



# ***Pensioner Housing***

## **Residents Handbook**

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition - March 2021

Welcome to your Whangarei District Council Pensioner Housing Unit.

We provide 164 Pensioner Housing units throughout the district with the aim to provide safe, affordable and age-friendly housing for our tenants.

Although our units are designed for retirees who are active and able, we know that you will appreciate the convenience of having us take care of the outdoor maintenance for you. We mow lawns, clear gutters and tend to paths, leaving you with more time to enjoy the things you really love.

You will enjoy the comfort and privacy of your unit but you will also have the security and support that come from living in a friendly, communal environment.

This guide will give you the information you need to help settle in.

***Please read through and contact your tenancy manager if you wish to discuss anything further.***



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## Keeping in touch

We want to keep in touch with you and make it really easy for you to get tenancy help and to request maintenance and repairs when needed. To do this Council has appointed a Tenancy Manager to act as agent for all our Pensioner Housing tenancy management and operational matters.



Queries and any requests for maintenance should be directed to:

**Whangarei Agricultural & Pastoral Society**

127 Bank Street, Whangarei

phone: 09 438 3109 Extn 1

email: [pensionerhousing@wap.org.nz](mailto:pensionerhousing@wap.org.nz)

8.30am - 4.30pm



We are also going to send you questionnaires and newsletters from time to time to check that we are providing housing that is safe, affordable and age-friendly and to ask you for your suggestions for improvements. You can help us by keeping in touch and taking part in these surveys.

## Your tenancy agreement

You have entered into a tenancy agreement which is a contractual arrangement between yourself and Council. This gives some important rights and responsibilities as set out in the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 and which are outlined in your tenancy agreement, a copy of which is provided.



In addition, this Residents Handbook sets out further guidelines aimed to help with the efficient management and operation of the villages and to encourage a harmonious environment for the enjoyment of all tenants.

In your tenancy agreement you have agreed to reside in your unit and not sublet it or assign it to anyone else. As you have signed this agreement you are the only one able to live in the unit. Failure to abide by this will result in termination of your tenancy.

# Money matters

## Rent

Your rent is payable two weeks in advance and should be paid fortnightly starting from when you move in.

You have some options for paying your rent, however, we would prefer you to pay by Direct Debit or Assignment of Benefit as we find this is more convenient and efficient for our tenants.

A Direct Debit form is also included or please ask your Tenancy Manager to send you a pre-populated Assignment of Benefit form for you to sign and return to allow rent to be paid directly from your benefit.

Other options are:

- Automatic payment

Please talk to your Tenancy Manager about these options to ensure you have the correct details so that your rent is paid to our account.

## Bond

Your bond is set at the equivalent of four weeks rent calculated at the time your tenancy commences.

Your bond will be lodged within 23 days with Tenancy Services who will hold it until the tenancy is terminated.

At the end of your tenancy you should get a full refund if you have looked after your unit and paid your rent in full.

You can also ask to have it transferred if you are transferring to a new tenancy.



# Vehicles and parking

## Car parks

Car parking facilities are very limited in all our villages and for that reason cannot be reserved by any particular tenant. It is important that this is understood by all tenants to ensure a harmonious environment for all. Please be considerate of others when using the parking facilities. You must only park in designated car parks, not on grass or in no parking areas.

As a Tenant, you are responsible for your visitors. Visitors must park outside the village at all times. Allowances are given for picking up and dropping tenants or groceries off so long as they do not exceed five minutes at any one time.

Non-roadworthy vehicles or vehicles parked inconsiderately or in emergency parks may be removed at the owner's expense.

No more than one vehicle per tenant can be parked on the property. If you own more than one vehicle you must park the second one on the street.

There are no parking facilities available for trucks, trailers, motorhomes etc.

# Repairs and maintenance

## General maintenance

We are responsible for keeping your home in a reasonable state of repair and carrying out maintenance work. We engage Council approved contractors to do all of our maintenance work.

**Normal Hours:** If you want repairs or maintenance work done, please report it to your Tenancy Manager.

**After Hours:** Only urgent and emergency repairs should be reported to Council's After Hours Call Service on 430 4200.

Maintenance will be prioritised and completed on the following basis:

- first priority will be given to urgent health and safety issues that include water supply, means of cooking, continuity of power supply, rainwater leaks etc. The aim is to respond to urgent health and safety requests within 24 hours
- second priority will be given to responsive maintenance where components break or wear out and are likely to place you at risk, including security and accessibility issues. We will respond to these based on the level of risk identified



- other (non-urgent) responsive maintenance and upgrade requests receive a lower priority. These include redecorating units and/or upgrades resulting from tenancy management inspections or by request. This work will be completed in accordance with established priorities across the entire pensioner housing stock.

Please note that to complete full refurbishment work the unit must be vacant for 4-5 weeks. This is to protect the health and safety of our tenants and contractors and also to allow full access.

## ***Pest and infestations***

It is the responsibility of the landlord to make sure your unit is free from pests at the beginning of your tenancy.

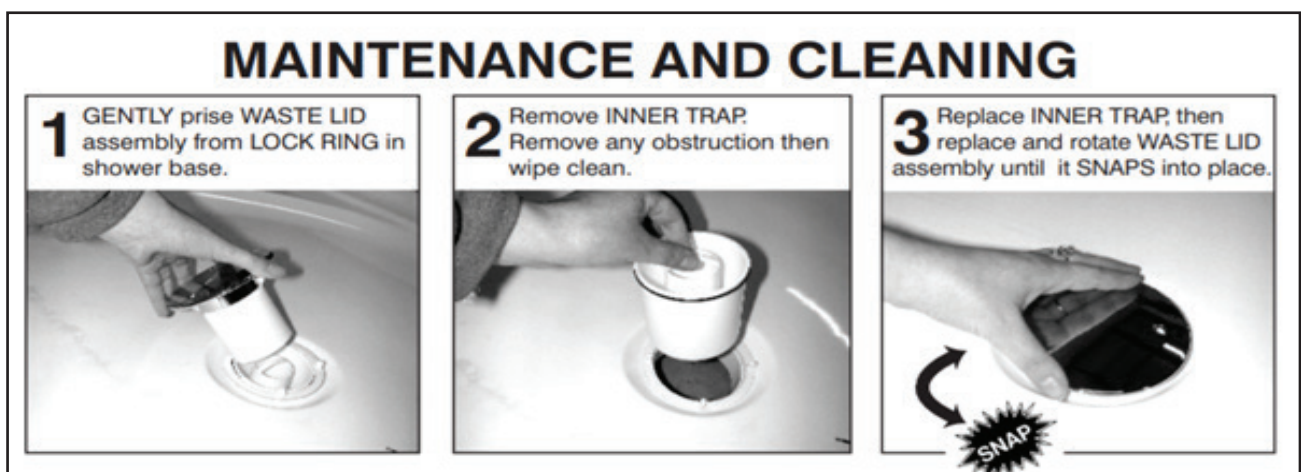
To avoid pest infestations, you are required to keep your units in a clean and tidy condition and to dispose of and store food appropriately.

If there is an infestation you must notify the tenancy manager immediately. Where the infestation is caused by cleanliness or hygiene issues, the costs for fumigation may be on-charged to you.

## ***Sewerage and waste water blockages***

We are responsible for any defects in the plumbing systems of your unit but you are responsible for ensuring there are no internal blockages caused by fats, scraps or anything else in the drains or toilet.

You may find that from time to time your shower drains slowly and you may be standing in water. This is not pleasant for you and can also lead to flooding in the unit. The slow drainage is probably due to a build-up of soap scum, hair etc. in the drain. Initially you can try pouring boiling water down the plug hole to break up this debris. If this doesn't work and you have an easy clean drain you may need to remove the cover and clean the trap inside. Follow these easy steps.



If this doesn't work then please contact us so that we can get a plumber to check it for you.

## ***Light bulbs and electric stove elements***

Your unit has been checked to ensure all lights and stove elements work before you move in.

We will arrange for the replacement or repair of all electrical fittings and will replace or repair any hob and oven elements that fail due to normal wear and tear.

It is your responsibility to replace light bulbs that expire during your occupancy. However, if you have problems with this due to any health or mobility issues, please phone us and we can arrange for one of our contractors to do this for you, as long as it is within normal hours.

## ***Installations and or additions***

You must not alter your unit in any way or install fixed equipment without first gaining written approval from us.

This includes painting, construction of a garden, landscaping the exterior, installation of heat pumps, constructing lean-tos or sheds etc.

Please do not use screw in hooks or nails in the walls. Damage-free hanging solutions are available at most hardware stores and are allowed.

# ***Gardens and grounds care***

## ***Lawns and communal grounds***

Lawns, trees and hedges within the villages are maintained on a regular basis by Council contractors.

Paths, fences and car parks will be sprayed and/or water blasted annually. If you notice your paths are green and slippery please let us know so that we can book this in for cleaning to avoid any fall hazards.

Do not add, remove or transplant any plants from or to any areas maintained by Council. If you wish to request or recommend any improvements or landscaping please contact us for approval first.

## ***Gardens***

We do not maintain the gardens in the immediate area of your unit and these are your responsibility to keep in a tidy manner that enhances the appeal of the village.

Please be mindful when choosing plants for your gardens to make them easy to look after. Choose plants and shrubs that will grow no bigger than 1m (in width and height) and will not block access to paths or light into units.





If you are experiencing any difficulties with this for any reason, please let us know so that the garden can be returned to lawn or alternative arrangements made.

## ***Pots, ornaments and rubbish***

Please keep ornaments and pots to a minimum and within your garden areas and not on paths or lawns. Please dispose of rubbish and do not allow it to accumulate around your unit. This is to allow safe access for yourself and our contractors who maintain lawns and the exterior of your unit.

If you have an accumulation of things around your unit that are causing issues or are not in keeping with the overall look of the village you will be asked to remove them.

## ***Staying safe and secure***

### ***Keys***

You will be provided with two keys for your unit. It is your responsibility to take care of these. You are not allowed to have keys cut for your unit yourself for security reasons. To arrange another key please contact us – there will be a small cost for this.

If you lock yourself out of your unit and a locksmith is required any charges for the call out or repair of any damage caused to gain access will be charged to you.

Please take care to lock all doors and close all windows if you are going out. Keys are not to be left under the mat, in a letterbox or under a pot plant!

If your village includes shared facilities, these must be kept locked when not in use.

### ***Security and lighting***

Your unit has a security door fitted to allow ventilation while still keeping the unit safe.

All villages have exterior lighting and we are currently upgrading to LED lights, and where necessary, adding more lights for paths, car parks etc.

Each unit has a porch light. Not all have been upgraded to motion sensor security lights yet. If you feel that your lighting could be improved, please discuss this with us.

### ***Smoke alarms***

Working smoke alarms are compulsory in all rental homes. It is our responsibility to ensure that smoke alarms are working at the start of each new tenancy and these will also be checked at every inspection.

You must not damage, remove or disconnect your smoke alarm and you must contact us if you notice there are any problems.

## **Health and safety**

We all have a responsibility to ensure that your village is a safe place to live and a safe place for our staff and contractors to work.

We want to do everything we reasonably can to minimise the opportunity for anything that might cause you or your guests harm.

You can help us by:

- Letting us know if you identify any slip or trip hazards or fire and electricity hazards
- Keeping your home and the exterior of your unit free of surplus possessions and rubbish
- Never overloading power points, multi boards or double adaptors
- Keeping heaters clear of anything that can burn such as curtains
- Never leaving cooking unattended
- Always abiding by the health and safety instructions of our contractors. Do not enter any area barricaded off and sign posted as a work site. This is because we and our contractors need to comply with the conditions of the Health and Safety at Work Act when we are carrying out work on the units. Do not be offended if you are asked to leave any area that is unsafe as our contractors are required to do so under the Act.

## **Utilities and services**

### **Telephone and internet**

Cabling has been provided to your unit for a telephone and at least one jack point is located inside your unit.

Most villages also have high speed fibre installed to the gate and in some villages fibre has been laid underground to the exterior of the units. Approval must be given prior to any new fibre installations.

You are responsible for supplying your own telephone(s) and modem and arranging a telephone and/or internet connection, should you choose to have them, and for paying all charges for the connection and ongoing rental.



### **Power connection**

At the beginning of your tenancy you must make arrangements with your preferred power supplier to open an account for electricity to your unit. All charges relating to the electricity supply are your responsibility.

For health, safety and hygiene purposes you must maintain a power supply to your unit.

## Television tuning and aerials

An aerial has been provided and an aerial jack point for connection. Any upgrades or tuning required at the start of your tenancy will be your responsibility.

If the installation of a new aerial or other equipment is required, you must first get approval from us and the installation must be carried out by approved contractors only.

## Cooking appliances

An electric oven for cooking is provided in your unit. For fire safety reasons gas cookers are not allowed to be used in the units.

## Heating

We are currently in the process of installing heat pumps in all the units, however, all units have been fitted with insulation in the ceilings and where accessible, underfloor and in the walls.

Electric heaters are our preferred option for tenants to use for heating.

Gas heating is allowed but not recommended as unflued heaters release air pollutants and water vapour directly into your home. This can cause mildew and mould build up if insufficient ventilation is provided. If your unit has existing heater or heat pump then gas heating is not allowed.

## Water supply

Water is supplied by Council and is covered in your rent.

Please do not waste water and notify us as soon as possible if you notice any leaks from taps or pipes etc.

## Refuse disposal

Disposal of all household refuse is your responsibility. This must be undertaken regularly and refuse must not be allowed to accumulate.

Any costs incurred by us to remove rubbish will be on-charged to you.

Green Waste bins are supplied by us and will be collected as required. These bins are to be used for green waste such as weeds, leaves and trimmings etc. Branches and household rubbish are not to be placed in green waste bins.



# Property inspections

We inspect your unit at least twice a year and at other times as required. The purpose of the inspection is to:

- Check for any repairs or maintenance that might be required
- Ensure that your home is safe from a fire and security perspective
- Ensure that your home is secure and that all locks, latches and catches are working properly
- Make sure that there are no breaches of the tenancy agreement

We will contact you at least 48 hours in advance to arrange a suitable time. If defects are identified during an inspection, we may need to come back and re-inspect once things have been fixed. We will give you notice if we need to do this.

## General matters

### Pets

Pets are not allowed in pensioner housing units.

In special circumstances, we may consider a request for permission for one cat or one bird. You must make a request in writing and if approval is given a bond will be required and special conditions will apply.

No dogs are allowed in the villages at any time, except for registered guide dogs.

### Smoking

All Pensioner Housing units and all communal areas within the villages are smoke free environments.

You are responsible for both yourself and your visitors, to ensure that there is no smoking in your unit. If any damage is suspected to be caused by smoking inside a unit this will be deemed not to be fair wear and tear and the cost of repairs will be charged to you.

If you smoke outside your unit, please be considerate of your neighbours and dispose of butts appropriately and ensure that your smoking does not adversely affect others.

All communal areas such as carparks, shared laundries etc are smokefree.

### Behaviour

Being a good neighbour is an important part of living in a communal village setting. We encourage all our tenants to act as good neighbours.



A good neighbour is:

- Considerate – respects other people’s right and privacy
- Tolerant – understands that people have different ways of doing things
- Concerned – notices when something is wrong and does something about it
- Responsible – for the actions of their families and guests
- Law-abiding – does not engage in and reports illegal activity to the Police

If you encounter any problems that concern your physical safety or any illegal activities, please phone the Police immediately. If you do report a problem to the authorities, please also give us a call to let us know about the issue.

As we have a responsibility for the well-being of all our tenants we will not tolerate bad behaviour that interferes with the peace, comfort, privacy or safety of those living nearby.

Unacceptable behaviour will result in the termination of the tenancy as set out in the Residential Tenancies Act 1986.

## **Visitors**

Visitors can be family, friends, support workers or anyone else you have invited to your unit. As you are responsible for the behaviour of your guests at all times (within the village and inside your unit) it is really important that they abide by the Pensioner Housing rules set out in this Handbook and behave with courtesy and consideration to others.

If your visitor interferes in any way with the peace, comfort or privacy of other tenants and you allow them to do so you may be in breach of your tenancy agreement and your tenancy may be terminated.

# **Tenancy Matters**

## **Ending your tenancy**

When you decide to leave, you must give us written notice as per your Tenancy Agreement and provide us with a date that you will be vacated by and an address for future correspondence.

We will:

- give you a helpful checklist of things to remember to do
- inspect the unit after you have emptied and cleaned it
- prepare a Bond Refund or Transfer Form which you must sign
  - If there is damage to the unit or it is not left reasonably clean and reasonably tidy, we will claim any costs we incur from the bond, plus any rent that may be still owing.

## ***Urgent termination of tenancy***

We may waive the notice period if you are being permanently relocated to a hospital or rest home or if, due to ill health, you are not able to give written notice as per your Tenancy Agreement. Written proof of this must be provided to support your request.

## ***Transfers***

Under special circumstances you may request to transfer to another unit. This could be due to a change in health, transportation or to be closer to services and family etc. In these circumstances, you should request the transfer in writing and provide us with any details to support this.

In all cases a transfer will be treated as a termination of the old (details above) and the commencement of a new tenancy.

## ***Complaints and grievances***

Even though we do our best to get things right, sometimes you may feel we haven't. If there is something you are not happy about regarding your unit or the services we offer, we would like you to talk to us and give us the opportunity to find a solution. Depending on the type of complaint you can do one of the following:

### ***Informal complaint***

Any problems or requests regarding your unit, your neighbours or the grounds please contact your tenancy manager first. Your comments will be recorded and the appropriate actions taken to rectify the problem or the reasons why we can't fix it will be clearly explained.

The tenancy manager may escalate this to Council, if it is a serious problem or one that requires Council approval of expenditure.

### ***Formal complaint***

If the problem continues and is not resolved you may put your issue in writing and send it to the Council:



#### **MAIL**

Community Property Adviser,  
Whangarei District Council,  
Private Bag 9023,  
Whangarei 0148



#### **EMAIL**

[mailroom@wdc.govt.nz](mailto:mailroom@wdc.govt.nz)

Your complaint will be reviewed and the appropriate person will be appointed to investigate further. You will be kept informed of the process, who is appointed and any steps being taken to reach a mutually acceptable agreement.

## **Mediation and Tenancy Tribunal hearings**

If the matter is related to your tenancy agreement or is in relation to any matter covered under the Residential Tenancy Act it may be referred to Tenancy Services for formal mediation or to the Tenancy Tribunal for a hearing. The Tribunal can formalise what is agreed at mediation or can make a ruling on an issue that is legally binding on both parties.

## **Breach of responsibilities**

If you break the conditions of your agreement and it is something that can be fixed, we will ask you to fix the problem within 14 days.

If you don't fix the problem, we will give you a notification of breach of tenancy and ask the Tenancy Tribunal to end your tenancy and get you to pay any money owed to us.

If you break the conditions of your agreement, and it has a serious impact upon us or any other person, we will ask the Tenancy Tribunal to end your tenancy immediately.

## **The Tenancy Tribunal**

The Tenancy Tribunal is a court set up to deal with unresolved problems between tenants and landlords. We may apply for a Tenancy Tribunal Order if you (or your visitor):

- owe more than 21 days' rent
- have caused or threatened to cause substantial damage to your house or garden
- have threatened or assaulted, or permitted any other person to threaten or assault any of our staff, contractors, agents, any other building occupant or neighbour, or anyone else entitled to be on the property;
- have had 14 days' notice to remedy a breach under the tenancy agreement but haven't done it
- have broken one or more terms of your tenancy agreement with us and the problem cannot be resolved
- have used or allowed your house or flat to be used for illegal activities.

## **Independent advice for tenants**

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment – Tenancy Services also provides free advice for tenants on 0800 TENANCY (0800 83 62 62).





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*Working together with*



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