

# Section One - Welcome to your new home

## Welcome

We are delighted to welcome you as a new tenant of Taunton Deane Borough Council and we hope you will be happy in your new home.

We trust you will find the information in this pack useful, informative and easy to understand. It will help explain what you can expect from us as well as your responsibilities as a tenant.

If there is something you are not clear about, please contact us and we will be happy to help.

Please keep your welcome pack in a safe place - you may not need it now but it could be useful to you in the future.



## Moving in

Moving home can be a stressful time and in the hectic run-up to the big day it is all too easy to forget something important. We've put together a checklist to help you.

### Reminder list for moving house

#### In the weeks leading up to your move:

- Get estimates from removal companies.
- Confirm the date of your move with your chosen removal company, if relevant.
- Collect newspapers, tissue paper, boxes, cardboard, wrapping and padding to help with packing.
- Check on your home contents insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for the move and covered at your new address. If you do not have home contents insurance please refer to the home contents insurance leaflet.
- Arrange meter readings and disconnections at your existing home, if applicable.
- Arrange to take over gas, water and electricity at your new address, and make sure that all your appliances are properly fitted.
- Tell your telephone company and ask them to make the necessary arrangements for a final account at your present address, and for taking over or installing a telephone at your new home.



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- Clear out any unwanted items.
- Send out change of address cards or letters.
- Contact Royal Mail about redirection of post.
- Start packing non-essentials and label boxes according to contents and room they need to be in.
- Arrange care for your children or pets on moving day.

### One week before:

- Settle newspaper and milk bills.
- Defrost fridge.
- If you are moving a freezer and its contents, turn the freezer dials up to maximum for a couple of days before your move.

### One day before:

- Pack your 'moving home survival kit'. See overleaf.
- Finish packing everything except overnight items.
- Ensure you have cash to hand.  
Keep credit cards and cheque books handy.
- Put valuables and documents in a safe place.

## Moving day:

- Keep your money somewhere safe.
- Pack van and keep the 'moving house survival kit' to one side.
- Check you have not left anything behind.
- Secure all windows and lock all doors.
- Collect keys for your new home.
- Take meter readings.
- List any damaged items and ask the removal company to sign as confirmation.
- Locate the water stopcock.



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## Who to inform

Please use this list as a guide:

- |                          |                                       |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Bank                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Motoring organisations<br>(For example RAC or AA) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Benefit agency                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | National Insurance                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Building society                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | National savings, premium                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Council Tax                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bonds   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Credit card companies                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Opticians   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Deane Helpline                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pension providers                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Dentist                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | Phone company                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Doctor                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | Publications or<br>subscriptions                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | DVLA                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rental companies                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Electoral register                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Royal Mail  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Electricity board                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Schools   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Employer                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sports and social clubs                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Family                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | Stairlift   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Friends                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | Store card companies                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Gas board                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tax office  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Hire purchase companies               | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trade unions, professional<br>bodies              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Housing benefit /<br>Universal Credit | <input type="checkbox"/> | TV and video rental<br>companies                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Inland Revenue                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | TV licensing authority                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Insurance companies                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Vet   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Library                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | Water board                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Magazine subscriptions                |                          |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mail order companies                  |                          |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Milk or newspaper<br>deliveries       |                          |   |

## Moving house survival kit

Below is a list of ideas for the contents:

- |                          |                   |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Basic tools       | <input type="checkbox"/> | Packed lunch or snacks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Bin liners        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rubber gloves          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Bulbs             | <input type="checkbox"/> | Soap                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Cloths            | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tea towels             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Detergent         | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tea and coffee         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Dustpan and brush | <input type="checkbox"/> | Toilet roll            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | First aid kit     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Torch                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Hand towels       | <input type="checkbox"/> | Washing-up bowl        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Kettle            |                          |                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Milk              |                          |                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mop               |                          |                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mugs              |                          |                        |



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## Things you need to know

- We carry out **safety checks** on the gas and electrical circuits. We will service the gas and central heating system.
- **Utilities** - It is your responsibility to tell your gas, water and electricity suppliers about your move. Make sure you take a reading of the meters for your records in case there is a dispute later.

If your property has a gas meter and you do not intend to use gas appliances you will still be liable for a service charge.

The water board is unlikely to take out a water meter.

- **Take meter readings on the day you move in** - If you do not, you may end up paying for services you have not used. Talk to gas, electricity and water providers about different ways of paying your bills. There will be various choices open to you.

To find out which company currently supplies the **gas or electric** to your new home. Please contact: 0800 326 5524.

- **TV Licence** - If you have a TV make sure you have a licence. Ask at your local Post Office for payment options or telephone TV Licensing on 0300 7906165.
- **Home contents insurance** - It is your responsibility to insure the contents of your home. We only insure the structure and fixtures in the building. We have details of "pay-as-you-go" insurance if you would like to safeguard your possessions at an affordable cost. Please refer to the home contents insurance leaflet.

- **Cost of removal** - We will not help with any removal costs unless the move is to do with a modernisation programme or you meet the criteria for our Transfer Removal Grant Scheme. Loans may be available, depending on your circumstances, from the Department of Work and Pensions.
- **Improvements** - You can undertake your own improvements with prior permission from the Council. Please contact your Estates Officer for more information.
- **Home Furniture Service Trust** - If you are on a low income the Home Furniture Service Trust may be able to help. They supply recycled furniture and household goods at affordable prices. You can contact them on 01823 253053.
- **Garages** - We have garages to let in most areas. These are to be let for the garaging of cars and not for the storage of possessions. For more information please log on to [homefindersomerset.co.uk](http://homefindersomerset.co.uk)
- **Fences** - We are not responsible for maintaining the fences between council properties.
- You should consider registering with a **doctor and dentist**. You can phone the NHS Helpline for details of the nearest doctor to your new home. Telephone: 111 available 24 hours a day or visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk).



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## Customer care

We aim to provide you with excellent customer care.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring that housing services are equally available to all.
- Responding to questions about our service as soon as possible.
- Providing all customers with a named officer to deal with their enquiry.
- Keeping customers informed about the progress made in any investigation.
- Making every effort to resolve any problems referred to us.
- Carrying out our duties in a fair, equitable and consistent manner.
- Advising customers when and why we are unable to take any further action.
- If we are unable to help, quickly directing customers to the most suitable agency.

When you contact us you can expect the following standards of service:

### In writing



We will reply within one week. If this is not possible we will send an acknowledgement card or letter.


Our address is:

Taunton Deane Borough Council,  
The Deane House, Belvedere Road,  
Taunton, TA1 1HE


## By email


 Email us at: [enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk).

## By telephone

 We will answer your call within 20 seconds. If you are hard of hearing, a minicom system is available on our main switchboard number. Telephone: 01823 356356.

## When you visit an office

 All office buildings are fully accessible by wheelchair. If you call at our office for an interview our aim is to see you within 10 minutes. However, during busy periods this time may be longer.



## A language line is available if necessary.

If you need information from us in different formats or languages, contact the Housing Reception who will be able to help.

Opening hours:      Mon - Thurs 8.30am - 5.00pm  
                              Friday            9.30am - 4.30pm

## Comments and complaints

We strive continuously to be a Council for the community and seek to consult with residents at every opportunity. With this in mind we are interested in all comments, suggestions, compliments and complaints.

A form is available from the Housing Reception at the Deane House, Halcon Link Centre, Priorswood Office, Wellington Community Office or by logging on to the Taunton Deane website: <https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/have-your-say>.

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Tenants in sheltered housing can also get a copy of the form from supported housing staff.

You can use the form to compliment a member of staff or praise a service you have received. You can also use the form to make complaints. If you have difficulty putting your complaint in writing you can ask us for help, ask a friend to help you or go to the Citizens Advice Bureau.

We aim to provide the best service we can, but as with everything in life sometimes things do go wrong and mistakes happen. If you are not satisfied with any area of our work or consider that we have failed to do something, we want to hear from you.

We will try to resolve your complaint in an informal way, so in the first instance please talk to a member of staff.

Should you wish to complain formally we guarantee to:

- Respond to your complaint within 5 working days and tell you who is dealing with the matter.
- Give a written reply within 20 working days of receiving your complaint detailing our response or giving a date that we will issue a full response.
- If you are not satisfied with our response, you can take your complaint further, such as through an independent person like the Local Government Ombudsman. The Local Government Ombudsman service is an independent impartial and free service. More information is available from Housing Reception, Deane House or the Local Government Ombudsman. Telephone: 0300 061 0614 ([www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk))

- We will treat all comments and complaints confidentially.

*Please note: We do not consider a complaint about your neighbour to be a complaint under our Corporate Complaints Policy. We would only consider this under that policy if you were not satisfied with the way we handled your complaint. If you have a neighbour nuisance complaint please speak to your Estates Officer.*

## **Our commitment to equality**

We value diversity and believe that all people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. We aim to promote equality of opportunity in our role as a service provider.

In promoting equality of opportunity, we will oppose all forms of discrimination, whether on grounds of disability, gender, race, sexuality, age, marital status, religion, national origin or any other condition or requirement which may place a person or group at disadvantage.

## **Get involved**

### **A choice and a voice in the services you receive**

#### **What is tenant and resident involvement?**

Tenant and resident involvement is a two-way process involving the sharing of information and ideas between tenants, residents and Taunton Deane Borough Council. It is your chance to get involved in the issues that affect you and your local community.

We are committed to involving and supporting tenants and residents to address local issues on our estates.

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Your opinion really counts and that is why we want to build stronger links between everyone involved:

- You
- Your local tenants and residents associations
- Your Councillors
- Taunton Deane Borough Council and the services we provide

## Ways we help you get involved

We help tenants get involved by providing information in a variety of ways, which include:

- Letters to individual tenants
- Information bulletins
- Deane Housing News and Tenants' Talk newsletters
- Tenant Services Management Board
- Tenants' Forum
- Supported Housing Development Group
- Local Tenant and Resident Associations
- Questionnaires, surveys and focus-groups
- Meeting with tenants to discuss specific issues
- Taunton Deane Borough Council website
- Taunton Deane Borough Council customer services line



For more information please contact  
The Tenant Empowerment Team on  
01823 356552 or e-mail:  
[tenant.empowerment@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.empowerment@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

## Why should I get involved?

- You know what your local needs and priorities are

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

- It is an opportunity to learn new skills and meet new people
- It can be satisfying to help make your community a better place in which to live
- We can help you to meet the cost of your involvement by paying for carers (including childcare), transport and any training you may require



## How can I get involved?

How you get involved is up to you. Your contributions matter; there are a wide range of ways in which you can get involved. For example:

- Raising issues of concern
- Suggesting ideas for local projects
- Volunteering your time
- Filling out surveys and suggestion sheets
- Attending your local tenants and residents association meeting
- Attending the Tenant Services Management Board, Tenants' Forum or Supported Housing Development Group.
- Taking part in Estate Walkabouts
- Helping choose the products that go into homes - tenants accompany staff and assess and score how good the products were.
- Design and content of Annual Reports

## Don't just think it . . . get involved!

Taunton Deane Borough Council, the Tenant Services Management Board, Tenants' Forum and recognised Tenants and Residents Associations, work to promote equal opportunities in communities and to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

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## Community Development

The Community Development Team works in partnership with tenants, staff and other organisations to help make your neighbourhood a better place to live.

The priorities of the team are to:

- Support education and skills development
- Remove barriers to employment
- Promote and achieve healthier lifestyles
- Improve the look and feel of the area

### Examples of events held include:

Summer fun days – working with a community centre, hundreds of families and young people attended the summer events, as well as Easter crafts, October half term community cooking, and Christmas market.

Community Clean-up Days - took place across the borough allowing tenants to clear up their properties and estates, collecting tonnes of rubbish. A group of dedicated volunteers worked tirelessly and without them the days would be almost impossible.

Community gardens and neighbourhood parks – helping communities to obtain funding and organise the work to make their neighbourhoods a better place to live

If you would like more information please contact the Community Development Teams on the telephone numbers below.

North Taunton	01823 219518
Taunton East	01823 785004
Wellington	01823 219783

## **Right to personal information**

The Data Protection Act 1998 became law on 1 March 2000. The new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) comes into force in May 2018. They give you the right to find out what information about you is held on computer and paper records.

Taunton Deane Borough Council is committed to protecting your information. We are registered with the Information Commissioner and comply with the provisions of the 1998 Data Protection Act and from May 2018 the new General Data Protection Regulation.

## **Information handling/collection and use**

We will ensure that your information is handled in total confidence. Personal information such as your name, address or other tenancy details will never be disclosed, sold or shared with any third parties without your consent. We will not pass information on to any third parties other than those responsible for the information and services provided as part of your tenancy.

## **Security**

We have security measures in place to protect the loss, misuse and alteration of your information under our control. We take every precaution to protect your personal details whether held in manual or computerised form.

## **Right of access to information held**

You have a right of access to your records. You will need to fill in an application form and provide some details to identify yourself to us and help us find your information in order to process your request. Please ask your Estates Officer for a copy of our leaflet "Access to your personal information" and the accompanying application form. This can also be obtained from our website  
<https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk>.

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



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## **What are you entitled to see?**

You are entitled to see if the Council holds any personal data about you, and if we do we will send you:-

- A copy of the information we have about you
- Details of the source of the information
- A description of why the information is held
- Details of anyone it may be passed to or seen by
- An explanation of the reasoning involved in any automated decisions

## **How long does it take?**

When the Council has enough information to identify you and locate your records (and you have paid any necessary fee) we must provide you with the information within 40 calendar days. From May 2018 this will reduce to 1 calendar month.

## **What does it cost?**

The Council may ask you to pay a single fee of £10 to provide the information. (Please note that this fee only relates to your rights to see detailed records, there is no charge for routine enquiries). From May 2018 this fee will be abolished.

## **What information can't you see?**

Some information on your record may be withheld from you if it could identify someone else. If that person objects to being identified, you may be refused access to all or part of your record. In addition some categories of information are exempt from various provisions of the Data Protection Act and the new General Data Protection Regulation so this may affect the information you can see.

## **How can you correct errors?**

If any information about you and your name is inaccurate, you are entitled to have it corrected or removed. Information is inaccurate if it is incorrect or misleading in any matter of fact. This includes an expression of opinion if it is based on inaccurate data.

## **How can you complain?**

If you are dissatisfied with the way your application for information has been dealt with, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office by visiting [ico.org.uk](http://ico.org.uk) or telephoning 0303 123 1113. Alternatively you can complain in writing to:

Information Commissioner's Office,  
Wycliffe House,  
Water Lane,  
Wilmslow,  
Cheshire,  
SK9 5AF

If we refuse to give you access to your records, or to correct or remove inaccurate information (and the Data Protection Commissioner cannot help) you can apply to the court.

Human Rights Act - The Council as a 'public' authority will meet its obligations under the Human Rights Act.