

Vale Homes

Safe in our hands



Cartrefi'r Fro

Diogel yn ein dwylo

VALE of GLAMORGAN



BRO MORGANNWG

# Your Contract Holder's Handbook



Vale Homes



@ValeHomes

[www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)



Vale of Glamorgan Council  
Civic Offices  
Holton Road  
Barry  
CF63 4RU

Vale Homes @ValeHomes  
[www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

## ● Contents

● Moving in	5
● Your rent and money advice	6
● Repairs and Maintenance	10
● Your Occupation Contract	13
● Your Home	15
● Moving Home	19
● Moving out	22
● Getting involved	22





## ● Welcome to your new home

This handbook contains lots of useful information you will need to know about your Occupation Contract and living in your home. It is broken down into sections to make it easier to find the information you need. Please remember however that all your contractual rights and responsibilities that go with being a Contract Holder are included in your Occupation Contract.

## ● How to contact us

If you wish to contact us at any point you can do so in a number of ways:

- Call our Customer Service Centre (CIV) on 01446 700111.
- Visit the Council's web site [www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)
- Register for our Customer Portal, where you can access information held about you, check your rent account, make a payment or raise a query. You can register as a new user or access the Customer Portal by visiting the Vale of Glamorgan website. Type in Customer Portal into the search bar and follow the instructions.
- In person by visiting the Civic Offices in Barry where there is a dedicated 'Housing' reception desk - please contact 01446 700111 for opening times.



- Contacting a member of staff directly by telephone, the contact numbers for named individuals are shown on the 'Vale Homes' part of the Council's web site.
- If you have an emergency outside of office hours you can contact us on 01446 700111.

## Income team

If you have a query about rents, help you might be receiving towards your housing costs, are experiencing difficulties paying the rent or wish to make a payment, you can contact our Income team on 01446 709511, 709512, 709513 or 709514.

## Money Advisors

We also have a dedicated Money Advice team who can help with budgeting, welfare benefits and income maximisation. The Money Advice team can be contacted on 01446 709146.

## Employment and Training

Our Community Investment team deliver a range of programmes, training and support to help you access training, work experience placements and employment. If you are looking to get back into work or to change career, get in touch with them on 02920 673215 for more information about the assistance available or [CommunityInvestment@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:CommunityInvestment@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

## Volunteering

The Council actively encourages Contract Holders to get involved and take an active role in their community. This includes volunteering

### Did you know?

*Barry, before the post docks expansion of the 1880s, was just one of three small hamlets in the area, the largest of which was Cadoxton, where there was a church, four chapels and three inns. The third, named Holton, was in the vicinity of the old bus depot.*



initiatives such as our successful Value in the Vale Volunteering scheme which enables people to take part in a wide range of local volunteering opportunities from community clean ups, to befriending older neighbours to peer support groups to assist individuals with poor mental health. For more details call 07522 710254 or email [hello@valueinthevale.com](mailto:hello@valueinthevale.com)

### Getting involved

There are also a range of other ways that you can become involved. We have a number of Residents Groups operating across the Vale who are always on the look out for new members, so if you are interested in joining an existing group or would like to set up a new group, please get in touch on 01446 709895 or [Get-Involved@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:Get-Involved@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)



## ● Moving in

You will be expected to move into your property straight away after you have signed the Occupation Contract and been given the keys.

When you first move in you will need to contact the existing gas and electric suppliers to register as the new occupier. Where there is a token meter, they will advise on how you can purchase credit or tokens. They may also need to clear the meter so you are not liable for any outstanding debt owed by the previous occupier.

To find out who supplies your new property you can contact the below:

**National Grid on 0800 096 3080** or  
<https://www.simplyswitch.com/energy/guides/who-is-my-supplier/>

You will need to contact our Heating Contractor to arrange for the gas to be uncapped and checked to ensure it is safe. Heatforce can be contacted on 02920 763622.



If you have a gas cooker you will need to have this installed by a Gas Safe Engineer and an electric cooker must be fitted by a qualified electrician. You will be expected to cover the installation costs yourself.

You may receive a decorating voucher in lieu of painting and decorating which has not been completed when the property was empty. You can redeem this at the nominated supplier for paint and materials of your choice. There are restrictions about what the vouchers can be used for. You will need to contact the supplier directly to make arrangements. Their contact details will be given to you when you sign for your property.

You will need to register your new address with Doctors, Dentists, Schools, Bank/ Building Society, Council Tax, Telephone Provider etc.

Speak to our Money Advice team if you have any queries about your benefits, budgeting or accessing grants and loans needed.

## ● Your Rent and Money Advice

It is your responsibility to pay your rent every Monday in advance. If you receive help with your housing costs e.g. Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, **your claim is your responsibility**. For advice you can contact Housing Benefit on 01446 700111, or if you are on Universal Credit you can call 0800 3285644. Alternatively, you can speak to a member of the Rents Team who will advise you on what you need to do.

You can pay your rent in a number of ways. **You will need your rent account PIN which you can get from the Income Team 01446 709513.**



By telephone using a debit or credit card, call 01446 736815 (automated payment line) or by speaking to an agent 01446 700111.



Online at [www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)





By Direct Debit. We will calculate your monthly payments and request the payment directly from your bank or building society each month. Please contact us on 01446 709513 for a Direct Debit form.



Standing order.



In person at the Cashiers Desk at the Civic Offices in Barry. For opening hours please call 01446 700111 for more information



At any shop or Post Office displaying the Pay Point sign. You will need your Rent Payment card which you can get from the Income Team 01446 709513.



Housing Benefit or Universal Credit directly. If you receive either of these benefits you can request it is paid to us directly.

## Difficulties paying your rent

Please let us know if you experience any difficulties paying your rent as getting into arrears could put your home at risk. The sooner you contact us the better. We will do everything we can to help. This can include providing assistance with welfare benefits, offering money advice, help with budgeting and we can work out an affordable repayment plan if needed.

The rents/income teams contact details can be found in the Income Team section of this handbook.

### Did you know?

*Penarth before the building of the docks was a tiny hamlet on just 71 at the 1801 census. With agricultural work as the only form of employment development was slow. Being outside of the coalfield no other work was available but by 1851 it had grown to 273 persons.*



We appreciate that sometimes, households can have money worries and may have several different debts to different companies, however your rent is considered a priority debt and should be paid before other debts like catalogue debts, personal loans, credit card bills etc.

### Money advice

We have a team of trained Money Advisors who can review your finances and offer advice regarding money matters. This can include making sure you are in receipt of the right benefits, help with budgeting, assistance to access grants or loans and increasing your income e.g. switching to the best value tariffs for utilities, mobile phones etc. The service is free and not linked to any products or services. Get in touch with the Money Advice team today if you want to discuss any concerns. They can be reached on 01446 709146 or [moneyadvice@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:moneyadvice@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)



## Universal Credit

If you are out of work or on a low income, you may be eligible for help towards your housing costs. Universal Credit is a monthly payment for people aged between 18 and 65 and replaces six existing benefits. Universal Credit is paid into a bank or building society account every month. It can take several weeks after you make your claim to get your first payment.

It is possible to get an 'advance' if you need money immediately but remember this is recovered from ongoing payments, so you will receive less each month thereafter. Please let us know if you have been given an advance, so that we can advise you what payments are required.

**Your Universal Credit payment will include the money you are awarded for rent. You will need to make arrangements to pay this to us.**



If you are struggling with your money you may be able to arrange to have your rent paid directly to us. This means the housing cost element of your Universal Credit will be deducted at source by the Department of Work and Pensions and paid to us on a four-weekly basis.

For advice on how to claim Universal Credit or to find out if you are eligible you can contact them on the below numbers:

Phone: 08003285644 (Welsh Language 08003281744)

Text Phone: 08003281344

Or contact one of our Money Advice Team.

### Setting your rent

Your rent is reviewed every year and we will notify you in writing before any increase.

The Council sets its rents in accordance with guidelines received from the Welsh Government.

The rent for your home is set over 50 weeks each year which means there are two weeks when rent is not charged. These are usually at Christmas and at the beginning of April. If you are behind on your rent it is expected you will continue to pay during these weeks to reduce your arrears.

### Service charges

Service charges are collected for costs incurred in providing services to a building. Details of the specific service charges for your property are set out in your offer letter and include services like communal lighting, communal grass cutting, door entry systems, communal cleaning etc.

Currently the Council collects water charges on behalf of Dwr Cymru – Welsh Water. These charges are a service charge and mean you pay your water and sewerage costs weekly. The charges are the same as if

#### Did you know?

*During the 1850s the Three Bells Inn at Cadoxton was the starting point for the thrice weekly nine o'clock horse-drawn carriage to Cardiff. The journey took half a day with all male passengers walking up every hill to ease the burden on the single horse.*



you paid Dwr Cymru directly. Dwr Cymru provides some assistance schemes for occupiers who meet certain criteria e.g. on some kinds of benefits, households with more than two children.

However, from April 1st 2023 your water charges will no longer be included in your Rent and service charges and will need to be paid directly to Dwr Cymru and you will need to contact them directly. You can contact them on 0800 052 0145 or apply online.

Please contact the Income team for more information and to check if you are eligible for reduced charges.

It is possible to request a water meter so that you pay for water you use. If you have a water meter you will need to pay Dwr Cymru directly.

## ● Repairs and maintenance

We are responsible for most of the repairs to your home and we provide a responsive repairs service to deal with these.

### Repairs you are responsible for

Some examples of repairs you will be responsible for are: fitting TV aerials, plumbing washing machines/ tumble dryers, fixing cookers, replacing light bulbs (unless it is a sealed unit), keeping the garden tidy, lock changes if you lose your keys, plugs and chains on sinks and baths, broken toilet seats, internal decoration and keeping your garden tidy and free of rubbish.

### How to report a repair

You can report a repair by contacting our CIV Customer Service Centre on 01446 700111 between the hours of 8.30 and 5pm, Monday to Friday or by emailing [repairs@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:repairs@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

**If you have an emergency repair out of hours, please ring 01446 700111.**



When a repair is raised you will usually be given an appointment when the work will take place. You will also get confirmation or reminder text messages regarding the appointment. Please make all efforts to be at home when the repair operative attends.

### Timescales for repairs

There are different timescales dependant on the urgency of the repair.

**Emergency repairs** - the target time for emergency jobs is 24 hours. Emergency repairs are when there is an immediate risk to safety or well-being e.g. electrical faults, severe leaks, property is insecure, loss of heating.

**Urgent repairs** - the target time is 5 days.

**Routine repairs** - the target time is 42 days.

### Gas servicing/ electric checks

The Council is legally required to undertake safety checks to ensure homes are safe. Gas checks are carried out annually and appointments are made in advance. Electric checks are less frequent, but you will be notified in writing in advance. It is important that access is allowed so



these important checks can be completed. Failure to allow access might result in legal action being taken.

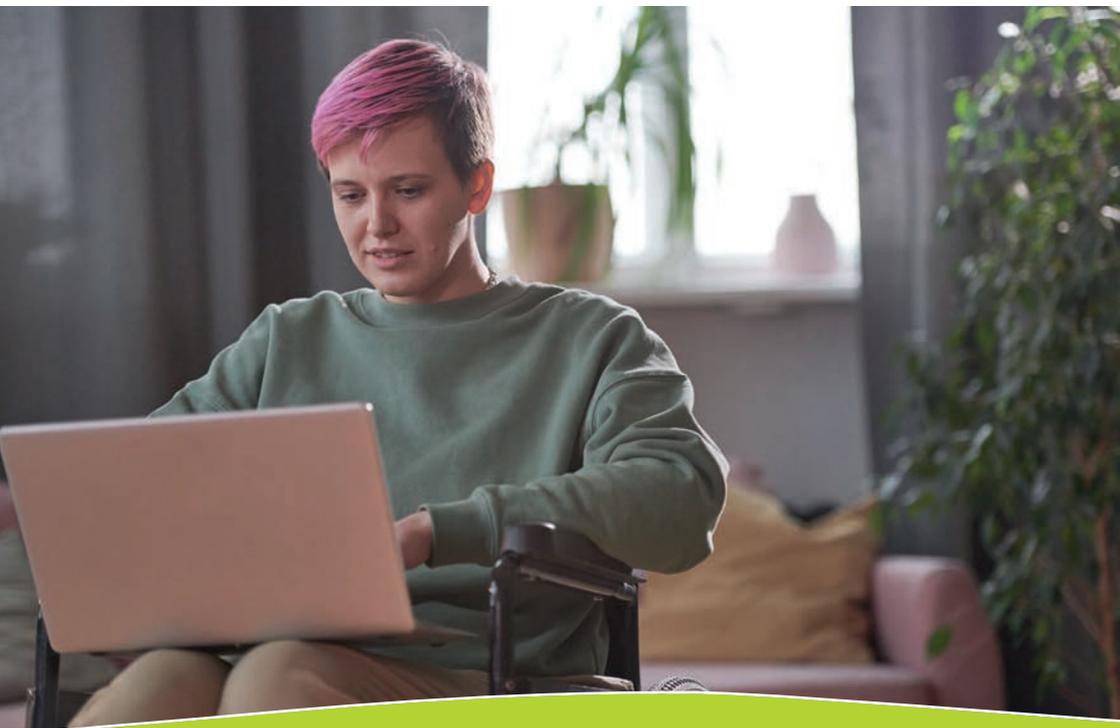
### Rechargeable repairs

Some repairs e.g. damage which is not considered fair wear and tear will be recharged. You may be asked to pay for this work in advance or it can be charged to you via a sub account. You may be unable to move to another home if you have any charges outstanding for rechargeable repairs.

### Planned maintenance/ major works

Major repairs include large scale work such as damp treatment, new roofs, re rendering, kitchen and bathroom replacement. These are extensive works and can take several weeks. In some instances, you will need to move out temporarily for work to take place.

Some repairs which are initially reported as responsive repairs are found to require more extensive work. When this happens, the work



will be passed to the Housing Assets team to be carried out on a programmed basis. There might be a delay before this work starts as it is often needed to be contracted out to an external firm. Our staff will be able to advise you of the process and timescales involved should you find yourself in this position.

### Stock condition surveys

An ongoing programme of surveys helps us to maintain up to date information about our properties and informs our planned maintenance programmes. These surveys are carried out periodically by staff and they will require access to your home. They will write to you in advance and visit at a mutually convenient time. It is important that you allow the Officer access to your home to undertake this survey.

### Wales Housing Quality Standard

Often referred to as WHQS this is the minimum standard a Council home must be brought up to. The Council has an investment programme in place to ensure all homes meet this standard and kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems, roofs, doors, electrical systems etc are improved periodically.

The work is carried out on a programmed basis taking into account the stock condition survey results. This means that components like kitchens and bathrooms are updated in your street at the same time. There are exceptions of course and some components may already meet the WHQS standard. In this event they will not be replaced.

If WHQS work is planned in your street, we will write to you in advance and let you know what works are needed; in many instances we will appoint a dedicated Officer to work with you and contractors to minimise disruption and ensure the work goes smoothly.

#### Did you know?

*In 1895 Woodlands Road was at the very edge of Barry, the next planned street to the north was to have been called Wordsworth Street, running through the remains of Newlands Wood, but it was built as Gladstone Road, which it is still called today.*



## Adaptations

Some Council properties are adapted for people with a disability. We always try and ensure adaptations remain in a property so that it can be allocated to another household who need these adaptations.

If you require adaptations to your existing home, you should contact the Council Housing Adaptations team (CHAT) on 01446 709894 they will ask you for more details about the adaptations you require and will contact your Occupational Therapist to discuss your requirements.

The Council invests a significant amount of money adapting existing properties. This includes minor works e.g. handrails, lever taps and major works, including extensions, wet rooms, lifts and hoists. Decisions regarding adaptations are based on the recommendations of the Occupational Therapist and take into account the locations, size and layout of the property. Some adaptations are not possible due to the location, size or layout of the property. In these instances, it may be more appropriate to transfer to a more suitable property.

## ● Your Occupation Contract

Your Occupation Contract is a legal contract between you and the Council. It sets out a range of rights and responsibilities which must be adhered to. Failure to observe the conditions of the Contract may mean your home is at risk.

There are two different types of Occupation Contract - an Introductory Contract and a Secure Contract. During the 12 month Introductory Contract period, you will have fewer rights. The introductory period can be extended if there are concerns regarding the way you have adhered to your contract.



The way we end an introductory contract is different from the way we end a secure contract. The Council still needs to apply for a court order to end an introductory contract, but the Court must grant us possession if we have followed a procedure laid down in law. This means we do not have to prove that you have behaved in a certain way.

Some of the other key differences are shown below:

Occupation Contract rights	Introductory Occupation Contract	Secure Occupation Contract
To exchange with another Contract Holder	✗	✓
Take in a lodger or sublet	✗	✓
To repair	✓	✓
To improve the property	✗	✓
Family member has succession rights	✗	✓

### Changes to your Occupation Contract

We understand that sometimes there might be changes to your household. Please tell us straight away if this is the case. For example:

- **Relationship breakdown**

If you are a joint Contract Holder and your relationship breaks down, you will need to talk to your Neighbourhood Manager to



see what this means for you. The Occupation Contract may be able to be transferred to the remaining person. However, both Contract Holders will remain jointly liable for the Contract and any rent until this has been resolved.

- **New relationship**

If you have a new partner and they have moved into your home, you will need to register them as an occupier; you may also be able to add them to the Occupation Contract. There are implications to this, so you will need to speak to your Neighbourhood Manager. In most instances it will be necessary for the other person to have lived at the property for at least 12 months.

- **Children**

If your children have moved out or you have new children, you should let us know so the records can be updated.



## ● Succession

It may be possible for a close family member to take over the Occupation Contract if you pass away. There is a range of criteria which must be met. For example, the person looking to succeed will need to prove they have lived at the property continuously for at least 12 months. If the home is too large for the person succeeding the Occupation Contract or was adapted for the deceased person's needs, we may ask them to move to a more suitable property. For advice about this they can contact your Neighborhood Manager to find out if they are eligible for succession rights.

In the event a joint contract Holder passes away the Contract passes to the surviving Contract Holder automatically and this counts as a succession. Please speak to your Neighborhood Manager who will be able to advise you on this and any implications.

On occasions there might be more than one person looking to succeed the Occupation Contract. The spouse or partner will normally have any succession rights; however, your Neighbourhood Manager will be able to give advice based on the specific circumstances.

## ● Your Home

It is a condition of your Occupation Contract that you live in your home and use it as your only or principle home. If you are likely to be away from the property for an extended period i.e. over two weeks, you should let your Neighbourhood Manager know. You should also advise the Housing Benefit section or the Department of Work and Pensions if you are receiving help towards your Housing costs.

### Did you know?

*Coronation Street in Barry was originally named Sydenham Street after Mr S W Richards, the builder who constructed the houses. His unusual name was lost when the residents won the best decorated street prize during the 1953 Coronation and requested the change.*



## Insurance

The Council takes out Buildings Insurance to protect against any damage to the structure and exterior of the building. We do not cover losses or damage to your personal possessions and strongly advise you to take out your own household contents insurance. This can mean that you are not left out of pocket in the event of a flood, fire, burglary etc.

## Decorating

Contract Holders are responsible for decorating their homes. Vouchers for paint are provided when you first move in, however ongoing decoration works are the responsibility of the Contract Holder.

## Improvements or alterations

Permission should be sought prior to making any changes or alterations to your home. This includes erecting satellite dishes, extensions, installing car ports, replacing kitchens/ bathrooms etc. You will need permission in writing prior to commencing any works otherwise you may need to reinstate the property to its original condition.

Permission will not be unreasonably withheld; however, staff will need to see copies of plans, relevant building regulations approvals and details or how the work will be undertaken to ensure it is safe and does not have a detrimental impact on the property.

### Did you know?

*Down by the old village of Barry, after the docks were built, Heath Farm was acquired by a Mr Walker who built High Street, Queen Street, Princes Street and the Barry Hotel on the land. The growing settlements of Barry and Barry Dock were then some way apart.*



## Neighbour problems

It is a condition of your Occupation Contract that you do not cause nuisance which affects your neighbours right to peaceful enjoyment of their home.

Typically, this can include loud music, dog barking, threatening/intimidating behaviour, dumped rubbish, parties, drug taking, inconsiderate parking, abandoned vehicles, vandalism etc. The Council adopts a robust approach to tackling nuisance behaviour and follows up reports received. We also work with partner agencies including the Police. Where the nuisance behaviour is serious or is not modified, we are able to consider a range of legal actions and your home could be put at risk.

Some neighbour problems relate to a clash of lifestyles and we would encourage you to discuss your concerns with your neighbour in the first instance. This can mean problems do not escalate.



## Household rubbish

Contract Holders are required to dispose of household rubbish in a responsible manner and to comply with the Council's refuse collection guidance e.g. recycling, putting waste on the kerbside on the appropriate day for collection. Please check the Council's web site for more specific details, including collection dates in your areas.

Rubbish and items should not be left to build up in gardens or in communal areas of flats. This can be a hazard and attract vermin.

## Garden rubbish

Contract Holders are responsible for keeping their garden in reasonable condition. This includes cutting grass and hedges and keeping gardens clear of rubbish and items.



## Pets

There is separate guidance available regarding keeping of Pets in Council accommodation. Typically, if you reside in a house you are permitted to keep a small number of dogs, cats or smaller household animals provided they do not cause a nuisance or disturbance to neighbours. If you reside in flats with communal entrances you are not allowed to keep pets. The rules regarding pets will have been explained to you when you were offered your home and you may have signed a disclaimer to say you would not keep pets.

## Parking

Some properties have parking bays located within the curtilage of their homes; these are for their own use but should not be used for keeping unroadworthy vehicles. In most instances parking will be available on the public highway or in Council owned car parking areas. Spaces are not dedicated to specific properties and are available to all residents and their visitors on a first come first served basis. Contract Holders are asked to park responsibly and not to block access for other people.

It is possible for blue badge owners to request that an existing parking space in a communal area is dedicated for use by disabled people. There is a process to follow and if agreed, the space remains available for any blue badge holder not exclusively the person who requested it. Please speak to your Neighbourhood Manager for advice about this.

The Council owns a number of garages, and these are available to Contract Holders for the storage of motor vehicles. Vale Homes Contract Holders have priority in accessing the garages and they are charged weekly in addition to the rent. If you are interested in renting

### Did you know?

*Many people think the name Port Road refers to the dock at Barry but should you follow that road from its start at Culverhouse Cross (now Old Port Road, Wenvoe) you would end up in Aberthaw, which was the Vale's most important harbour before silting up many years ago.*



a garage there is an application process to follow and you should speak to your Neighbourhood Manager in the first instance.

**Caravans** - not allowed in Council owned car parking.

## Running a business

If you are considering running a business from home please contact your Neighbourhood Manager to discuss this as permission is needed to do so. Permission is not automatically given, for example any business that would impact negatively on your neighbours or community would not be allowed. An example of what would not be allowed is if you wanted to set up a car mechanical business off your driveway.

## Lodgers and Sub letting

A lodger is defined as renting a furnished room in your home – usually a bedroom and will have use of other rooms such as the bathroom and kitchen. They may receive some services from you such as meals, laundry and cleaning but they will not have the right to exclude you from the room that you have rented.

A Sub-Contract Holder has exclusive use of at least one room usually a bedroom and can have shared use of the bathroom and kitchen. They have the right to exclude you from entering the room that they have exclusive rights to.

You must get permission to take in a lodger or sublet a room and this may be refused if it results in overcrowding at the property. If you have sublet or have a lodger, you must continue to live at the property and use it as your main or principle home.

### Did you know?

*Boverton Castle was once the home of Hadwisa, the divorced wife of King John. When the barons were seeking the King to force him to sign the Magna Carta curbing his powers he hid here in disguise for six months. He eventually met them and signed at Runnymede in 1215.*



It is a criminal offence to illegally sub-let the whole of your home and if you are found guilty you could be imprisoned for up to two years, fined up to £50,000 or ordered by the Court to give any profit made to the Council.

The Contract Holder is responsible for the behaviour of sub-Contract Holders and lodgers and if they cause a nuisance or annoyance, you will be breaking the terms of your Occupation Contract. If you apply to move, your sub-Contract Holder or lodger will not be considered a part of your household and if you move out, they will need to move out at the same time. It is also your responsibility to declare any income you receive from sub- Contract Holders or lodgers for tax and benefit purposes.

### Pest control

Contract Holders can request statutory pests be treated free of charge at their home. Problems can be reported via the CIV Contact Centre on 01446 700111. The Pest Control team also treats non-statutory pests but there is a charge for this service. Please see the web site for more information regarding this service and the charges.



## ● Moving home

### To another social rented home in the Vale of Glamorgan

- Secure Contract Holders can apply for a transfer to another Vale Council home or Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partner in the Vale. This is dealt with by the Homes4U scheme. Applications can be made online via the Council web site, but it is expected that Contract Holders will have clear rent accounts and no outstanding breaches of Contract.
- All applications are assessed in line with the Homes4U criteria and are awarded a band to reflect their level of housing need. You are then able to 'bid' for available homes advertised by the Council on a weekly basis. Bids can be submitted by telephone or online.
- Homes are allocated in line with the Homes4U Policy to the household with the highest band and the earliest registration date within that band.



- Prior to moving out a pre termination check will be made of your existing property to ensure it is in good condition and there is no damage. Any issues will need to be resolved before a move can go ahead and an offer can be withdrawn.

## Moving away from the Vale of Glamorgan

- If you wish to move away from the Vale of Glamorgan you will need to contact social landlords operating in the area you wish to move to. It might be possible to make a direct application provided you can demonstrate a local connection with that area. Your Neighbourhood Manager will be able to advise about different social landlords operating in other areas.
- Other landlords are likely to request a reference from the Vale of Glamorgan prior to making an offer of accommodation. If there are any outstanding breaches of contract it is possible an offer of accommodation may be withdrawn.

## Swapping homes

- Secure Contract Holders are eligible to apply to swap homes with other Contract Holders, this is often referred to as a mutual exchange. Permission is needed before a house swap can go ahead and there are circumstances when this cannot be granted.
- If you are interested in swapping homes, you will need to register for the Homeswapper scheme [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk) where you will be able to search for homes of other Contract Holders looking to swap. If you find another property, you will need to contact us to agree this and to sign the appropriate paperwork. No one should move homes until permission has been granted and the paperwork has been completed.

### Did you know?

*In 1860, before Barry Docks, a walk down a quiet path that was later Vere Street ended at a sandy beach. From there you could stroll west under the cliffs to Barry or across the sea dam to the Bendricks, visiting Barry Island via stepping stones at low tide or continue to Sully.*



## Renting privately

- Private rented accommodation is an appropriate housing option for many households. Applications need to be made to the landlord direct or via a lettings agent. There are several approved lettings agents operating in the Vale of Glamorgan and further details can be provided on request by speaking to your Neighborhood Manager or contacting Homes4U.
- Be aware that most private landlords will require rent in advance and a bond before allowing you to move in. The Rent Smart scheme operates in Wales and seeks to regulate the private rented accommodation available. It would be a good idea to check the Rent Smart web site to ensure the landlord is regulated and the property meets minimum safety standards.

## Assisted home ownership (Aspire2Own)

- Aspire2Own is the name given to the assisted home ownership scheme operating in the Vale. Households with a local connection to the Vale and who can't afford to buy their own home independently are able to register an interest in several subsidized housing solutions including Homebuy, Shared Ownership and intermediate renting. For more details regarding the products and scheme eligibility please visit the Council web site and type in Aspire2Own into the search box.

## Right to Buy

- The Statutory Right to Buy scheme has been abolished in Wales so you are no longer able to request to buy your Council home.

### Did you know?

*Barry's hospital was one of the first three in the country owned by the council long before the NHS. Workers paid two pence a week from their wages towards it. Each had a ticket allowing treatment in proportion to their payments. Emergency cases were admitted without a ticket.*



## ● Moving out

There is a need to provide 4 weeks' notice in writing prior to moving out of your Council home. It is also necessary to remove all items and return the keys. Failure to give notice or return keys can mean you continue to be liable for the rent.

It is expected that Council homes are cleared and cleaned and are returned in reasonable condition. The outgoing Contract Holder will be recharged for the costs of any damage or remedial work required.

A preterm check is carried out before you move out. You will be advised of any remedial work required and reminded of what you need to do to end the Contract correctly.

Keys should be returned prior to midday on Monday to avoid the next weeks rent charge being levied. Keys should be handed in at the Housing Reception at the Civic offices in Barry. Receipts will be given.



## ● Getting involved

We are committed to providing opportunities for you to get involved in our work. Your involvement can help us improve our services and have a positive impact on your neighbourhood.

There are several ways you can choose to get involved including:

### Residents Boards/Groups

- These are residents from a specific area who get together to discuss local issues or what is important in their area. Typically, these groups will have a constitution and a committee and meet on a monthly or bimonthly basis. Council staff will attend meetings to provide updates, listen to concerns or answer questions. Residents Boards receive funding from the Council to cover running costs e.g. room hire charges, stationary etc.

There are a range of Residents Boards in existence and we welcome interest from Contract Holders looking to set up new groups in areas which are not covered by an existing Residents Board.



## Working Group/Quality Design Forum

- These are umbrella groups which are made up of representatives from different Residents Boards. The groups meet periodically to look at broader issues affecting Contract Holders in the Vale and receive updates from Senior Officers. The Working Group focusses on Housing Management issues like anti-social behaviour, digital inclusion, income management whilst the Quality Design Forum deals with Maintenance issues such as the choice of kitchen and bathrooms, appointment of repair contractors or reviewing progress with the Major Works programme.

## Service Quality Accessors

- This is a new group who carry out reviews and service testing of key Council services. This involves mystery shopping, reviewing performance data, talking to other Contract Holders about their experiences and providing feedback to staff about what works well and not so well. This feedback helps us to improve what we do. Full training is provided, and the Group are supported by a member of staff. Please see Vale Homes Pages on the Vale of Glamorgan Website.

## Block champion, Estate Inspections

- Some people prefer to act as local champions, keeping an eye on standards where they live. This can include notifying staff of litter, parking problems or if the grass has not been cut. Contract Holders can do this when they want, and their feedback is important to ensuring that neighbourhoods are kept in good condition.

## Digital Buddies

- Do you have a passion for all things digital? Do you enjoy passing that knowledge on? If yes then why not become a Digital Buddy and help us to get other residents online. For more information please visit the Vale Homes pages on the Vale of Glamorgan Website.



## Scrutiny (Homes and Safe Communities)

- Contract Holders, who are members of the Working Group and voted onto this Committee, attend the monthly meetings with Councillors and Senior Staff. They scrutinise and report on specific issues relating to any Departments of the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

We are currently looking at new and creative ways for you to get involved, please check our web site for more details regarding this or speak to a member of staff.

We hope you have found this handbook useful although you may have questions that have not been answered within this handbook. If that is the case then please contact the Vale Homes Team for further information and...

...welcome to the Vale Homes Community!

**If you would like a copy of your Contract Holder's Handbook in Welsh please contact your Neighbourhood Manager.**



[www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)



# ● Moving into your new home



## CHECKLIST

The day you sign for your Occupation Contract arrange for the gas to be uncapped and safety checked

Date	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time	<input type="text"/>	

To find out the current Gas and Electric Supplier you can contact:  
**National Grid** 0800 096 3080

<https://www.simplyswitch.com/energy/guides/who-is-my-supplier/>

Gas Meter Reading

Old Property	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Home	<input type="text"/>	

Electric Meter Reading

Old Property	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Home	<input type="text"/>	

Council Tax

This can be completed online via [www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)  
Or by phone Call 01446 709564

Date	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time	<input type="text"/>	

Tv License

This can be completed online <https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk>  
Or by phone Call 0300 555 0286

Date	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time	<input type="text"/>	

Television subscription

Date	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time	<input type="text"/>	

Telephone

Date	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time	<input type="text"/>	

Tick when completed

Mobile	Date	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Time	<input type="text"/>	

Internet provider	Date	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Time	<input type="text"/>	

Gas	Date	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Time	<input type="text"/>	

Electric	Date	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Time	<input type="text"/>	

Water	Date	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Time	<input type="text"/>	

## Quick look



# USEFUL CONTACTS

Phone

Email

### Neighbourhood Manager

01446

@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

### Neighbourhood Assistant

01446

@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

### Customer Service Centre

01446 700111 CIV@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

### Repairs (including out of hours)

01446 700111

### Rents/Income

01446 709511 Incomeassistantsinhousing@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

01446 709512

01446 709513

01446 709514

### Money Advice Team

01446 709146 moneyadvice@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

### Employment and Training

02920 673215

### Volunteering

hello@valueinthevale.com

### Local Residents Groups (if applicable)

### Council Housing Adaptations

01446 709894

### Universal Credit Helpline

0800 328 5644

### Citizen Advice Bureau

03444 77 20 20

### Supporting People Team

01446 709793 supportingpeople@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

### Telecare Alarm Services

01446 700111 telecare@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

# Your Occupation Contract Handbook

Vale of Glamorgan Council  
Civic Offices  
Holton Road  
Barry  
CF63 4RU



 Vale Homes  @ValeHomes

[www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)