



Tenant Handbook

Welcome to your new home!

The Dublin Simon Community Independent Housing team would like to give you a warm welcome to your new home.

The aim of this **Tenant Handbook** is to:

- Explain the Independent Housing Service
- Provide information on your accommodation
- Explain your rights and responsibilities as a Dublin Simon Community Tenant
- Outline what you can expect from us and in return what we expect from you

It is important that you carefully read this Handbook. If you need any assistance in doing this please let a member of the Independent Housing team know and they will support you.

Further information can be obtained from the Independent Housing team by email at independenthousing@dubsimon.ie or T. (01) 635 4812

*Please note the information in this booklet is correct as of October 2022 however please note it may be subject to change.

Dublin Simon Community provide accommodation and housing support services across Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, Meath, Louth, Cavan and Monaghan. Our service offers accommodation for people who have experienced homelessness. Our tenants can enjoy the comfort of their own personal space and the support that the housing team can offer. Support is provided to you through an assigned Independent Housing Officer and a dedicated Independent Housing team.

As a tenant we want you and your family to feel safe and secure in your home and community. Our aim is to provide a quality service to you; to support you and your family sustain your home and provide services that meet your needs.

We hope you find this handbook useful. If you have any questions about anything mentioned in the handbook, please do not hesitate to ask your Housing Officer.

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Dublin Simon Community

Dublin Simon Community work to prevent and address homelessness in Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, Meath, Louth, Cavan and Monaghan. We provide services at all stages of homelessness and enable people to move to a place they can call home.


VISION AND MISSION

Our Vision is:

Making Home a Reality

Our Mission is:

As a community we support people to exit homelessness, access and retain homes, and rebuild lives by delivering housing, health and wellbeing services.



VALUES

COMMUNITY & INCLUSION:

We provide those associated with Dublin Simon Community a sense of involvement, inclusion and belonging.

RESPECT & EMPOWERMENT:

We are committed to showing respect to each other and creating an environment where staff and the people who use our services are empowered to improve their lives.

EXCELLENCE & INNOVATION:

We provide services to best standards and are cost-effective we are constantly pioneering new and innovative delivery mechanisms for service provision.

ACCOUNTABILITY & INTEGRITY:

We operate with transparency so that we are accountable for actions, individually and collectively while being equitable and fair in all our dealings.

Simon Community Housing

As well as providing emergency and supported accommodation for those who have or are experiencing homelessness, we also provide housing for those who are in a position to sustain independent living. Varying levels of supports are provided through other agencies and services such as Housing First or Support to Live Independently (SLI) depending on the needs of our potential tenants. Our properties are located across a wide geographical area ranging from city centre to suburban areas.

How to Apply for Housing

To access our properties potential tenants will be expected to be registered as homeless and will have a housing needs assessment with the relevant local authority. Referrals are accepted through local authorities or our services.

Your Tenancy



Supporting You to Move into Your New Home

The Independent Housing team provides support in two key areas to our tenants.

1. The Housing Officer is your primary contact within the Dublin Simon Community and will assist in explaining the tenancy agreement, rent setting, complaints and other important policies.
2. We can refer you to the relevant support services who will assist with the practical aspects of moving in and sustaining your tenancy, for example: financing your move, support with accessing entitlements, integrating into the local community, advice with paying bills and much more.

Tenancy Conditions

As a tenant of Dublin Simon Community Independent Housing service, you have the right to occupy the property and treat it as your home. The tenancy agreement will be between you (the Tenant) and Dublin Simon Community (the Landlord) and will set out the terms on which you may occupy the property.

The Tenancy Agreement

This is a legal document stating clearly the rights, responsibilities and obligations of both Dublin Simon Community (the Landlord) and you (the Tenant). If this agreement breaks down Dublin Simon Community will take action which could lead to eviction. This document will be fully explained to you by your Housing Officer.

Termination of Tenancy

- **Periodic Tenancies:** Where a tenant occupies a property on a periodic (month-to-month) tenancy, that tenancy can be terminated within the first 6 months without any of the grounds / reasons arising. No prior warning needs to be provided, however the notice period for a tenancy of less than 6 months (where a breach has not occurred) was **increased** in July 2022 from 28 days to **90 days**.

Note | where a notice is being served where a breach has not occurred, a tenant now has 90 day period to apply to the RTB to dispute the validity of the Notice – the content of the Notice needs to reflect this revised dispute period¹.

- **Fixed Term Tenancies** give a tenant **increased protections** over and above the standard protections under the 2004 Act **from commencement of the tenancy**².

In essence, a standard fixed term tenancy permits a compliant tenant to remain in occupation of the property for the full duration of the term and that right applies from the very first day. Unlike a periodic tenancy, no minimum 6-month occupation period is required before the protections apply in a standard fixed term tenancy.

Joint Tenancy

This is a tenancy agreement between the landlord and tenant.

Please speak to your Housing Officer if you would like to add your partner to join your tenancy after you move into property. This is not an automatic right and the partner will need to apply to Dublin Simon Community and follow the process which includes estate checks, Garda vetting process, 1st & 2nd interview.

What happens to my home if I die?

Where there is a joint tenancy, and one tenant dies, the tenancy automatically remains with the surviving tenant.

Where a sole tenant dies, Dublin Simon Community has the right to take back the property. Succession is not an automatic right.

In exceptional circumstances Dublin Simon Community will consider granting a new tenancy to a member of their immediate family where the family member used the dwelling as their normal place of residence for a minimum period of the preceding twenty four months. Each applicant must meet the criteria of Independent Housing and follow the referral process, each applicant is considered in terms of the current housing need of the applicant and the size of the existing unit of accommodation.

Landlord Responsibilities

- To adhere to the terms of the tenancy agreement
- Provide adequate notice of rent or service charge increases
- Provide adequate notice to quit
- Carry out all cyclical maintenance
- Complete all necessary repairs as set out in the tenancy agreement
- Have insurance for the dwelling, meaning the structure and **not the contents of a tenant's property**

¹ The period to challenge a notice of termination that is based on a breach of tenant obligations remains at 28 days.

² The 2004 Act allows for a tenant to be given more beneficial rights than the statutory minimum standard protections – however the 2004 Act prohibits contracting out of these statutory minimum protections.

Tenant responsibilities

- To adhere to the terms of the tenancy agreement
- To live in the accommodation as your main home and nowhere else
- To pay rent weekly in advance
- Provide details of your household income every year
- Provide 4 weeks notice in writing when moving out
- Maintain the property and garden area and complete repairs which are your responsibility (see tenancy agreement)
- Notify Dublin Simon Community of any structural issues or damage as soon as you become aware, Dublin Simon Community can identify and repair the damage and avoid the property becoming in a worse condition
- Ensure that the property is not used for business purposes or sub-let
- Dublin Simon Community will carry out property inspections and will always give prior notice, tenant should allow Dublin Simon Community reasonable access to the property for repairs and maintenance and immediate access in the case of emergencies.
- Obtain written permission from Dublin Simon Community before carrying out any alterations or improvements to the property
- Insure your own contents

Rent

Dublin Simon Community assesses each household to determine how much the rent charge will be. It is important that tenants provide full details of their income; this will ensure that each tenant will pay an affordable rent which will not cause them financial difficulty.

- Rent is charged on a weekly basis and paid a week in advance.
- It is very important you pay your rent weekly and arrears do not occur. Your Housing Officer will explain the rent policy prior to signing your tenancy agreement.
- The method of paying rent will be agreed at the time of signing the tenancy.
- If the household circumstances change during your tenancy it is the responsibility of the tenant to inform their Housing Officer. These changes may include: social welfare payments, a person in the household starting or ceasing employment and a death or birth in the household.
- A service charge will be included in your rent payment. This charge will be determined by the type and location of the property. This charge covers the upkeep of communal areas, waste disposal, electricity, lift maintenance, security.
- A rent statement will be issued to each household biannual (twice a year)

There are two methods of payment for DSC Rent:

1. **Household Budget** through An Post- This is a convenient way to pay your rent as the rent payment comes directly from your Social Welfare payment.
2. **Standing Order**-The rent is automatically paid through your bank account every week.

How is the rent calculated?

Rent is applied to a property depending on how Dublin Simon Community acquire the property for example properties may be donated to Dublin Simon Community or purchased under Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) or Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) how the property is acquired will determine how your rent is calculated.

The differential rent scheme applies to properties funded under the Capital Loan and Subsidy Scheme or the earlier Rental Subsidy Scheme. Some of properties were funded under this scheme and therefore those tenants pay a differential rent. This scheme calculates rent charged at 20% of the household income a service charge may also apply.

Depending on your income, tenants may be able to claim rental assistance from the Department of Social Protection. Please contact your local Community Welfare Officer for further information or ask your Housing Officer.

NOTE: It is the tenant's responsibility to ensure the full rent is lodged into Dublin Simon Community. If a tenant is securing payment assistance (i.e. rent supplement or Housing Assistance Payment (more commonly known as HAP) etc) it is the responsibility of the tenant to ensure it is applied for and secured as soon as possible.

Transferring

Dublin Simon Community **does not operate** a formal transfer policy which might facilitate tenants transferring from one Dublin Simon Community unit to another.

Should you require alternative accommodation we advise you present to your Local Authority to progress an application. To be eligible for a transfer with your local authority, you must have resided at the property for a minimum of two years.

Moving Out

If you plan to move out of your property you must give at least 4 weeks notice in writing. Failure to do so means you will have to pay 4 weeks rent.

The procedure for moving out is as follows:

- Written notice must be provided to Dublin Simon Community 4 weeks before the intended date of termination of your tenancy. This is referred to as "Notice of Tenancy Termination"
- Over the next 4 weeks rent must be paid as normal.
- Arrears must be cleared.
- Household Budgets or Standing Orders will need to be cancelled.
- You will need to arrange an appointment to meet the Housing Officer on the day you leave.
- You need to make sure that the dwelling is in good condition.
- Following an inspection of the property, Dublin Simon Community will promptly arrange for the return of your security deposit (if any) less any arrears owed, deductions for any repairs, outstanding bills or other charges. You will need to make sure the property is left in the same condition you received it, with allowance for reasonable wear and tear.

You will need to make sure that all utilities are turned off and capped by a suitably qualified person and that all wiring is left in a safe condition.

Pets

Pets are not permitted in Dublin Simon tenancies unless explicit permission is received.

Tenants may apply to keep a pet in their accommodation. This application must be made in writing to your Housing Officer.

All decisions by the Independent Housing team will be made on a case by case basis and is dependent on the type and location of the accommodation, the possible impact on your neighbours and any management company restrictions in place.

All decisions made by the Independent Housing team are final.

Satellite Dishes

Satellite dishes must not be attached to the front or sides of building or apartment blocks.

If you want to install a satellite dish it must be installed to the rear of the property and there should never be more than one dish attached to any one property.

Keys/Fobs/Locks

The Tenant is responsible for all keys to their home and must inform the Independent Housing service of any loss or theft as soon as possible. It is **not** the responsibility of the Dublin Simon Community to replace lost or stolen keys to your home. You shall be required to pay for the replacement of any key, letter box key or entrance door fobs which are subsequently lost or mislaid which were given to you at the start of your tenancy.

Repairs & Maintenance



Our responsibilities

Dublin Simon Community are responsible for the Repair and Maintenance of the structures of all our accommodation.

In some circumstances these repairs and maintenance will be the responsibility of the managing agent of the estate or apartment block in which your dwelling is located. Dublin Simon Community will represent you should you need to contact your Housing Officer.

Structural Repairs and Maintenance may include the following:

- Walls
- Floors
- Roofs
- Windows
- External Doors
- External Steps, paving, gates and railings
- Toilet Bowls
- Baths
- Sinks
- Taps
- Heating Systems (Including normal wear and tear to heating controls and hot water systems)
- Fire alarm systems (excluding replacing batteries)
- Carbon Monoxide alarm systems (excluding replacing batteries)

Dublin Simon Community will undertake to maintain the items above and to repair any defects which result from normal wear and tear. The majority of defects will be noted in cyclical, regular inspections and repaired.

We will not undertake any repairs on items which are defective as a result of malicious damage or obvious carelessness. Damage will be inspected by a representative of Dublin Simon Community who will decide on the

nature and severity of the damage. The property is inspected room by room, checked for any structural damage and if any repairs are needed it is also checked for any electrical issues/fire safety issues etc. Outside areas are also checked – garden/balcony/communal spaces/hallways. Focus should be on the general condition of the property and it is important to assess the condition of the 8 key components which make up the Dublin Simon Community Lifecycle Programme:

1. Boiler
2. Heating
3. Electrical
4. Kitchen
5. Sanitary-ware
6. Windows/Doors
7. Roofs
8. External (garden, path, walls)

Your Responsibilities

As a tenant, occupier and resident of the property you are responsible for the regular, care, repair and decoration of your home.

The repairs you are responsible for include the following;

1. Within the home

- Repairs to doors and windows which are not the result of normal wear and tear
- Internal doors, door handles, locks, hinges
- Repairs (or replacement) of damaged fixtures and fittings including cupboards, drawer units, sinks, countertops, shelves, doors, handles, hinges, locks, catches and other parts of the kitchen installation.
- Wall tiles, floor tiles, linoleum floor finishes, timber floors and carpet finishes
- Chimney sweeping and cleaning where applicable
- Replacement of fire hearth and surround tiles where applicable
- Damage to entrance hall doors and back doors to the dwelling including handles, hinges, locks, catches, letterboxes, doorknockers and doorbells which is not caused by normal wear and tear
- Replacement of broken glass within the home
- Draught proofing
- Windows stays, locks and restrictors
- Changes of locks required as a result of tenant negligence.

2. Outside the home

- Repairs to front, rear and side entrance gates to the home
- Repairs to any sheds, out houses and fuel sheds and their fittings associated with the home
- Care of the gardens – grass and hedging
- Clearing of gutters and drains to your home to prevent flooding
- Maintaining the area allocated to you as a bin store

3. Electrical Repairs

- Replacement of fuses except Main fuses. (Electricity is dangerous. If in doubt seek advice from Dublin Simon Community, never take a risk)
- Repairs to all electrical appliances which were not installed by Dublin Simon Community
- Replacement of light bulbs

Note: Wiring and electrical fittings which were provided as part of the property such as cables, switches, sockets etc.; will be replaced by Dublin Simon Community where deterioration has occurred due to normal wear and tear.

Damage caused by negligence, overloading with appliances and multiple plugs and malicious damage will be repaired but you, the Tenant will be responsible for the cost. The cause of the damage and the responsibility for the cost will be made clear to you, by a representative of Dublin Simon Community for your agreement before any works will take place.

Note: Where it is your responsibility to repair an electrical fitting or installation, (other than the replacement of bulbs and fuses) it is your legal obligation to ensure the work is carried out by a qualified and competent electrical contractor. You must ask to see an identity card and you should receive a RECI certificate for any works carried out.

4. Plumbing Repairs

- Cleaning of gully traps, shower and sink outlets from baths, sinks and showers
- Replacement of toilet bowls, wash hand basins, baths, sinks and shower trays where damage has been caused which is deemed to be beyond what is expected of normal wear and tear
- Repairs to toilet seats, cisterns, chains, handles, washers' stoppers and ballcocks
- Repair of a leaking or dripping tap
- The cost of clearing blocked drains
- Clearing blocked drains where the blockage has been caused as a result of malicious damage or obvious carelessness
- The cost of repairing damage to heating systems and hot water systems where the installations have been obviously interfered with causing a malfunction. (Note: Any repairs to gas fired heating or hot water systems must be carried out by a qualified and competent mechanical contractor. You must ask to see an identity card and you must receive an RGI certificate from the contractor for any works carried out.) This should not occur as the boilers and heating systems will be checked regularly and serviced annually. If the heating system malfunctions you should contact Dublin Simon Community as soon as possible.

Dublin Simon Community appreciates your concerns in relation to electrical and gas issues affecting your home.

NEVER take a risk with Gas or Electricity, ALWAYS phone the Independent Housing team or the Repair and Maintenance team for advice if you are unsure.

Independent Housing Team: Tel (01) 635 4812

Repairs & Maintenance Team: Tel 085 872 0765

General Repair & Maintenance Issues

- As a tenant, you are responsible for the repair or replacement of any damage caused by wilful or malicious damage to the property, its fixtures and its fittings. If Dublin Simon Community has to undertake a repair resulting from wilful or malicious damage the cost of the repair or replacement will be charged to you. If these works are to be scheduled, you will be notified of this before any works take place but there may be exceptional circumstances where works will have to take place urgently or in your absence and Dublin Simon Community reserve the right to make a judgement call in emergency situations regarding the protection of life and property.
- As a tenant, you are responsible for damage and breakages to the premises, its fittings and fixtures resulting from an act of burglary, theft or larceny. It is recommended that insurance cover is put in place, by you, for the contents of your home.
- Dublin Simon Community do not provide or maintain the installation of security alarm systems.

Exceptional Circumstances

Dublin Simon Community work with all their tenants to ensure a safe, comfortable environment in which to live. We accept that exceptional circumstances, such as disability, old age and illness may occur in which case, Dublin Simon Community will arrange for the work to be carried out to prevent further hardship. This will be determined on a case by case basis. You should contact your Housing Officer immediately if you feel you might qualify for such assistance.

Smoking Policy

Dublin Simon Community operate a smoke-free policy. This aims to protect staff and contractors from second-hand smoke and ensure a safe work environment.

If you are being visited by a staff member of Dublin Simon Community or a Dublin Simon Community contractor, we must ask that you refrain from smoking whilst they are in your accommodation with you.

Alterations and Adaptions

In order to make alterations or adaptions to a Dublin Simon Community property, **you must apply in writing in advance.** You must receive written permission before any changes can be made. Should you or a member of your family require changes due to physical ill health or reduced mobility, please contact your Housing Officer, who will advise and support you with applications.

If alterations or adaptations are made to the property it will be the responsibility of the tenant to return to property to it's original state.

Call Out Charges

If you log a Repair and Maintenance issue with DSC, we will arrange for a suitable contractor to call out to your property to address this. You will be informed of this in advance and a suitable date and time will be agreed.

NOTE: If the appointment is missed for any reason and we are not informed i.e.: you are not home at the agreed time and the contractor cannot reach you, then you will be responsible for the cost of the callout (see Tenancy Agreement, Section 3.15).

Response times are below:

- Emergency- 24 Hours
- Urgent- 72 Hours
- Routine- 5 Days
- Preventative-As agreed

EMERGENCY

- Smoking electrical fuse board
- Faulty electrical sockets, sparks present
- Tiles falling from the roof of a dwelling
- Burst pipes
- Any smell of Gas in the premises
- Failure of security aspects of doors and windows resulting in the inability to secure the premises

URGENT

- Leaks under sink units
- Water leaking from baths, showers
- Water staining evident in ceilings below bathrooms
- Lack of hot water / heating
- Loss of power to parts of the dwelling
- Failure of security aspects of doors or windows resulting in concern for the security of the premises

ROUTINE

- Replacement of fixtures and fittings showing signs of damage through reasonable wear and tear
- Repairs to intercom systems etc. through reasonable wear and tear

CYCLICAL

- Regular building inspections
- Annual servicing of gas boilers and alarm systems

The above represents examples of the type of issues which may fall into each category. We will determine the appropriate level of response on a case by case basis.

The above listed does not infer responsibility of the issues to either party. This will be determined by the Simon Community.

Emergency Repair Service

Dublin Simon Community provide an emergency repair service outside of normal office hours.

We stress that you must be mindful that this number is for emergency issues only.

Non-emergency calls to this number will incur a charge.

Emergency issues are where there is a:

1. Risk to life
2. Threat of flooding or fire
3. Complete failure of the electricity supply. (Please check if neighbouring properties are without power before calling)
4. Risk of significant damage to the property.

This number is for your protection and safety. You will not be charged for genuine calls but please remember the importance of your actions.

To report an Emergency out of normal office hours please call

086 036 6084

Safety in the home



Dublin Simon Community are committed to providing homes which meet high standards of quality and safety. However, there are day to day dangers which can cause damage and injury which are avoidable with good housekeeping and common sense. We have listed some of these below and would ask you to make yourself, and anybody residing in the home, familiar with these.

Fire Prevention

There are many things which can cause a fire to start in your home. The majority of fires which occur could have been avoided if a few simple measures had been taken.

- **Always** Keep matches, lighters, candles in a safe place out of reach of children.
- **Never** leave a lit candle unattended and **always** be extra careful when placing candles that they can't ignite anything around them.
- **Always** use an ashtray to put out cigarettes and only empty the ashtray when you are sure it is safe and there are no smouldering butts.
- **Never** smoke in bed.
- **Never** overload electrical sockets.
- **Always** ensure an extension lead is not left coiled up when plugged in.
- **Always** unplug electrical equipment when not in use.
- **Never** dry clothes on electric heaters
- **Never** leave clothes racks unattended in front of an open fire, a gas fire or an electric heater.
- **Never** leave food cooking on the grill, on the hob or in a chip pan unattended.
- **Always** ensure your fire blanket is within easy reach in the kitchen and read the instructions on how to use it.
- **If** you have an open fire always use a screen guard and make sure the chimney is cleaned regularly. *This is part of your responsibilities as a tenant.*
- **Always** store flammable liquids in a locked cupboard away from any heat source like the cooker or fire place.
- **Check** your smoke alarms regularly and **NEVER** remove the batteries. **Replace** the batteries as soon as they give the low battery alarm. (A beep every 20 seconds)

What to do in the event of a fire

The most important things for saving lives in the event of a fire are;

- I. **Early warning:** Working fire alarms will save your life.
- II. **Planning:** Everybody living in the home should know what to do in the event of a fire. **Get out and Stay out.** You should all have a safe meeting point outside the home where you can gather and make sure everyone is accounted for. **Never** go back into the building under any circumstances. The professional rescue teams are trained for this.
- III. **Emergency Services:** Once out of the house immediately call **999** or **112** for the fire brigade. Try and be calm and give them the address of the dwelling. Answer their questions as best you can and follow their instructions.

If possible as you are leaving close all doors behind you as this will stop the fire from spreading. In apartments the internal doors are fitted with automatic closers for this reason. Disabling the automatic closers will be seen as malicious damage to the property and you will be charged for immediate repair and replacement. Repeated instances could result in you losing your tenancy.

In an apartment block never use the elevator/lift in the event of a fire evacuation.

Chip Pan Fires

One of the most common causes of fire in the home can be the chip pan catching fire. For your own safety:

- Never leave the chip pan unattended
- If the pan does catch fire turn off the heat NEVER try to put it out with water as this will make the fire far worse.
- Immediately cover the pan with the fire blanket or a damp tea towel as this will smother the flames. (Always ensure you have a functioning fire blanket and even a kitchen fire extinguisher in your kitchen. Replace these immediately if used)
- Never try to move a flaming frying pan as it will spill and spread the flames.
- Alert everyone in the house and evacuate immediately if the fire is out of control.

Electrical Faults

It is important and it is your responsibility to ensure that all electrical household appliances are in good working order.

If an electrical appliance is not working **always unplug** it from the wall before investigating the appliance and never remove the protective casing from the appliance while it is still plugged in.

- **Never** leave damaged appliances or old / defective appliances plugged in.
- **Never** double up on plugs and sockets with adaptors and extension leads as this will cause an overload and can catch fire.
- **Never** use electrical appliances in the bathroom.

- **Never** attempt to force a 2 pin plug into a 3 pin socket as you may suffer an electric shock.
- **Always** ensure plugs are properly connected and fused and that the cables are not damaged or frayed.
- **NEVER** tamper with the electrical installation in the home. If there is a loss of power call your Housing Officer who will assess the situation and take the appropriate action.

Remember anybody carrying out electrical work in your home must be a qualified electrician and present you with a certificate of completion

Burst Pipes and Water Leaks

If you discover a burst pipe or a water leak you should

- Turn off the water mains at the stop cock. (You will be shown the location of the stop cock when you move in)
- Turn on all the taps to drain the water tank and reduce the pressure on the pipe.
- Turn off the heating system and the immersion.
- Look for the source of the water leak. If you can see the pipe and get at it easily try to wrap it with a towel and put a basin under it.

CALL DUBLIN SIMON COMMUNITY IMMEDIATELY!

Gas Leaks

If you smell gas in your home

- Contact the Gas Company immediately. 1850 20 50 50 even if your supplier is Airtricity or Electric Ireland
- Do not smoke and put out any lit cigarettes.
- Never light a match or use a lighter.
- Open all the doors and windows.
- Turn off the gas supply. (You will be shown the location of the gas shut off when you move in)
- Do not switch on or off any lights or electrical appliances.

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon Monoxide is a poisonous gas that has no colour and no odour. It can arise from gas, oil, coal and other fuels. It can be very dangerous and can kill. For your safety, carbon monoxide detectors have been installed in accommodation where there is any risk due to fires or heating installations. You should keep all rooms well ventilated and never block or close vents.

Protecting Your Home



Insurance

Dublin Simon Community only insures the structure and fixtures of your home, as described earlier in the repairs and maintenance section. You will need to obtain content insurance for your personal belongings

Dublin Simon Community insurance does not cover damage to:

- Floor Coverings
- Furniture
- Internal decoration
- Personal Property

You are responsible for your contents and for arranging insurance cover for these items. Dublin Simon Community is not responsible for the insurance of the contents of your home.

You will need to insure your home contents and personal items against loss due to theft, water leaks, fire and accidental breakages.

In order to be protected you will have to take out your own contents insurance to cover these items. This applies even if the damage is caused by water leaking from a dwelling above or fire spreading from a neighbouring property. You will still need to claim on your own insurance to have any damage put right.

In the unfortunate event of an incident damaging your property and contents, not having insurance will cost you far more in replacement costs than the insurance premium.

Security

You can reduce the risk of your house getting broke into by taking some of the following advice

- Make sure that you lock all doors and windows when you go out.
- Leave a light on if you go out or use timers for your lights.
- Change the locks if your keys are lost or stolen.
- Keep your home in good repair; replace broken windows, broken locks on garden gates and sheds.
- Don't leave keys under doormats or anywhere burglars are likely to find them.
- Let your Housing Officer know if you are going away for any period over two weeks.
- In apartment blocks make sure the entrance door always locks behind you.
- Never leave the entrance door propped open.
- Never allow people follow you inside if they do not live in the block. Report any faults or problems to your Housing Officer.

Protecting Yourself in the Home

- Have a door chain fitted and use it if strangers call to your door.
- Never leave the hall door open with a stranger unattended.
- Never let anybody pressurise you into letting them into your home. A genuine professional caller will not put you under this pressure.
- Check the callers' identity, ask for their photographic identification and use it to call the organisation to check their identity. Close the hall door while doing this. *(Remember a professional tradesperson or professional will not mind you doing this and will have been trained to expect it)*
- If you are suspicious or uneasy you do not have to let anybody, except the emergency services in certain circumstances, enter your home without notification and agreement.
- If you wish to install an CCTV monitoring system you must apply in writing to Dublin Simon Community

Call the Gardaí if you are suspicious or feel threatened by a caller's motive

Anti Social Behaviour

Anti-Social Behaviour can have a very negative effect on the day to day lives of those living in a community. Dublin Simon Community are committed to preventing and addressing such behaviour.

Anti-social behaviour can be described as:

- Intimidation or threats
- Abuse or harassment
- Violence against a person or family
- Sale, supply or possession of illegal drugs
- Criminal activity
- Noise pollution
- Vandalism

Dublin Simon Community will issue a warning to individuals or families that engage in anti social behaviour. If necessary, the offending tenant will face legal action which may lead to eviction.

Your Neighbourhood

Dublin Simon Community takes its responsibility towards the community and our neighbours very seriously and we expect our tenants to adhere to our neighbourhood policy. This policy is aimed at promoting a positive relationship between ourselves, our tenants and those living and sharing communal areas. There are some simple steps that can be taken to help everyone get along.

- Respect each other right to live peacefully
- Do not engage in behaviour that upsets others living close by
- Look after your homes and gardens/balconies keeping them tidy
- Do not park your car in a manner that will cause stress or danger to others
- Remember you are responsible for the behaviour of your children and visitors
- Keep noise levels down especially at night time or early in the morning
- Dispose of rubbish / arranging collection

Dublin Simon Community realise that difficulties can arise with neighbours and would ask tenants not to let a situation escalate. A simple chat can sometimes resolve a problem. If there is a situation that is persistent and is causing distress, please contact your Housing Officer.

Reporting Anti Social Behaviour

If you experience anti social behaviour, the first step is to try to resolve the situation with the person yourself. If you cannot resolve the situation please note the details of incident such as date, time, location and any witnesses, photos or recordings of CCTV. Contact your Housing Officer who will facilitate you making a formal complaint which will be investigated.

Any illegal activities, including violence, intimidation, drug dealing and vandalism should be reported to your local Gardaí immediately, you must also inform your Housing Officer of any suspicions or incidents witnessed.

Diversity and Equality



Dublin Simon Community are committed to actively opposing any discrimination on the basis of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation or religious affiliation. We believe that everyone has the right to access and maintain a home of their own.

We aim to ensure that the housing and services we offer are available to all without discrimination and that no-one is disadvantaged on the grounds listed above. We expect our tenants to treat their neighbours with dignity and respect.

Our Values

Community

We provide those associated with Dublin Simon Community, a sense of involvement, inclusion and belonging.

Respect & Empowerment

We are committed to:

Showing respect to each other and responsible conduct is expected from all in the community.

Creating an environment where volunteers, staff and those who use our services, are empowered to improve their lives and that of their communities.

Excellence & Innovation

We provide services that are cost effective, to best standards and are constantly pioneering new and innovative ways of providing our services.

Accountability & Integrity

We operate with transparency so that we are accountable for actions, individually and collectively. We are equitable and fair in all our dealings.

Participation

Tenant participation is a two-way process involving the sharing of information and ideas with the aim of improving the standard of housing conditions and services provided. We have a number of ways for tenants to get involved in the decision-making process which could influence decisions on your home, services provided and your community.

The benefits of effective tenant participation for everyone include:

- Better services
- Opportunities to develop new knowledge and skills
- Open communication between staff and tenants
- Supports links between the community and Dublin Simon Community
- informed and knowledgeable tenants who have the skills and confidence to influence decisions
- Staff and tenants being more aware of each other's perspectives
- Increased tenant satisfaction with their home and community

Keeping You Informed

You will be asked how you would like to be kept up to date with information such as service updates, opportunities both within and external to Dublin Simon Community, upcoming events and training. We will also ask what type and level of information you would like and how you would like to receive it, we have a range of options:

- Newsletters and information leaflets
- Tenants' handbook
- Community days
- Training Courses and Workshops
- Website
- Focus groups
- Text messages
- Email bulletins

Comments, Suggestions & Complaints

Dublin Simon Community is committed to providing quality services to tenants. To do this, it is important that we receive regular feedback about our services from the people using them. We are committed to Client Involvement principles by giving tenants opportunities to have their voice heard. By actively listening to our tenants and receiving feedback, we can develop our processes and put measures in place to improve the quality of our services. We welcome all comments, suggestions and feedback from tenants. We intend to listen and act on comments and suggestions for improvement and we aim to respond to and resolve complaints quickly.

Please contact your Housing Officer for more information or email independenthousing@dubsimon.ie.

You may be asked to complete a Tenant Satisfaction Survey each year. This is so that we can collect feedback on the quality of the services and accommodation provided to our tenants. Participation is not obligatory but your assistance and feedback support us to improve our services to you.



Useful Contacts List

Dublin Simon Community Independent Housing Team	01-6354812
Dublin Simon Community Repairs and Maintenance Service	Business Hours: 085 8720765 Emergency Out of Hours Number: 086 0366084
An Garda Síochána	Confidential Line: 1800 666 111 Crime Stoppers: 1800 250 025
Ambulance/ Gardaí/Fire Brigade	999 or 112
Electric Ireland	Emergency: 1850 372 999 Customer Service: 1850 372 372
Bord Gáis	Emergency: 1850 20 50 20 Customer Service: 1850 632 632
Airtricity	Sales: 1850 818 110 Customer Service: 1850 812 220
Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS)	0761 07 4000
MABS	Helpline: 0761 07 2000
Residential Tenancies Board (RTB)	Lo-call on 0818 303037
Threshold	1800 454 454
Irish Council for Social Housing	01 661 8334
National Domestic Violence Helpline	1800 341 900
One Family (Support for One Parent Families)	1890 662 212
Samaritans	116 123
Local Authority Contact Numbers	See page 22 of your Tenancy Agreement

Notes:

