



# Home User Guide

Welcome to your new home



# Welcome to your new home

Your home is brand new so maybe very different to other homes you've lived in. Take some time to explore and find out where everything is.

This guide has been prepared to help you become familiar with your new home quickly and easily. Keep it in a safe place along with your signed documents and any other new home information we've given you.

We've included a 'moving in' checklist to help you tick off the most important jobs. Please refer to a separate **New Home Information Sheet** which has useful guidance on things specific to your home, like where your meters are located.



## Go online for more

Find out more about managing your new home at [www.southernhousing.org.uk/managing-your-home](http://www.southernhousing.org.uk/managing-your-home)

Discover practical tips on housekeeping, utilities and services in your home, different types of heating & hot water, DIY, fire safety as well as advice on home safety and security.



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## Section 1

# Settling in

Welcome to your new home. Here is a checklist that we hope you'll find helpful. Check you know where everything is and that you have the right keys to access equipment.



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### Refer to your New Home information sheet

### Tick

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Digilock, fob or key – check you have been handed the correct keys

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Meter locations and how to take meter readings

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Bin Store location and collection day

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Council refuse and recycling policy

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Cycle store and parking if applicable

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BT, satellite, TV

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Post box and taking deliveries

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Fire meeting point and alarms

☐

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Tick off all those important tasks		Tick
Check your utilities	Ensure your utilities (heating, hot water, electricity, internet & TV) are all working. Ensure you know how to switch off in emergencies.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read your meters	Take a photo to record meter readings from both your new and previous home.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set up utility accounts	Set up your new utility accounts as soon as you move in, to avoid unexpected bills - you're responsible for bills from the start date of your agreement with Southern Housing.	<input type="checkbox"/>
TV and Internet	Notify TV licensing so they can transfer your licence to your new address.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insurance	Southern Housing are not responsible for insuring the contents of your home. It's essential you take out your own insurance with cover to include fire, theft & accidental damage.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Test the smoke and heat detectors (& CO detector if you have a gas boiler)	It's important to check these are all working for your safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tell people you've moved	Update your employer, bank / store card, HMRC, council, utility providers, schools and leisure providers (gym, library, sports clubs).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Council Tax	Set up an account as you're responsible for paying your council tax as soon as you move.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Update your driving licence	Register your new address with DVLA online.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rent payments	Make sure your direct debit payments are set up for your new address.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rubbish	Once you've moved in, you'll have a lot of bulky waste to get rid of, like boxes, old appliances and things that don't quite fit.  Please don't leave or dump items in communal areas as it's a fire hazard and fly tipping is illegal.	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Section 2

# Running your New Home

### Ventilation

The materials in a new building naturally contain a lot of water, and they need to be given time to dry out, so it's important to ventilate your home to avoid condensation and mould.

- Keep windows open whenever possible, leave trickle vents open at all times.
- If you have a mechanical ventilation and heat recovery (MVHR) unit in your home keep it switched on.
- Keep your home at an even temperature to assist the drying out period. We recommend the central heating thermostat should be no higher than 20°C unless there are extreme weather conditions.

### Redecorating

We ask that you wait for one year before you carry out any changes to your home, including painting or covering walls.

Cracks in the walls and around the door frame are perfectly normal in a new home. If the crack is wider than a £1 coin, it will be repaired when we reach the end of the defects liability period.

### Fixings to walls

If drilling into walls or ceilings, please be aware that there is a network of pipes and cables below the surface. It is strongly recommended that you use a cable/pipe detector. You should not drill into the area around 225mm either side of any electrical fitting.



## Section 3

# Setting up your Utilities & Bill Payments

The company that provides the utilities to your home (gas, electricity, water, internet) on the day you moved in still has rights to provide the supply, so you'll need to decide if you want to stay with them or swap to a new supplier.

**Remember:** Residents are responsible for utilities payments from the date of completion/ commencement of the tenancy agreement.

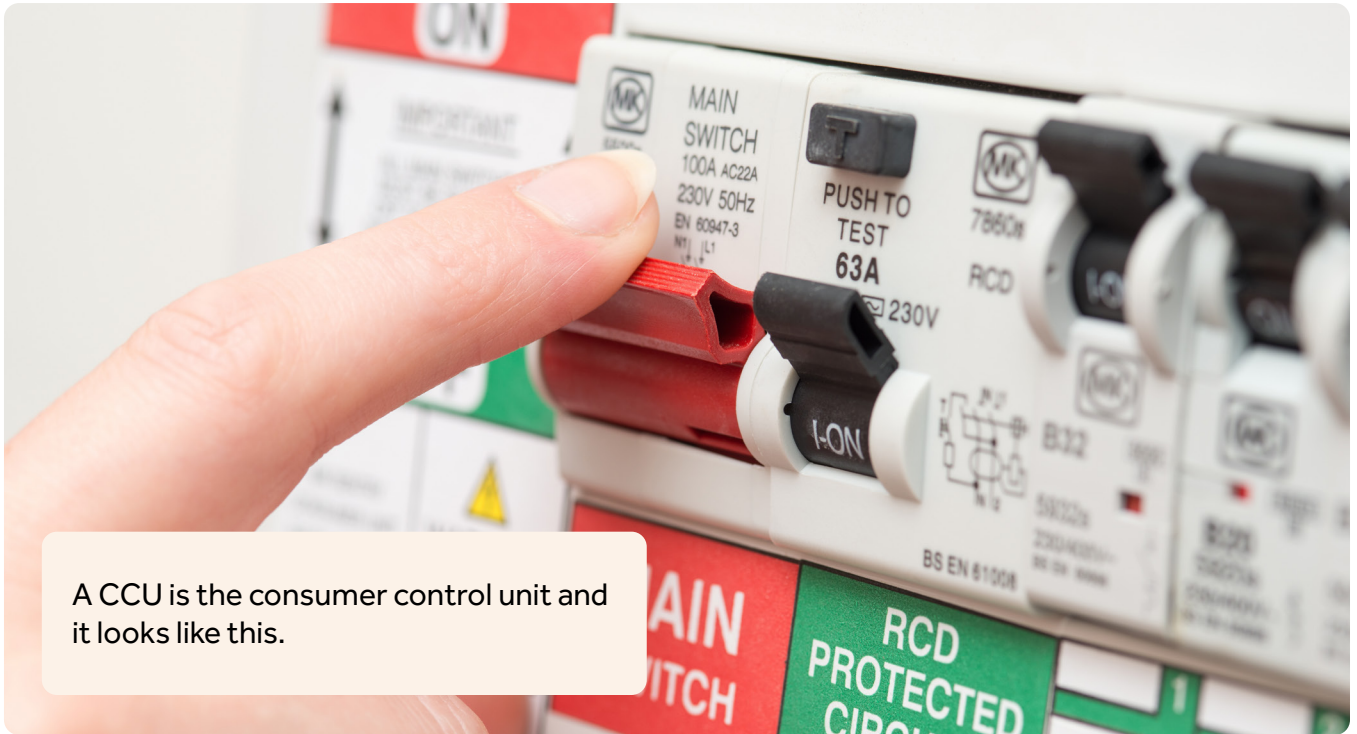
Most residents will be free to choose their own utility providers. If your building has a communal or district heat network you may not have a choice. We recommend that you wait for a few weeks as new addresses take time to be registered with all utility providers, so you may not get the best deal if using price comparison websites. We'll let you know which utility provider your home is currently connected to and mark our final meter readings of your new home on the **New Home Information Sheet**.



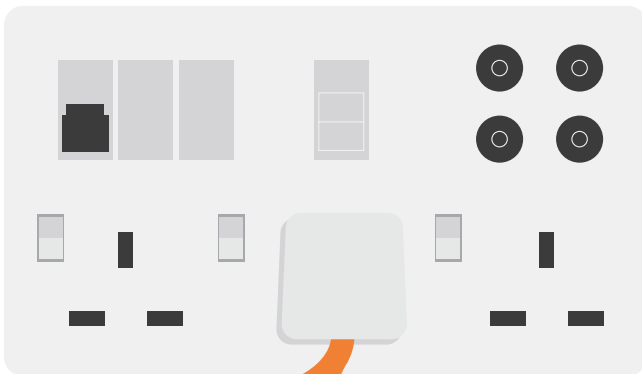
You'll find the utility company details included on your **New Home Information Sheet** along with meter locations, serial numbers and moving in readings.

## Section 4

# Electricity



A CCU is the consumer control unit and it looks like this.



The installation in your new home has been fully tested and should be trouble-free for many years. See your **New Home Information Sheet** to find out where your meter is and how to access it.

It's usually found in the hallway cupboard, but we'll make sure we show you where it is and how to switch off electricity in an emergency using the main switch.



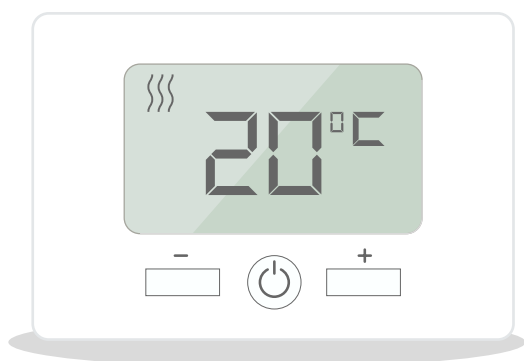
## Section 5

# Heating & Hot Water



When you move in you'll be provided with information about the type of heating system in your home. You'll also receive details or an explanation of how the heating and ventilation systems work including their controls.

By using modern insulation materials and building techniques, your home is considerably easier to heat than older homes. Even so, check our website for advice on how to save money on bills.



Stop valves are provided to turn off the water supply in an emergency or if you're fitting new appliances. Check you know where the stop valves are located in your home.

You'll usually find the one within your property under the kitchen sink, and one next to the water meter.

### Water leak

It is important that you know where emergency shut off valves are located in case of a leak.



## Section 6

# Reporting Defects & Emergencies

Occasionally, issues can crop up in new homes. These can include doors that won't close properly, a water leak or an electric socket that doesn't work.

These are known as defects and the contractor who built your home is responsible for fixing these.

Please note minor shrinkage and cracking within the drying-out period are not classed as defects.

If you have any gifted appliances, you'll find the user guides and warranty information left in your home. As we're not responsible for fixing these, make sure you register yours as soon as you move in.

### End of defects liability inspection


Your contractor will carry out an inspection one or two years after your home was built depending on the length of the Builder's Defect Liability Period. This is known as the 'end of defects liability inspection'. We'll agree with the contractor a list of outstanding defects that they're responsible for putting right.


Following this you'll be responsible for the repair and maintenance of your home as set out in your lease or tenancy agreement. We encourage you to report defects as and when they occur, rather than waiting until the end of the defects liability period.


It's important you allow access for this inspection to take place.

### I think there's a defect in my home, what should I do?

If you spot a defect, you should report it to us directly. We'll notify your contractor, who will contact you to make appointment to fix the issue within:

 28 days for routine work  
[newbuild.aftercare@  
southernhousing.org.uk](mailto:newbuild.aftercare@southernhousing.org.uk)

 7 days for urgent work  
[newbuild.aftercare@  
southernhousing.org.uk](mailto:newbuild.aftercare@southernhousing.org.uk)

 24 hours for an emergency  
**Call Southern Housing immediately**

Our phone number can be found at  
[www.southernhousing.org.uk/contact-us](http://www.southernhousing.org.uk/contact-us)

If you arrange for your own contractor to attend any defects during the defect liability period. This will invalidate the building warranty. We will not be responsible for any costs incurred.



### Repairs

Repairs are often a result of general wear and tear in your home.

**If you rent your home:** Please report any repairs to us.

**If you own your home:** You're responsible for repairs unless they involve communal areas.

Speak to us if you have any questions.

## Section 7

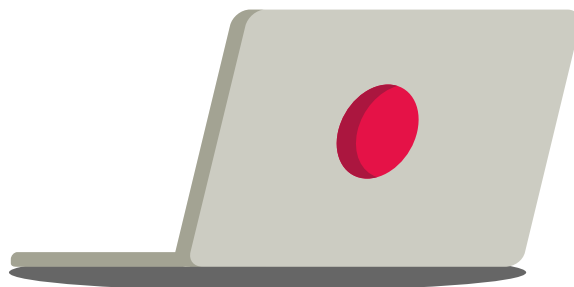
# Television & Internet



You'll need to set up and pay for your TV, phone line and internet with your chosen supplier.

Telephone connection points and in some cases internet routers have been provided in your home, usually by BT. If you decide to have a landline telephone installed, you should make arrangements with your chosen provider.

You can connect an internet router to any of the phone points within your home (if they're connected at the master socket). Make sure a high-low frequency bypass filter is fitted before the router or telephone connections.



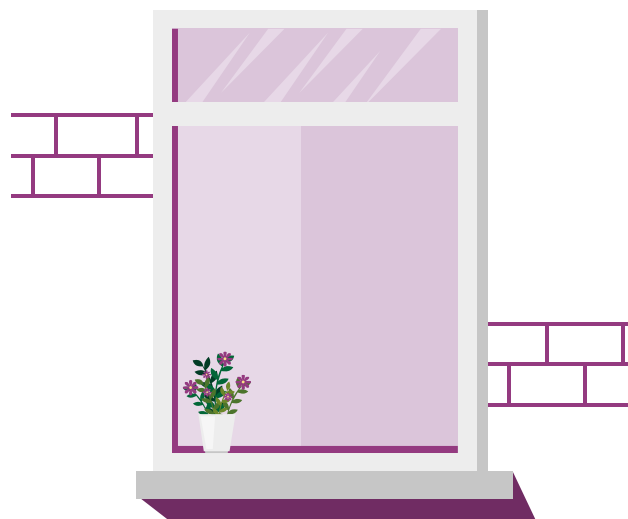
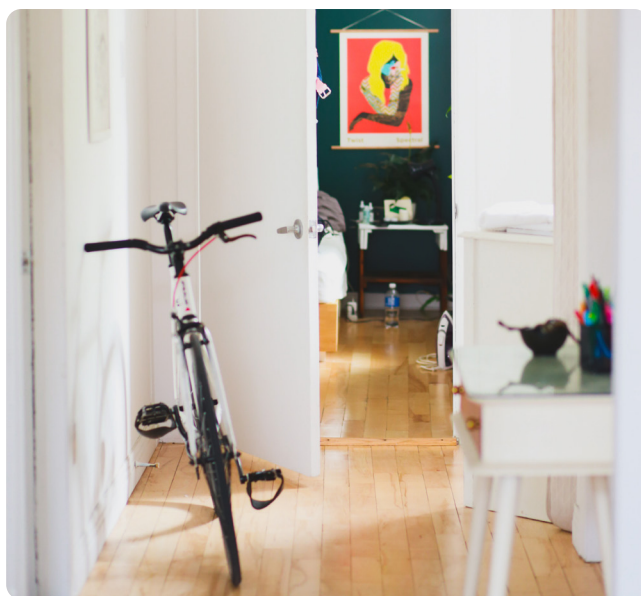
If you would like to install your own satellite dish please ask Southern Housing first.



## Section 8

# Home security

Southern Housing are responsible for insuring the building but not for insuring the contents of your home. Make sure you've taken out your own contents insurance. Check with us for details on whether you can install additional security measures.



### Rely on your doors

Your front and back doors are fitted with robust locking systems that should always be engaged when you leave the property.

If you live in a flat with a communal entrance, make sure the door is securely closed when you enter or exit the building.



## Section 9

# Fire safety

### 1. Exercise caution with balconies

- If you do need to smoke on your balcony, please ensure you dispose of the cigarette carefully.
- Use proper ashtrays which don't tip over and dispose of cigarettes properly.
- Don't burn candles, incense, or use an essence oil burner on your balcony.
- Don't store any combustible items or have barbecues on your balcony.
- Keep combustible and explosive items (like gas cylinders) off the balcony.

### 2. Be cautious with e-scooters, e-bikes, and hoverboards, as their powerful lithium-ion batteries can contribute to fires

- Avoid charging batteries unattended or on soft/uneven surfaces.
- Regularly inspect batteries and chargers for damage.
- Store batteries in a safe location away from extreme temperatures.

### 3. Ensure fire doors are used properly

- Don't leave a fire door wedged or propped open when not in use.
- If a fire door doesn't close or is faulty or damaged, report it to us immediately.
- Don't remove, trim, or make new openings in fire doors without our permission.
- Never disconnect or tamper with automatic door closers.

### 4. Prevent accidental activation of smoke detectors

- Avoid smoking or using aerosols near detectors.
- Keep kitchen and fire doors closed.
- If smoking, keep windows open.
- Refrain from smoking in corridors.

### 5. Ensure your smoke, heat, and carbon monoxide alarms are working

- Make sure you have a working smoke alarm and test it at least once a month
- Replace batteries if you hear intermittent beeping.

### In the event of a fire in your home

- Leave the room immediately, closing the door behind you.
- Inform everyone in your home and evacuate together.
- Close windows, if safe to do so.
- Do not attempt to extinguish the fire.
- Avoid using lifts unless you live in a very new building that has a designated 'evacuation lift'.
- Only use your balcony if it's part of the stated escape route.
- Call the fire brigade.

### Evacuating if you live in a flat

There will be a Fire Action Notice in the entrance and common parts of your building. These clearly describe what to do if there's a fire in your home.

The best escape route is usually the normal way in and out of your home but do familiarise yourself with any alternative exits.

Emergency exits will be clearly marked.

# About us

We're one of the UK's largest housing associations with over 78,000 homes across London, the South and South East and the Midlands. We've a long and proud history of providing affordable homes, with residents at the heart of all we do.

We want to create communities where everyone has a safe home in a place where they're proud to live.

## Our vision

Our vision is to create communities where everyone has a safe home in a place where they're proud to live.

## Our mission

We're big and we're local. Residents are at the heart of our services and we use our size to influence positive change in the areas where we operate.

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## Further Information

Details about managing your home can be found at:

[www.southernhousing.org.uk/  
managing-your-home](http://www.southernhousing.org.uk/managing-your-home)

If you have any questions please contact Southern Housing directly. Our contact details can be found at:

[www.southernhousing.org.uk/  
contact](http://www.southernhousing.org.uk/contact)



## We wish you all the best in your new home!

Statements contained within this Guide are provided for general guidance only and are accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of printing. Southern Housing can take no responsibility for inaccuracies in this Guide, nor for any actions taken as a result of those inaccuracies. Nothing herein shall form part of an offer or contract or be construed as any representation by Southern Housing. Websites quoted in this Guide are for information only and don't constitute recommendations by Southern Housing. Should you use any of the listed websites, you do so at your own risk.







**[www.southernhousing.org.uk](http://www.southernhousing.org.uk)**

**[hello@southernhousing.org.uk](mailto:hello@southernhousing.org.uk)**

## Head office

Fleet House,  
59-61 Clerkenwell Road,  
Farringdon,  
London  
EC1M5LA

## Correspondence

Building 800,  
Guillat Avenue,  
Kent Science Park,  
Sittingbourne  
ME9 8GU