



# PETRA Tenant Management Organisation Residents Handbook



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# You and us

## Introduction

This is a handbook for all residents of the Parkhill and Sunrise Estate, both tenants and leaseholders. It is designed to give you information about the housing services provided on this estate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to come over to the office for a chat, or give us a call on 01708 475358.

## The Parkhill and Sunrise Estate

Our estate contains three tower blocks:

- 1 – 48 Uphavering House
- 1 – 50 Parkview House
- 1 – 48 Overstrand House

The three tower blocks are managed on behalf of the Council by PETRA TMO. Each of the flats in these blocks have two spacious bedrooms, a kitchen, living room with balcony, bathroom and separate toilet. They also have an ample hallway plus one large and two smaller storage cupboards.

The three low-rise blocks are:

- 1 – 27 Sunrise Lodge
- 1 – 17 Solar Court
- 1 – 17 Serena Court

This sheltered accommodation is managed by the Council – although, at the time of writing, PETRA is in discussions with the Council and residents about the possibility of taking over the management of day-to-day repairs in these blocks.

The estate is set in beautiful scenery next to Harrow Lodge Park, with its lakes, fields and wildlife areas. West-facing flats also enjoy spectacular views of central London's ever-changing skyline.

We enjoy good public transport links. From Abbs Cross Lane, you can catch the 165, 365 and 372 buses, connecting variously with Elm Park underground station and the overland station at Romford, Hornchurch, Romford Market and Lakeside shopping centre.

Schools catering for all ages are in close walking distance. Shopping in Elm Park is a ten minute walk away, and the main shopping facilities of Hornchurch and Romford are short bus rides away.

## About PETRA

We were formally constituted on the 1st April 2003 as the first recognised Tenant Management Organisation in Havering. There are places for 15 elected board or committee members, all drawn from the estate residents.

## The Committee

Members are elected at the annual general meeting, held usually in September. Residents are welcome to stand for election and new members will be made most welcome. Prior to the AGM, and with the agreement of the Committee, new members can be admitted as co-opted members until the next AGM when they would need to stand for election.

Our current Chairman is Parkview resident Mike Davis. Mike is also Deputy Chair and Membership Secretary of the National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations (NFTMO).

## Staff team

PETRA employs a small team who are responsible for the day-to-day running of the estate. Currently, the team consists of:

- Caroline Edwards, Estate Manager
- Jim Brett, Senior Repairs and Grounds Maintenance Officer
- Brad Pavey, Repairs and Grounds Maintenance Officer
- Naomi Cooper, part-time Accounts Administrator
- Andrew Bence, freelance Writer and Editor

## Want to know who your nearest committee member is?

*Then visit the PETRA office today – We are here to help.*

The PETRA committee meets every month on the evening of the last Monday in the month. Meetings take place in the PETRA office and start at 8pm. All residents are welcome to attend meetings of the committee, but non-shareholders are not eligible to vote. There may also be times when an exempt item is on the agenda. This may be to discuss personal issues of a resident or member of staff, and can only be heard and discussed by committee members. Non committee members will be asked

to leave the meeting at this point. This is required to maintain our code of confidentiality.

## **Our aims and objectives**

Our aims include ensuring that the estate is maintained to the highest possible standards and to provide a first class service to the residents of the estate. PETRA is registered under the Industrial Provident Act and is governed by a committee of elected residents.

In addition to board or committee members, PETRA also has around 110 shareholders. PETRA ‘shares’ are purely tokenistic and cost residents just 10p each. They give lawful residents aged over 18 the chance to feel part of PETRA and entitles them to a vote at meetings where they can help decide what the priorities for the estate should be. Shareholders can be given as much training and instruction as they feel necessary to carry out their function, and we have a budget to pay for such training.



### **Interested in becoming a PETRA shareholder?**

*Then please come into the office for a chat*

## **Residents survey**

We hold resident surveys, usually once or twice a year, inviting you to comment on life on the estate and PETRA’s performance in particular. To date, we have had reasonably good marks from you for our performance – which, of course, is not to say there isn’t always room for improvement!

## **We aim to:**

- Check all common areas of the estate each day, identifying priorities and ordering work as necessary.
- Remove rubbish and clean graffiti from the estate as soon as it is reported.
- Keep all entrance lobbies clean and tidy, responding to need rather than sticking to schedules.
- Deliver a good service to all Parkhill and Sunrise Estate residents according to their needs.
- Encourage active participation by residents and help to foster a feeling of community on the estate.

- Ensure all residents can attend meetings and have access to information about the activities of PETRA TMO.

## **Confidentiality**

PETRA has a strict code of confidentiality. A copy can be obtained from the PETRA office. All personal information about residents will be treated in strict confidence. PETRA is registered under the Data Protection Act.

## **Equality**

PETRA takes very seriously its commitment to diversity and equal opportunities. We will treat all residents according to their needs and ensure that all residents have access to our services and the opportunity to participate in the organisation. We will not discriminate against any resident on any grounds but in particular on race, colour, religion, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability. A copy of our equal opportunities policy and procedure forms part of our management agreement with the Council and can be obtained from the PETRA office.

## **Opportunities for learning**

From time to time, the Havering College of Further and Higher Education uses the PETRA offices to offer short courses to residents. PETRA also hires in other specialist course providers for residents to educate or stimulate ideas for self improvement. In recent years this has included first aid, computer, cooking and a flower arranging courses.



**If a resident has particular skill or expertise that they would like to share with others in the community, what should they do?**

*Pop into the office for chat – PETRA wants to act as a ‘hub’ for the community to share skills and experience.*

# **You and your home**

If you are new to the estate, welcome! PETRA Committee members wish you an enjoyable time whilst you and your family reside on our estate. You have probably met our estate manager who most likely signed you up for your tenancy.

## **Introductory tenancy**

In most cases new tenants coming onto the estate will be on what is known as ‘an introductory tenancy’ for the first 12 months. Thereafter, all being well, a tenant will be offered a fixed term tenancy.

Your tenancy date started on a Monday and the date is recorded on your tenancy agreement. This is the date when you became the legal tenant and from that date you are expected to keep the flat clean, tidy and without annoyance to your neighbours or other residents on the estate.

## **Your responsibilities**

You are responsible for arranging the supply of gas and electricity to your flat. The gas meter is located in the corner cupboard under the kitchen sink or under the right hand side of the kitchen window. The meter may either be a ‘card key’ type, where you need to top up the card every so often at one of the local shops. Or you might have a more conventional quarterly type of meter. The electricity meter can be found on the wall of the large cupboard in the hall. Again, this may be either a ‘card key’ type or quarterly.

## **Good neighbours**

Your new home is on a landing shared by three other flats. We ask all residents to share some responsibility for keeping the landing, storeroom, chute room, and stairs (down to the next level) clean and free from any obstructions. Contract cleaners are employed to clean these areas, but in between their visits, residents who are physically robust are very welcome to sweep and mop the lift lobby area, the chute room, storeroom and the stairs down to the next level as needed.

## **Rubbish and recycling**

Normal household rubbish can be placed in plastic carrier bags and put down the chute. Do not put anything other than normal household rubbish down the chute as anything else may cause a blockage. If you have any bulky items you need help disposing of, please contact the PETRA office. Alternatively, you may leave bulky objects (furniture etc) down by the green containers situated in the basements of Overstrand and Uphavering House. We would appreciate it if you would not put items by the

containers on a Friday afternoon as youths sometimes can cause a nuisance with items left out during the weekend. In the basement areas of all three blocks there are orange bag recycling bins, and two glass recycling bins - one to cover the use for Overstrand and Parkview and one for Uphavering. There is also a textile recycling bin in Parkview's basement. Please use these bins for what they are designed for.

## Pets

We discourage the keeping of dogs or any other animals that can either be stressed from living in a flat or can cause a nuisance like barking when its owner is out. If you insist on having a pet, please:

- Gain permission first from the PETRA estate manager.
- Your pet must be kept under control at all times, failure to do so may result in legal action.
- Always make sure to clean up after it has done its 'business' on or around the estate. Dog poo bins are provided on the estate.
- Don't dispose of dog/cat litter down the chute unless it is wrapped securely in a plastic bag.
- Don't dispose of dog poo down the chute.



## Are you clear about your responsibilities as a tenant?

*If not, please speak to one of the team at PETRA*

## Live and let live

Residents need to be aware that if PETRA receives any complaints about you, members of your family or your visitors, we will write to you explaining what it is we think has happened and what positive steps we expect you to take to curb the annoyance or resolve the problem.

## Being considerate

Celebratory parties, for example, are of course reasonable from time to time, but new residents should be aware that surrounding neighbours do not appreciate being kept awake. If you are planning a party, it is best to let your immediate neighbours (including above and below) and the PETRA office know in advance. You should also set a time when you guarantee all noise will cease, and you MUST ensure that the deadline you set is kept to.

Similarly, we would ask you to keep the volume of your TV and radio etc down. ‘Live and let live’ requires us all to show consideration for others.

## You and your neighbourhood

 **Do you know of a Council estate in a lovelier setting than ours?**  
*We doubt it, and one of PETRA’s aims is to keep it that way!*

### Common areas

The successful care and upkeep of the estate is dependant on an effective partnership between the residents and PETRA. It is the responsibility of the residents to keep the front of their own flat clean and tidy. All shared areas, ie passages leading to the stairs, the stairwells themselves, the lifts and all the common areas, should be kept free from obstructions and litter.

Residents should note that it is illegal to smoke in the communal areas (lifts, landings, playrooms and stairwells). Please ensure your visitors are aware of this too.

### Graffiti and vandalism

In our efforts to keep the estate a clean and welcoming environment for everyone, we would encourage all residents to work with us and report all incidents of graffiti to the PETRA office. Removal of racist or offensive graffiti is a high priority and will be cleaned off as soon as possible. That is after we have photographed it and asked the police for any intelligence they may have on any ‘tag’ or previous incidents/knowledge. We will take legal action against anyone who damages the estate.

Please remember: we share this estate and must all act with consideration for one another if it is to be a place we are all happy to call ‘home’.

### Playrooms

These are often a bone of contention between neighbours when inappropriate items are stored in there. It would be ideal if all people on the landing could get together and decide on a designated area for each flat.

Please note: Only non-flammable items may be stored in playrooms to meet health and safety legislation. These are communal areas and are also covered by the no smoking legislation.

## **Parking**

Parking of vehicles on the estate is free of charge and we do not have any specific parking bay allocation policy. In short, you can park anywhere within reason. However, there are some restrictions. Do not park close or next to the buildings, especially near any entrance/exit doors, as this restricts access to the dry risers in the event of a fire. Do not park near or next to any of the iron pipes that can be seen on the outside basement walls. These are the gas mains and the Fire Brigade need instant access to the yellow valves set in the ground just by these pipes. These restrictions are for your safety so please ensure you, your family and visitors comply.

## **Our green and pleasant estate**

We're very lucky to live in attractive surroundings and PETRA staff are doing their best to keep the estate's green areas looking good and free from glass and litter etc. People can help by not allowing dogs to foul on the grass, and if they do – by clearing the mess away immediately.

We ask all residents to help keep these communal areas clean. Unlike some other London estates, we do not have any big problems with drug injection paraphernalia, but given that children play out on the grass in the nice weather, it goes without saying that adults should keep a careful eye out for any discarded needles, broken glass or other dangerous debris. And if you do see anything that needs to be cleared safely, tell the PETRA office immediately.

## **Let's party (responsibly!)**

From time to time, in the summer, some of the residents get together on the grass at the front of Overstrand and Parkview for an impromptu BBQ for friends, family and kids. It is great to see neighbours and their children sharing such good times and the whole estate takes on a village atmosphere. If you're attending such a gathering, please make sure to clear up your mess afterwards.

## **Anti-social behaviour**

PETRA will not accept any anti-social behaviour on this estate. Residents are responsible for the behaviour of every person both in your family and

those visiting you or your family members. Failure to do so could put your tenancy at risk.

Would all residents please note, CCTV cameras have been installed throughout the three tower blocks and anyone recorded behaving in an anti-social way will be prosecuted. If those involved caught on camera are visitors to your flat, you may also be prosecuted or charged for any damage done or cleaning up required.

### **More about noise**

Noise carries. We do understand that you may want to put your own stamp on your new home, and that can range from just putting a few pictures on the walls to a complete decoration makeover. As in all things, it is a matter of consideration for your neighbours. Drilling, hammering and banging of any kind should not start before 9am and, with plenty of breaks in between, should finish by 8pm on any day where children would be expected to attend school the following day. On a Friday or Saturday, all DIY should stop by 8:30pm.

Examples of anti-social behaviour that will not be tolerated:

- using abusive or insulting words
- using or threatening to use violence
- vandalism on the estate
- noise or fouling from pets
- unreasonable levels and/or timing of intrusive noise, including loud music
- littering and rubbish dumping
- speeding and dangerous driving of cars, vans, and riding of scooters/mopeds
- spraying or scrawling grafitti
- smoking in the common areas of any buildings
- blocking shared areas in the building or on the estate.

Please note: Residents are held responsible for the actions of their family members, their friends and their visitors. If the cameras pick up on you or your family/friends behaving in an anti-social way, you could be liable for a fixed penalty fine and/or prosecution.

## **How to report anti-social behaviour**

Make a note of the incident or incidents that you have witnessed – where, when, what happened, and (if you know) who was responsible. Then visit the office, or call us, to let us know the details. If you think that you or anyone else is in immediate danger because of anti-social behaviour, report the matter immediately to the office, call the Council's emergency out-of-hours phone number (01708 756699), Community Wardens 0800 151 3444, or the non-urgent police number 101.

## **How PETRA will respond**

Where a complaint of anti-social behaviour is made, PETRA will interview the complainant, supply them with an incident diary and witness statement form, and assess their vulnerability.

We will go on to investigate the allegation and report our findings to the relevant people and agencies. These could include the council and the police. Throughout this process, the complainant will be kept informed and their best interests respected.

### **What should you do if you have concerns about anti-social behaviour on the estate?**

*Please report your concerns to the office as soon as possible making sure you have dates and times to assist investigation.*

## **You and your flat**

As we all know, ‘stuff happens’ and sometimes you need help urgently. Please see our ‘Emergency Procedures’ booklet to find out what to do

This covers emergencies such as Fire, Power cuts, gas leaks and much more together with relevant phone numbers and contacts.

### **Water and boilers**

There are a number of water turn-off points in your flat, depending upon the type of boiler you have.

Those with the latest ‘**Combi**’ boiler will have two points of control: 1) under the sink – a stopcock; and 2) a further gate-valve located behind a small access panel door at the back and below the toilet cistern.

Other flats with the ‘**Elson**’ type hot water storage system will have three other ‘ball-a-valve’ controls. These look like stubby pipe fittings with a central flat headed screwdriver point in the middle of each fitting. These are located to one side of the Elson tank in the middle hall cupboard.

Whichever system of water supply you have, you are advised to familiarize yourself with the control valves, their location and ensure they are in working order.

You should be aware that a number of the plumbing waste pipes in these flats are now past the point where they can be relied upon. As a consequence, from time to time, as one or another waste pipe develops a leak, either PETRA staff or Havering Homes and Housing will employ plumbers to remove the large panel at the back of your toilet in order to trace the source of the leak. As a new tenant please be aware of this and decorate or tile your toilet in such a way that this panel can easily be removed.

## **Windows and condensation**

In 2013, new windows were installed in all three tower blocks on the estate. However, condensation in these flats can still be a problem.

Condensation is caused by too much moisture and not enough ventilation. Cooking, baths and showers are the main cause of condensation but tumble dryers, dish washers and hanging wet washing over radiators are all major contributors to condensation damp problems. Even sleeping in bedrooms where the air vents in the windows have been closed by stuffing with paper can make the condensation worse. In order to deal with ‘black mould’ please contact the PETRA office who will give you appropriate advice.

The extractor fan on the roof of each block runs 24 hours a day and removes dampness and odour from the bathrooms and toilets. The extractors are found at high level in both the toilet and bathroom and look like circular plastic apertures.

## **Repairs and maintenance**

There is a list of what tenants are responsible for maintaining and repairing, as against what PETRA is obligated to do. For full details of the list, please contact the office. Other than in very exceptional circumstances, all

window glass will be rechargeable. Door damage (including cupboards), locks and hinges are the tenant's responsibility. Obviously all items damaged by the tenant, the tenant's family members and visitors will be rechargeable.

### **Help for older and disabled residents**

Elderly and/or disabled residents who have no one to help them should ask PETRA if they have small jobs we can help them with. It is our general policy to help whenever possible, though there may be times when we have to refuse if other priorities have dictated events on the day. We hope that any refusal will not cause offence but sometimes staff have other more pressing priorities that have to be addressed.

### **Reporting repairs**

It is the responsibility of the tenant to report any defects to the PETRA office as soon as possible. It is also the responsibility of the tenant to take care of their home and not allow negligence or abuse, either by members of their family or by their visitors. Any alterations or additions to the property or its fixtures must have the written permission from PETRA or the Council's Homes and Housing team.

For reporting repairs, the office is usually staffed between 7:30am to 3:30pm, and phones are covered until 5pm Monday to Friday. Should we be out of the office for any reason you can leave a message on the answerphone, 01708 475358, and we will respond as soon as possible. Repair requests are prioritised and we usually make arrangements to call at the most convenient time for the tenants. Sometimes we will need to inspect the job before carrying out or arranging a repair.

### **Timescale for repairs**

#### **Emergencies – within 4 hours to make safe and/or complete**

We will attend as soon as possible to a defect that is either causing distress to a resident and/or damage to the building, or any defect that might potentially cause danger to the health of residents.

#### **Non emergency priority / Urgent – within two working days**

A repair will be treated as urgent if it is causing serious inconvenience to the resident, visitors or the public. The circumstances will be taken into

account when considering whether a repair is urgent. Priority will be given to households where there are young children, people who are elderly, housebound, or suffering from disability or illness.

A blocked sink, basin or bath, a toilet that won't flush, small leaks. For difficulties of this kind, we will endeavour to attend and repair within 48 hours.

### **Non urgent – within 14 working days**

We aim to remedy all defects for which we are responsible for and do so as quickly and efficiently as possible.

### **Whose responsibility is it to report repairs and take care of your flat?**

*Yours! So please take your responsibilities seriously.*

#### **Tenant responsibilities**

Tenants are specifically responsible for replacing: tap washers, toilet seats, door locks, spy holes, letter plates, hinges, smoke detectors, and all broken window glass. If you are unsure please contact the PETRA Office and they will be able to advise you.

#### **PETRA's responsibilities**

PETRA will normally maintain everything else in your flat, except where we believe an item has been abused by the tenant, a member of the tenant's family, or friends/visitors of the tenant. This repair will be recharged. We also look after the grounds maintenance.

#### **Homes and Housing's responsibilities**

The Council's Homes and Housing team are responsible for boiler servicing and repairs to central heating. *You are also legally obliged to let the council's contractor (currently S&F) into your flat once a year to service your boiler.*

- the supply of gas and electricity to the flats
- the lifts and all associated machinery
- water tanks and associated pumps and pipe-work
- extractor fans and trunking
- roof integrity

- stairwell netting
- aerials and cameras
- main entrance door electronic locks
- dry riser maintenance
- soil stacks and associated copper waste pipes

### **The Council's other responsibilities:**

- estate trees
- hard standings
- drains/sewers manholes etc
- roads and walkways, kerbs, etc
- the fabric of the buildings
- retaining walls and fences
- building insurance

## **You and your rights**

### **Be sure be safe**

Please be careful who you let into your flat. All PETRA staff carry photo identification, as should any contractors that we use. You should not hesitate to ask to see the ID if you are unsure about the person at your door. If still in doubt, do not let them in. Instead, contact the PETRA office immediately.

### **If we get it wrong**

Being human, we do all sometimes make mistakes. When PETRA makes a mistake, our policy is to apologise, learn lessons from it, and right whatever mistake has been made as soon as possible.

Any resident who has a complaint against PETRA or those acting for PETRA may use the complaints procedure. A copy is available in the PETRA office and covers complaints about the following:

- the behaviour or performance of an employee of PETRA
- the standard of caretaking and/or cleaning
- the speed or standard of repairs carried out by PETRA
- the behaviour or standard of performance of a member of the Management Board

## **Complaints procedure**

We can provide you with a copy of our complaints procedure in the office. Alternatively, you can view and download it from our website:  
**[www.petratmo.weebly.com](http://www.petratmo.weebly.com)**

Any resident who has a complaint against the Council or those acting on its behalf should use the Council's complaints procedure which you can find online at <http://www.havering.gov.uk/Pages/Services/Complaints-about-Council-services>

The type of complaint covered in this policy includes complaints about:

- the roads or walkways on the estate
- water and other utilities provided on the estate
- the garages
- lifts and other mechanical items on the estate
- TV reception
- roof leaks

## **The complainant's rights**

All complaints made about PETRA services or those acting on their behalf will be treated in the strictest confidence. There will be three stages following any written complaint about PETRA.

- 1) An investigation by the Manager or the Chair of the TMO, unless the complaint has been made about the Manager or the Chair of the Board, in which case the Council's Homes and Housing team will be the arbiters of the issue and will deal with it under their own three-stage complaints procedures.
- 2) The second stage will be a formal meeting with the complainant, with witness statements followed by a full report on the finding/s of the formal meeting.
- 3) The third stage will be a right of appeal should the complainant still feel aggrieved. This third stage will be conducted by Homes and Housing.

Any complaints not covered by PETRA's complaints procedures should be referred to Homes and Housing on 01708 434000, the Council on 01708 434343, or your local ward councillor. A list of councillors is held in the PETRA office.

**If you have a complaint but are not sure who to complain to, what should you do?**

*Read the above, and if you're still not sure, contact the PETRA office for advice.*

## **Home insurance**

When the pennies are scarce it is understandable to forgo on things like home insurance cover. However, that can be a truly costly mistake. Fire and smoke damage can cost you everything you own. Or that silly moment when you go out and leave a tap running and your downstairs neighbours asks you for £100s to replace and decorate what your mistake caused to be damaged. These are precisely the times you thank heaven you got insured. The Council has an arrangement with Norwich Union to offer our residents a special offer on two schemes. To find out more, give them a ring on 01708 434000 and ask for Julie Oakley.

## **Buying your council home (Right to Buy)**

The Right to Buy scheme allows council tenants to buy their home off the council and gives tenants a discount on the open market.

To qualify for the Right to Buy scheme, you need to have been a public sector tenant for at least five years in total.

You do not have to have lived at your present address for five years if you've already held tenancies elsewhere but you do have to be a secure tenant.

You can request a Right to Buy information pack from the Home Ownership team by the following:

- Call Home Ownership on 01708 434000
- Email: [homeownership@havering.gov.uk](mailto:homeownership@havering.gov.uk)

The team will provide you with a booklet that explains how the Right to Buy scheme works.

If you live in a flat or maisonette they will also give you a booklet that gives more detail about buying leasehold properties. A Right to Buy application form will also be included.

Please be aware that Havering Council are only able to provide Right to Buy information directly to the tenant, not to family members.

### **Havering Liberty Credit Union**

Also when money's tight, you might want to look into a simple savings scheme which provides you with a certain amount of security and piece of mind. For as little as £5 per month regularly saved, the Credit Union may be able to help with:

- help when domestic emergencies happen
- a bridging loan when starting a new job
- managing funeral expenses
- loans to cover training costs

Their savings interest rates are usually better than the high street banks or building society and their interest rates on borrowing are usually cheaper as well. Why not give them a ring on 01708 741899.

### **Domestic violence**

PETRA is very aware of the fears and practical problems victims of domestic violence face on a regular basis. It takes bucket loads of courage to get away from an abuser, especially when you have the children's wellbeing to consider. Help is available from organisations such as Victim Support (01708 451000) or the National Women's Aid organisation (0808 200 0247) If you are being bullied please seek the help that is available.

### **What PETRA will do to support victims of domestic violence?**

Where an allegation of domestic violence is made, PETRA will, as a matter of urgency, refer the complainant to one or more of the following agencies: Victim Support Havering; Women's Aid; and relevant Homes and Housing officials.

# **Leaseholders**

The number of Leaseholders on the estate is growing and this could be due to a few reasons. We like to think that residents are so pleased with the service PETRA provides that they wish to remain on the estate or, of course, in the current economic climate more people are exercising their 'right to buy' to enable them to get onto the housing ladder.

A number of our original leaseholders have now sold their flats and new leaseholders have moved in but have no idea about PETRA and how we work and support all residents. For instance, all community events such as fun days, cooking sessions, arts & crafts sessions and outings are open to all residents. All leaseholders are eligible to be shareholders in PETRA, this costs 10p per share and is valid for the length of time the leaseholder resides on the estate. Being a shareholder entitles you to attend meetings and vote on any issues to do with the estate and how our money is spent.

In this section we hope to give you details of what a leaseholder can expect and also what their responsibilities are.

## **Your lease with the Council**

The lease tells you what parts of the property have been sold to you and what rights you have over communal areas.

When you buy your flat, you do not buy the property itself, you buy a lease which gives you the right to live in the property for a set period of time.

Havering Council owns the freehold and is your landlord. They are responsible for completing repairs to communal areas, providing cleaning services to communal areas, maintaining grounds etc (these services are provided mainly via PETRA as the Council's Managing Agent).

Although leaseholders do not have to pay a weekly rent you are required to pay annual 'ground rent' and a service charge.

Leaseholders are looked after by the Home Ownership team who are part of the Council's Homes and Housing service.

## **The lease**

Not all leases are identical, some clauses may vary slightly.

The front page of your lease explains who is involved in the agreement.

The lease gives the name of the person who originally bought the flat from the Council. Later purchasers take on all the rights and responsibilities of the first purchaser.

The lease also includes the requirement to pay service charges for major works, communal services and repairs, management and administration costs and ground rent.

The Lease is a legal document that sets out the relationship between you and the landlord.

It is important for leaseholders to understand the terms of your lease.

You should make sure that you understand what are your responsibilities, and what are those of the Council. If you break the terms of your lease, you could face legal action.

## **Don't understand your lease?**

If you find it difficult to understand your lease then you should get advice from a solicitor and insist that they provide a report on its terms when they are instructed to deal with the purchase of your home.

## **Renting out and selling your home**

This page provides you with information on renting out and selling your home.

### **Renting/sub letting your home**

- Leaseholders do not normally need the Council's permission to rent out their property unless they have a Council mortgage, in which case they should contact the Home Ownership team.

- You will need to notify the Council if the property is sub-let your building insurance may be affected. Failure to notify them may result in loss of insurance cover. The Insurance Section will need a copy of the tenancy agreement. This will be required each time the agreement is renewed.
- You should notify the Home Ownership team and the PETRA Office in writing, providing details of your correspondence address and emergency contact numbers.
- You are still the owner of the property and therefore responsible for the service charges. Your tenants must abide by the terms of the lease. If they do not, the Council may take action against you as the owner of the property.
- You should also contact your mortgage lender if you wish to sub-let your property to check that the terms of your mortgage will allow this.
- You can only let your property as a private residential flat for the occupation of one family only.

## **Selling your home**

Leaseholders do not need the Council's permission to sell their property.

### **Will I need to repay any of the Right to Buy discount if I sell my home?**

If you purchased the property from the Council under the Right to Buy, you will need to repay all or some of the discount depending on when you made your application to buy the property, usually if you sell after 5 years and have no outstanding debts with the Council there is no recharge.

### **Information from the Council**

The person buying your property may want details of the service charges and any works that have recently been carried out or are planned for the

future. Your solicitor will normally write to Home Ownership team asking for the information they require.

There is a fee for this service. Information will be provided within 12 working days of receipt of the fee.

## **Notify the Council**

It is the new leaseholders' responsibility to notify Havering Council's Legal Services Division that the lease needs to be assigned into different names. This must be done within 21 days of completion. The leaseholders' details cannot be amended until the official assignment has been received by the Council.

Failure to do so is a breach of the lease agreement. The building insurance cover will also be affected if the lease is not in the correct names.

## **PETRAs responsibilities (which are paid for within your services charges)**

- Caretaking (cleaning ground floor and basement communal areas)
- Grounds maintenance
- Repairs to communal areas

## **Supporting leaseholders**

Leaseholders may ask PETRA to carry out repairs in their property. The Manager will have to consider whether PETRA has the resources to do this work, and if PETRA does carry out work on behalf of a leaseholder then they will be charged in the same way as if an outside contractor had been used.

The service charges leaseholders pay for cleaning, caretaking and grounds maintenance are all calculated by the Council. Any additional repairs/maintenance will be itemized within your quarterly statement.

## **Leaseholder responsibilities:**

- The Council has the right to enter a leaseholder's home to inspect or carry out repairs for which they are responsible. They will try to give you 48 hours notice in writing, unless there is an emergency.

- All maintenance and decoration within the flat, making sure any DIY is done within reasonable times
- It is recommended that you have adequate contents insurance to cover damage to your own or other peoples properties.
- Ensuring your family and visitors behave in an appropriate manner throughout the estate
- Keeping your immediate communal area clear and tidy
- If you have pets ensure they are controlled in an appropriate manner

## **Leaseholders and anti-social behaviour**

Your lease states that you must not do anything within your flat, building or estate that could cause a nuisance, annoyance or damage to other residents. This applies to everyone living in your home and any visitors.

### **Examples of nuisance are:**

- loud and frequent playing of music, radio or television
- noisy parties
- other loud noise such as vacuum cleaning, hammering or arguments
- harassment of neighbours
- uncontrolled animals
- blocking shared areas in the building or on the estate

TV's, radios and so on should only be played at reasonable levels and at reasonable hours. In short, no one should be able to hear noise outside any flat.

If you are found to be causing a nuisance or harassment, Havering Council can take legal action against you.

## **Who do I report harassment or nuisance to?**

If you are suffering harassment or nuisance, you should contact the PETRA office. The Manager will investigate your complaint and take appropriate action.

## **Do I need permission to keep a pet?**

Yes. If you wish to keep a pet, you must first seek permission from the PETRA Estate Manager. If permission is granted, your pet must be kept under control at all times. Failure to do so may result in legal action taken against you.

## **Reporting a repair**

Before contacting the Council, leaseholders must make sure that the repair is the Council's responsibility to fix.

Report a repair online by logging in/registering with SeeMyData at  
<https://www.seemydata.co.uk/cgi-bin/index.pl?client=havering>

## **Other ways of reporting a repair include:**

- Download the My Landlord app on your smartphone, take a photo of the problem and submit to the Council's housing repair team. The app is available from Google play, app store or iTunes.
- Email [homes@havering.gov.uk](mailto:homes@havering.gov.uk)
- Phone on (Freephone) 0800 151 3444 (this number is free from landlines but mobile operators may charge) or by general phone on 01708 434000
- Textphone - 01708 433399
- Out of Hours emergency repairs (01708 756699).

Check the contractors ID. Please remember, anyone working for Havering Council should carry identification. Always ask to see an identity card before letting anyone into your home.

## **Getting permission for home improvements**

If you carry out work without permission, you will be breaking the conditions of your lease.

Leaseholders need the Council's permission (Landlord's consent) for any work they may wish to carry out that will change the structure of their home.

This includes:

- Removing or building walls

- Changing doors or windows
- Putting up a satellite aerial
- Installation of water meter

## **Want to carry out structural alterations/additions to your home?**

You must write to the Home Ownership team for consent. You will need to include full details of the works you wish to carry out along with any specification or plan. There is a fee for this service.

### **Home Ownership team**

Homes and Housing  
Chippenham Road  
Harold Hill  
Romford  
RM3 8YQ

### **Leasehold Focus Group**

The purpose of the group is to discuss information supplied to leaseholders about services and service charges, and to review procedures.

Since it was set up the group has reviewed the information supplied to leaseholders about their estimated service charges and actual expenditure incurred as well as surveys carried out with leaseholders. As a result of discussions with the group the Council has introduced a charge for 'Resale' enquiries and the group was also involved in the production of the Leasehold Information Pack.

The group meets four times a year and is always looking for new members to reflect views from leaseholders across the borough.

### **Leasehold Panel**

The Leasehold Panel is a group of leaseholders who have agreed to take part in Council surveys about services the Council provides. Surveys are normally conducted by post or email.

# Useful numbers

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Telephone</b>
Abbs Cross School	01708 440304
The Albany School	01708 441537
Brittons School	01708 630002
Benhurst School	01708 450807
Elm Park Primary School	01708 451463
Town Hall Romford	01708 434343
St Andrews Ward Councillors	01708 434343
Environmental Health (Noise Control)	01708 432777
Havering Trading Standards	08454 04050
Housing Allocations	01708 434130
Havering Council's Homes and Housing team	01708 434000
Havering Council's Home Ownership Team	01708 434000
Elm Park Library	01708 434919
Hornchurch Library	01708 434903
Non-Urgent Police matters	101
Romford Police Station	0208 721 2594
Hornchurch Police Station	01708751212
St. Andrews Police team	0208 649 3527
Neighbourhood Wardens	01708 434000
Neighbourhood Wardens (out of hours)	01708 756699
The Samaritans	01708 740000
Community Safety	01708 432927
National Domestic Violence	08082000247
Victim Support (Havering)	0208 550 2410
Havering Women's Aid	01708 728759
National Women's Aid	0808 200 0247
AgeUK	01708 796600
Housing Out of Hours Emergencies	01708 756699
Queens Hospital Romford	01708 435000
Elm Park Clinic	01708 796066
NHS Direct	08454647

**Parkhill Estate Tenant Management**

**Organisation**

**PETRA Office**

**1 Parkview House,**

**Sunrise Avenue,**

**Hornchurch,**

**Essex**

**RM12 4YW**

**Tel: 01708 475358**

**Fax: 01708 469350**

**Email: petratmo@aol.com**

**Website: [www.petratmo.weebly.com](http://www.petratmo.weebly.com)**

**PETRA is a not-for-profit community  
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