

**Albyn Housing Society  
Limited  
Tenant's Handbook**



## Contents

<b>Contents</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>About this Handbook</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>About Albyn Housing Society</b>	<b>4</b>
At <b>the</b> start of your tenancy	<b>7</b>
<b>More about your tenancy</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Living in your home</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Repairs and Maintenance</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Adaptations</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>If you need to move</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Ending your tenancy</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Support Services</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Customer Care</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Tenant Participation</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Your Contacts and Notes</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>64</b>



## About this Handbook

We have written this handbook to give you information about Albyn Housing Society and your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. We also hope it will give you some practical advice that will make your life as a tenant of Albyn Housing Society easier, safer and more enjoyable.

The handbook will be reviewed and updated from time to time, so any comments that you have about the content or format of this book will be very welcome.

The Handbook refers to various information packs and leaflets. Some of these packs will have been given to you with this handbook. A full list of the information leaflets currently available is included in Your Contacts and Notes. You can get copies of any of the packs or leaflets at any of our offices or by asking any member of staff.

Information from this handbook is also available on our website – [www.albynhousing.org.uk](http://www.albynhousing.org.uk).



## About Albyn Housing Society

### Introduction to Albyn Housing Society Ltd

Albyn Housing Society Ltd. is your landlord. The Society was established in 1973, and has its head office in Invergordon. The main services offered by the Society are delivered by over 30 staff (see Organisational Chart) based there. These include the management and maintenance services, that you will most commonly have contact with and also the finance and IT, corporate and development services. A further group of staff based in Inverness, Dingwall and Nairn provide support services to individual tenants.

The Society is a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), registered with Communities Scotland (registration number HAL 64). This means that the Society has to operate within rules set down by the Scottish Executive and is subject to regular external inspection. For you, this offers guarantees about the minimum standards of service offered by the Society, how the business is run and the opportunities for you to become involved.

At some point during the next few years, the Society will be required to register its support services with The Care Commission. In common with Communities Scotland, this will place detailed regulations and standards on the Society and ensure that the support services are subject to external inspection on a regular basis.

The Society has over 2000 properties in management. These are spread across the following parts of the Highland Council area:

Caithness; Sutherland; Ross & Cromarty; Inverness-shire and Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey. We also have a small number of properties in Dyke, Moray.

## **Committee of Management**

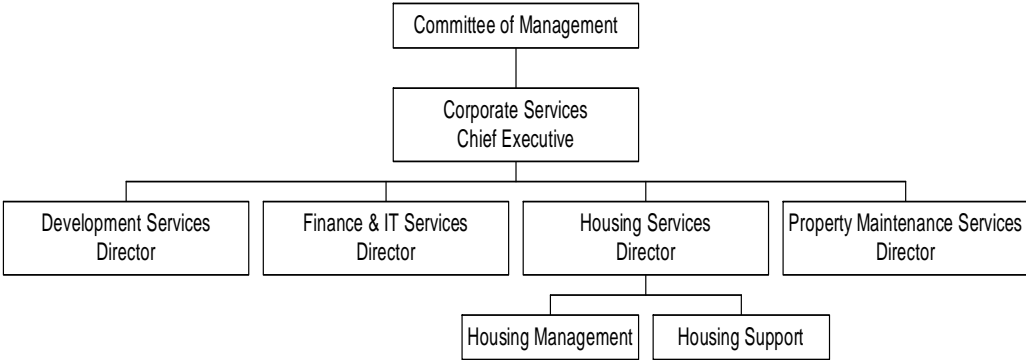
The Committee of Management runs the Society. There are 15 Members of the Committee. These 15 Members are elected from amongst the Society's membership at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Society. Ordinarily, at any given year's AGM at least five (a third) of the places are up for election. Of the 15 Members of the Committee 4 of them must be tenant-members of the Society and 1 more is the elected representative of the Federation of Albyn Residents. The Society's rules and various standing orders govern the conduct of Committee meetings.

Further information about membership of the Society is given in Tenant Participation.

The Committee holds business meetings at least 10 times per year, plus 2 or more strategy planning days. There are 2 formal sub-committees. These are the Audit Sub-Committee and the Disciplinary Hearing Sub-Committee. Both of these have memberships drawn from the elected Members of the Committee. Also, there is the Staff Consultative Forum, which deals with business about the employment responsibilities of the Society. It includes equal numbers of representatives from both the Committee and staff. Usually, the Committee and Sub-Committees meet in Invergordon during the daytime.

Contact information for the Committee is set out in Your Contacts and Notes.

### Management Structure



## At the start of your tenancy

### Tenancy agreement

Your tenancy agreement is the most important document you have for your new home. It details your rights and responsibilities as a tenant of Albyn Housing Society Ltd. We will take you through the most important parts when you sign for your new tenancy. You will need to keep it in a safe place as you may need to refer to it again. This handbook explains parts of it in greater detail or will tell you where you can get more information if you need it.

If two or more people have signed the tenancy, each one is individually and jointly responsible for making sure that all the tenancy conditions are kept to. You can apply for a joint tenant to be added to your tenancy agreement after your tenancy has started.

*For more information and useful advice see our Moving In leaflet.*

### Varying Your Agreement

Your tenancy agreement may be varied in only three circumstances:

- we increase the rent or service charge in the way described in paragraph 1.7 of the agreement; or
- we or you apply to the Sheriff under Section 26 the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 for an order to change the tenancy agreement and the Sheriff grants such an order; or



- we agree with you in writing to change it. This will only happen in exceptional circumstances, e.g. we may agree to change the period of notice required when you terminate your tenancy.

## **Paying Rent and Service Charges**

The rent and service charges that you pay cover the costs of managing and maintaining your home. You will only have to pay a service charge if we are providing a service to look after areas that you share with other tenants, e.g. cutting grass in your estate or cleaning common stairways in a block of flats. Our charges do not cover Council Tax or any charges that are raised by the Scottish Water Authority. See “Rent and Service Charges” section for further information on how these charges are set.

You will be asked to make your first rent payment when you sign for your tenancy. Your rent is due to be paid on the first day of each month. It is up to you to decide how often you wish to pay your rent as long as you let us know what you intend to do and that you pay enough to cover the monthly charge in advance.

You can pay rent in a variety of ways:

- You can pay cash at any local Post Office or at any branch of the Royal Bank of Scotland. We will give you a payment book or card to use when making payments.
- You can set up a Bank Standing Order from your bank account, ask us for a form
- You can send a cheque to us. Please make the cheque out to Albyn Housing Society Ltd and write your name, address and tenancy agreement number on the back of the cheque.

If you are on a low income you may be able to get Housing Benefit to help with your rent. You will have to make a claim for this benefit from your local council. We can help you with this. See the section on “Housing Benefit” for further information. You can also get Council Tax Benefit to help with Council Tax payments.

There may be other sources of help with the costs of setting up a new home. If you think you might need help, we might be able to help by putting you in contact with the relevant organisations.

Once you have been in your new home for some weeks we may contact you to make sure that you are settling in and managing ok.

## More about your tenancy

### Rent and Service Charges

#### *What does your rent and service charge cover?*

We use the rent you pay to:

- Repair and maintain your home
- Manage the services we provide to you
- Repay loans and interest on the loans taken out to buy or build houses

Sometimes we provide services to look after areas that you share with your neighbours, e.g. grass cutting or stair cleaning. We will make a charge to cover the costs we have to pay to the contractors for carrying out that service. This will appear on your tenancy agreement as a separate charge, but is payable together with your rent.

Full details of what income we receive and how it is used are included in our Annual Report that will be sent to you each year.

#### *How do we set charges?*

Your rent is set by our “Rent Setting Policy” agreed by our Committee of Management. You can get a copy of this policy by asking Housing Management Services on ☎ 01349 855979.

The rent for each house will vary depending on the size, type and general amenities of the house. So for example a 3 bedroom detached house with private garden and garage will have a higher rent than a 1 bedroom flat with a shared drying green.

We aim for rents to be affordable to people on low incomes and be comparable to other housing association or council rents in the area.

### ***Rent Increases***

Our rents and other charges are reviewed annually by the Committee of Management with increases usually applied on the 1<sup>st</sup> April each year. We will contact you towards the end of each year to let you know how we propose to change any charges the following year and to ask for your views.

If you have been a tenant with the Society since before 1989, you may have the right to have your rent set by the local Rent Officer. The Society can only apply for a rent to be reviewed every three years in these circumstances. We will have told you at the start of your tenancy if this right applies to your own tenancy.

If you were previously a tenant of Scottish Homes before Albyn Housing Society Ltd became the landlord of your house, we will only increase your rent in accordance with the agreement we made with you at that time.

If you need further information or think that your rent has not

been set or increased correctly please contact our Finance Department on ( 01349 855973.

### ***Housing Benefit***

If you do not think you can afford to pay the rent charged you must contact us straight away. We can help you to claim Housing Benefit. Your local council pays Housing Benefit to people who have to pay rent but have a low income or are on certain other benefits. You must fill in a claim form, which asks about your household, income and savings. You will also have to provide certain bits of evidence to back up the form. If you qualify for Housing Benefit it can be paid directly to us. Sometimes you may only get part of your rent paid by Housing Benefit and have to pay the rest yourself.

We have leaflets about Housing Benefit, which will help you make a claim. Contact Housing Management Services on 📞 01349 855979 for copies of the leaflets.

### ***Difficulties Paying Rent***

If you are not able to pay your rent or you want to pay your rent late, or if there is a problem with your housing benefit, get in touch with us straight away. We can only help you if you let us know there is a problem. If you do not pay your rent you are in arrears and in danger of losing your home.

If you do not pay your rent when you said you would or when it was due, we will write to you asking you to pay. If you get a letter from us you must get in touch with us, even if you think you have paid what is due. If you contact us we will try to find

out if you are getting all the help you are entitled to. You can talk to us in confidence either in our offices or in your own home. We will be able to look at your circumstances and agree with you how much you can afford to pay to cover your rent and clear any outstanding arrears. We might put you in touch with another organisation that specialises in debt or benefit advice.

If you do not contact us after getting reminder letters we will take stronger action to get the rent and arrears paid. This could mean that we take you to court and get an order either for payment of the debt or to evict you from your home – or sometimes both. If we have to take you to court you will also have to pay legal expenses which can be over £100. You might also find that your credit rating is affected.

We would rather not take court action against our tenants and we will always try to help tenants avoid getting into debt in the first instance. However we depend on all our tenants paying their rent so that we can manage our houses properly, keep them in good repair and keep future rent increases as low as possible.

Remember, the sooner you talk to us about any problems you might have, the sooner we will be able to help.



## Living in your home

### Who lives there

To keep your tenancy you have to live in this house as your main or only home. If you do not live in the house we will take action to end your tenancy.

When you filled in your application for housing you told us about your household. Over time this can change and you must let us know if someone leaves or if someone new comes to live with you. This includes family members who count this as their home but don't live there all the time. We need to know this so that we can:

- See the house is not getting overcrowded
- Let all adults in the household know if we are to do anything that may affect their rights.
- Be sure who else might have a right to take the tenancy over if anything happens to you.

If you want to have a lodger staying in your home and paying you rent, you must get our written permission to do this before you make any agreements with the intended lodger. If you think you might want to do this, please ask us for our "Lodgers Pack" by contacting Housing Management Services on ( 01349 855967.

### Going Away from home

If you are going to go away from your home for any significant length of time e.g. more than 4 weeks, you must let us know.

Even if you are leaving someone else to look after your home you should let us know. You will continue to be responsible for paying the rent while you are away.

If your home is going to be empty for **any** length of time during cold weather you must let us know. This is so that we can take appropriate action if we have reports of frozen or burst pipes.

You might want to sublet your home if you have to go away for a long period but intend to come back. If you are thinking about doing this you must get our written permission before you make any agreements with the person subletting. We might ask for additional information about the agreement you have and how long you intend to be away. We will not generally give permission for you to sublet for more than 6 months. If you think you might want to do this, please ask us for our "Subletting Pack" by contacting Housing Management Services on ( 01349 855967.

If you go away from home and don't tell us, we might think you have abandoned your home and are not coming back. We would then take steps to reclaim your home. This could end in you losing your home and your possessions. We do not need to go to court to do this but must serve a notice to you at your last known address. We can force access to an abandoned house and change the locks if we think the house or its contents are not safe or secure.

If you do not respond to the notices we send we can end your tenancy after 4 weeks. If you have left any possessions in the house we will store them for no more than 6 months **but** only if they have a higher value than the costs of storage and any other debts that you owe us (e.g. rent). Otherwise we can sell or

dispose of your property.

We can also take action to end the tenancy of a joint tenant who has abandoned the house leaving another tenant in occupation. The remaining tenant will become the sole tenant.

## **How to behave**

As a tenant, you are responsible for looking after your home and neighbourhood and being a good neighbour to other residents. The following are issues that can become areas for dispute if everyone does not behave with respect for each other.

### ***Pets***

You can keep pets without our permission as long as they do not cause nuisance or annoyance to your neighbours and you do not break any law or court order relating to the animals. If you do not keep your pets under reasonable control, look after them properly or if you allow them to cause nuisance to your neighbours we will first ask you to take steps to improve the situation. This might mean finding another home for your pets. If you do not do this we may get a court order to remove the pet.

A pet is defined as a domestic animal such as a dog, cat, rabbit, caged bird, fish, small rodent, non poisonous reptile or non-poisonous amphibian which are generally kept as pets. If you want to keep any other animal you must get our written permission.

If you have a dog, it must not be allowed to stray or to foul pavements or public areas, especially areas where children might play. Poop Scoops are available from any of our offices or your local council service point. If you find a stray dog in your area you can contact the dog warden at the local council who will then arrange to come and collect it.

Remember, if you have a dog that you leave alone in your house or garden it can cause disturbance to your neighbours if it barks or whines all day.

### ***Parking***

In some estates there is not always enough parking for everyone to park in front of their own front door. Unless the parking spaces have been designated for particular houses, parking is generally on a first come, first served basis. Please think before parking in a spot that may cause problems or annoyance to other people. In particular please be aware of the needs of neighbours who are elderly or who have mobility difficulties or who have small children.

Do not park in areas that have been designated for other residents, as disabled parking spaces (unless you have a disability which means you need to use the space) or have been designated as No Parking areas.

Abandoned vehicles, or any vehicles parked on the public road or in one of our car parking areas without displaying a current tax disc, will be removed.

## ***Play Areas***

Please encourage your children to use areas set aside for play where these are provided.

Make sure you know where your children and teenagers are and that they are not causing a nuisance to other people in the area. You are responsible for the behaviour of your children and they should not be allowed to damage other people's property. It can be dangerous for young people, especially young children, to be out at night, and it can be a cause of concern to other local people.

Adults also need to remember that young people need to play and groups of children together are not in themselves a cause for concern.

If you have a dog, make sure that they are not allowed to foul in areas where children might play.

## ***Shared Areas and facilities***

If your house has shared areas with other residents please respect their privacy and keep the areas you share clean and tidy and free from any obstruction.

If we do not employ a contractor to keep shared areas clean you are responsible for doing this along with other neighbours. We will leave it to you to organise yourselves. If you cannot

organise this work yourself we may set up a rota system. In the last resort if the areas are not kept clean we may arrange for the work to be carried out by a contractor and the cost recharged to all tenants sharing the area.

If you are not sure which areas you are able to use or are responsible for, please speak to your neighbour or ask us.

### ***Rubbish***

We will provide you with a bin to use during your tenancy. This will normally be a wheelie bin for your own use, but some tenants in flats may share a larger bin. This bin will remain the property of Albyn Housing Society Ltd and must be left in good condition when your tenancy ends. We will also provide somewhere for the bin to be kept. This could be a bin store or stand. You must make sure that your bin is returned to its proper storage place as soon as possible after it has been emptied.

The local council will empty the bins if they are left in the right place on the right day. We will tell you when this at the start of your tenancy. If you are not sure please speak to a neighbour, ask us or check with your local council service point.

The council will normally only collect rubbish if it is in the bin provided. If you have additional rubbish you will have to make arrangements with the local council for a special collection. They will do this free of charge for most items.

## ***Gardens***

If you have a garden, keep it tidy and weed free. If you cannot manage to do this because of ill health or disability you may be eligible for our garden maintenance scheme. Contact our Property Maintenance Office on ( **0845 130 9995** (Lo-call)).

There may be other garden schemes that you could join. Contact us, or your local council office for advice.

## ***Noise***

Noise is a fact of everyday life, and everyone has to accept that daily activities will create some level of noise. However, some types of noise are unacceptable and there are times of the day and night when noise really does become a nuisance.

Complaints about noise can be easily avoided by a little consideration for others. Think before you start noisy housework or DIY work or have a party. Will it disturb your neighbours? Have you warned them in advance?

If you make loud noise persistently or at inappropriate times of the day without consideration for your neighbours it can become Anti-Social Behaviour and we will take action that will have serious consequences for your household.

If your neighbours continually disturb you with noise you should first of all talk to them about it. We all create noise and sometimes people do not realise that they are disturbing anyone. If talking doesn't work there are various steps that you can take. If you contact us we can give you advice and may be able to take steps to prevent future disturbance. If you are seriously disturbed by loud noise in the night or at weekends you can also contact the police. Please ask for our *Neighbour Complaints pack* by contacting Housing Management Services on ( 01349 855967.

### ***Harassment***

Any form of harassment caused by you, someone who lives with you or anyone visiting you will not be tolerated by Albyn Housing Society Ltd. It is a clear breach of your tenancy agreement and is also a criminal offence.

Harassment means any anti-social or nuisance behaviour towards someone because of their race, colour, nationality, culture, ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, age, disability, religion, other belief, appearance or status. It includes physical attacks, damage to property, verbal threats or insults that cause the person alarm or distress.

If you are suffering from harassment contact us straight away.

**We will only be able to help you if you let us know what is happening**

### ***Neighbour Complaints and Anti-Social Behaviour***

Neighbour problems cover a wide range of issues and we are committed to tackling these problems. As a first step we encourage you to sort out your problems with your neighbours informally. We will help you with this if you want. If you cannot resolve the problem between yourselves then contact us at our Invergordon Office.

However, if you feel you would put yourself or your household at risk by contacting your neighbour, speak to the police or us straight away.

In the earlier parts of this section we have given you some advice about the need to treat your neighbours with respect and to deal with issues like pets, parking, rubbish etc sensibly and reasonably. If this doesn't happen, lack of consideration can lead to resentment and complaints from others that we have to deal with as nuisance or anti-social behaviour.

When we receive a complaint it will be categorised depending on the severity of the incident that has occurred and the nature of the complaint. Wherever possible all parties will be contacted within two working days to gather more information about what has happened. If you have been abused, harassed or the victim of crime we will contact you earlier. We will contact you again as soon as possible and no later than 14 days after you make your complaint to let you know what action, if any, we will be taking.

After speaking to everybody involved we may find that the issue is a difference of opinion or lifestyle and not related to your tenancy, or a personal disagreement between two people that does not cause a nuisance to anyone else. For instance, if somebody parks their car outside your house but it is not in

designated parking or causing an obstruction, Albyn Housing Society can not intervene in this. In this type of case we will not become involved in taking any further action, although we may offer you advice or arrange for mediation between the people involved. However if other incidents happen that do become a tenancy issue we will take appropriate action against whoever is causing the nuisance.

If we agree that you have grounds for complaint in which we should get involved then we will warn the person you complained about that their actions are causing disturbance or annoyance and that if they do not stop we will take appropriate action against them. This could include verbal, written or final warnings or formal legal action. Legal action could include interdicts, Anti Social Behaviour Orders, or as a last resort, eviction.

Where we think further action is required we will ask you to put details of your complaint in writing. If you do not want to put the complaint in writing, we will still try to investigate it, but it may be more difficult to get the sheriff to award an order in court.

If the problem continues after you have reported it to us, it is important that you tell us and keep a record of these problems. The *Neighbour Complaints pack* has log sheets for this purpose, but we have included one on page 25 as an example of the type of information you need to record.

In addition to information included on the log, we will also collect statements from tenants, check incidents reported to the police and contact other witnesses as evidence should we need to take a case to court.

You must always give us as much information as possible about the problem—what has happened, dates, times, the names of those involved and any other people who were witnesses. It is important that we know about incidents as soon as possible as they can be very difficult to investigate properly at a later date.

If there has been any criminal behaviour, you must report every incident to the police so that they can respond straight a way. The Police should give you an incident number, please keep a note of this number in case we need to check the details.

Further information about how to respond to and deal with neighbour problems is included in our Neighbour Complaints pack.

Reported To						
Witnessed By?						
What happened ?						
Who was involved ?						
Date and Time						

## **Repairs and Maintenance**

We have a legal duty to maintain your home in a fit and safe state for you to live in. We also have a commitment to provide good quality housing. About a ten percent of the rent you pay goes towards the cost of the day to day repairs service.

Generally we are responsible for keeping the structure and exterior of your home in good repair and keeping the installations in the house for the supply of water, gas and electricity and for sanitation in good repair and proper working order. However if the damage is caused by your neglect or misuse, we will carry out the work and may charge you for it.

You are responsible for the internal decoration of your home and the good maintenance of the fixtures and fittings. This means that you should make sure your home is in as good a decorative order at the end of your tenancy as it was at the beginning. In addition, you are responsible for damage to glass, doors, sinks, internal choked drainage, sweeping flues/ chimneys and lost/replaced keys and locks.

You must also:

- Report repairs promptly after they come to your notice;
- Allow the Society access to your home to inspect or repair at any reasonable time
- Maintain any garden or other ground let to you as part of your home.
- Where there are common or shared gardens, stairs etc take your turn to keep these clean and in good order.

### **Whose Responsibility?**

The following list outlines whose responsibility different repairs are likely to be:

Item	Us	You	Exceptions
Adaptation Equipment	✓		Where supplied by tenant
Back Boilers	✓		
Balconies	✓		
Banisters (internal)	✓		
Baths	✓		
Bin Stores or Shelters	✓		
Brick/Blockwork etc	✓		
Carports	✓		Unauthorised installation
Ceilings	✓		
Chimney Stacks/Pots/Cowls etc	✓		
Chimney Sweeping		✓	Blocked flues causing fire hazard

Item	Us	You	Exceptions
Cisterns	✓		
Clothes Poles	✓		
Clothes Lines		✓	
Coal Bunkers	✓		Retaining boards of internal store
Communal Areas to Flats	✓		
Communal TV Systems	✓		Those not provided by AHS eg cable
Cupboards		✓	
Damp-Proof Courses	✓		
Decoration (internal)		✓	Communal areas
Decoration (external)	✓		Tenant's installation (sheds, etc)
Decorative tiles		✓	Where provided by AHS Ltd
Divisional Fences		✓	Where erected by AHS Ltd
Doorbells	✓		Tenant's own installation
Doors to Common Areas	✓		
Doors/Door Fittings (external)	✓		

Item	Us	You	Exceptions
Door Locks (external)	✓		When tenant has lost/broken key
Doors (internal)	✓		
Door Glass (internal)		✓	
Door Handles (internal)	✓		
Door Name Plates		✓	
Downpipes (rain & soil)	✓		
Drainage (including blockage)	✓		Where caused by negligence/misuse
Driveways	✓		
Drying Areas (communal)	✓		
Electric Heaters/Fires	✓		When supplied by tenant
Electric Plugs		✓	
Electrical Wiring/ Sockets & Switches adaptations	✓		Unauthorised electrical
Entry Systems	✓		
Estate Footpaths/Walks	✓		Where adopted by local authority



Item	Us	You	Exceptions
Extractor Fans (communal & individual)	✓		
Floorboards	✓		
Fluorescent Tubes		✓	Communal Areas/Senior Citizens
Foundations	✓		
Fuse Boxes (ELCB, fuses/MCB)	✓		
Fuses to Plugs		✓	
Garages	✓		Garages erected by tenants or unauthorised installations
Garden Huts		✓	Where provided by AHS Ltd
Gas Central Heating (pipes, radiators, timers, thermostats)	✓		
Gas Fires	✓		Where installed by tenant
Gas Detectors		✓	Where provided by AHS Ltd
Gas Piping	✓		
Gates	✓		
Grab/Support Rails	✓		
Greenhouses		✓	

Item	Us	You	Exceptions
Glass (internal)		✓	Communal area
Glass (external)	✓		Where caused by vandalism which must be reported to the police
Glass (double glazing)	✓		
Guttering	✓		
Handrails (internal, external)	✓		
Hatches to Loft (communal, individual)	✓		Where not provided by AHS Ltd
Immersion Heaters	✓		
Keys (replacement)		✓	
Kitchen Fittings/Worktops	✓		
Lifts	✓		Where not provided by AHS Ltd
Light Bulbs		✓	Communal areas
Lighting Pendants/Roses	✓		
Outbuildings		✓	Where provided by AHS Ltd

<b>Item</b>	<b>Us</b>	<b>You</b>	<b>Exceptions</b>
Overflow Pipes	✓		
Painting (internal)		✓	Communal areas
Painting (external)	✓		
Parking Areas	✓		
Paths (main access to house)	✓		
Paths to Garden	✓		Where not provided by AHS Ltd
Paths (public)	✓		When not adopted by local authority
Pest control/ infestations	✓		
Pigeon Lofts		✓	
Plaster and Plasterboard	✓		
Play Areas/Equipment	✓		Where not provided by AHS Ltd
Plugs/Chains for Bath, Sink w/h Basin		✓	
Retaining Walls (garden)	✓		Where not provided by AHS Ltd
Roofs/Roof Tiles/Slates/ Roof Lights	✓		
Ropes for Clothes Drying		✓	Communal areas
Rotary Clothes Dryers	✓		Where caused by negligence/ misuse

<b>Item</b>	<b>Us</b>	<b>You</b>	<b>Exceptions</b>
Roughcast	✓		
Sheds		✓	Where provided by AHS Ltd
Shower Units/Fittings	✓		Where not supplied by AHS Ltd
Shower Curtains		✓	
Sink Base Units	✓		
Sink Bowl/Drainers	✓		
Skirting Boards	✓		
Smoke Detector (battery and mains)	✓		Where not supplied by AHS Ltd
Smoke Detector Batteries		✓	Batteries for hard wired smoke detectors
Sockets (electrical)	✓		
Stairs (communal, individual)	✓		
Stair Lighting	✓		
Solid Fuel Central Heating	✓		Where not provided by AHS Ltd
Steps	✓		
Switches (electrical)	✓		Unauthorised installation
Taps	✓		Washers

Item	Us	You	Exceptions
Toilets	✓		Where caused by negligence/misuse
TV Aerials		✓	Communal systems where there is provision in service charges
TV Aerial & Communal Sockets	✓		
Ventilators	✓		Unauthorized installation
Wash Hand Basin	✓		Where caused by negligence/misuse
Waste Plugs/Chains to Basins, Baths, Sinks		✓	
Water Heating	✓		Unauthorized installation
Water Supply Storage	✓		
Tanks/Pipes	✓		
WC Bowl & Cistern	✓		Where caused by negligence/misuse
WC Seats/Lids/Hinge Sets		✓	
Window Frames/Sills/Fittings	✓		

## *Smoke Alarms*

Where your home has been fitted with battery operated smoke alarms, you should be aware that replacing the batteries is your own responsibility as tenant. Smoke alarms can save lives; you must check your batteries regularly and replace them as soon as it is required.

Safety glass must be used for all window or door glass repairs. If you carry out a repair and do not use safety glass we will replace glazing with safety glass at the end of a tenancy, and recharge you.

Although certain repairs are your responsibility, we may still carry out the repair but will charge you the cost of doing so.

## **Laminate Floorings (Glued)**

If you have decided to use laminate or wood panel flooring as your floor covering, it may cause problems if we need to get access underneath the floor to carry out a repair. This is likely to be difficult if the flooring is glued in place, as it cannot be lifted and re-laid without damage. Check that your home and contents insurance will cover this damage.

## **Alterations and Improvements**

### **Alterations and Improvements**

If you wish to carry out any alterations or improvements, you must get written permission before you start any work. If you do not get our permission we may have to carry out work to put things back the way they were. We will charge you for any work involved.

Our permission is also required for the installation of satellite dishes, aerials etc. We will not withhold our permission unless we have good reason. You may also need to get permission from the local Planning Department, and it is your own responsibility to arrange this. If you do not get our permission and planning permission we may remove the satellite dish and charge you for the work involved.

If you have carried out certain work to improve your property you may be entitled to compensation when you leave this home. See the "Moving Out" section of this handbook for further information.

### **How to Report a Repair**

There are several ways in which you can report the repair.

- You can telephone Albyn Housing Society Ltd at 98/100 High Street, Invergordon on :
  - Repairs Direct Line No ( 0845 130 9995 (low call rate)
  - Switchboard No ( 01349 852978
  - Emergency Pager ( 07626 984 790 (for "out of hours" use)

- You can email us at [repairs@albynhousing.org.uk](mailto:repairs@albynhousing.org.uk)
- Alternatively you can call in person to our office at Invergordon during office hours

## Emergency Call-Out Arrangements

This service is available for use by tenants in emergencies if repair work is needed to:

- **Make your home secure** – e.g. by temporary boarding-up of windows and making lock fast
- **Make your home safe after storm or fire damage** – where there is a danger to life and limb
- **Prevent further damage** – flooding, burst pipes and/or serious roof leaks
- **Complete** loss of heating or power supply within the house

During normal office hours you should use the repairs direct line 0845 130 9995.

If you need an **emergency repair** either

- **outwith normal office/working hours**
- **or during public holiday periods only**

call our **Emergency telephone number**: ( 07626 984790.

Emergency repairs carried out may only be of a temporary nature, with a permanent repair being carried out during normal working hours. If you make an emergency call, the following information **must** be given:

- The full postal address
- The tenant's name
- Contact telephone number (tenant's own or neighbours)
- Any other relevant details for contact and/or access.
- A brief but accurate description of the defect or damage and what repair or trades may be required, e.g. plumber, glazier, joiner etc.

If you make an emergency call for work that is **not** in the emergency category, you will generally have to wait for the work to be started.

## **What Happens after Repair has been Reported?**

Your report will be passed to the Maintenance Officer who may wish to inspect the problem. If he does not wish to inspect the repair, he will pass a repair request to the private contractors who are employed by the Society. If he does want to inspect the repair before ordering that the work is done, he will contact you and make an appointment.

We will mail a copy of this repair request to you which also has a satisfaction questionnaire included. When the work has been completed, please complete the questionnaire and return it to us in the envelope provided, with any comments on the work. It will help us to monitor the quality of the repair service.

With the exception of Emergencies, repairs will be carried out during normal working hours, which are 8am to 5pm on weekdays.

## **How Long Will Repairs take?**

We have set target times for completing repairs, depending on the type of work that needs to be done.

### **8 Hours**

Emergency repairs will be carried out as soon as possible after they have been reported and should be dealt with within 8 working hours of the repair being reported to us. Where the repair is of a temporary nature you will be told when you can expect the permanent repair to be made and whether or not you will be charged for the work.

## **1 Day**

Urgent qualifying repairs will be attended to within 1 working day. Repairs that fall into this category are:

Blocked sink, bath or drain (where there are other sinks or baths in the house)

Unsafe access path/step

Repairs to WC and cistern (where no other WC in house)

## **2 Days**

Urgent repairs will be attended to within 2 working days.

Urgent repairs are those that are not classed as emergency repairs but where any substantial delay in attending to the repair could cause damage to property etc. Examples of urgent repair situations are:

Water penetration causing damage to ceilings, walls

Broken glass/doors/locks

Immersion heaters [on non coal fired houses]

Heating repairs in winter

## **Routine Repairs**

Most other repairs required will be routine repairs and will be attended to within 10 working days (unless it is a repair to an extractor fan, which will be done within 7 working days)

The types of repairs quoted above are intended as a guide.

There will be situations where the response time to repairs will

be varied because of special circumstances.

## Right to Repair

You are entitled to have certain repairs carried out within given timescales. These are called qualifying repairs and a list of them is set out below. If any single qualifying repair fails to be carried out within the time scale set, you have the right to call in another contractor. This contractor must be on the approved list of alternative contractors that we will have provided to you.

*You must inform us that the repair has not been carried out within the set timescale and that you are calling out a different contractor.*

You will then be eligible for payment from us to make up for the delay. You will be awarded a standard £15.00 plus £3.00 for every working day that the repair has not been completed. These payments do not come into force until the timescales given below have passed and the repair is still not done.

For example, if you find you have partial loss of electric power on a Monday, and you report it to us that day, we will have 3 days to fix it. If we have not fixed it by Thursday



then you can arrange for the second contractor to carry out the repair. You can ask us to arrange this, or if you arrange it yourself you must let us know. We will then give you £15.00 plus £3.00 every day the repair is not completed. This £3.00 per day will not start until the Thursday as we are allowed 3 days as shown below for this kind of repair. The £3.00 per day compensation ends on the day the repair is completed. The most any tenant can claim is £100.00.

**Repairs that should be carried out within 1 working day of the repair being notified**

*Blocked flue to open fire or boiler.*

*Blocked or leaking foul drains, soil stacks or toilet pans where there is no other toilet in the house*

*Blocked sink, bath or drain*

*Loss of electric power within the house that is not a mains supply failure*

*Insecure external window, door or lock*

*Unsafe access path/step*

*Leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes tanks cisterns*

*Loss or partial loss of gas supply*

*Toilet not flushing where there is no other toilet in the house*

*Unsafe power or lighting socket, or electrical fitting*

*Loss of water supply within the house that is not a mains supply failure*



**Repairs that should be carried out within 3 working days of the repair being notified**

*Partial loss of electric power*

*Partial loss of water supply*

*Loose or detached banister or handrail*

*Unsafe timber flooring or stair treads*

**Repairs that should be carried out within 7 working days of the repair being notified**

*Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working.*

For further information please contact Property Maintenance Services on (0845 130 9995 for a copy of the “Right To Repair” leaflet.

We have our own targets for when repairs should be completed by. However the government has also set targets that some repairs should be completed by under the Right to Repair scheme. We will work by the shortest target

### **Planned Maintenance**

In addition to carrying out repairs in response to your requests, each year we prepare a programme of Planned Maintenance. This usually results from an inspection visit, and takes into consideration external works. Some work is programmed on a cyclical basis to deal with the natural ageing of your home. This means that on a planned and regular basis – a cycle – we upgrade, repair and replace certain parts of your home, internally and externally. For example we redecorate the

outside of all homes every 5 years, by painting window frames etc and replace kitchens every 15 years.

Sometimes we may delay carrying out a routine repair if the item is due to be replaced under our programme of maintenance. We will tell you about this when you report the repair.

Sometimes we will pay decoration allowances following major repair or maintenance work to your home. This will be in the form of an order form that can be exchanged for goods up to a set value at certain suppliers. You will be told if you will be given any decoration allowance when the contract is completed. The payment of a decoration allowance is up to the Property Maintenance Manager. If you think you should be getting one you must contact the Property Maintenance Officer as soon as possible after the maintenance work has finished.

## **Repairs to Your Property when you have applied to Purchase**

Until your purchase is completed we must keep in good repair the structure and exterior of your home and keep in good repair and proper working order the installations in the house for the supply of water, gas and electricity and for sanitation. We may also have other responsibilities to you and you can find out more by reading your tenancy agreement. We will not carry out any major replacements or improvements after you have made an application to buy your house.

## **Electric Circuit Breakers**

New houses may be fitted with Residual Current Breakers or earth Leakage Circuit Breakers. These provide additional safety but are very sensitive to faulty appliances. If the circuit breaker trips when you connect an appliance it is possible that the appliance is defective. Before reporting a fault tenants should carry out a checking procedure in accordance with the instructions provided for resetting the circuit breaker.



For further information please contact Property Maintenance Services on low-call (0845-130-9995).

## Gas Servicing

If you have a gas central heating or a gas fire provided by us, we have to arrange an annual service check. If the inspection shows that a repair or replacement is required, we will carry out the work within the appropriate time-scales. You will have to let our contractor in to carry out the inspection. We will give you a copy of the inspection report. If the report highlights a problem with one of your own appliances it is your responsibility to have any appropriate work carried out.



When you move in we will give you a copy of the most recent gas safety report for your house.

## Adaptations

If you or a member of your household have a physical disability or an ongoing medical problem that makes living in your home difficult we will try to help you. There are two ways you may be able to get help.

- Aids such as grab rails and bath aids can be supplied by the local council Social Work Services
- Albyn Housing Society Ltd may be able to arrange for adaptations such as replacing a bath with a shower or changing the height of worktops or kitchen units.

If you think an adaptation is required we will ask for a formal assessment from a suitably qualified specialist, usually an Occupational Therapist. They will give a written report advising on what changes need to be made to your house, and give a priority for the work to be done. We will have the work costed and where funding is available we will arrange to have the work carried out for you.

If you have access to alternative funding you may be able to get the work done even if we can't fund it. You must have our written permission to carry out any adaptation on your home. Contact our Housing Team on **(01349-855956)** for further information.

Information on how to contact the Occupational Therapist or your local social work service is shown in "Your Contacts and Notes"

## Home Insurance

You are strongly advised to take out insurance to cover replacement of your belongings, redecoration, and making good damage caused to your home in the case of theft, fire or accident. You might be liable to replace broken glass in windows, or damaged sinks, baths or toilets so you would be well advised to include accidental cover in your household insurance.

The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) has negotiated special rates for housing associations tenants. If you want further details, contact us on (01349 852978 for a leaflet about Diamond Insurance Cover.

You do not need to insure the building itself. This is the Society's responsibility.

You may want to keep a list of your valuable possessions. Take a note of serial numbers on items of equipment and include any details such as distinguishing features, jewellery hallmarks or imperfections. You might also want to take photographs of any unusual items. In the event of a theft the list and photos will help you and the police confirm what has been stolen and identify anything that is recovered.

## If you need to move

Over time, your circumstances might change, and the house you are in may no longer be suitable for you. You can apply to us for a transfer or apply to other landlords for housing. Alternatively you can swap houses with another of our tenants or with a tenant of another housing association or local authority. This is known as a Mutual Exchange.

### **Transfer to another Albyn Housing Society Ltd house**

You can apply to move to a different type or size of house or to a different area. We aim to make a percentage of all our allocations of empty houses to transfer applicants each year. Allocations will normally be made to the applicant with the highest need to move. We will work this out by allocating points according to our allocation policy. Guidance on the policy will be sent to you when you apply for a transfer.

We may not allow you to transfer if you have rent arrears or if you have not looked after your home or if we have had justified complaints about your behaviour related to your tenancy.

Contact our Housing Management Services on (01349 855967 for a Transfer Application Pack.

### **Mutual Exchanges**

You can advertise that you are looking for a swap on our Mutual Exchange board in the Invergordon Offices or you can look out for other peoples adverts in our offices, in local council housing offices or other housing association offices. You can also

advertise in the local press or in local supermarkets. If you have access to the internet you can also advertise on landlord websites.

There is also a national scheme that helps people to swap houses with tenants in other parts of the country. This is called 'Homeswap', and you can get an application form from our office in Invergordon or on the internet site [www.availablehomes.org.uk](http://www.availablehomes.org.uk).

When you find someone who you want to exchange with it is up to you to contact him or her. You can arrange to visit each other's homes. Please inspect their homes carefully. Make sure you would be happy to move into it the way it is. We will not carry out any decorations for you.

If you decide that you want to swap homes you and the other tenant must fill in an Application for Mutual Exchange form. If the other tenant is not an Albyn Housing Society Ltd tenant, they will also have to contact their landlord and you might have to complete a form for them. You cannot go ahead with the swap until both landlords have given their permission in writing.

We may not allow the exchange to go ahead:



- if you or the other tenant have rent arrears or
- if either of you have not looked after your home or
- if we have had justified complaints about your behaviour related to your tenancy or
- we cannot get a satisfactory reference from the other tenant's landlord.

In addition we will not allow the transfer if it will result in overcrowding or significant under-occupation of our house or if the house is of a special type and the other tenant does not need the particular type of housing.

Ask for a Mutual Exchange pack for full details and the forms that you will need by contacting us on (01349 855967).

## Ending your tenancy

If you want to end your tenancy you must give us four weeks notice in writing. Remember to tell us the date that you are moving out and your forwarding address.

We will send you out a form to complete and arrange for an inspection of your home. During this inspection we will check whether any repairs or redecoration needs to be done by you before you leave in order to bring the property up to an acceptable standard. You will have the chance to carry out any repair work and decoration required before you leave. We will inspect the house again when you leave and may charge for any work that should have been done by you before you left. If you do not leave the house in good decorative order we will charge you for any decoration allowance that we have to pay to the new tenant. You will be responsible for removing any belongings that you leave in the house or garden, including carpets, unless you have arranged to leave them for the incoming tenant and we have been informed of this arrangement. If you just leave them we will have them removed and will charge you for removing them.

Remember you will have to pay rent up to the end of your notice period or the date when you return your keys – whichever is the latest. We will advise you of the expected amount of rent due when you give us notice.

We generally need four weeks notice so that we can inspect the house and to allow time for any repairs or redecoration to be carried out. We also can use this time to start the process to re-let the house. We can agree to end your tenancy with a different period of notice, for example if you are transferring to another Albyn Housing Society Ltd

tenancy.

We can also end your tenancy without your agreement by taking you to court. We will only do this if you have broken your tenancy agreement with us and we have not been able to resolve the situation with you in any other way. For example:

- If you have not paid your rent
- You are not living in the house as your main home
- You have using the house for illegal or immoral purposes
- You or a member of your household or anyone visiting you has acted in an serious anti-social manner
- You gave us false information when you applied for the house
- You have caused damage or neglected any part of the house or shared areas to a significant degree.

If you abandon the house we can also take action to end your tenancy. See the section on [“Living in your home”](#)

If you have carried out improvements to your home and think you might be entitled to compensation please contact our Property Maintenance Section when you give your notice.

## **Succession**

If you die another member of your family or a carer living with you may be able to inherit your tenancy. If you had a joint tenancy the surviving tenant will become the sole tenant. This does not count as a succession.

If there is not a joint tenant, the person who wants to inherit the tenancy must have been living with you at the time of your death. Different members of your family will have a different right to succeed, but may be able to hold a joint tenancy. A family member will have a greater right to succeed to the tenancy than a carer. Each tenancy can only be inherited twice. This is explained in more detail in your tenancy agreement.

Different rules apply to houses that are fully adapted for wheelchair use. We have to try to make best use of wheelchair adapted houses because they are very specialised and not readily available throughout the area. Only the partner of the tenant has the automatic right to succeed and this right only applies once. If there is no partner and no one occupying the house uses a wheelchair we will try to move the household to another more suitable house. If there is someone in the house that does use a wheelchair but does not have a right to succeed, we will try to allow the household to remain in their home.

## **Moving Out**

When the time comes to move out you may find this checklist helpful.

Before you move out:

- Contact electricity, gas and/or oil suppliers to let them know when you will be moving out. They may want to talk to you about how you are going to pay your bills. Remember to take meter readings on the day you leave.

- Contact your telephone company to arrange for a final bill and change your directory entry. If you are not moving too far you might be able to take your telephone number with you.
- Let your local council know that you are moving – you will need to fill in a form for Council Tax.
- Make a list of everybody who will need to have your new address e.g. banks, building society, schools, work, doctor, dentist, friends and family. You can arrange to have your mail redirected by Royal Mail, though they charge for this service.
- Arrange to remove any rubbish or items of furniture that you are not taking with you. If you leave it we will charge you for getting rid of it.
- Make sure you carry out any repairs notified to you when you gave your notice of termination.
- Remember to make good the decoration before you leave or you may have to pay a redecoration allowance. This usually means touching up damaged paintwork or wallpaper e.g. where you have removed fittings from the walls.
- If you are on housing benefit you must let the local council know when your tenancy will end and you are no longer responsible for paying the rent – this might not be the same date that you move out. You might be able to get housing benefit paid on two homes during your notice period. Ask your housing officer or your local council benefit officer for advice on this.

Remember to hand in your keys as soon as you move out. If you move out before your 28 days notice have passed we might be able to re-let the house early and you could save money. If you do not return your keys we will continue charging you rent until you hand the keys in or we change the locks.

## Right to Compensation

If you have carried out certain work to improve your property and you are giving up your tenancy, we might be able to compensate you for the cost of the work. To qualify:

- you must have got our written permission before the work was started,
- you must have completed the work to a satisfactory standard,
- the work must have been carried out after the 30th September 2002
- and the improvement must be included in the following list.

	Item
1	Bath or Shower
2	Cavity Wall Insulation
3	Secondary Insulation
4	Double glazing or other external window replacement or secondary glazing
5	Draught proofing of external doors or windows
6	Insulation of pipes, water tank or cylinder
7	Installation of mechanical ventilation in bathroom and kitchens
8	Kitchen sink
9	Loft insulation
10	Rewiring and the provision of power and lighting or other electrical fixtures including smoke detectors
11	Security measures other than burglar alarm systems



12	Space or water heating
13	Storage cupboards in bathroom or kitchen
14	Thermostatic radiator valves
15	Wash hand basin
16	Water closet
17	Work surface for food preparation

If you wish to carry out any of the above please contact Property Maintenance Services for further information.

### Support Services

We can provide housing support services to provide flexible tenancy support to vulnerable people in their own temporary tenancies. The service has the following amongst its aims:

- Providing flexible levels of support to help people establish and keep their tenancy, leading to a planned permanent tenancy with Albyn Housing Society Ltd or another housing provider
- Liasing with other agencies involved with the person
- Helping people avoid becoming homeless due to a lack of tenancy support
- Promoting a better understanding of the needs of vulnerable people in terms of housing support

The Support Service is for vulnerable people who are (or who are at risk of becoming) homeless or who are in temporary accommodation. The person must need and want to use the service. Informal enquiries from people who want to use the

service can be made to the Support Services team in Inverness. Contact details are provided at the end of this handbook.

The Support Services team provides tenancy support on an individually agreed basis. An average of six hours support a week is provided to each person on the basis of a support plan agreed with the tenant. We expect that the support will usually be over a period of months or even years, subject to regular reviews and agreement on the support needs of each person. The support provided is also linked to a Care Plan agreed with the council's Social Work Services where appropriate.

The support offered aims to provide a confidential service and choice for the person. Amongst other things it can involve practical help with budgeting, debt management and paying bills; help in getting access to relevant services and help in learning how to manage a home and a tenancy.

## Customer Care

### Customer Care Charter

The Society has a Customer Care Charter, which states that the Society will

- Provide a first class customer service, which is customer focused.
- Promote effective teamwork throughout the organisation.
- Ensure quality standards, which meet or exceed the requirements and expectations of our customers at all times.



These intentions are supported by the Society's commitment to respond to your enquiries quickly and professionally whether these enquiries are by phone, in-person or in writing. Full details of the Customer Care Charter and what you can expect from the Society are set out in the separate leaflet "Customer Care and our Commitment To You", which is included in your tenants' pack. You can get additional copies by contacting us on ( 01349 852978.

## **Independent Advice**

The Society encourages you to seek independent advice whenever you are unsure of information or advice you have received from the Society or if you require assistance in responding to, say a rent arrears letter from the Society. You may be able to get in contact with local citizens' advice bureau or advice service. Alternatively you may wish to seek formal legal advice through a solicitor. The Society is not permitted to recommend particular solicitors. Depending on the information you are looking for, it may be appropriate to contact Communities Scotland or the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations.

Contact details for advice bureau and services are set out in Your Contacts and Numbers.

## Access to Information

The Society is registered with the Data Protection Registrar. You are entitled to access information about you that the Society holds on files (both electronic and paper), under the Data Protection Act 1998. You will be provided with photocopies on request. The Society may charge you up to £10 for some of this.

More general information is made available in the tenants' pack. New reports and information (the Society's Annual Report, for example) will be sent to you as a matter of course. A list of free information to which you are entitled is set out in part 8.3 of your tenancy agreement.

We will not pass on any information you have given to us to anybody outside Albyn Housing Society Ltd unless

- We told you when we collected the information who we would pass it on to and for what purpose

or

- We have your permission

We will only use the information you give us for the purposes that we told you about when we collected it from you.

## Complaints

From time to time difficulties will occur which will disrupt the Society's delivery of services to you. This may give you cause to be dissatisfied with the Society, and you may wish to raise a complaint. If you are not sure about doing this yourself you may wish to ask one of the tenants' groups to represent you. We will be happy for them to contact us on your behalf.

There are 3 internal stages to the Society's Complaints Procedure, and 1 external stage. These are set out in detail in the Society's leaflet "Making A Complaint Or Comment About Albyn Housing Society Ltd.", which is included in your tenants' pack.

- The first stage is a complaint to the appropriate member of staff, and hopefully the majority of complaints can be sorted out at this stage.
- The second stage is to the Service Area Director or Chief Executive or Committee Chairperson (depending on who was involved in the first stage), if agreement can not be reached at the first stage.
- If the complaint can not be sorted out at stage two, then you can complain to the Society's Committee.
- Should this still not bring you satisfaction you can go to the fourth stage and complain to the Housing Association Ombudsman for Scotland.

We will always respect your confidentiality when dealing with

your complaint.

Contact details for the Committee and the Housing Association Ombudsman for Scotland are in Your Contacts.



## **Becoming a member of Albyn Housing Society Ltd**

Membership of Albyn Housing Society Ltd gives you the right to stand for election to our Committee of Management, and also to vote at these elections. Membership costs £1 and forms are available from our Invergordon Office. Membership is open to everyone except staff who are employed by the Society or who were previously employed there within the last 12 months. Elections take place once every year in September at the Society's AGM.

Further information on the Committee of Management can be found in "About Albyn Housing Society" at the start of this handbook.

For further information please contact the Community Involvement Officer on ( 01349 855972

## **Support for tenants groups**

Anyone wishing to start a local tenants group or become a TIV will receive full support both from the Federation and Albyn Housing Society Ltd.

We will grant fund tenants groups that are set up according to an agreed model. The grant consists of a lump sum plus an allowance per house within the area of the group. This funding can be spent by the group on the running costs of the group, training of group members etc.

Travelling and/or care expenses may be paid to members.

Our Community Involvement Officer will be able to help you to set up a tenants group and give you further advice and information about our tenant participation policy.

You can get a information pack about setting up tenant groups by contacting the Community Involvement Officer on ( 01349 855972.

### **Our consultation process**

All policy and procedures relating to the services that we provide to tenants are discussed with FAR and with other registered tenants groups before they are agreed at our Committee of Management.

If a policy change will significantly affect the maintenance or management of your home, we will take steps to inform all tenants and get their views before deciding on the way ahead. We might do this by arranging local meetings, by writing to all tenants individually or by including something in our newsletter.

In some circumstances we will consult individually with the group of tenants affected, e.g. major repairs within one estate or street.

## INDEX

About Albyn Housing Society	4
About this handbook	3
Access to information	59
Adaptations	56
At the start of your tenancy	7
Committee of Management	5
Complaints	60
Customer care	57
Customer care charter	57
Difficulties paying rent	12
Electric circuit breakers	44
Emergency call-out arrangements	37
Ending your tenancy	51
Gardens	20
Going away from home	14
Harassment	21
Home insurance	47
Housing benefit	12
How do we set charges?	10
How long will repairs take?	39
How to behave	16

How to report a repair	36
If you need to move	48
Independent advice	58
Introduction to Albyn Housing Society Ltd	4
Living in your home	14
Membership of Albyn Housing Society Ltd	62
More about your tenancy	10
Moving	48
Mutual exchanges	48
Neighbour complaints	22
Noise	20
Our consultation process	63
Parking	17
Pets	16
Planned maintenance	43
Play areas	18
Rent and service charges	10
Rent increases	11
Repair reported—what happens next?	36
Repairs and maintenance	26
Repairs to your property when you have applied to purchase	44
Right to compensation	55
Right to repair	41
Rubbish	19

Shared areas and facilities	18
Succession	52
Support for tenants groups	62
Support Services	56
Tenancy agreement	7
Tenant participation	62
Transfer to another Albyn Housing Society Ltd house	48
Varying your agreement	7
Who lives there?	14
Whose responsibility?	26
Your contacts and notes	67

**Yo**

## Your Contacts and Notes

### Information Leaflets

The following information leaflets and packs are those that are currently available from any of our offices.

Moving In  
Lodgers Pack

Subletting Pack

Neighbour Complaints

Transfer Application Pack

Mutual Exchange Pack

Keeping Warm and Saving Money

Safety in your Home

Use of Liquid Petroleum Gas and Paraffin

Right to Repair Pack

Right to Compensation Pack

Moving Out

Protecting your Home from Frost Damage

Introduction to Housing Benefit

Making a claim for Housing Benefit

Housing Support

Home Insurance

Complaints Procedure

Customer Care

Right to Buy

If you need to know about anything else that is not included in this handbook or one of the above leaflets, please ask any member of staff, who will help you find what you need.

## **Contacts**

### **Albyn Housing Society Ltd**

98-100 High Street

INVERGORDON

Ross-shire

IV18 0DL

Tel: 01349 852978

Fax: 01349 853859

Repairs (during office hours)

Tel: 0845 130 9995

Repairs (out of office hours) - Emergencies only

Tel: 07626 984790

Rents

Tel: 01349 855971

Tenancy Advice

Tel: 01349 855967

### Shared Ownership

Tel: 01349 855978

### House Sales

Tel: 01349 855973

### Tenant Participation/Community Involvement

Tel: 01349 855972.

## **The Highland Council Service Points**

If you need help or advice about any of the Highland Council services you can contact your local Service Point. Highland Council services include refuse collection, street sweeping, Council Tax, Housing Benefit, sports centres, schools, consumer advice, money advice, pest control, social work services, housing services, planning, libraries.

### Caithness Area

Thurso                    01847 894545

Wick                        01955 607702

### Sutherland Area

Bettyhill                01641 521242

Dornoch                 01862 812008

Durness                 01971 511259

Golspie                 01408 635200

Helmsdale	01431 821742
Lairg	01549 402588
Lochinver	01571 844777

#### Ross and Cromarty Area

Alness	01349 882366
Dingwall	01349 868527
Fortrose	01381 620797
Invergordon	01349 852472
Lochcarron	01520 722241
Muir of Ord	01463 870201
Poolewe	01445 781243
Tain	01862 892122
Ullapool	01854 612426

#### Inverness Area

Fort Augustus	01320 366733
Inverness	01463 703999

#### Badenoch & Strathspey Area

Aviemore	01479 811990
Grantown on Spey	01479 872539
Kingussie	01540 664502

## Nairn Area

Nairn 01667 458500

## Moray Council

HQ Elgin 01343 543451

## Citizens Advice Bureau

For free and independent advice on a wide range of housing and money matters contact your local CAB.

Alness 01349 883333

Dingwall 01349 864850

Inverness 01463 235345

Nairn 01667 456677

Tain 01862 894382

Thurso 01847 894243/896796

Wick 01955 605989

## East Sutherland Village Advisory Service

Golspie 01408 633000

## North West Sutherland Advice and

## Information Service

Kinlochbervie            01971 521730

## Other Organisations

Scottish WaterEmergency            0845 600 8855

Customer Service    0845 601 8855

### Police

HQ                        01463 715555

### Badenoch, Strathspey & Nairn Command Area

Aviemore                01479 810222

Ardersier                01667 462222

Carrbridge            01479 841222

Grantown on Spey    01479 872922

Kingussie              01540 661222

Nairn                    01667 452222

### Caithness and Sutherland Command Area

Wick                     01955 603551

Bettyhill               01641 521222

Brora                    01408 621222

Dornoch                01862 810222

Golspie	01408 633222
Lochinver	01571 844222
Thurso	01847 893222
Tongue	01847 611270

#### Inverness Command Area

Inverness	01463 715555
Beauly	01463 782222
Culloden	01463 794550
Drumnadrochit	01546 450222
Fort Augustus	01320 366222
Foyers	01456 486222
Kirkhill	01463 831222

#### Ross & Cromarty Command Area

Dingwall	01349 862444
Alness	01349 882222
Aultbea	01445 731222
Conon Bridge	01349 861871
Evanton	01349 830713
Fortrose	01381 620222
Gairloch	01445 712017
Invergordon	01349 852222
Lochcarron	01520 722222
Muir of Ord	01463 870222
Tain	01862 892215
Ullapool	01854 612017

**NOTES**

My Maintenance Officer is:

Phone number:

My Housing Officer is:

Phone number:

**NOTES**

**NOTES**

## NOTES