

Calder Valley Community Land Trust Tenants Handbook



A very warm “Hello” to you from all of us at **Calder Valley Community Land Trust** and our partner **Connect Housing Association** who will look after you and your home on our behalf.



You can phone Connect on **0300 5000 600** (local rate) to report any problem with your home Monday – Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Note that there is a late start at 10:30am every Wednesday

You can ring outside these hours if there is an emergency

(Gardening problems to the CLT direct on 0845 250 0532)

Both CVCLT and Connect hope that you will have many happy years here in your new home and we will work, together with you, to make it happen.

We can give you this document in a large-print version

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Moving in

Welcome to your new home. We hope this handbook gives you some useful and important information. Please read this handbook when you move in and then keep it close at hand. If you have any queries please contact us on one of the phone numbers given in this handbook.

Your new home has been built and is owned by Calder Valley Community Land Trust (CVCLT) who are also your landlord. We are a local Trust, set up to create good-quality homes at affordable rents. Birks Court is our first development.

Our partners, Connect Housing Association, look after you and your home on a daily basis on behalf of CVCLT. Connect directly own and manage other homes in Walsden. Together our two organisations will try to make sure you are happy and safe in your new home.

The contact phone number of **Connect** is: **0300 5000 600**. **This is the number to ring, about any problem relating to your home (but not gardening issues)**. You can also email them at hello@connecthousing.org.uk. **Their normal office working hours are weekdays 9am to 5:00pm, however there is a late start of 10.30am on Wednesdays.**

Connect's office address is 21 Bond Street, Dewsbury, WF13 1AX.

The web address is www.connecthousing.org.uk

The easiest way to contact Calder Valley Community Land Trust, if you have access to email, is on info@caldervalleyclt.org.uk. Our address is Unit 23, Hebden Bridge Town Hall, St George's Street, Hebden Bridge, HX7 7BY. Our phone is 0845 250 0532 (this will be routed through to one of our volunteer trustees).

About Calder Valley Community Land Trust

CVCLT is a member-led charitable 'community benefit society', which has been established to help address housing needs in our part of West Yorkshire. The idea of community-led housing is about local people playing a leading role in solving local housing problems, creating genuinely affordable homes and stronger communities. CVCLT is managed by a Board of Trustees, all of whom are volunteers and unpaid, and who are elected by members.

At present we have around 250 local people as members of CVCLT. We encourage our tenants also to become members, so that you can also have a say in the

development of local community-led housing, and the management and direction of your housing. If you wish to become a CVCLT member (and this is not obligatory), you will find an application form with this pack. Members make a minimum contribution of £1, as a share in the society.

Making the move

You will want to tell people that your address has changed. These are likely to include your doctor, dentist, bank and credit card companies, electricity and gas companies, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency and the Council Tax and Housing Benefit sections of the council. (You are liable to pay the Council Tax to Calderdale Council from the date your tenancy starts.)

The Post Office can redirect your mail for a certain period, but will charge for this service.

Postal address

Your postal address is: Birks Court, St Peter's Gate, Walsden, Todmorden, OL14 6BN

Gas, electricity and water

Remember to take final meter readings from the property you're moving out of, so that you don't pay for any gas or electric used by the next occupiers.

Please read the meters with us when you first move in. Your meters are directly outside. The gas is in the brown meter cupboard, the electricity in the white box. You have a big coloured key which can open both meter cupboards.

You will be responsible for gas and electricity usage from the date your tenancy starts.

Check who supplies Gas and who supplies electricity to your home. We would encourage you to investigate changing to an alternative supplier if you can get a better deal.

Water is metered. The meters are inside the big manhole cover near the entrance to Birks Court, but fortunately your water usage will be read automatically. To register with Yorkshire Water you should telephone 0345 1242424, or go to their website at yorkshirewater.com

White goods and carpets

We have put flooring in the hallway, bathroom and kitchen, but you will need to think about the carpets you want in the other parts of your home.

The kitchen has space left for you to put in your own fridge and cooker.

Insurance

CVCLT as landlord insures the fabric of your building. You are responsible for contents insurance, if you wish to be insured.

Paying the rent and service charge

We ask you if possible to pay by direct debit (although other methods are possible). We will give you the form to fill in.

Who can I talk to if I have a problem?

If your problem is about something to do with your new home, please contact Connect on 0300 5000 600.

If the problem is about paths or the gardening contact CVCLT on 0845 250 0532.

Who can I talk to if I wish to raise an issue or make a complaint?

Connect work to high standards and will do their best but if you are dissatisfied with the way Connect is handling any matter please contact them in one of the other ways given earlier and they will do their best to resolve it. Connect has a formal complaints policy, which sets out how complaints are handled, they are members of the Housing Ombudsman scheme.

If you remain dissatisfied with the way you have been treated, you can also contact CVCLT and we will investigate. Contact us at info@caldervalleyclt.org.uk. Our address is Unit 23, Hebden Bridge Town Hall, St George's Street, Hebden Bridge, HX7 7BY. Our phone number is 0845 250 0532. CVCLT is also a member of the Housing Ombudsman scheme.

Both CVCLT and Connect would love to receive compliments too!

If you think we are doing something well, please send your comments to CVCLT.

Section 1

Your new home

Moving into a new-build

You are moving into a brand new home. The extra information in Section A at the end of this Handbook will give you some advice about how to look after your new home.

Finding out where things are in your new home

You'll need to know where things are in your home, such as your fuse box and trip switch, gas tap, boiler, water stop tap and water tank. The information you need is in this manual.

Instructions and manuals

Along with your keys to your new property, you will be given a manual for the operation and maintenance of the boiler, and details of how the thermostat works. We advise that you read through these and keep them for future reference.

Central heating

Your central heating runs off a gas boiler. The system will be tested before you move in. You will be shown how to use your central heating on the day you move in. A contractor will carry out a boiler service inspection every year and it is important that you let the contractor into your home to do this.

We are giving you a small white cylindrical 'key' which is what is needed if the radiators ever need bleeding. Please keep this somewhere safe.

Thermostat

This is how you control the heat in your home. The big number on the display is the current temperature. You can change the temperature by flipping open the lid and manually selecting a different temperature.

You can move the thermostat from room to room, and operate wherever you are (it works by sending a wireless signal to the boiler). The thermostat has batteries which need changing occasionally. There are also facilities to put the boiler in 'holiday' mode if you are away for some time.

Connecting appliances

We have not provided white goods in your new home. When installing appliances like a washing machine or dishwasher to the water supply and drainage, please ensure that the hoses are properly connected and tightened before you turn the water on, as dripping connections can cause damage.

Electricity fuse box / consumer unit

This is in the box near your front door.

Gas cut-off

The lever to cut off your gas supply is outside, in the gas meter cupboard.

Smoke alarms

Each of the rooms has a smoke alarm, and there is also a carbon monoxide detector in the kitchen. These are wired in to the mains, but have battery back-up (in case of mains failure). The batteries are unlikely to need replacing for a considerable time.

If the alarm goes off, you can reset it by pushing the button in the centre of the alarm in the kitchen (you may need a stick to do this).

Windows

There are trickle ventilation slots above the windows. These can be closed, but we would suggest that you keep them open to allow a little air circulation into and out of your rooms.

Water

The water stop cock is under the kitchen sink.

Personal emergency alarm service

Please consider whether you need to sign up for a personal emergency alarm service. This can be reassuring for both you and your family, particularly if you live alone.

To have an alarm you will need a landline telephone. The alarm activator (which can be, for example, a bracelet or button on a lanyard worn around the neck) is linked to the landline, and an alert is sent through the telephone to the call handling centre, who can summon help or call family members.

Rubbish and recycling

You will need bins for recycling, for landfill waste, for glass and for kitchen waste. All the bins are kept at the entrance to Birks Court, on the little bit of tarmac on the right as you come in, not in your houses.

We will be monitoring the arrangements for the bins over the initial period, to check that this is working well and not becoming an eyesore.

You will need to ask the council for a set of bins when you first register for council tax. If you have difficulties, Calderdale's main Customer First phone number is 01422 288001. Or you can call in to the Customer First desk in Todmorden library on Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays.

External light

The light outside your front door automatically comes on from dusk to dawn. If you don't want it on, the switch is inside by the front door.

Outside

You are more than welcome to plant shrubs or plants in pots which you can put outside your house (please don't block any paths!).

Section 2

Responsibilities

Both the Landlord and the Tenant have responsibilities. These are laid out in your tenancy agreement, so please keep your copy safe. It is the tenancy agreement which is the legal document between you and us; this handbook simply tries to bring out some of the key points of our agreement. We are sure you will understand if, in places, we have to be a little formal. (We do appreciate that quite a lot of what follows may not be relevant to you!)

Your responsibilities as tenant in outline are to:

- Pay your rent on time.
- Keep your home clean.
- Be a good neighbour.
- Contact CVCLT with any change of circumstances.
- Contact your local Housing Benefits Team with your change of circumstances, if relevant; be responsible for your Housing Benefit claim, if relevant.
- Report repairs in good time.
- Give access for the annual gas safety check.
- Allow access for employees or contractors to make inspections or carry out work.
- Tell us in advance if you will be away for more than 28 days at a time.

Additionally, you must

- Ensure that your home covered by this agreement is your only home.
- Only make alterations with prior written permission from CVCLT.
- Ensure you get prior consent from CVCLT if you are planning on running a business from your home

And, of course, you must not

- Use your home for immoral or illegal purposes.

Please ensure that you are meeting your responsibilities. Tenants who breach their tenancy conditions potentially run the risk of being evicted from their home.

Here is some further information to help you.

Keeping Pets

Pets can be members of the family! We are very happy for you to keep a small pet. Our only proviso is that your pet is well-behaved and does not cause a nuisance by soiling the communal areas, or by excessive barking.

If a tenant's pet behaves in an anti-social way, or is found to be soiling or damaging property, the tenant may be liable for the costs of any repairs. In this situation the tenant might also be asked to find another home for the pet. In extreme cases, a tenant might be liable for eviction.

Parking

As you will see, the parking area for the Birks Court residents is across the driveway.

We have put in an electricity supply to a socket outside your front door, which can be potentially used for charging an electric car. If you have an electric car, please talk to Connect about how you can set this up.

Running a business from your home

If you are thinking of running your own business from your home, you must apply first in writing to CVCLT so that we can consider your request. We will try to be as helpful as possible, but we will need to consider if your proposed business will have adverse effects on your neighbours.

Illegal use

You will of course understand that tenants must not use their home for any illegal purposes, such as dealing in drugs, prostitution, storing stolen goods or keeping unlicensed firearms. As you would expect, CVCLT as landlord would take any such usage very seriously and would take steps to evict any tenant who uses their home in this way, or who committed a serious crime in or near the property.

Section 3

Repairs and maintenance

How to report a repair

As the tenant it's your responsibility to report any repairs needed at the property so that we can keep your home and surrounding areas well maintained.

Please **contact Connect** to report the problem.

As well as the phone number **0300 5000 600**, there's an email address specially for reporting repairs, it is **repairs@connecthousing.org.uk**.

How quickly will someone come out?

Connect will do your repairs. They will organise this and tell you who will visit you and when you can expect them to call. Please ensure that you are at your property when they arrive. They will try to ensure that the work is completed in one visit.

If you are out when they call, they will leave a card with a phone number for you to call to arrange another appointment.

If anyone you are not expecting, or you do not recognise, says they are from CVCLT or Connect don't let them in before you have confirmed their identity. Call Connect or CVCLT to check if someone has been sent and find out their name.

What do I need to do before a repair can be carried out?

Please ensure that the area is clear to enable easy access the repair. (Do not worry if for health reasons or because you are disabled you are unable to do this).

Boiler problems

Your gas boiler will be serviced annually. A visiting service engineer will visit to check your heating system to make sure that it is safe and that any faults are repaired. This service is important for the effective operation of your system and

your safety. Connect will notify you about the annual gas service in advance of the visit.

In the event of your boiler stopping working, before contacting the repairs line, please check the following:

- Is the fuse switch turned on under the boiler?
- Is the wall thermostat set high enough for the heating to come on?
- If you top up your meter using a gas card, is there credit on the meter?

If there is a full or partial boiler breakdown that cannot be rectified immediately, an adequate source of temporary heating and hot water will be provided by Connect depending upon the occupancy and size of your household. The visiting engineer will order parts and will book an appointment with you to fit the parts before they leave your home, so you know exactly when they will be calling back.

External repairs

We have a duty to repair the external structure of your home. Contact Connect if you see anything that causes you concern or you think needs repairing.

The contractors may need access to your home or garden to do the work safely and effectively. This is particularly important if they need to put up scaffolding or long ladders. If scaffolding is required and you have children visiting, please ensure they do not climb or play near the scaffolding. We have provided extra information to help you cope when any work is needed on your home.

The extra information in Section B at the end of this Handbook provides more information about responsibility for repairs.

Section 4

Improvements to your Home

Always contact CVCLT about these

This is your home and it is important that you feel at home.

If you want to make significant internal changes to improve your home, you need to get our permission first. Please contact CVCLT, as your landlord, before you start any improvement work.

Please realise that if tenants do undertake any improvement work,

- They will be responsible for future repairs/maintenance to the improvement.
- If the improvement causes damage, they must pay the cost of putting it right.
- If they carry out improvements without our permission, we may ask them to remove the changes and put the property back to its original condition.
- When they leave the property, if we have to remove an improvement to re-let the property, they will potentially be charged for putting it right.

Section 5

Health and safety in your home

As your landlord, CVCLT is responsible for ensuring that your home is safe and that potential risks are reduced to a minimum.

Extra information to help tenants keep safe is given in Section C at the end of this Handbook.

Electrical safety

Everyone uses electrical items and it is really important to ensure the items are safe when you plug them in.

One of the ways CVCLT & Connect keep you safe in your home is by ensuring that electrical installations are inspected and repaired.

What are we doing to keep you safe?

- We ensure that an electrical inspection is carried out at your home every five years.
- We ensure that our tradespeople are fully qualified and appropriately experienced to carry out any electrical work.

Raise any concerns about the electrical installations in your home by calling Connect.

Fire safety

Fire safety affects all of us so naturally CVCLT takes fire safety very seriously.

What are we doing to keep you safe?

- We use competent contractors to undertake fire safety work in your home.
- We liaise with the local fire and rescue service to ensure they are familiar with your home and its fire measures.
- We keep residents informed about fire safety and provide relevant and up-to-date safety information.

Fire safety is everyone's responsibility.

Gas safety

It is your responsibility to let us know if there is something wrong with your boiler or heating.

If you are concerned about gas in your home, please call Connect immediately to report the problem.

If you think you smell gas in your home: Make sure that you have turned off all gas knobs properly. **If you can still smell gas, follow the instructions below.**

- **Do not attempt to investigate or fix the problem yourself**
- **Open all doors and windows to let in plenty of fresh air.**
- **Turn off the gas lever at the mains: this is outside in your meter cupboard**
- **Do not touch any electrical switches including lights**
- **Do not light matches, lighters or smoke in the house; put out cigarettes**
- **Avoid rooms with a strong smell of gas as you may be overcome by the gas fumes.**
- **If you can, leave the dwelling and stay out. Ask a neighbour or friend if you can stay with them until help comes**

If you smell gas outside, the national emergency number to ring is 0800 111 999. This operates twenty-four hours a day.

How quickly will someone come out?

If there is an emergency someone will attend within two hours. You must ensure they have access to the problem otherwise they may have to force an entry.

If the problem is not an emergency the normal timescales for repairs will apply.

It is important that you:

- Never cover an appliance or block the air vents
- Never block or obstruct any fixed ventilation grilles or air bricks
- Never block or cover outside flues.

How often will CVCLT service my boiler?

On our behalf, Connect will do gas safety checks and service your boiler every year.

The annual gas safety checks are required by law. You must give Connect's technicians access for these. Repeated failure to provide access is a serious breach of tenancy conditions and will result in further action, this may result in loss of your tenancy.

Water safety

You can keep yourself safe by

- Running taps and other outlets that haven't been used for more than seven days for five minutes, particularly showers and other low-use outlets.
- Descaling shower heads and taps on a regular basis to minimize scale build up using proprietary descaling sprays.
- Reporting any damage to any part of the water system by contacting Connect.

Section 6

Antisocial behaviour

An important part of your tenancy is to be a good neighbour. The action of a few can affect the quality of many, sometimes whole communities.

Of course we do not anticipate that tenants of our homes will engage in anti-social behaviour. Nevertheless this is something which, were it to happen, we would take very seriously. Anti-social behaviour may be one-off or ongoing. It means behaviour that is likely to cause nuisance, harassment, alarm or distress to others.

The extra information in Section C at the end of this Handbook gives advice on how to manage anti-social behaviour, and how you can help CVCLT and Connect address and resolve the problem.

How you can help by being a good neighbour

We think that good neighbourliness among other things means being

- Considerate (respecting peoples' rights and privacy and thinking about how their behaviour affects others).
- Tolerant (understand that people have different ways of doing things and that is okay).
- Responsible (for their actions and those of family, visitors and pets).
- Law abiding (does not engage in illegal activity and contacts the police if appropriate).

As a good neighbour we would expect you to:

- Talk things over with your neighbour when there are problems, listen to other peoples' points of view, and try to come to an agreement that works for everyone.
- Keep noise coming from your home at a reasonable level, particularly at night.
- Be tolerant of any children playing outside.
- Park considerately so as not to block your neighbours' access to their property.
- Keep the area around your home tidy
- Control any pets and clean up after them.
- Dispose of bulky items responsibly, by taking to your local Community Recycling Centre or contacting your local Council who will pick up bulky waste for a charge.
- Avoid keeping untaxed or un-roadworthy vehicles at your home or in the neighbourhood.

In the event that a tenant was to persist with anti-social behaviour, eviction would be considered along with other interventions and the most appropriate course of action would be taken.

Section 7

Resident Involvement

Calder Valley Community Land Trust is a community organisation, and your home has been built because of local voluntary effort. This makes us particularly keen to work in partnership with you, to ensure that we know your views and can make sure that we provide services that you want and value.

Unless you are not on email or ask us not to, we will send you regular Community Land Trust email newsletters. These are sent out to all members, and include news of what CVCLT is doing. We would like to include news about our new tenants in Birks Court and would love to hear from you and include your news.

Feedback surveys

We may send you occasional surveys which are an opportunity to let us know what you think about your home and the services that we provide.

Complain, compliment or comment

Tell us whether you're happy or not with any service provided on our behalf by contacting CVCLT.

If the issue is something in the grounds or parking area, contact CVCLT straight away.

If the issue is about your home or rent contact Connect first, they will deal with it. If you are not satisfied with Connect's response contact CVCLT, and we will investigate.

There is a formal complaints policy, setting out how complaints are handled. Contact Connect to obtain a copy.

You can email us on info@caldervalleyclt.org.uk. Our address is Unit 23, Hebden Bridge Town Hall, St Georges Street, Hebden Bridge, HX7 7BY. Our phone is 0845 250 0532 (this will be routed through to one of our volunteer trustees).

Become a member

CVCLT owns your home and rents it to you. You can become a member of CVCLT and vote at its General Meetings. This includes the Annual General Meeting which elects the volunteers who serve as trustees/board members (the people that take all the decisions about how the trust manages its affairs).

CVCLT would very much like all our tenants to become members and urges you to consider joining us. But you don't have to. If you decide not to join us, you will still be consulted about all matters that affect your home

If you become a member of CVCLT you are eligible, if you wish, for election to the Board and also to CVCLT's Housing Management Sub-Committee. This group has special responsibility for all the decisions about how the CVCLT's homes are managed. CVCLT welcomes tenant members of this Sub-Committee.

Section 8

Ending your tenancy

You may wish to move from your home, either to a new home, or into supported living, or you may move to a residential or nursing home. We want to make sure the tenancy is ended properly so you don't have to pay any additional costs or rent charges.

You will normally need to give four weeks' notice, by completing the CVCLT termination form. This form can also be completed by a relative if you are unable to do so. Please contact Connect to request a form. The termination date is set from the following Monday after the date we received your notice.

Please ensure you provide us with a current telephone number and forwarding address.

In the event of your death, CVCLT will accept a reduced notice period of two weeks from a person legitimately representing your estate. Your representative will need in due course to provide a copy of your death certificate as well as a completed tenancy termination form. This to protect your estate from unnecessary charges.

If the event that a tenant has to go permanently into a residential home, we will need a completed termination form, normally signed by the tenant. (If this is not possible we will require a letter from the residential home to confirm that the tenant will permanently be residing there.) The termination form needs to be completed and returned immediately. If you receive housing benefit, this will only continue to be paid for a short time from the date permanent residency was agreed.

Whatever the circumstances, once we receive your termination notice you will receive confirmation from us in writing of the date your tenancy is due to end, when the keys are due to be returned and details of any rent still payable until the end of your tenancy.

Where possible, a representative from Connect will carry out a pre-termination inspection at the property. This is to gather details about the property and offer any advice needed.

Any outstanding rent should be paid before the termination date. If you are claiming Housing Benefit, you must inform your Housing Benefits team that you are moving out. When you move out, your Housing Benefit will stop immediately.

During the notice period your property will be advertised so that we can allocate it to someone else. It would be helpful if you would allow prospective tenants to view. Please note that a representative of Connect or CVCLT will always accompany them.

All keys should be returned by noon on the date that you have been advised your tenancy ceases. Please return your keys on time as the tenancy doesn't end until we have them. This means that the rent will continue to be charged until we do. A tenant who doesn't return all the keys will be charged by us to have all the locks in the property changed.

When moving out:

- Have the meters read, turn off water and leave electrical cables in a safe condition
- Provide details of energy suppliers
- Not leave anyone else living in the property, nor any pet
- Leave all fixtures and fittings (except your own white goods) in good repair
- Remove your own white goods (we advise you use a qualified tradesperson)
- Leave the decoration of the property in a condition where they can immediately be let to another person
- Leave the property and garden clear of all rubbish, furniture and other contents. If items are left in the property, we will charge you for their removal

Home swapping

You have a right, if you feel your home is no longer suitable, to try to arrange to swap your home with that being occupied by another CVCLT tenant or by a tenant from any other housing association or council in the UK. Bear in mind though that we can only accept people as tenants in our Birks Court homes those who have a local connection (normally ten years' residency in the Todmorden area) and are over the age of 65 years.

For a home swap to go ahead, you'll need the written permission of both landlords before the exchange can go ahead. Connect will provide guidance on home swapping on request.

Section 9

Money matters

You need to pay your rent and service charge on time. If you don't, you may fall into arrears and that could even potentially risk losing your home. CVCLT has adopted a rent management policy which focuses on a culture of prompt payment rather than arrears management.

The rent you pay for your home covers the costs of building, maintaining, repairing and improving the properties we own, as well as managing the properties.

By paying your rent in good time, we have the income to provide you with good services. There are different ways that you can pay your rent.

We ask you to pay if at all possible by direct debit. Payments are taken automatically every month, so you don't have to worry about falling behind with your bills. The rent and service charge is payable in advance.

If you are unable to pay by direct debit, you can also pay at the local Post Office. We can also advise you how you can pay online or by Pay Point if you feel you need to pay in this way. We will discuss with you when you accept your tenancy if you want to pay in one of these ways.

We discourage payment of rent by cash except in extreme circumstances. Holding large amounts of cash in your home or on your person is risky.

We normally increase your rent in April each year. We will write to tell you at least one calendar month before the increase. As an 'affordable rent', the level we can set is capped.

Your home has shared gardens, grounds, entrances and other areas for which we have responsibility. You pay a service charge on top of your rent, to cover our costs for doing this. Examples of the services covered by this charge include maintaining grounds, car park etc.

Do tell Connect, in confidence if you have any financial problems, or are worried about paying your bills including your rent. We do not want any of our tenants to be in arrears with their rent, for whatever reason. We will endeavour to support you, to ensure that your arrears are managed and that you avoid eviction. If you are on a low income or struggling with your finances, you can be referred to a confidential service.

You can visit Age Concern Todmorden for advice at 11 Burnley Road, Todmorden. They normally hold drop-in sessions every morning from 10.00am-12.00 noon, Monday-Friday.

You can also visit the local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). Calderdale and Kirklees CAB hold drop-in sessions every Thursday morning from 9.30am-12.00 noon at Todmorden Health Centre. They also have an advice line on 0300 330 9048, and have a Universal Credit Claim Helpline on 0800 144 8444.

Organisations such as Shelter provide excellent on-line or telephone advice (go to their website at https://england.shelter.org.uk/get_help).

If you are claiming state pension, you may be able to get help with your rent and council tax by claiming housing benefit and council tax benefit from the council. If you are single, there is also a single person occupancy discount.

If you think that you may be entitled to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, contact Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council Customer First Services on 01422 288001. You can also visit the Todmorden Customer First Service at Todmorden Library, Rochdale Road, which is open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9.00am – 5.00pm (closed for lunch from 1.00-1.30). Customer Services in Halifax are open every day from 9.00am-5.00pm at 19 Horton Street in Halifax.

You can check if you are eligible for Universal Credit by visiting the GOV.UK website, or contact the CAB Universal Credit Claim Helpline on 0800 144 8444. Or you can phone the Universal Credit helpline on 0800 328 6544. Or contact via the Textphone 0800 328 1344 from Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.

Section 10

Other important information

Tenancy Fraud

CVCLT takes tenancy fraud very seriously. We will actively encourage residents to report suspected tenancy fraud

What is tenancy fraud?

Not using the property as your sole home, including:

- Abandoning the property.
- Succeeding to or assigning the tenancy without the permission of CVCLT, after the legal tenant has moved out or died.
- Unlawfully subletting the entire property.

Other examples of tenancy fraud include:

1. Attempting to obtain a property using false statements, for example, falsely claiming to be homeless.
2. Attempting to obtain a property by using false documents, for example: using a forged passport or claiming to be someone else in order to access social housing.
3. Failing to disclose a debt owed to a previous landlord.

When tenancy fraud is identified, we will take appropriate and necessary action to recover the property.

Data protection

We take our responsibilities under the *Data Protection Act 2018* General Data Protection Regulations seriously and are committed to ensuring that we record all data accurately and carefully.

We will only hold data that is relevant, accurate and related to the purpose for which it is held, and we won't keep it longer than is necessary.

You have a right to access personal data about you and can make your request in writing or by email and must specify the personal information required and include proof of identity.

Freedom of information

As a charitable registered social landlord (not a local authority) CVCLT is not governed by the Freedom of Information Act (2000), but we do make information about our operations and performance freely available through our website and other publications. Connect is governed by the Freedom of Information Act (2000).

Our website

CVCLT's website is www.caldervalleyclt.org.uk.

An electronic version of this Tenant's Handbook is available there. You can also find our Policy for handling complaints, and the Complaint form.

There's a lot else on our website about how we are trying to bring more affordable housing to the upper Valley, which we hope you will find interesting.

Additional Information

Section A: Looking after your new home

Reduce condensation

Condensation is common in new homes whilst the materials of the property dry out. At times, condensation can lead to mould on walls and ceilings, in exceptional cases mould can damage clothes, bedding and flooring.

Once the construction materials have dried out, condensation will reduce; however normal day-to-day activities can still produce condensation.

Decorating

The walls to your property will have been painted with emulsion paint. Further coats of emulsion and oil-based paints or wallpaper can be used for later redecoration. *Please use decorator's filler if you need to make good any plaster cracks or minor gaps.*

Maintenance

The smoke alarms fitted are mains operated and require little maintenance; the back-up battery may occasionally need changing.

Inspection chambers and rodding eyes (pipe fitting) are there to provide access to the drainage system, so please don't cover any manhole covers with soil, turf or paving.

Your kitchen

How do I look after my kitchen?

We hope that you find your kitchen attractive, convenient and comfortable. You can ensure your kitchen lasts a long time by taking care of it.

Worktops

You don't need to do much with worktops other than wipe them over regularly with a warm damp cloth. It is fine to use disinfectants but please do not use a scouring pad or powder as they could scratch the surface permanently.

Please do not put hot items directly onto the worktop as they are not heat resistant and may mark. Make sure you use a mat or a chopping board if you need to put hot pans or dishes down on the surface.

Try not to get worktops very wet or leave pools of water on them for any length of time. This may, over a period of time, damage the surface or sealants.

Your bathroom

Wash hand basin, WC pans and cistern

Ceramic products like this should be cleaned regularly with warm soapy water. They can be rinsed, dried off and polished with a soft cloth. This will prevent dirt building up and clinging to ceramic surfaces.

Please do not leave strong cleaners or bleach on ceramics for any length of time. It is fine to use disinfectants or household cleaners but just remember to follow the instructions on the bottle and always remember to keep cleaning products out of the reach of visiting children.

Chrome taps and fittings

Wipe over with a damp cloth and warm soapy water from time to time. It is fine to use disinfectants, but please do not use a scouring pad or powder. Some household cleaners contain bleach or are abrasive and you need to be careful that you do not damage chrome with substances that can cause black spots, pitting or streaks. If you do use chemical cleaners, rinse off after use.

Toilet seat and shower panels

Wipe over with a damp cloth and warm soapy water from time to time. It is fine to use disinfectants, but please do not use a scouring pad or powder; again, always remember to follow the instructions on the packaging.

Your doors

How do I look after my doors?

The external doors in your home are double glazed for better heat and noise insulation and made from PVC-U or GRP which is long-lasting, hard wearing and does not require any ongoing maintenance, like painting.

Due to the material the door is made of, it is important that you do not drill or make any alterations to the door.

Additional Information

Section B More about repairs and maintenance

What do I need to do before work starts?

We may ask you to empty cupboards or shelves prior to work starting if you are having work on your kitchen or bathroom.

We may occasionally need access to your loft for rewiring for example, so it would be helpful if you can ensure your loft is tidy.

Will I need to cover my things up?

Our contractors/tradespersons will use dustsheets, but if you feel they have not adequately covered your carpet please let them know. If you have any dustsheets of your own it is also a good idea to cover your lounge suite, television and any other household possessions, as dust goes a very long way!

Safety when work is in progress

Please be careful whilst the work is being carried out. It is really important that visiting children understand that they must not play with tools, building materials, on scaffolding or in skips.

We will do all we can to keep you and your family safe whilst the work is going on but parents/grandparents or guardians have responsibilities too. Likewise, please make any suitable arrangements if there are any pets.

Will I have to manage without a kitchen or bathroom?

If you are having repairs to a kitchen or bathroom you may have limited access for some of the time while the work is in progress, so if you can, plan ahead. To make managing without a kitchen easier, think about preparing some meals in advance of the work which can be easily re-heated or even eaten cold. We will try to reconnect temporary cooking facilities by the end of the day, wherever possible.

We try to make sure that you are not left without washing or toilet facilities overnight, however on rare occasions this is unavoidable. In such cases temporary facilities will be provided. Bathroom fittings will usually be replaced on the same day but there will be some inconvenience. You may wish to arrange with a neighbour or relative to use their facilities for the short period when the fittings are swapped, just in case.

If I don't want the upheaval, can I opt out of any planned improvement works or repairs?

You are within your rights to opt out of improvement works inside your home, as long as there is no risk to the health and safety of yourself or others. However if a need for improvement works has been identified to resolve problems in the dwelling, then these will only get worse and eventually you may need to have the work carried out anyway.

Can I leave my key with a neighbour if I will not be at home?

A friend or family member will need to be present if a contractor or tradesperson requires access into your property.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you require more information please phone Connect.

Common repairs and queries

Frequently asked questions

Stop taps

Your stop cock is under the sink. Can you test the stop tap to ensure it turns your water supply on and off? If it's stuck, please contact Connect

Dripping taps

Please contact Connect. Please be aware that the longer the tap is left dripping, the bigger the job.

Changing light bulbs

We will change lights for tenants who are registered disabled or have a recognised vulnerability, if they do not have a family member to do this for them.

Criminal damage

In the unfortunate event that criminal damage is caused to the fabric of your property, ask the police for a crime number. If you have a crime number you will not be charged for the repair (we will claim from our insurers) .

Blocked drains

If you have a blocked drain please contact Connect

Alterations to kitchen to fit appliances

It is your responsibility to ensure that you obtain appliances that will fit your kitchen.

I'm locked out of my property; does CVCLT have spare keys?

We don't hold spare keys for our properties; you can leave a spare key with a relative, or trusted friend, or a neighbour. If you require a lock change please contact Connect; however you may be charged a fee for this.

Additional information

Section C In the event of antisocial behaviour

If a problem occurs between neighbours, it is often best to try and sort the matter out informally. By speaking to your neighbour, you may be able to settle the matter straight away without having to do anything else. Your neighbour might even be unaware that there was a problem in the first place.

We understand that this may not work or be appropriate in all cases. If it doesn't, please contact Connect and they will talk to you about the problem and tell you how they may help.

Keeping diary sheets are an important part of obtaining information to capture what has been happening and help establish the nature and extent of the problems and impact it is having on others.

After I've complained, what happens next?

Connect will try and help you sort out minor problems as quickly as possible. If things are, or become more serious they will work with you to agree on an action plan of what we will do, and what you will need to do, and outline the process for dealing with reports of anti-social behaviour.

Will Connect keep me updated with what's going on?

If they identify antisocial behaviour, they will agree an action plan with you setting out what they will do about it and what they will need you to do. They will keep you informed about the things they do and will ask you to do the same to try to tailor support to your needs. They will support victims and witnesses and work with other agencies.