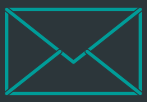

Green
Square
Accord
Tenant Handbook
Welcome to your new home



0300 111 7000



info@greensquareaccord.co.uk



greensquareaccord.co.uk

Contents

About GSA 3
Save time, do it online! 4
A reminder 5
Rent and service charges 6
Ways to pay 8
Repairs: who is responsible? 10
Your tenancy 22
Staying safe in your home 25
Dealing with condensation 37
Upgrades and improvements 40
Anti-social behaviour 42
Getting involved 45
Compliments and complaints 49
How we use your data 51
Getting information in different formats 52

Welcome to your new home

This handbook provides information about your home and the service we provide. Please keep it somewhere safe so you can reference back to it when you need to.



About GSA

We are one of the biggest social housing and care providers in England.

We believe passionately in our purpose and provide housing and support services to more than 50,000 people across our four localities.

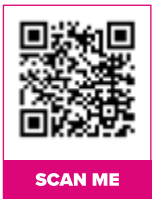
We are proud to play an active role in helping people to deal with the consequences of the housing crisis by providing affordable homes for people in our communities who need them most.



Scan this QR code or visit greensquareaccord.co.uk/about-us to find out more about our organisation including:

- What we do
- How we are governed and regulated
- Our Executive Team and Board
- Our services
- Our structure
- Our locality model
- Our long-term strategy
- Our annual report and financial statements
- Our customer policies
- Careers
- Latest news

Save time, do it online!



Visiting our website is the quickest and easiest way to find information and access our services. If you have a query about your home or the services we provide, scan this QR code or visit greensquareaccord.co.uk.

If you need this information in a different language or format you can visit greensquareaccord.co.uk or scan the QR code. Our website features a range of accessibility tools including translation, easy read and read aloud technology.

You can create an account on our customer portal which enables you to book repairs, pay your rent and access other services.

Here when you need us

If you need to contact us, we are always here to help. You can email our team on info@greensquareaccord.co.uk or call us on 0300 111 7000. We are available from 8am to 7pm Monday to Friday and we have an out of hours service to cover emergencies outside of these hours.

A reminder

Here are some things you should do as soon as you can:

- Arrange contents insurance for your personal belongings. We have a partnership agreement which gives you access to a specialist policy - find out more on our dedicated insurance web page (building insurance on your home is covered by us)
- Contact your local council to set up or change your council tax payments and to add your household to the electoral roll
- Contact your local council to make a claim for benefits (if applicable)
- Find out where your stop taps, fuse box and trip switches are located (contact us if you need help with this)
- Re-direct your mail from your previous address (please contact the Post Office for advice)
- Arrange or amend your TV licence (if necessary)
- Remember to let your doctor, dentist, bank, employer, school and organisations like the DVLA know about your new address.

Rent and service charges

Rent explained

Your tenancy agreement will set out your rent and the date it is due to be paid each month. We set rents once a year and the Government sets the rent charge social landlords can apply.

Rent in advance explained

Paying your rent in advance means you pay for your home before you live in that period, not after. Your payment covers the week or month coming up, not the one that has just passed. We ask for rent in advance to help you:

- Keep your rent account up to date
- Avoid falling behind or building up debt
- Stay in control of your payments
- Create a small safety buffer.

If your rent is not in advance yet, don't worry. We're here to help. You can catch up slowly by making small extra payments over time. Email our team on info@greensquareaccord.co.uk or call us on 0300 111 7000.

Service charges explained

If you live in a flat or house that has shared areas or facilities, you'll also pay a service charge towards the cost of maintaining and repairing those areas.

Here are some examples of what your service charge may cover:

- Cleaning of shared areas, such as stairs and hallways.
- Gardening and grounds maintenance, such as grass-cutting, paths and car parks.
- Gas, water and electricity supplies to shared areas.
- Maintaining door entry systems and lifts.
- Maintaining fire equipment and fire safety checks.
- Repairs and maintenance in shared areas.

You'll either pay a fixed or variable service charge, depending on your tenancy. We'll always let you know at least a month before any changes to your service charge.

SCAN ME

You will receive an annual statement explaining any increases in your rent and service charge. For more information about how we calculate rent and service charges scan this QR code or visit greensquareaccord.co.uk/rent-and-service-charges

Ways to pay

We want to make it quick and easy to pay your rent and service charges, so we've got a choice of ways for you to pay. Your tenancy agreement will tell you whether you need to pay your rent weekly or monthly. It is important to pay your rent on time – you could lose your home if you don't pay.

Paying online

You can pay us directly from your online customer account. You can also use this to check your account balance.

Direct Debit

Direct Debit is the easiest way to pay your rent on time, every time. Visit our website and click on the Direct Debit link, then choose the area that you live in. You will receive an email requesting your information instantly. We can collect direct debits at a frequency to suit you – weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

Once this is set up, you don't have to worry about missing a payment. We'll always let you know in advance if your rent changes and your payments will change automatically. You'll just need your bank account and sort code details to hand when you call us.

Allpay app

Download the allpay app to pay your bills from your smartphone using your debit or credit card. Just search allpay in your device's app store.

Post Office or PayPoint

Use your payment card to pay at any post office or wherever you see the PayPoint logo in convenience stores, newsagents, supermarkets and service stations. You should receive a payment card automatically when you start your tenancy. If you haven't got a card or need a replacement, please contact us to order one.

Phone

You can call us to pay your rent over the phone using your debit or credit card. Our automated payment service is available 24/7. Press 1 when you call, and you'll be transferred to our partner allpay. You can also speak to us to set up regular payments using your debit or credit card, so you don't need to call us each time you want to pay your rent.

Need support?

You can access a range of advice and support on our Cost of Living hub. If you're struggling to afford your rent or you're worried about paying your bills, it is important you contact us as soon as possible on 0300 111 7000. Our Financial Skills and Tenancy Sustainment team can help you:

- Set a household budget.
- Apply for benefits.
- Secure charitable grants and hardship funds.
- Apply for fuel vouchers.

SCAN ME

Repairs: who is responsible?

When you rent a home from us most minor repairs are your responsibility to fix, while some repairs are our responsibility.

SCAN ME

Scan this QR code or visit greensquareaccord.co.uk/manage-your-home to access our step-by-step guides on how to complete simple repairs.





Bathroom

Your responsibility	Our responsibility
• Cleaning your bathroom • Cleaning bathroom extractor fan vents • Replacing bath and sink plugs and chains • Repairing and replacing loose or broken toilet seats • Shower heads and hoses • Replacing bath panels • Replacing shower heads • Fitting shower curtains • Unblocking sinks, baths and toilets	• Repairing leaking baths, showers, sinks, taps and toilets • Replacing flush handles



Condensation, damp and mould

Your responsibility	Our responsibility
Follow our advice to help to manage condensation, damp and mould in your home **(we will provide you with a separate leaflet on managing this)**	Complete inspections when you tell us about condensation, damp and mould and deal with issues which can't be easily managed or treated by you



Doors, windows and locks

Your responsibility	Our responsibility
• Adjusting doors • Adapting doors to accommodate carpet • Replacing broken glass	• replacing door thresholds • repairing window sills • replacing window catches, fasteners, sash cords and locks • repairing window frames • renewing glazing putty



Electrics

Your responsibility	Our responsibility
• Changing light bulbs and tubes • Reattaching light pull cords • Testing smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and replacing batteries • Resetting trip switches in your fuse box	• Installing a smoke alarm • Repairing sockets and switches • Checking your electrical wiring



Heating and plumbing

Your responsibility	Our responsibility
• Setting your heating controls • Preventing your pipes from freezing or bursting in cold weather • Knowing how to turn off your water stop tap	• Installing central heating systems • Repairing and servicing your boiler and central heating system (including gas pipes) • Repairing fireplaces • Unblocking main drains up to the soil stack



Shared areas

Your responsibility	Our responsibility
Keeping areas clear of obstructions	We are responsible for looking after shared areas. You can find out more by visiting our estate services page.



Gardens, sheds, fences and garages

Your responsibility	Our responsibility
• Cutting the grass in your garden • Looking after the garden paths and patios at your home • Looking after trees in your garden • Installing and maintaining sheds • Replacing broken washing lines in your garden • Repairing damaged fences (we will only repair fences if they border a public right of way and your tenancy agreement or lease states that we are responsible) • Replacing garage door pulls	• Repairing pathways, steps and means of access • Maintaining garages that are part of the property • Maintaining stores that are part of the property • Maintaining brick sheds and outhouses that we have provided • Replacing gates, hinges and latches that we have installed • Repairing brick garden walls



Utilities and energy

Your responsibility	Our responsibility
Contacting your utilities provider where your supply is impacted when this is not due to a defect which we are responsible for	• Repairing external pipes • Repairing energy generating equipment



Foundations, external walls, roofs and drainage

Your responsibility	Our responsibility
• Clearing rainwater gully grids • Installing and maintaining aerials at your home	• Repairing foundations • Repairing external walls • Repairing roofs • Repairing chimneys • Sweeping your chimney once a year (unless it is part of a central heating system) • Maintaining drains and gutters



Pests

Your responsibility	Our responsibility
Keeping your home clean and tidy will help avoid pest infestations. If you do have pests in your home, such as ants, cockroaches or mice, it's your responsibility to deal with the problem. Your local authority can often help you deal with pests.	We'll deal with pests in shared areas such as cockroaches, rats and wasps, as part of your service charge. We'll look out for pests during our cleaning and grounds maintenance visits, but please get in touch if you see evidence of pests in shared areas.



Internal walls, floors, ceilings and stairs

Your responsibility	Our responsibility
• Keeping the interior of your home clean and tidy using suitable cleaning products • Painting and decorating • Repairing minor cracks in plaster • Repairing fixtures you have put in or fixtures you have damaged • Replacing cracked or broken wall tiles you have installed • Fitting curtains and blinds • Cleaning carpets and floors • Replacing carpets and floors you have fitted	• Repairing plasterwork • Repairing structural issues with walls, floors, ceilings and stairs • Repairing skirting boards • Replacing floor coverings that we have installed



Kitchen

Your responsibility	Our responsibility
• Cleaning your kitchen • Cleaning kitchen extractor fan vents • Installing, repairing and replacing washing machines, tumble dryers and dishwashers • Repairing and replacing electric or gas cooking appliances you have installed • Ensuring appliances are installed correctly and any damage caused during installation is repaired • Installing waste pipes on washing machines and dishwashers • Installing vents on tumble dryers • Replacing sink plugs and chains	• Repairing leaking sinks and taps • Repairing kitchen cabinet doors and drawers

Damage or neglect

If we have to repair any deliberate damage to the property caused by you or visitors to your home or damage caused by you neglecting your responsibilities, you will be charged for the cost of this work.

Likewise, if we repair something that's your responsibility, you will be charged the full cost. This is sometimes known as a recharge, and we will advise you how this needs to be paid.

Examples of when we'll charge the cost of our repairs back to you include:

- If you lock yourself out of your house and need us to change the locks
- If we have to replace smashed doors or windows
- If you need us to unblock your sink or toilet
- If you pull radiators off the wall.

If your home was damaged by someone else, you may be covered for the unexpected repair costs by your home contents insurance.

How to report a repair

Once you have checked a repair is our responsibility, the easiest way to report it is online at greensquareaccord.co.uk, using your customer portal or by filling in the online form.

You can also call us on 0300 111 7000 or email info@greensquareaccord.co.uk

How we assess and prioritise repairs

We prioritise repairs based on the level of urgency and severity of the issue. We also take additional needs and vulnerabilities into account. If you feel this applies to you or your family, for example, if you're unwell or have a disability, please tell us when you report your repair.

Emergency repairs

Emergency repairs are for situations where there is an immediate threat to your safety or home, such as structural damage or a major water leak.

We aim to send an operative to your home within four hours to make the area safe and complete the repair within 24 hours. We might need you or a neighbour to wait at home for us to arrive so you can give us access to your home.

If the issue has caused damage to other parts of your home, we may need to follow up with additional repairs.

In a fire, you should call 999. If you smell gas, call the National Gas Emergency Service immediately on 0800 111 999.

Urgent repairs

Urgent repairs are for situations that need attention to avoid future damage to your home, such as a leaking roof or a blocked pipe.

We aim to complete these repairs within seven days.

If we prioritise your repair as urgent our planning team will contact you directly to agree an appointment with you.

Routine repairs

Routine repairs are standard repairs that do not need urgent attention, such as a broken cupboard door or a dripping tap.

We usually fix these issues within 28 days.

We aim to book an appointment that is convenient for you when you report a routine repair. If we need to use a contractor to complete the work, they will contact you directly to arrange the appointment.

Completing your repair

Once you've reported a repair, we'll arrange an appointment that's convenient for you. If we need to use a contractor to carry out specialist work, they will contact you directly to arrange a suitable appointment.

In some cases, we might need to send a surveyor out to investigate the issue before we can arrange a repair appointment. This is usually only necessary for complex issues, such as structural repairs, reports of damp, or ongoing problems.

Please make sure somebody over the age of 18 is at home on the day of your appointment. They need to be aware of the problem you have reported in case our operative needs to ask any questions.

If your plans change and you can't give our operative access to your home on the day of your appointment, please contact us as soon as possible to arrange a new appointment.

Your tenancy

Before you move into your home, you'll sign a tenancy agreement. This sets out your responsibilities as a tenant, and our commitments as your landlord. You will be given a copy of your tenancy agreement or lease.

Your responsibilities

- Look after your home and garden.
- Pay your rent and service charges on time.
- Always be considerate and respectful to your neighbours and local community.
- Report repairs to us promptly and do any repairs that you're responsible for.
- Let us into your home to carry out repairs and safety checks.
- Tell us before making any major changes to your home.
- Update us if your circumstances or contact details change.
- Talk to us if you need help or advice with your housing situation.
- Treat our colleagues considerately and with respect. Violence or personally directed abuse towards our colleagues is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Read our Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.

Our responsibilities

- Provide you with a safe and well-maintained home.
- Work with your local community to make your neighbourhood a great place to live.
- Make it easy for you to pay your rent and any other charges, such as service charges.
- Let you know in advance if your rent or service charges change.
- Carry out any landlord repairs. If the repair is your responsibility and not ours, we'll explain that to you.
- Let you know in advance if we need to visit your home for repairs or safety checks.
- Make it easy for you to contact us in a way that suits you.
- Make our responsibilities as your landlord clear. If we can't provide you with a service you need, we'll point you in the direction of other organisations who could help.

Making changes to your tenancy

Sometimes circumstances change, for example, children leave home and new partners move in. If that's the case, you should let us know straight away so we can update our records. You can tell us about any changes through your online account, by email or by phone.

Ending your tenancy

You'll need to give us four weeks' written notice if you want to end your tenancy.

The notice period starts on the Monday after we receive your written notice and, as long as you have included all the details we need, we'll write back to you to confirm the date your tenancy will end. You will continue to be charged rent and service charges during the notice period.

SCAN ME

The easiest way to let us know you would like to end your tenancy is by completing the Ending Your Tenancy Form on our website.

If you have a joint tenancy, written notice from one tenant would end the tenancy for both of you and you would both need to leave the property.

If you have power of attorney for a relative, you can give us notice on their behalf.

Once we've received your written notice, we can't legally continue your tenancy if you change your mind about leaving your home. Please be sure you want to end your tenancy before you write to us.

In some circumstances, we may be able to extend your notice period for a short time. For example, if you're moving to a new home that's not ready yet. Please let us know as soon as possible if you need a little more time, as we may have a new family waiting to move into your home.

Staying safe in your home

We share the responsibility for keeping you safe in your home. This section includes information about key areas of home safety.

Gas safety

What you need to know

Unsafe gas appliances can cause carbon monoxide poisoning. Regular safety checks will help spot any danger signs, as well as mean your boiler is less likely to break down. If you have a gas appliance you should have a working carbon monoxide alarm and check it regularly. If it isn't working or you don't have a working alarm contact us.

Our role

As your landlord, it is a legal requirement for us to carry out a gas safety check at your home every 12 months.

Your role

You agreed to give us access to complete this check in your tenancy agreement. You could be putting yourself, your family and your neighbours at risk if you don't let us service your appliances. We may take legal action, or charge you for the engineer's time, if you don't let us into your property or rearrange appointments. If your appointment date isn't suitable, or if you have any concerns, please contact us as soon as possible to arrange an alternative time. If you have any concerns about your gas appliances before or after your annual gas safety check, please contact us.

Useful information

You should check your user manual before making any changes to your boiler. For example, changing the temperature settings. For most boilers you can download the manual directly from the website of the manufacturer, or you can request a copy by contacting us.

If you have gas appliances in your home, you need a carbon monoxide alarm and you should test it regularly.

If you smell gas in your home or garden, call the National Gas Emergency Service immediately on 0800 111 999 or via textphone (minicom) on 0800 371 787.

Electrical safety

What you need to know

We check the electrical wiring in your home every five years to make sure it is safe.

Our role

It is a legal requirement for us, as your landlord, to test the electrical wiring in your home every five years.

We'll use an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) test that checks wiring, electrical equipment and your fuse box. Unsafe wiring could put you at risk of an electrical shock or could cause a fire. The EICR test will check the condition of the electrics in your home and make sure you're not at risk.

We'll contact you before your EICR service is due and we'll write to you with a date for your appointment and offer a morning or afternoon visit.

Your role

You agreed to give us access to do so in your tenancy agreement. You could be putting yourself, your family and your neighbours at risk if you don't let us check the electrical wiring in your home is safe. We may take legal action, or charge you for the engineer's time, if you don't let us into your property or don't rearrange any missed appointments. If your appointment date isn't suitable, please contact us as soon as possible to arrange an alternative time.

Useful information

Millions of people across the UK are at risk of serious electrical accidents from making simple mistakes at home. Here are some simple tips to help protect you:

- Look at your plugs and power sockets to check they're not damaged.
- Check visible cables, leads and light fittings are in good condition.
- Don't overload your plug sockets.
- Don't put things on top of the microwave.
- Don't take mains-powered appliances into the bathroom, such as hairdryers or heaters.
- Don't store combustible materials, like petrol or cleaning products, near your fuse box or electricity meter.
- Switch off electricals when you're not using them.
- Turn off the power at the fuse box before you start any DIY near electrical wiring or sockets.

You can find more advice on the Electrical Safety First website.

Water safety

What you need to know

Legionella is a type of bacteria that lives in water, such as rivers and ponds. It's most often found in stagnant water, so it's not usually a risk in your home. If you go away on an extended holiday or stay away from home for a while, legionella bacteria can sometimes grow in your water system. This is because the water doesn't move through the system like usual when you're not flushing the toilet or running taps regularly. Not everyone who comes into contact with legionella becomes ill, but the bacteria can cause a lung infection called Legionnaires' disease.

Our role

If you notice anything unusual with the water system in your home, we will come and inspect this for you.

Your role

Although it isn't very common to find legionella in your home, here are some simple steps to help prevent legionella bacteria from growing in your water system:



- Keep your hot water cylinder thermostat set at 60°C. Legionella bacteria grows at temperatures between 20°C and 45°C, so setting your thermostat to 60°C will kill any bacteria.
- Descale your taps and shower heads every three months, or sooner if you spot a build-up of limescale, mould or algae.
- If you have a water tank, make sure that the lid fits tightly to stop the water from getting contaminated and check any insulation around your tank is fitted correctly.
- Run your garden hose into a drain or unused area of your garden for one minute before you use it.
- Keep your water butt clean if you have one.
- When you come back home after being on holiday or being away for more than a week, flush your toilets and run all taps and showers continuously for about two minutes to flush out any bacteria. Keep the lid down when you flush the toilet and run the taps slowly for the first few seconds to avoid being sprayed by any bacteria in the water.

If you notice anything unusual with the water system in your home, let us know. For example, if there's rust flowing from your taps or if your hot water is not heating properly.

Useful information

Further information about Legionella and Legionnaires' disease can be found on the NHS website.

Asbestos

What you need to know

Asbestos is a natural fibre that was used in insulation, flooring and roofing building materials up until the late 1990s. It is now banned in the UK because asbestos can cause cancer and lung disease if the fibres are disturbed or damaged. You are unlikely to find asbestos in your home if it was built after 2000. However, older homes may have asbestos in:

- Artex ceilings
- Bath panels and toilet cisterns
- Central heating systems, including boilers, gas fires and electric storage heaters
- Cold water tanks
- Drainpipes and guttering
- Floor and ceiling tiles
- Plasterboard
- Insulating boards for fire protection
- Roof boards and panels

Our role

By law, we must properly manage any asbestos in your home. We don't always need to remove asbestos, as sometimes it's safer to leave it where it is, but we will always make sure you're not at risk.

We check our properties for asbestos and we keep records of where we find it. If we come to your home and suspect you may have asbestos, we'll take samples from the materials for tests. If the tests show there is asbestos, we'll carry out regular inspections to check its condition and make sure it's not damaged. We'll arrange for a specialist contractor or surveyor to visit your home immediately if you think something containing asbestos has been damaged.

Your role

It's not a problem to have asbestos in your home as long as it's in good condition and you don't disturb it. You should never try to remove any asbestos yourself.

When you're decorating or doing DIY near something you think could contain asbestos, it's important to not disturb it. Be careful when drilling, cutting, scraping or using sandpaper near surfaces or materials that could contain asbestos.

If you're planning any home improvements near materials that could contain asbestos, please contact us for advice before you start.

Fire safety

What you need to know

Fire is a risk in every building, and we share the responsibility for fire safety in your home. If your home is in a shared building, there are extra safety steps you need to take and important fire safety information you need to be aware of.

Our role

We fit smoke alarms in all our homes. In shared buildings, such as blocks of flats, we are also responsible for:

- Making sure the safety features in shared areas are working as they should, including any smoke or fire alarms.
- Inspecting your front door to make sure everything is working as it should be.
- Informing you of the fire evacuation process for your building.
- Letting you know any actions we have taken to manage fire risk in your building.

Your role

You should test your smoke alarm at least once a month to make sure it is working. If the alarm doesn't sound, replace the battery. If you have a mains-powered smoke alarm fitted, contact us immediately so we can arrange to fix it. Always let us know if there's a problem with your smoke alarm.

Having an escape plan could make all the difference if there is a fire in your home. If you live in a shared building this will be set out for you in the building's fire evacuation plan and it is important you follow this. If you live in an individual home, then you should develop your own escape plan.

Smoke makes it almost impossible to see when you're trying to escape, so have a plan of how you'd get out quickly in an emergency:

- The best exit is usually the nearest exit but have a backup in case it's blocked, such as a ground floor window.
- Keep keys near doors and windows, so it's quicker to get out. For security reasons, make sure no one can reach them from outside.
- Make sure everyone knows the plan and practice it with everyone in your home.
- Be extra careful when using candles, smoking or cooking.

If you live in a shared building you have additional responsibilities to:

- Keep shared areas, including corridors, clear of your belongings. Leaving your items in shared areas can cause a serious hazard. We will remove any items which are left in these areas and will charge you if you do not collect them. This includes e-scooters and mobility scooters.
- Always keep fire doors closed, including your front door.
- Tell us if for any reason you would find it more difficult to evacuate the building – even if this is for a short time.

- Take some time to read the fire safety notice for your building and make sure everyone in your home understands what to do in the event of a fire. The fire safety evacuation policy will be displayed clearly in the building, or you can find it at greensquareaccord.co.uk/fire-safety

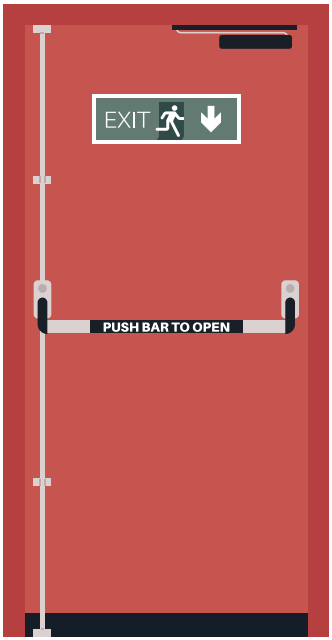
SCAN ME

Useful information

Here are some other simple steps to protect you from the risk of fire in your home:

- Take care in the kitchen – don't leave the hob or oven unattended and keep electrical appliances and leads away from water.
- Regularly clean lint from your tumble dryer.
- Avoid using candles – if you do use them, don't leave them unattended.
- Keep soft furnishings away from anything that generates heat, such as candles or light bulbs.
- If you smoke, make sure you stub any cigarettes out completely.
- Don't leave your BBQ unattended and make sure it's extinguished completely when you've finished using it.

Fire and rescue services provide free Safe and Well visits to help you reduce the risk of fire in your home. A firefighter will visit your home to talk to you about home fire safety. They can check and fit smoke alarms and help you make a fire escape plan, as well as offer health and wellbeing advice. You can find more information about Safe and Well visits from your local fire and rescue service.







How to deal with condensation

Keep your home warm

Condensation occurs when warm, moist air touches a cold surface like a window or external wall. Try to maintain a constant temperature by setting your thermostat at 18-21 degrees to tackle rises and dips in temperature, when condensation could develop.

Ventilation

Providing a route for moisture to escape from your home will help to minimise condensation. Use extractor fans in your bathroom and kitchen and clean them regularly. If you don't have fans, contact us as we may be able to install them.

If you have trickle vents, keep them open. Try to open your windows for 15 minutes each morning, even in cold weather, and wipe away any condensation on the sills.

Avoid producing lots of moisture

Drying washing indoors creates condensation, so dry laundry outdoors or use a tumble dryer whenever possible. If drying indoors can't be avoided, use a clothes horse in the bathroom with the window open and door closed.

Take care when cooking

Covering pans with a lid while cooking helps minimise condensation.

Always use your extractor fan if you have one and leave it on after cooking until the moist air has cleared.

Keep the kitchen door closed and the window open. This prevents excess moisture reaching the rest of the property.

Leave room to breathe

Condensation can form behind furniture against external walls, eventually resulting in mould growth. Leave a 5cm gap to allow air to flow and choose window coverings that can be moved well clear of frames.

Remove excess moisture

Using an electric dehumidifier will help to remove excess moisture from the air, leaving your home feeling warmer.

Small moisture absorbers are ideal for cupboards and tight spaces where damp appears, but a power supply isn't practical.

Tackle black mould

Treat black mould as soon as it appears, as it will get worse quickly. Use a proper mould treatment/remover, not soapy water as it doesn't work.

Black mould will stain any surface it grows on, even once it's been treated, so the affected areas will need to be stain blocked even if you are wallpapering.

If your home is prone to damp or condensation, choose moisture resistant paints designed for use in kitchens and bathrooms. If you prefer wallpaper, choose a less absorbent vinyl wallpaper with mould-resistant paste.

Upgrades and improvements

We are committed to keeping your home in good condition. We will assess the condition of your home every five years to check it is safe and plan our property refurbishment programme. This is known as a stock condition survey. We will send you a letter to let you know when your home is due a survey and arrange an appointment with you.

When we visit your home, we'll check the condition of your:

- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Windows
- Internal and external doors
- Roof
- Fencing and gates
- Heating system
- Wall and loft insulation
- Electrical wiring
- Paths and paved areas
- Security system (if we provided it)

We will let you know if anything needs to be upgraded or improved and arrange the work for you. If you want to make significant changes to your home, such as structural changes, you must contact us to get our permission.

Making adaptations

We can help make changes to your home if you, or a member of your household, need them because of a disability or illness.

There are lots of ways we can make your home easier for you to use, including:

- Installing handrails, grab rails and ramps
- Swapping your taps for lever taps

All our tenants are eligible for home adaptations. Please contact us if you need any minor aids or adaptations to make it easier to live in your home, such as handrails or ramps. We don't charge you for adaptations to your home, but we review every request in line with budget and suitability. If you need larger changes to your home, you'll need to speak to an occupational therapist from your local council first to determine what adaptations are right for you.

Occupational therapists work to improve your ability to do everyday tasks. Depending on your situation, you can get occupational therapy for free through the NHS or social services. You can speak to your GP or your local council for a referral if you don't already have occupational therapy.

If you want to have an aid or adaptation fitted yourself, you'll need to contact us for written permission before the work is carried out. The easiest way to do this is to email us at info@greensquareaccord.co.uk

Anti-social behaviour

We want your neighbourhood to be a great place to live. Anti-social behaviour can make you; your family and your community feel unsafe, distressed, or annoyed. That's why tackling anti-social behaviour is a priority for us.

What is anti-social behaviour?

- Excessive noise
- Verbal abuse
- Physical violence
- Intimidation or harassment based on age, gender, disability, race, religion or belief, sexuality or any other reason
- Damage to property or possessions
- Drug and alcohol-related anti-social behaviour
- Using our property for illegal purposes such as drug dealing and prostitution
- Domestic violence and abuse

What isn't anti-social behaviour?

Not everything reported to us is considered anti-social behaviour. Examples of things we don't class as anti-social behaviour are:

- Babies crying or children playing
- Loud talking or laughing
- Using a washing machine, tumble dryer or vacuum cleaner during the day
- Noise from people moving around in their home
- Cooking smells
- Cultural differences
- Nuisance from pets and animals
- Untidy and/or overgrown gardens
- Vehicle-related nuisance, such as inconsiderate parking
- One-off events, such as a birthday party

We consider these to be everyday living noises, lifestyle differences or nuisance, not anti-social behaviour.

In these circumstances, we may give advice so you and your neighbours can resolve the situation yourselves or work with your neighbour to resolve the issue.

How to handle anti-social behaviour

Before reporting anti-social behaviour – and only if you feel it is safe to do so – you should try talking to the person causing the problem. They may not realise they're causing a nuisance, and it can often stop the problem straight away.

If you're not able to resolve the problem yourself, or don't want to approach your neighbour, you can contact us for help or report it to us using our online form.

If the problem affects other neighbours, ask them if they would like to report it to us as well. It may be easier to settle a dispute if we receive reports from everyone experiencing the same problem.

If the problem is to do with crime or violence, we'll advise you to contact the police on 101 or, in an emergency, on 999. If it's noise nuisance from loud music, animals or machinery, you'll need to speak to your local council's Environmental Health team. We'll work with those organisations to stop the anti-social behaviour as soon as possible.

If the person causing the problem is not one of our customers, we have fewer powers to deal with them. We may direct you to the agency that can help if that's the case, such as your local council, and we may work together with them to stop the nuisance.

SCAN ME

To find out more about how we manage anti-social behaviour and for more advice scan this QR code or visit greensquareaccord.co.uk/manage-your-home

Getting involved

We work in partnership with our customers to ensure their views are at the heart of our business.

We recognise not all customers are the same and people may want to engage in different ways depending on their level of interest and capacity to get involved, and some people may not want to engage at all.

To accommodate the different ways customers might want to engage with us we have developed a menu of options that customers can choose from to suit them. We are committed to providing opportunities to engage in an accessible way which meets the diverse needs of our customers. If you have a disability or there is another reason getting involved may be more challenging for you, we will work with you to ensure you still can.



Our menu is based on our four building blocks of engagement:

1. Informing

Find out about how GSA is performing and how to get involved through a range of communication channels.

Our website is regularly updated with news stories and performance information (covering key areas such as repairs, customer contact centre and customer satisfaction).

Regular communications about what is happening are published on our social media channels. We advertise our local offers and events through our online channels as well as posters and leaflets and we produce an online annual report.

2. Inputting

Customer surveys will generally be sent out electronically to customers. Surveys may focus on general satisfaction and feedback in relation to repairs and other services you receive from us. Once we have gathered your feedback, the team turn this into insight and share it across the business to enable service improvement. We may also call you to follow up on a survey or ask for your views.

We also contact customers annually to invite them to take part in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) survey, the results will be shared with the Regulator for Social Housing and published on our website.

3. Influencing

Are you interested in meeting GSA staff, want to learn more about local issues or opportunities and share your views?

You can join customer roadshows that we host in your area or smaller neighbourhood consultation events.

Our roadshows give customers the opportunity to meet staff in their locality, share views and meet other customers.

Neighbourhood consultations are smaller ad-hoc meetings where customers will be invited to discuss issues or opportunities in their local area.

4. Involving

Do you have more time? Our ‘at home’ option means you can join online customer focus groups on specialist topics that you are interested in. Or, if you have a passion for championing customer-led scrutiny then you can set up a resident group or apply to become a member of our panel.

Customer focus groups will be facilitated by the Community Involvement and Investment team, and will feed directly into the Customer Panel. Locality focus groups will take place every six months, bringing together customers from each of the four geographies localities to discuss issues/themes and gather views.

The Customer Panel will identify where focus groups are needed to hear from more customers in relation to specific topics or service areas. These could, for example, focus on repairs, communication, procurement etc. (and may or may not be locality based).

Customer Panel membership represents the maximum level of involvement and is geared towards those customers who want to get involved at a strategic level in the scrutiny of our services and act as a customer voice representative to help drive performance and increase customer satisfaction.

The panel is led by a chairperson (a GSA customer) and is a group of customers from across GSA's four localities. The panel works in partnership with us to ensure resident-led scrutiny where the customer's voice is heard and used to influence and drive performance and service improvements.

The panel meets every month, reports into our Communities and Customer Experience Committee and provides assurance that we are conducting ourselves in an open, transparent and accountable way.



To find out more about the work of our involved customers and how you can get involved, scan this QR code or visit greensquareaccord.co.uk/communities

Compliments and complaints

We are committed to learning from all feedback. Whether you received a great service or you're not getting the level of service you expect, we want to know.

Want to pass on a compliment?

Our team members are passionate about what they do. It makes their day when they receive praise for a job well done, so please do get in touch and let us know how we have impressed you.

If you're unhappy

SCAN ME

We want to hear from you if you feel we have let you down. We welcome the opportunity to put things right. If you're unhappy with our service, please call us on 0300 111 7000. You can find out more about how we handle complaints by scanning this QR code or visiting greensquareaccord.co.uk/contact/compliments-and-complaints/

Equality, diversity and inclusion: our commitment

At GSA, our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) mission is simple. We want to be a diverse and inclusive organisation that reflects the communities we serve. We want to be a fair and inclusive employer and landlord.

This mission is at the core of our corporate strategy. We believe that being a diverse and inclusive organisation will deliver better outcomes, not only for our customers, but also our colleagues.

Equality is about fairness and everyone having an opportunity to make the most of their lives. Equity is about giving more to the customers and colleagues that need it. We strive for equality and equity is how we get there.

Diversity is recognising and valuing the differences in all of us, valuing each other and what we all bring.

Inclusion is inviting and supporting differences, giving colleagues and customers the confidence to be themselves and be part of the journey.

SCAN ME

Read more about our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion by scanning this QR code or visiting greensquareaccord.co.uk/about-us

How we use your data

Data protection legislation gives individuals the right to be informed about how organisations use their personal data. We process the personal data that we collect for a number of purposes. Our privacy notice gives an overview of how we use personal data.

SCAN ME

You can find a copy of our privacy notice and find out more about your rights by scanning this QR code or visiting greensquareaccord.co.uk/privacy-policy

Getting information in different formats

SCAN ME

In addition to this handbook, we have lots of helpful information about managing your tenancy on our website, including our publication scheme: greensquareaccord.co.uk/publication-scheme

Our website has accessibility features to support inclusivity. You can:

- Change colours, contrast levels and fonts
- Zoom in up to 300% without the text spilling off the screen
- Navigate most of the site using just a keyboard
- Navigate most of the site using speech recognition software
- Listen to most of the site using a screen reader (including the most recent versions of JAWS, NVDA and VoiceOver)

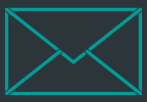
However, we recognise that some customers may have extra needs when it comes to accessing information.

As part of the Social Tenants Access to Information Requirement scheme, we will consider all reasonable enquiries about adjusting the format of our information to better suit your needs.

Find out more by reading our Reasonable Adjustments policy at greensquareaccord.co.uk/customer-policies



0300 111 7000



info@greensquareaccord.co.uk



greensquareaccord.co.uk

Your address:

Electric meter location:

Serial number:

Fuse board location:

Gas meter location:

Serial number:

Boiler location:

Water stop tap location(s):

Call 0300 111 7000

Email info@greensquareaccord.co.uk

Visit greensquareaccord.co.uk

Green Square Accord

WE THRIVE AT HOME