

New Tenant – Sign Up & Settling In Visit Procedure

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Date	Owner	Version	Reason for Change
May 2020	Fiona Ross	V3.0	3 yearly review

Summary of Changes

Section	Change
2.0	Removal of section relating to exceptional circumstances. Replaced with information about legal capacity to sign an agreement
4.2	Additional information about rent payment options
Appendix 1	Moved to Appendix 3. Replaced with Provisional Offer Letter
Appendix 2	Moved to Appendix 4. Replaced with Offer of Acceptancy Form
Appendix 5	New – key receipt form
Appendix 6	Addition of Post sign up checklist
Appendix 9	Addition of Moving in Satisfaction Questionnaire

New Tenant – Sign Up & Settling In Visit Procedure

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1.0 Introduction

This procedure describes our arrangements for signing up a new tenant at the start of their tenancy and then carrying out a visit within the first 4-8 weeks of the tenancy commencing to check that the tenant is settling-in satisfactorily.

This procedure supports our [Allocations policy ref. HM01](#).

2.0 Legal capacity to sign an agreement

2.1 Guardian in Place

If a Housing Services Officer (HSO) is aware that the proposed tenant who is being allocated a property does not have capacity they need to ensure that they have confirmation of who the legal guardian is and if they have the powers to sign a tenancy agreement on the tenants behalf.

This information should be provided in the Housing Application form and they should have received a copy of the welfare guardianship order or power of attorney. An allocation cannot be progressed until we are certain the tenancy can be signed.

2.2 Intervention Order

There may be instances when proposed tenants do not have a welfare guardian in place but the proposed tenant has been assessed as not having capacity to sign a tenancy agreement.

Prior to any allocation being authorised we would request that the local authority who are proposing the move apply for an intervention order to provide them with the powers to sign a tenancy on the tenants' behalf.

ARK appreciates that an intervention order can take some time to progress and in order to prevent holding up any allocations ARK will accept a letter of comfort from the social work department involved with the allocation. This letter must state that the local authority has applied for an intervention order and that they confirm that until this has been signed they understand that they will be liable for any rent due or damaged caused within the tenancy from the date that the tenancy commenced.

3.0 Provisional offer & Viewing

As part of the pre-allocation applicant visit, in addition to carrying out all the checks required, including verifying the applicant's ID and the information provided on their application form etc., if the applicant is interested in the property and the HSO is satisfied with all the information that was provided at the pre-allocation visit and reference received the HSO will issue the applicant with a provisional offer letter (**Appendix 1**).

The offer of the tenancy will be 'subject to viewing' and the applicant will be asked to confirm their acceptance of the offer 'subject to viewing' by signing and returning the Offer of Tenancy Acceptance form enclosed with the letter (**Appendix 2**).

Where an applicant is identified as requiring additional support it may be necessary for viewing to take place before an offer is made to ensure the property is suitable. It may also be necessary for offers to be made through the applicants' guardian where the applicant does not have capacity to make this decision.

For further details see the procedures Applications & Allocations (non-Edinburgh) and (Edinburgh) refs: [HM21](#) and [HM22](#).

Following confirmation from Maintenance Officer (MO) that the property is ready to re-let, the HSO will arrange with the applicant, or their guardian, to view the property along with the care provider if applicable. The applicant/guardian will then confirm whether or not they wish to accept the offer.

If the first applicant does not accept the offer the HSO will repeat the process with the applicants who are next on the list/ further nominees until an offer is accepted.

4.0 New tenant sign up

4.1 Arranging the sign up

Following the acceptance of an offer the HSO will arrange for the new tenant to sign the Tenancy Agreement, receive their Sign-Up Pack and property keys etc.

Arrangements will normally be made verbally and, depending on the time before the sign-up, may be confirmed in writing.

There will be several options for completing the sign-up eg. They may take place in ARK's office in Edinburgh, local offices or at the property. Arrangements will be made to minimise the delay between acceptance of an offer and the start of the new tenancy, as follows:

- The HSO may carry out the sign-up on the same day as the viewing of the property, if the applicant accepts the offer;

- The HSO may obtain some of the information required for the sign-up at the time of viewing the property, with the sign-up process to be completed at a future date by arrangement;
- Where another person has authority to sign on behalf of the tenant i.e. an intervention order or welfare guardian is in place, the Tenancy Agreement and other paperwork required to complete the sign up will be sent to the relevant person.

To save repetition, in the rest of this procedure it will be assumed that the HSO is carrying out the new tenant sign-up.

4.2 At the sign up meeting

Once a tenant has been identified and the allocation has been agreed:

- A tenancy start date will be agreed between the tenant, Care Manager/guardian, support provider and Housing Services Officer;
- The tenant and or their guardian will then meet with the HSO on the tenancy start date at the property to sign the tenancy and collect the keys;
- All tenancy signings should be attended by the HSO, the tenant, where possible, and the legal guardian. Support providers can also be invited to attend to ensure that everyone has the same information;
- There will be two copies of the tenancy agreement, one of which will be returned to ARK Housing and the other will be kept by the tenant.

The HSO will establish at this point how the rent will be paid for the property and take appropriate action to ensure this is received.

- Paying rent via Direct Debit – tenants will be advised that ARK can set up a Direct Debit to make payment. This can be done directly onto the Portal or if there is a financial guardian, on a paper version;
 - Rent payment via Rent Card – HSO will request a new rent card to be sent to tenants address to allow them to make payments at the Post Office or Paypoint outlets;
 - Telephone Payments – HSO will provide tenant/guardian with details of contact number to make payments over the telephone;
 - Housing Benefit – if the tenant is able to claim housing benefit the HSO will, with a signed mandate from the tenant/guardian, make contact with the local authority. Dependant on tenant circumstances this may a change of circumstances form or submission of a new claim;
- Universal Credit – HSO will prompt and offer support tenants to update their UC journal if they need to report a change to their housing costs. Similarly, if the tenant needs to make a new claim the HSO will provide support and information to make a claim.

4.3 Sign up Pack

The HSO will prepare a sign-up pack (see **Appendix 3** for list of contents). The pack will contain a Sign-Up Checklist (**Appendix 4**). At the sign-up meeting the HSO will:

- Explain the key rights and responsibilities of the tenant, and those of ARK;
- Ensure that the Tenancy Agreement, Good Neighbour Charter and any other relevant documents are completed with the required information and signed correctly;
- Give the tenant their copy of the Tenant's Handbook, relevant safety certificates for the property and other information leaflets (see Appendix 3 - for the list of leaflets etc.).

The HSO will complete the checklist as the meeting progresses to record all the information handed over and explanations given.

4.4 Issue of keys

The standard issue of keys will be:

- 3 front door keys/ communal main door keys/ key fobs;
- 1 back door key/ communal back door key;
- 1 stair cupboard key, where applicable;
- 1 laundry/outbuilding key, where applicable;
- 1 key for any garages or outbuildings that are part of the tenancy agreement.

The HSO will ensure that the tenant signs the key receipt for the relevant keys, and that a copy of the receipt is given to the tenant (**Appendix 5**).

5.0 Action following sign up

Following the sign-up the HSO will:

- Update the Allocations modules on Capita, and the Edindex information for an Edinburgh allocation;
- Make up a new House File;
- Ensure that all items that are on the checklist (**Appendix 6**);
- Update information on *Letting standards* and *Settling in Visit* spreadsheet;
- Notify the relevant Council Tax department, confirming also that the former tenant is no longer at that address;
- Provide the Housing Assistant with information to arrange the settling-in visit.

6.0 Settling in Visit

The HSO will carry out a settling-in visit for every new tenant within 2 – 8 weeks of the start of the tenancy. In exceptional circumstances only, when there is a guardian in place that lives far away from the tenants property and it is not practical for them to travel to the tenants address the HSO may contact the guardian and carry out the checks etc. by telephone.

The visit is part of our overall arrangements for sustaining tenancies. Its purpose is to:

- Check that the tenant has moved in and is occupying the property;
 - Confirm that the tenant is aware of and understands their responsibilities under their Tenancy Agreement;
 - Check that the tenant is coping with the tenancy, and/or to highlight any previously unidentified support needs;
 - Deal with any queries or initial problems they may have, especially if they have not paid their rent on time or if they are experiencing or causing any anti-social behaviour issues;
 - If a claim for Housing Benefit or universal credit was made, to check the progress of their claim;
 - Check on the property condition and any repairs works outstanding from the void period or noted since the tenancy started, if any;
 - If a decoration allowance was agreed, check that the required decoration has been, or will shortly be, carried out;
- Give the tenant an opportunity to raise any issues or concerns with the HSO.

The Housing Services Assistant will write to the tenant proposing a date and time for the visit (**Appendix 7**).

- The tenant will be advised to contact the HSO if they need to change the date or time of the visit;
- The settling in visit may be arranged with the tenant's support worker or guardian where this is more appropriate, the visit should be completed with the tenant present where able;
- The letter will enclose a checklist (**Appendix 8**) to help the tenant prepare for the visit and note any points they wish to discuss;
- The letter will also enclose a Moving in Satisfaction Survey (**Appendix 9**) which they will also be asked to complete prior to the visit.

The HSO will take a copy of the *Checklist* and *Moving in Satisfaction Survey* to the visit, in case the tenant has mislaid their copy, plus a copy of a Settling-In Visit record (**Appendix 10**) to note any information provided and action points agreed. Following the visit the HSO will deal with any action points agreed, liaising with colleagues and the tenant as required. The HSO

will note completion of relevant action on the Settling-In Visit record. Depending on what has to be done, the HSO may choose to send a final letter confirming that the agreed action has been completed, or may advise the tenant by telephone.

If the tenant is not at home when the HSO calls, a card will be left to confirm the HSO was present at the agreed time.

On returning to the office the Housing Assistant will write to the tenant (**Appendix 11**) to advise that:

- A further visit will be made on a specified date and time, or
- The tenant should contact the HSO to arrange a visit.

If access is not arranged within 8 weeks of the tenancy commencing the HSO will send a final letter (**Appendix 12**) to advise that no further arrangements to carry out a visit will be made, as it will be assumed that the tenant does not wish to raise any issues regarding the tenancy and that they are satisfied with the property schedule they have received and the property condition.

However, if the HSO suspects that the property may not be occupied, the Abandoned Properties procedure, HM29, may be initiated.

The HSO will ensure that the relevant information regarding the issue of letters and the date of the visit etc. is added to the Capita contact management system.

7.0 Implementation & Review

7.1 Implementation

The Head of Housing Services is responsible for ensuring that this procedure is implemented by Housing Services staff when required.

7.2 Review

The Head of Housing Services will ensure that this procedure is reviewed at least every three years.

Appendix 1 – Provisional Offer Letter

Date

«title1» «forename1» «surname1»
«address1»
«address2» «address3»
«address4»
«postcode»

Dear «title1» «surname1»

Application for Housing – Ref: «refno»

I write to advise you that we are currently considering your application along with others for a X bedroom flat at XXXXXXXXXX, the details of which are shown below.

Address	
Size	
Floor level	
Monthly Rent & Service Charges	
Available for occupancy	
Please note the information above is for information only and is not a formal offer.	

I plan to visit you at the address provided on your application form on XXXXXXXX to carry out a pre allocation visit.

If you are interested in being considered for this property, please contact me by telephoning ** and confirm you are able to attend the visit proposed above. It would be appreciated if you could have two forms of identification available to show me when I visit, e.g. a birth certificate/council tax bill/benefits letter/utility bill AND a form of photographic ID such as a passport or drivers license. If you are applying as joint applicants I will need this for both applicants.

Should the above not be suitable alternative arrangements can be made.

If we do not hear from you by XXXXXXXXXXXX we will assume that you are not interested in being considered for this property.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 2 – Offer of tenancy acceptance form

Offer of Tenancy:

I accept/do not accept the offer of the above tenancy.

Signed _____ Date _____

If tenancy not accepted, please give the reason for refusal.

The tenancy will start on:

Appointment to sign tenancy agreement:

Date

Time

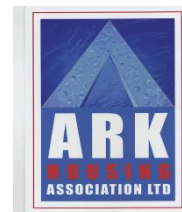
Questions about tenancy

Replied:

Appendix 3 – List of contents in Sign up Pack

- ARK's Good Neighbour Charter – tenant read this, sign it and return to ARK
- Household Information form –tenant complete and return to ARK
- Contact information for the National Grid along with a meter reading form. HSO t contact utility provider and advise new tenant has moved in
- ARK's Letting Standards – tenant to check this and if you are happy with everything please sign on Page 1 and return to ARK
- A repairs and maintenance Booklet
- A Right to Repair leaflet
- A Right to Compensation leaflet
- Tenants Handbook

Appendix 4 – Sign up Checklist



ACTION TO BE TAKEN AT TENANCY SIGN UP

Address	
Name of new tenant	
Name of joint tenant	
Start date of tenancy	

Electric meter reading	
Gas meter reading	
Number of keys provided	

	Action	Y	N	Comments
A1	Contents of tenancy agreement explained/agreed			
A2	Tenancy agreement signed correctly			
A3	Household information form completed and signed			
A4	ARK's Fair Processing Notice, Cover form (where other h'ld family members, children <12 and >12) & Consent Form			
A5	Rent payments & arrears procedure explained			
A6	Rental Exchange – Leaflet & Fair Processing Notice			
A7	Good Neighbour Charter explained and signed			
A8	ASB policy & procedures explained			

A9	Estate management responsibilities explained			
A10	Decoration allowance explained (where appropriate)			
A11	Alterations/improvements explained			
A12	Pets permission explained			
A13	Housing Benefit form completed			
A14	Housing Benefit mandate completed			
A15	Direct debit form completed			
A16	Notification of change in circumstances explained			
A17	Availability of policies & procedures discussed			
A18	Becoming a Member			
	Tenant Participation – Working Party/HUB group			

Note of items given to tenant (please tick to confirm handed over)

	Copy of Signed SST/OA/SSST/PRTA			SFHA Insurance Scheme Details	
B1	Tenant Handbook		C1	Lettings standard	
B2.1	ARK's Fair Processing Notice		C2	RandM Tenants Info Booklet	
B2.2	ARK's FPN Cover letter		C3.1	Utility ntf procedure/readings	
B2.3	ARK's FPN Consent Form		C3.2	National Grid leaflet	
B3.1	Rental Exchange Tenant Leaflet		C4	Our power information leaflet	
B3.2	Rental Exchange – Fair Processing Notice		C5	Right to Repair Leaflet	
B4.1	Neighbour dispute leaflet		C6	Right to Compensation Leaflet	
B4.2	Good Neighbour Charter copied & sent to tenant			Gas safety certificate- Applicable/Not Applicable	
B5	Pet Permission Form			Electrical safety certificate	
B6	Electoral Registration Form			EPC	

B7	Membership form		C7	Heating user instructions	
B8	Complaints Leaflet			Smoke alarm user instructions	
B9	Significant Performance Failures Leaflet			CO user instructions	
B10	TV Licensing				

Signed by tenant(s):
Signed by HSO:
Action completed by: _____
Date: _____

Appendix 5 – Key Receipt Form



Keys for Property at (Address)

I can confirm that I have received the following keys for the property at (Address):

(Enter details of keys provided)

Tenant Signature : _____

Name : _____

ARK Witness: _____

Position: _____

Date : _____

Appendix 6 – Post Sign up Checklist

Name:

Address:

Date:

Tenancy type: Supported / Mainstream

Follow up action (please tick to confirm action completed)

Initials	Date	Action
		House file created/Blue & Computer file
		ID in file (Birth certificate & photographic)
		Offer letter on file
		Signed Application form
		Signed Tenancy agreement
		Household Details form
		Tenancy Recommendation form signed by SHSO
		Shortlist attached to tenancy recommendation
		Direct debit set up or Allpay card ordered
		Housing benefit/UC form completed
		Mandate signed
		Council Tax notified of new tenant
		Signed confirmation of letting standard & Spreadsheet completed
		Update Offer status on capita
		Tenancy charges added to Capita *1 (see below)
		Edindex allocations updated if Edinburgh let
		Settling in Visit arranged <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updated on Spreadsheet - Added to capita via contact management
		Completed Moving In Satisfaction Form passed to HSA

		Intervention order/ Legal Guardian
		Furniture inventory

*1

FURN	Furniture charge for ARK tenants
FURNRL	Furniture charge for RLO supported tenant at 110 Albany Street
FURNAG	Furniture charge for TAG supported tenants at Restalrig
HBCC	HB Core & cluster charge for all ARK supported tenants except St Andrews
HBGHS	HB Group Home Charge for St Andrews tenants
HBIHMC	HB Intensive Housing Management Charge for tenants supported in Edinburgh by TAG/Leonard Cheshire/SHARE

Appendix 7 – Settling in Visit Letter



Tenants name
Address 1
Address 2
Town
Postcode

Dear Tenant,

Settling In Visit: Property Address

I am writing to say your Housing Officer **insert name** will visit **insert time** on **insert date**. If this date or time is not suitable please contact me as soon as possible to see if we can arrange a suitable alternative.

This is a **Settling In Visit** to give you the opportunity to discuss anything you want to about your new tenancy. I enclose two documents:

- Moving in Satisfaction Survey – by completing this you will allow us to look at how we can improve our service

and

- a Checklist – this will cover some of the areas that we will discuss at the visit.

Please can you could complete both of these documents prior to my visit.

As this is my first visit to you since your tenancy started, I will be grateful if you would be available to provide access.

Yours sincerely

Encl: Checklist / Moving In Satisfaction Survey

Appendix 8 – Checklist for Settling In Visit

SETTLING-IN VISIT - TENANT'S CHECKLIST

Name: Address:.....

ITEM	YES	NO	COMMENTS
<p>Did you receive a full set of keys, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Main door key/fob (flats only) ▪ Common back door key (flats) ▪ Stair cupboard key (flats) ▪ Front door (flats & houses) ▪ Back door (houses) 			
<p>Do you have a signed copy of your Tenancy Agreement?</p>			
<p>Did you receive a copy of the Tenant's Handbook?</p>			
<p>Have you looked at the Handbook?</p> <p>Did you find the information helpful?</p>			
<p>Are you happy with the way you are paying your rent?</p> <p>Do you want to change? If yes, how would you like to pay?</p>			
<p>If a benefit claim was submitted, has this been processed and paid?</p>			
<p>Do you have home contents insurance?</p>			
<p>Were you happy with the condition the property was let to you?</p> <p>If not, please list opposite the room(s) or area(s) you are not happy with and why. Continue overleaf if necessary.</p>			
<p>Do you know how to report a repair?</p>			

<p>Have you reported a repair?</p> <p>If yes, did you find it easy to contact us or the contractor?</p>			
<p>Do you have the –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Good Neighbour Charter? b) Anti-social Behaviour leaflet? c) Comments & Complaints leaflet? d) Heating system instructions? e) Right to Repair leaflet? f) Right to Compensation leaflet? g) Smoke and CO alarm instructions? 			
<p>If you live in a flat, do you understand your responsibilities for looking after common areas such as the stairs and landing?</p>			
<p>Do you understand your responsibilities regarding good relations with your neighbours and looking after your garden (if you have one)?</p>			
<p>Have you experienced any anti-social behaviour or harassment from neighbours or others that you have not already reported? If yes, please give details.</p>			
<p>Are you having any difficulties in keeping your tenancy going?</p> <p>If yes, is there any particular kind of help that you need?</p> <p>Have you spoken to anyone about this or contacted any other agency that could help? If yes, please state who you spoke to and what they said.</p>			
<p>Have you been given any information about tenant participation in our</p>			

activities? Would you like to be involved in a local tenants' group?			
----------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--	--

OTHER COMMENTS - Please add any other comments you would like to make here:

Appendix 9 – Moving in Satisfaction Survey

Full survey can be found at :

<O:\Housing\2020 Sign-up\5 Post Sign-up\Moving in Satisfaction Survey\Final copy Moving in Sat Survey.pub>

Moving In Satisfaction Survey



Name.....

Address.....

.....

I get support from (service)

.....

Appendix 10 – Settling in Visit Record

SETTLING-IN VISIT - RECORD

Tenant's name(s):		
Address:		
Tel:	Mobile:	Email:
Tenancy commenced on:	Monthly rent £	Payment by:

Application submitted for H/B? YES / NO* Progress? _____

Decoration Allowance form attached? YES / NO*

Changes to household since start of tenancy? YES / NO*. If YES detail changes below:

Tenant's income £ per week/month* Partner's income £ week/month*

Next of kin (if not already recorded) – name, address, phone number(s) & relationship:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Action required as a result of the settling in visit (see also comments overleaf). Against each action add 'HSO' for Housing Services Officer or 'T' for Tenant, to show who is responsible for completing the action.

ACTION	HSO/T	COMMENT / PROGRESS

Items to be discussed with the tenant:

ITEM	COMMENT / ACTION REQUIRED ETC.
Rent account	
Property condition	
Repairs completed/ outstanding	
Decoration allowance	
Communal areas/ garden	

Anti-Social Behaviour	
Pets	
Association membership	
Tenant participation / tenant forums	
Other – detail:	

Visit date

Signed *Housing Services Officer*

Signed *Tenant*

Appendix 11 – Second Settling In Visit Letter



Tenants name
Address 1
Address 2
Town
Postcode

Dear Tenant,

No access at Settling In Visit: Property Address

I am writing to say your Housing Officer **insert name** attempted to visit at **insert time** on **insert date** but they were not able to reach you.

The settling in visit has now been arrange and the housing officer **insert name** will attempt to carry out the visit at **insert time** on **insert date**.

If this date or time is not suitable please contact me as soon as possible to see if we can arrange a suitable alternative.

As this is my first visit to you since your tenancy started, I will be grateful if you would be available to provide access.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 12 – Final Settling in Visit Letter



Tenant's name
Address 1
Address 2
Town
Postcode

Dear Tenant,

No access at Settling In Visit: Property Address

I am writing to say your Housing Officer **insert name** attempted to visit at **insert time** on **insert date** and on insert second visit details but they were not able to reach you.

We try to conduct settling in visits for all of our tenancy that have recently started their tenancy with ARK to ensure that we are able to assist you where possible to settle into your new home and to help provide support for you to sustain your tenancy.

As you have not responded to any of the letters that have been sent or allowed access the two visits I have tried to carry out there will be no further arrangements to carry out a visit.

Due to the lack of engagement it is assumed that you do not wish to raise any issues regarding the tenancy and that they are satisfied with the property and the condition it was receiving.

Should you wish to contact me to discuss any of the above further please feel free to do so.

Yours sincerely