

circle | more than housing

tenant handbook



Contents | Sections 1 - 8

Section 1 - Welcome to Circle Housing

1 Welcome to Your Circle Home	03
2 About Circle Voluntary Housing Association	03
3 How You Can Get In Touch	03
4 Our Shared Values	04

Section 2 - Before You Move In

1 Your Privacy	07
2 Your Tenant Rights	07
3 Your Tenant Responsibilities	07
4 Pets	08
5 How Rent is Charged	09
6 Service Charges	10
7 How to pay your rent	10
8 Property Condition Report	10
9 Moving into your home	11
10 Equality	12

Section 3 - Your Tenancy

1 Supporting You In Your New Tenancy	15
2 The Residential Tenancies Board	16

Section 4 - While You Are A Circle Tenant

1 Repairs and Maintenance	18
• Reporting a repair	18
• How can you help us?	18
• Reporting repairs in office hours	18
• Reporting an emergency out of office hours	19
• Repairs we can charge you for	20
• Repairs you are responsible for	20
• How quickly will we complete your repair?	24
2 Planned Maintenance	24
3 Improvements	24
4 Adaptations	25
5 Your Safety	26
• Gas	26
• Fire	26
• Electricity	27
• Winter safety in your home	27
• Home Contents Insurance	27

6 Transfers	28
7 Requesting an Addition to a Tenancy Agreement	28
8 Inheritance	28
• Who can succeed my tenancy?	28
9 Rent	29
• Your responsibilities	30
• Our responsibilities	30
10 Tenant Responsibilities (Home & Neighbourhood)	31
11 CCTV	33
12 Anti-social Behaviour	35
• I am experiencing antisocial behaviour	36
• How can I avoid annoying my neighbours?	36
• Domestic Abuse	37
• Hate Crime	37
13 Your Involvement	38

Section 5 - Leaving Circle

1 Ending your Tenancy	40
• Ending a Joint Tenancy	40
• When we can end your Tenancy	41

Section 6 - Complaints And Suggestions

1 Complaints, Suggestions & Compliments!	43
• What Happens When You Make a Complaint?	43
• Residential Tenancies Board (RTB)	44
• Comments And Compliments	44

Section 7 - Hints & Tips

1 Home Maintenance	46
• Interior	46
• Exterior	49
2 Our Website	50
3 Checklist	51

Section 8 - Useful Contacts

1 Contacts	53
2 Help & Advice	54
3 Notes	55

Section 1

Welcome to Circle Housing



Welcome to Your Circle Home

Welcome to Circle Voluntary Housing Association! We want you and your family to feel safe and secure in your new home and community. Our aim is to support you as you move and provide you with quality housing and services.

This handbook sets out useful information about your tenancy with us and our services; your rights and responsibilities and how you can contact us. It's important that you keep this handbook so that you can refer to it.

We hope that you will be able to find the answer to your question in the pages of this handbook. If that isn't the case, do please get in touch with us. Further information on all aspects of our services can be found on www.circlevha.ie or you can email us at info@circlevha.ie

About Circle Voluntary Housing Association

Circle is an Approved Housing Body with charitable status, this means we are a not-for-profit association with approved status from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. We are also a member of the Irish Council for Social Housing.

We have been providing high-quality, social and affordable housing to families and individuals since 2003. Our work is made possible by the funding provided by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government which is administered by local authorities. We work in partnership with Local Authorities to meet local social and affordable housing need.

How You Can Get In Touch

Our opening hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Out of hours Repairs & Emergencies after 5pm Monday – Friday, at weekends and bank holidays. To report an emergency repair when our office is closed, please call - (053) 937 4832.

Contact Circle:

Circle VHA, Phoenix House,
32 - 34 Castle Street,
Dublin 2,
Telephone: 01 407 2110 | Email: info@circlevha.ie | Web: www.circlevha.ie

What you can do on our Website:

- ✓ Log a repair request (for emergency out of hours requests telephone 053 937 4832)
- ✓ Pay your rent online.
- ✓ Complete a pet application.
- ✓ Report a complaint or give us feedback.
- ✓ Complete your confidential income statement for a rent review.
- ✓ View our policies.
- ✓ See tutorial videos on how to manage repairs in your home.

Our Shared Values

Our actions align with our vision to make a difference by providing quality homes for people in housing need.

At Circle Voluntary Housing Association, we firmly believe that how we interact with our customers, communities, colleagues and key stakeholders is of fundamental importance. Our passionate commitment to caring about our tenants and the services we deliver has led to the development of our core values - six behaviour-based principles that speak directly to the characteristics we hold high.

We Hear...

W

Willingness to embody all our values in a driven manner.

E

Empowerment of our staff and tenants.

H

Honesty allows for complete understanding, it aids in the delivery of integrity and putting our tenants' best interests at the heart of our decision-making.

E

Excellence reminds us of our continuous strive to be better.

A

Accountability benefits all, transparency will foster this, and the creation of solid and reliable documentation will ensure that this accountability is enforced.

R

Respect is the foundation of these values, without respect for us, others, and the service we provide we must ask ourselves why we put so much of our valuable time into the job we do.



Section 2

Before You Move In



Your Privacy

We fully respect your right to privacy. Any personal information which you provide to us will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality, strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988-2018. This includes all employees of Circle and the Board of Directors.

Circle Voluntary Housing Association will follow the principles of the Data Protection Act; we agree to:

- ✓ Only collect essential information.
- ✓ Not collect personal information about an individual just because we think that the information may be useful later.
- ✓ Tell people what we are going to do with the personal information we have collected about them.
- ✓ Constantly ask ourselves whether information is required for a particular purpose.
- ✓ Show people how their personal information is held. Contact dp@circlevha.ie
- ✓ Always keep personal information secure.
- ✓ Delete information that is no longer relevant.
- ✓ Wherever possible, keep personal information accurate and up to date.

Your Tenant Rights

- Secure, safe and affordable housing.
- Privacy is honoured.
- Confidentiality by way of policy and procedure.
- A supportive, safe and secure environment.
- Empowerment through encouraging and assistance in the process of decision making.
- Consultation on decisions relating to your home and experiences.
- Confidential assessment of your applications and the clear explanation of the application.
- Fair and consistent treatment.
- Timely and flexible response to tenants' needs.
- Equal treatment of all tenants.
- Responds to the individual and cultural needs of tenants in an appropriate manner.
- Works with other services to provide a more holistic approach to housing.

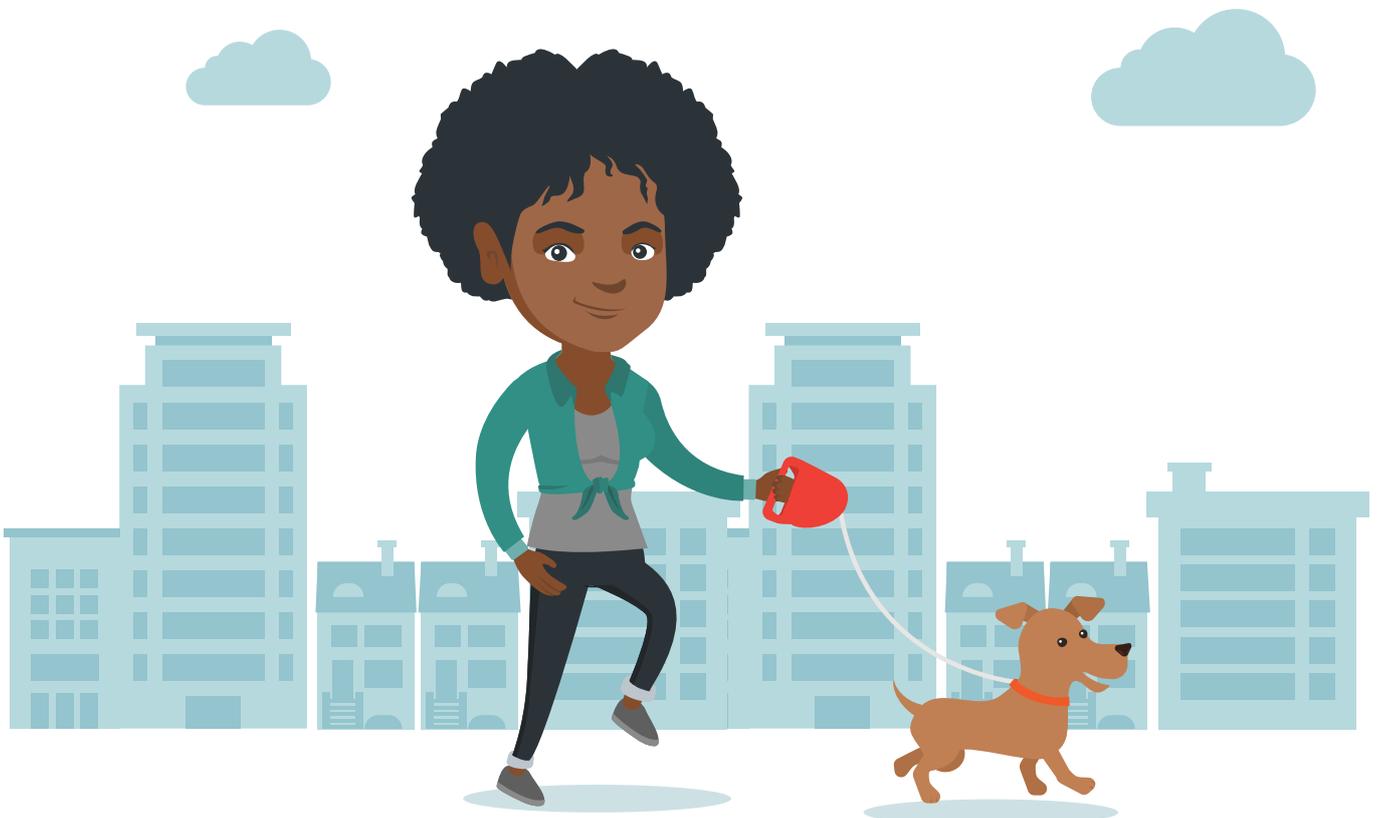
Your Tenant Responsibilities

- › Treat all Circle staff and our contractors' staff with respect.
- › Care for your property, including the grounds and gardens.
- › Abide by the terms and conditions of the Tenancy Agreement.
- › Report to Circle as soon as practicable any repairs or maintenance issues at your home.
- › Pay your rent on time and in advance.
- › Respect the rights of your neighbours regarding quiet enjoyment of the premises.
- › Notify Circle of any changes to household income or size.
- › Allow access of your property to staff when required.

Household Pets

We understand the attachment many people have to their pets and how important companion animals can be to the health and well-being of people. However, it is important to note that not all properties at Circle will be suitable for pets for several reasons including size of property, location or type of property.

Any tenant wishing to have an animal in their property, should apply for permission to keep a pet in writing to the office or by applying online. All applications will be assessed on the suitability of the pet for the property. Tenants found to be keeping pets in their property without the permission of Circle will be in breach of their tenancy. You can apply to keep a pet by submitting a pet application form which is available on our website.





How Rent Is Charged

Your rent is determined by the type of capital funding grant that Circle have received to purchase or build your property.

Capital Assistance Schemes (CAS) rents are determined by taking into account the tenant's means and the cost of providing and maintaining the dwelling. A rent allowance may be payable for those eligible tenants who satisfy a means test. Your Tenancy Service Officer will support you with your application.

Differential Rent Scheme rents are determined by your income. Each household's rent is calculated as a percentage of the household income. A copy of the rent calculation is included with your offer of tenancy.

Everybody living at the property will have their income considered when calculating the rent. Rents are reviewed annually, if your income or the income of any person residing in your household changes you must let Circle know so that we can revise your rent. You will be asked each year to complete a Confidential Income Statement and provide proof of all household incomes. You must tell us in advance if you want to have anybody else living in your home as this also affects the rent that you will need to pay. You can also request a review at any time if your circumstances change, or if you become aware of a discrepancy in the rent calculation. A new rent assessment may take up to 1 month so please submit all income related information.

Service Charges

Some homes have a charge for services such as maintenance of communal areas or centralised fire alarm systems. You will have been told about these charges when you signed your tenancy agreement with us. These charges are due to be paid alongside your rent and are reviewed on an annual basis.

How To Pay Your Rent

Household Budget – If you are in receipt of Social Welfare paid through An Post, then this is the best method of payment for you. Your rent will automatically be deducted from your Social Welfare and logged onto your rent account each time you collect your payment from the post office. To pay your rent by Household Budget, you need to complete a Household Budget form. Your Tenancy Service Officer will assist you in completing this form before you move in or you can contact the Income Management Team who will post one out to you.

Standing Order - If you have a bank account and would like to ensure your rent is paid on time each week, then this is the best method of payment for you. Your Tenancy Service Officer will provide you with a Standing Order form as part of your sign-up pack and you can also contact the Income Management Team for a standing order form. Please allow your bank 1 to 2 weeks to set up the standing order.

Rent Card – A Rent Card will be issued to you when you sign your Tenancy Agreement. This card has a unique Occupancy Code that relates to your tenancy. Your card can be used at An Post locations nationwide as well as Post Point retail outlets.

Credit or Debit Card Payments - You can make credit or debit card payments on our website or by calling the Income Management Team.

Important! You must provide your Occupancy Code when making payments, using any of the above methods. We cannot credit the money to your rent account unless you do which will mean that your rent account will be in arrears. Please contact us if you require your Occupancy Code.

Property Condition Report

When you sign a tenancy agreement for your property, you will be given a property condition report, detailing the condition of the premises you are moving into. As the tenant, you must review, complete and sign this form, add any comments and return it to your Tenancy Service Officer. If you move out of your property, this report will be used by Circle to determine whether there is any excess damage, beyond normal wear and tear to the property.



Moving Into Your Home - Things To Remember

We appreciate that it can be stressful moving into a new home. Here is a handy checklist to make your move easier.

- Contact gas, water and electricity suppliers to set up or change your utilities account.
- Take meter readings as soon as you move in.
- Find out where your stop taps, fuse box and trip switch are located (contact your Tenancy Service Officer if you need help)
- Arrange contents insurance for your personal belongings. Buildings insurance is already set up for your home.
- Redirect your mail from your previous address. Please contact your local post office for advice.
- Arrange a television licence, if necessary.
- Remember to tell your doctor, dentist, bank, employer and school your new address.
- If you install a phone, please let us know your number.

Equality

Circle positively promotes diversity and equality of opportunity. We welcome people from all backgrounds and value the different contributions they make. We aim to provide homes and services that meet the needs of the communities in which we work, irrespective of gender, race, family status, marital status, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability, or membership of the traveller community.

We believe that no one should be disadvantaged on any of the grounds above and expect that everyone treats each other with dignity and respect.

We promote fair access to housing by monitoring the allocation of our homes, including the quality of accommodation, to ensure that discrimination does not occur and by working with our Local Authority partners to eliminate any discrimination in the nominations of households for housing or transfers.

We endeavour to consult all tenants, individually through surveys and through mechanisms such as tenants' groups and advisory panels to ensure that the housing services meet their needs. We ensure that tenant involvement and participation activities promote the full and active participation of all groups of tenants in participatory forums, and we challenge any housing applicant or tenant that voices discriminatory views.

We do not tolerate harassment of tenants. We take the strongest possible action against perpetrators and are proactive in co-operating with other agencies including An Garda Síochána in dealing with racial harassment. We provide appropriate means of communication, such as an interpreting service and try to ensure that our housing services respond sensitively to the needs of vulnerable tenants, and provide, where financially possible, extra services in response to those needs.



Section 3

Your Tenancy



Your Tenancy

Your tenancy agreement is a legal contract between you and us. It sets out your responsibilities as a tenant and our responsibilities as your landlord. By signing it, we are both agreeing to all the terms and conditions listed in it.

As the tenant, your main responsibilities are to:

- ✓ Pay your rent in full and on time.
- ✓ Provide details of your household income as soon as they change or when we request it.
- ✓ Look after your home, including telling us as soon as any repairs are needed.
- ✓ Not behave in a way that causes upset or distress to others living in the area.
- ✓ Ensure your home is your main place of residence.
- ✓ Not use your home for business purposes or sublet your home.
- ✓ Not carry out any alterations to your home without Circle's permission.
- ✓ Not allow anyone else move into your home without requesting permission from Circle.
- ✓ Give Circle 4 weeks' notice when you wish to end your tenancy (you must continue to pay rent during this period)

As the landlord, our main responsibilities are to:

- › Carry out all repairs to agreed timescales (except repairs that are the tenant's responsibility)
- › Calculate the rent that you need to pay and tell you about this once you have supplied us with all the income details of everyone living in your home (where applicable)
- › Provide rent statements every 3 months or as requested.
- › Have insurance for the property (only the structure, not the contents)
- › Give you the appropriate notice when ending the tenancy.

Supporting You In Your New Tenancy

In the first 5 months of your tenancy, we will formally meet with you to see how you are settling in. Your tenancy will be confirmed at the 6-month stage providing that there are no serious breaches of your tenancy agreement.

You can contact your Tenancy Services Officer at any time during your tenancy if you are experiencing difficulties.

We will warn you in advance if you are breaking the terms of the tenancy agreement and are at risk of losing your home.

The Residential Tenancies Board

The Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) is a public body set up to support and develop the rental housing sector.

Their role is to regulate the sector, maintain a national register of tenancies, resolve disputes between landlords and tenants, initiate investigations and provide information to the public to ensure tenancies run smoothly. If your tenancy agreement is with Circle, then your tenancy will be registered with the RTB and your tenancy falls under the residential tenancies' legislation set out in the Residential Tenancies Act. You can find out more information by visiting the RTB website at www.rtb.ie



Section 4

While You Are A Circle Tenant



Repairs and Maintenance

Reporting A Repair - Before you report a repair to us, you should: check that the repair is not your responsibility, (see pages 20 to 23 for more information).

When you contact us, you should let us know:

- ✓ the details of the item that needs repairing.
- ✓ where in the home the item is located, such as the Kitchen or Bathroom etc.
- ✓ how long the issue has existed and if this is a recent problem or an ongoing issue.
- ✓ if anything has changed in your home recently that might have caused the issue.
- ✓ details of error codes if the repair relates to your heating system.
- ✓ other information you think we may need, pictures or a video is useful if you are able to supply it.

We will discuss the repair with you and tell you:

- › if the repair is your responsibility; or
- › if the repair is our responsibility, we will arrange for a member of our Repairs Team or our contractor to make contact with you to arrange an appointment that suits you.

Making sure your home is kept in good condition is a shared responsibility between you and Circle. We will make sure the structure is kept in good condition, but you are responsible if the structure needs repairing because of damage you have caused, for example if you break or remove an internal door. You are responsible for such things as decorating, replacing bath plugs or getting into your property and changing the locks if you lose your keys.

How Can You Help Us

You can help us to organise repairs in a number of ways:

- Write down and remember the location of your gas meter, electricity meter and water stop tap. (You can make a note of this on the inside back cover of this handbook)
- Keep your repair and inspection appointments or let us know in advance if you cannot be present.
- Treat our staff and contractors as you expect to be treated yourself. Abusive language or behaviour will not be tolerated under any circumstances and we may refuse to complete the work because of this.
- Follow any safety advice and instructions given to you by our staff or contractors.
- Make sure you have adequate home contents insurance cover. We have insurance if something happens to the building, but it is your responsibility to make sure you have insurance for the contents.
- Make sure someone over the age of 18 will be at the property for the appointment.
- Move delicate or expensive items from where we will need to work so they are not accidentally damaged or broken.
- Move your furniture, carpets (or other floor coverings) and belongings from the area, if we have asked you to do so.
- Make sure we can carry out the work by keeping pets and children out of the way.



Reporting Repairs In Office Hours

You can report repairs by e-mail, telephone or through our website.

E-mail: repairs@circlevha.ie | Website: www.circlevha.ie | Telephone: 01 407 2110

Reporting An Emergency Repair Out Of Office Hours

We carry out emergency repairs outside of office hours where the situation is so serious that there would be a risk of harm or damage to people or property if we waited until the next working day.

If you have an emergency repair outside of office hours you can report this to our emergency repairs team on 053 937 4832.

Out of office hours, we will only carry out repairs to make you and your family safe overnight – for example, serious water leaks, gas or electrical problems or to secure your home. We may carry out a temporary repair and then return later to complete the repair.

Our Customer Services Officer will talk to you about the repair and discuss what needs to be done. If it is our responsibility, we will arrange for someone to visit. This will either be a contractor or a Repairs & Maintenance Officer from Circle. We may arrange an appointment for someone to inspect the repair before any work is organised. If we need to carry out an inspection, we will explain this when you call, and we will arrange a convenient appointment.

Making sure you are at your property for the appointment will mean the repair is done on time. If you are unable to keep an appointment, you must let us know as soon as possible. If you are not at home, we will leave a card asking you to contact us. Please also note we may need to do the work at another time. For example, in bad weather conditions our contractors cannot work at heights or use ladders outside as this is a safety risk. If this is the case, we will let you know as soon as possible.

Repairs We Can Charge You For - Repair Responsibilities - See Table Below

It is important that you accurately tell us what the problem is when you log a repair and how serious it is. We may recharge you if you exaggerate how urgent the repair is. If someone has damaged an item and you report this as normal ‘wear and tear’, we may also charge you for the cost of the work. If you fail to promptly report a repair, Circle could recharge you if the problem worsens or causes further damage to your home. If you fail to keep an appointment with us and do not notify us in advance, we may charge you for the cost of the visit. We will charge you for any damage you, your family or visitors cause to your home.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?	CIRCLE	TENANT
REPAIR TYPE		
BASIN AND SINKS		
Tap is leaking	•	
Tap will not turn off	•	
Basin or sink is blocked		•
Plug / chain is broken or missing		•
Basin is loose, cracked or broken	•	
Removing scale from taps, sinks, baths and toilet pans		•
BATHS AND SHOWERS		
Plug / chain is broken or missing		•
Water is seeping between bath and wall	•	
Sealant around bath / shower needs to be renewed		•
Electric shower does not work / faulty		•
Shower head is blocked		•
Replacement of shower screen door		•
COMMUNAL AREAS		
Entry phone is not working	•	

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?	CIRCLE	TENANT
Concrete or tarmac path is damaged	•	
DOORS		
Replacement keys and gaining entry to your home if you have lost your keys		•
Resizing door to fit over floor coverings (Note: permission is required from Circle before these works are carried out)		•
Water is getting in around the door frame	•	
DRAINAGE		
Manhole cover is loose	•	
Gully is blocked		•
ELECTRICS INCLUDING LIGHTING		
Mains Powered Interlinked smoke detector is not working	•	
Stand-alone battery smoke detector is not working		•
Carbon monoxide detection system	•	
Electric socket is loose or damaged	•	
Light bulb needs replacing		•
Electrical consumer unit (fuse box) is not working properly	•	
Security Alarm		•
Appliances including but not limited to cookers, fridges, washing machines and TV's		•
FLOORS, WALLS AND CEILINGS		
Skirting board is loose	•	
Floor covering is loose		•
Several wall tiles are loose	•	
Decorating		•
Small cracks in plaster on wall		•
Small repairs to plaster on ceiling		•
Large repairs to plaster on ceiling	•	

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?	CIRCLE	TENANT
GARAGES		
Replacement keys and gaining entry to your garage if you have lost your keys		•
Metal garage door is loose	•	
GUTTERS AND DRAINPIPES		
Plastic downpipe is loose	•	
Gutter to House up to 2 storeys or Bungalow is blocked		•
Gutter to Multi-Unit Development blocked	•	
HEATING, HOT WATER AND VENTILATION		
Service and Maintenance of Oil / Gas Boiler Heat Pump	•	
Boiler is not working properly	•	
Jacket to cylinder is damaged or missing		•
Airlock in heating system		•
Bleeding radiators		•
Thermostat not working properly	•	
Cleaning of bathroom extractor fan		•
Cleaning of kitchen extractor fan		•
KITCHEN UNITS		
Unit door will not open or close properly due to wear and tear	•	
Drawer front needs repair due to wear and tear	•	
Worktop is loose or damaged due to wear and tear	•	
LOCKS, LATCHES AND FITTINGS		
Handle is broken	•	
Replacement keys if you have lost them		•
OUTSIDE THE PROPERTY		
Concrete or tarmac is damaged	•	
Mowing and tidying the garden		•
Dividing fences and gates		•

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?	CIRCLE	TENANT
ROOF		
Chimney pot is loose	•	
Tile is loose or broken	•	
Maintenance, removal or replacement of TV aerials or satellite dishes		•
STAIRS		
Handrail is loose	•	
Stair or tread is loose	•	
TOILETS		
Toilet is blocked (unless caused by faulty pipework)		•
Cistern is damaged	•	
Toilet seats		•
WATER SERVICES		
Water pipe is leaking	•	
Cold water tank is leaking	•	
Making sure pipes do not freeze and dealing with frozen pipes		•
WINDOWS AND GLAZING		
Window fitting is loose		•
Window glass broken (unless caused by defect, burglary or Third Party ASB)		•

PLEASE NOTE:

Any property components damaged by the tenant will be the tenant’s responsibility to repair. Should Circle have to undertake a repair to any item damaged by a tenant or any person connected to the tenant, Circle reserves the right to recharge the tenant for the full cost of the repair and any additional administration charge that is incurred.

Note: If your home is within a Multi-Unit Development, the common areas will be subject to the Owner Management Company (OMC) and their agents. All repairs relating to the common parts of such an estate or block will need to be first reported to Circle who in turn will report the repair to the OMC. It is the OMC’s responsibility to undertake all repairs to common areas and therefore certain types of repair may take longer to complete than the timeframes stated in the following section.

Repair Timelines: How Quickly Will We Complete Your Repair?

We want to take care of your repair promptly and effectively. To do this we need to prioritise all repairs by how urgent they are.

Emergency repairs – within 24 hours: These are repairs which threaten your health, safety or security, or could cause significant damage to your home, including flooding, total loss of electrics or water and damage where your home is not secure. We may only make safe during the visit and we may have to return at a later date to complete a full repair.

Urgent repairs – within 5 working days: These are repairs that cause inconvenience, for example minor leaks and blockages, faulty electrical fittings and leaking roofs.

Routine repairs – within 20 working days: These are non-urgent repairs which do not pose a risk to health or safety, for example, repairs to outside walls, repairing and replacing individual kitchen units, floor tiles, guttering and downpipes.

Planned Maintenance

Each component in your home has a specified life expectancy, therefore Circle will carry out planned maintenance programmes on all Circle owned homes to ensure that the property remains in a safe and satisfactory condition.

This means that Circle will notify you when component parts of your home are due for renewal such as heating appliances, kitchens, bathrooms, and the re-wiring of fixed electrical systems for example. By undertaking these works, we expect that we will reduce the likelihood of routine repairs being needed which in turn will cause less disruption to you during your tenancy. We will let you know when your home is to be included in the planned programme.

All our staff and contractors carry identification. Always ask for ID from anyone visiting your home to complete a repair or inspection.

Improvements

You may want to make changes to your home such as putting in a shower or fitting cupboards. You must ask our permission before carrying out any type of improvement to your home.

Any improvements to your home must meet Circle's minimum standards for quality and the contractor who undertakes the work must be fully qualified, accredited, and insured.

You will need to tell us:

- ✓ Details of the improvements, including drawings and component specification information.
- ✓ Details of who will be doing the work, including but not limited to qualifications, accreditations and insurances. We may in some instances request references for specialist works. We may want to inspect the work during the project and on completion so you will need to agree to appointments before the works progress.

If there are improvements you would like to do to your home but don't have a suitably qualified contractor to undertake the works, please contact us to discuss the project and we may be able to put you in touch with a Circle accredited contractor.

Please note, any improvement works undertaken by you will be your responsibility to maintain in the future. If the work causes any damage, you will have to pay for the repairs.

Adaptations

We are committed to supporting our tenants who may have a disability or mobility issue to live independently within their home. If you are disabled or have serious health issues, we may be able to adapt your home so you can live in it safely.

Major adaptations such as level access showers will require specialist guidance from your GP or Occupational Therapist. You should speak with them and your Tenancy Service Officer to discuss your options, we will then work with these agencies to identify the best solution for you.

Please contact us if you would like more information.



Your Safety

Gas - If you smell gas at any time ring Gas Networks Ireland on 1850 20 50 50 or 01 920 5050, no matter who your gas supplier is. If you can't get through, dial 999 / 112. Then:

- Ensure gas appliances are turned off and have not been left on and unlit.
- Don't smoke or use a naked flame.
- Don't unplug or switch anything electrical on or off.
- Open windows and doors.
- If the smell persists, turn off the gas at the meter.
- Leave the property and contact Circle.

For your and your family's safety we will inspect and service your gas boiler and appliances once a year. As your Landlord, we have a duty of care and a legal obligation to ensure that your heating appliance is operating safely. Therefore, you must allow us access when we get in touch about servicing your heating appliance. Failure to comply could result in your tenancy being terminated.

Fire - We have fitted fire detection alarms in your home for your safety. It is your responsibility to test the alarms weekly and to replace the batteries when needed.

It is also your responsibility to keep all exits within your home clear. We will carry out fire risk assessments for all communal areas. You must not store any personal belongings – for example washing or children’s toys - in communal areas. These may be a fire hazard and also may block an escape route in an emergency.

When fire breaks out, it can spread quickly. You need to act quickly. Preparation can save valuable seconds. A rehearsed fire escape drill can make all the difference. Make sure you know where your fire exits are and plan an escape route.

In the event of a fire breaking out:

- ✓ Sound the alarm.
- ✓ GET OUT AND STAY OUT!
- ✓ Close all doors behind you as you leave.
- ✓ Phone the fire brigade from outside (Dial 999 or 112)
- ✓ If your clothes catch fire, “Stop, Drop and Roll”.
- ✓ Do not re-enter the building for any reason.

If you are prevented from leaving by smoke, heat or fire:

- › Seal off the spaces in the door openings with clothing or a sheet to stop smoke from entering.
- › Always keep down on the floor where the air is cleaner and cooler.
- › Go to the window, open it and call for help.
- › The window may be the quickest and safest way for the fire brigade to rescue you.

Electricity - We will test your home’s electricity supply and wiring before you move in. You should make sure that your own electrical equipment is safe and in good working order. We will also undertake Periodic Inspection and Testing of the fixed wiring system within your home on a cyclical basis to ensure its continued safe use.

Winter Safety In Your Home

If you are going away over winter, please keep your heating on low, at 15 degrees Celsius, to prevent pipes from freezing and bursting. Alternatively, you could turn off the water at the stopcock, open all taps (including showers) and flush all toilets before you leave. It is also advised that should your home have an attic space, that you leave the attic trap door open to prevent pipes freezing in the roof space.

Home Contents Insurance

Although we insure the structure of your home, you are responsible for insuring your possessions against accidental damage, fire and theft including furniture, clothing, appliances, carpets, curtains and flooring and anything you keep in the garden or shed. Replacing your belongings could be very expensive. When taking out insurance, list your belongings which include all your appliances and white goods and estimate how much it would cost to replace these. You can contact An Post, many Credit Unions and Insurance Brokers for a quote. We would advise you to get three quotes to ensure that the insurance cover you decide on best meets your needs.

Transfers

Circle acknowledge that your household's composition will change over the lifetime of your tenancy as will the needs of you and your family.

You may wish to request a transfer due to:

- ✓ An increase in your family size.
- ✓ A decrease in your family size.
- ✓ Medical needs.
- ✓ Change in location of your employment.

We will support you in applying for a transfer with the relevant local authority provided there are no breaches to your tenancy and your rent and service charge account is clear of arrears. Please contact your Tenancy Services Officer to discuss your request to the Local Authority.

If your transfer request with the Local Authority is approved at a time when a new property or re-let property becomes available for tenancing, your Tenancy Service officer will liaise with the Local Authority to request their support in the nomination to the new property. The Local Authority is wholly responsible for the authorisation of any transfer to or from a Circle property.

Addition to a Tenancy Agreement

A joint tenancy can be between any two adults who are permanently living in the home. In most cases joint tenancies are signed by couples.

However, should you separate or divorce then the tenancy agreement will have to change, and one tenant will have to surrender their right to the tenancy. If this happens you should seek advice from your Tenancy Services Officer.

If you want to add someone to your tenancy you will need to request permission from Circle. We will review the application with the Local Authority and any person you are seeking to add to the tenancy will need to adhere to the same application process that all our tenants complete.

Inheritance

Who can succeed my tenancy? Succession like inheritance simply means that you may be able to pass your tenancy onto someone else when you pass away. If you have a joint tenancy with your partner, then they will remain on as a sole tenant after your death.

However, should your children wish to apply to succeed your tenancy after your death, then they must apply in writing. The tenancy will normally be transferred to a son or daughter provided they have been living in the home for at least two years immediately prior to the death of the sole or joint tenants. There is no legal right to inherit the tenancy, however Circle may grant such a request after reviewing the application and consulting with the Local Authority.

Succession will only be granted once and the person applying for succession must not own or have an interest in any other property. They must be an adult and the property must be suitable to their needs.

Rent Payment

You are legally required to pay us rent, in exchange for living in your home. Failure to pay rent is a serious breach of your tenancy.

We have to make sure that we collect the rent that is due as it is that money that allows us to maintain and improve our properties.

If you do not pay your rent, you may be evicted from your home. Please get in touch with us immediately if you are having difficulty paying your rent; we have specialist staff available to help. We also work closely with partner organisations such as Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) and Threshold, who offer free and independent advice.

Our Income Management Team collect rent and service charges. Our officer's priority is to support people to sustain their homes by providing support and specialist advice. If you are having difficulty in making payments, please contact a member of the Income Management Team.

If you miss a rent payment, our Income Management Officers will contact you in writing informing you of the missed payment and they will invite you make an agreement to repay the arrears. Serious arrears or not engaging with the services offered may lead to formal warning being issued which could lead to a Notice to Quit and you being evicted from your home. Circle will lodge a dispute with the Residential Tenancies Board and will seek enforcement through the courts of all Determination Orders. You can contact the Income Team at rent@circlevha.ie if you have rent related queries.

Your responsibilities

You must pay your rent on time and in full each week. Please note that we can only allow tenants to pay rent monthly if their account is one month in credit and they continue to pay one month in advance.

You must tell us about any change in your income, or in the income of anyone living in your home, as this affects the rent that you need to pay. When we write to you about the annual rent assessment, you must respond to us within 4 weeks, giving proof of your income and the income of everyone living in your household.

You must tell us in advance if you want to have anybody else living in your home as this also affects the rent that you will need to pay.

Our responsibilities

We will review your rent at least once a year. We may do this more often if you have changes in your income. Once you have provided us with income details, we will assess your rent and notify you of any changes in the rent that you must pay.

All your rent payments are recorded on our Housing Management system and we will send you a rent statement every three months.





Tenant Responsibilities

In Your Home and Neighbourhood - You Must:

Your Home - Financial

- › pay your rent in full and on time. You must also pay in advance.
- › tell us of any change in your financial circumstances as this will affect the rent that you have to pay.
- › get our permission in advance before you let anybody live at the property with you, even if only temporarily.
- › pay your gas, electricity, refuse collection and any other domestic bills.
- › get home contents insurance and personal liability insurance.

Your Home - Pets and Animals

- ask our permission before getting a pet (as not all homes are suitable). An application to keep a pet must be made to your Tenancy Services Officer in writing or online.
- keep pets under control and clear up any mess.
- keep your home and garden clean to reduce the risk of pest and vermin infestation - you are responsible for any pests inside your home or garden.
- Waste receptacles must be secured and clean.
- Garden compost heaps, food for birds or anything likely to attract vermin should not be left in the open or unsecured.

Safety and Security

- ✓ test your smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector regularly; changing the battery when needed (where the detectors are battery operated)
- ✓ take care if using candles in your home.
- ✓ allow access for the yearly gas safety inspection and any other essential maintenance and servicing.
- ✓ tell us if you're going to be away from your home for longer than 14 days.
- ✓ pay for the replacement of any keys or fobs if you lose them.
- ✓ remove or tamper with any items installed in your own home or communal areas which are provided - and are a legal requirement to be in place - for your safety and that of your neighbours. This includes smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, window restrictors, door closers, fire extinguishers and fire blankets.

Upkeep Of Your Home

- › tell us straight away about any repairs that are needed that are our responsibility.
- › get our permission before doing any home improvements.
- › keep your home well ventilated to reduce condensation.
- › allow access for annual property inspection.

Other

- ensure that your family, friends and visitors comply with all the terms of your tenancy agreement whilst in your home and the local neighbourhood.
- report any tenancy or housing problems to us.

Gardens And Outside Areas

- ✓ arrange a weekly refuse collection contract with an authorised refuse collection company.
- ✓ keep your garden clean, tidy and free from rubbish.
- ✓ check with us before cutting down any trees - some are protected by special orders.
- ✓ supervise children on balconies, outside and in communal areas.
- ✓ check that safety latches on windows and balconies are safe and secure, and locked (especially if you have young children)

Communal Areas

- › be considerate to other people when using all outside communal areas, including inside stairwells and walkways.
- › arrange a weekly refuse collection contract with an authorised refuse collection company and provide us with proof of your contract (unless this is included in your service charge)
- › ask permission before planting shrubs / flowers.

Behaviour

- treat your neighbours, Circle staff and contractors with respect and consideration.

In Your Home and Neighbourhood - You Must Not:

Your Home

- let anyone else live in your home - either with you or instead of you - without our prior permission.
- intentionally damage your home.
- run any kind of business from your home.

Communal Areas

- › don't allow anyone who you do not know into shared parking areas, entrance halls, stairways or lifts.
- › don't smoke, take drugs, spit or urinate (or allow your family, friends or visitors to do these things)
- › don't vandalise or leave rubbish.
- › don't store any personal possessions - these may block access in an emergency or cause a fire (in the case of flammable materials)
- › don't put bulky items (such as furniture, electrical goods, mattresses) in the bin stores or any communal areas.
- › don't keep untaxed or unroadworthy vehicles.

Behaviour

- don't behave in an anti-social way in your home or neighbourhood.
- don't allow visitors or family to behave in an anti-social way in your home or neighbourhood.
- don't verbally or physically abuse staff or contractors.

CCTV

Circle will not give consent or approve any installation or use of CCTV. Tenants who install CCTV are personally liable and must comply in full with data protection law obligations.

What Is The Status Of CCTV In Homes?

A domestic CCTV system should only operate in a way that captures images of people within the perimeter of the CCTV operator's own property including the garden or driveway. Systems operated in this way are not subject to data protection law due to the personal or household exemption in that law.

If you are a householder that has installed a CCTV system and your CCTV system operates in a way that captures images (and sounds) of people outside of the perimeter of your property, for example in their homes or their gardens or on public footpaths or streets, you cannot avail of the household exemption and must comply in full with data protection law obligations. This follows from the decision of the Court of Justice of the European Union, which found that the household exemption did not apply where a domestic CCTV system captured images in the street outside the property.

What Does Compliance With Data Protection Law Mean?

Compliance with data protection law requires a number of things including: demonstrating that you have a lawful basis for operating the CCTV system, that you are transparent about how the system operates which entails the installation of appropriate signage, that you keep any personal data safe and only for a limited period, and that you comply with any access requests or requests for erasure from affected individuals who should be able to contact you from the contact details you include on the signage.

What Happens If You Fail To Comply With Data Protection Law?

Failure to comply may result in action against you by the DPC and/or expose you to a claim for damages in the courts by any affected neighbours or members of the public, including passers-by. In other jurisdictions within the EU where the same data protection laws apply as in Ireland, homeowners have recently been subjected to fines and/or directions to cease operating the CCTV system where it cannot be operated in a way that only captures images within the perimeter of a home.





Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- ✓ Physical violence, making threats or other behaviour or harassment resulting in danger to somebody.
- ✓ Racial harassment or other hate crime.
- ✓ Arson or attempted arson.
- ✓ Using the home for unlawful purposes.
- ✓ Criminal behaviour including drug dealing or the use of illegal drugs.
- ✓ Noise.
- ✓ Littering.
- ✓ Problems associated with groups of people.
- ✓ Garden misuse and vandalism and damage to homes.
- ✓ Misuse of communal areas and public spaces including nuisance from vehicles and car repairs.
- ✓ Use of drones in communal areas.

We are committed to contributing to creating homes and neighbourhoods where people want to live. We recognise the detrimental effect that anti-social behaviour can have on individuals, their ability and desire to live and work in an area and their day to day lives. We do not accept anti-social behaviour (ASB) by our tenants, household members, any visitors or pets within the property or surrounding communal areas.

We are committed to taking effective action and using the powers available to us, where we consider they can provide effective remedy or resolution. But we also recognise that tenants and other agencies share this responsibility, and it will not always be appropriate for us to take the lead. Where ASB is the result of criminal activity we expect tenants to report criminal behaviour to the Gardaí and we expect the Gardaí and other statutory agencies to take action where they have sufficient evidence to do so.

We work with and support our tenants experiencing ASB in developing an action plan that is appropriate and proportionate to the type of ASB.

I Am Experiencing Anti-Social Behaviour – What Should I Do?

If you feel comfortable doing so, talk to the person. They may not know they are causing a problem. Talk to your Tenancy Service Officer, we deal with situations sensitively and will explain what can be done. If you are threatened with violence or witness something illegal, contact the Gardaí immediately or contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 250 025.

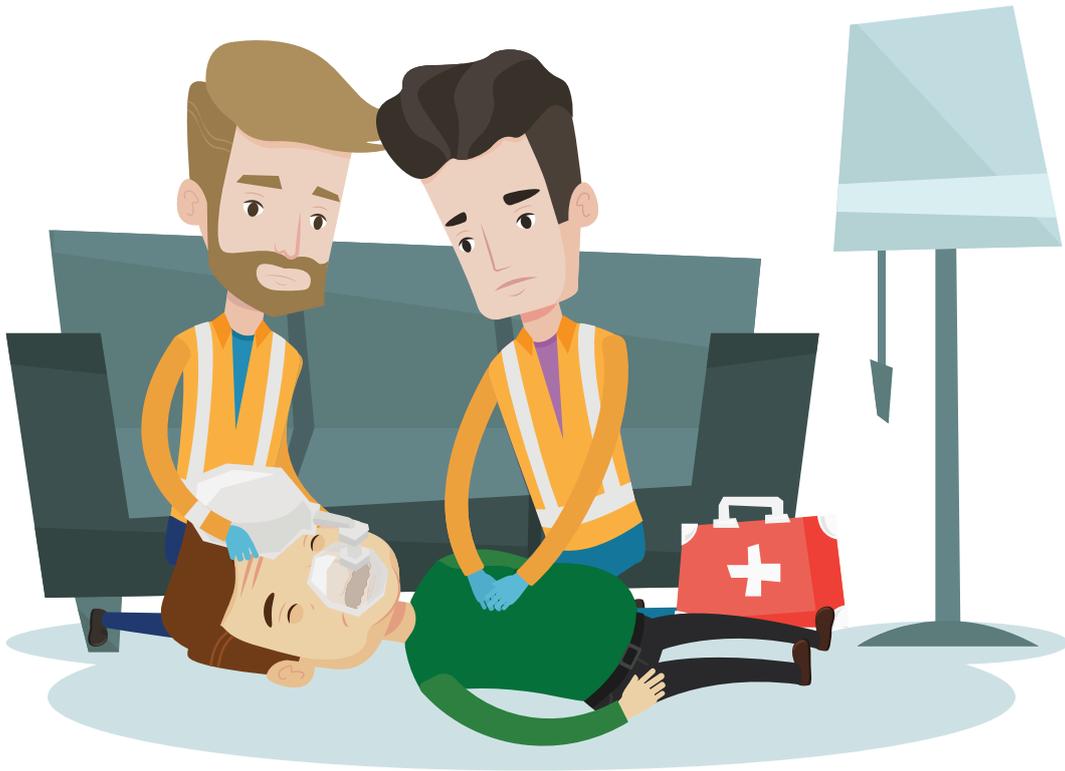
When reporting an incident, you must give as much detail as you can; when did the incident occur, where did it occur, the names and addresses of those involved. Once you've made a report to the Gardaí, note the name and badge number of the Garda that took your report. Your Tenancy Service Officer can give you a log sheet to record any further incidents. This is important as it allows us to build up evidence of repeated occurrences.

How Can I Avoid Annoying My Neighbours?

- Keep noise to a reasonable level.
- Respond positively if someone complains.
- Warn neighbours of potential noise (e.g., before a party or major repair)

You should prevent your pet from:

- › Fouling your home, garden, public footpaths or communal gardens and always clear up after them!
- › Straying outside your home and garden – you should be in control of your pets at all times.
- › Making a noise (e.g., barking) for long periods.
- › Being aggressive towards people or other animals.



Domestic Abuse

We will always support and assist tenants who experience domestic abuse in their home.

We maintain strict confidentiality and provide information about other agencies that can help. You should not give up your tenancy unless a solicitor, independent advice centre or the Gardaí advise you to do so and you have somewhere else to live. If you are a victim of domestic abuse, we may be able to:

- ✓ Help you move away from the problem.
- ✓ Provide additional security at your home.
- ✓ We can also refer tenants to specialist support agencies.

Domestic abuse is a crime – don't suffer in silence. If you suffer or witness domestic abuse, please get help by contacting: Women's Aid 24hr National Freephone Helpline on 1800 341 900 or Men's Aid Confidential Support Service Helpline on: 01 554 3811

Hate Crime

Hate crime is where people are targeted because they are believed to be different. This may be because of their age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, background, disability or faith. We investigate every report

of hate crime and will pursue legal action to evict any tenant found guilty. Please contact the Gardai immediately or contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 250 025 to make a report.

Your Involvement

Why Get Involved?

We'd like to encourage you to get involved so that you can help us shape the services you receive. We know that people lead busy lives, with some having more time than others; we regularly review the ways in which you could work with us - we hope you will find something here that appeals to you.

What's In It For Me?

Apart from being able to have a say in how we deliver services, there are also opportunities for you to become involved in your neighbourhood and wider community. We would like to ask you to play an active role in the estate and community in which you live. This can include:

- Welcoming new tenants and introducing them to the neighbourhood.
- Updating neighbours and us on developments in the community.
- Giving us feedback on the services you receive and telling us about services that you would like to receive.

How can I get involved?

We provide information sessions, access and referrals to services and encourage other organisations that provide services in your community an opportunity to introduce themselves to you through drop in-clinics, meetings and courses.

You can get involved by letting your Tenancy Services Officer know that you are interested in participating. Here are some of the ways you can get involved:

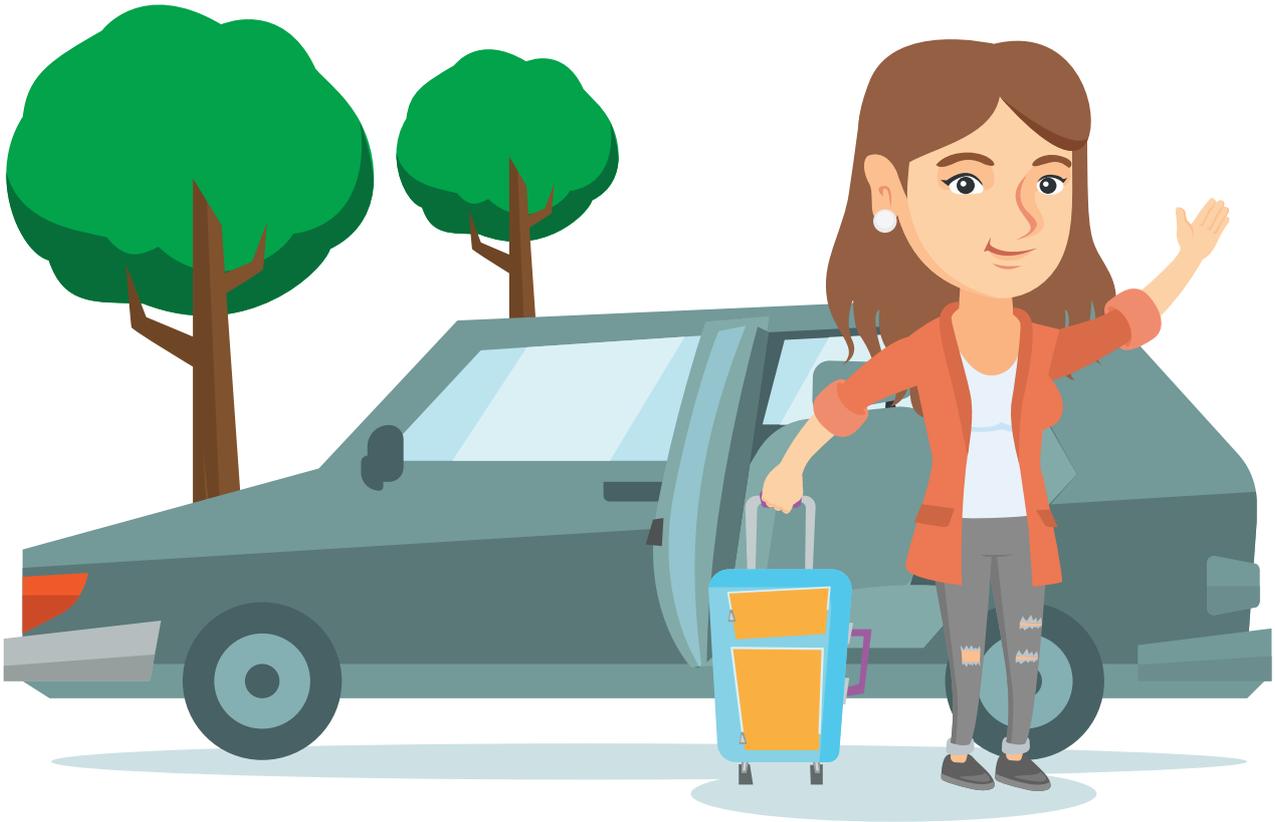
- ✓ Setting up and attending neighbourhood groups.
- ✓ Conducting or attending focus groups to feedback to us.
- ✓ Taking part in tenant advisory groups.
- ✓ Delivering or attending workshops.

We will work with you at whatever level of engagement you are comfortable with. Please contact your Tenancy Services Officer for information on how to get started.

Section 5

Leaving Circle





Ending Your Tenancy

If you decide that you no longer want or need to live in your home, you must:

- Give us the required notice in writing, as stated in your tenancy agreement. Please contact us so that we can tell you the correct notice period.
- Allow us to inspect your home before your tenancy ends.
- Leave your home and garden clean and tidy. We will charge you for any damage that you have caused or any belongings or rubbish that you leave behind.
- Make sure that your rent and any other monies that you owe us are paid up to date by the time your tenancy ends.
- Return the keys to us on the date your tenancy ends, or you will be charged another week's rent.
- Remove all your belongings and rubbish from your home, including the attic, garden and any outbuildings.

Ending A Joint Tenancy

If you are a joint tenant, the tenancy can be ended by just one of the joint tenants. If you both want the tenancy to end, please follow the steps above. If only one of you wishes to end the tenancy, please contact your Tenancy Services Officer to talk about this.

When We Can End Your Tenancy

We hope that you settle into your home and that it is a long-term home for you. It is very important to us that you feel safe and secure in your home, we would not wish to end a tenancy unless the circumstances are such that it is unavoidable, for example, very serious breaches of the tenancy agreement.

Circle must abide by the law, which is stated in the Residential Tenancies Acts, when we intend to end a tenancy. The grounds for ending a tenancy and the notice periods are listed below:

- During the first 6 months of your tenancy, Circle is not required to provide a reason for terminating your tenancy. During this time, your tenancy is deemed to be a probationary tenancy and Circle may terminate your tenancy by serving you with 28 days' notice in writing.
- After 6 months your tenancy becomes a Part 4 Tenancy. This means the tenant has the right to remain in the property for a period of 5½ years after the expiration of the Probationary Period has elapsed unless notice of termination has been served within the Probationary Period.
- After the first 6 months Circle can only terminate the tenancy pursuant to one of the 5 grounds within Section 34 of the Residential Tenancies Act. For example:
 - › The tenant has breached their responsibilities, for example, not paying rent or service charges.
 - › The property is not suited to the tenant's needs, for example, where a family has outgrown a property and requires a larger property.
 - › The landlord wants to sell the property, this would only occur for example, if Circle intended on transferring the property and therefore could not continue to be a landlord.
 - › Significant refurbishment of the property, this may arise if there were substantial works required to the dwelling which could not be safely undertaken if a person were residing there. In these circumstances Circle would provide alternative accommodation with the option to return to the original property upon completion of works.
 - › The use of the property is changing, this may arise if Circle intended on changing the use of the dwelling for redevelopment. In these circumstances Circle would provide alternative accommodation with the option to return to the original property upon completion of works, if applicable.

The notice periods required to end a tenancy are determined by the reason for the Notice of Termination. Notice periods are set in legislation and can be found on the Residential Tenancies Board website: www.rtb.ie

If a tenant has breached their tenancy, they could be served a 28-day Notice of Termination and this may be reduced to 7 days in certain circumstances for example anti-social behaviour.

We must first write to the tenant, informing them of the breach and give reasonable time for them to remedy it. If the tenant does not do this then we may proceed with serving a Notice of Termination.

If you receive a Notice of Termination from Circle, please contact your Tenancy Services Officer. You must continue to pay your rent until the Notice of Termination expires at which point you must return the property back to Circle. If you continue to remain in the property, Circle will refer the matter to the Residential Tenancies Board who will make a determination order. If you fail to leave the property as required under the determination order, Circle will refer the matter to the District Court for enforcement.

Section 6

Complaints, Suggestions & Compliments!





Complaints, Suggestions And Compliments!

We endeavour to always give excellent service. It's important that we know if you are not happy with a service or if you believe that you have been treated unfairly.

We will seek your feedback on an ongoing basis to help us review our policies and the services we offer. Your involvement is very important to us as it shapes the housing and services we provide.

We have a complaints procedure so that you can tell us when we have not delivered services as we have promised to do. Our staff are trained to listen and resolve any concerns or queries you may have. If you would like to make a complaint or receive a copy of our complaints procedure you can contact:

- ✓ Our Customer Service Team who will forward your call to the most relevant staff member.
- ✓ Your Tenancy Services Officer
- ✓ Your Income Management Officer
- ✓ Any staff member of Circle
- ✓ Our website www.circlevha.ie

What Happens When You Make a Complaint?

Stage 1

The staff member to whom you spoke when making the complaint will acknowledge your complaint, ask you how you would like the complaint resolved, keep you informed of the process and progress they are making in addressing and resolving your complaint, resolve your complaint and give you the opportunity to give feedback on the resolution and process.

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, you can escalate your complaint verbally, in writing or by email to the Head of Service. The Head of Service will acknowledge your complaint and actively work towards a resolution with you.

Stage 3

If you remain unhappy with the response and outcome of your complaint you can refer your complaint to another Head of Service who will independently investigate your complaint and the process that was applied. The outcome of this stage is final, however, appeals against the process can be referred to the Chief Executive Officer.

Residential Tenancies Board (RTB)

At any point, a tenant who has a tenancy registered with the Residential Tenancies Board may contact the RTB to register concern or dissatisfaction with their landlord.

The RTB suggests that any disputes between landlords and tenants try to be resolved informally first. For this reason, we suggest that you make a complaint through our complaints procedure before going to the RTB.

Comments And Compliments

We value any comments and compliments on our service as these also help us to understand what we are doing well, as well as what could be improved.

By commenting on the services that we provide, you participate in the sharing of information and ideas that can improve our housing and services. We have a number of ways for you to get involved in giving feedback that directly influences decisions about your home and community.

The benefits of participation for everyone includes:

- ✓ Better services.
- ✓ Opportunities to develop new knowledge and skills.
- ✓ Open communication between Circle staff and our tenants.
- ✓ Well informed tenants who have the skills and confidence to influence decisions.
- ✓ Circle staff and tenants being more aware of each other's perspectives.
- ✓ Increased tenant satisfaction with their home and community.

Section 7

Hints And Tips



Hints & Tips - Home Maintenance

Many parts of your home need regular maintenance. Most of these items can be attended to by you with ease and are necessary to prevent further problems and to keep your home functioning in the correct manner.

Interior

1. Condensation

Condensation can cause issues throughout the property and lead to mould growth if not remedied. The best ways to avoid condensation in your home are:

- ✓ Open your windows regularly.
- ✓ Ensure that all wall and window vents are kept open and cleaned regularly to avoid dust build up.
- ✓ If possible, do not dry clothes inside; if you must dry your clothes indoors make sure the space is ventilated.
- ✓ When cooking ensure that the extractor fan is on and that the filter is cleaned or replaced regularly.
- ✓ If possible, keep the kitchen door closed while cooking.
- ✓ Do NOT turn off isolator switches to bathroom extractor fans.
- ✓ Ensure you wipe away any condensation daily.
- ✓ Dehumidifiers can help, most hardware stores stock these.

2. Mould Growth

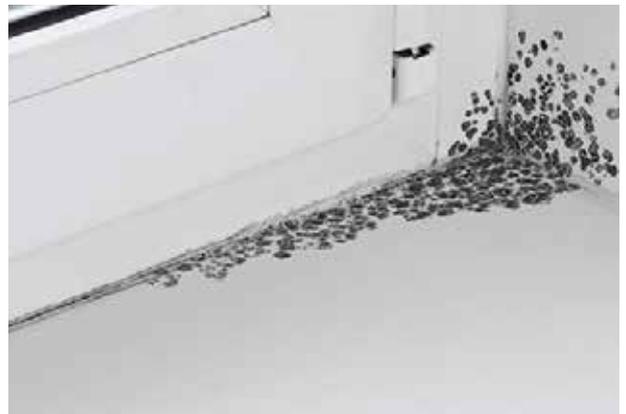
Mould growth is both unsightly and can be unhealthy and, in most cases, easily avoidable.

- Clean away any visible signs of mould using any of the readily available treatments in shops.
- Check the area for leaks or signs of water penetration.
- Follow all the steps listed to deal with condensation.

Condensation



Mould Growth



3. Windows And Doors Maintenance

Windows and Doors, either uPVC or wood, will require regular maintenance.

- › Hinges should be cleaned and lubricated regularly using a silicone lubricant. (DO NOT use WD40 as it acts as a degreaser)
- › Sliding hinges on uPVC windows should be kept clear of dirt and lubricated regularly.
- › Window vents should be kept open and clean.
- › Cracked or broken glass should be replaced immediately.
- › Clean your windows and doors regularly including the frames.
- › Never fix blinds or curtains to the frames.

Window Locks



Window Hinges



4. Gas Leak

If you smell Gas:

- ✓ Turn all gas appliances off.
- ✓ Open windows and doors.
- ✓ Extinguish cigarettes and any naked flames.
- ✓ Do not use an electrical switch or any appliance.
- ✓ Turn off the gas at the meter.
- ✓ Do not use a phone in the immediate area, use a neighbour's or call from outside.
- ✓ Telephone Gas Networks Ireland Ph: 1850 20 50 50; if you can't get through call 999/112.

5. Power Outage

In the event of a Power Outage:

- Check if your neighbours are also without power.
- If your neighbours are also without power, report your fault by calling Ph: 1800 372 999.
- If your neighbours have power, check your trip switch is on the "on" position or if your fuses have blown.
- If your trip switch or a fuse has blown, turn off all appliances before resetting the switch or replacing the fuse.

6. Bathrooms

Toilets, sinks and showers can get blocked sometimes and for various reasons, if this occurs:

- › Toilets can get blocked sometimes and for various reasons, excess toilet paper, disposable wipes and children's toys are among the most common reasons for blockages. If this happens remove as much of the offending material as possible and clear the remainder using a plunger.
- › Sink unit and bath wastes can also get blocked. This can normally be remedied using a plunger or one of the many unblocking liquids on the market. If necessary, remove the u-bend and clear the blockage by hand.
- › Regularly clear the shower waste pipe of any built-up blockage like hair and soap.
- › Check the seals on shower doors to prevent water escaping.

Bathroom Sinks



Unblocking U-Bend



7. Leaks

- ✓ In the event that there is a major leak in your home immediately turn off the water at the stop cock usually located under the kitchen sink or in the hot press. Turn on all taps to drain down the water system and report the leak.
- ✓ DO NOT use the boiler until this has been remedied.

8. Chimneys

- Chimneys should be swept at least annually but ideally twice a year to avoid blockages and risk of chimney fire.

9. Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms

- › When you are vacuuming your home, it is advisable to vacuum any dust from the detector.
- › Check the batteries in these monthly to ensure they are functioning correctly.

10. Radiators

- ✓ If your radiators are cold, this could be for a number of reasons. If there is trapped air in the system, your radiator may need to be bled. See our website for a video tutorial on how to bleed your radiator safely.

Exterior

1. Drains, Gutters & External Water Tap

- Clean all gutters regularly to prevent blockages by leaves and debris.
- Clear fallen leaves away from drains to avoid blockages and allow free flow of surface water.
- If you have an outside tap fit an insulating cover during the winter to prevent freezing.

2. Oil Central Heating

- › If you have oil central heating always ensure you have adequate oil in your tank before turning on the heating. If the oil is allowed to run out it will air lock the burner and will require a plumber to bleed the boiler. This is a service that you will be charged for.

External Gutters



External Drains



3. Door Keys & Electronic Fobs

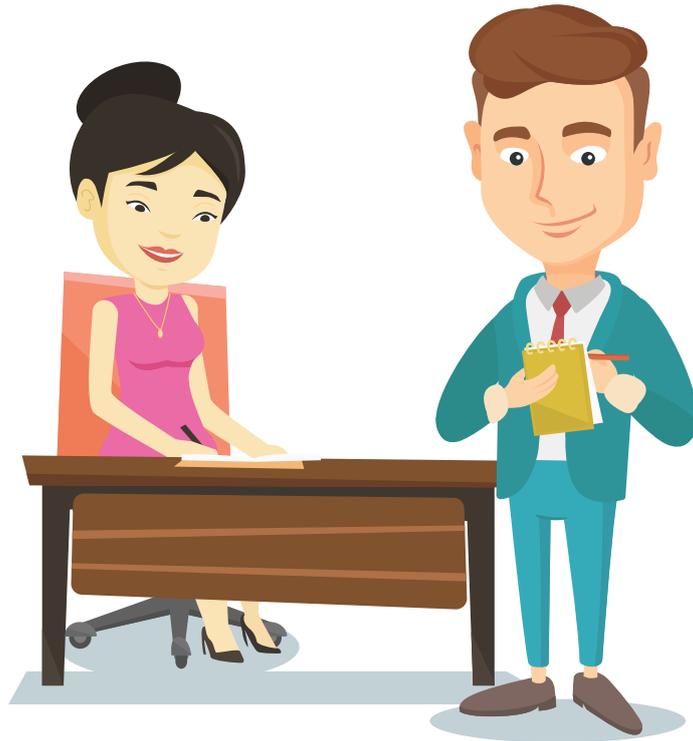
- ✓ Have a spare set of keys kept with a family member or someone you trust; this avoids you having to pay costly locksmith fees in the event you lock yourself out or lose your keys.
- ✓ Spare security keys and electronic fobs for communal doors and gates can be ordered through your Tenancy Services Officer. There will be a cost applied to you for spares and replacements.



Log On To Our Website - www.circlevha.ie

What you can do on our website.

- Log a repair request (for emergency out of hours requests telephone 053 937 4832)
- Pay your rent online.
- Complete a pet application.
- Report a complaint or give us feedback.
- Complete your confidential income statement for a rent review.
- View our policies.
- See tutorial videos on how to manage repairs in your home.



Circle VHA - Codes And Number Checklist

Please Keep This Information At Hand

Your Occupancy Code (for online queries and rent payments)	
Your Tenancy Services Officer	
Your Income Management Officer	
Your GPRN	
Your MPRN	
Location of stopcock	
Location of Gas shut off	
Location electrical consumer unit (trip switches)	

Section 8

Useful Contacts



Useful Contacts

Below are just some of the contacts you may find helpful. If you are looking for specific contact details, or other support, you may find the answer on our website.

1. Circle VHA

Dublin Office - Our opening hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

Circle VHA
Phoenix House, 32 - 34 Castle Street, Dublin 2
T: 01 407 2110
E: info@circlevha.ie
W: www.circlevha.ie

Emergencies:

Circle out of hours number for Repairs & Emergencies: after 5pm Monday – Friday, at weekends and bank holidays - to report an emergency repair when our office is closed – Call - 053 937 4832

2. Ambulance / Gardaí / Fire Brigade / Coast Guard - Emergency

T: 999 / 112

3. Gas safety

Gas Networks Ireland - 1850 205 050. If you can't get through, dial 999 / 112

4. Electricity

ESB Networks – T: 1850 372 999 (24 hrs)

5. Water

To report a flood from a public watermain or sewer Irish Water - T: 1850 278 278 (24 hrs)

6. An Garda Síochána – Non-Emergencies

Confidential Line - T: 1800 666 111

Crime Stoppers: - T: 1800 250 025

Help & Advice

- ✓ MABS (Money Advice and Budgeting Service) – 076 107 2000, www.mabs.ie
- ✓ Threshold (advice on housing and homelessness) – 1800 454 454 (Freephone), www.threshold.ie
- ✓ Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection - www.welfare.ie
- ✓ Immigrant Council of Ireland (information service for migrants) 01 674 0200, www.immigrant-council.ie
- ✓ Citizens Information – 076 107 4000, www.citizensinformation.ie
- ✓ One Family (support for one parent families) – 01 662 9212 / 1890 662 212 (lo-call),
- ✓ Alone (support for older people) – 0818 222 024, www.alone.ie
- ✓ Women’s Aid Ireland National Domestic Violence Helpline - 1800 341 900 (freephone), www.womensaid.ie
- ✓ Men’s Aid Ireland – 01 554 3811, www.mensaid.ie
- ✓ Samaritans: freephone 116123, text 087 260 9090, www.samaritans.org
- ✓ Pieta House: freephone 1800 247 247, or text HELP to 51444

Social Housing

- ✓ Residential Tenancies Board - 01 702 8100 / 0818 303 037 (lo-call), www.rtb.ie
- ✓ Irish Council for Social Housing - 01 661 8334, www.icsh.ie

Utilities

- ✓ Bord Gáis: Customer Service - 01 611 0101, www.bordgaisenergy.ie
- ✓ Electric Ireland: Customer Service - 1850 372 372, www.electricireland.ie
- ✓ Airtricity: Customer Service - 1850 812 220, www.sseairtricity.com
- ✓ Energia: Customer Service - 1850 300 700, www.energia.ie
- ✓ Prepay Power: Customer Service – 0818 323 920, www.prepaypower.ie

What you can do on our website: www.circlevha.ie

- ✓ Log a repair request (for emergency out of hours requests telephone 053 937 4832)
- ✓ Pay your rent online.
- ✓ Complete a pet application.
- ✓ Report a complaint or give us feedback.
- ✓ Complete your confidential income statement for a rent review.
- ✓ View our policies.
- ✓ See tutorial videos on how to manage repairs in your home.

circle | more than housing

CIRCLE VHA, PHOENIX HOUSE, 32-34 CASTLE STREET, DUBLIN 2, IRELAND.
TELEPHONE: (01) 407 2110 - EMAIL: INFO@CIRCLEVHA.IE WEB: WWW.CIRCLEVHA.IE