



# **Donegal County Council**

## **Tenants Handbook**

## **Table of contents**

Introduction.....	2
1: Your Tenancy.....	3
2: Your Rent.....	8
3: Looking After Your Home.....	12
4: Your Community .....	29
5: Yours Safety .....	31
6: Schemes That Help You Buy Your Home .....	33
7: How Can You Contact Us?.....	35

# Introduction

When you rent your home from Donegal County Council, you become a **Council tenant**. Before you move in, you must sign a **tenancy agreement**. This agreement lists the terms of your tenancy, and it is the legal contract between you and us.

This handbook outlines:

- our responsibilities as Donegal County Council,
- your responsibilities as a tenant, and
- your rights as a Council tenant.

This handbook will help you understand your tenancy agreement. Read it carefully and keep it in a safe place with your copy of your tenancy agreement.

Your neighbours have exactly the same rights and responsibilities as you. Your responsibilities apply to you, your friends and relatives, and any other person visiting your home, including your child (children).

If there is any part of this handbook that you think could be improved, please contact us. We want to hear your views.

To contact us, call us on (074) 915 3900 or write to the Housing Department at your local Public Services Centre.

If you need any other information about our services, call to your local Public Services Centre. These centres can help you with leaflets, booklets and notices about our services.

# 1: Your Tenancy

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What are my main obligations as a tenant?

- Your Council home must be your only home. You must not live anywhere else at the same time.
- You must not stop living in your home for more than six weeks in any period of 52 weeks without getting our permission first.
- You must not use the house, garden or shed for business purposes.
- You cannot let someone else live in your home instead of you without our written permission.
- If you want to move out of your Council home, you must write to us at least four weeks before you move out. Before you leave, you must remove all your things, clean the house, tidy the garden, remove all of your waste and make sure the house is in good condition.
- You must pay any rent, management company fees and other charges that you agree to when you sign your tenancy agreement.
- You must keep the inside and the outside of your home in good repair. This means you must regularly clean, paint and repair it.
- You must keep your garden in good repair. You must cut the grass regularly.
- You must remove your waste regularly by having it collected by a waste collector with a permit or by taking recycling to the recycling centre.
- If your household income or other circumstances change, you must let us know.

- You must fill in and return your Rent Review Form every year and every time your income changes.
- You must keep to our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.
- You must cooperate with us on everything to do with your tenancy. These conditions are included in your tenancy agreement.

### **Can I take in lodgers or sub-tenants?**

No, you cannot have lodgers or sub-tenants **unless** you have written permission from us. To get permission, write to the Housing Department at your local Public Services Centre and explain why you want to have a lodger or sub-tenant.

### **Do I have to insure my home?**

No, you do not have to insure the **structure** of your home. We insure all Council properties against fire and storm damage.

### **Do I have to insure the contents of my home?**

Yes. If you want insurance cover for your belongings, you must take out contents insurance. You might also want to get other insurance against burglary or malicious damage such as vandalism. Talk to your insurance broker about the best insurance for you.

### **What are the rules about noise and damage?**

You, your children, and anyone else living in or visiting your home cannot cause noise, damage or a problem for your neighbours.

You must keep noise low between 9.00pm and 8.00am.

## **Can I keep pets?**

You can keep one domestic pet so long as they do not become a problem. Domestic pets include cats, dogs and household birds such as budgies and parrots.

If your pet damages your home or causes damage anywhere else in your estate, you are responsible for the damage. You must keep your pets under control, and you must follow any laws about keeping pets.

There are extra rules about dogs.

- You cannot keep a restricted breed of dog or a crossbreed dog that is partly a restricted breed.
- Your dog must have a licence. If you do not have a licence, you might have to pay a fine. You can get a dog licence from the post office and the Council.
- Your dog must be microchipped. If you have not microchipped your dog, you might have to pay a fine. Your vet can microchip your dog.
- You cannot let your dog roam around the estate without you.
- You must clean up after your dog and put the waste in a bin. This is the law.

If there are dogs roaming your estate, contact the dog warden on (074) 912 5159.

## **Can I move to a different Council home?**

Yes, you can move to a different Council home after you have been a tenant for two years.

Before you can move, you must apply to us. Before you move, you must also meet a few conditions.

- You must have good reasons for moving.
- Your rent payments must be up to date.
- Your home must be in the same condition it was in when you moved in. We will inspect your home to make sure it is in good condition.

If you have been a tenant for less than two years, we will consider an application to move only if there are exceptional circumstances.

## **What if I want to move out of my Council home?**

If you want to move out of your Council home, you must **write to us at least four weeks before you want to leave.**

We will inspect your home to:

- make sure it is in good condition, and
- identify any repairs that you need to make.

When you move out, you must sign a Termination of Tenancy Form, which is a statement that says you have removed all your things and any waste. You have to give us this form when you hand in your keys.

If we are not happy with the condition of the house, we will not be able to let it to another tenant. You will have to pay the rent until you fix any problems even if you have already moved out.

If you damage your home and do not repair it or pay for repairs, we cannot provide you with another home.

### **Can Donegal County Council end my tenancy?**

Yes. If you break your tenancy agreement, we will go to court to get a Possession Order. A Possession Order lets us evict you from your home, which means you will be forced to leave. If this happens, we cannot provide you with another home.

## 2: Your Rent

### How is my rent calculated?

Your rent is based on a system called the Differential Rent Scheme.

Under the Differential Rent Scheme, we work out what your rent should be based on what you can afford to pay. If your income is low, your rent will be low. If your income increases, so will your rent.

When we calculate your rent, we include the incomes of all members of your household. If you have dependent children, we reduce the rent.

### How can I pay my rent?

There are lots of ways you can pay your rent.

<b>Payment method</b>	<b>Details</b>
Household Budget Scheme	If you get social welfare payments, you must pay your rent using the Household Budget Scheme. Your rent is automatically deducted from your social welfare payments.
BillPay	The BillPay service is available at all post offices and PostPoints.  If you want to use BillPay to pay your rent, we will give you a swipe card to use in the post office. Please ask us for one.
Standing order, direct debit or credit transfer from your bank	You can pay your rent directly from your bank account to our bank account.  If you want to do this, please ask us for our bank details.

Wages deduction	If you are a County Council employee, you can ask us to take your rent from your wages.
Through a cash office in your local Public Services Centre	Call in to your Public Services Centre to pay your rent.  If you need to post your rent to your Public Services Centre, send a cheque or postal order. Do not send cash.

## How often does the Council review my rent?

We review your rent every year. We will send you a Rent Review Form that you have to fill in and return to us.

## What if I don't return my Rent Review Form?

If you don't return the form, we will charge you a higher rent. This is called a **penal rent**. It is your responsibility to make sure this does not happen.

## What if my circumstances change?

You must let us know if your circumstances change. For example, you should let us know when:

- a person in your household gets a job or becomes unemployed;
- a person in your household starts getting a social welfare payment; or
- a person joins the household or if there is a birth or death in the household.

If you need to add or remove someone from your tenancy, then you must contact the Housing Department in your local Public Services Centre. They will advise you on anything you need to submit in order to get the changes made.

## **What if I don't notify the Council if my circumstances change?**

If you do not tell us about a change in your circumstances and we find out about it, we will reassess your rent and backdate the change.

For example, if your income increases in January and we do not know about it until June, when we reassess your rent, we will backdate the change to January.

It is important to tell us about changes so you can avoid having increases backdated to your account. Backdated increases can lead to rent arrears.

## **What if I have rent arrears?**

### **What if my rent payments are not up to date?**

If you owe us rent, contact us immediately. We will discuss your situation with you. In some cases, we will agree to let you pay your arrears over a few weeks or months if you sign a written agreement and follow it.

In most cases, if you have to pay rent arrears, you will need to add some extra money to your weekly rent payment. You will have to agree this amount with us, and you will have to pay it every week until you have paid all the arrears.

### **Will you take me to court?**

Yes. If you do not keep the agreement to pay your rent arrears, this is a **breach of tenancy**, and we will take you to court.

There are other situations that are breaches of tenancy. If we cannot resolve a breach of tenancy with you, we will have to take you to court.

## **Are you likely to take my home from me?**

Yes. If we do take you to court, we will ask the judge for a Possession Order. A Possession Order gives us permission to evict you from your home. You will be forced to leave.

Evictions are painful and difficult. You can avoid eviction by meeting your responsibilities as a tenant, which are set out in your tenancy agreement. This includes keeping your rent account up to date.

If you are evicted because you breached your tenancy agreement, the Council and other services might decide that you have made yourself homeless. If this happens, we are not legally required to re-house you.

## **What if I have other questions?**

- If you have questions about your tenancy and rent payments, call the Housing Department at 074 9153 900.
- If you have questions about unpaid rent, call the Income Collection Department at 074 915 3900.

## 3: Looking After Your Home

Every home needs to be looked after, and sometimes things need to be repaired or replaced.

### What are the Council's responsibilities?

As your landlord, we are responsible for some of the maintenance of your house. We will replace or repair fittings that have **fair wear and tear**. These are items that need to be replaced or repaired because they are old or worn.

We will not repair or replace fittings:

- if you do not look after the fittings and this causes the wear and tear to them;
- if there is a burglary or other malicious damage such as vandalism; or
- if you have a private contractor replace or repair the fittings.

For more detail about our responsibilities for repairs, read the tables later in this chapter.

## **What are my responsibilities?**

As part of your tenancy agreement, you agree to:

- look after your home, garden, yard and outbuildings;
- keep the footpath and any road or gutter around your home free of litter and waste; and
- weed your garden and cut the grass.

For more detail about your responsibilities for repairs, read the tables later in this chapter.

## **Who is responsible for fire brigade charges if there is a fire?**

If there is a fire in your home, you must pay the fire brigade charges. You should consider including these charges in your insurance.

## **Will the Council make an exception to the rules on repair requests?**

If it is unreasonable or impossible for you to make repairs that are your responsibility, we will consider a request to make those repairs. In general, we will agree to this if:

- you are elderly,
- you have a disability, or
- there is some other good reason why you cannot do the repairs yourself.

## What are the specific responsibilities for repairs?

The tables in this section show you the maintenance and repair tasks that you have to look after in your home and what the Council has to look after.

### Heating: solid fuel /stoves / solar panels

Tenant	Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repair, maintain and replace               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Doors, glass and hinges</li> <li>○ handles</li> <li>○ grates</li> <li>○ fireplates, firebacks, firebricks, firecords, and fireclay</li> <li>○ seals</li> <li>○ other items</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace the boiler</li> <li>• Replace the range if it is more than 20 years old and unusable</li> <li>• Replace a range if it is less than 20 years old and you agree to pay for it in instalments (over a period of time)</li> </ul>

### Heating: back boiler (fireplace)

Tenant	Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace the grate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace the boiler – only if it has been installed by the Council</li> </ul>

## Heating: oil or gas fired

Tenant	Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yearly service and maintenance of tank, supply line and boiler</li> <li>• Repair the boiler</li> <li>• Repair the burner</li> <li>• Keeping written proof that the service is done every year</li> <li>• Problems that happen because the fuel tank ran out</li> <li>• Radiators – clearing air locks, leaks and repair</li> <li>• Only use a registered gas installer / contractor. If you are unsure, about who is certified, please contact us</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace the boiler</li> <li>• Replace the oil burner if the unit is more than 20 years old and unusable</li> </ul>
<p>If there is an oil leak, turn off your oil line at the tank.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only use kerosene in your oil burner.</li> <li>• Never raise or tilt oil tanks.</li> <li>• Do not alter your heating system.</li> <li>• Do not install a back boiler or under-floor heating.</li> </ul>	

## Plumbing

<b>Tenant</b>	<b>Council</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Replace, service and repair water and sanitary fittings such as showers and toilets</li><li>• Repair damage to your own things from leaks or burst pipes</li><li>• Notify the Council of any work you have done, including the name and address of the plumber</li><li>• Damaged caused by unapproved alterations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Repair leaking and burst pipes</li><li>• Replace hot water cylinders or immersion heaters due to wear and tear</li></ul>
<p>If there is a leak, turn off your mains water supply immediately. If you cannot do it yourself, ask a neighbour for help. You can usually find the mains stop under the kitchen sink or near the bottom of the hot press.</p>	
<p>Identify all areas where there are stopcocks and valves so that you can turn off the water if there is a flood.</p>	

## Frost and freezing conditions

Tenant	Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You must keep your home warm enough to prevent burst pipes.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Leave the attic hatch open to allow heat into the attic, especially at night</li> <li>○ If you are away, make sure your heating comes on regularly or turn off the water mains and drain the plumbing and heating system</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Repair damage to your own things from leaks and burst pipes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repair leaking and burst pipes unless they burst because the house was not properly heated</li> </ul>
<p>Do not try to light or run frozen boilers or heating systems.</p>	

## Electrical repairs

Tenant	Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms and replace the batteries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electrical inspections</li> <li>• Rewiring old houses</li> </ul>

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell the Council about any electrical maintenance work and the name and address of the electrical contractor who does the work</li><li>• Make sure the electrical contractor you hire is a registered electrical contractor. If you are unsure, please ring us to check</li></ul> |  |
|---|--|

If there is an electrical fault, turn off the power at your mains fuse box or breaker. If you cannot do it yourself, ask a neighbour for help.

Donegal County Council will not be responsible for any unauthorised electrical work on your home or for the consequences of that work.

## Windows, doors and glass

<b>Tenant</b>	<b>Council</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Repair or replace broken glass</li><li>• Maintain, repair or replace window and door fittings such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ letterboxes</li><li>○ catches</li><li>○ stays</li><li>○ locks</li><li>○ handles</li><li>○ latches</li><li>○ hinges</li><li>○ sashes</li><li>○ seals</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inspect and service windows and doors every 3 to 4 years</li><li>• Replace or repair windows, external doors and window and door frames that are more than 15 years old and unusable</li></ul>

## Condensation, mould and damp

<b>Tenant</b>	<b>Council</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Repair damage from condensation</li><li>• Repair internal plaster cracks</li><li>• Prevent mould and damp by ventilating the kitchen, bathroom and laundry area correctly</li><li>• Heat all rooms adequately</li><li>• Open windows regularly to air your home</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• None</li></ul>
<p>You can get a leaflet on condensation by Homebond in your local Public Services Centre (contact details at the back of this booklet).</p>	

## Roof, chimneys and gutters

<b>Tenant</b>	<b>Council</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clean chimneys at least once a year</li><li>• Pay fire brigade costs if there is a chimney fire</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Repair and replace roof tiles that are damaged by normal wear and tear</li><li>• Replace fascia and soffit</li><li>• Clear and clean gutters each year on a programmed basis</li></ul>

## Painting and decoration

<b>Tenant</b>	<b>Council</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paint the inside of the house</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paint the external walls of some houses each year</li></ul>

## Drainage and sewerage

<b>Tenant</b>	<b>Council</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In a housing estate, maintain and service the sewer from your home to the main sewer</li><li>• In a rural cottage, maintain, service and repair the pumps, septic tank, treatment plant, percolation area and any other sewerage.</li><li>• Make sure that only licensed waste contractors de-sludge your system.</li><li>• Keep written proof of annual servicing that you have carried out</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• None</li></ul>

### Drainage and sewerage (continued)

Tenant	Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make sure you do not put these things in you drains and septic tank:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ baby wipes</li><li>○ tanning wipes</li><li>○ grease</li><li>○ oil</li><li>○ sanitary towels and tampons</li></ul></li><li>• Make sure your garden is adequately drained</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• None</li></ul>

### Kitchen units

Tenant	Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain and repair kitchen units</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Replace kitchen units that are more than 15 years old and unusable</li></ul>

## **Boundaries, sheds and gardens**

<b>Tenant</b>	<b>Council</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain fuel sheds and outhouses</li><li>• Cut grass and hedges</li><li>• Keep driveways, kerbing, fences, walls and gates in good condition</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Council may repair walls / fences if damaged by accident</li></ul>

## **Utilities: gas, electricity, telephone, water**

<b>Tenant</b>	<b>Council</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pay all bills</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• None</li></ul>

## **How can I request repairs to my home?**

If you need us to repair something in your home that we are responsible for:

- call us on (074) 915 3900,
- write to us at your local Public Services Centre, or
- fill in the contact form on our website, [www.donegalcoco.ie](http://www.donegalcoco.ie)

A staff member will contact you to arrange access to your home either to inspect the problem or to carry out the repair. Please be aware that we will assign a priority to your repair and it will be fixed accordingly.

## **If I owe rent, will it delay repairs to my home?**

When we schedule repairs and maintenance work on Council houses, we consider a tenant's rent payment history. This means it is important for you to have a good rent payment record if you want us to make repairs quickly.

## **Can I make alterations to my home?**

You might want to improve, alter or add to your home, boundary wall or fence. For example, you might want to add a room to your home or change a boundary wall. If you are a tenant of a long-term leasing property, you **cannot** alter your home.

Other tenants can alter their home if they meet certain conditions.

### **Before you begin work**

- Write to the Housing Department at your local Public Services Centre to get our approval before you improve, alter or add to your home.
- Check if you need planning permission for the work. If you do, you must apply for and receive planning permission before you begin work.

### **During the work**

- Do not cover manhole covers or access points for other services such as telephone services.

### **After the work**

- When the work is finished, you must give us a certificate from a qualified architect or engineer. This certificate must state that the work was completed according to proper building practice and in line with building regulations.

## **What else should I be aware of?**

- If Council employees or contractors are working in your home, you must make sure that all people, especially children, stay away from the work for safety reasons.
- When you dig or plant trees and shrubs, know where to find underground cables. Make sure you do not damage them.
- To avoid damaging your roof, have TV aerials and satellite dishes professionally fitted.
- Keep gullies and drains free from litter and fallen leaves.
- To avoid damaging your attic, be careful when you walk around the attic.
- If you are having work done in your home, you must make sure that you follow the requirements of The Safety Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013. If you have any questions about these regulations, you should contact the Health and Safety Authority at 1890 289 389 or [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)

## **Managing your waste**

As a Council tenant, you are responsible for making sure recycled waste or rubbish is removed from your home.

### **How do I get my waste collected?**

Donegal County Council does not collect waste or recycling. You must get a private waste collector to take away your waste. There may be more than one collector in your area.

Your waste collector must have a waste collection permit. It is illegal to collect waste without one. Before you hire someone to take away your waste, make sure they have a permit.

You should contact your local waste collector to find out about their payment options and charges.

Waste collectors have fixed days when they collect waste. Choose a waste collector that suits you.

### **Can I burn paper or rubbish in my back yard or garden?**

No. It is illegal to burn paper or rubbish in your yard or garden.

### **Can I recycle to reduce my waste?**

Yes. You can recycle many things at recycling centres.

There are recycling centres in Letterkenny, Carndonagh, Stranorlar, Dungloe, Milford and Laghey.

You can recycle these materials at recycling centres:

- Cans
- Batteries
- Cardboard
- Engine oil

- Glass
- Paper
- Plastic
- Tetrapaks
- Electrical equipment such as radios, kettles and computers
- Fluorescent tubes
- Timber
- White goods such as fridges and washing machines

For more information on recycling centres, visit our website:  
[www.donegalcoco.ie](http://www.donegalcoco.ie).

## **Can I compost food and garden waste at my home?**

You can compost most food and garden waste at your home. Composting reduces the amount of waste you have to pay for. You can buy a compost bin from your local Public Services Centre.

### **Compost these items**

- Bread
- Coffee
- Eggshells
- Fruit peelings and cores
- Tea bags and leaves
- Vegetables, vegetable scrapings and ends
- Grass and hedge cuttings
- Tree prunings
- Shredded cardboard
- Paper

### **Do not compost these items**

- Meat
- Dairy

## **What if I cannot get to the recycling centres?**

Your waste collector should be able to collect many dry recyclable items from you. These are things such as paper, cardboard, plastic, aluminium and steel cans.

Your waste collector can give you a recycling bin or prepaid recycling bags. They will also tell you what items you can and cannot put in your recycling bin.

## 4: Your Community

### How can I get involved in my residents' association?

When you move into an estate, you become a member of the community. Many estates or areas have residents' associations, and we encourage you to get involved in yours. If there is no residents' association in your area, we can help you form one.

### What do residents' associations do?

Residents' associations look after shared areas in an estate. These include areas such as green spaces, fences and walls.

Members of residents' associations also work together to identify parts of the estate to improve. For example, people in your estate might agree that your estate needs a playground.

In some cases, we can help your residents' association with maintaining and improving your area or estate.

Every year, we hold a **Best Kept Housing Estates Competition**. Winning estates get prize money as part of their prize.

### How do I get help if there are problems near my home?

Sometimes you might experience **anti-social behaviour** near your home. Anti-social behaviour is behaviour that regularly makes you feel distressed, fearful or intimidated. It may also make it difficult for you to feel comfortable in your home.

If a person or people outside your home regularly threaten, intimidate or harass you, this is anti-social behaviour. If it happens only once, it is not considered anti-social behaviour.

Noise, litter and problems with dogs may or may not be anti-social behaviour. However, tenancy agreements say that tenants should not annoy or disturb their neighbours, and you need to keep noise low between 9.00pm and 8.00am. If you think there is a problem, contact the Housing Department in your Public Services Centre to discuss it.

### **How do I make a complaint?**

If you decide to complain about a problem near your home, you must fill in our standard complaint form. In the form, include:

- what the problem is,
- the name of the person who is causing the problem,
- your name, and
- your contact details.

Your complaint is confidential. This means we will not tell anyone that you complained.

To get a standard complaint form, contact the Housing Department at your local Public Services Centre.

### **What will the Council do if I complain?**

We work to prevent and eliminate any anti-social behaviour in our housing estates.

We will investigate your complaint and try to stop the problem. If we need to, we will work closely with other agencies such as An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive.

There are some complaints that we will not deal with. These include:

- complaints about unsupervised children,
- disagreements between neighbours, including some noise complaints, and
- disagreements and fights between children.

# 5: Your Safety

## Dealing with fire

The safest way to deal with fire is to prevent it.

- Install smoke alarms.
- Test the alarm once a week – push and hold the test button until it beeps
- Change the battery once a year
- Vacuum / brush the casing to get rid of any dust every 6 months
- Never remove or discard a smoke alarm or its battery
- Always put a secure fireguard in front of an open fire.
- Follow the instructions for electrical appliances.
- Do not overload electrical sockets.
- Switch off appliances that you are not using.
- Clean your chimney every year.

If there is a fire in your home, **first** get everyone out of the building and **then** call the fire brigade.

## Dealing with gas smells

You need to do take action if you think you can smell gas.

- Turn off the gas supply at the meter.
- Open doors and windows to get rid of the gas.
- Do not use mobile phones.
- Do not turn electrical switches on or off.
- Do not smoke.
- Do not use naked flames.

If you suspect a gas leak, phone Gas Networks Ireland immediately.

## **Preventing electrical problems**

You must get permission from us before you make any changes to the electrical fittings in your home. Electrical fittings include switches, sockets, light fittings and showers. All electrical work on the house must be done by a certified electrical contractor.

If you would like more information about electrical safety in your home, download *The Safe Use of Electricity in the Home* from the website [www.esb.ie/esbnetworks](http://www.esb.ie/esbnetworks)

## **Preventing carbon monoxide poisoning**

Carbon monoxide is a highly dangerous gas. You cannot see it or smell it. It is often called 'the silent killer'.

Carbon monoxide is produced by faulty home heating appliances that burn fossil fuels. Fossil fuels are turf, coal, oil and gas.

Do these things to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

- Do not block air vents, flues or chimneys.
- Regularly clean and repair your heating appliances. Get them serviced every year.
- Regularly clean flues.
- If you are having a gas cooker or heating appliances installed, make sure properly qualified people do the work.

For further information, please go to [www.carbonmonoxide.ie](http://www.carbonmonoxide.ie)

# 6: Schemes That Help You Buy Your Home

If you are a Council tenant, you may be able to buy your home from us.

## Tenant Purchase Scheme

The Tenant Purchase Scheme helps many Council tenants to buy their homes from us.

Some types of homes **are not** available to buy:

- Apartments
- Duplex units
- Homes that were built specifically for older people

You cannot buy your home if it is part of the Long Term Leasing Scheme or Rental Accommodation Scheme.

If you would like more information about whether you can buy your home under the Tenant Purchase Scheme, contact your local Public Services Centre.

## Mortgage Allowance Scheme

The Mortgage Allowance Scheme helps people in Council housing who would like to build or buy a private home – that is, one the Council does not own.

**The scheme reduces your mortgage repayments over the first five years of your mortgage.**

To take advantage of this scheme, you need to apply to us. We will assess whether you qualify for this scheme. If you take part in this scheme:

- when you move out of your Council home, it must be in good condition so that someone else can move in,
- you must not have any rent arrears, and
- the Department of the Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government will pay your mortgage allowance directly to the lending agency or bank that gives you your mortgage.

To find out if you qualify for the Mortgage Allowance Scheme, contact your local Public Services Centre.

### **Incremental Purchase Scheme**

Newly-built Council houses may be available to buy under the Incremental Purchase Scheme. To find out if you can buy your house under this scheme, contact your local Public Services Centre.

## 7: How Can You Contact Us?

Telephone: (074) 915 3900



Facebook

Email: [info@donegalcoco.ie](mailto:info@donegalcoco.ie)



Twitter

Web: [www.donegalcoco.ie](http://www.donegalcoco.ie)

### Office Opening Hours

Monday to Thursday

9.00am to 12.30pm

1.00pm to 5.00pm

Friday

9.00am to 12.30pm

1.00pm to 4.30pm

### Cash Office Opening Hours

Monday to Thursday

9.00am to 12.30pm

1.00pm to 4.30pm

Friday

9.00am to 12.30pm

1.00pm to 4.00pm



## **Other numbers you may need**

### **Community Welfare Officers**

Letterkenny	(074) 91 94 930
Milford	(074) 91 63 446
Carndonagh	(074) 93 29 284
Buncrana	(074) 93 64 516
Dungloe	(074) 95 59 206
Donegal Town	(074) 97 244 85
Ballyshannon	(071) 98 52418
Ballybofey	(074) 91 31 154
Lifford	(074) 91 41 691

### **Library Service**

Library locations, contact details and opening hours are available on  
[www.donegallibrary.ie](http://www.donegallibrary.ie)

## Services provided by other organisations

<b>Services</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Websites</b>
Emergency services	999 or 112	
Garda Confidential Line	1800 666 111	
NowDoc	1850 400 911	
Letterkenny University Hospital	(074) 91 25 888	
Sligo University Hospital	(071) 91 71 111	
Dog Pound / Dog Warden	(074) 91 25 159	
Dog Warden	(074) 91 25 159	
Electricity emergencies	1850 372 999	
Gas emergency	1850 20 50 50	<a href="http://www.gasnetworksireland.ie">www.gasnetworksireland.ie</a>
Citizens Information	1890 777 121	<a href="http://www.citizensinformation.ie">www.citizensinformation.ie</a>
Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS)	1890 283 438	<a href="http://www.mabs.ie">www.mabs.ie</a>
Office of the Ombudsman	1890 223 030	<a href="http://www.ombudsman.gov.ie">www.ombudsman.gov.ie</a>