have gas in your home will need to uncap the gas before it can be used.

NPH's gas contractor PH Jones can be contacted on 01604 588811. They will uncap your gas for no fee. Please contact them as soon as you move in.

### **Energy Supplier**

Your current energy supplier is Energy Angels. We work closely with Energy Angels to make sure you're getting the best deal possible.

Please call them free on 01902 585503. If you need any advice, please contact our Customer Services team on 0300 330 7000

## Find out who your energy supplier is:

### 7003 Step 1

**Gas** - Contact the National Grid on 0845 835 1111.

**Electric** - Contact MPAS the Meter Point Administration Service on 0845 603 0618.

### Step 2

Once the supplier is known, call them directly to open an account and arrange to get a gas card (if you have a pre-payment meter). Your supplier will either send you your gas card in the post or give you a reference number to collect from a local shop.

### Step 3

Register your gas card by following the instructions given to you by your supplier. Once registered, you will be able to top up your card at the shops. It is a good idea to keep your receipt when you top up your card in case of any problems.

## ✓ **Contact your Water Supplier**

For water rates, billing enquiries and payment arrangements contact Anglian Water on 03457 91 91 55.

## ✓ **Arrange Council Tax and Benefits**

Let the Council Tax department know that you have changed address. If you were receiving any benefits like Housing Benefit before you moved you will also need to let the relevant benefits departments know too.

You can contact West Northamptonshire Council on 0300 330 7000 for any Council related benefits or Council Tax matters.

You can also find many services online at [www.northampton.gov.uk](http://www.northampton.gov.uk).

If you are receiving other types of benefits (such as Job seeker's Allowance or Working Tax Credit) you will need to inform Job Centre Plus.

## ✓ **Cover your belongings with Home Insurance**

We advise all NPH tenants to take out household contents insurance to cover personal belongings.

Crystal Home Contents Insurance, arranged in conjunction with Thistle Tenant Risks, can protect your belongings at an affordable price.

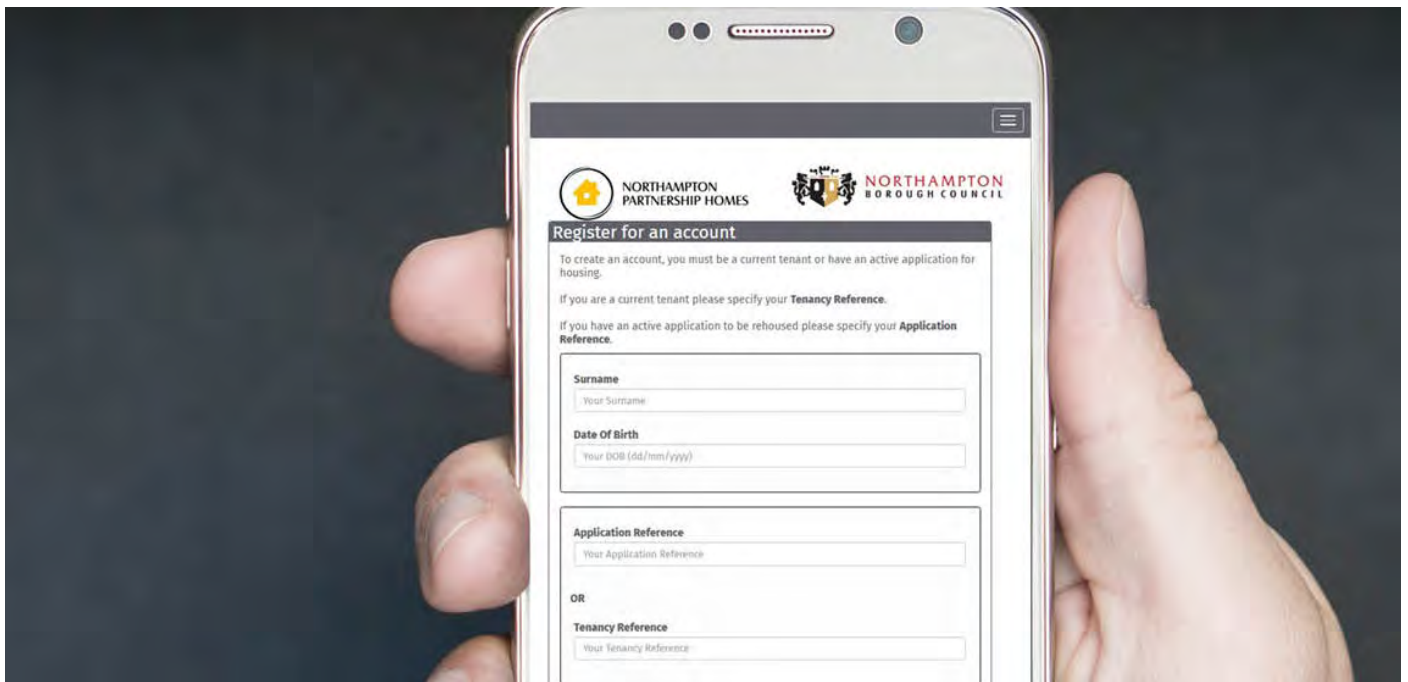
If you would like more information on this scheme, you can contact Crystal through 0345 450 7288 or online at: [www.crystal-insurance.co.uk](http://www.crystal-insurance.co.uk).

## **Other**

Please make sure your post from your previous address is re-directed and inform the TV licensing agency when you change address.



# Manage your tenancy online



## Do it Online

We want to make accessing services when you need it as easy as possible.

Using our website [www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk](http://www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk) you can manage your tenancy online at whatever time suits you.

- Pay your Rent
- View your Rent Balance
- Report a non-urgent repair
- Apply to keep a pet
- Apply for a garage
- Report Anti-social Behaviour

In the next pages, we'll show you how to do this.

**Username:** .....

**Password:** .....

# Useful links to NPH's website

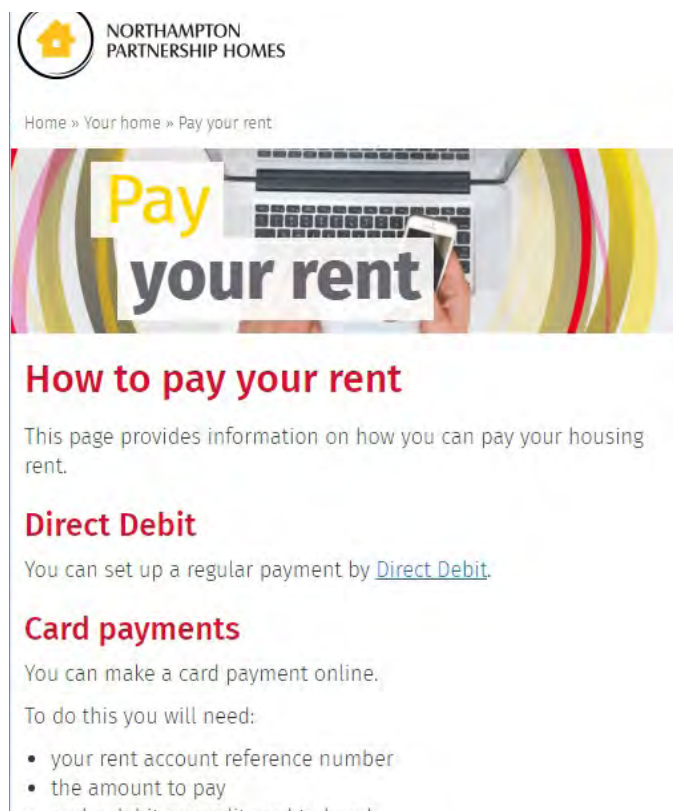
## Pay your rent

### Where to go:

[www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/pay-rent](http://www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/pay-rent)

### What you can do:

- Set up a Direct Debit
- Make a Card Payment
- Get advice on Housing Benefit



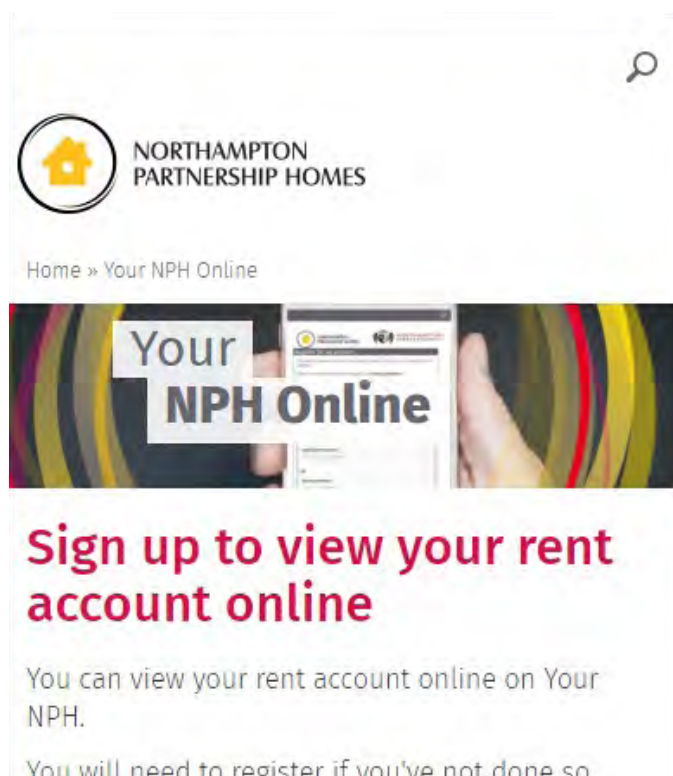
## View your rent balance

### Where to go:

[www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/your-nph-online](http://www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/your-nph-online)

### What you can do:

- Register for an account online
- View and manage your rent statements
- Update your contact details
- Set up a Direct Debit payment



# Reporting a Repair

## How to report a repair

You can report a repair by calling NPH's Contact Centre on 0300 330 7003 or by visiting our website. When you report a repair we will ask for information on the type of repair so we can prioritise your appointment.

Repairs are prioritised as Emergency, Urgent and Non-Urgent.

## Emergency Repairs

Your repair is an emergency if:

- there is immediate danger to you or persons in the property
- there is risk of flooding or risk of major damage to the property
- it is required to make the property secure
- you lose the heating in the property (between 31 October – 1 May).

We aim to respond to an emergency repair within 24 hours.

## Repairs that are your responsibility to fix:

- replacing keys or locks when keys are lost or stolen or when you get locked out
- trying to clear blockages in basins, sinks baths or toilets
- decorating
- resetting trip switches
- replacing light bulbs
- putting up TV aerials and satellite dishes (only with our permission)
- maintaining garden paths (except any that lead from the boundary gate to the front and back doors)
- replacing clothes lines and rotary driers (unless for communal use)

## Urgent Repairs

Your repair is urgent if:

- there are full or partial sanitation problems (treatment and disposal of waste)
- there is no water, electrical supply or heating
- there is risk of immediate damage to the property
- there is a possible health, safety or security risk
- there is a serious inconvenience to the household.

We aim to carry out your urgent repair within 7 days.

## Non-Urgent Repairs

You can report a non-urgent repair online.

We aim to carry out your repair within 28 days.

Please provide as much information as possible on the repair and location at home when reporting online.

- replacing plugs and chains in baths, sinks and basins
- replacing handles and latches to doors and kitchen units
- adjusting doors when new carpets and laminate floorings have been fitted
- testing and cleaning smoke detectors
- fitting waste supply pipework and vents for washing machines
- keeping your gully grids clear of leaves
- replacing door knockers, bells or security chains
- replacing toilet seats and flush chains

# Repairs you will be charged for

Keeping your home in good condition is a joint effort between NPH and you.

## You are responsible for:

- Keeping the inside of your home clean and in good condition
- Repairing things that have been damaged
- Making sure that when repairs are needed through wear and tear you let us know as soon as possible
- Internal decoration
- Keeping your garden tidy
- Your own belongings, including keys

If you ask us to carry out any repair you are responsible for, such as damage to your home, we will charge you. This is called a recharge.

Check out the following tips for avoiding recharges.

- Ask a friend or relative to keep a spare set of keys for you – lock changes cost over £80 and from the 1st April we will be asking for payment up front before we make an appointment.
- Beware of DIY - botched jobs or alterations we haven't authorised could be expensive!
- Don't pretend your repair is an emergency to get it done quicker.
- If you're moving out, make sure you leave the property empty, clean and tidy.
- Take out some home insurance – we can put you in touch with a company who offer low cost insurance to NPH tenants and leaseholders [www.crystal-insurance.co.uk](http://www.crystal-insurance.co.uk)



Did you know that if you call us between 2pm and 4pm your call will be answered more quickly than the earlier part of the day?



# Your responsibility as a tenant

## Your tenancy agreement

When you begin your tenancy you will sign a tenancy agreement. This agreement is a legal contract between you and your landlord. The tenancy agreement also states that neither you, your children, other members of your household or visitors must cause nuisance to neighbours or any other person in the local area, whether they live there or not.

## Your tenancy

The majority of new tenants will start on an introductory tenancy. Please remember if you have an introductory tenancy and you behave anti-socially it is relatively easy for the council to evict you for breaching your tenancy conditions. If we apply to the court for a Possession Order and we have

followed procedures correctly, the court has to grant the order. You will lose your home with no guaranteed rehousing.

We offer all new tenants the opportunity to sign a Good Neighbour Agreement as part of the sign up process. It is expected that most tenants will be happy to sign it. The agreement describes what Anti-Social behaviour is and sets out the positive behaviour we expect.

**Read all about your responsibilities and our responsibilities at:**

**[www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/being-tenant](http://www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/being-tenant)**

[About NPH](#)[Find a home](#)[Your home](#)[Supporting you](#)[Get involved](#)[Home](#) » [Your home](#) » [Being a tenant](#)

## Being a tenant

### Your tenancy

The following information is a guide to your tenancy.

Information from the tenant handbook can be found here and printed if required. Please contact us on 0300 330 7003 if you have any questions.

[Your responsibilities as a tenant](#)[Our responsibilities as your landlord](#)[Your tenancy](#)[Ending your tenancy](#)[Pay your rent](#)[Repairs](#)[Being a tenant](#)[Being a leaseholder](#)[Your housing officer](#)[Your safety](#)[Anti-social behaviour](#)[Ecton Traveller Site](#)[Do it online](#)[Report an empty home](#)

# Paying your rent

**Your rent is due weekly in advance**

## **You can pay your rent in a way that suits you:**

- Direct Debit (any day of the month or weekly on a Friday)
- Recurring Card Payment
- In the Post Office or shops with the Payzone sign (using your payment card or bar code letter that we will give you at the start of your tenancy)
- By phone using the 24hr payment line (01604 838383)
- On the Internet – through the NPH Website or with a NPH Your Account

Your rent is due weekly in advance as stated in your tenancy agreement. You can choose to pay your rent monthly but you will need to make sure that your account is one month in advance to keep in line with your tenancy agreement.

We appreciate that this may be difficult, however, if you can just pay a little extra each month to bring your account into credit this will really help.

## **Difficulty paying rent**

If you don't pay your rent you could lose your home.

We always deal firmly with non-payment of rent and service charges.

**If you don't pay your rent, you could lose your home**

## **This is because we rely on this income to pay for:**

- The management
- maintenance
- care taking and communal services you and others receive
- as well as to build and refurbish homes.

If you do fall into arrears or are experiencing financial difficulty we can help you find solutions, but only if you contact us and tell us what is happening.

We have a dedicated income team who can offer advice and support when you need it most.

# Paying your Rent

If you need advice, speak to your rent income officer



## Difficulty paying rent

You can get help to meet the cost of rent and service charges either through **Housing Benefit** or the housing element of **Universal Credit**. Your circumstances will determine which one you should claim. We can provide you with further advice about this.

In either case the amount of help you are entitled to will depend on your income and savings, as well as whether anyone else lives in the household and the amount of their income.

If you think you may be entitled to help with housing costs you must apply as soon as possible.

Housing Benefit is paid directly to your rent account but Universal Credit is paid to you, monthly, in arrears. You are responsible for managing your money and ensuring your rent payments are made from your Universal Credit payment.

## Help with the housing costs

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Call our Rent Income Team on: 0300 330 7003

For more information, please visit our website:

**[www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/pay-your-rent](http://www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/pay-your-rent)**

# Rental Exchange

At NPH we believe that you should get credit for paying your rent on time.

The Rental Exchange is a way to enhance your credit report without needing to take on new credit agreements.

To do this, we can provide your rental payment record to Experian on a regular basis. You will then be recognised for paying your rent on time, in the same way homeowners are recognised for paying their mortgage each month.

## What are the benefits?

Sharing your rental payment history will help create an online proof of identity, proving you are who you say you are and that you live where you say you live. Proving this makes you a more reliable potential customer to companies.

**A higher credit score means it may become easier for you to:**

- Qualify to pay for gas/electricity via a non-prepay tariff
- Receive better mobile phone rates
- Open a bank account
- Shop online
- Have a loan application approved
- Get a new credit card

If you have any questions or if you want to opt out of this service, please call us on 0300 330 7003.

## Or write to:

Data Management Officer  
Northampton Partnership Homes  
The Guildhall  
Northampton  
NN1 1DE



# What to do in an emergency

## Gas (smell, leak or fumes)

Call National Grid (Gas) immediately on 0800 111 999. Use a phone outside your home; using one inside, even a mobile, could spark an explosion.

- **Turn off the gas and open the windows.**
- **Turn the handle at the meter to the flat (horizontal) position.**
- **Do not smoke and put out any flames (matches and so on).**
- **Don't switch anything electrical on or off until the problem is fixed.**
- **Contact us and inform us of the leak and any other issues.**

If you can smell or see smoke, phone 999 or 112 immediately.

If there is no sign of smoke or fire, check whether the alarm has been set off by something else.

## Electricity

Turn the mains switch on the consumer unit to off. If you have a power cut phone 105.

## Water

Turn the mains stop tap to the right (clockwise). If you have no water supply, phone Anglian Water on 03457 145 145.

**For all other emergencies dial 999 or 112.**