

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME



A handbook for our tenants or licensees

**RICHMOND
FELLOWSHIP** 
MAKING RECOVERY REALITY

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME

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We're here to support you to take **control of your life**. We will help you make decisions about what you want to achieve and to develop the confidence and skills to enable you to move on to more independent living.

We believe that recovery is a journey which is different for each person. Therefore, our approach is to focus on your individual needs, choices and aspirations, and to work with you as equal partners to help you achieve your goals.

We're here to help you actively take part in decisions about your support; you have as much control over this support as possible.

This booklet gives you all the key information you need to know as a new tenant or licensee.

If you have any questions about anything you read here, please speak to your Recovery Worker or another member of staff.

YOUR RECOVERY JOURNEY



To help you with your recovery journey, you will work with a member of our staff to develop a personalised support plan for you, based on the goals you identified in your needs assessment. Your support plan will include:

- The work that is needed to complete the goal
- A named person responsible for completing the work
- A date by which the work should be completed

REVIEWS

Your Recovery Worker will review your support plan with you so that you can discuss the progress you've made. Together, you can then decide if there is any additional help you need to achieve your goals, as well as look at possible new things to include in your support plan. This review will happen at least once every three months but you can ask for more frequent reviews if you would like them.

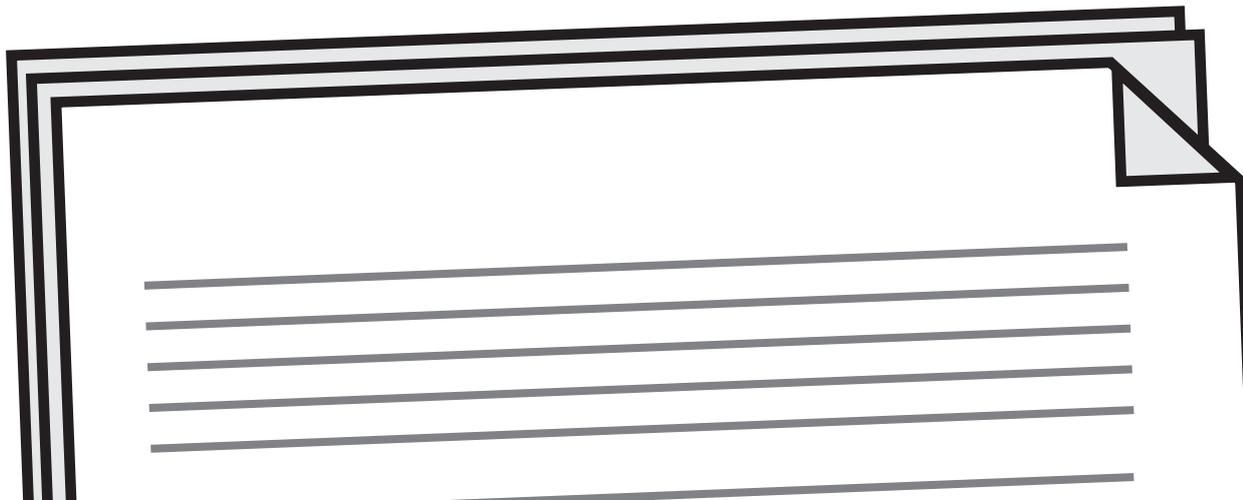
It is important that you engage with your Recovery Worker and the service you are living in so that you can work towards the goals in your plan, in order to help you live independently in the community going forward. If you don't accept and engage with the support provided to you, this may result in you having to leave your accommodation.

YOUR **TENANCY OR LICENCE** AGREEMENT

Before moving into your home, you'll sign a tenancy or licence agreement.

This sets out rights and responsibilities for you as the tenant or licensee and for us as the landlord. Please also be aware that some properties have additional rules and these will be shared with you when you are given this handbook. If you are unclear about what these are, please speak to your Recovery Worker.

It is very important that you keep to these rights and responsibilities. If you do not you may be evicted, as described within your tenancy or licence agreement.



Your rights:

- You have a right to privacy and respect for your lifestyle as long as it doesn't interfere with the rights of others
- You have the right to safe and well-maintained housing and for repairs to be carried out in a timely fashion
- You have the right to feel safe in your own home and be free from harassment
- You have the right to have access to information about your tenancy or licence and rental charges, eg via a noticeboard in your home or online
- You have the right to information about our policies.

If you're not happy with any aspect of your support or accommodation then please speak to your **Recovery Worker** about how to make a complaint or pick up our feedback leaflet.



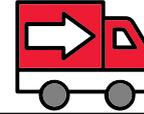
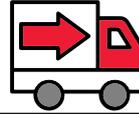
Your responsibilities:

- To pay your rent and any service charges when they're due
- To be considerate to other tenants or licensees living in the same property as you and any of your neighbours
- To keep noise and disturbance to a minimum
- To take responsibility for your visitors
- To report your own repairs and any broken equipment
- To avoid fire risks as per your tenancy or licence
- To keep your home secure by locking windows and doors.

Your tenancy or licence agreement is a **legal** document and you should keep it in a safe place.



MOVING IN



Moving into a new home can be an exciting time but it can also be stressful. We want your move to go as smoothly as possible and will support you as soon as you move in to feel comfortable and settled in your new home.

If you're unsure about a certain topic please speak to your Recovery Worker about the specific arrangements at your property.

Setting up your bills

Where your rent includes water rates and other charges, we'll pay such charges to the relevant authority. Otherwise, you're responsible for setting up your utilities and council tax payments. Your Recovery Worker can help you with this if you're not sure how to do this.

Contents insurance

We don't provide contents insurance for tenants or licensees, and so we encourage you

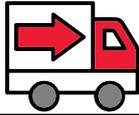
to purchase your own policy to cover your personal possessions. Your Recovery Worker can help you complete the necessary forms to do this if you're not sure how to. However, please be aware that we are not liable for the loss of any of your possessions.

Decorating your home

We keep all our properties to a high decorative standard. However, if you want to decorate your own home, please first speak to your Team Manager to gain permission to do so.

Keeping pets

We recognise that pets can have a therapeutic benefit and help you with your recovery. However, we have to balance this against what's appropriate given the type of accommodation you're staying in. If you'd like to keep a pet, you'll need to request this in writing to your Team Manager before any decision is made.



Smoking

Our rules and Smoking Policy will depend on the type of accommodation you're in. If you're in shared accommodation, you may be allowed to smoke in your own room or in a designated smoking shelter outside.

Smoking is not permitted in common or shared areas as this is against the law, so if you do smoke in common or shared areas you are breaking the law and putting your tenancy or licence at risk. However, your accommodation may have a Non-Smoking Policy and therefore you will not be allowed to smoke within any of the premises.

Check with a member of staff at your accommodation to learn more about the smoking policy where you live.

GREEN LIVING

When you begin your tenancy or licence with us, where appropriate, you will be given an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), enabling you to access your energy efficiency and see how green your home is. There are lots of ways to live in a more environmentally friendly way – and it can save you money on your bills too.

Here are just a few tips:

- Switch the lights off when you leave a room and use energy-saving bulbs
- Turn down the temperature on your heating by just one degree – this can reduce your heating bills
- Try to only use washing machines and dishwashers when they're full
- Switch your TV and DVD player off at night – keeping appliances on standby uses a lot of electricity
- Only boil as much water as you need – boiling a whole kettle uses a lot of power
- If there's a recycling scheme, then use it.

LIVING IN YOUR NEW HOME

Having people to stay

Your accommodation is for the named person on your tenancy or licence agreement only and under your tenancy or licence you mustn't have anyone else living with you. There will be different rules for having visitors and overnight guests depending on the type of accommodation you're in, so please speak to your Recovery Worker if you're unsure of what they are.

Absence and abandonment

You will need to inform your Recovery Worker in writing and in advance if you intend to be away from your home for more than 14 days.

You must not abandon your home and tenancy or licence. If we have reasonable cause to believe that your home has been abandoned or is not your principle home then we'll take steps to end the tenancy or licence and take possession of your home.

Anti-social behaviour

It is important that you are respectful of the people living in your household and those living close to you. You or any of your visitors must not cause a nuisance or annoyance to any of our other tenants or licensees living in your property, to any tenants or licensees living in the neighbourhood, or to any member of staff or contractor employed by us.

This includes:

- Behaving in an unruly way (shouting, swearing, using obscene/offensive gestures, banging doors, walls or the ceiling)
- Drug use or dealing
- Loud music or noise.



Racial and other harassment

Within all of our properties, we expect all of our tenants or licensees to treat everyone equally, fairly and with respect. You or your visitors must not commit or incite any harassment or threat of harassment on the grounds of race, colour, religion, age, gender, sex, sexuality or disability.

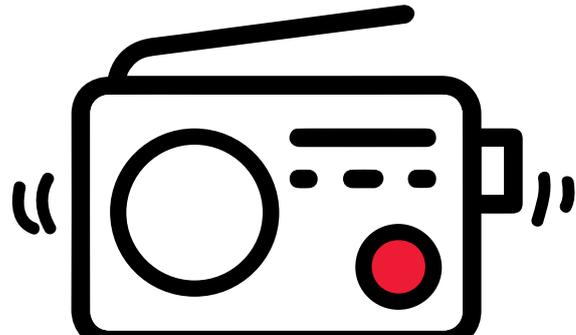
Harassment is behaviour that may interfere with the peace and comfort of, or cause offence to, any other tenant or licensee or individuals living in the neighbourhood, or to any member of staff or contractor employed by us.

Committing anti-social behaviour of any kind is likely to result in a formal warning being issued to you. Repeated incidents could result in you losing your home. You should also be aware that all illegal drug use or dealing will be reported to the police.



This can include:

- Violence or threatening violence against any person
- Abusive or insulting words or behaviour
- Damage or threats of damage to property belonging to another person, including damaging or setting fire to any part of a person's home
- Writing threatening, abusive or insulting graffiti.



PAYING YOUR RENT

What your rent covers

We try to keep our rents and service charges as low as possible while still allowing us to maintain our properties and services to the highest standards.

How to pay

When you move in your Recovery Worker will discuss with you the best way for you to pay your rent. This can be weekly or monthly and should normally be done by standing order. You are entitled to receive an up to date rent statement once a month. Your Recovery Worker can take you through this.

You may be entitled to housing benefit to help cover the costs of your rent. You can talk to your Recovery Worker about what you may be entitled to and how to apply. They can also help you to deal with the Housing Benefits Office and the Benefits Agency and help you get independent financial advice if you want it. With your permission we may involve external agencies that specialise in these areas to support you with this process.

Rents for our housing can be made up of the following charges:

Core rent – covers the costs of maintenance, building insurance, some staff costs and any mortgage or lease we may have on the property.

Communal service charge – covers the costs of cleaning and maintaining any communal areas at the property.

Personal service charge – covers the costs of heating, lighting and a proportion of the water rates to your room as well as food and cleaning (if this is part of your tenancy or license agreement).

Your tenancy or licence agreement will set out exactly which charges apply to you.

Speak to your Recovery Worker if you would like someone to explain it to you. If we have to change the rent and service charges, we'll only do this once every financial year and you'll always get at least one month's notice before any changes are made.

WHAT IF YOU GET INTO DIFFICULTIES?

It's really important to keep up with your payments and pay your rent on time.

If you're experiencing financial difficulties or are struggling to make payments then you should let us know as soon as possible so we can help before the situation gets too serious. If you don't pay your rent on time you'll be in breach of your tenancy or licence agreement.

Contact your Recovery Worker or another member of the team and explain the situation to them. They'll then work with you to agree a way for you to repay any debts and to manage your payments going forward. Once you've let us know, there is a process that we will follow to make sure you keep up to date with your payments.

If you don't let anybody know then we'll have to formally write to you and ask you to repay any outstanding rent and outline any repayment plans that you have agreed with us. If you ignore this

then we'll begin legal proceedings to recover what you owe us or to seek possession of the property, meaning you could eventually lose your home.

Taking legal action is always a last resort and we'd much rather work with you to help you manage your finances better, so it's always best to talk to your Recovery Worker rather than ignore any problems.

Our Arrears Policy gives more details about this process. Ask your Recovery Worker if you would like to see this.



MAINTAINING YOUR PROPERTY

We aim to keep all our properties to the highest standards possible, but as with any home this can only be done with regular maintenance and timely repairs. As the tenant or licensee you're responsible for keeping your home to a reasonable standard. As the landlord, we're responsible for carrying out planned maintenance and repair jobs.

REPORTING REPAIRS

Step One: Identify the problem

We'll need you to describe your problem as best as you can (eg where the problem is and what is wrong) to make sure we order the right repair for you. You'll also need to give us:

- Your full name and property address (and include any room numbers or location if applicable)
- A contact phone number
- Suggestions for when would be a convenient time to carry out the repair, subject to the type of repair.

Step Two: Report

Report your repair to our Property Services team office hours: 9am - 5pm, Mon to Fri):

Freephone: **0800 0858 511**

Email: **property@richmondfellowship.org.uk**

OUT OF HOURS - To report a repair outside of office hours please contact your local service as they'll have details for your local out of hours contractor. If you are unable to contact a member of staff, please see the poster or information board in the communal area of your property, where there will be a list of out of hour contractors in your local area.

When you report your repair we'll record the details on our systems, provide you with a job number and tell your Recovery Worker that we've logged your job. We'll then contact one of our contractors who'll get in touch with you to organise a time to complete the work. It may also be a good idea to let your Recovery Worker know if a contractor calls you back so that they are aware of when the repair is taking place.

Step Three: **Repair**

How quickly we carry out your repair depends on how serious the problem is:

- **Emergency** – this is something that could cause damage to someone's health or safety, or cause serious damage and destruction to property.
We aim to respond within four hours.
- **Urgent** – this is something that needs urgent attention like a water leak or blocked toilet.
We aim to respond within 24 hours.
- **Routine** – for all other repairs we aim to respond within five working days.

Once the contractor has made an appointment, you'll need to make sure they can access your home to carry out the repair work. If the date or time you've agreed is no longer convenient please call a member of Richmond Fellowship staff or the contractor as soon as possible so we can alert the Property Services team and re-arrange a time that suits you. All our contractors will carry ID with them so please check this before letting them in.

Once we have carried out your repair we'll ask you to complete a customer satisfaction survey to check you're happy with how we dealt with it. Your feedback will then be reviewed and used by the Property Services team to help them continue to provide an effective repairs service and improve their overall performance as a team.

MAINTAINING YOUR PROPERTY

Step One:

Identify the problem

Step Two:

Report

Freephone: 0800 0858511

Step Three:

Repair

Planned maintenance

As well as responding to repair issues we also carry out a programme of planned improvements to ensure our properties are always of the highest standard, such as redecorating and replacing out of date furniture and appliances. These planned improvements will depend upon the service you are in.

We regularly inspect our properties to identify if any improvements are needed and will consult with you if any changes are required and when the work will be carried out. You must allow reasonable access for our staff and contractors to carry out inspections and maintenance work. Your Recovery Worker or a member of the Property Services team will aim to contact you at least 24 hours beforehand to let you know when we will need to access your home, but in emergency situations we may need to have immediate access to your property.

Adaptations

We want people to live as comfortably as possible in our properties so if you need help using the bathroom

or getting up steps then we may be able to install adaptations like grab rails or ramps to make your life easier. Speak to your Recovery Worker, who'll be able to advise you how to make a request. Following your request, you will be assessed by an Occupational Therapist who will determine whether adaptations are required or not. We will then review any recommendations with you based on the outcome of your assessment.

Report your repair directly to our Property Services team, Freephone: 0800 0858 511.

Safety Checks and Safety tips

We all want to make sure you're safe in your home. There are checks we have to do as a landlord but there are also simple steps you can take to keep yourself safe too.

Gas

We have a legal duty to have all our gas appliances inspected and serviced every year. When you sign your tenancy or licence agreement, you'll be given a copy of your most up-to-date gas safety certificate and a copy will also be kept at your property should you wish to check it.

Fire

All of our properties are fitted with smoke alarms and are routinely checked to make sure they're working. Our fire evacuation procedure is also displayed in all of our properties. Your service will also carry out an annual fire risk assessment which will be kept on site.

You can help reduce the risk of fire by unplugging electrical appliances before you go to bed or when you go out and by not leaving naked flames such as candles or cigarettes unattended. You should also keep exits clear of obstruction.

Your accommodation will also carry out regular fire drills. Please let us know if you may have difficulties in hearing a fire alarm or exiting the building in an emergency and we will arrange for reasonable adjustments to be made.



What to do if:

You detect a gas leak:

- Turn off all gas appliances immediately
- Open windows and doors to let air in and the gas fumes out
- Ring the National Grid emergency line on: **0800 111 999**
- Do NOT use any naked flames
- Do NOT smoke
- Do not turn on lights

If there is a fire:

- Leave the property immediately. If you live in flats you should use the stairs and not the lift
- Close doors behind you as you leave to contain the fire and smoke
- Dial **999** to alert the fire service
- Stay outside and don't go back inside the building.

BE PART OF THE COMMUNITY

We want you to feel safe and comfortable in your home and to become a valued part of your community. We'll support you to achieve this by putting you at the centre of your recovery and helping you to reach your individual goals and aspirations.

At the same time, we expect all our tenants or licensees and their visitors to be considerate and respectful of their neighbours. Our homes must not be used for any criminal, immoral or illegal purposes, and we won't accept any antisocial behaviour, harassment or hate crime of any type against a person or group within your home. We will involve the police and take legal action if necessary.

Noise

We want you to enjoy your home, but please be mindful of those living close by to you, especially during the evenings and late at night. Please do not play any radio, television, hi-fi equipment or musical instrument so loudly that it causes or is likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance to any other tenant or licensee or neighbour, especially between the hours of 11pm-7am.

Parking and roads

Please be considerate when you are parking outside or nearby your home and ensure that you or your visitors do not block local roadways and other vehicle access. Make sure to keep these and car parking spaces clear of non-roadworthy vehicles and other obstructions. If you would like to apply for a parking permit please speak to your Team Manager.

Rubbish

You and your visitors must keep your home reasonably clean and tidy and assist in keeping the communal areas of the property clean and tidy, including the garden. This includes making sure you store bicycles and other large, obstructive objects out of the way. If your accommodation has a recycling scheme, please ensure you recycle your rubbish.

Equal opportunities

Although we're all different, we each deserve to be treated fairly and with respect and we should all have the same rights as other people. This means that no member of staff, volunteer, contractor or other tenant or licensee can treat you any less favourably than anybody else because of your race, religion, gender, sex, age, disability or sexuality.

If you feel you're being discriminated against by an individual or by our organisation then you have a legal right to lodge a complaint. Our Equal Opportunities Policy gives more details about this. Ask your Recovery Worker to see this.



Protecting you from abuse and harassment

Abuse is anything that harms another person and may include physical, verbal, sexual or financial abuse, neglect or discrimination. Harassment is any kind of threatening behaviour, damage to your property or physical assault that is based on prejudices about your race, religion, gender, age, disability or sexuality.

We take all reports of abuse or harassment extremely seriously and will investigate all cases. We'll involve the police if a crime has been committed. If, after investigation, we find that a member of our staff has been abusive then we'll take appropriate action against them which could include them losing their job.

Our Harassment and Safeguarding Policies give more details about this. Ask your Recovery Worker to see these.



Protecting your information and confidentiality

We comply with the General Data Protection Regulator (GDPR) which sets out how information is collected, stored and disclosed so that your privacy and confidentiality are protected.

We also have a Privacy Policy to make sure any information you give us is treated carefully, sensitively and securely. As a provider of housing, care and support services, we need information about your health, housing, support and social care needs to deliver our services and to meet your assessed needs. We need this information to assess your eligibility for a service and offer you our housing service. We use this information to develop a support plan and review your progress at regular intervals. You can find a full copy of our privacy notice at your service.

We don't pass on any of your personal information to other agencies without your written permission unless we believe that you or others are at risk, have been involved in a serious crime, or if there are concerns in relation to child protection.

GET INVOLVED WITH US

Putting people in control of their own recovery is central to our philosophy and putting the people who use our services at the heart of our organisation is fundamental to how we operate.

There's lots of ways you can get involved with Richmond Fellowship to help us improve the services we provide and to help us make the right strategic decisions about how we take our organisation forward.

This includes:

- Being on interview panels to recruit new members of staff
- Taking part in one of our many quality reviews to help improve our services
- Attending our National Working Together Forums and helping to shape the future direction of our organisation
- Joining in with your local service meetings and having a say in how your service is run.

Speak to your Recovery Worker to find out more information about how to get involved.



MOVING ON

Our supported housing properties are there to help you to develop your independent living skills and **achieve your individual goals**. This means that hopefully after you've completed the term of your tenancy or licence you're ready to move on.

If you need it, we can help you to:

- Identify what ongoing support you may need
- Support you to find alternative suitable accommodation
- Support you to find suitable employment, education or training opportunities
- Apply for any ongoing benefits you may be entitled to
- Register with medical services and local authorities
- Work in partnership with other external agencies

In some circumstances you may want to move on or transfer to other housing sooner than the end of your tenancy or licence. For example, if you want to be nearer to family or work or if you don't like the area you're living in.

You should discuss your reasons for wanting to move with your Recovery Worker who may speak with other agencies involved in your care such as your GP, Social Worker or housing teams to help you to reach a solution.

If you wish to end your tenancy or licence and hand in your notice, please speak to your Recovery Worker.



COMPLAINTS

How to make a complaint

You have the right to make a complaint if you're not happy about any aspect of your support package or accommodation. You can phone, write or ask to see a member of staff you feel comfortable talking to, to discuss your concerns. You can also bring someone along with you for support if you want.

In the first instance we'll try to resolve your complaint locally on an informal basis as we've found that most issues can be resolved quickly this way.

However, if you're not satisfied with the response of the local team handling your complaint, then you can make a formal complaint which is dealt with at a more senior level.

FEEDBACK

How to provide feedback or compliments

You can fill in a **Feedback, Compliments and Complaints** leaflet which are available at the service and pass it to a member of our team at any time or alternatively, you can email your feedback to us at:

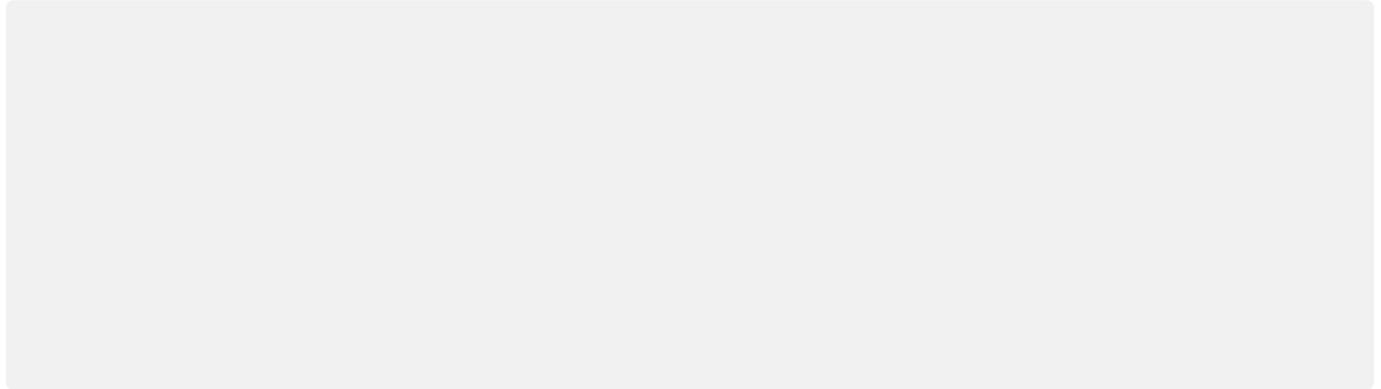
communications@richmondfellowship.org.uk

If you've received a particularly good service from a specific member of staff or team at Richmond Fellowship, please do tell us their name and the service they work at and we will make sure they get your personal feedback.

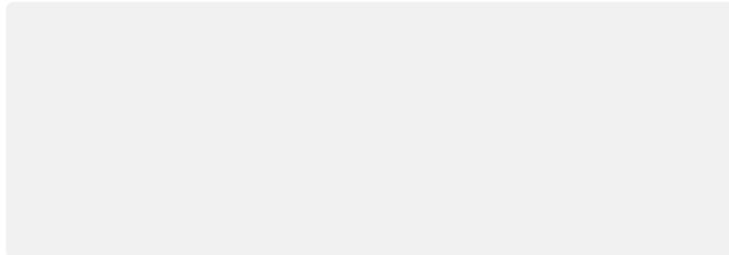
If you are currently using one of our services then you can also give us your feedback on a number of different topics and themes by taking part in our **annual satisfaction survey**.

NOTES

Please use this space to write down local contact details and information.



Out of hours:



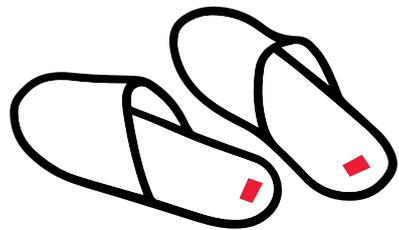
Useful Numbers

Repairs: **0800 0858 511**

GAS - National Grid UK: **0800 111 999**

Emergency Services: **999**

Property Services: **0800 0858 511**





Richmond Fellowship is a national mental health charity making recovery reality for thousands of people every year. We provide a wide range of services including residential support, supported housing, employment services, community support and crisis support.

Richmond Fellowship is now part of **Recovery Focus**, a group of charities with the shared aim to **inspire recovery together**.

Find out more by visiting our website at:

www.richmondfellowship.org.uk

Facebook: **[/rfmentalhealth](https://www.facebook.com/rfmentalhealth)**

Twitter: **[@rfmentalhealth](https://twitter.com/rfmentalhealth)**

If you need this leaflet in alternative formats such as a different language, large print or easy read then contact Richmond Fellowship's Communications and Marketing team by emailing **marketing@richmondfellowship.org.uk**