

# Customer Handbook

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# WELCOME

**‘Our vision is to meet housing need and deliver homes that change people’s lives.’**

Elim’s customers include families and single people accessing a wide range of services that include Supported and General Needs Accommodation, Gypsy and Traveller sites and Shared Ownership properties.

We aim to provide housing and services that serve as a platform for growth, helping our customers achieve their aspirations.



## **Customers First**

Customers are at the heart of our services and decision making



## **Aspirational & Accountable**

We are ambitious for our customers, staff and stakeholders

We work with integrity, learn from mistakes and do what we say we will



## **Results Driven**

We work hard and deliver great results for our customers and for Elim



## **Everyone’s view matters**

We listen to understand, improve and build our services



## **Supportive**

We tackle challenges head on and inspire each other to achieve our potential



# YOUR TENANCY

## We have the right to:

- Change the rent or other charges made providing we give you 1 months notice of the change.
- Enter your property, after giving you notice, to carry out inspections, repairs or gas servicing.

## We are responsible for:

- Making sure that we carry out the repairs that are our responsibility.
- Consulting with you about any planned changes to your tenancy.
- Carrying out statutory compliance surveys and testing.

## You have the right to:

- Live in your home peacefully.
- Be consulted about any major changes affecting your tenancy.

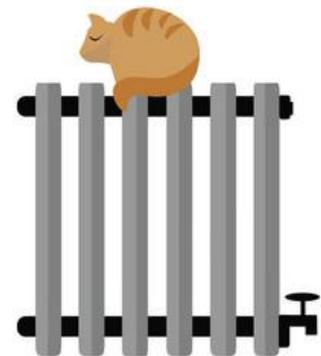
## Depending on the type of tenancy agreement you may have the right to:

- Exchange the tenancy (swap homes with another tenant.)
- Succeed to a tenancy (take on a tenancy from a family member if you are living with them, and they pass away.)

- Assign your tenancy (offer the tenancy to a family member.)
- Take in a lodger.
- Make improvements with our written agreement.

## You are responsible for:

- Living in the property as your main home, all the time.
- Paying the rent and any other charges when they are due.
- Taking care of the property, including reporting repairs when needed.
- Making sure that you, members of your household, visitors or pets do not cause nuisance or annoyance, harass or threaten anyone in the vicinity of your home, including Elim staff, contractors and Board Members.
- Tell us if you are going away for more than 4 weeks (for example going into hospital or on holiday.)



# LOOKING AFTER YOUR HOME



There are many things you can do to make sure your home stays in good condition. Some of the problems tenants report to us such as condensation and mould can be easily avoided.

For tips on how to deal with these issues visit our leaflet rack online at [www.elimhousing.co.uk](http://www.elimhousing.co.uk)

## Home contents insurance

As your landlord we only insure the actual building itself. Your personal belongings including furniture, carpets and decoration are not insured by us and are **your responsibility**. This is the same whether you are a general needs tenant, supported housing customer or shared owner. If you do not have contents insurance, you will have to pay to replace any damaged items by such things as fire, burst pipes or flooding.

The National Housing Federation can provide information to customers wishing to take out low cost home contents insurance cover by calling them on 020 7067 1010.

## What can your Housing Officer help with?

Your Housing Officer will attend your property throughout your tenancy for 'Keeping in Touch' visits. This is an opportunity to discuss your tenancy and to give any feedback you may have.

You may also see your Housing Officer on estate walkabouts. These are usually arranged quarterly and your Housing Officer is happy to meet you when onsite. Please contact the office if you are interested in attending your estate walkabout.



# PAYING YOUR RENT



## Paying your rent:

Rents are reviewed every year. Any changes will normally take place annually in April and we will notify you at least 1 month before any change is due.

If you receive Housing Benefit or Universal Credit you must contact the Housing Benefit or Department for Work & Pensions to inform them of any changes.

How much rent you pay, will depend on where you live, and what type of home you live in. Your rent covers:

- Repair and maintenance costs.
- Improvement costs.
- Management costs.
- You may also pay a service charge.

Rent statements are sent to you every 3 months. This shows you the rent, and any other charges as well as any payments that have been made.

## Ways you can pay:

- Setting up a Direct Debit.
- Phone us to talk about any of these options or make payment over the phone on 01454 411172.
- Going online at [www.elimhousing.co.uk](http://www.elimhousing.co.uk).
- Setting up a Standing Order.
- By paying at any pay point with an Allpay card issued by Elim.



# PAYING YOUR RENT



**Housing Benefit** is assessed and paid by the Local Authority. It is your responsibility to complete a claim form and supply the information requested. Even if Housing Benefit have agreed to pay your rent, you have the overall responsibility for making sure that it is paid and resolving any problems.

**Universal Credit** is a single payment for people who are looking for work or on a low income. You will receive one payment each month directly into your bank account, replacing other working age benefits.

As Universal Credit is replacing Housing Benefit, part of the money you receive is for you to pay your rent and any service charges. We will no longer receive this payment directly and you will be responsible for paying your rent when it is due.

**Service Charges** are charged to people living in properties which have shared areas or facilities. Service charge pays for things like: heating, lighting and cleaning of shared areas, fire safety equipment, door systems and garden maintenance.

**Your Responsibility** Rent must be paid in advance, you can do this on a weekly or monthly basis. If you do not pay your rent you risk losing your home.

Paying by Direct Debit is easy to set up and means you won't forget to pay the rent when it is due.

If your Housing Benefit does not cover the full rent due you must pay the shortfall directly to Elim.

If you are in financial difficulty please contact us. We may be able to help by agreeing a payment plan with you or referring you to specialist debt advisors.

**If you are having problems paying your rent, please contact us in the first instance, so we can help you on 01454 411172**

**Please remember, that if you do not pay your rent or service charges, we may take legal against you, which could result in you losing your home.**

# REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE



## Emergency repairs

An emergency repair is if there is a danger to the Health & Safety of our customers or the public. For example, burst water pipes or serious electrical faults. We will attend and make safe within 24 hours.

## Urgent repairs

Are faults that will affect the comfort and safety of our customers or the public. For example, a blocked sink, leaking roof or communal light fault. We will attend within 5 working days to fix any issues.

## Routine repairs

Most repairs are routine, for example, broken roof tiles, leaking overflow or carpentry repair. Generally these types of work will be carried out within 21 working days unless part of planned work.



# REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

## Reporting repairs

Please contact our Head Office on 01454 411172 between 9:00am and 5:15pm Monday to Friday. You can also report your repair online at [www.elimhousing.co.uk](http://www.elimhousing.co.uk).

All repairs that are reported to us are important, but we need to deal with them in order of priority. In an emergency, don't report your repair in writing or online. Call us straight away.

If you have an urgent repair outside our office hours, please contact 0808 169 2910.

## Rechargeable repairs

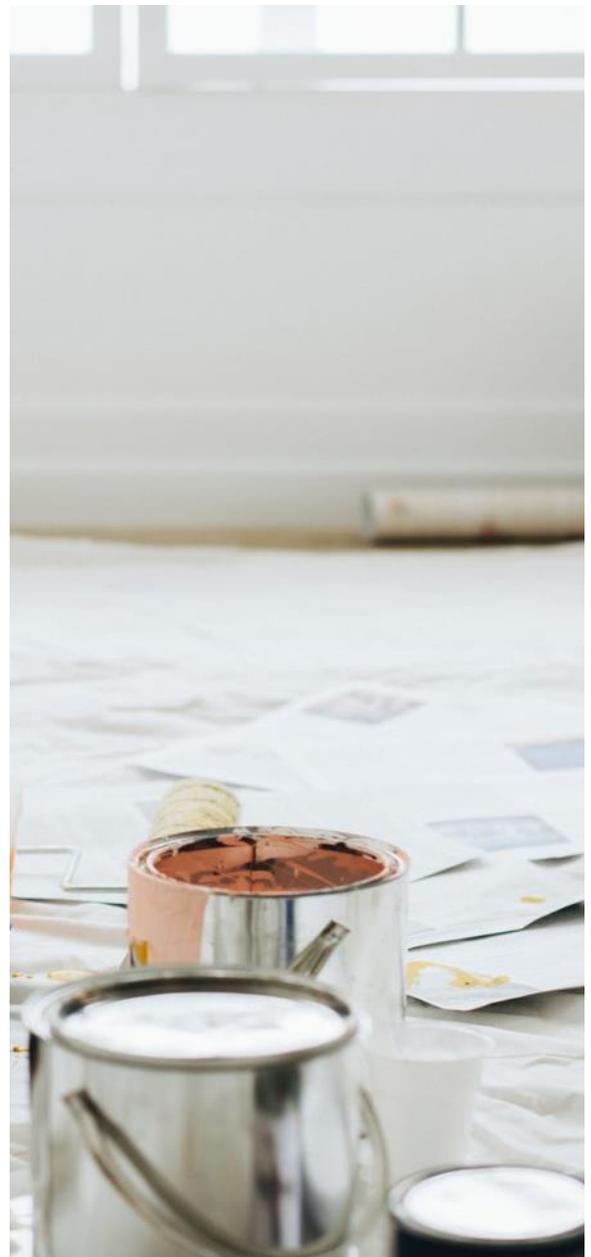
You are responsible for repairing any damage caused by you, your family or visitors. If you can not carry out a repair for any reason you should contact Elim to discuss this. We may be able to arrange for the work to be carried out by our contractor but you will be required to pay the full cost of this. For example, attendance of a locksmith after locking yourself out of the property.

## Health & Safety

The safety of our customers is paramount and on occasions we will require access to your home to carry out safety checks and servicing. When we require access to your property, we will telephone or write to you and inform you of the need for access. We will try our utmost to arrange a convenient time with you to carry out the inspection/ service.

## Unvented pressurised cylinders

Properties that have electrical heating or heating supplied by heat pumps may have their hot water stored in an unvented pressurised cylinder. These must be tested and serviced every 12 months. This will take approximately ½ hour.



# REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE



## Gas safety

Annual servicing and safety inspections are required. All Elim gas appliances that are fitted in Elim properties are regularly serviced and have a Landlord Annual Safety Inspection (CP12) carried out within 10 to 12 months of the previous servicing date. This will take approximately 1 ½ hours. Elim are obliged to issue the certificate to you, and to keep a record of the certificate which can be requested by customers at any time. Elim also fit carbon monoxide detectors when the gas appliance is serviced.

## Resident appliances

Elim will not service or be responsible for appliances installed or owned by its customers.

## Emergency gas safety procedure:

If the you smell gas, immediately follow the procedure below:

- Turn off the gas supply if it is safe to do so.
- Extinguish all naked flames / do not smoke.
- Get to fresh air immediately - open all doors and windows to ventilate the area.
- Contact the relevant National Gas Emergency Tel. 0800 111 999
- Call Elim's Maintenance Team Tel. 01454 41172 during office hours, or our out of hours number Tel. 0808 169 2910.
- If you are feeling unwell visit your GP or hospital immediately.
- If the attending emergency operative identifies any concern with any gas appliances, follow the advice given concerning use of the equipment and where advised contact a Gas Safe registered engineer to fix the appliance.
- Do not turn the gas supply on again until it has been checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

## Liquified petroleum gas :

Contact the number on the bulk storage vessel or meter. For cylinder supplies please see local telephone directory for contact details. Then contact Elim: 01454 41172 or our Out of Hours Service on 0808 169 2910 who will instruct a gas servicing contractor to attend.

# REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

## Fire safety

Elim has a legal responsibility to carry out a Fire Risk Assessment of communal spaces, this includes the flat doors leading off these spaces, every 5 years with 2 yearly reviews. Inspection of fire doors are mandatory, if you reside in a flat or shared house this will take about 10 minutes. Communal areas may have fire detection systems and emergency lighting, these systems are regularly tested and maintained. What you can do to reduce fire risk in your home:

- Do not overload electrical outlets. Cords should not be frayed or damaged.
- Make sure any equipment connected to the mains is in good condition.
- Make sure that combustibles like drying clothing, are not too close to heaters.
- Never smoke in bed or near soft furniture.
- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children.
- Never use extension cords with heating or air conditioning equipment.
- Close your downstairs doors at night before going to bed.

## Electrical

Testing is legally required every 5 to 10 years and will take about 1 ½ hours and the electricity supply will need to be switched off for about 20 minutes whilst any faults are corrected. Elim retain a copy of the Electrical Installation Condition Report which is available to customers on request.

## Asbestos

5 yearly Asbestos Management Surveys are required, as well as review every 2 years. This may not apply to your property; you will be notified if your property is affected. The Asbestos Management Survey review will take about 15 minutes.

If Asbestos is found, we have a duty of care to inform you of the locations and type in your property, as well as anyone else who this may affect.

Asbestos that is left undisturbed, present no health risk but if damaged can release fibres. Painting of surfaces but not rubbing them down is allowable, as is putting drawing pins in these materials.

Customers are not permitted to carry out alterations that may disturb Asbestos and if there is any concern about the condition of asbestos, you should contact us as soon as possible.

## Water management (Legionella)

Elim regularly test and clean communal systems and monitor water temperatures using an approved water management contractor. Access may be required occasionally to take a sample. To reduce the risk of Legionella, you can ensure that shower heads are cleaned regularly. If your home is unoccupied for more than 1 week, upon return, run all taps and shower head in a bucket of water for 3 minutes, flush your toilet, and keep cisterns covered.

## PAT testing (Elim equipment only)

Elim supplies some portable electrical appliances to some of its properties and these will require a PAT test every two years. This does not include items like washing machines, fridges and electric heating. The PAT is to ensure portable equipment is in good condition and safe to use

# COMMUNITY

## Being a good neighbour

Everyone is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of their property. Quiet or peaceful enjoyment means you can live normally in the property without suffering any unnecessary interruptions.

You should expect your neighbours to respect your privacy and comfort, and you should respect theirs. Always remember to be tolerant of others and think about whether your expectations of them are fair.

### You can be a good neighbour by:

- Keeping your garden tidy
- Putting your rubbish out on the right day
- Keeping the noise down
- Not leaving items in communal areas
- Not fly-tipping

## If your behaviour has been unacceptable

If your behavior, or that of any of your household members or visitors, is found to have caused a nuisance to another person you may be found to be in breach of your tenancy agreement. If this is the case we will review the evidence and take appropriate action against you. This could put your tenancy at risk.

## Reporting anti-social behaviour

We have high expectations of all of our customers and will deal quickly and firmly with any issues, but we don't get involved in 'tit for tat' arguments. We want you to get on with your neighbours and if needs be, make an effort to sort out any differences you may have with them – a calm and reasonable chat will often help sort things out – without the need to get others involved.

However, if you have tried this or you do not feel able to, please get in contact with your Housing Officer or a member of the Customer Service Team on 01454 411172.

Our service will give you honest advice about what we can and can't do to put a stop to such behaviour.

You should tell us immediately if you or your neighbour are suffering from any anti-social behavior.

You can report ASB by letter, email or in person to your Housing Officer by telephone.



# GETTING INVOLVED

At Elim we value your feedback and suggestions on how our services could be improved. By getting involved you can contribute to the decisions we make about a number of different issues including how we manage your home.

## Comments, compliments and complaints

Elim Housing is committed to delivering high quality services to all its customers. We welcome feedback to help us understand what we are doing well, where we could improve, or if a mistake was made. We use the feedback we receive to improve and change our services for you.

If you would like to make a comment, raise a compliment or complaint please contact us either through our website, by phone, via email or letter.

**Tel. 01454 411172**

**[www.elimhousing.co.uk](http://www.elimhousing.co.uk)**

**[info@elimhousing.co.uk](mailto:info@elimhousing.co.uk)**

## Policy, forms & procedures

All our policies and procedures are available on our website at [www.elimhousing.co.uk](http://www.elimhousing.co.uk)



# ENDING YOUR TENANCY



## Ending your tenancy

The amount of notice you need to give will be stated in your tenancy agreement. It is usually 4 weeks for general needs residents and 2 months for intermediate rented or rent to homebuy properties. You can give more notice than this if you wish. When your tenancy ends you need to:

- Have paid all rent up to the end of your tenancy.
- Remove all your possessions and rubbish. We will charge you if we have to do this.
- Leave the property, garden and any attached buildings in good, clean order.
- Make sure you have done any repairs which are your responsibility. If more work is required, that you are responsible for, we will re-charge you.
- Make sure you leave the property secure, locking all doors and windows.
- Make sure you return all the keys to the property to us. Your tenancy will not be ended and you will be charged rent until they are returned.

You can find further information on ending your tenancy via our website at [www.elimhousing.co.uk](http://www.elimhousing.co.uk)

Or by contacting your Housing Officer at 01454 411172



# ELIM HOUSING GROUP



## KEY

- SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION
- HOMES FOR RENT OR SHARED OWNERSHIP
- GYPSY & TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION
- STUDENT ACCOMMODATION
- STAFF
- DEVELOPMENT OR GROWTH ACTIVITY UNDERWAY

# CONTACT US



**Elim Housing Association**

**Units 3 & 4 Pinkers Court**

**Briarlands Office Park**

**Gloucester Road**

**Rudgeway**

**Bristol**

**BS35 3QH**

**Telephone: 01454 411172**

**Email: [info@elimhousing.co.uk](mailto:info@elimhousing.co.uk)**

**Website: [www.elimhousing.co.uk](http://www.elimhousing.co.uk)**

**Our Customer Handbooks are available in large print and in other languages upon request. Please contact us on 01454 411 172 or email [info@elimhousing.co.uk](mailto:info@elimhousing.co.uk) if you would like to request these formats.**

Nasze Podręczniki są dostępne na żądanie w dużym druku oraz w innych językach. Skontaktuj się z nami pod numerem 01454 411 172 lub napisz [info@elimhousing.co.uk](mailto:info@elimhousing.co.uk), jeśli chcesz zamówić te formaty.

Nos manuels sont disponibles en gros caractères et dans d'autres langues sur demande. Veuillez nous contacter au 01454 411 172 ou envoyer un courriel à [info@elimhousing.co.uk](mailto:info@elimhousing.co.uk) si vous souhaitez demander ces formats.

**Our Head Office is open between 9.00am and 5.00pm  
from Monday to Friday.  
We are not open on bank holidays.**