

# Moving into your new home



A guide to your new home and moving in

## Introduction

Sandbourne would like to welcome you to your new home. We hope that your move will be a smooth one but, should you have any problems relating to your tenancy or settling in, please contact the office. Our details are on both the front cover and last page of this leaflet.

This leaflet is intended to be a basic guide for our residents and is fairly general due to the variety of different tenures and properties we have.

The use of 'you' applies to all of our occupiers who are tenants, leaseholders or shared owners. The use of 'us', 'our' or 'we' refers to Sandbourne Housing Association.

## A bit about Sandbourne

Our registered office is located in Poole and (at the time of print) we have 10 staff: a Chief Executive, Head of Housing, two housing management staff, two maintenance staff, two part-time finance staff and two admin staff.

We have (at the time of print) 224 properties in Bournemouth, 194 in Poole, 45 in Ringwood, 13 in Wimborne and 5 in Milborne St Andrew.

These are made up of general rented flats and houses for those people aged 18 and over who are nominated to us by the local authority; flats (and a few other homes) for those people aged 60 and over for which we hold a waiting list; and some leasehold and shared ownership properties that are advertised independently from us when they become vacant.

Our aim is to cover information that could be useful to as many new residents as possible, but obviously this might vary subject to the type of new home you are moving into. We also have a wide range of other leaflets covering specific topics, many of which will be in your sign up pack but are also available from the office or on our website.

## When you know you are moving in

Here are some of the arrangements you may need to make:

- If you think you may be entitled to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, you should apply immediately to the local authority (Housing Benefit) or DWP (Universal Credit).
- If you have been receiving Housing Benefit or Universal Credit at a different address, you must tell them that you have moved.
- You should contact the electricity, gas, phone and broadband companies, where applicable, to let them know that you are moving and let them know if you want them to continue providing those services to you.
- You should make sure that you have arranged contents insurance cover for your belongings for your new property (see separate section on this below).
- Please arrange for your TV licence to be transferred to your new home, even if you receive a free licence.
- Don't forget to let people like your GP know that you are moving.
- You might also want to arrange with the post office to forward your post from your previous address.

## Home contents insurance

Sandbourne does not insure your furnishings or belongings and we strongly advise that you take out your own home contents insurance.

This should cover you against damage to your personal belongings, floor coverings, furniture and other contents and decorations, including damage from fire, flood, break-in and vandalism, or accidents caused by you to your neighbour's property or Sandbourne's communal facilities.

When choosing an insurance policy, you should make sure that it covers broken glass and locks in doors and windows.

## **Your tenancy**

If you are moving into a rented property, you will sign a tenancy agreement and the date given on that document is the one when you become the legal tenant. From that date you are responsible for paying rent and other charges, even if you do not move in immediately. Please keep your tenancy agreement safe and see our leaflets on 'Tenancies' and 'Rent and Service Charges' for more information.

## **Paying for your rent and/or service charges**

The leaflet 'Rent and Service Charges' explains this in more detail, along with our leaflet on 'Payments (Ways to Pay)'. However, we will ask you to let us set up a direct debit with us for any payments due. Please note that rent is due in advance.

## **Housing Benefit and Universal Credit**

Please remember that if you are currently in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit and you move homes, you will only receive it on one of your properties (unless you have an agreed overlap with the local authority/DWP) and it will only be paid once you have moved in.

## **Keys**

We will provide you with a set of keys (and fobs where applicable) when you sign up to your tenancy with us. We will not hold any spare keys for your own front door, so they will be your responsibility to replace if you lose them.

The only master keys or fobs we hold will be for the main front entrance doors to blocks of flats. If you need a spare, please contact us, although there will be a charge for this.

For security reasons, please let us know immediately if you lose your key/fob to a main entrance door to a block of flats

as this could compromise the security of the building.

We provide key safes outside of our 60+ flats and strongly recommend that you keep a spare key to your flat in there. You should also ensure that your next-of-kin knows your key safe number in case there is an emergency.

## Security

There are many aspects of keeping safe in your home, but we would recommend that you do not have any sort of name plate outside of your home giving your details as this could make it easy for bogus callers to introduce themselves. See our separate leaflet on 'Safety in the Home'.

## Support services

Apart from our Extra Care scheme in Bournemouth, we do not provide any support to residents. What we do provide is a housing team who can point you in the direction of where you might be able to get support to help you live independently in your home, including who to contact about how to claim benefits etc.

## Decorating, repairs and home improvements

You should familiarise yourself with our leaflets 'Repair Guidelines' and making 'Home Improvements'.

We do have a dedicated email address for you to report your repairs to ([repairs@sandbourne.org.uk](mailto:repairs@sandbourne.org.uk)) which goes straight to our maintenance team and you can sign up to a text messaging service so that you know we have ordered your repair for you.

These leaflets state that before you move in we will have checked the condition of the property, carried out safety

checks, and undertaken any necessary repairs and redecorating.

Although you may be able to do things such as putting up shelves, you must not make any alterations to your new home for the first year of your tenancy (your starter tenancy period) and it is always best to check with us first before carrying out any works and make sure you have our permission. You should not remove anything from the property, which belongs to us, during that first year.

You will be responsible for certain repairs (see repairs leaflets) and some, if carried out by us, may be rechargeable to you. Our leaflet 'Recharge Guidelines' provides more information. You will also be responsible for the ongoing decoration of your home.

## **Newly built or recently refurbished properties**

If you are the first resident to occupy a new or recently refurbished home, you may come across things that need to be fixed. Don't worry if you find the paintwork flaking or cracking inside. These are normally signs of the wall plaster drying out. It can take up to a year for this to settle, but you can speed up the process by making sure your home is well ventilated.

For other problems, please let us know as soon as you notice anything that is wrong so that we can try to get it put right. Any work carried out by the original contractor is normally under guarantee for the first year and we may need to get back to them within that timescale.

## **Legionella**

We don't want to alarm anyone, but we do recommend that you run your taps and shower (if applicable) for a few minutes when moving into your new home. Also, that you

flush your toilet before use. This is simply advice that we give to all our new residents when moving in or if they have been away from their home for a long period of time, as outlined in our 'Legionella' leaflet.

## **Keeping communal areas clear**

Following advice from the Fire Service and our insurers, personal items are not permitted outside of flat doors in communal corridors, eg mats, plants, tables. Communal corridors and fire exits should not be blocked/obstructed. Pushchairs, bicycles and toys, for example, should not be stored under stairwells. Combustible materials should not be stored in any communal areas or cupboards. Therefore, anything that can cause an obstruction or can cause or accelerate a fire is not permitted in communal/shared areas.

## **Rubbish disposal**

Disposing of your normal household rubbish and recycling is nearly always an issue, irrespective of whether you live in a flat or a house. It depends on where you live as to the colour of your bins and whether you have to use black bags. At the time of printing this leaflet, Poole has black general refuse and blue recycling bins, whereas Bournemouth has black recycling and blue general refuse bins. Our Ringwood residents have an assortment of bins and black bags.

What we would ask is that you dispose of your rubbish responsibly in line with what you are advised by your local authority. You are also responsible for disposing of your own electrical and other bulky household items, for example old washing machines or mattresses, and these should not be left out for someone else to remove. The council won't take them and we will have to find out who 'dumped' them and re-charge them for their removal. If we can't, then the charge is split between all residents at that scheme.

Where there are shared bins/bin stores (blocks of flats), the council will not empty bins if they are contaminated, for example putting general household waste in the recycling bins. This can cause a backlog of rubbish and lead to residents filling whatever bins are empty irrespective of what should go in them.

Again, with shared bins, please remember that if you put large cardboard boxes, for example, in the recycling bin without breaking them up, they take up a large amount of space and can result in the bin becoming very full very quickly.

## Parking

This is one of the biggest problem areas, particularly within estates or blocks of flats. For this reason, we have produced a comprehensive leaflet on 'Parking' to cover as many eventualities as possible.

Some of our 18+ properties do have allocated resident and visitor car parking spaces, but many of our residents have no parking at all. At the majority of our 60+ schemes, some parking is provided on a first come, first served, basis.

Please read our parking leaflet but remember that parking may not be a right where you live; where there are designated disabled parking bays, an official disabled parking permit (blue badge) must be displayed; entrances/exits must never be blocked; and emergency vehicles should never be prevented from parking close to a building.

Finally, tolerance should be exercised when workmen, removal companies, etc are loading or unloading on site.

## Pets

We have a leaflet on 'Pets (Living with Pets in a Sandbourne Property)'. This provides useful guidance about what we expect of our pet-owning residents.

If you have a pet at the point of applying for accommodation, should let us know in advance. If you are considering getting



a pet, you should use the form at the back of our leaflet to gain our permission first.

If you have been granted permission to keep a pet in your home, you must not allow them to cause a nuisance or to foul the grounds around your home and you should follow the guidelines in the leaflet.

## **Communal gardens/paths/roads**

Where there are communal gardens, we are responsible for keeping the grounds tidy and free of rubbish; trimming shrubs and hedges; maintaining fences, boundary walls and steps or paths leading to your front or back door, but not other garden paths.

Communal gardens are for the benefit of all residents at that scheme and if you wish to hold an event, you must seek our permission first. We do not encourage residents to 'take over' part of the communal gardens as their own or leave their own items permanently outside in the grounds.

Although we may provide grit bins, we will not clear snow or ice from paths or roads and car parks in communal areas owned by us.

Please see our leaflet 'Gardens (Your garden and/or communal gardens/grounds)'.

## **Feeding birds and wildlife**

Whilst we understand that many people may like to put food out for birds and other wildlife, we discourage this where there is communal living. This is because the food left out can encourage vermin (rats) and this, together with bird droppings, can cause damage to property.

## **Satellite dishes**

If Sandbourne has already erected a satellite dish, for example at a block of flats, you cannot normally put up your

own dish. This is sometimes down to what is acceptable under planning conditions for flats.

If you live in a house, then you should check with us before putting up a satellite dish as we may need to give you permission for this.

## **Living with your neighbours**

We accept that, on rare occasions, neighbours may fall out with each other. We have leaflets and policies to help you resolved matters between yourselves ('Acting Responsibly', 'Anti-Social Behaviour' and 'Complaints'). However, if we need to get involved, we need to act impartially and ask residents to keep diary log sheets to support their complaints.

## **Running a business from your home**

Your home is meant to be used as a home. Therefore, you must not run a business from your home without our written permission. We will normally only give our permission if we are sure that the business will not disturb your neighbours and does not require planning permission. Please contact us before considering this.

If we become aware of of anyone carrying out criminal, illegal, or immoral activities in their home, for example, prostitution or illegal use of drugs, we will take action.

## **Applying for a Transfer or Swap Homes**

If you decide that you would like to transfer from one Sandbourne property to another, please ask us for a copy of our Allocations and Lettings Policy to see if you meet the criteria, for example, age or disability. We can then send you a form to complete to go on the Transfer List.

If you want to swap your home with someone who is not a Sandbourne resident, please speak to us or visit the Home Swapper website ([www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk)).

## **Buying your home**

Please contact us for further information about the Right to Buy.

## **Leaving your home**

We don't want to talk about you leaving your home when we are only just welcoming you as a new resident. However, when the time comes and you want to move or you sadly pass away, we have a leaflet on 'Moving On (Ending a Tenancy)' which either you or your next-of-kin will be given and this has a form at the back for you/your next-of-kin to use to end your tenancy. A month's notice is normally required.

## **New Home Survey**

We want to find out what we are getting right or wrong and therefore will send you a survey, normally six weeks after you have moved in. Your feedback is always important to us, so please be honest but constructive with any comments you make.

## **Data Protection**

When you receive your New Tenant Pack, you will be provided with a leaflet explaining about how we deal with and use your data under the General Data Protection Regulations. It is always best to check our website for the latest version of this leaflet later on during your tenancy to read about any changes that have come about.

## **Newsletters**

We produce quarterly newsletters for all of our residents (normally March, June, September and December). We would encourage you to read these as they are our main

means of communicating information to all residents at the same time. We always welcome articles and feedback.

## **Other available leaflets**

We have lots of other leaflets available upon request from the registered office or from our website which have not been mentioned in the leaflet, including:

- Asbestos in Your Home
- Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) and Drones
- Communal Facilities
- Condensation and Damp
- Customer Service Standards
- Flats (Living in)
- Gas Safety and Servicing
- Guest Room and Communal Lounge Bookings
- Night Storage Heaters
- Resident Involvement and Engagement

## **Need more information?**

You can write to us at our registered office:

Beech House, 28-30 Wimborne Road, Poole, BH15 2BU

Email: [info@sandbourne.org.uk](mailto:info@sandbourne.org.uk)

Repairs: [repairs@sandbourne.org.uk](mailto:repairs@sandbourne.org.uk)

Website: [www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk](http://www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk)

Telephone us on: 01202 671222

Please note that telephone calls to the registered office number above may be recorded for information and training purposes.

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