



Welcome to your new home

Independent Living

CLICK TO OPEN





Welcome

Welcome to your new home, we're really happy to have you as a Midland Heart resident. Getting a new home is an exciting time but we know that there's a lot to think about.

We've put together some useful information to help you settle in and to answer any questions you have in the future.

My tenancy

To make your tenancy a happy one, it's important that you understand your **Tenancy or Licence agreement**. It's a legal contract setting out both yours and our legal rights and responsibilities.

We've given you a copy and a guide to help you understand it. You should keep them in a safe place and contact us if you have any questions.

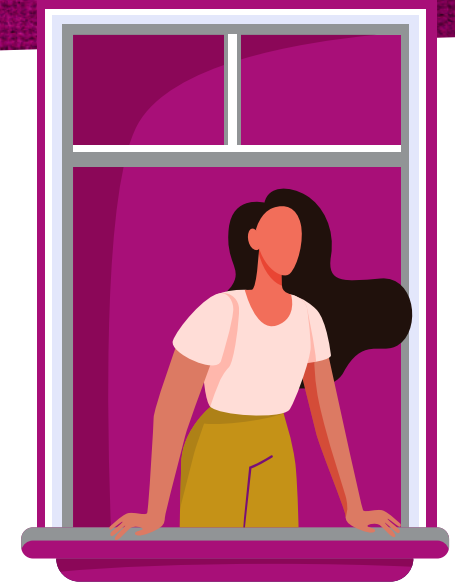
Independent Living Team

Your Independent Living Team will act as your main point of contact. They are there to support you with all your housing needs and can signpost you to local services where appropriate.

Your Independent Living Team will:

- Take responsibility for the security, safety and cleanliness of the scheme
- Make sure any issues with the building and equipment are reported and repaired
- Monitor the staff working at the scheme, such as cleaners, gardeners and window cleaners

All of our staff will be polite, professional and helpful. They will always treat you with fairness and respect, but if you have any concerns about the way you have been treated by a member of staff, please contact your scheme manager. If you have concerns about your scheme manager, please contact our hub on **0345 60 20 540**.



PLEASE KEEP THIS AND A COPY OF YOUR TENANCY AGREEMENT SAVED IN A SAFE PLACE SO THAT YOU CAN FIND IT WHEN YOU NEED IT.



Workbooks

It's really important that you work your way through our collection of Independent Living Workbooks during your time as a resident with us. These will help you to prepare to live independently and manage your own tenancy. The workbooks focus on several aspects of Living independently including:

- Managing your health and wellbeing
- Paying your housing costs
- Your housing options
- Budgeting, bills and dealing with debt

Once completed, you will have the skills and knowledge to manage all aspects of independent living. Once completed, the modules are yours to keep and to refer back to should you ever feel the need. You will also be provided with certificates for every module completed.

Being a good neighbour

We want everyone to feel comfortable at our schemes, so as part of your Licence agreement with us you must treat all staff, contractors and residents with respect.

You should be considerate of your neighbours and try to avoid making too much noise. We don't tolerate offensive or abusive language or behaviour. You're also responsible for the behaviour of your visitors.

If you have any concerns about the way residents are behaving, please contact your Scheme Manager. We'll follow our Antisocial behaviour (ASB) Policy and work closely with relevant partner agencies such as the police to tackle instances of ASB in our properties. You can find out more about ASB [here](#).



Updating my information

It's very important that you keep your information up to date. You'll need to let us know if you change your name, if the people you live with changes, if there are changes to your personal circumstances such as starting work, or if you want to end your license or tenancy. Please make sure you notify your scheme staff of any changes to your information.



How to contact us

Our App

With our free app you can securely manage your rent account anytime, anywhere on your smartphone or tablet in three simple steps.

1. Downloading the app is easy and it's available to all residents. Just search 'Midland Heart' on the Apple or Android app store or visit www.midlandheart.org.uk/app
2. To register you'll need your personal reference number. Don't worry if you don't know it, you can ask for it on the app and we'll send it to you via text, email or post.
3. Once you've received your personal reference number, you'll be asked to enter this, your full name and date of birth so we can check that you are the account holder. Now, you're good to go!

If you need any extra information or support to download and access the app, please speak to the staff at your scheme.

Website

Please take some time to have a look at our website www.midlandheart.org.uk, it has lots of useful information to help you look after your home and access our services.

You may also like to read our annual report or find out more about our service standards [here](#).

Social Media: Are you following us?

We're on [Facebook](#) and [X](#) so why not give us a follow? Our teams share lots of useful information to help keep you up to date.

Call us

Your main point of contact for any questions or concerns

will be your Independent Living team. You can check notice boards and the office door to find out when they are available.

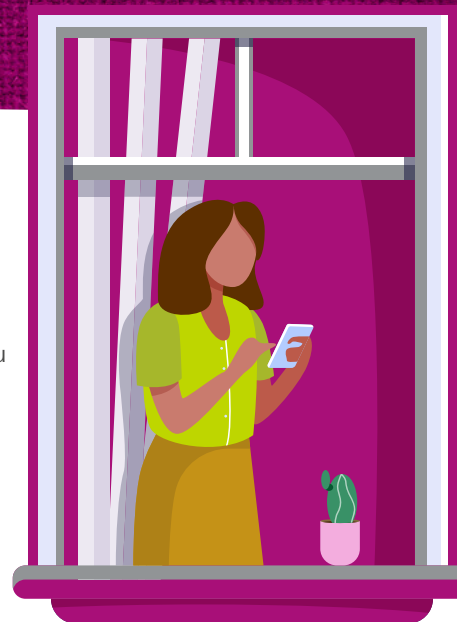
However, if your scheme staff are all unavailable, you can contact our Hub by calling **0345 60 20 540** and selecting the option that you need.

Emergencies

An emergency is something that causes an immediate health, safety or security risk to you or anyone else. An emergency is also something that is causing substantial damage to your home.

- **If you need an emergency repair, call us on 0345 60 20 540**
- **If you think you can smell gas, telephone 0800 111 999 straight away**
- **If you can see or smell smoke, call 999 or 112 immediately**
- **If you have a power cut in your area, dial 105**

You can report an emergency at any time of the day or night, this including weekends and bank holidays. If you call when the Hub is closed, you'll be transferred to our out of hours service.





Paying my rent



Paying your rent should be one of your main priorities as it's a key part of the Licence agreement you have with us.

If you know that you're going to have problems paying your rent, please speak to your Accommodation Officer as soon as possible. You can also give us a call on **0345 60 20 540** as soon as possible. Our Rent Payment Team are here to support you and will work with you to understand your specific circumstances.

Ways to pay

With our [free app](#) you can securely manage your rent account anytime, anywhere on your smartphone or tablet.

Once you've registered you can:

- View your rent balance and payment history
- Make a payment
- Download your rent statement and proof of rent

You can pay your rent through our app or by [Direct Debit](#) each month or you can find out about other [ways to pay](#) on our website.

It's your responsibility to make sure your rent is paid, even if it's covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

Universal Credit and Housing Benefit

If you currently claim Universal Credit, you'll need to update your journal with your new address and housing costs.

Please let the staff at your scheme know if you're already in the process of applying for Universal Credit.

If you receive housing benefit, you should contact the local authority in the area you're moving to update your claim.



Paying my rent

Money advice

Our Money Advice Team offer free and confidential advice about how to manage your finances. They can help you work through any financial problems that you're having and find a solution that suits you. You can even [self-refer on our website](#).

If you're struggling to pay your rent it's really important that you call us on **0345 60 20 540** as soon as possible so that we can help you to get back on track.

Service Charges

We include service charges as part of your total rent. A service charge is a fee for an extra service provided to your home. This often covers a communal area that is shared with other properties in your scheme.

Your service charge may cover things like gardening, cleaning windows and communal areas, shared lighting, door-entry systems and fire alarms. The expected cost of providing the service is split equally between the properties receiving the service.





Managing utilities

In some schemes, your utilities will be managed by us.

However, if you do manage your own utilities, then the first thing you'll need to do is set up your gas, electric and water suppliers. We've put together these handy steps to help you get started.


Gas and Electricity

Step 1

You'll need to contact your new gas and electricity suppliers as the meters may be disconnected or have a debt from the previous occupier.

To find out your gas supplier contact
National Grid on 0870 608 1524.


To find out your electricity supplier contact
M-Pass on 03456 015972.

 **Make sure you take note of your gas and electricity supplier and meter point reference number.**



Step 2

Once you know your gas and electricity supplier, you'll need to contact them. Have your gas and electric meter readings ready when you call.

 **If you don't have a smart meter, remember to submit your meter readings. If you don't your first month's bill may be estimated which could cost you a lot more money in the short term.**

Let the supplier know that you're moving into the property and ask them to remove any debts from the meter.

Register the account in your name, have any credit on any pre-paid meters transferred and set up your payment method.

Step 3

If you have a gas supply, contact us on **0345 60 20 540** for a turn on and test appointment to reconnect your gas meter.

Your appointment

You'll usually have to wait two working days from the time you contact us for an appointment, so plan ahead where you can.


Make sure you've set up a Direct Debit with your energy supplier or have at least £5 worth of credit on both your gas and electricity meters before the contractor arrives.

If you're not at home for your appointment, you'll have to wait another two working days from when you contact us for another one and you may be charged for the missed appointment.

Once our contractor has completed the work, you'll be given a copy of the gas safety record. Please keep this in a safe place. Your next gas safety check will be within 12 months. We'll contact you to let you know when your next appointment is.

Water

You can find out who your water supplier is by typing your postcode into this website.

 **Find out if you have a water meter or if you'll be paying a fixed rate. If you have a meter, you'll be charged for the exact amount of water you use.**



Saving energy



Doing our bit to tackle climate change

By making a few small changes you can save lots of energy and money:

- 💡 Turning off appliances instead of leaving them on standby could save you between £50 to £90 each year.
- 💡 Turning the thermostat down by just one degree can save you 10% on your bills.
- 💡 Move furniture away from radiators to let the heat into your rooms.

To find out more about saving energy in your home, visit www.midlandheart.org.uk/saving-energy

Saving water saves money

Around 18% of energy in UK homes is spent on heating water, so even if you don't have a water meter you could still save money on your energy bill.

- 💡 A leaky toilet wastes between 200 and 400 litres of water per day. So let us know as soon as you notice a leak.
- 💡 It's often cheaper to wash a full load of dishes in a dishwasher on an eco setting, than it is to wash them by hand.
- 💡 **You can save 12 - 15 litres of water per minute by having a shorter shower.**

For more information on saving water, visit www.midlandheart.org.uk/save-water-and-money



Keeping my home safe

Your safety is our number one priority. We'll do everything we can to make sure you're safe and secure in your home. There are also some things that you can do to help keep your home safe too.

If you'd like to know more about the safety checks we carry out or useful hints and tips for keeping your building safe, visit

www.midlandheart.org.uk/homesafe

Flushing your water system

When you first move in or if you've been away from your home for a while, you should 'flush' the water system through before you use the water in the taps. Especially if you live in a block or scheme with shared services.

To do this you should turn on the hot water heating system for at least two hours before using any water taps, then:

- Turn all taps on low and run them for 3-5 minutes, make sure all the water drains away. This includes outdoor taps if you have them
- Unscrew the showerhead if you have one. Holding just the hose below waist height, turn on the shower and run for 3-5 minutes, again allowing the water to drain away

Home contents insurance

The furniture inside your home is our property and therefore insured by us however, we don't insure your personal items like laptops, TVs and mobile phones. It's best to get them insured against things like theft, fire, vandalism, burst pipes, floods and other household risks.

The best way to protect your belongings is by taking out insurance.

We've teamed up with Royal and Sun Alliance plc. to offer our tenants a special household contents insurance plan. There are two levels of cover and you can find out more by visiting <http://www.midlandheart.org.uk/contents>



Allowing access

There are times when you will need to give us access to your home to carry out important safety checks or repairs. You'll also need to give us access for regular flat inspections.

We'll write to you with an appointment to let you know when to expect us. As part of your tenancy agreement, you'll need to be home to let us in. If you can't make the appointment, you'll need to contact us to rearrange.

There are also times where we may need to access your home for emergency repairs, for example, if your neighbour reports a leak coming from your home into theirs.



Keeping my home safe

Gas safety checks

If your home has a gas supply, it's in the terms of your tenancy or license that you must let us complete a gas safety check every year.

This important annual safety check helps keep you and your family safe and makes sure your heating is running efficiently.

We'll need access to your property to complete this check, it's free and takes about an hour depending on the number of gas appliances you have.

If for any reason you don't allow our Gas Safe registered engineers into your home, we may take legal action to gain access to your property and you may have to pay the court costs.

Electrical safety

To help keep you safe, we complete electrical inspections in your home before you move in and every five years after. We'll write to you in advance to let you know when your electrical inspection is.

When we visit, we'll check electrical sockets, wiring, light fittings, wired smoke alarms and lighting with closed covers in your building.

We'll also carry out an Electrical Safety Check (Portable Appliance Testing) in all communal areas every two years.

Fire safety

We do everything we can to prevent a fire from starting in your home but it's important to know what you can do and how to escape if there is a fire.

Most house fires start in the kitchen, from faulty appliances to taking your eye off the cooking for just a minute, fires can start and take hold of your kitchen in seconds.

Make sure you:

- Know your evacuation strategy and the best way out of the building
- Keep escape routes, hallways and corridors clear at all times
- Test your smoke alarms weekly to make sure they work
- Check any fire doors with self-closing devices close fully at least once a month. If your fire door doesn't close properly report it to us
- If you have a carbon monoxide detector, you should check this regularly using the test button to make sure it's working and you can hear it
- Report repairs immediately so we can arrange for them to be completed as soon as possible

If you have communal areas in your building, we'll carry out a monthly Fire Risk Assessment (FRA). If you have any questions or want more information about the latest FRA done in your building, contact our Fire Risk Assessment Team by emailing:

FRA.management@midlandheart.org.uk





Repairs and maintenance

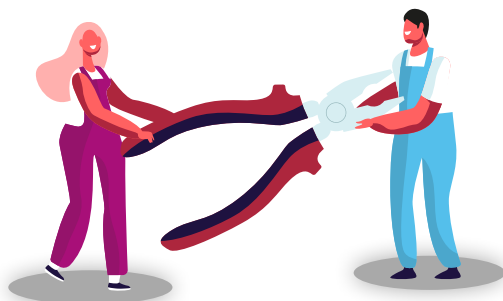
We understand how important it is to make sure everything is working as it should. Before you report a repair, you'll need to confirm if it's something that we're responsible for. If you're not sure you can visit www.midlandheart.org.uk/repairtool.

Booking a repair

Once you've confirmed that a repair is our responsibility you can report it by calling **0345 60 20 540**. You can also report a repair using our Midland Heart app or by getting in touch with us via [Facebook](#) or [X](#).

You'll be given an appointment slot and a reference number just in case you need to change or confirm your repair details.

Our contractors will arrive within the time slot that you're given but it may take them a little longer to finish off the repair.



Communal repairs

If you notice a repair needed in any communal areas, please report this to the staff at your scheme and they'll get this reported.

Emergency repairs

An emergency is something that causes an immediate health, safety or security risk to you or anyone else. An emergency is also something that is causing substantial damage to your home.

Examples of emergencies are:

- An external door which won't lock
- Having no power
- Exposed electrical wires, or water coming into contact with sockets or wiring
- An uncontrollable water leak

How do I report an emergency?

Change to:

- If you need an emergency repair, call us on **0345 60 20 540**
- If you think you can smell gas, telephone **0800 111 999** straight away
- If you can see or smell smoke, call **999** or **112** immediately
- If you have a power cut in your area, dial **105**

You can report an emergency at any time of the day or night, this including weekends and bank holidays. If you call when the Hub is closed, you'll be transferred to our out of hours service.



Repairs and maintenance

Damp and mould

Damp and mould is unpleasant, so it's important to understand what causes it and the steps you can take to prevent it.

When moist air settles on a surface it turns into water droplets. If these droplets do not dry out, they can lead to damp. Mould can grow and spread easily in damp conditions.

How can I prevent damp and mould?

- Let fresh air into your home for an hour each day. This will replace the moist air with drier air from outside.
- Open windows slightly - upstairs and downstairs at opposite ends of the house.
- Leave internal doors open so the air can move around.

You can find more detailed information about [damp and mould](#) on our website.

Communal areas

Your safety and security are our number one priority. That's why we carry out regular checks of our [communal spaces](#).

Our Accommodation team carry out weekly inspections of our buildings to make sure there are no potential fire or security risks.

They also check the quality of your communal services such as cleaning and grounds maintenance to make sure they're meeting the high standards we expect.

- To support us in keeping you safe, we ask you to:
- Make sure the entrance (and exit) door is closed properly when coming and going from the property
- Never let in anyone you're not expecting or who shouldn't be there
- If you spot vandalism or security issues, please report it to us, and where needed, report the issue to the police

Please also remember that smoking is not allowed inside any of our homes or communal areas. Smoking indoors in public spaces is a fire risk and is also against the law.





My Voice



By joining My Voice, you can work with us to make improvements to the services you receive.

There are lots of different ways that you can get involved, depending on your interests and the time you would like to give.

You can find out more here

www.midlandheart.org.uk/myvoice



Feedback

We want you to have the best possible experience with us and we're focused on providing a fast, fair, friendly and efficient service. We really want to hear about your experience to help shape the way we deliver our services to you in the future.

Give us your feedback

If you'd like to share your feedback you should speak to your Retirement Living Team. Alternatively, you can fill out a form on our website www.midlandheart.org.uk/myfeedback

- **Comments** - feedback on a service
- **Compliments** - when we are doing something well
- **Complaints** - when you don't think we have met our published standard of service

We know that there may be times where we don't meet the high standards that we set ourselves.

If you'd like to make a complaint about a service you've received, it's important that you contact us first so that we can do our best to resolve the issue.

If you're not satisfied with the final outcome, you can then contact the Housing Ombudsman by visiting www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/contact-us or calling **0300 111 3000**.

If you're satisfied with the service you've received, you can also leave us a review on [Trustpilot](#).

We're always looking for ways to improve our Midland Heart app, so we'd really appreciate it if you took the time to give us a rating and a review on the App store or Google Play.



IFF Research

You may get a call from our external research provider after you've used one of our services. They'll collect your feedback on our behalf so that we can use it to monitor our services.



Midland Heart, 20 Bath Row,
Birmingham, B15 1LZ

Got a question?
Get in touch



0345 60 20 540



@MidlandHeart



@MidHeartHelp



midlandheart.org.uk

Data protection

If you'd like a friend or family member to speak to us on your behalf you'll need to sign a form of authority.

If you have any questions about your rights under GDPR or want to access, delete or restrict the data that is held on file, you'll need to let us know.

All data will be transferred securely in line with our data sharing agreement and we'll only use your personal information for the purposes set out in our Data Protection Policy in relation to the management and administration of your property and always in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

You can view our Privacy Notice on our website.

Core

The CORE Privacy notice (COntinous REcording of Social Housing Lettings and Sales (CORE)), can be found [here](http://midlandheart.org.uk/findahome).

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