



# Tenant Handbook

January 2020



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Disclaimer

All efforts have been made to ensure this document and information contained therein is accurate.  
We will update as new and updated information, regulation and legislation become available.

iCare Housing 2020



# Welcome message

We are pleased to present you with your iCare Tenant Handbook.

Now that you have availed of Mortgage to Rent with iCare, the purpose of this book is to provide you with important information regarding your house and tenancy in a readable and straightforward format.

This tenant's handbook which has been put together for your information and guidance and sets out the responsibilities of iCare, and your responsibilities as a tenant of iCare.

Please take time to familiarise yourself with your handbook and hopefully it will become a valuable resource for you.

**David Hall,**  
**Chief Executive Officer, iCare Housing**

## Acceptance

I have read and accept the terms of this Tenant Handbook

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed on behalf of Icare Housing:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## About iCare Housing

iCare Housing is a regulated non-profit Approved Housing Body, with charitable status, which has been set up specifically to help families who are eligible for social housing and in mortgage arrears to stay in their homes.

iCare Housing was launched in September 2017 in response to the worsening housing crisis in Ireland, and to provide a realistic solution for the many families who find themselves in unsustainable mortgage debt.

iCare helps individuals and families through the Mortgage to Rent Scheme, which is a government scheme designed to help homeowners who are at risk of losing their homes due to mortgage arrears.

Through the Mortgage to Rent Scheme, iCare Housing has bought your house from the bank and is now providing you with a Tenancy Agreement to enable you to remain in your home. This means that you have security of tenure in your own home.

## Our Relationship with Respond Housing

In order to provide a comprehensive nationwide repair and maintenance service from Day 1, iCare partnered with Respond, one of Ireland's leading housing associations. Respond also has charitable status and has long history and experience in provision of social housing in Ireland, with a stock of over 4,000 housing units across the country.

Therefore, though your Tenancy Agreement is with iCare, the maintenance and repairs on your home will be managed by Respond, and your day-to-day contact point in relation to rent and repairs will be with Respond. Respond's contact details are provided below.

We will work closely with Respond to ensure that your tenancy with iCare will be a positive experience for you and your family.

The contact details below are for Respond, who will be your primary contact for all queries relating to rent, repairs, maintenance and other general queries.

### Respond Contact details:

Phone Number: **01 808 7700** or **051 840200**

Internet address (for access to Tenant Information Portal System):

[www.respond.ie](http://www.respond.ie)

Email address: [info@respond.ie](mailto:info@respond.ie)

Customer Service Centre Opening Hours:

8.30am to 5.45pm (Monday to Thursday) and

8.30am to 4.45pm on Friday.

Emergency/Out of Hours Service: When the Customer Service Centre is closed you can still call 051 840200 or 01 8087700 where you can select option 2 to be transferred to the Respond out-of-hours service who will assist with any emergencies 24/7.

## **iCare Contact details:**

You are of course welcome to call iCare Housing on 1800 233 244 for general queries relating to your tenancy.

## **TIPS (Tenant Information Portal System)**

An increasing number of people manage their finances and banking online, and you have the opportunity to view your rent account and maintenance jobs on your property online.

TIPS (Tenant Information Portal System) provides you with 24-hour access to your rent account, so you can see transactions the moment they are put on your account. The system allows you to view the full history of transactions on your account.

You can also see details of the repairs and maintenance requests which have been passed to contractors to complete on your home, so you can keep track of progress.

Your initial lettings pack will provide you with your unique tenant number, and this tenant number will be your Username for the TIPS system. Your lettings pack will also provide you with a password for the system, and you will be prompted to change your password on your initial log in to the TIPS system.



## **Welcome to TIPS – Tenant Information Portal System**

The TIPS system shows you all the essential information about your tenancy, your rent account and repairs to your home. You will find everything that you need to manage your account with us and a variety of support information to help you find out what you need to know or for you to contact us if you need any help.

Please log-in to your account on the left.

### **Remember:**

- Use your 6 digit rent account number as your username.
- Change your password when you login to a password of your choice.

## Your Tenancy with iCare

### Your Tenancy Agreement

Your Tenancy Agreement is a legally binding contract between you and iCare. Every Tenant is required to sign a Tenancy Agreement when they become a Tenant of iCare. iCare will also sign this agreement. The agreement sets out the responsibility of both parties to the agreement (you and iCare).

You should keep this document securely for reference purposes.

The tenancy of an iCare home brings with it, certain obligations and responsibilities on both the part of iCare and the Tenant.

You are entering into a legal contract with us. If there is anything in the agreement which you do not understand, please contact iCare **1800 233 244** and we will be happy to help you with your query.

Your responsibilities apply to you, your friends and relatives, and any other person living in or visiting your home, including your children.

### What are iCare's responsibilities to our tenants.

- iCare will keep to the terms of the Tenancy Agreement.
- iCare will carry out repairs to the property that are our responsibility in a timely manner.
- iCare will endeavour to facilitate your peaceful enjoyment of your home.
- iCare will provide adequate notice of rent increases.
- iCare will offer support to victims of nuisance.

- iCare will facilitate you (sometimes with other agencies) in resolving disputes.
- iCare will address nuisance and anti-social behaviour and take action against anyone who persists in engaging in anti-social behaviour.
- iCare will carry out cyclical maintenance.
- iCare will have insurance for the structure of the property only. Our tenants are strongly advised to take out their own content's insurance as iCare will not be responsible for their belongings or the contents of the property.

### What are your responsibilities to iCare.

- To keep to the terms of the Tenancy Agreement.
- To pay rent weekly in advance.
- To pay your rent on time.
- To provide income details of all members of your household each year and when requested to do so.
- Not sublet your property or any part of it.
- Not operate a business from your property.
- To ensure the property is your main place of residence.
- Not to give your tenancy to anyone else.
- To give the required notice if you wish to leave the property.
- Not to carry out structural alterations or improvements to your home without first getting written permission from iCare.
- To keep your home and garden (where applicable) in a clean and tidy condition. Keep the interior of your home in a good condition in both decoration and repair.
- To respect your neighbours.

- To take responsibility for the actions of everyone residing in your home as well as any visitors.
- Not to cause nuisance, engage in anti-social behaviour or harass your neighbours (examples are listed below).
- To allow reasonable access to iCare/Respond staff or their agents to your home.
- Do not interfere with any neighbours' peaceful enjoyment of the neighbourhood.
- To complete repairs which are your responsibility.
- To dispose of all household rubbish in an appropriate manner.
- Insure your belongings against accidental damage, fire and theft.

### **Examples of nuisance behaviour.**

- Playing loud music, arguing and door slamming.
- Dog barking and fouling in common areas.
- Dumping of rubbish around the house and locality.
- Playing ball games close to someone else's home and playing the ball up against a wall.
- Vacuuming, using washing machines and drilling at unsocial hours.

### **Examples of harassment includes.**

- Racist or sexist behaviour or language.
- Using or threatening to use violence.
- Using abusive or insulting words or behaviour towards a neighbour.

- Damaging or threatening to damage another person's name, home or possessions.
- Writing threatening, abusive or insulting letters or graffiti in common areas.
- Doing anything that interferes with the peace and comfort of other people on your estate or in your neighbourhood.

### **Examples of criminal behaviour.**

- Selling, using, growing or manufacture of drugs.
- Harassment of neighbours.
- Selling or receiving stolen goods.
- Prostitution

### **If you don't meet the terms of your tenancy agreement**

If you do not keep the terms of the Tenancy Agreement, it can result in iCare taking action against you which could result in you losing your home.

If your behaviour as a Tenant is less than that expected from you, you will be in breach of your Tenancy Agreement.

Remember, this may lead to the matter being referred to the RTB and could even lead to a termination of your tenancy.

It is your responsibility to fulfil your Tenancy Conditions.

If you do not pay your rent, you are at risk of losing your home.

## What can you do?

As a Tenant, you have agreed to abide by the terms of your Tenancy Agreement.

This signed agreement is a legal document setting out the requirements for living within the iCare community, including the behaviour of a Tenant and members of their household.

Tenants who break this agreement are subject to a range of sanctions, including an Official Warning and / or a Termination Notice.

If you are the victim of nuisance or anti-social behaviour, including threats and intimidation, and this behaviour puts you in fear or danger, or causes you injury or damage you should contact An Garda Síochána, especially if personal assault/ injury and damage to property are involved.



## Rent

It is your responsibility to pay the rent weekly in advance, in accordance with the conditions of your tenancy.

If you have a joint tenancy, both parties are equally responsible for payment of rent.

The rent money we receive is very important as this income allows for the delivery of an effective and efficient housing management and maintenance service.

### How much rent will I pay?

The rent that you pay as a Tenant is an income based affordable rent, called a 'differential rent'.

It is based on the Differential Rent Scheme in your Local Authority and is calculated according to your household income; it is always aimed at being affordable. The rent is assessed every year to take account of changes in your income. If your income reduces, your rent may be reduced. Similarly, if your income increases, your rent may be increased.

The initial amount of rent you will pay is given on Page 1 of your Tenancy Agreement.

## Confidential Income assessment

A confidential income assessment form must be completed by all our tenants at a yearly rent review so rent can be calculated.

- The iCare rent year starts from first Monday in July and runs for 52 weeks until the beginning of the following July.
- Your rent is calculated using the relevant differential rent scheme applied to your Local Authority area. This means that your rent is calculated by looking at the amount of income coming into your household and the makeup of your household which includes the number of people/children/dependents etc.
- The amount of rent you pay will be reviewed each year. You will be sent a review form. You must fill out this form and send it back to the Customer Service Centre at Respond.
- This process is compulsory, if you do not return the completed form a penalty rent will be applied to your account. You will be informed of this by letter. Any changes in the rent calculation will be implemented at the time of the annual rent assessment and at least 4 weeks advance notice will be given to you.
- It is important that you complete these forms correctly each year when requested by iCare/Respond and any other time there is a change of income or family composition in order to ensure that any such changes are reflected in your rent calculation.

If changes occur in your household composition and/or of named tenants occur during the year, rent will be reassessed from the date

of the change. Rent will be reassessed if household income increases or decreases during the year.

You should notify us of any changes immediately.

Rent charged will only be revised on receipt of evidence of the change in income.

### **How do I pay my rent?**

You have the following options to pay your rent to iCare through Respond:

- Standing Order (payment direct from your bank account)
- Household Budget Scheme (direct weekly deductions from social welfare payment)
- Post Office Swipe card, known as Billpay (this can be used at the post office or any shop which has a PostPoint facility)

Your lettings pack will contain forms for Standing Order and Household Budget, and a Post Office Swipe card should you wish to use this option.

### **What happens if I miss a rent payment?**

In the event that you miss a rent payment or think that you may miss a rent payment please contact Respond immediately. Contact numbers are given on Page 4 of this Handbook.

We can then work with you to reach a resolution to the problem by either agreeing a temporary arrangement if the issue is short term or reviewing your rent if the issue is longer term.

The most important thing is to make contact as soon as you become aware of a problem in payment as the options to resolve the problem are greater the sooner we get involved.

### **Can non-payment lead to legal proceedings?**

Yes, if you have rent arrears and fail to keep to a repayment programme that you have negotiated with Respond on behalf of iCare. Serious rent arrears may result in the issue of a termination notice and the matter being referred to the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB). In addition to terminating your tenancy, we can also apply to court for a debt judgement against you. This will seriously damage your credit rating and will make it much more difficult for you to borrow money or buy items on credit.

### **Can I get another mortgage in the future?**

If your circumstances change in the future, you can contact any Lender to discuss applying for a mortgage.

## **If my financial situation changes, can I buy my home back?**

Yes, as a tenant of iCare Housing you can buy back your home.

There are two buyback options available;

### **Buyback – Option A**

You the tenant can buy back your home at OMV (open market value) on the date of the buyback so long as OMV is not less than the price plus costs paid by iCare Housing. This is detailed in Appendix IV of your Tenancy Agreement.

### **Buyback – Option B**

You the tenant can buy back your home at the price paid plus costs incurred by iCare Housing. The costs include but are not limited to cost of repairs, cost of finance and legal costs. It is important to note that post buyback if you sell within 20 years of purchasing from iCare Housing a percentage of the proceeds of sale may be clawed back by iCare. This is detailed in Appendix IV of your Tenancy Agreement.



## Repairs and Maintenance

As a Tenant of an iCare house or apartment you are responsible for maintaining and carrying out some repairs to your home (both internally and externally).

Over the following pages, we set out the division of responsibility between you, as the Tenant, and iCare’s housing repairs service, which is managed by Respond.

You, as Tenant, are responsible for internal repairs and garden maintenance, while Respond, on behalf of iCare, is responsible for structural repairs.

We provide a set of commonly asked questions with answers, and also set out the procedure for reporting a valid repair to the Respond Housing Repairs team.

Finally, we provide general advice on maintaining your home.

### Your Responsibilities

You must repair or replace any parts of the building damaged by you as the tenant, members of your family including children or visitors. This would include damage to the structure of the property such as installations, fixtures and fittings.

## Who is responsible for what?

### External:

Tenant	iCare/Respond
Maintenance of your garden grass and hedge cutting	Structure and exterior of buildings
Repairing TV aerials	Roof leaks & repairs
Repair and maintenance of any shed or outhouse fitted by tenant	External cracks
Replacing broken glass and window panes	Chimney stacks/pots and cowls
Replacing lost keys for windows and doors	Repair and maintenance of gutters and down pipes
Oiling window and door hinges and locks	Repair any steps and paths that are an essential means of access to property
	Repair boundary walls or fences
	Periodically paint the exterior of the property
	Repair and maintain the main services such as water, electricity, heating and heating of water

### Internal:

Tenant	iCare/Respond
<p>Minor plaster cracks</p> <p>Repairs to or replacement of cupboards, wardrobes and their doors, hinges, handles, locks, catches and drawers.</p> <p>All internal decoration, such as painting of walls, ceilings and internal woodwork.</p> <p>Damage caused by you as the Tenant, members of the household, or visitors to your household</p> <p>Maintenance and replacement of all furniture and fittings</p>	<p>Structural repairs to walls, ceilings, tiling, skirting boards, down pipes and drains except where damage has been caused by tenants</p> <p>Chimney sweeping</p> <p>Damage caused by fire, except where damage has been caused by tenant</p>

### Electrical:

Tenant	iCare/Respond
<p>Replacement of light bulbs</p> <p>Repair and replacement of electric showers (if no other means of heating water exists, iCare/Respond will remove/make safe the electric shower and ensure that an alternative source of hot water in the bathroom is provided for)</p>	<p>Repairs to Electrical wiring and electrical fittings provided by iCare/Respond</p> <p>Repairs to sockets</p> <p>Repairs to light switches</p> <p>Repair/replacement of smoke alarms</p> <p>A fire blanket and either a mains wired smoke alarm or at least two 10 year self contained battery operated smoke alarms. Carbon Monoxide alarms where required.</p>

## Doors, Windows and Floors

Tenant	iCare/Respond
Damage to windows and doors NOT due to fair wear and tear	Repairs to doors and windows which are defective due to normal wear and tear
Replacement of broken window glass NOT due to fair wear and tear	Replacement of front and rear door locking mechanisms which are defective due to normal wear and tear
Damage to front, side and rear entrance gates NOT due to fair wear and tear	Repair/replacement of window stays and catches damaged due to normal wear and tear
Draught proofing to external doors	Repair of floor tiles damaged due to wear and tear
Cleaning to floor and wall tiles	NB : Floor coverings should not be removed without prior written consent of iCare
Cleaning and repairs to floor coverings	
Damage due to break in (house alarm is advised and contents insurance is advised, as landlord's policy will not cover any contents lost or damaged.	

## Plumbing and Heating

Tenant	iCare/Respond
Clearing of rainwater and surface water gullies	Repair/replacement of toilet cisterns defective through fair wear and tear
Clearing of blockages from waste pipes from bath and sink	Repair of water storage tank and repair of stopcock
Maintenance of toilet bowls, baths, sinks and wash hand basins (EXCEPT where defective through fair wear and tear)	Repairs to boilers and hot water cylinder
Repair/replacement of seats, chains, handle washers and stoppers for toilets and sinks	Maintenance of external waste pipes and drains
Replacement or repair/replacement of toilet cistern NOT caused by fair wear and tear	Burst pipe repairs
Clearing a blocked house drain	
Clearing air lock in radiators and between your oil tank and boiler as a result of letting tank run empty	

## Cooking and Heating Appliances

Tenant	iCare/Respond
Maintenance of all appliances and white goods	Servicing of gas and oil central heating
Fire grate and front frets	Repair of heating units defective due to fair wear and tear
All damage caused to heating units NOT caused by fair wear and tear, including glass fronts on room heating appliances such as stoves	Replacement of defective fire backs (fire place)



## Reporting a Valid Repair

*Please refer to the list above before reporting a repair to ensure its validity*

### Frequently asked questions

#### **Q: How do I report a repair?**

A: You should report a repair by phone to 01-808 7700 or 051-840200. You will be asked to provide your name, address, contact number, Tenant ID number and detail of the repair required. Alternatively, you can report a repair by logging onto <http://www.respond.ie/Maintenance.aspx>

#### **Q: What happens next?**

A: If it is a valid repair, you will be contacted by a Respond staff member to arrange access to your dwelling (during business hours) either to inspect the problem or to carry out the repair. You must make provision for the repair contractor to be able to enter your dwelling.

Failure to keep this appointment may result in you being charged for the cost of the contractor's call-out charge.

Please be aware that a priority shall be assigned to your repair and fixed accordingly.

You shall be provided with an estimated time for the completion of the repair.

#### **Q: In what circumstances do I have to pay for maintenance repairs?**

A: Where damage is caused by the Tenant and repairs are carried out by Respond on behalf of iCare, you must pay the cost.

*In addition, if a contractor is called out and discovers that the repair is a Tenant responsibility, the repair will not be carried out and you will be charged for the cost of the contractor's call-out charge.*

#### **Q: Will iCare make an exception?**

A: iCare considers requests to carry out repairs which are the Tenant's responsibility only in exceptional circumstances, such as old age, where it is impossible for the Tenant to do so. If you are an old age pensioner, and you are unable to look after your home, you should contact iCare for more information and assistance.

## Gas Safety

Respond on behalf of iCare Housing will service gas central heating boilers annually. You must allow access to our approved contractor to undertake the servicing of the boiler. You should never attempt to alter the gas meter, repair or service the boiler or heating system. If your boiler or heating system is not working please contact Respond's Customer Services Centre.

Tampering with the boiler or other gas appliances can put you and your family at risk of serious injury.

If you think you can smell Gas, follow these steps:

- Turn off the gas supply at the mains
- Open windows & doors
- Extinguish any flames
- Do not use a mobile phone
- Don't switch on or off electrical equipment or switches
- Do not smoke

**If you suspect a gas leak, phone Bórd Gais immediately on 1850 20 50 50**

## Electricity Safety

To avoid any incidents with electrical sockets or appliances:

- Unplug appliances that are not in use.
- Don't overload sockets.
- Don't touch bare wires.

- Don't touch any electrical appliance if it is wet – turn off the electricity at the fuse box and don't use the appliance again until it is dry.
- Do not leave mobile devices charging on soft furnishings such as beds or couches.

## Fire Safety

### Fire detection;

- Test your smoke alarms at least once a week
- Change the battery (if applicable) immediately when you hear the warning beep.

### Escape;

- Know what to do when you hear a smoke alarm so you and your family can get out safely.
- Make an escape plan for your home and practice with everyone who lives there.
- Keep the keys to doors and windows nearby.
- If you hear the fire alarm, check doors with the back of your hand for heat before you open them. If they are warm, the way might be blocked by fire.
- Keep communal areas, halls, landings and stairwells clear of furniture, bicycles, etc. to ensure escape routes are clear of obstruction.

In the event of fire in your home, leave the premises and dial 999 or 112 immediately.

## Security in your home

There are some very simple steps you can take to help improve the security of your home.

- Always lock doors and windows when you go out.
- Leave a light on if you go out at night or use timers for lights.
- Pull curtains at night.
- Lock your shed and side gate.
- Photograph and mark all valuable property.
- Do not leave your keys under the doormat or other hiding place where burglars are likely to find them.
- Never leave valuables lying around.
- Use house alarm if fitted.
- Fit a good quality door chain and use it when strangers call.
- Don't leave strangers by an open door.
- Don't let anyone in until you are satisfied you know who they are and what they want.
- Telephone An Garda Síochána if you are suspicious.

For additional information on security see [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)

Please note that iCare Housing insure the structure only of your home. We do not insure the contents. We would strongly advise that you obtain your own contents insurance.

## Being winter ready

Weather warnings are presented in 3 categories;

Status Yellow – Be Aware

Status Orange – Be Prepared

Status Red – Take Action

More details on Met Éireann's weather alert, weather warning and severe weather warning on [www.met.ie](http://www.met.ie) which also has the latest national and regional forecasts.

During severe weather conditions emergency repairs will be carried out when it is safe for our appointed contractors to do so.

## Risk of burst pipes

You should be aware of the risk of burst pipes in cold weather and take reasonable care to ensure that water pipes do not freeze:

If a pipe bursts you should;

- Turn off the mains water supply at the stopcock.
- Turn all taps on to drain down your storage tank.
- If water comes in contact with any electrical fittings switch off the electricity supply.
- Store water in the bath or another large container so that you have water for flushing the toilet and washing etc until burst pipe is repaired.

## Your Neighbourhood

Everyone has the right to enjoy home in their own way, providing they do not intrude on their neighbours living near them.

A good neighbour will try to understand the different lifestyles of others. Please be considerate of others.

Tenants do have responsibilities like keeping their Tenancy Agreement and making their estate a better place to live.

We all want to live a peaceful and pleasant lifestyle in the surroundings of our home so we have put together a few guidelines to help us all do just that.

### As a Tenant you should understand and accept that:

All reasonable steps should be taken to foster an environment which enables your family to live peacefully in your home. You are responsible for the behaviour of visitors in your home.

*Nuisance and annoying behaviour would include any of the following:*

- Playing loud music.
- Arguing and door slamming.
- Dog barking and uncontrolled fouling.
- Offensive drunkenness.
- Selling drugs.
- Dumping rubbish.
- Playing ball games close to someone else's home.
- Vacuuming, using washing machines and drilling at unsocial hours.

- You and/or any member of your household should not harass others.

### Harassment includes:

- Racist or sexist behaviour or language.
- Using, or threatening to use, violence.
- Using abusive or insulting words or behaviour.
- Damaging, or threatening to damage, another person's home or possessions.
- Writing threatening, abusive or insulting letters or graffiti.
- Doing anything that interferes with the peace and comfort or convenience of other people on your estate or in your neighbourhood.

You or members of your household should not use your home for illegal activities.

### *Examples of this would be:*

- Selling, using, growing or manufacturing drugs.
- Prostitution.
- Selling and/or receiving stolen goods.

*Remember, if you are convicted of an offence, in or around your home, iCare can refer the matter to the RTB. iCare will act where drugs, violence, intimidation or prostitution are involved.*

## **Your Home**

Your home should be kept in a good state of decoration and repair at all times.

You must seek prior permission, in writing, from iCare Housing Association for any alterations or improvements to your home.

You cannot erect a shed or any outbuilding, additional fencing or TV aerial without prior permission from iCare Housing.

You must keep your home clean and tidy and you should not permit the accumulation of waste in or about the property.

You are responsible for making your own arrangements and payment for the regular collection of your refuse.

You must ensure no refuse is discharged into sinks, lavatories, etc. or waster soil pipes in the property.

## **Keeping your neighbourhood clean and litter free**

Your household rubbish should be placed in the bins provided by your refuse provider and you should take every effort to keep the area around the bins tidy.

There is a need and onus on you to maintain cleanliness of communal areas.

## **Blocked Waste Pipes**

Blocked waste pipes occur most commonly in kitchens and bathrooms when either food particles or hair builds up in the U-bend. To avoid this, remove food or hair from around the plug hole after using sinks or baths.

## **Pets**

Please consult your Tenancy Agreement, as certain pets are not allowed in iCare homes.

It is your responsibility to ensure dogs are kept under control and secure within the garden of the property and any fouling is cleared up.

It is your responsibility to keep dogs under control in public parts of the community and to clean up after them. Try not to let them become a nuisance by being noisy, especially late at night or early in the morning.

## **Gardens**

If you have a garden, front or rear, it is your responsibility to keep it neat and tidy.

This may be just by removing litter or by keeping the grass and hedges cut – an untidy garden is not only unsightly but reflects on the area in which you live.

Tree planting or removal must have the approval of Respond on behalf of iCare.

## Household Pests

Tenants are responsible for dealing with minor household pests such as ants, slugs, wasps, bees, mice etc.

**NB:** More serious pest or vermin problems should be referred to the Environmental Health Department or your Local Authority.

## Parking

Everybody wants to park near their home but this is not always possible.

Please consider others when parking your vehicle. Remember not to block access for emergency services and do not park on grass verges or footways – it is unsightly, causes damage and is dangerous for young children or people who are partially sighted.

Do not park in front of driveways or areas where you will cause problems for people trying to get in and out of their homes.

Parking bays are important to all Tenants, especially those with visitors.

Do not carry out large scale car repairs in these areas, park illegal or unroadworthy vehicles in them, or abandon cars in a dangerous condition.

Your local Council will remove any vehicle for a small fee if asked to do so by the owner.

Caravans and large trailers parked in small parking areas are a problem to car owners wishing to park their vehicles in these areas. Please try to avoid this where possible and consider others.

## Crime

Please take responsibility for reporting crime in the community, i.e. antisocial behaviour on estate, drug dealing, car crime, joy riding and damage to property.

Reports can be made to the local Garda Siochana or your Housing Officer.

You can also support Community Alert or Neighbourhood Watch. More information can be obtained from your local Garda Station.

## Going Away

If you plan to leave your home empty for more than three weeks at a time, please inform iCare.

Please advise us if anyone is staying in the property in a care-taking capacity.

Also contact your local Garda Station – they can advise you of any security arrangements which may help you.

## Business

You cannot operate any kind of business from your home, including a shop, workshop, factory or farm.

# Questions and Answers

## Q: Am I responsible for the garden or just the dwelling itself?

A: You are responsible for both the garden and the dwelling. You are also responsible for any laneway/walkway adjoining your house. Laneways should be kept in a clean condition and must **not be used for dumping**. You are responsible for the routine upkeep of walls, gardens, gates, and fences fair wear & tear excepted. Gardens should be maintained in a neat and tidy condition.

- Under litter by-laws, each householder is obliged to keep the footpath and road gulley-adjoining their property free from litter.
- Refuse must be left in a manner which ensures that it does not become litter.
- Where communal rubbish bins are available, refuse must be placed in the bins provided.

## Q: Must I insure my dwelling?

A: As a Tenant, you are **strongly advised** to insure the **contents** of your dwelling. Only the **structure** of the home is insured by iCare. The contents of your home are **NOT covered by iCare's insurance policy and iCare assumes no liability whatsoever for any damage or loss to the contents of your home.**

## Q: Can I make alterations to my dwelling?

A: You must get, in writing, the agreement of iCare **BEFORE** starting any improvements, alterations, or additions to your home, including garden sheds. Each query regarding alterations will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

All such fixed additions and alterations become the property of iCare.

In the case of unacceptable alterations carried out to the dwelling, or alterations without permission, iCare may require full reinstatement to the original condition.

**Painting the exterior of the house will be subject to permission and conditions.**

## Q: Will my dwelling ever be inspected?

A: Yes, inspections are carried out on an ad-hoc basis and at least annually. High levels of repair requests may result in more frequent inspections.

The Tenant must provide access to the premises for the purpose of inspection and works to be carried out by duly Authorised Agents (Gas, Water, Electricity Supply, and Telephone Authorities).

Valid ID must be requested of authorised agents and Respond staff at all times.

**iCare reserves the right to inspect dwellings periodically as part of its Stock Assessment Procedures.**

## Residential Tenancies Board



**Following the enactment of relevant Sections of the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2015, all Approved Housing Bodies including iCare Housing came under the remit of the Residential Tenancies Board.**

This means that Approved Housing Bodies and tenants now have access to the dispute resolution services of the Residential Tenancies Board which had only been open to private sector tenancies.

As a result of the commencement of legislation there is an obligation on iCare Housing to register all new tenancies as they occur in the future.

### **What is the Residential Tenancies Board?**

The Residential Tenancies Board was set up under the Residential Tenancies Act 2004. It was formerly called the Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) but its name was changed to the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB).

Services provided by the RTB

1. Registration of tenancies  
The RTB maintains a national register of tenancies
2. Dispute resolution  
The RTB provides a confidential dispute resolution service. You can initiate the dispute resolution process if you are a tenant, a landlord or are otherwise directly affected by a 'problem'.
3. Research and information  
The RTB has published a number of research reports on issues in the private rented sector and it also publishes a quarterly Rent Index. It provides a wide range of information for tenants, landlords and agents, along with sample forms and other publications.

For further information on the RTB and details on how it can benefit you as a tenant:

- Homepage: [www.rtb.ie](http://www.rtb.ie)
- One Stop Shop: [onestopshop.rtb.ie](http://onestopshop.rtb.ie) (08:30 – 18:00)
- Phone numbers: 0818 303037 / 0766 887350
- Post: RTB, PO Box 47, Clonakilty, Co Cork

## Useful information:

### Contacts:

**Ambulance/fire brigade/Gardai** 999 or 112

**Citizens Information:** 0761 07 4000

<http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/>

### Department of Social Protection

[www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)

### An Garda Síochána Confidential Line:

1800 666 111

[www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)

Crime Stoppers 1800 250 025

### Useful Information:

- Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act 2019.
- Residential Tenancies Act: [https://www.rtb.ie/residential-tenancies-\(amendment\)-act-2015](https://www.rtb.ie/residential-tenancies-(amendment)-act-2015)
- Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019