



The MMHS Residents' Handbook

Welcome to the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society.

We are delighted to share some essential information with you, our ministerial residents. This handbook covers MMHS services, your rights and your responsibilities.

CONTACT US

Main number and general enquiries

Tel 020 3848 6020 option 6 Email admin@mmhs.org.uk

Rent-related enquiries

Tel 020 3848 6020 option 5 Email finance@mmhs.org.uk

Vacating your property and property sales enquiries

Tel 020 3848 6020 option 4 Email admin@mmhs.org.uk

New tenancies, property purchases or equity sharing lease enquiries

Tel 020 3848 6020 option 3 Email admin@mmhs.org.uk

Gas central heating

For any issues with heating or hot water, notify the Boiler Plan team:

Tel 0800 612 2302 option 3 Email mmhs@boilerplanuk.com

For emergency out-of-hours help, contact Boiler Plan Engineer Lead, Adam Leak:

Tel 07923 245140

All other repairs (Monday–Friday, 9am – 5.30pm)

Tel 020 3848 6020 option 2 for gas or heating repairs (escalations)
option 1 for general repairs

Email property@mmhs.org.uk

Web www.mmhs.org.uk/repairrequest

Out-of-hours emergency repairs

To report an emergency repair (roof, locks or glazing damage) please phone and speak to an MMHS representative [020 3848 6020](tel:02038486020) option 1 (Please do not leave a message)

(Further information on repairs can be found in section 3)

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1 YOUR TENANCY

MMHS residents have either a tenancy agreement or an equity sharing lease. All are provided with full details in the relevant documentation. Some of the details appear in this section of the handbook.

1.1 Your tenancy agreement

You will have signed your tenancy agreement when you moved into your property.

It can be changed only:

- by the agreement of both the resident (or joint residents) and MMHS
- or*
- by law.

This does not apply to changes in your rent. Your rent may be altered after a three-month notice period or in accordance with the annual rent review process.

The agreement will be in the name of the retired presbyter or deacon and his or her spouse/civil partner in the event of a joint tenancy.

1.2 Taking over an existing tenancy

When a resident dies, the spouse/civil partner has the right to succeed to the tenancy provided he or she is living in the property. In the case of a joint tenancy, the surviving partner becomes the sole resident. The **right of succession** does not extend to the children of the resident, spouse or civil partner.

1.3 Ending your tenancy

When ending your tenancy, you must give **at least three calendar months'** written notice to MMHS, and your keys must be returned by the date your tenancy ends. Please refer to Section 10 where there is a list of matters to be attended to on vacating the property.

On the death of a sole resident, or the surviving resident in the event of a joint tenancy, the executors will be responsible for following this procedure. **PLEASE NOTE that rent and bills are usually payable by the departing/transferring tenants or by the executors until the keys are physically received by MMHS.**

1.4 Your equity sharing lease

The equity contribution you make towards your property (whether compulsory, towards a ministerial resident's own property improvements/alterations or 'top-up') will be converted into an equity share. This will be shown as a percentage share of the value of the property, as determined by an independent RICS qualified surveyor. Full details of the Equity Sharing Scheme will be made available at the time of use and at any time thereafter when requested.

All details of the exact equity share and how it is worked out are in the lease.

1.5 Ending your equity sharing lease

When ending your tenancy, you must give **at least three calendar months'** written notice to MMHS, and your keys must be returned by the date your tenancy ends. Please refer to the checklist of matters to be attended to on vacating the property, sent out upon request.

On the death of a sole resident, or the surviving resident in the event of a joint tenancy, the tenancy is terminable by one month's written notice – given either by MMHS or by your executors.

1.6 Your rent

The rent payable under your tenancy agreement or equity sharing lease may be varied once a year. Not less than three calendar months' notice of any such variation will be given, and the revised rent will be payable from the date set out in the notice.

The usual method of rent payment is by deduction from the pension received from the Ministers' Pension Scheme. However, for those without sufficient pension to cover the rent, separate arrangements will be made.

Rent is payable monthly. Please contact MMHS in advance if there is any problem with paying your rent, as persistent late payment without approval could lead to possession proceedings, in accordance with your tenancy agreement or lease.

2 LIVING IN YOUR HOME

2.1 Your garden

You are responsible for keeping your garden in a clean and tidy condition. See Section 9, *Garden Maintenance*.

If you find you are no longer able to carry out all the maintenance yourself and pay for assistance, a grant of £250 per year may be available from the Methodist Church's Fund for the Support of Presbyters & Deacons (FSPD). Contact MMHS for an application form.

2.2 Keeping pets

You may keep dogs, cats, rabbits and similar as domestic pets. If you choose to keep other pets and animals, you must first seek written approval from MMHS. You must ensure all such pets are kept under control and do not cause a nuisance or annoyance.

Where MMHS is not the freeholder of a property (predominantly flats), there may be conditions attached to the lease which preclude the keeping of pets. If in doubt, please consult MMHS for further advice.

2.3 Use of property

You must occupy the property as your only and main residence. No alterations or additions may be made to the property without written permission from MMHS.

2.4 Neighbour disputes

It is always best to try to resolve any problems with your neighbours yourself wherever possible. However, if you have persistent problems, then please contact MMHS for advice.

2.5 Lodgers

You must seek permission from MMHS before taking in lodgers. A lodger is someone who lives as part of the household but does not have exclusive use of any part of your home. Please notify MMHS when they move in and when they leave.

2.6 Subletting etc

You must not sublet all or any part of your home (including the garage) and you must not assign your tenancy/lease.

3 LOOKING AFTER YOUR HOME

The maintenance of your home is a responsibility shared between MMHS and the resident.

3.1 MMHS's responsibilities

MMHS is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the following items at the property which includes, but is not limited to (*please contact MMHS for advice*):

Externally

- garages
- window frames
- window catches, locks and security devices (where provided by MMHS)
- external doors and frames
- external lighting
- access steps, paths and driveways
- drains, gullies and external pipes
- keeping gutters and drain gullies clear (MMHS will reimburse for one annual clean)
- boundary and divisional garden fences, where provided by MMHS, but excluding painting with preservative
- roofs
- walls
- chimneys
- decoration of previously painted areas (see section 4.3)
- provision of a garden shed where there is no garage at the property (refer also to section 7.4)
- pruning or removal of large forest-type trees (see section 9.1)
- conservatories (see section 3.2)

Internally

- cold water storage tanks and supply pipe work
- electrical installations including wiring and consumer units, switches, lighting, power points and extractor fans
- kitchen units, worktops, sink, taps, waste pipes, traps and associated wall tiling
- sanitary fittings including wash hand basin, taps, WC pan and cistern, bath, showers, WC seats and lids (as a result of fair wear and tear), waste pipes, traps and associated wall tiling
- plumbing
- floorboards
- internal doors, frames, hinges, handles and catches
- heating systems (see section 3.9)
- floor covering in wet areas, ie kitchens & bathrooms
- wired smoke detectors and CO detectors, if fitted.

3.2 Maintenance of conservatories and similar structures

MMHS will repair and maintain a conservatory which was in place when the property was purchased, or was erected by a former resident and the property has since been re-let.

3.3 Residents' responsibilities

The resident is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the following items at the property which includes, but is not limited to (*please contact MMHS for advice*):

Externally

- taps
- doorbell
- greenhouse
- shed (where there is already a garage at the property)
- patios or decking
- clothes posts, lines and rotary dryers
- stores and sheds not owned by MMHS
- replacement of locks when keys are lost or stolen, or the provision of replacement/additional keys
- additional locks
- security alarm systems
- pipes in outbuildings, damaged by freezing
- provision of water meters
- paths and paving not directly serving an entrance door
- fences erected by residents within the demise of the property
- treatment of fences with preservative (regardless of ownership)
- gardens - including garden ponds (see section 9)
- TV and radio aerials and satellite dishes
- some external redecoration (refer also to section 4.3).

Internally

- telephony and internet
- routine redecoration
- a repair not attributable to the normal wear and tear of items which are usually the responsibility of MMHS
- all fittings and appliances not provided by MMHS (includes cookers, ovens whether built-in or not, and cooker hoods, etc)
- fuses, light bulbs and fluorescent tubes
- security alarm systems
- WC seats (where existing is serviceable or at tenant's request)
- shaving points
- Saniflo-type macerators
- sink, bath and basin plugs and chains
- blind and curtain rails
- floor coverings (which are laid on the structural floors in the property) except in wet areas
- clothes airers
- hat and coat rails and hooks
- shelving
- minor plaster cracks
- fitted wardrobes and doors.

3.4 Priority to give to your repair request

When arranging a repair, please phone the office first so details can be logged. It is not possible to give an exhaustive list, but here are examples of the priority and timescales that repairs should be given:

Emergency (normally within 24 hours) also see section 3.11

- bursts or major leaks to external water supply pipes and major leaks to internal water services
- blocked or overflowing sewers and internal soil stacks
- storm or flood damage to the structure
- dangerous structures, wall collapse, major structural leaks and defects
- repairs to front and rear entrance doors and ground floor and balcony windows where the property is insecure
- defects to WC pans or cisterns (where the house has only one WC)
- no power, hot water or central heating (refer also to section 3.11) and gas problems.

Urgent (normally within 7 working days)

- minor leaks to external water supply and minor leaks to internal water systems
- faulty taps and ball valves
- blocked flue to an open fire
- serious roof leaks and defects
- defective central heating (refer to section 3.11)
- defective immersion and water heaters (where there are no additional/secondary forms of water heating)
- renewal of sanitary ware (where unusable/unsanitary).

Routine (normally within 28 working days)

- repairs to doors, windows and general joinery repairs (unless external doors or windows are insecure)
- renewal of doors and windows (unless insecure or being dealt with under planned maintenance)
- repairs to floors
- minor repairs to house and garage roofs
- repair/renewal of guttering and rainwater goods
- renewal of sanitary ware and external plumbing goods (where being replaced due to fair wear and tear)
- repair of paths, fences, garden walls (where these are MMHS's responsibility), other than minor faults that are the tenant's responsibility
- repairs to external rendering, pointing or brickwork.

3.5 Reporting Repairs

Emergency service

If you have an emergency repair that needs attention out-of-hours, particularly roofs or locks, please telephone 020 3848 6020. If you do not manage to speak to an MMHS representative, please do not leave a message. Try again later, or you can find an emergency local contractor and arrange for works up to a maximum value of £250 to make the property safe.

Further work required should be reported to MMHS at the next available opportunity, using the procedure detailed below for reporting a repair.

A separate service is available for the breakdown of gas central heating and hot water appliances (see section 3.11).

How to report a repair

All repairs must be reported to MMHS. **Permission must be obtained before a contractor is engaged for non-urgent repairs over £100** or MMHS may not reimburse you.

You can report either by phoning, writing, sending an email to the office, or reporting via MMHS's website www.mmhs.org.uk/repairrequest. Please do not forget to include your name, address and phone number when reporting the repair.

For repairs other than to gas-fired boilers, central heating, and some electrical and drainage repairs, we will ask you to appoint a local contractor.

If the work costs under £100 you can authorise the contractor to carry out the work immediately, pay the contractor directly and send a receipted invoice for reimbursement to MMHS's offices.

For work costing over £100, we usually require a written quotation to be sent to the office, either by post or email to property@mmhs.org.uk (see below).

If we are happy with the quotation, we will raise an order directly with the contractor on your behalf and ask them to liaise with you to arrange a convenient date to carry out the work.

You will receive a copy of the order summarising the work ordered, the name and phone number of the contractor to whom the order has been issued, and the date by which the work should be completed. Your copy of the order will also include a range of questions, which will comprise MMHS's *Tenant Satisfaction Survey*. You will be provided with a pre-paid envelope with the copy order for the return of the questionnaire.

The Property Director will normally require written estimates where the work is of a complex or specialist nature or where the cost is likely to fall within the following higher cost brackets:

Anticipated Order Value (including VAT)	Minimum Number of Estimates Required
Up to £100	1 verbal
£100 to £500	1 written
£500 to £5,000	2 written
More than £5,000	3 written

Original copies of all quotations must be submitted to MMHS for approval. Scanned copies sent by email are acceptable. MMHS will only pay invoices addressed to MMHS, not to the resident.

3.6 Choosing a contractor

Which contractor is suitable and how will you make sure they do a good job?

Contractors will be required to meet the following standards:

- Carry Public Liability Insurance. **MMHS will be unable to raise an order or reimburse tenants unless proof of contractor Public Liability Insurance is provided.**

- Tradespeople will have appropriate trade qualifications and will be conversant with customer care standards and practices and health and safety procedures. They should be appropriately dressed and carry some form of identification
- Operatives will avoid mess and protect residents' furnishings and decorations

Where possible, contractors should be registered with professional bodies such as NICEIC, FENSA, CERTASS, Gas Safe, Federation of Master Builders, etc

Ideally, the contractor will be based locally (within 20 miles) of your property.

MMHS may carry out inspections before and after work has been carried out but, in any event, will require to be satisfied that all works have been carried out to the appropriate standard.

3.7 Items to be Re-Charged

MMHS reserves the right to refuse to reimburse or to re-charge residents for items on invoices covering the following:

- all items for which the resident is responsible (see sections 3.1 and 3.3)
- re-fixing of radiators or any other items normally permanently fixed to the structure of the property
- the cost of investigating and rectifying electrical problems involving electrical appliances owned by the tenant
- any enhancement to, or variation from, MMHS's approved specification(s)
- rectification of problems caused as a result of work undertaken by the resident (although not by a former resident or owner)

The resident will be liable for the full cost of such work, including applicable taxes, but MMHS will not levy any fee for administering the re-charge.

3.8 Other emergencies

In the event of an emergency in your home, it is vital to know where essential services are located and how to isolate them. You should make sure you know where the stopcock, electricity box and gas supply tap are located. Please make a note of all these and display in a prominent place. This will enable anyone to switch off as necessary if there is an emergency and you are not at home, see the back of this book for the Locations Table.

Water

You can turn off this supply by turning the main stop tap clockwise. Check it every six months to ensure you can turn it on and off. It is very important to take precautions against burst pipes in winter. If you are away from your home overnight and there is a risk of frost, leave your heating on a low setting. Alternatively, leave your heating on and ask a neighbour or friend to operate it for you.

There will also be other stopcocks on the cold water supply pipe from the cold water tank and on the pipe serving the hot water installation. Drain cocks are normally located on the lowest point on the system under the sink and near a boiler. These allow the system to be emptied of water.

Gas

A control valve is always located at the side of, or above the meter. The gas valve is closed when the handle is at right angles to the pipe.

Under no circumstances tamper with other controls on your gas installation or equipment.

If you suspect a gas leak, immediately:

- extinguish all naked flames
- turn off the gas at the meter
- do not touch any electrical switch
- open doors and windows
- call the Boiler Plan team on 0800 6122302 (out of hours 07923 245140)
- leave the property.

Electricity

The following tips may be useful:

- never run an electrical appliance from a light socket
- do not run wire under carpets or rugs
- make sure plugs are wired correctly and fitted with correct fuses
- always follow the manufacturer's instructions and guidance
- avoid the overloading of power sockets when using multi-adaptors
- replace frayed flex
- never take any electrical appliance into the bathroom.

Fire

If a **fire** breaks out:

- get **everyone out** as quickly as possible
- try to close doors and windows if you can as this will prevent the spread of fire and smoke
- dial 999 or ask a neighbour to request the Fire Service and give your exact address
- NEVER use water on a fire involving electrical equipment, cooking fat, oil or spirit
- warn your neighbours, especially if they occupy a flat in the same complex
- ensure your family knows what you do in the case of a fire practice or fire drill for your home.

Remember: never re-enter a burning building or do anything that would endanger your safety.

3.9 Annual servicing of heating and hot water systems

MMHS's responsibilities

MMHS has a contract in place with a national gas contractor service to:

- carry out, at periods not exceeding 12 months, a safety check of every gas-fired appliance owned by MMHS in every property owned by MMHS.
- carry out, at the same time as the safety check, a full service, clean and inspection of every gas-fired boiler owned by MMHS
- inspect all structural flues (chimneys and the like) serving appliances, regardless of the ownership of the appliances
- inspect and test all gas supply pipe work, regardless of the ownership of the appliances the pipe work is serving
- undertake a visual inspection of any gas-fired appliance not owned by MMHS but which are attached to MMHS's gas supply pipe work (for example, cookers and hobs) but not including gas fires with balanced or fan assisted flues.

The national gas contractor is unable to assist with the servicing, etc, of **oil-fired, LPG or other systems**. Therefore, residents should find a local supplier who can offer a contract to look after such systems. MMHS will reimburse any costs incurred.

An annual inspection should cover and test any oil tanks, valves and safety devices serving oil-fired appliances in properties owned by MMHS or for which MMHS is responsible.

3.10 Residents' appliances and gas fires

Residents' responsibilities

Gas fires are the responsibility of residents.

MMHS will carry out an annual safety check of any gas fires in a property, provided the gas fire is connected to MMHS's flue or chimney. Gas fires with balanced or fan-assisted flues will not be safety-checked by MMHS. This is the responsibility of the resident.

Residents will be responsible for the repair and replacement of any gas appliance not owned by MMHS.

Defective appliances

The following table sets out the action MMHS will take if a gas appliance in one of its properties is issued with a 'defects notice' or becomes irreparable:

Appliance	Action
Gas fire connected to MMHS's chimney or flue and connected to a gas boiler (back boiler)	MMHS will replace the boiler with a SEDBUK A or B rated boiler. The replacement of the fire will be the responsibility of the resident
Built-in gas oven, hob, freestanding cooker, fan or balanced flue gas fire. Gas fire connected to MMHS's chimney or flue but not connected to a gas boiler (back boiler). Any other appliance connected to MMHS's gas supply or central heating system	No action - the resident will be responsible for the repair and/or replacement of the appliance

3.11 Repair and maintenance to heating and hot water systems

MMHS has a contract with a national gas contractor service for all gas-fired boilers and appliances. It is an unlimited calls contract, so please report any problems directly to them on the number in the *Contact Us* section at the front of this handbook and they will send an engineer.

Tenants with oil-fired, LPG or other systems should arrange a contract with the supplier for your area. MMHS will reimburse any costs you incur.

Repair categories

- Emergency - normally within 24 hours
- Urgent - normally within seven working days
- Planned - normally three months' notice

Emergencies	<i>Any time of the year</i>
Gas or oil leak	
Water leak causing (or likely to cause) structural damage	
Carbon monoxide incident	
Any failure affecting a vulnerable resident	

Emergencies	<i>October to March (inclusive)</i>
Any failure of heating system	
Any failure of hot water system	

Urgent	<i>April to September (inclusive)</i>
Any failure of heating system	
Any failure of hot water system	

Planned	<i>January to December (inclusive)</i>
Boiler replacements	
Complete heating replacements	
System upgrades	

3.12 Electrical repairs

For a minor electrical repair, please contact a local electrician who is NICEIC or similarly registered. Then please follow the procedure as for [How to report a repair](#) (section 3.5).

If you have a recurring electrical fault, please report this to the office. We may want to arrange for an EICR test to be carried out of the whole electrical installation at your property. If you have any other concerns or require further advice, please contact the Property department at MMHS offices.

3.13 Drainage

MMHS has an account with a national contractor. If you have any drainage problems, please call MMHS's office so we can arrange a callout for you.

4 PLANNED MAINTENANCE

MMHS has a programme of maintenance which includes items such as double glazing, refurbishment of kitchens and bathrooms, central heating boilers, driveways and external decorating.

4.1 Double glazing

Priority will be given to those properties where the existing windows and doors have wooden frames with single glazing. Attention is also given to those with old aluminium frames where the double glazing is no longer effective.

4.2 Refurbishment of kitchens and bathrooms

MMHS has adopted a standard specification for refurbishment. When we advise you that work can commence on either of these components, we will inform you of the relevant standards. You may choose items of a higher standard or specification, but you will then be required to meet the difference in cost.

MMHS will not provide the following items:

- floor coverings in non-wet rooms (including, but not limited to, carpet, vinyl, lino, cushion and laminated flooring). Also blinds, curtains, curtain rails and other items of furnishing
- white goods/kitchen appliances (including, but not limited to, cookers whether freestanding or built-in, hobs, extractor hoods, fridges, fridge/freezers, washing machines, dish washers or tumble dryers)
- carousel units, open-ended kitchen cupboards, glass-fronted kitchen cupboard doors, under unit lighting.

Residents holding an equity share in the property will be required to pay a proportion of the cost of the planned work. The percentage of the cost to be charged to the resident will equal the percentage of equity held.

If you decide not to proceed with the proposed planned work, then that element of the work will be deferred for a period of five years. In exceptional circumstances, postponement on medical grounds, for example, MMHS may defer the work for a shorter period of time.

4.3 External painting

MMHS has a programme for external decoration. The extent of this work will be limited to:

- the main property
- permanent outbuildings - garages, brick-built storage sheds, timber sheds where supplied/maintained by MMHS (usually where there is no garage with the property)
- metal fences and gates
- previously-painted (not stained, varnished or untreated) timber gates
- garden sheds, summerhouses, greenhouses, conservatories, decking, **but** stained, varnished or untreated timber fencing and other similar structures are excluded, and fall within the resident's responsibility including the treatment of fences with preservatives such as Cuprinol.

5 SAVING ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

MMHS aims to provide its residents with properties which provide affordable warmth.

You can also help yourself, in a number of ways, to save energy and thereby improve your quality of life as well as the environment, with the added bonus of cutting your energy costs. The following suggestions may be of help to you.

5.1 Condensation and mould growth

Most of the complaints we receive about dampness turn out to involve condensation. This is caused when moisture carried by warm air reaches a cold surface and is deposited onto it. Condensation can cause damage to decorations, floor coverings, clothes and bedding.

You can limit condensation and mould growth by producing less moisture, and providing ventilation to remove moisture.

- try to reduce the amount of moisture in the air
- open windows to prevent water vapour or steam travelling to colder areas of your home
- keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed when these rooms are in use
- try to keep your home sufficiently heated to avoid cold surfaces onto which water vapour can be deposited
- do not block up any air bricks or vents
- use extractor fans, where installed, in kitchens and bathrooms
- wipe surfaces which have become wet with condensation
- clean off any mould growth as soon as it occurs, with anti-fungicidal solution or a dilution of household bleach mixed with water
- properly vent tumble dryers to the outside
- dry clothes out of doors where possible
- ventilate behind wardrobes and cupboards by leaving a space between the back and the wall.

5.2 Preventing dampness

The damp-proof course in the external walls of your home is to stop dampness rising from the ground. Often there are also airbricks in walls below suspended ground floors to prevent moisture from building up under the floors. It is essential that the soil level is kept below the level of the damp-proof course and the airbricks are kept clear.

5.3 Recycling

Local authorities have established recycling facilities in their districts, which provide segregation of garden matter, building rubble, general household rubbish, cardboard, newspaper, glass and plastic.

5.4 Disposal of rubbish

Normal household rubbish will be collected by your local council. If you have bulky items to dispose of, you should either take them to the local recycling facility or arrange with your local council for a special collection (for which you may have to pay). Rubbish must not be allowed to accumulate.

NB It is not advisable to store items in the loft of your property. If you do place items in the loft, you do so at your own risk and MMHS will not accept responsibility for any injury incurred. You will be responsible for making good any resulting damage.

6 RESIDENTS' IMPROVEMENTS/ALTERATIONS

You have the right to carry out improvements to your home, subject to MMHS's consent. If you wish to make an alteration or improvement, you must apply in writing to MMHS. You must not undertake any such work without first obtaining MMHS's written consent.

Permission will normally be given provided the nature of the work is satisfactory. We may inspect the work on completion to ensure that it has been carried out to the relevant building standards.

In certain circumstances, MMHS will allow the installation of solar panels on roofs or in gardens. Please contact the MMHS office with specific details.

For certain works, it will be necessary to provide details, drawings and a written specification together with an estimate of costs. You may also need to check whether building regulation approval and/or planning permission is required before any work is commenced. Any consents should be copied to MMHS and you should also ensure the title to your property does not include any provisions that could have a bearing on your proposals or require any approval from a superior landlord. MMHS can assist in this area.

For projects of a significant size, MMHS will require the appointment of professional consultants at the ministerial resident's expense to design, specify, manage and approve the proposed works.

You will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of any alterations you may make (subject to MMHS's discretion).

When the cost of an improvement is more than £20,000 (including VAT), the increase in value resulting from the improvement will be added to any percentage share you hold in the property or recorded as a new equity share if you do not have an existing equity share.

To qualify for equity share, the work must be either structural in nature, provide additional facilities or improve either the kitchen or bathroom. In calculating the resident's outlay, fixtures, fittings and decorations do not qualify as improvements and the cost of such items will not be taken into account. Professional fees, but not local authority planning or other statutory fees, may be considered.

To calculate the equity value increase, if any, a surveyor will be appointed by MMHS to provide two valuations - with and without the improvement. The difference between these two amounts will be converted into the percentage equity share. The surveyor's fees for the valuations and the legal fees for preparing the equity lease will be the responsibility of the resident. It should be noted that the equity value may be less than the cost of the work.

6.1 Conservatories and extensions

Generally, MMHS will not raise any objection when a resident wishes to replace an existing or add a new conservatory or other similar structure to the property, although DIY or self-build structures are unlikely to receive approval.

MMHS will not provide any financial contribution towards such work.

6.2 Provision of documentation

As mentioned above, the resident will be required to provide MMHS (on completion of the work) with all necessary permissions and approvals (such as planning and building regulation), certificates (such as gas and electrical safety) and guarantees. Guarantees should be in joint names (the resident and MMHS) or should be transferable should the tenant move to another property.

7 GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

7.1 Decoration

Residents moving into either newly purchased or existing Society properties, that have not been refurbished before the start of their tenancies, will be entitled to an initial contribution towards decoration costs of up to £600.

Residents whose homes are subject to major improvement or capital works (refurbishment, replacement of central heating, kitchen or bathroom refurbishment, rewiring etc) will be eligible for a contribution towards the redecoration of the rooms affected by the work. The contribution will be agreed between the resident and MMHS, and will be based on the cost of bringing the affected areas back to an emulsion finish (regardless of previous finish). The contribution will not exceed £100 per affected room and, in total, £600 per property.

The decoration contribution will remain open for claim for a period of twelve months from the date of occupation by the tenant or from the date of completion of the project. Claims made beyond this period will be paid at the discretion of MMHS and only in exceptional circumstances.

7.2 Provision of a gas supply

MMHS will fund the provision of a gas supply to a property not currently served by gas if it is possible and economic to do so. The gas supply entry position will be as dictated by the supply company. Costs relating to extending the supply to main appliances such as gas fires, cookers and hobs owned by the resident will be met by the resident.

7.3 Gas fires

MMHS will offer a contribution towards the cost of a replacement gas fire only where MMHS replaces an existing gas fire / back boiler system with a wall-mounted gas boiler. The maximum contribution MMHS will make in this respect is £200.

7.4 Garden sheds

Where a property is not provided with a garage, MMHS will meet the total cost of the purchase and installation (including base) of a single garden shed not exceeding 4.5 square metres (48 square feet) of floor area. Sheds will be expected to have had a useable life of 20 years before replacement will be considered.

7.5 Security lighting

MMHS will meet the full cost of a coach type or low wattage halogen type light fitting to each external door serving the property. The cost of individual light fittings will be limited to £25 per fitting including VAT.

7.6 Loft insulation

MMHS will endeavour to upgrade loft insulation provision to the standards appertaining at the time that a property is modernised or is to benefit from a replacement heating system.

7.7 Insulation grants

Residents will be encouraged to take advantage of insulation grant schemes available and MMHS will fund all of the resident's contribution under such a scheme.

7.8 Cavity wall insulation

MMHS no longer approves cavity wall insulation.

7.9 Garden maintenance grants

As per section 2.1, if you pay someone to help you with the basic tasks of mowing the lawn, weeding borders, etc, you may apply for a grant of £250 per year from the Methodist Church *Fund for the Support of Presbyters & Deacons* (FSPD). Please contact us for an application form.

7.10 Provision of downstairs WC

A contribution of up to 50% towards the cost of providing a WC will be made, although not usually in the first five years.

7.11 Loft ladder

A contribution of up to 50% of the cost of installing a loft ladder will be made.

7.12 Provision of a shower

A contribution of up to 50% of the cost of installing a shower over the bath will be made.

7.13 Payment of grants

Payment can be made directly into your bank account. If you provide your bank and account details, we will transfer the relevant amount and confirm this by either letter or email.

8 AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

As a responsible landlord, MMHS is committed to assisting residents to obtain aids and adaptations, where they are required, and will supplement resources available from local authorities.

Examples include the following – additional grab rails, replacing a bath with a shower, provision of a downstairs WC, a special or raised WC, suitable washbasin, remote control window openers, additional socket outlets, relocation of heating controls, adaptations to kitchens. This list is not exhaustive and any provision that enables a tenant or spouse to maintain independence will be considered.

Recommendations for aids and adaptations are normally generated by a Social Services occupational therapist's assessment of the resident's or spouse's needs. Where the request comes directly from the tenant, family or other advocate, it must first be referred to Social Services to enable an assessment to be carried out. This includes any request to replace a bath with a shower.

Where Social Services are unable to provide an assessment within eight weeks of the application, MMHS will contribute 50% of the cost of a private assessment if the resident so wishes.

Where an assessment generates a requirement for substantial adaptation which is high cost, technically difficult or inappropriate in the property concerned, sensitive consideration may need to be given to the provision of alternative accommodation.

8.1 Funding

MMHS will fund an assessed aid or adaptation costing less than £100, if no other source of funding is available.

Where a resident is refused local authority funding on the ground that the work exceeds the financial threshold, the resident will be expected to contribute towards the cost. The contribution will be based on savings held by the resident and will be calculated on the following basis:

- savings of less than £20,000 - MMHS will meet 100% of the cost
- savings between £20,000 and £50,000 - MMHS will meet 50% of the cost
- savings of more than £50,000 - MMHS will not contribute.

If no other source of funding is available, the work will be funded by MMHS. This will cover occupational therapy assessments, purchase of equipment, adaptation works and associated fees. Priority will be given on the basis of need balanced with length of time since the initial application was made. Aids and adaptations funded by MMHS will remain the property of MMHS.

Maintenance and running costs of major installations such as stair-lifts and hoists etc will be the responsibility of residents.

MMHS does not have the expertise to decide which aids and adaptations are appropriate for an individual. We therefore require requests for adaptations to be supported by a professional such as an occupational therapist.

8.2 Hand and grab rails

These are often funded by Social Services. The approval of MMHS must be sought before any rails are fitted.

Where steps from access paths to external doors do not have a rail, MMHS will fund this provision.

9 GARDEN MAINTENANCE

Residents are wholly responsible for the maintenance of any individual or shared garden they have access to and/or enjoyment of. Annual garden maintenance grants may be available as detailed in section 2.1.

9.1 MMHS's responsibilities

MMHS will be responsible for the management, pruning, lopping and/or reduction of 'forest'-type trees. These include oak, silver birch, conifers (generally), ash, horse chestnut, rowan, flowering cherry and willow.

The resident will be responsible for keeping MMHS informed of:

- a) the condition/size of such trees
- b) the issue by the local authority of any tree preservation orders affecting Society properties

9.2 Residents' responsibilities

The resident will be responsible, throughout the year, for:

- keeping the grass at a reasonable length
- pruning and trimming shrubs, bushes and other flowering plants as necessary
- maintaining beds and other similar areas in a weed-free condition
- preventing any plant or shrub encroaching onto footpaths (public or private) or into adjacent gardens
- trimming and keeping to a height not exceeding 1.8 metres (six feet) and to a reasonable width any hedges (including leylandii and other similar varieties)
- the pruning, lopping and/or reduction as necessary of all 'domestic'-type trees including all fruit-bearing trees, laurel (including in hedges) and ornamental trees such as lilac etc
- generally maintaining gardens in a tidy and well-kept condition.

10 MOVING HOME

MMHS recognises that residents may want to move or transfer to an alternative MMHS home.

Residents wishing to transfer will need to contact the office and they will be sent a copy of the transfer policy and an *Application for Transfer of Tenancy* form to complete and return to MMHS. After review, residents will be informed in writing whether or not they qualify for a transfer and the reasons for that decision. Policy criteria include:

1 Length of tenancy

Unless there is a significant change in residents' circumstances, it is expected that residents will stay in their homes for at least ten years from the start of their tenancy before applying for a transfer. However, a significant change in circumstances will override this expectation.

2 Eligibility

A resident applying for a transfer has to qualify for Society housing in the same way as a new applicant. An intending transferee, with resources over the current maximum allowed for new applicants, will be refused.

3 Equity contribution

The equity contribution rules will be the same for existing residents and new applicants.

MMHS's and transferees' equity contributions will relate to the year in which the transfer commences. Depending on their assets, equity may be required for residents moving into a property either already owned by MMHS or specially purchased. Where a resident holds an equity share in the current property, an estimated value will be used for assessing their eligibility. The value may mean they are required to have equity in their new property. An actual valuation will be obtained when a resident has moved and depending on whether the property is sold or retained this will be either the sale price or MMHS's valuation.

10.1 Vacating a property

When you have decided to move out of your home you should:

- contact MMHS in writing, giving three months' notice
- use the checklist which will be sent to you to prepare your home to return to MMHS.

The following are some of the actions covered in the checklist:

Keys

Unless otherwise agreed in writing, all external door keys (or P-number if you have been given one) should be posted to MMHS by registered post identified, for security reasons, by town only, when you have vacated the property.

New address

Please provide to MMHS your contact/forwarding address and, if possible, a phone number.

REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE CONTROLS – LOCATIONS

The locations of these control items can be logged in the table below to assist when dealing with repairs and emergencies.

	Position in Home
Stopcock	
Fuse box	
Gas tap	
Trip switch	
Boiler	
Water tank	

REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE LOG

You should also fill in the repair log when work is carried out. If in any doubt, consult MMHS or a professional before carrying out any maintenance.

Date	Work carried out	Contractor name

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