

## Introductory / Secure Tenancy Agreement

This is your tenancy agreement, the legal contract which sets out the conditions of your tenancy. It also sets out the Council's responsibilities as your landlord and your responsibilities as a tenant. It is important that you understand that if you break any of the terms of this contract, you could lose your home. If you would like help to understand this agreement, please contact a Housing Officer on **01622 [ ]**.

This is a legal contract describing the conditions of a tenancy between:

(1) **Maidstone Borough Council**, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, ME15 6JQ; and

(2) **the tenant(s) named below** and who have signed on Page 17 in relation to the property described below:

Full name of Tenant(s):										
Address of property (your home):										
	Postcode:									
Type and size of property:		House		Flat on .....	Floor		Maisonette			
		Other								
Number of bedrooms:		1		2		3		4		5
		Other								
Gardens:		No Garden				Front Garden			Rear Garden	
Permitted number of persons:	Storage room number (if applicable):									
Start date of tenancy:	..... (day of week) ____ / ____ /20__.									

Type of tenancy at start of tenancy –

Introductory Tenancy

Secure Tenancy

For introductory tenants only:

The date your tenancy will become a secure tenancy is (unless Maidstone Borough Council has taken steps to extend or end your tenancy as set out in this tenancy agreement): \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ /20\_\_ .

Total weekly rent at the start of the tenancy:

## Definitions

### Introductory / Secure

#### **anti-social behaviour**

Anti-social behaviour is conduct causing or likely to cause nuisance, annoyance, harassment, alarm or distress to a person residing, visiting or otherwise engaging in a lawful activity in the locality of your home.

Examples of anti-social behaviour include but are not limited to:

- using or threatening to use violence
- damaging and vandalising property
- spraying or writing graffiti
- loud music or making other loud noise
- persistent arguing and slamming doors
- noise or mess from pets
- drunkenness
- dumping rubbish
- setting fires
- riding motorbikes or mopeds anywhere other than on the road
- repairing cars on estate roads or parking areas
- revving of motor vehicles' engines
- speeding in motor vehicles
- obstructing any shared areas, doorways and other entrances or exits
- throwing items from balconies or windows
- racist or homophobic behaviour, gestures and language.

#### **assign**

A method for transferring your tenancy to someone else.

#### **common areas**

All parts of the building which all tenants share, for example, the hallways, stairs, shared landings, shared laundry rooms, and shared gardens.

#### **the Council**

Maidstone Borough Council as landlord; also includes officers of the Council and agents acting on the Council's behalf.

#### **fixtures and fittings**

All appliances and furnishings (not removable furniture) including those for supplying or using gas and water.

#### **improvement**

Any alteration or addition to your home to make it better which is made by you or on your behalf which was not there when you moved in, for example, additional building work inside or outside, the erection of aerials or satellite dishes.

#### **introductory tenancy**

An introductory tenancy is a periodic weekly tenancy granted under the Housing Act 1996. An "introductory tenant" is a tenant under an introductory tenancy, and the "introductory period" is the duration of the introductory tenancy (usually one year, but this can be extended in some circumstances).

#### **lodger**

A lodger is a person who lives in your home but does not have exclusive right to any part of it. You are responsible for making a lodger leave if you want to end the arrangement.

#### **neighbourhood**

The local area where you live, for example, [ ]. The area will include property which is privately owned or rented and property which is owned or managed by the Council or housing associations. This area usually includes local shops and facilities, for example schools and leisure centres.

## **personal property**

All personal items which belong to you or a member of your household or visitors and includes curtains, furniture and floor coverings such as carpets.

## **the property / your home**

The property (dwelling-house, flat, maisonette or other dwelling) in which you live and includes any garage, shed, other structure, garden or land etc, as set out on Page one, but does not include any common areas.

## **Secure tenancy**

In the context of this tenancy agreement this means a secure periodic weekly tenancy granted under the Housing Act 1985. A "secure tenant" and other similar terms should be construed accordingly.

## **sub-let/sub-tenant**

Giving another person (called the sub-tenant) the right to live in all or part of your home and charging them money to live there.

## **tenancy agreement**

This agreement.

## **[Tenants' Handbook**

A handbook containing useful information (such as contact telephone numbers) but it does not form part of this tenancy agreement. Copies of the Tenants' Handbook are available on request from your Housing Officer.]

## **Tenancy Policy**

Maidstone Borough Council's published tenancy policy. A copy is available on the Council's website ([www.Maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.Maidstone.gov.uk)) or is available on request from your Housing Officer.

## **terms and conditions**

All or any of the clauses of this agreement.

## **Maidstone House**

Maidstone Borough Council's offices at:

Maidstone House,  
King Street,  
Maidstone,  
Kent,  
ME15 6JQ.

## **written permission**

A letter from the Council giving you permission to do something (note: any permission sought will not be unreasonably withheld but may be subject to reasonable conditions).

## **you / tenant**

The tenant and, if you are a joint tenant, any one or all of the joint tenants.

## **your household**

You, your family and other persons living in your home including any adult family members, other adults, children under 18, lodgers, sub-tenants, and visitors.

# 1. Introduction

- 2.1** This tenancy agreement is a legal contract describing the terms and conditions of your tenancy and your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. If there is anything you do not understand please contact your Housing Officer or seek legal advice before you sign this contract.
- 2.2** This tenancy agreement describes either your secure tenancy under the Housing Act 1985 or your introductory tenancy under the Housing Act 1996. Whichever tenancy you have, it is important for you to know that you have a number of rights and responsibilities.
- 2.3** It is important you understand that if you break any of the terms or conditions of this contract the Council may commence legal proceedings against you. This could ultimately result in the termination of your tenancy and everyone living in your home being evicted.
- 2.4** The definitions section sets out the meanings of words used in this tenancy agreement.
- 2.5** Any reference to an Act of Parliament or regulation within this tenancy agreement includes any subsequent amendments to such legislation or regulations.
- 2.6** Where any term or condition of this tenancy agreement requires you to get written permission from the Council, such permission will not be unreasonably withheld but it may be given subject to reasonable conditions.
- 2.7** For more information about Maidstone Borough Council tenancies, such as practical suggestions and contact numbers, see the [Tenants' Handbook]. You can view the [handbook] on the website [and copies of the handbook are available on request from your Housing Officer].
- 2.8** Unless the contrary is stated or implied the rights and obligations set out in this agreement are

intended to replicate the rights and obligations established by statute, such as by the Housing Act 1985, Part IV. The contrary may be implied where, for example, rights and obligations are set out in the contract which either are not addressed by statute or where the statute gives the Council discretion.

# 2. Introductory tenancies

Section two applies to introductory tenants only.

- 2.1** An introductory tenancy is a tenancy for a trial period for the first 12 months (unless it is extended as described below). Introductory tenants have fewer rights than a secure tenant.
- 2.2** If you break any of the terms or conditions of this tenancy agreement, the Council may decide to apply to the County Court for a possession order. This could ultimately result in the termination of your tenancy and everyone living in your home being evicted. Before the Council applies to the court, it will serve you with a Notice to Terminate the tenancy and details of your right to request a review of its decision. The Council can ask the court that you pay the Council's legal costs if it makes an application to the court.
- 2.3** The Council may decide to extend the introductory tenancy trial period if you breach any of the terms or conditions of this tenancy agreement. Before the Council extends your trial period, it will give you a notice of its intention to do so and this notice will include details of your right to request a review of its decision.
- 2.4** If you keep to the terms and conditions of this tenancy agreement and the Council has not started possession proceedings during the introductory period, then you will automatically become a secure tenant at the end of the introductory period.
- 2.5** Succession rights are limited to those allowed by Sections 131 to 133 of the Housing Act 1996. In general, this means that if you die whilst your tenancy is an introductory tenancy, your tenancy will pass to your husband, wife or civil partner if he/she occupied the property as his/her only or

principal home at the time of your death. This is called 'succession'. If you do not have a husband, wife or civil partner the tenancy can pass on to a member of your family who occupied the property as his/her only or principal home at the time of your death if they also resided with you throughout 12 months immediately before your death. If a joint tenant dies the tenancy will pass to the other joint tenant and this will count as a succession.

- 2.6** As an introductory tenant you have the right to assign your tenancy to a person who is qualified to succeed to your tenancy. If you do this, this will count as a succession.
- 2.7** Whilst your tenancy is an introductory tenancy, you do not have the right to buy your property or to exchange your property with another tenant.

### 3. Rights of a secure tenant

- 3.1** As a secure tenant the Council can only end your tenancy by obtaining and enforcing a County Court order for possession. In most cases, the court will only grant a possession order in relation to a secure tenant if it is satisfied that it is reasonable to do so.
- 3.2** The tenancy will only be secure while you occupy the property as your only or principal home. If at any time your tenancy ceases to be a secure tenancy the Council may end it by giving you four weeks' notice to quit.
- 3.3** The Council will not attempt to take possession of your home or take any other action without trying to discuss the matter with you beforehand.
- 3.4** If your home has special adaptations which you or your household do not need, the Council may apply to the court for a possession order to take back your home provided suitable alternative accommodation is made available for you.
- 3.5** As a secure tenant, and as long as your tenancy remains secure, you have the right to assign your tenancy to a person who is qualified to succeed to

your tenancy. If you do this, this will count as a succession.

- 3.6** If your tenancy started before 1 April 2012 then succession rights are limited to those allowed by S.87 of the Housing Act 1985 before it was amended on that date. In general, this means that on your death your tenancy may pass to:
  - a) Your husband, wife or civil partner if he/she occupied the property as his/her only or principal home at the time of your death;
  - b) In the absence of such a succession, a family member if he/she occupied the property as his/her only or principal home at the time of your death and resided with you throughout the period of twelve months ending with your death.
- 3.7** If your tenancy started on or after 1 April 2012 but before 1 April 2013 then a person may succeed to your tenancy in accordance with S.86A(1) of the Housing Act 1985 but if there is no person qualified to succeed under S.86A(1), then a family member may succeed to your tenancy pursuant to S.86A(2) following the same rules for family member succession as were contained in S.87 of the Housing Act 1985 before it was amended on 1 April 2012.
- 3.8** If your tenancy started on or after 1 April 2013 then succession rights are limited to those allowed by s.86A(1) of the Housing Act 1985. In general, this means that on your death your tenancy may pass to your husband, wife or civil partner (or a person who you lived with as if you were husband and wife or civil partners) if he/she occupied the property as his/her only or principal home at the time of your death. No other family member can succeed to your tenancy.
- 3.9** In certain circumstances, you have the right to buy your property. You should contact Maidstone Borough Council if you want to know more about your right to buy.
- 3.10** In certain circumstances, you have the right to exchange your tenancy with another tenant.

## 4. Demoted tenancies

- 4.1** If you, any member of your household or any visitor/s cause anti-social behaviour the Council may apply to the County Court to have your secure tenancy changed to a demoted tenancy. If the Council decides to apply to the court for an order to demote your tenancy, it will give you a notice of its decision and details of your right to request a review.
- 4.2** If the Council successfully obtains a court order demoting your tenancy this will mean that your tenancy is no longer a secure tenancy and you will only have the rights of an introductory tenant.

## 5. Rent

- 5.1** The term “rent” includes the weekly rent, service charges and any other weekly charges.
- 5.2** When you sign the tenancy, you will be required to pay four weeks rent in advance.

### Paying your rent Your responsibilities

- 5.3** You must pay the rent and any other money owed to the Council under this tenancy agreement.
- 5.4** Rent falls due on a Monday and it must be paid in advance. You may pay your rent weekly or for any longer period such as fortnightly, four- weekly or monthly. However, the Council will not consider that your rent account is in arrears if payment is made and received before close of business on the Friday in the week which it is due.
- 5.5** You can pay your rent in any of the following ways: by Direct Debit, by standing order, by debit or credit card, by internet banking, by cheque, by cash payment and by PayPoint. The Council will charge you a fee for any payments made by credit card and the fee may change from time to time depending on what fee the Council is being charged by your credit card provider. *(For more information about payment methods and*

*current credit card charges please ask your Housing Officer.)*

### Changing your rent

- 5.6** The Council may vary the amount of rent at any time provided it gives you notice in writing at least four weeks before any change.

### Joint tenant responsibilities

- 5.7** Each joint tenant is responsible for the rent. The Council can recover all arrears owed to it from any individual joint tenant. This means that even if one joint tenant leaves all tenants continue to be responsible for rent, arrears and tenancy charges.

### Difficulty in paying your rent

- 5.8** If you have any difficulty paying your rent you or someone acting on your behalf must inform the Council immediately.
- 5.9** If you do not pay your rent, the Council may apply to the court for a possession order which could ultimately result in the termination of your tenancy and everyone living in your home being evicted. The Council can ask the court that you pay the Council’s legal costs if it makes an application to the court.

## 6. The property (your home)

### Living in your home

- 6.1** You must occupy the property as your only or principal home. If you no longer occupy the property as your only or principal home then the Council may end your tenancy.
- 6.2** The Council conducts audits of the properties it rents to tenants. If requested by a Housing Officer you must provide proof:
- a) of your identity and of anyone living with you; and
  - b) that you are living in the property.

- 6.3** If you leave your home for one month or longer you must notify your Housing Officer in writing of:
- a) the dates of your absence; and
  - b) the name and contact details of a nominated key holder in case of emergencies.
- 6.4** To avoid statutory overcrowding, you must not have more people living in your home than the permitted number (this is shown on page one).

## Criminal, illegal or immoral activity

- 6.5** You, members of your household or visitors must not carry out or use your home or any common areas for any criminal, illegal or immoral acts such as:
- Cultivating, manufacturing, selling or conspiring to sell, using, possessing and/or dealing in illegal drugs or substances,
  - Handling or storing stolen or counterfeit goods,
  - Prostitution.
- 6.6** You should be aware that the Council may apply to the court for a possession order (which may ultimately result in the termination of your tenancy and everyone living in your home being evicted) if you or a member of your household or visitor is convicted of an indictable offence committed in, or in the locality of, your home.

## Lodgers

- 6.7** If you are a secure tenant you may take in lodgers providing you do not have more people living in your home than the permitted number allowed, as detailed on page one. You must notify your Housing Officer in writing of the names and dates of birth of your lodgers within fourteen days of them moving in. Such notification will be in addition to any notification which you may need to give the relevant authority which administers any welfare benefits you are claiming. *(If you are*

*an introductory tenant, you do **not** have the right to take in lodgers.)*

## Sub-letting

- 6.8** If you are a secure tenant and want to sub-let part of your home, you must get prior written permission from the Council before you do so. The Council will not give permission for more than the permitted number of persons allowed to live there, as detailed on page one. You must not sub-let the whole of your home. The Council may prosecute any tenant who parts with the possession of the property or sub-lets the whole of it as provided for by the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013. *(Note: If you are an introductory tenant, you do **not** have the right to sub-let the whole or part of your home.)*

## Running a business

- 6.9** You must not run a business from your home without first obtaining written permission from the Council. Any request for permission must be made in writing and addressed to your Housing Officer at Maidstone House. When deciding whether to grant permission the Council will consider factors such as the noise, any nuisance which may be caused to your neighbours or whether damage will occur to the property or common areas. Permission will not be granted if it would result in a breach of planning legislation.

## Pets and animals

- 6.10** Some types of property are not suitable for animals. If you live in sheltered accommodation, a multi-storey block or in accommodation which shares a common entrance, you will need to sign the Council's Pet Owner Contract before you are allowed to keep an animal in your home.
- 6.11** You, members of your household or visitors must not allow any animal to frighten, annoy or cause a nuisance to any other person living in the locality of your home. Dogs must be accompanied by you or a responsible member of your household and kept on a lead when in common areas.

**6.12** You must not keep any animal which causes or is likely to cause a nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to neighbours or others living in the locality of your home. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: allowing your animal to persistently foul in an inappropriate place, straying, barking, creating an offensive smell, inadequate control or creating any kind of health hazard. In these instances, the Council may withdraw its permission for you to keep the animal(s) and you must then remove it/them from your home.

**6.13** You must comply with the terms of the Control of Dogs Order 1992, whereby all dogs in public places are required to wear a collar with identification attached to it, including the owner's name and address.

**6.14** You must not keep any dog listed under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 at your home.

**6.15** In cases of cruelty to animals or where the animal is causing a nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to others, the Council may give you written notice requiring you to remove it from your home. The Council may also report these cases to the RSPCA or the Police.

**6.16** You, members of your household or visitors must ensure that any animal kept at your home does not prevent an employee, contractor or agent of the Council gaining access to your home.

## Personal property

**6.17** You are responsible for your personal property and the decoration of your home and it is your responsibility to take out insurance to protect them. The Council is not responsible for the loss or damage of any personal property (whether they belong to you or someone else) no matter how they become damaged or lost unless the damage or loss is caused by the Council's negligence. *(Note: The Council strongly advises which you take out and keep current contents insurance which covers the contents of your home and third-party damage to the contents of adjoining properties and personal injuries. The Council has arranged a low-cost contents insurance policy which is available for all tenants*

*to apply for – see the Tenants' Handbook for further information).*

## Access to your home

**6.18** You must allow Council employees, their contractors, agents or other statutory bodies to enter your home at all reasonable hours to inspect your home or carry out any works.

**6.19** You must also ensure their safe passage for inspecting, carrying out repairs, gaining access to roofs and loft spaces or for any other reason including the annual gas safety inspection.

**6.20** You must not allow an accumulation of personal property to prevent or obstruct any inspection conducted by or on behalf of the Council, or cause structural damage to the property or pose an environmental health risk. You will be asked to dispose of excess items if you cause such risks. If you refuse to dispose of excess items the Council may enforce clearance by obtaining a court order.

*(Note: If you do not allow access to your home you could be putting yourself and your neighbours at risk and the Council may take legal action to gain access to your home and you may have to pay the costs. You may also be prosecuted for obstruction. The Council recommends that you ask for identification of any person seeking to enter your home who claims they are from the Council).*

**6.21** The Council will give you at least 24 hours' notice of intended entry to your home by its employees/contractors or agents (except in cases of emergency, see 7.5).

## Ventilation and heating

**6.22** You must make sure that at all times there is adequate ventilation and heating within your home and follow any advice given by the Council to prevent condensation. If condensation occurs you will be responsible for any repair work, unless it occurs as a result of a fault in the property.

**6.23** You must have any chimneys in use swept at least once a year.

## Using appliances and equipment

- 6.24** You must use all domestic and Council appliances and equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's and/or the Council's instructions. You are responsible for all damage to your home or injury to people caused by your appliances and equipment.
- 6.25** You must take adequate care and precautions when bringing, storing, charging or using power scooters or other devices used to aid mobility to ensure that damage does not occur to your home.

## Motorbikes

- 6.26** You must not store or use mopeds, motor bikes, mini-motos or quad-bikes within the dwelling (meaning the house, flat or maisonette in which you live), and you must not cause, allow, permit or encourage any member of your household or any visitor to do so.

# 7. Repairs, improvements and alterations to your home

## The right to repair

- 7.1** Some repairs are covered by regulations, which means that by law the Council must carry out certain small, urgent repairs which are likely to affect your health, safety or security within specified timescales.
- 7.2** You must give the Council clear notice that your home requires repair. This can be reported by telephone, in writing, via the website and by visiting Maidstone House.  
*(Note: For more information about your rights, please refer to the Tenants' Handbook or contact your Housing Officer).*

### Your responsibilities

- 7.3** You must look after your home in a reasonable manner and make sure your home remains in good condition at all times.

## Internal decoration

- 7.4** You are responsible for decorating the inside of your home and ensuring you keep it in a clean and well-decorated condition. You must not apply textured coatings to the internal walls and ceilings of your home.

## Emergency access

- 7.5** In an emergency, the Council or any person authorised by the Council may require access to your home. In the event that your home is unoccupied or access is unreasonably denied, the Council may use reasonable force to gain entry to your home without giving you any formal written notice. Upon completion of the works and/or inspection, your home will be secured properly and repaired if necessary.  
An emergency in these circumstances is when either your home or another person's property and health and safety is deemed to be at imminent risk of harm, such as where there is a suspected fire, burst water pipe, gas leak or electrical fault. In the event that access is unreasonably denied, you may be prosecuted for obstruction.

- 7.6** You must immediately report any defects or damage to your home which are the responsibility of the Council and enable the Council to arrange for inspection and/or repair(s) to be carried out. For contact information please refer to the [Tenants' Handbook].

## Alterations and improvements

- 7.7** You have the right to carry out alterations, additions or improvements to your home provided you first obtain written permission from the Council. Any request for permission must be in writing and addressed to your area surveyor at Maidstone House. Alterations and additions include any alterations to the gas or electrical installations (such as those in 7.8). You may need to obtain planning and building control permission prior to permitting any work to start. Future maintenance of any improvements will be your responsibility.

## Own gas appliances

**7.8** You are responsible for arranging an annual service of your own gas fired appliances and accompanying flues where the Council has not accepted responsibility. You must provide the Council with service certificates upon request.

## Paying for works

**7.9** The Council may require that you pay for the cost of any reinstatement works to your home if you have had any alterations, additions or improvements carried out (or arranged to be carried out) without written permission from the Council.

**7.10** You are responsible for any deliberate or negligent damage to your home or common areas caused by you, any member of your household or visitor. This means you must arrange for and pay the cost of repairing any damage. You are also responsible for any substandard works or repairs which you arranged to be carried out to your home, meaning that you must have the works or repairs redone to a good standard. You must also take all reasonable measures to ensure that your family and other persons do not cause wilful or negligent damage to your home or common areas.

## Lofts

**7.11** No storage of items in the loft of your home is permitted where there is upgraded levels of loft insulation (150mm and above). Where storage of items in the loft is permitted this is at your own risk. Lofts in flats are not part of your home and must not be accessed by you or your household.

## Away from home

**7.12** You must take all reasonable measures to ensure that when away from your home:

- The property is adequately secured to prevent unwanted access by people not invited by you to live there
- The property is adequately heated at all times

- You turn the water off at the mains if you will be away for a long period during cold weather.

## Gardens

**7.13** If your home includes a garden, you must at all times keep it cultivated, neat, tidy and free from rubbish, pests and weeds. You must also maintain any trees so as not to endanger the health and safety of people in the vicinity or cause damage to any other property. You may be recharged for the cost of any necessary clearance or maintenance work undertaken by the Council.

## Smoke detectors

**7.14** You are responsible for maintaining any battery- operated smoke detector and ensuring it is always in good working order.

### The Council's responsibilities

**7.15** The Council will be responsible for repairing and maintaining the structure of your home. (For further details, see the Tenants' Handbook).

**7.16** If you are a secure tenant and have made alterations additions or improvements to your home the Council will only repair them if the Council has agreed in writing to maintain and repair them.

**7.17** The Council is not required to carry out works or repairs for which you are responsible under the terms of this tenancy agreement.

**7.18** The Council is not responsible for repairing internal decorations affected by improvement works carried out at your home unless the damage to the decoration has been caused as a result of negligence on behalf of the Council.

**7.19** The Council is not responsible for the removal and replacement of any furniture or floor coverings which have to be moved to enable repair or improvement work to be carried out.

## Gas servicing

**7.20** The Council will annually inspect gas service pipes and gas fired equipment for which the Council has a statutory duty to inspect and

maintain. You must provide access for the gas service and any resulting repairs to be performed.

## Consultation

**7.21** The Council will consult tenants who are likely to be substantially affected by any proposed major repairs and/or improvement schemes.

## Rebuilding

**7.22** The Council is not required to rebuild or reinstate your home in the case of destruction, serious structural damage or deterioration.

# 8. Living in your community

## Nuisance and anti-social behaviour

### Council responsibilities

**8.1** The Council will not tolerate anti-social behaviour and will investigate all reported cases of nuisance or harassment. The Council will take appropriate and proportionate action against perpetrators.

**8.2** Malicious or false allegations made of anti-social behaviour may result in action being taken against the person making these claims.

### Your responsibilities

**8.3** You are responsible for the behaviour of every member of your household and visitors to your home. This responsibility includes behaviour on surrounding land, in common areas and throughout the neighbourhood in which your property is situated.

**8.4** You must not engage in anti-social behaviour in your home, in common areas or in the neighbourhood in which your home is situated. If you do, the Council may decide to apply to the court for a possession order which could ultimately result in the termination of your tenancy and everyone living in your home being

evicted. The Council may also seek other legal remedies.

**8.5** You must not:

- Engage in any form of harassment or intimidation on the grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality, faith or religion, sexuality, disability or gender, which may interfere with the peace and comfort of, or cause offence to any other person residing in or visiting or otherwise engaged in a lawful activity within the neighbourhood in which your home is situated (including Council employees, agents or contractors);
- Inflict domestic violence, threaten violence or use mental, emotional, financial or sexual abuse against your partner, ex-partner or another member of your family or household;
- Threaten violence towards any person residing in or visiting the neighbourhood or any person otherwise engaged in lawful activity within the surrounding areas of the neighbourhood and this includes any of the Council's employees, agents or contractors;
- Threaten violence against, harass, verbally abuse or intimidate any Council employee or agent of the Council at or in the vicinity of his/her place of work, including any Council premises (including the common areas of any Council-owned property) or in Maidstone town centre, the neighbourhoods and shopping parades;
- Harass or use physical, mental, emotional or sexual abuse against anyone residing in, visiting or otherwise engaged in lawful activity within the neighbourhood in which your home is situated;
- Cause damage to the Council's common areas. You must not interfere with the security and safety equipment in communal blocks. Where a door entry system is fitted, doors must not be jammed open. You must not allow in strangers without identification;
- Keep any illegal weapon or any other dangerous object which is prohibited by

law in your property. You must get written permission from the Council to keep any weapon in your home. Consent will normally be granted in respect of licensed weapons.

**8.6** You must not cause, allow, permit or encourage any member of your household or any visitor to do any of the things set out in 8.4 and 8.5.

## Damage to your home

**8.7** You or any member of your household or any visitors must not do anything which increases the risk of fire, flood or damage to your property or adjoining properties. If there is a fire, flood or other such incident in your home, you may be responsible for repairing any damage as a result of not using your home in a responsible manner.

## Flammable material

**8.8** You, any member of your household or any visitors must not keep or use bottled gas (portable gas space heaters), paraffin, petrol or any other flammable material within the property (meaning the house, flat or maisonette in which you live) or in common areas, except for those required for general household use. Bonfires are not permitted.

## Vehicles

**8.9** Within the boundary of the property, motor vehicles must be parked on a Council approved hardstanding. Prior written permission must be sought from the Council before parking a trailer, caravan or boat on a hardstanding.

**8.10** You or any member of your household or any visitors must not park or leave a vehicle, trailer, caravan or boat anywhere which may block access for emergency service vehicles or cause a nuisance to others.

**8.11** You or any member of your household or any visitors must not cause or allow an obstruction to any garage, rights of way, roads, footpaths or access routes across your home, in common areas, shared areas or in the neighbourhood.

**8.12** You or any member of your household or any visitors must not allow anyone to sleep in a caravan or other vehicle parked outside your home.

**8.13** You or any member of your household or any visitors must not park the following vehicles on the property (including any garden), common areas, shared areas, or on Council-owned land within the vicinity of your home:

- Goods vehicles of more than 1500 kg (unladen weight)
- Unroadworthy or dangerous vehicles
- Vehicles without a road fund licence (tax disc) or a valid MOT (except as provided for in 8.14).

**8.14** You or any member of your household or any visitors must not park any SORN registered vehicles on common areas, shared areas, or on Council-owned land in the vicinity of your home and may only park such vehicles within the boundary of the property on a Council approved hardstanding.

**8.15** You or any member of your household or any visitors must not abandon vehicles in the neighbourhood in which your home is situated. The Council will take steps to remove such vehicles and then charge the costs of removal to the registered owner.

**8.16** You must exercise care in the maintenance of your vehicle to ensure it does not spoil the appearance of the area, e.g. oil spillage. The cost of any such remedial work will be charged to you.

**8.17** You or any member of your household or any visitors must not drive across a kerb to access the property unless it has been lowered in accordance with the regulations of the Highway Authority.

**8.18** You are only entitled to strip down or repair vehicles at the property which are regularly used by you or your household. You or any member of your household or visitors must not repair vehicles on any common areas, shared areas, or

on Council owned land within the vicinity of your home.

**8.19** You or any member of your household or any visitors must share the use of any driveway which gives access to both your home and an adjoining property with the occupants of that adjoining property. The driveway must not be blocked in any way, for example, by parking a vehicle or by fencing off part of it.

**8.20** You or any member of your household or any visitors must not park a vehicle or drive across grassed areas in or around properties owned by the Council and you must pay the costs incurred by the Council for works to repair any damage to the kerb or drains, soil replacement and re-sowing of grass.

## Community responsibilities for those living in blocks of flats or maisonettes

### Smoking in common areas

**8.21** You or any member of your household or any visitors must not smoke in the common areas of the building.

### Behaviour in common areas

**8.22** You must not throw food, refuse or any other object from a window, from landings, down stairwells or from balconies.

**8.23** You must not hang bird feeders, flower pots, washing, clothes, mats or rugs or any other object from the windows and balconies. You must not hand beat or shake washing, clothes, mats or rugs on or from the windows of your home or from any common areas such as landings, balconies, stairs or roof.

### Refuse

**8.24** You must not place any discarded household or garden objects, e.g. washing machines and garden waste, in the bin areas or drying areas.

You must securely bag all rubbish before putting it in the refuse chutes or bin areas.

**8.25** Under no circumstances should you dispose of any bulky items via the refuse chutes, as this can cause the chutes to become blocked (where chutes exist).

**8.26** You must securely bag all rubbish before putting it in the refuse chutes or bin stores.

**8.27** You must not leave refuse bags/sacks or containers of recycling outside your front door or in the communal areas.

### Lifts

**8.28** You must not interfere with the lift system or wedge lift doors open as this can affect the efficiency of the system (where they exist).

### Business notices

**8.29** You must obtain written permission from the Council before affixing any plate or notice on any part of your home or common areas relating to advertisements for trade or professional business.

**8.30** You must not hold or permit any sale or auction at your home or on common areas without prior written permission from the Council.

### Fixing items to outside walls

**8.31** You must not affix any item to the outside walls and brickwork including hanging baskets or bird feeders. You must not allow or permit external window boxes or plants to be placed on any window sills.

### Fire safety

**8.32** Common areas must be kept clear to enable emergency evacuation and the Council may remove any objects found there. If the Council removes one or more items of your personal property which are obstructing common areas, you must pay for the cost of the removal.

If your home is a flat or maisonette you must not cause an obstruction in any of the common areas by leaving prams, pushchairs, bicycles, power

scooters or other devices used to aid mobility, domestic appliances, furniture, floor coverings, rubbish or any other objects there. You are responsible for contacting the Council immediately if you become aware of any such obstruction. Common areas remain Council property.

*(Note: This condition is important for your safety and that of your neighbours. Obstructions in common areas can be fire risks and/or trip hazards).*

## Flooring

**8.33** The Council may require you to keep all the floors in the property substantially covered with material suitable for reducing the transmission of noise (such as carpet or rugs).

**8.34** You must obtain the Council's prior written permission before you install floor tiles, laminate or wooden flooring or flooring of a similar nature, and the Council will only give permission to tenants living in flats and maisonettes in exceptional circumstances. If you install any such flooring without the Council's prior written permission, the Council may require you to remove it at your own expense and replace it with floor coverings as set out in the previous clause.

## 9. Ending the tenancy

### Your responsibilities when ending your tenancy

**9.1** If you intend to end your tenancy, you must give the Council at least 28 days' written notice (called 'notice to quit'). The notice to quit must expire on the day of the week on which your tenancy commenced (e.g. if your tenancy commenced on a Monday, the notice to quit must expire on a Monday).

**9.2** Once you have given 'notice to quit' you must allow Council staff access to the property (at a pre-arranged date) for an inspection. In some

cases, this will involve prospective new tenants accompanying Council staff.

**9.3** You must return all keys to the property to Maidstone House by 12 noon on the day you leave, (including gas and electric meter keys where appropriate).

**9.4** If you are joint tenants either of you can end the tenancy by giving the Council notice to quit (see 9.1). This will end the tenancy for all joint tenants regardless of who has given the notice.

**9.5** You must leave the property, including any garden, in a clean and tidy condition, clear of all personal property, furniture and rubbish. Any personal property left will be cleared by the Council and you must pay the costs incurred by the Council in clearing the property.

**9.6** You must repair any damage (however caused) prior to leaving the property. If you fail to repair any damage prior to leaving the property, you must pay the costs incurred by the Council in carrying out those repairs.

### The following applies to introductory tenants only

**9.7** The Council will only take steps to recover possession of your home as follows:

- If you break any of the terms or conditions of this tenancy agreement
- Where the sole tenant dies and there is no person who is qualified to succeed to the tenancy
- If you abandon the property, or sub-let or leave the property without giving the Council vacant possession. In this case, the steps the Council may take include serving you with a 'notice to quit' or other appropriate notice on you at your last known address.

### The following applies to secure tenants only

**9.8** The Council will only take steps to recover possession of your home as follows:

- If you break any of the terms or conditions of this tenancy agreement, the

Council may give you written notice that it intends to apply to the court for an order of possession on one or more of the grounds set out in the Housing Act 1985. (If the court grants the Council a possession order this could ultimately result in the termination of your tenancy and everyone living in your home being evicted)

- Where the sole tenant dies and there is no person who is eligible to succeed to the tenancy
- If you abandon the property, or sub-let or leave the property without giving the Council vacant possession. In this case, the steps the Council may take include issuing you with a 'notice to quit' or other appropriate notice at your last known address.

### The following applies to both introductory and secure tenants

**9.9** Any notice the Council wants to serve on you may be served personally or by first class post addressed to you at the property or your last known address. The Council may also leave any notice at the property by posting it through the front door or otherwise by affixing it to a conspicuous part of the property.

**9.10** Delivery of a notice by any of the ways set out in 9.9 above will constitute good and proper service.

## 10. False statement

**10.1** You or someone acting on your behalf must not make a statement:

- which you know is false,
- which you thought could be false,
- which involves you in any way in supplying information which may deceive an officer of the Council or its agent in allocating you this property. The Council will take legal action to obtain possession of your home in any such circumstance.