

# TENANT WELCOME PACK



**berneslai**  
homes

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# WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME

This handbook provides you with a helpful, easy to use guide on how to get the most out of living in your new home. It contains information on:

- Your tenancy
- Your rights and responsibilities as a tenant
- The services we provide
- Useful contacts

We’re pleased to welcome you as a tenant of Berneslai Homes. We’re a local housing company responsible for managing homes on behalf of Barnsley Council. We support tenants and work together to create thriving communities.

We hope this handbook helps you to settle in and it won’t take long for your house to feel like a home.

Please contact us if:

- There’s anything you don’t understand
- You would like more information
- You require this handbook in an alternative language or format

## Contact us

If you have an enquiry, then please visit our website [www.berneslaihomes.co.uk](http://www.berneslaihomes.co.uk).

We have one number for you to contact us on **01226 787878**.

Our contact centre team is available for all general and repair enquiries Monday-Friday 9am – 5pm.

You should also use this number to report an emergency repair out of hours - the Repairs Hotline is open 24/7 for emergencies.

You can visit us on our channels to find out more at:



News, events and service updates



News and events



Videos

If you are struggling to read this pack and need it in an alternative format please see the back page for further information.

## Moving in

When it comes to moving house, there are so many things to think about that it can often become stressful and overwhelming.

Here’s a list of organisations and services you may need to contact to let them know you’re changing address:

☐ **Universal Credit** – We will be asked to verify your rent costs should you claim the Housing Element for payments towards rent

☐ **Housing benefit and council tax support** – you need to let the council know about any changes in circumstances. They can then pay you the right amount of benefit or support. Scan the QR code to let Barnsley Council know.



☐ **Council Tax** – a change in your circumstances can affect the amount of council tax you pay. Scan the QR code to let Barnsley Council know.

☐ **Your work**

☐ **Your bank, insurance, pension, and credit card companies**

☐ **The council, electoral roll**

To set up or update your Housing Online account, see the back cover of this guide.



- ☐ TV Licensing
- ☐ Doctor and dentist
- ☐ DVLA
- ☐ National Insurance/DWP
- ☐ Broadband and other media – contact your media service provider(s) for things like broadband, cable, satellite, and phone. You’ll need to end the service at your old address and arrange for a service at your new address. If you’re out of contract, you might be able to save money by switching.
- ☐ Gas and electric – inform your electricity and gas supplier of your move. Make sure you give your supplier the final meter readings on the day you move out. It’s a good idea to make a note of them and keep them to check against your final bill.
- ☐ Water provider – inform the water company of your move.
- ☐ Home insurance – it’s important that you arrange contents insurance to cover your belongings in case of a flood or fire. Please see the information on page 10 for details.
- ☐ Post – remember to redirect your post to your new address with Royal Mail. There’s a charge for this, and you can choose to have your post redirected for up to 3, 6, or 12 months.
- ☐ Deliveries – remember to cancel or change the address for any regular deliveries you get such as milk, newspapers, and so on.

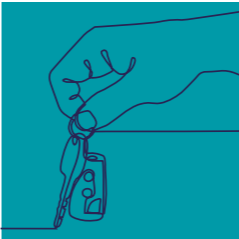
Once you’ve accepted your tenancy and signed your tenancy agreement we’ll give you:

- ☐ A copy of the tenancy agreement and a full agreement
- ☐ A set of keys
- ☐ Meter readings for the gas and electricity meters and a note of your supplier(s)
- ☐ Tenant Welcome Pack (this handbook)
- ☐ Contact details for your neighbourhood team
- ☐ Gas Safety Certificate
- ☐ Any information that is relevant to your new home

Useful information to note:



Property address and postcode	
Tenancy start date	
Your neighbourhood team is	
Team email address	
Phone number	



Rent reference number	
Weekly rent amount	
Council Tax band	



Location of stop tap	
----------------------	--



Gas meter reading	
Gas re-connection appointment	
Gas re-connection number	
Gas supplier*	



Electric meter reading	
Electric turn off point	
Electric supplier*	



Type of heating (see page 21)	
Type of cooker point	
EPC rating	

\*You’re welcome to change your gas and electric supplier. We recommend using a website comparison site to get the best deal.

# PAYING YOUR RENT

## When to pay?

Your rent will be charged weekly and you are responsible for payment of rent from the day that your tenancy starts. If you receive Universal Credit Housing Element, this is paid directly to you from the DWP, payments are made in arrears. If you receive Housing Benefit, this is paid direct to your rent account every week. Please contact the Income team if you are unsure how much and when you need to pay.

You can choose to pay your rent in a way that suits you, this can be every:

Week

Two weeks

Four weeks

Calendar month

There are four weeks in each year when we don't charge rent to your account. These are called non-chargeable weeks and are at the beginning of April, August bank holiday, Christmas, and New Year.

## How to pay your rent?

You can choose to pay your rent in the following ways:

### Direct Debit

The easiest way to pay your rent is by Direct Debit – it's flexible, convenient, and makes sure you never miss a payment.

You can pay your rent directly from your bank account weekly, fortnightly, 4 weekly, or calendar monthly on any date of the month (excluding the 31st). We work out the amount of rent you'll pay for the year and divide the annual rent by the number of payments you'll make.

Payments are updated automatically so there's no need for you to tell your bank when your weekly rent charge changes. You'll receive at least 5 working days' notice of any changes to your payment amounts and dates. If you receive Universal Credit or Housing Benefit, you'll need to notify us of any changes to the amount that you receive, and we'll amend your Direct Debit.

You can set up a Direct Debit online by scanning the QR code or speak to a member of the Income team on 01226 787878.



### Standing Order

You'll need to arrange this yourself and it will be your responsibility to notify your bank of any changes to your payment.

Payments need to be made to Barnsley Council using the following details: (Barnsley Council Barclays account)

- Account number: 83651142
- Sort code: 20-08-07

You must also provide your bank with your 11-digit rent payment reference number. It's important to give the correct details to make sure your payments go to the correct rent account.

### Online

You can pay online by debit or credit card, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by visiting our website at [www.berneslaihomes.co.uk/your-home/pay-your-rent](http://www.berneslaihomes.co.uk/your-home/pay-your-rent) You'll need your 11-digit rent payment reference number.

### Phone

You can pay by phone on our automated service, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, on 01226 775445. Make sure you have your rent reference number and debit or credit card details to hand.

## How to check your rent?

You can check your rent account balance, see your payment history, and make a payment using My Housing Online. It's a quick, easy, and secure way to keep rent payments up to date. All you need is an email address to set up an account.

Scan the QR code to visit My Housing Online.



## Struggling to pay your rent

If you're worried about money or having problems paying your rent, we're here to help. You can contact us by completing our online form by scanning the QR code or speak to a member of our team on 01226 787878.



## Universal Credit

You may be able to claim Universal Credit (UC) if you're:

- On a low income (including self-employed or part time employment)
- Out of work or if you can't work, for example, because of a health condition

If you are eligible for Universal Credit, you may get an extra amount of money to pay towards your rent, this is called the housing cost element. You must claim straight away as it is the date of claim that will be used in deciding when any housing costs are paid. The housing cost element cannot be backdated, apart from certain special circumstances.

If you are awarded the housing cost element of UC, it's your responsibility to pay the rent due.

To make a claim visit <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

## Housing Benefit

Housing Benefit helps people on a low income to pay their rent. It can pay for part or all of your rent. How much you get depends on your income and circumstances.

You can claim Housing Benefit if either:

- you (and your partner if you have one) are of State Pension Age or receive Pension Credit or
- you live in temporary or supported exempt accommodation

For further information or to make an application, visit [www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/benefits](http://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/benefits)



## Discretionary Housing Payment

The extra amount of money you get for housing will not always cover your rent. You might need to pay the rest of your rent from your Universal Credit payment or other income. You might be able to get extra help from your local council with your rent and other housing costs, for example, a rent deposit or moving costs.

For more information scan the QR code.



## Under occupancy or bedroom tax

If you claim Universal Credit or Housing Benefit, the amount you receive towards paying your rent will be reduced if you're of working age and living in a Berneslai Homes property with more bedrooms than DWP say you need.

If you're affected, your Housing Element or Benefit will be reduced by the following percentage:

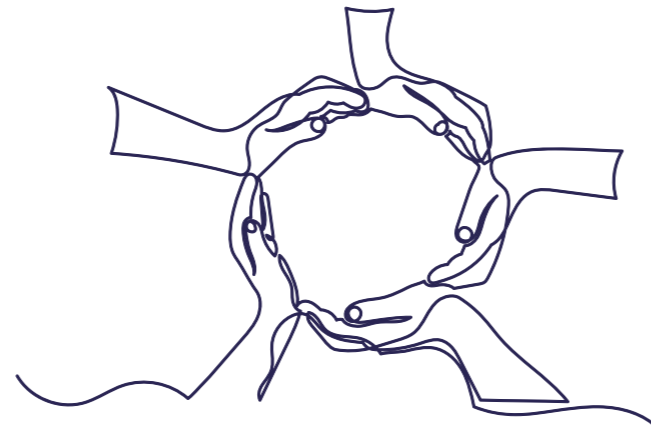
- 14% if you have one spare bedroom; or
- 25% if you have two spare bedrooms.

For example: If your rent is £80 a week and you claim Housing Benefit, each week you will have to make the following payment to your rent account to cover the shortfall:

- £11.20 for one spare bedroom; or
- £20 a week for two spare bedrooms.

It'll be more if you're only entitled to partial Housing Benefit.

# HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU



## Tenants First team

Our dedicated Tenants First team gives specialist tenancy and family support.

We offer:

- **Tenancy support** – this includes help with claiming benefits, support to access services and grants, and furnished tenancies. The team can help and advise you to make changes.
- **Referrals to third party services like Citizens Advice, charities, and trusts**
- **Housing coaches** – support tenants on our waiting list for rehousing. They make sure they are all set up to care for their new home, report repairs, pay bills and utilities, and be part of the community.
- **Family intervention support** – for tenants with multiple and complex needs. The team can help identify the root causes and provide families with a realistic and tailored support plan.

- **Mental health (housing-related) support for adults and families**
- **Employment training support** – helping tenants to get into training, skills, and employment

We support tenants with a wide range of tenancy issues. We also offer individual and family support to those who have multiple and complex support needs. Our support is targeted to individual needs, with practical help and advice offered.

You can contact the team by:

- Completing the online form which can be found by scanning the QR code below.
- Phoning 01226 787878

Scan the QR code to find out more about the support we can offer.



## More Money in Your Pocket

If you're having difficulties due to the cost of living, you might not realise you're entitled to some help. You can find out more about local and national support available on our website and Barnsley Council's website by searching 'more money in your pocket'.

## Warm Homes team

If you're worried about paying your energy bills, or you're struggling to keep your home warm, Barnsley Council's Warm Homes team can help by giving you advice on making your home warmer and cheaper to run.

They can advise you on:

- Improving your home with energy saving measures
- Energy bills and tariffs
- Energy debt

You can contact the team by:

- Emailing [warmhomes@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:warmhomes@barnsley.gov.uk)
- Phoning 01226 773366

Scan the QR code to find out more.



## Home contents insurance

Berneslai Homes doesn't cover your contents as part of your tenancy agreement. It's important that you arrange contents insurance to cover your belongings. This is in case of theft, water damage, fire, or other household risks. No matter how careful you are, there's always a risk that your belongings could be broken, damaged, or stolen. Home contents insurance can help give peace of mind should the worst happen.

If you need insurance then sign up for My Home Contents Insurance Scheme. It's a specialist insurance scheme for tenants provided by Thistle Tenant Risks.

Other insurance providers are also available. Insurance comparison websites can help you find the best deal for you and your circumstances. You can find out more information by:

- Visiting [www.thistleinsurance.co.uk](http://www.thistleinsurance.co.uk)
- Emailing [myhome@thistleinsurance.co.uk](mailto:myhome@thistleinsurance.co.uk)
- Phoning 0345 4507288 (Monday to Friday 9am until 5pm)

## Pension Credit

If you have reached state pension age and are on a low income, you could qualify for Pension Credit. If your income is higher, you might still be eligible for pension credit if you have a disability, you care for someone, you have savings, or you have housing costs. If you're in a couple, you'll both need to have reached state pension age. Pension Credit gives you extra money to help with your living costs if you're over state pension age and on a low income. Pension Credit can also help with some housing costs.

You can start your application up to four months before you reach state pension age or can apply any time after you reach state pension age, but your application can only be backdated by three months. For further information please visit [www.gov.uk/pension-credit](http://www.gov.uk/pension-credit)

## Council Tax support

If you're on a low income, you may be able to claim council tax support to help you pay your council tax bill. To claim for Council Tax support, visit [www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/benefits/](http://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/benefits/)

# DECORATING YOUR HOME

It's your responsibility to decorate your home. Here are some helpful tips to help you.

## Removing wallpaper

If you'd like to remove wallpaper in your home, follow these simple steps(\*):

Step 1



Prepare the room

Step 2



Protect the floors and furniture with dust sheets

Step 3



Remove decorative items from walls

Step 4



Turn off the electricity in your room to avoid water getting into electrical sockets or switches

Step 5



Protect switches and sockets from debris and drips with masking tape and plastic sheeting

Step 6



Score the wallpaper - Use a wallpaper scorer to create small scratches in the paper. This allows the solution to penetrate the wallpaper and loosen the adhesive base.

Step 7



Mix solution – You can buy specialist wallpaper stripper spray. But hot water mixed with fabric softener works just as well. Mix equal parts fabric softener and water in a large spray bottle.

Step 8



Soaking the walls - Use a spray bottle to thoroughly dampen. Allow the solution to thoroughly soak the paper for a few minutes.

Step 9



Stripping the wallpaper - Grab pieces of wallpaper at the bottom corner and carefully pull them upward. Use a wallpaper scraper. If plaster is falling off the walls while stripping the paper off, stop and phone us on 01226 787878.

Step 10



Cleaning the walls – Use either sugar soap or mix a tablespoon of washing up liquid with very hot water. Use a sponge to wipe down the walls, scrubbing carefully to remove all traces of wallpaper adhesive. Finally, rinse down the walls with clean water and towel dry.

(\*) Before any wallpaper removal please look at the asbestos information on our website.

Scan the QR code to find out more.



## Repairing superficial plaster cracks or small holes in internal walls

Follow these simple steps:

**Step 1**



Sand the hole or crack with some coarse / medium (60, 80, or 100 grit) sandpaper to get rid of any flaky paint or plaster that is left in the hole.

**Step 2**



Apply a small amount of filler to a filling knife and then into the hole or crack.

**Step 3**



Once the hole or crack is filled, scrape off any excess to leave the filler flat with the wall.

**Step 4**



Once dry it may need to be sanded if it's not completely smooth. Do this with a finer sandpaper (100 or 120 grit).

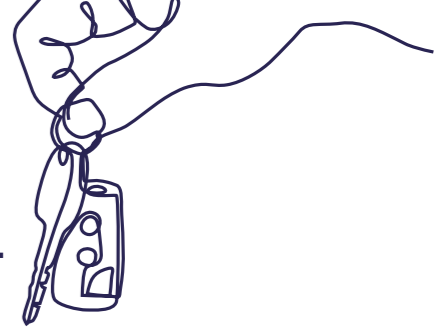
If you have any large cracks over a width of 3mm (width of a pound coin) please report this to us on 01226 787878.

If you are a Barnsley resident aged 50+ then you could get support from Age UK Barnsley. They provide a handyperson and gardening service to help with basic DIY jobs and garden maintenance for a small fee. You can contact them by:

- Phoning: 01226 776825
- Emailing: [information@ageukbarnsley.org.uk](mailto:information@ageukbarnsley.org.uk)



# YOUR TENANCY



## Your Tenancy Agreement

Your Tenancy Agreement is a very important document. It sets out the terms and conditions of your tenancy and the rights and responsibilities of you and us. Your Tenancy Agreement will tell you whether you are an:

- Introductory tenant
- Secure tenant
- Flexible tenant

By signing a Tenancy Agreement, you agree to what is contained within it. If you're a joint tenant, there's an equal responsibility to keep to the terms and conditions in your agreement.

## Our responsibilities

Our responsibilities as a landlord include:

- Maintaining your home to the Decent Homes standard and that it is warm, comfortable and safe
- Keeping essential services for gas, electricity, and heating in good repair
- Completing all other repairs which we are responsible for
- Treating your personal information with the highest standard of security. For more information please see the Privacy Section on page 30.

## Your responsibilities

Your responsibilities as a tenant include:

- Paying your rent and service charges (see page 6 and 7).
- Allowing us access to your home – You can live in your home without interference from us for the length of your tenancy but there are specific times that we need you to allow us or our contractors access to:
  - Inspect your home (and garden if you have one)
  - Carry out routine safety checks, such as heating services, electrical and asbestos surveys
  - Carry out routine tenancy visits such as new tenancy visits and routine tenancy visits
  - Visit if there is a health and safety risk to you, the property, or neighbours
- To be a good neighbour and not cause anti-social behaviour (ASB) - Everyone has the right to live peacefully in their own home without unnecessary disruption or disturbance from others. You, members of your household, or visitors must not cause any nuisance to, or annoy, offend, or harm any other tenants or residents.

Keeping your home clean and tidy – you are responsible for:

- Decorating your home
- Carrying out some repairs
- Keeping your gardens in a good, tidy, and safe condition free from weeds and rubbish
- Reporting repairs – See page 17
- Keeping both inside and outside communal areas, stairwells and walkways clear at all times

Other responsibilities

- Report any ASB or hate crime
- Ask for our written permission to carry out improvements and alterations to your home
- Inform us about any changes to your name or relationship
- Keep your contact details up to date by registering to My Housing Online (see back cover)

Repairs – Who is responsible for what

As your landlord, we maintain and repair your home internally and externally. To do this we keep the basic structure wind and weather tight and make sure your heating, water, and electricity are working correctly. There are some repairs that we don’t do. Here’s a list of who is responsible for the most common repairs.

Item	Berneslai Homes	Tenant
Damage caused by you, a member of your family, or a visitor (including accidental damage)		✓
Damage caused by criminal activity. We’ll work with the police to investigate all reports of criminal damage and we’ll need any crime reference numbers when you’ve reported anything. If we find you’re responsible for damage and have reported it falsely, we may prosecute you or take action that could result in you losing your home.	✓	
Internal repairs		
Bath	✓	
Plugs and chains for bath, basin, and sinks		✓
Blockages* – sink, wash basin, bath, or toilet	✓	
Toilet pan and cistern	✓	
Toilet seat (except for elderly or vulnerable people)		✓
Chimney and flue	✓	
Chimney sweeping (We will sweep your chimney once a year)	✓	
Installation and maintenance of oven/cooker		✓
Cooker switch or socket (existing)	✓	
Floor coverings – if installed on Decent Homes or Barnsley Homes Standard they become the tenant’s responsibility after 12 months		✓
Wet room floor covering	✓	
Curtain batten or rail		✓
Damage caused if the police force their way into your home		✓
Decoration – internal		✓
Door adjustment to fit carpets		✓
Doorbell		✓
Door chain		✓

(\*)Try to unblock yourself first and if you’re not able to please contact us. If the blockage is caused by items (for example put down the toilet) we may need to recharge you.

Item	Berneslai Homes	Tenant
Skirting boards	✓	
Doors – internal	✓	
Heating system	✓	
Immersion heater	✓	
Kitchen units	✓	
Light fittings – switches, sockets and pendants	✓	
Electric wiring (including fuse box)	✓	
Electric fire (if we installed it)	✓	
Electric storage heater	✓	
Extractor Fans	✓	
Smoke detector	✓	
CO Detector (if required)	✓	
Solid-fuel heating system	✓	
Plastering (except superficial plaster cracks and small holes)	✓	
Plumbing	✓	
Shower unit (if we installed it)	✓	
Wash basin, sink, bowl and drainer	✓	
Water supply – cold	✓	
Window catches, frames, handles, sills, and vents	✓	
Repairs to locks on windows and doors	✓	
Keys (lost or stolen) and changing the locks (**)		✓
Pipe boxing in		✓
Pests inside the property such as rats, mice, and cockroaches *unless due to tenant abuse / misuse	✓*	
External repairs		
Doors – external	✓	
Decoration – external timber fascias and soffits	✓	
Fences / gates (***)		✓
Gardening		✓
Trees – where there’s a health and safety risk due to overgrown or falling trees	✓	
Guttering, downpipes, soil pipes and waste pipes	✓	
Letterbox covers		✓

Item	Berneslai Homes	Tenant
Drains	✓	
Door nameplate		✓
TV aerial or satellite dish – for your home only		✓
Walls – outside or boundary walls	✓	
Repairs to the external porch or passage door (storm door)	✓	
Clearing gulley grates of rubbish (leaves etc.)		✓
Clothes post		✓
Damp-proof course	✓	
Door-entry systems	✓	
Communal areas		
Communal stair lighting	✓	
Communal steps and entrances	✓	
Communal flooring, carpets, vinyl	✓	
Communal pipe boxing where health and safety issues	✓	
Communal TV aerial	✓	
Communal lighting	✓	
Pests outside the property such as rats and mice *unless due to tenant abuse / misuse	✓*	

**(\*\*) Lost keys**

If you lose your keys Berneslai Homes will change your locks, however we will re-charge you for this work. Berneslai Homes do not keep spare keys for tenants properties. In order to avoid unnecessary expense you may consider leaving a spare key for your home with a family member, friend or trusted neighbour.

**(\*\*\*) Fences/gates**

Unless a property boundary adjoins a road, footpath or the ground levels differ by more than a 300mm drop it is usually the tenant’s responsibility to maintain. Your Neighbourhood officer will discuss boundary responsibilities with you when you sign for the property. If the fencing or gate is deemed to be hazardous we will make this safe.

**Tenants’ own improvements**

You may want to decorate, or make alterations or improvements to your home. If this is the case, you must ask for written permission before you make any changes. We may need to inspect before we give you permission. This includes Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points. If you do get permission, you’re responsible for all maintenance and Berneslai Homes will not incur additional costs as a result of your changes. We’ll need to know:

- Information on the type of improvement or alteration
- The name of the person or company doing the work
- A full specification of the materials that will be used
- When the work will be carried out

In certain circumstances, you might be entitled to compensation for any alterations you’ve carried out when you end your tenancy.

Scan the QR code to request an improvement to your home or phone us on **01226 787878**.

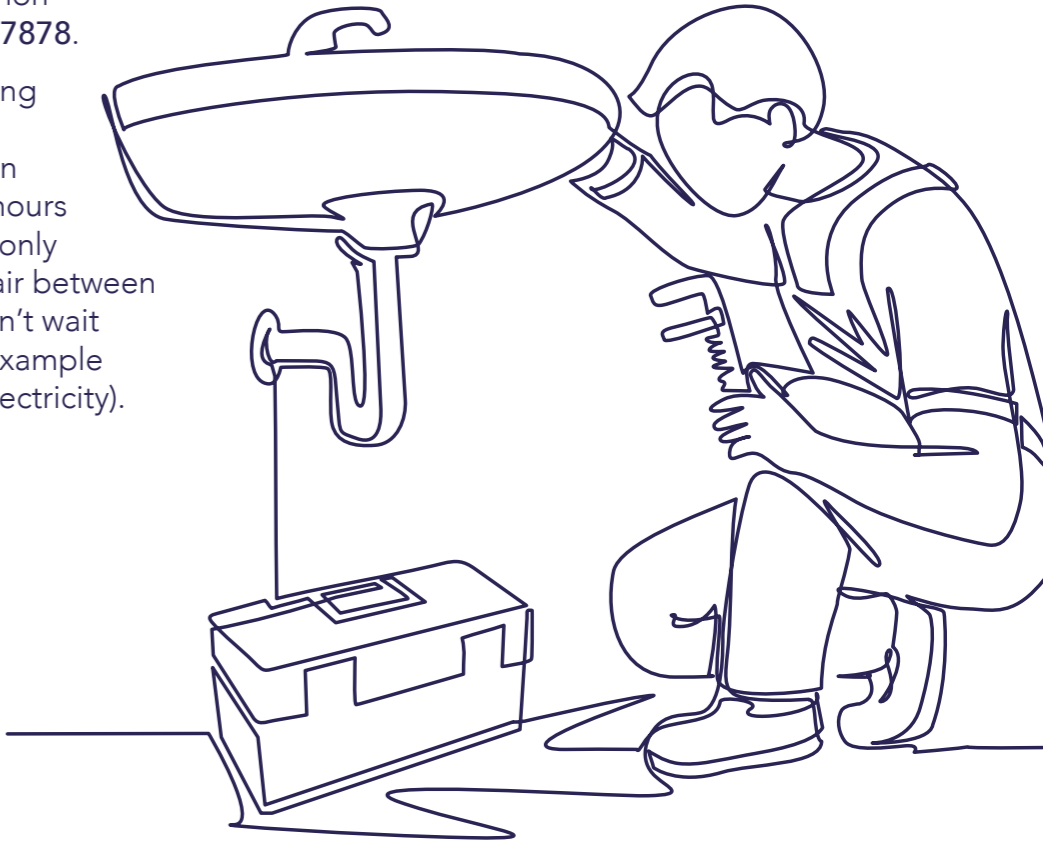


**YOUR REPAIRS SERVICE**

**How can you report repairs**

You can report emergency and non-emergency repairs on **01226 787878**.

An emergency repair is something that’s putting someone’s safety, security, or health at risk. You can report an emergency repair 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We’ll only come out to an emergency repair between 6.30pm and 8am if the repair can’t wait until the next working day (for example if you have a burst pipe or no electricity).



How do we categorise repairs and how long do they take

Legally and contractually, we must maintain and repair your home. We're responsible for keeping the structure, the outside, and the essential services in good working order.

When you report a repair that we're responsible for, we'll come to your home and aim to complete those repairs in the time scales below. The priority we give to your repair will depend on how urgent it is. We will place the timescales into one of four categories.

<b>Category 1 Emergency repairs</b>	<b>Category 2 Urgent repairs</b>	<b>Category 3 Priority repairs</b>	<b>Category 4 Non-urgent repairs</b>
Problems that put someone's safety, security, or health at risk – for example, structural damage, broken heating, blocked drains, burst pipes or dangerous electrical or gas fittings. We aim to deal with emergency repairs within <b>24 hours</b> . We may have to carry out a temporary repair to deal with the situation, and then carry out the full repair at a later date.	Not an emergency but a repair that needs to be done quickly to prevent more damage to your home or discomfort to you and your family – for example, minor leaks or electrical repairs. We aim to carry out these repairs within <b>3 working days</b> .	Priority repairs include a leaking roof or a door-entry phone not working. We aim to carry out these repairs within <b>7 working days</b> .	Issues that aren't causing any serious problems or risk – for example, small areas of plastering, guttering, or adjusting windows. We aim to carry out these repairs within <b>25 working days</b> .
<b>Category 5 Cyclical and planned works</b>	Cyclical works are seasonal works of a non-risk nature including fencing, paving etc. These are generally seasonal in nature and we aim to carry them out within a 6 month priority (weather dependent). Planned works are typically planned component replacements where there's no risk, including roof, roofline, bathroom, kitchen, full windows etc. Works of this nature can typically range anywhere between <b>6 and 18 months</b> to be completed.		

What happens if we can't repair it first time

We'll always try to complete repairs on our first visit. However, sometimes when we come to do the repair, we may identify that we can't do it straight away. We then place the work on a programme of works and we'll always make safe any hazards straight away. This might be because a replacement is needed, or the work is more extensive than what we can do on a routine appointment (for example large areas or replastering or kitchen replacements). If on this first visit, we feel your work falls into this category we'll arrange for another inspection by a technical officer.

They will inspect your home within our target of 28 days and agree with you on how we plan to resolve your repair issues. Once we've done this inspection, we'll write to you within our target of 14 days, so that you have written confirmation of any planned repair or replacement works required.



For further information please scan the QR code.

FOR YOUR SAFETY

Keeping tenants safe is our number one priority and we have a dedicated team working to cover all areas of legislation and compliance.

We carry out regular tests and servicing in our properties including communal areas. It's important to report any issues to us straight away. It is important you let us in when you have an appointment for a safety inspection or service.



Gas safety

What to do if you smell gas

If you can already smell gas and/or think there could be a leak, you should call the National Gas Emergency Service immediately on **0800 111 999** at any time of the day or night. The number operates 24/7 and is free to call.

To keep you and your home safe:

- DO open doors and windows to ventilate the property
- DO turn off the gas at the mains tap

The mains tap is usually located near the gas meter and has a handle that can be turned 90 degrees. If the gas leak is in a cellar or basement, don't enter and instead evacuate your home.

If you suspect you have a gas leak or smell gas, it's important that you don't do any of the following as these could place you in further danger:

- DON'T turn any power or light switches on or off
- DON'T light any sort of flame within the property
- DON'T use any appliances that could cause a spark

Always wait until the gas engineer has given you the all-clear before returning inside your property.

Gas servicing

We're legally required to carry out a gas safety check every 12 months. This helps to keep you, your family, and your neighbours safe, and makes sure your appliances are working efficiently. We keep a record of each safety check and service and give you a copy too. It's really important you allow us access to your home for this.

We'll send you a letter confirming the date when your gas safety check is due. If the appointment isn't convenient, please contact us as soon as possible so we can rearrange it. We'll need plenty of notice as your gas safety certificate is only valid for 12 months from the date of your last check.

When we carry out your gas safety check, we will:

- Disconnect any appliance that is unsafe or dangerous
- Provide you with a copy of your Landlord Gas Safety Check Certificate (LGSR) within 28 days of completing the gas safety check

## Fire safety

We have a legal duty under the Fire Safety Regulations to identify and remove any risks and hazards, or to reduce these as far as possible.

Communal Berneslai Homes properties have an up to date fire risk assessment completed by an independent qualified assessor. These are reviewed regularly, and you can request a copy of one for your building.

Here are some steps you can take to reduce the risk of fire in your home:

- Test your smoke alarms regularly
- Plan an escape route from every room and make sure everyone in the home knows how to get out in the event of a fire and all internal doors are closed
- Keep your home tidy and access to doors and windows clear

Scan the QR code to our website for further advice to keep you safe.



## Electrical safety

### What to do if your electrics trip

If your electrics trip, open the cover on the consumer unit to see which switches have tripped to the OFF position. Put them back to the ON position. If tripping occurs again, it is probably being caused by a faulty appliance.

This may be caused by the following:

- Plugging in too many appliances to one socket or extension cable
- Breaks in electrical wires
- Overfilling a kettle or iron with water which overflows onto the appliance

If you can't identify what has caused this to happen, report this to us on 01226 787878.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CARRY OUT THE REPAIR YOURSELF

### Electrical Safety Checks

Electrical safety checks are a legal requirement. They identify any potential hazards or risk within electrical installation. Electrical faults can cause electric shocks and fires. Putting you and your loved ones at risk of serious injury or even death.

We'll carry out electrical testing every five years. The inspection and testing can take a few hours to complete, it is non-invasive so we will leave no mess and will cause minimum disruption.

You can request a copy of your electrical test certificate by:

- Emailing [complianceadmin@berneslaihomes.co.uk](mailto:complianceadmin@berneslaihomes.co.uk)
- Phoning 01226 787878

The electrics to your home will have been tested before you moved in. Scan the QR code for advice if your electrics trip.



## Missed appointments

It's really important that you keep appointments for your safety checks. If you fail to give us access to your home so that we can carry out these checks, for example by missing your appointment or not giving us enough notice that you won't be in, we'll take all available steps to meet our legal obligations. This may involve taking formal and legal action against you so that we can gain access to make sure that your home is safe. In some cases this could include disconnecting your gas supply. Any costs incurred from taking formal action will be charged to you.

## Types of heating

### Gas boiler

A conventional way of heating your home and hot water, there is a gas boiler installed in your property that provides the heating and hot water needs for your property.

### Air source heat pumps

A modern way of heating your home and hot water, an air source heat pump is installed usually outside your property, this takes heat from the air and converts it to usable heat to heat your home and hot water.

### District/Communal heating

An alternative way of heating your home and hot water, near to your property is a boiler house where a heating source is located, this could be gas boilers, ground source heat pumps or biomass boilers.

## Asbestos safety

Asbestos used in the manufacturing of products has been banned since 1999. However, as most of our properties were built before then products containing asbestos may be present in your property. As long as asbestos is in good condition and isn't disturbed or damaged, there is little risk and this is not harmful to your health. Asbestos containing materials found within housing are usually low risk materials. If these materials are disturbed or damaged, there is a chance of Asbestos fibres being released in the air. In any event of disturbance, you must inform us either directly or by phoning 01226 787878.

### Requesting an asbestos survey or further information

If you'd like to request any existing asbestos information for your home we have on file, such as previous surveys or related documentation, please email [asbestos@berneslaihomes.co.uk](mailto:asbestos@berneslaihomes.co.uk). If you're not online please phone us on 01226 787878 for help.

## Damp, mould and condensation

We let all homes free from damp, mould and condensation.

When it comes to damp and mould always remember '**STAR**':

- **S**pot the signs - the first sign that there might be a problem is misting and water droplets on windows and other cold surfaces that takes a long time to disappear. The second sign is patches of black mould growing on your walls and ceilings.
- **T**ry our tips – to reduce condensation and black mould in your home. (see website and leaflet below for tips)
- **A**ct fast - as soon as you spot a problem with condensation, damp, or mould, follow our tips and see if things improve. You don't need to leave the mould in place for us to see when we inspect your home. (see our website for more tips)
- **R**eport it - if a damp or mould problem doesn't go away when you've tried our tips, or you're worried about it getting worse – report it to us.

We treat damp and mould requests as priority inspections and we'll respond within 7 days to remove any immediate hazards. You can report any concerns to us by:

- Completing our online form which can be found by scanning the QR code.
- Phoning 01226 787878
- Scan the QR code to visit our website for further information and advice or to report a problem with damp and mould.



## YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

We work closely with Barnsley Council and other partners to make sure your estate is clean, attractive, well kept and is a safe, secure, and clean place for you to live.

Our promise to you is that we will:

- Keep shrub beds, hedges, verges, and grassed areas tidy in communal areas.
- Cut grass in communal areas (only) regularly between April and October. Your Neighbourhood team will be able to provide you with more information around communal grass cutting in the locality of your home.
- Prune or fell trees that are our responsibility and that need pruning or felling. This is in line with Barnsley Council's Tree Management Framework.
- Control weeds in communal areas by spraying verge edges and paved surfaces that we are responsible for once in spring and once in summer.
- Remove any offensive graffiti within one working day of being told about it.
- Keep communal areas in flats and independent living schemes clean and well maintained.



- Where the law allows us, arrange for abandoned cars to be removed.
- Provide necessary information, advice, and support so you can maintain your tenancy.

You are responsible for maintaining your own garden including grass cutting, weeding and keeping it to an acceptable standard.

## How you can help

You can help us by doing the following:

- Follow the conditions of your Tenancy Agreement.
- Follow the conditions of your Good Neighbour Agreement (see agreement for examples).
- Report any problems of anti-social behaviour, graffiti, litter, or abandoned cars.
- Let us know if a home has been abandoned (remember some of our homes may be unoccupied while major works are being carried out so they can be re-let).
- Join us on our estate walkabouts. We publish dates on our website, or you can ask your Neighbourhood officer for more information.
- Send us your comments on how we can improve your home or neighbourhood.
- Get involved with volunteering and other community activity.
- Keep your garden in a tidy and reasonable condition. This includes pruning back any large hedges or shrubs. We may take action against tenants who fail to do this. We can offer advice to tenants who may find it difficult to keep their garden tidy.
- Look after any fencing that you are responsible for.
- Recycle your rubbish by using the right bins.
- Take any large items of rubbish to the local waste recycling site or arrange for them to be collected by Barnsley Council.

## Reporting anti-social behaviour (ASB)

In most cases of minor nuisance or ASB, the first thing you should do is discuss the problem with your neighbour.

We offer a mediation service. This is where we arrange for a trained person to help you and your neighbour meet, talk about your problems, and help you understand each other's point of view.

If you can't talk to your neighbour about the problem or it's a sensitive problem, then you can report ASB confidentially by:

- Phoning the police on **101** (or **999** in an emergency).
- Phoning CrimeStoppers on **0800 555 111** (this can be anonymous).
- Completing online form by scanning the QR code.
- Phoning us on **01226 787878**.
- Phoning our Respect Line – available out of hours from 5pm to 9am Monday-Friday, weekends, and Bank Holidays **0800 075 6699**.

Remember to tell us your name, address, and phone number, as we may need to phone you back.



## Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. It means keeping people safe from harm, abuse, and neglect. We want all our tenants to be safe and happy in their homes and we work in partnership with Barnsley Council to do as much as possible to prevent abuse from happening by raising awareness and understanding.

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger phone the police on **999**.

If you're not able to speak, press **55** at any time and you'll be automatically transferred to the police.

Please visit our website by scanning the QR code for further advice and information. This includes spotting the signs that someone might need safeguarding support like hoarding or if they are suffering from abuse or neglect.



## Domestic abuse

We treat all reports of domestic abuse seriously. We're committed to working in partnership with other agencies for the safety of all those who may be or have been, experiencing domestic abuse. Domestic abuse isn't just about violence, it can involve many different types of behaviour such as: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, controlling behaviour and coercive behaviour.

For immediate help in an emergency call the police on **999**. If you are not able to speak, press **55** at any time and you'll be automatically transferred to the police. If you are experiencing domestic abuse you can contact us at **01226 787878**. You can also scan the QR code for further advice and support. We'll treat all initial reports of domestic abuse as high risk and aim to speak to the person reporting the concerns and carry out a risk assessment within one working day of receiving a report.



## Independent Domestic Abuse Service (IDAS)

We work closely with our partner IDAS (Independent Domestic Abuse Service) to support residents in Barnsley who are suffering or have suffered from domestic abuse.

If you or someone you know is experiencing any form of domestic abuse, speak up - don't suffer alone: call **03000 110 110**.

IDAS also provides support in a range of other ways including:

- Online video support sessions
- WhatsApp messaging
- Live chat on their website (3-6 pm)
- Email

# GETTING INVOLVED

We want homes and estates to be great places to live. We believe the best way of improving our service is to work closely with tenants. Your views are important to us and every voice matters. We provide a range of different opportunities for you to give us your thoughts and influence the services you receive. We also offer training, provide transport and equipment, and cover all reasonable out of pocket expenses.

Here are some of the ways you can get involved:

- Become a Service Excellence Assessor (SEAP), and help us test the services you receive. This includes carrying out spot checks on empty properties and grounds maintenance, influencing policies, procedures, and changes to our services.
- Improve your neighborhoods and communities by attending an estate walkabout or Your Community, Your Say meeting.
- Scrutinise our services by joining the Scrutiny Panel.
- Be part of our Tenant Voice Panel to make sure we're meeting all our obligations as a landlord (which are set out in the Social Housing Regulatory framework).
- Complete a survey and tell us what you think of our service.
- Attend one of our local engagement opportunities.
- Join a Tenant and Residents Association.
- Attend a Customer Panel.
- Join our Check it Challenger programme and give us your views over email from the comfort of your own home.

Visit our website [www.berneslaihomes.co.uk](http://www.berneslaihomes.co.uk) to find out more.

You can get involved by:

- Completing an online form by scanning the QR code
- Emailing [communityengagement@berneslaihomes.co.uk](mailto:communityengagement@berneslaihomes.co.uk)
- Phoning **01226 787878**



## Customer satisfaction surveys

We carry out a range of customer satisfaction and experience surveys linked to the services we provide to you. Most of the surveys are triggered by an interaction with us. For example, if you have a repair carried out to your home, then you may receive a survey following the completion of that repair.

If you receive a survey from us we'd encourage you to complete it and return it to us. It's really important that we know how you feel, as without your views we don't know how well we're doing, or where we can improve our services.

Scan the QR code to view our survey results on our website.



# ENDING YOUR TENANCY

You can end your tenancy by giving us four weeks' notice before 12pm on a Monday. If you want to end your tenancy with us, you must let us know formally, this is a condition of your tenancy and will prevent extra rent charges from being added to your account after you've left the property.

Once you've given us notice, we'll contact you to inform you of the end date of your tenancy. We will inspect the property before you leave to:

- Identify any work that needs rectifying before the tenancy ends to avoid recharges such as holes in doors
- Discuss how we expect the property to be left
- Make arrangements for you to return the keys to us

As part of your Tenancy Agreement, the property and garden must be clean and clear of all belongings including carpets, furniture, garden furniture and free from damage. Your rent account must also be up to date to avoid legal proceedings.

For more information about ending your tenancy visit our website by scanning the QR code or phone **01226 787878**.



# OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS AND PROMISE

## Our promise

We're committed to providing the best possible service. But we're not perfect and there will be times when we get things wrong or you're not happy with our service. If you aren't happy, we want you to tell us. It's OK to complain. We'll do our best to put things right for you, and we'll learn from your complaint. Your feedback is important to us and helps us improve what we do.

Our promise sets out our commitment to you.

We will:

- Provide good quality information so that you know what to expect
- Be responsive to your needs
- Listen to you
- Involve you in shaping the service
- Have good clear and up to date procedures
- Provide the best services within the budget available
- Strive to constantly improve



## By phone

We will answer:

- Repairs and general enquiries line **01226 787878**, Monday to Friday 9am until 5pm, excluding Bank Holidays
- Emergency repairs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week **01226 787878**

We try our best to answer at least:

- 80% of repairs calls within 3 minutes
- 75% of all other calls within 5 minutes

## Online

If you use our e-forms you'll receive confirmation that we've got your form. The confirmation will give you a timescale as this changes depending on the form completed. We'll reply to most simple contacts within three working days. If you email us, we'll acknowledge it within one working day and aim to follow up within five working days.

## In writing

We will provide you with a full response to your letter (except complaints) within five working days. Our response will be in Plain English.

## Supporting you to access our services

We ask for and record information about tenants to help us support you in the best way possible. You can tell us your preferences before we visit you, for example, if we should use a certain door, wait a bit longer for you to answer, or knock loudly.

You can also let us know if you have a particular communication need. We can support people with hearing impairment, visual impairment, and other languages. If you'd like to access any of these services, please let us know by:

- Phoning **01226 787878**
- Emailing [customerservices@berneslaihomes.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@berneslaihomes.co.uk)

Don't forget to tell us your name and address.

## Giving us a compliment

If you've received great service from us or if a member of staff has gone that extra mile to help you then we'd love to hear from you. If you'd like to make a compliment you can share this with us in the following ways:

- Completing our online form by scanning the QR code
- Emailing us at [customerservices@berneslaihomes.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@berneslaihomes.co.uk)
- Phoning us on **01226 787878**
- Contacting us on social media
- Talking to a Berneslai Homes staff member

Once we've received your feedback, we'll share this with the member of staff or team and their manager.



## Making a complaint

Your feedback is really important to us and helps us improve what we do. We're committed to providing a good service. Whether it's good or bad, we want to hear what you have to say. It's OK to complain. If you've raised concerns about an issue with our service and it hasn't been dealt with quickly and effectively, please let us know that you remain dissatisfied.

We'll always try to make it easy for you to complain by providing different ways to contact us.

A complaint can be made in any of the following ways:

- Completing our online form by scanning the QR code
- Emailing [customerservices@berneslaihomes.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@berneslaihomes.co.uk)
- Phoning **01226 787878**
- By third party representative (e.g. family, friends, Local Authority Councillor, MP, Board Member, Mayor's office). (Normal day to day enquiries from councillors are dealt with through a separate procedure).
- On social media (to maintain your privacy we'll ask you to private message us).



## What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however, made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the landlord, its staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.

You do not have to use the word complaint for it to be treated as such. If you are unhappy with our service, we want to hear about it, and we'll give you a choice on how it is dealt with.

Here are some examples of complaints:

- We repair something wrong or not to the standard
- We don't do something that we promised to do or should have done, for example, we don't place a repair order that you made, or we don't turn up for an appointment we made
- Our staff behaviour is not acceptable
- We don't provide a service within our specified times
- We failed to communicate as we promised
- We fail to meet our legal duties
- We don't manage reports of Anti-Social Behaviour
- We give wrong or misleading advice
- We don't act within agreed policies, procedures, or service standards
- We delay in undertaking work that can't be explained within the terms of policy and procedure
- We display bias or inequality of treatment
- Talking to a Berneslai Homes staff member

## What can't you consider as a complaint?

We will not consider complaints in the following circumstances:

- Where the issue giving rise to the complaint occurred more than twelve months ago, or the resident became aware of it more than 12 months ago. We may apply discretion where the resident was unable to make the complaint earlier (for example health grounds) or where the complaint raises safeguarding or health and safety issues
- Where legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court
- Where the issue being raised should be dealt with under any statutory review procedure including but not limited to decisions made under the terms of the Lettings Policy or our Tenancy Policy. More information about the review process for these policies is on our website. Where a resident makes a complaint that should be dealt with as a review, we will confirm with the resident the process that we will follow
- Where the matters have previously been considered under both stages of this complaints policy
- Where a claim arises relating to alleged damage of belongings or personal injury, these are investigated through the insurance route by Barnsley Council
- Where a complaint has been pursued in a way that we determine is unreasonable
- When a resident repeatedly makes serious allegations that employees or contractors have committed criminal, corrupt, or perverse conduct without any evidence

If we decide not to accept a complaint, we will provide a detailed explanation to you within five working days setting out:

- The reasons why the complaint will not be dealt with under our Complaints Policy;
- Any individual circumstances we considered in making our decision; and
- The resident's right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.

Each complaint is considered on an individual basis, we don't take a one size fits all approach when excluding complaints.

We record and report on any complaint that we have excluded from our complaint procedure.

You can see our Complaints Policy by scanning the QR code.



How we handle complaints

We deal with all complaints in line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code. If after your complaint has been dealt with through our complaints process and you remain dissatisfied, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman by:

- Phoning 0300 111 3000
- Emailing [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
- Visiting [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
- Posting a letter to Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET
- Faxing 020 7831 1942

OUR PRIVACY POLICY

Your personal information is just that - personal. We promise to treat it with the highest standards of security and confidentiality at all times and in compliance with relevant legislation.

We need to collect your personal information to provide our services to you. This includes information that you provide over the phone, on forms, by email, by letter, in person, and online. We'll only collect information that is necessary or is required by law and we'll explain the reasons for this at the time of collection. You can see the information we have about you by submitting a request to us. This can be done by requesting it either by:

- Completing the online form by scanning the QR code
- Writing to Berneslai Homes Data Protection Team at Berneslai Homes, PO Box 627, Barnsley



Send us your feedback

We hope you have find this Tenant Welcome Pack useful and it's helped you settle into your new home.

We'd love to hear your feedback on this pack. You can send this to us by scanning in the QR code to complete our online form. As a thanks for giving your views we'll enter you into a six monthly prize draw to win a £20 shopping voucher.



USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

Barnsley Council	Phone	Website
General enquiries <sup>1</sup>	01226 773555	<a href="http://www.barnsley.gov.uk">www.barnsley.gov.uk</a>
Recycling and waste collections <sup>2</sup>	01226 773555	<a href="http://www.barnsley.gov.uk">www.barnsley.gov.uk</a>
Social Services adaptations <sup>3</sup>	01226 775800	<a href="http://www.barnsley.gov.uk">www.barnsley.gov.uk</a>
Barnsley Pest Control Service	01226 772050	<a href="http://www.barnsley.gov.uk">www.barnsley.gov.uk</a>
Benefits and Taxation	01226 787787	<a href="http://www.barnsley.gov.uk">www.barnsley.gov.uk</a>
Housing and homeless advice	01226 773870	<a href="http://www.barnsley.gov.uk">www.barnsley.gov.uk</a>
Social Services Out of Hours (Children)	01226 787789	<a href="http://www.barnsley.gov.uk">www.barnsley.gov.uk</a>
Social Services Out of Hours (Adults)	01226 774466	<a href="http://www.barnsley.gov.uk">www.barnsley.gov.uk</a>
Adult social care	01226 773300	<a href="http://www.barnsley.gov.uk">www.barnsley.gov.uk</a>
Children's Social Care	01226 772423	<a href="http://www.barnsley.gov.uk">www.barnsley.gov.uk</a>
Victim support	01226 243761	<a href="http://www.barnsley.gov.uk">www.barnsley.gov.uk</a>
Other support		
IDAS	03000 110 110	<a href="http://www.idas.org.uk">www.idas.org.uk</a>
Age UK Barnsley	01226 776820	<a href="http://www.ageukbarnsley.org.uk">www.ageukbarnsley.org.uk</a>
Age UK Handyman and gardening service	01226 776825	<a href="http://www.ageukbarnsley.org.uk">www.ageukbarnsley.org.uk</a>
Utilities		
Yorkshire Water	0845 1242424	<a href="http://www.yorkshirewater.com">www.yorkshirewater.com</a>
Cadent Gas Leaks	0800 111999	<a href="http://www.cadentgas.com">www.cadentgas.com</a>
Your money		
Citizens Advice	01226 206492	<a href="http://www.barnsleycab.org.uk">www.barnsleycab.org.uk</a>
Community First Community Bank	03 03 03 000 10	<a href="http://www.communityfirstcu.co.uk">www.communityfirstcu.co.uk</a>
Universal Credit	0800 328 5644	<a href="http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit">www.gov.uk/universal-credit</a>
Emergencies		
Police, Ambulance, and Fire Emergency	999	
South Yorkshire Police non-emergency	101	<a href="http://www.southyorkshire.police.uk">www.southyorkshire.police.uk</a>
South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue		<a href="http://www.syfire.gov.uk">www.syfire.gov.uk</a>
National Gas Emergency Service	0800 111 999	
Northern Powergrid <sup>4</sup>	105	<a href="http://www.northernpowergrid.com">www.northernpowergrid.com</a>
NHS	111	<a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a>

<sup>1</sup> Report a pothole or other highway issues, faults with streetlights, blue badge enquiries. <sup>2</sup> Find out your collection day, order a new bin, report a missed bin collection, or ask the council to collect a large unwanted item. <sup>3</sup> Contact them if you need help with equipment or adaptations. <sup>4</sup> Emergency number if you have a power cut.

A copy of this document is available on our website [www.berneslaihomes.co.uk](http://www.berneslaihomes.co.uk) which is compatible with language translation software and screen readers.

Please scan the QR code if you need more support with accessing this document.



O copie a acestui document este disponibilă pe site-ul nostru web [www.berneslaihomes.co.uk](http://www.berneslaihomes.co.uk) care este compatibil cu software-ul de traducere a limbilor și cititoarele de ecran.

Vă rugăm să scanați codul QR dacă aveți nevoie de mai mult sprijin pentru accesarea acestui document.

Kopia tego dokumentu jest dostępna na naszej stronie internetowej [www.berneslaihomes.co.uk](http://www.berneslaihomes.co.uk) która jest kompatybilna z oprogramowaniem do tłumaczenia języków i czytnikami ekranu.

Zeskanuj kod QR, jeśli potrzebujesz dodatkowej pomocy w uzyskaniu dostępu do tego dokumentu.

Šī dokumenta kopija ir pieejama mūsu tīmekļa vietnē [www.berneslaihomes.co.uk](http://www.berneslaihomes.co.uk), kas ir saderīga ar valodu tulkošanas programmatūru un ekrāna lasītājiem.

Lūdzu, skenējiet QR kodu, ja jums nepieciešama papildu palīdzība, lai piekļūtu šim dokumentam.



## Set up or update your Housing Online account

### What is Housing Online?

It's an online service giving you access to things like your rent balance, paying your rent online, and any rehousing applications you may have. Now you're a tenant, you can see and update information we hold about you like your contact details, helping us deliver better services to you.

### How do I set up an account?

If you bid online for this home, then you'll already have an account and you can log in the same way. If you didn't and want to set one up, scan the QR code.

If you're a joint tenant, you'll both need to set up an account and provide your personal and contact information.



[www.berneslaihomes.co.uk](http://www.berneslaihomes.co.uk)

Berneslai Homes Limited is a company controlled by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. A company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, number 4548803. Registered office: 10th Floor, Gateway Plaza, Off Sackville Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 2RD.

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