

Vale Homes  
Safe in our hands



Cartrefi'r Fro  
Diogel yn ein dwylo

# Vale Homes News

July 2022

VALE of GLAMORGAN



BRO MORGANNWG



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## The Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016



The Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 is a new law being introduced by the Welsh Government on **1st December 2022** and it affects every tenant and landlord in the public and private rented sector in Wales, including Vale of Glamorgan Council as your landlord and you as our tenant.

The Act will improve how people rent, manage, and live in rented homes across Wales.

### **There is no need to worry**

The Council will still be your landlord and you will continue to receive the same housing service as you do now. You will still be able to live in your home, you will still pay rent, and we will still do your repairs and look after your estates and communal areas. We have been working closely with Welsh Government and other housing organisations to prepare for the changes, and our staff will be working hard to ensure the changes are implemented as seamlessly as possible.

This newsletter sets out the important things you need to know and aims to answer any questions you may have.

If your question has not been answered or if you would like more information you can contact us in the following ways:

■ Email us at [rentinghomeswales@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:rentinghomeswales@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) or

■ To speak to your Neighborhood Manager use the contact details below

#### **Gibbonsdown and Treharne**

Housing Manager, Sharon Cull.  
Email [scull@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:scull@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)  
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#### **Barry East, Dinas Powys and Penarth**

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#### **Barry West, Llantwit Major, Rhoose, St Athan and Rural Vale**

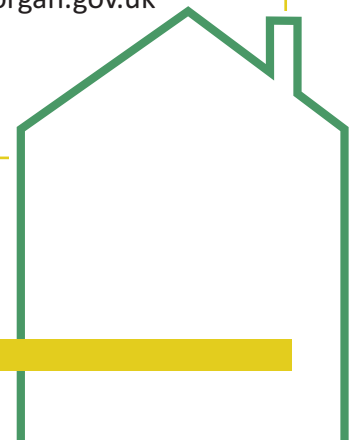
Housing Manager, Georgia Thomas  
Email [gthomas@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:gthomas@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)  
Phone 02920 673170  
Mobile 07815938413

#### **Buttrills, Central Estate and Colcot**

Housing Manager, Emma Williams  
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Phone 02920 673209  
Mobile 07855 311895

You can also find out more information on the Welsh Government's website:

<https://gov.wales/housing-law-changing-renting-homes>



## What are the changes?

The Council remains your landlord and we will issue you with an 'occupation contract', which will replace your tenancy agreement.

There are two types of occupation contracts created under the new law:

**1 Secure contract:**  
 this will replace secure tenancy agreements issued by the Council. It will also replace assured tenancies issued by housing associations.

**2 Standard contract:**  
 this affects tenants in private rented accommodation but will also be used by the Council and housing associations in certain circumstances. For example, all new council tenants currently receive an 'introductory standard contract' for the first 12 months.

Your occupation contract must be set out in a 'written statement'. The Council provided you with a written tenancy agreement and conditions of tenancy when you first moved in, but the new law means that we will send you a new occupation contract, which must include the following:

**Key matters:**  
 For example, the name of the landlord and contract-holder/s and address of the property.

**Fundamental Terms:**  
 Cover the most important parts of the contract, including how the landlord gets possession and duties regarding repairs.

**Supplementary Terms:**  
 Deal with the more practical, day to day matters. eg. the requirement to notify the Council if the property is going to be left unoccupied for four weeks or more.

**Additional Terms:**  
 Addresses any other matters, e.g. a rule relating to the keeping of pets.



## How it will affect you as a council tenant

There is no need to worry. Your legal right to live in your home will remain the same and you will not have to move home

You will continue to receive the same housing service from the Council

Tenants will become contract-holders

Tenancy agreements will become occupation contracts

You will not have to pay more rent – other than the usual annual rent increase, which is set by Welsh Government

The Council will now be known as a 'community landlord', a change from the term 'social landlord'

■ Succession rights will be increased - if you share your home, two successions to the contract will be allowed to take place, e.g. a spouse followed by another family member. In addition, a new succession right for carers is created

■ Joint contracts – contract holders can be added or removed from occupation contracts without the need to end one contract and start another. This will make managing joint contracts easier and help victims of domestic abuse by allowing the perpetrator to be targeted for eviction without affecting the contract of the victim.



## What you need to do

There is nothing that you need to do right now. But you will need to familiarise yourself with your new occupation contract when it arrives and keep it safe so you can refer to it when you need to. You can also have a look at the information guides and watch the video on the Welsh Government website.

<https://gov.wales/housing-law-changing-renting-homes>

The new law will automatically apply from 1st of December 2022 and by then existing tenants will have received their new occupation contracts. New tenants (contract-holders) will sign up to a new occupation contract from 1st of December 2022.

## Frequently Asked Questions

These are some frequently asked questions to help you understand the changes.

■ **What is an occupation contract?**

This is the new name for your tenancy agreement.

■ **Is there anything that I need to do?**

The only thing you need to do is read your contract when you receive it and familiarise yourself with your rights and responsibilities.

■ **Will the Council still be my landlord?**

Yes. The Council will still be your landlord.

■ **Will I still be called a tenant?**

No. You will be called a contract-holder instead of a tenant.

■ **Will I have to move home?**

No. This change will not mean you have to move home. Your right to remain in your property is unaffected.

■ **Will my rent go up?**

No. The amount of rent you pay will be unaffected. Council rents will continue to increase in line with Welsh Government Social Rent Policy.

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**Will my welfare benefits be affected?**

No. There will be no impact on your benefits if you're in receipt of any.

**Will I have to sign a new occupation contract?**

No. When you receive your new contract all you need to do is familiarise yourself with your rights and responsibilities.

**When will I receive my new occupation contract?**

Existing tenants will receive their new occupation contracts before 1st of December 2022 any new tenants (contract-holders) will sign a new occupation contract from 1st of December 2022. Regardless of when you receive your written contract, the new rules will apply to everyone from 1st of December 2022.

**I have an Introductory Tenancy Agreement, what does it mean for me?**

Introductory tenants will by the 1st of December receive a new secure occupation contract, any previous Introductory agreements will come to an end at this point.

**Will the housing services I receive be affected?**

No. There will not be any changes to the housing services you receive as a result of the new law. The Housing staff that you deal with will remain the same.

**Will it be easier for you to evict me?**

No. Your right to live in your home remains the same. You can only be evicted if you do something to break the terms of your contract such as anti-social behaviour or serious rent arrears.

**How much notice will I have to give if I want to end the contract?**

You must give the Council 4 weeks' notice if you wish to end your contract. This is the same as now.

**Will I be able to have a joint tenancy?**

Yes. The new law makes it easier to add or remove others to an occupation contract as there will no longer be a need to end one contract and start another.

If you are a joint tenant you will now be called a joint contract-holder.

**Will my spouse/child/family member be able to succeed my tenancy?**

Yes. The new law improves succession rights. These set out who has a right to take over the occupation contract and become the contract-holder after the current contract-holder dies.

If you share your home, two successions to the contract will be allowed to take place. For example a spouse followed by another family member.

A new succession right for carers is created, if the carer meets certain criteria, including having been living with the contract-holder for at least 12 months as their main home.



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**What happens if I have already succeeded to a tenancy?**

If you succeeded to a tenancy before the new law is in place as a spouse or civil partner, or someone living with the tenant as a spouse or civil partner, there can be one further succession. If you succeeded to a tenancy as a member of the family of the original tenant there can be no further succession.

**Will you be able to help me if I have problems with my neighbours?**

Yes. Under the new law all occupation contracts must include a term about anti-social behaviour and other prohibited conduct. If a contract-holder breaches this term of the contract, the Council is able to take action to prevent the behaviour continuing.

The Council will continue to provide the same support services for contract-holders who have experienced anti-social behaviour through The Safer Vale Partnership.

**Will I be able to get repairs done in the same way?**

Yes. You can continue to report repairs via the Call Centre on 01446 700111 during office hours, Monday - Thursday 9.00a.m - 5.00pm and Friday 9.00am - 4.30pm

**Will I be able to buy my property?**

No. The Right to Buy was abolished by the Welsh Government from January 2019. The new law has not changed this.

**Can I still apply for a transfer?**

Yes. You can contact your Neighbourhood Manager in the same way to discuss a transfer.

**Can I still arrange a mutual exchange?**

Yes, but you must ask our permission before you do.

**Will I be allowed to make improvements to my home?**

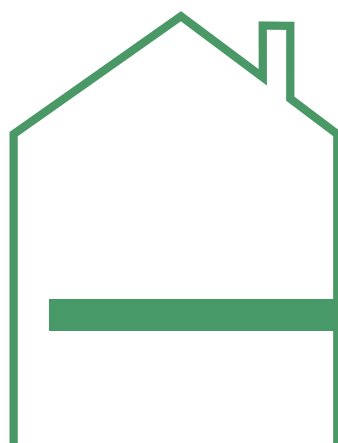
You have the right to carry out improvements to your home provided that you have our agreement in writing before carrying out the work. You may also need planning and building regulation approval.

**Will I be allowed to have a lodger?**

Yes. If you are a secure contract-holder you continue to have the right to have a lodger without asking our permission as long as this does not create statutory overcrowding. You must let us know in writing.

If you are an Introductory contract-holder you must wait until your contract has changed to a secure occupation contract before you can have a lodger.

A lodger is someone who lives in your home but does not have exclusive right to any one part of it. They will receive some kind of service from you such as cooking or cleaning.





■ **The Renting Homes Act is improving the condition of rental properties. How will this happen?**

■ **Will I be allowed to have a pet?**

■ **Will there be an easy read document to help me understand the jargon?**

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The new law states that all properties must be safe and fit for human habitation. The Welsh Government has published rules for this, called Fitness for Human Habitation Regulations.

The aim of these regulations is to ensure landlords properly maintain properties and that they are safe to live in.

This includes installing hard wired smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors and regular electrical safety testing. These are all things that the Council currently does. However, if you have any concerns about the condition of your property, please get in touch with your Neighbourhood Manager or report a repair via the Repairs Call Centre.

You must ask our permission first. Permission will not be refused if your request is considered reasonable.

Yes. You can find an Easy Read guide to the Act on the Welsh Government's website:  
<https://gov.wales/tenants-housing-law-changing-renting-homes-easy-read>

Information is also available in other languages.  
<https://gov.wales/landlord-guidance-renting-homes-foreign-language-versions>

If you need help accessing this information please get in touch and we will help you.

**From 1 December 2022\*,  
 The Renting Homes  
 (Wales) Act 2016, will  
 improve how we rent,  
 manage, and live in  
 rented homes in Wales.**

**1  
 December  
 2022**

\*Welsh Government has announced its intention to implement the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 on 1 December 2022.



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