

# **Guernsey Youth and Housing Project (Action for Children)**

A brief guide on being a good neighbour,  
tenancy and dealing with issues

**citizens  
advice**



**The Queen's Award  
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# Your home

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## KEY CONTACTS

Guernsey Youth Housing | Action For Children

Citizens Advice Guernsey

Tenants – Guernsey Landlords

## **Top 10 tips on being a good neighbour**

### **1 Shhh...**

Everyone makes some noise but please remember that sound travels very easily between flats, particularly from above or below. Noise is particularly unwelcome at night if your neighbours have to get up early or have small children, so please keep music down after 9.00pm and be aware that some things like putting on the washing machine can be noisy.

### **2 Keep control of your pets**

Be aware that not everyone likes your pet as much as you do! Be a good pet owner- keep your cat out of your neighbour's flowers and plants. Clean up after your dog, don't let it wander the streets and teach it not to bark when you go out. If you are worried about any pets being kept by neighbours, you should ring the GSPCA: 01481 257261

### **3. Keep your property tidy**

Don't let your rubbish spread into public areas or on to your neighbour's property. Be aware that after windy conditions you may have to carry out a tidying session.

### **4. Be reasonable**

If your neighbours need to come onto your property or into your garden to fix their gutters or paint, you should let them as long as they ask in advance and do it at a convenient time for to you.

### **5. Mind your Children**

Children have a right to play, ride their bikes and stand outside their house with their friends and to make some noise, but you must do something if your children are causing problems for your neighbours.

### **6. Share fairly**

If you share amenities, like kitchens, bathrooms or bin stores, you need to sort out any problems that may develop in a calm way. Try to see the other person's point of view and come to a compromise.

### **7. Anti-social behaviour**

Anti-social behaviour includes abusive language, threatening behaviour, assault, noise, graffiti and littering. If you experience any of these from your neighbours you should report these behaviours to the Landlord and to the Police.

### **8. Racial Harassment and Homophobic harassment**

If you experience racial or homophobic (anti-gay) harassment you should report this to the Police.

### **9. Parking Considerately**

Observe any parking restrictions and ensure you set a parking clock if required.

### **10. Crime**

If you become involved in illegal activities at your home your neighbours are likely to report you to the Police. Your tenancy could be affected by this.

### **What can you do about problem neighbours?**

- Talk to your neighbours and explain why you have a problem with what they are doing and see if you can resolve things. If you think you or they may get angry write them a polite letter instead.
- Inform the neighbour's housing provider: even private landlords have responsibility for their tenants.
- Keep a diary to keep track of when things happen, for example dumping rubbish, barking dogs and noisy parties.

### **Who to contact.**

- Tell the Police if you think a crime has been committed.
- You could contact an advocate to write a letter to your neighbour, but this would cost money.
- You could also contact Citizens Advice. [Citizens Advice Guernsey](#)

### **If you are accused of being a nuisance.**

Talk to your neighbour to find out what the problem is and see if you can reach a compromise.

If you think your neighbours' complaints are wrong, you may want to discuss them with your Housing officer or Landlord. If you have any information or witnesses that would support you, you should give them this as well.

If your neighbours' complaints are true and you are at fault you should do something about it as soon as possible as your tenancy could be at risk.

## **Your tenancy agreement**

The tenancy agreement puts in writing all the arrangements for the tenancy that have been agreed. It should be signed by the landlord and the tenant.

The tenant is someone who lives in a house, flat or room or other property they do not own and pays rent (money) each week or month to the landlord (the person or organisation that owns the property). The landlord can be the States of Guernsey, a housing association, a housing scheme, a company, or a person.

These are things that the tenancy agreement should cover: -

### **Rent**

The agreement should tell you how much rent you will pay and how and when the rent to be paid may be changed.

You need to find out if the rent covers other charges, for example water, gas, electricity, internet, TRP and parish rates.

### **Paying rent**

The agreement should say how often you pay the rent (weekly, monthly) and who to (the landlord, the agent and in cash or by bank transfer or other means).

### **Length of tenancy**

The agreement should state the length of the rental period and the date it begins.

### **Notice**

The tenancy agreement should say how much notice you should give. Notice is the warning in writing you must give before you can move out. Your notice is usually the same as the rental period so if you pay rent monthly the landlord will usually want a month's notice that you plan to move out but check carefully. You must pay rent for the whole notice period, even if you move out before it ends.

The landlord must give the notice required in the tenancy agreement in writing to the tenant stating they want the tenant to move out. If the tenant does not leave by the end of a notice period, the landlord can apply for a court order to evict them.

Eviction procedure for Landlords & Tenants: [Citizens Advice Guernsey](#)

### **Home contents**

If the tenancy agreement comes with a list of home contents (things which they provide for you in the home, like a washing machine or cups and plates) or information about the condition of the property (whether the paintwork on the walls is in good condition, whether the carpets are clean, whether there is any damage to windows, doors, etc) you must make sure you check that everything on the list is right. Take lots of photos of each room and the things in it so that you can prove the condition of your home when you moved in. You should do this either before you sign the tenancy agreement or in the first few days after you move in.

If something on the list is missing or wrong tell the landlord or the letting agent straight away.

When you leave the property, the list will be used to check if you have lost or damaged any of the contents. Landlords must expect normal wear and tear but you will have to pay for any significant damage. Usually this is deducted from your deposit.

If you are unhappy with the way the landlord is treating your deposit, you can contact [Contact – Guernsey Landlords](#) or [Citizens Advice Guernsey](#)

### **Building repairs**

The landlord is responsible for all building repairs caused by wear and tear, like a leaking roof or a rotten door frame. Usually the tenant pays for any damage they cause. So, if you break a window or damage the paintwork you will have to pay to repair it.

The landlord has the right to inspect the property from time to time. The landlord should give you notice and should come in the daytime, while you are there. Landlords should not just let themselves into your home. The tenancy agreement may also include other restrictions, like whether you are allowed to decorate, smoke on the premises, keep pets or sub-let. Sub-letting is when someone comes to live in your rented home and pays you rent.

### **Read the small print!**

Make sure you read the tenancy agreement carefully. Are the terms the same as you were told when you saw the place and talked to the landlord? If there is anything in the agreement you are not sure about, get advice. [Citizens Advice Guernsey](#)

If you can, take the tenancy agreement away before you sign it to read on your own or with some help. Don't feel pressured into signing it before you fully understand it. When you do sign a tenancy agreement make sure you get a copy to keep and put it somewhere safe. You may need it to claim benefits.

## Top tips to avoid losing your tenancy

### 1. Look after your money:

- Pay your rent on time.
- Pay your bills – gas, electricity, water charges.
- Budget so you know when bills are due and how much you need to pay.
- Don't take on loans you can't afford.

### 2. Be socially responsible:

- Don't disturb other people by playing loud music or having loud parties.
- Don't upset the people you are sharing with – help to look after the areas you share.
- Don't fall out with your neighbours – listen to them and sort out any problems calmly.

### 3. Remember your home is for you, not for other people:

- Don't let friends sleep over all the time.
- Don't make your home into a general place for people to meet and friends to hang out.

### 4. Look after your home:

- Keep your home clean and tidy
- Put rubbish out to be collected and recycled.

### 5. Report repairs to your landlord straight away.

- A water leak can cause damage to rooms below.

### 6. Protect your home against fire:

- Don't leave electrical appliances on when you go out.
- Make sure all cigarettes are out before you go to bed.

**7. Read your post.** If you 'file' it in the bin you may miss something important like an appointment or a reminder to pay a bill.

**8. Know your rights as a tenant,** how to make a complaint and who can help you.

**9. Stick to your tenancy agreement.** Your landlord has rights too.

**10. If you have problems don't ignore them or just walk away** - your home will be repossessed if you don't live in it.

## Energy issues

One of the biggest expenses for most households is energy costs. Gas and electricity are expensive and some heating or cooking appliances are costly to run. It is important to stay warm, but you also need to be aware of how much energy you may be using.

Tips on keeping warm are given on the States of Guernsey website [www.gov.gg/winterwellbeing](http://www.gov.gg/winterwellbeing). The site also has a series of links to other sites that could be helpful.

In addition to keeping warm your property also needs to be ventilated by opening windows regularly to prevent mould and damp developing.

It is important that any energy bills are paid on time but sometimes the bills can be confusing. Both Guernsey Electricity and Guernsey Energy (Gas) provide support in helping people understand their bills and assisting in budgeting to meet the bills.

If you are new to living independently the energy companies will give you additional support if you register with them.

For Guernsey Energy the link is <https://guernseyenergy.gg/priority-care>.

For Guernsey Electricity the contact is [Help | Guernsey Electricity](#).

The important thing is to seek help immediately if you are having problems and avoid running up debts.



**call us on**

**24 22 66**

**For free, friendly and completely confidential advice on:-**

**Separation or divorce**

**Employment issues**

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**Guernsey wills**

**Scams**

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**... and much more**

**GROW Hub, Les Petites Quartier Vinery, Coutanchez, St Sampson,  
Guernsey, GY2 4GE**

**Open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9.30 am to 4.00 pm  
Wednesday 9.30am to 6.30pm and Friday 9.30 am to 12.30 pm**

**Bus Route 32**

**[citizensadvice.org.gg](https://citizensadvice.org.gg)**

**What3Words:**  
develops.directly.rescues

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