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Top tips to living in your new home



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Welcome to your new home!

This mini guide is a quick reference to get you started in your new home. Below is a brief introduction about some of the equipment that you have that works together to give you a better energy efficient home.

Heating and hot water

The gas supply in your home is for your heating only. Your water is heated via an electric water heater.

Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery (MVHR) system

The MVHR system provides fresh, filtered air into your home, whilst trying to keep most of the energy already being used to heat your home. Making your home a high quality, low energy building. This system is fully automatic and doesn't require you to do anything.

What to expect in the first few weeks & months

To help you settle into your new home, we will be around for support and guidance in the first few weeks and months. You can expect:

1st Week:

- ✓ We will help you settle into your new home & community.
- ✓ Please take the time to look through this guide, and the full online version, and get to know the most efficient way to live in your home.
- ✓ Get in touch if there is anything you aren't sure of.

2nd Week:

- ✓ Once you're settled in, a member of our team will give you a call to arrange a visit and answer any questions that you might have. Of course, if there is anything urgent, please get in touch sooner.

1 Month:

- ✓ A member of our repairs and maintenance team, and your housing officer will visit to see if everything is ok.

3 Months:

- ✓ A member of our team will come and read your meters and show you how you can do this.
- ✓ We will email and text you with a feedback form to see how you're settling in, and anything we could do better.

6 Months:

- ✓ Your housing officer will see how you are settling in.

1st Year:

We will pop along to check your home to see:

- ✓ How you're settling into your home.
- ✓ If there are shrink cracks that we need to repair.
- ✓ Get feedback from you about your first year living in your home and ask if you'd like to take part in a story for local newspapers and our tenant newsletter.

Here are some useful tips on living in your new home:



Hot water

Your hot water comes from the hot water cylinder, located in the built-in cupboard in the kitchen area. Your gas boiler is in the kitchen wall unit. To programme your hot water, the programmer is in the living room area and looks like this:



Your programmer will send a signal to the boiler depending on the temperature of your home. If your home gets too hot, it will send a signal for the boiler to be switched off and will be switched on when your house gets too cold. The thermostats are normally set between 18°C and 21°C.



Programming your gas heating timer

The timer or programmer helps you to control when your heating comes on and when it goes off. By programming it, you can make sure that it works in the way that suits you and your home best.

Here is a suggestion of how to heat your home:

Programme your heating to come on half an hour before you:

- get up in the morning,
- come home,
- go to bed or go out.

A home will usually take half an hour to warm and to cool down. By doing this, your home should be warm without wasting energy.

Here is the link to the manufacturer's website, which has full instructions and user manuals in the 'Manuals & Brochures' section for you,

<https://www.worcester-bosch.co.uk/products/boiler-controls/directory/greenstar-comfort-ii-rf-1>

If you don't have access to the internet, please let us know and we can get someone to come and show you how to use the controls.



General advice



Try and use energy saving appliances (A rated) and low energy light bulbs.



Turn taps off when you aren't using the water.



Open blinds and curtains during the winter days.



Don't cover the radiators with objects like bags, as this will stop the heat from circulating around the room.



Avoid long curtains that cover the radiators.



We will arrange annual servicing of your MVHR system and heat exchanger.



Shop around for an energy provider, as different suppliers offer different deals.



Make seasonal changes to get the best out of your heating. For example, during warm weather consider if the heating needs to be on.



Always contact us on **01824 706000**, during working hours, if you want to make any changes to your home.

Where possible, please don't:

- X** Cover or block gaps around the doors inside your home. These are there to help air circulate around the house.



Lower your thermostat

Try turning down your thermostat by one or two degrees – it doesn't sound like much, but this small change can have a massive impact on your bills. Obviously, please don't lower it to a point where your room feels cold, but by turning down your thermostat by just 1 degree you could save around 10% on your annual energy bill. It is also extremely important that you don't place items over your thermostat such as coats or furniture.



Be smart with timing

Make sure that the timer settings on your controller are correct. Work out the schedules of your household and when the home needs to be warm, then set the timers accordingly – for example, before you wake up or when you finish work. You don't want your heating running when you don't need it.

Making a schedule and setting your heat pump to warm your water at a different time from your heating will make sure you have enough hot water for your needs.



Switch off heating in unused rooms

Turn the heating off or down to the frost protection setting in rooms you aren't using. Tailoring the temperature of each room will give you more control over your heating, and how much energy you use.

When you are only heating rooms, you need to stay warm, be sure to keep any internal doors shut so you aren't leaking heat out into the rest of the house.



Make the most of the energy you pay for

Don't trap heat in your radiators. Make sure your curtains or furniture aren't blocking the heat from entering the room. Lift your curtains onto the windowsill if you need to and pull your sofa forward.

Thermostatic radiator valves are fitted on your radiators to allow you to control the temperature of individual rooms. There are numbers printed on the valves from 1 to 5 which correspond to a room temperature.

We recommend making small changes each day until you find the temperature that best suits you; we suggest starting at a setting of 2-3 for a bedroom, hall, or kitchen, and 3-5 for a lounge or bathroom.



Keep your radiators clean

Radiators get hot and therefore are like a magnet for attracting dust and dirt and if left uncleaned. The build-up can be quite substantial. Particularly dirty radiators can be less efficient than clean ones, making your system use more energy to heat your room, which will be reflected in higher energy bills.

Try to regularly clean the convector fins – the zigzag grooves running down the back (and front). This can be done with a long-handled radiator brush or even by running the nozzle attachment of a Hoover across the top and bottom.

Energy efficiency

With energy bills increasing, here are some hints and tips on things you can do to help:



Cooking

- Make sure you use the correct size pan for the food and the hob.
- Make sure the lid is kept on the saucepan to keep the heat in.
- When boiling vegetables and pasta, only use enough water to keep them covered.
- A microwave oven is more energy efficient than an oven, so use a microwave, when possible, but remember to switch it off at the wall when not in use.
- Cook in batches when using the oven. You can freeze portions of food to warm up later, this could also save you time.
- Food cut into smaller pieces cook quicker and saves time.
- Make sure the rings on the cooker are clean as burned food absorbs heat and makes the ring less efficient.



Fridge/Freezer

- Defrost your fridge and freezer on a regular basis as this will improve their efficiency and stop a build-up of ice. See your appliance user guide for more advice, if needed.
- By keeping the fridge and freezer full they don't have to work as hard and therefore use less energy.
- Make sure that food is cooled down before placing them in the fridge or freezer.



Washing machine/combined tumble dryer

- Make sure you use full loads and not half loads.
- When possible, use the low-energy program on your washing machine.
- Dry your clothes outside when you can, and do not put clothes on the radiator to dry. This increases the amount of condensation in the air in your home and increases the risk of black mould.
- Take advantage of your electricity provided by your solar panels and use your appliances during the day (especially on sunny days).



Other appliances and lights

- Make sure the appliance is switched off in the wall when you're not using them as some appliances use energy when on stand-by.
- Use energy saving light bulbs around your home, and when you're not using the room make sure you switch off the light.



Frequently asked questions

Do I need to switch my heating on?

Your home doesn't have a typical heating system. For most of the year, you shouldn't need to turn your heating on. The windows and insulation will help keep the heat in.

In the winter, when it isn't so sunny, you may need to top-up your heating.

You can programme your heating and hot water to come on and off up to three different times a day.

How will I be charged for my heating?

A meter has been put into your home. We have registered your electric meter with British Gas. If you wish to change provider, please contact your preferred energy supplier.

Can I open the windows during the year?

You can open the windows, but you don't need to open them for fresh air. The ventilation in the house does this for you by getting air from outside. The windows are triple glazed, so if you keep them shut, it'll keep your home quiet and warm. The MVHR system works better if your window and doors are closed.

Can I dry clothes in my home?

During dry weather, you can dry your clothes outside. If you are drying clothes indoors, we recommend you use an airer located in the bathroom with the door closed. The water from wet clothes will be taken outside by your MVHR system and replaced with dry air. Please do not put wet clothes onto radiators to dry.

What should I do if my home is too warm, or too cold for me?

Your home will be set between 16-22 degrees but adjust the temperature to your own comfort.

How do I cool my home in the summer?

Your MVHR system has an automatic summer bypass mode, that disables heat recovery when the outside temperature is cooler than the inside.

During warm weather, it's important for you to live in a comfortable temperature. As the temperature outside cools in the evening, we suggest that you open your windows to let the warm air out, and let some cool air in.

What about cooking smells and steamy showers?

Your Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery (MVHR) system filters condensation and odours from the home, including cooking, bathing, and showering. It means that bad smells don't hang around, and it reduces condensation and mould. Damp and condensation, if left untreated, can cause mould. To help reduce this in your home, you can:

- If there are water droplets in the corners of windows and walls, wipe them with a cloth.
- Keep your MVHR system running to reduce this happening.

If you would like more tips about reducing condensation, please visit our website: <https://www.denbighshirehousing.co.uk/mould-and-condensation/>

Can I make any changes to my home?

To make sure your home continues to meet your needs, you'll need to get approval, in writing, from our repairs and maintenance team before making any changes or adaptations.

Damage to your home would need to be repaired immediately by one of our team and may be recharged.

Why do I have an external letterbox?

You have an external letter box to the rear of the building, next to the rear door. Deliveries can be made without anyone having to enter the building. You can collect your mail from the foyer inside the rear door. The key will be provided for this for you to access.

Why can I only use a combined washer dryer or just a washing machine?

It isn't possible to put a ventilation pipe outside for a normal tumble dryer & there is no space for one.

Can I hang up pictures, mirrors, or anything on internal walls?

Yes, you can as long as they are attached safely.

Can I put up Christmas decorations, lights, hanging baskets etc up on the outside of the house?

This is one of the most important pieces of information about living in your new home.

As this is a communal building, you are unable to put anything outside your home that fixes to the walls or railings.

Is there a lift in the building?

Yes, there is a lift in the building & please follow the lift advice within the lift. Please do not put scooters, bikes, or any other furniture in the lift. Please do not use it if there is a fire and follow your fire safety guide for more information.

Can I store anything on the landings outside or near my apartment?

Landings are not a storage area and may cause a fire hazard. Please use your apartments to store your items, excluding bikes and scooters. Storage is available outside the apartments for these items.

Can I store anything by or under the stairways?

No as this can create a fire hazard. Please use your apartments to store your items, excluding bikes and scooters. Storage is available outside the apartments for these items.

Is there a bike and scooter storage?

Yes, outside the back of the apartments. Please use these areas to store your bikes and scooters.

How do I open the apartment main front door and use the intercom phone?

The main front door can be opened using your door fob. The intercom unit is located outside the main front door to the building with each flat numbered on the panel.

Can I access the back door to the apartments?

Yes, using your door fob.

Where is the outside bin area?

To the rear of the apartments, next to the car parking area.

Is there parking?

Resident parking is available to the rear of the apartments. There is also limited visitor parking available.

Is there a communal outside space?

Yes, there is a small communal garden and seating area to the rear of the apartments.

Here are some useful webpages for more advice and support:

Denbighshire County Council:

<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/benefits-grants-and-money-advice/cost-of-living-support/cost-of-living-support.aspx>

Government: **<https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/energy-saving-advice/>**

Nest Cymru: **<https://nest.gov.wales/>**

Citizen's Advice: **<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/>**

Living in an energy efficient home, reducing your carbon emissions and lowering your energy bills, visit:

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energyathome/>

How to report a repair

We always aim to repair any faults in your home that are our responsibility as soon as we can. You can report it online at **www.denbighshirehousing.co.uk/formbuilder/report-repair/view/** or call us on **01824 706000**. Routine repairs will be carried out within 20 days.

Some work such as gardens, paths and fences may be replaced when schemes or programmes are planned and will be scheduled within 365 days.

Water

If you have completely lost your water supply in your home, please contact Welsh Water on **0800 052 0130**.

Emergency repairs

If there is an emergency in your home, it is important you call us immediately to report the problem on **01824 706000**.

You can contact us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Emergencies may include:

- Loss of mains water or complete loss of electricity.
- Burst plumbing or flood that cannot be stopped by turning off the water.
- No heating or hot water (if between 31 October – 31 March and if no other heating is present).
- Unsafe or broken doors and windows.
- Gas leaks.
- Collapsed ceilings.

We always prioritise emergency repairs because if these are left unchecked, they may cause damage to your home or even worse, pose a risk to your health and safety. Any emergency repair will be dealt with in 24 hours.

Urgent repairs such as these, but not exclusive to, will be attended to within 5 working days.

- Partial loss of heating.
- Partial loss of lighting or power.
- Make safe a fence or gate.
- Bleeping smoke alarm or CO2 detectors.
- Electrics tripping.

What if it is not an emergency?

There are plenty of times when a maintenance or repair job is needed in your home, but we don't class it as an emergency. We still want to help fix the problem as soon as we can, and we pride ourselves on offering a service that is fast, easy and hassle free.

How to contact us

Online:

Visit our website www.denbighshirehousing.co.uk for up-to-date information about our services and latest developments.

Email: Email us on housing@denbighshire.gov.uk

Social Media:

Facebook: [@DenbighshireHousing](https://www.facebook.com/DenbighshireHousing)

X, formerly known as Twitter: [@DenbighshireHou](https://twitter.com/DenbighshireHousing)

Youtube: [Tai Sir Ddinbych – Denbighshire Housing](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv3v3v3v3v3v3v3v3v3v3v3)

Phone:

Call **01824 706000** Mon-Thurs 8:30am – 5pm, Fri 8:30am – 4:30pm. Out of hours emergencies call **0300 123 3068**.

We welcome communication in Welsh or English. If you would like anything in large print, or another language, please let us know your preference.

All information is correct at time of printing and is subject to change without notice.