YMCA North Tyneside Resident Handbook

1. Welcome & Purpose

- YMCA North Tyneside (YMCA) wants to provide safe, secure housing for people from all backgrounds.
- This handbook explains what you can expect from us and what we expect from you. This helps us all work together to keep your home safe and comfortable.
- We believe in treating everyone with dignity, safety, and respect.

2. Your Support

- **Personal Support:** As a resident, you will receive support tailored to your needs. We want to help you keep your home and gain the skills to live independently.
- **Keywork Sessions:** You will have a dedicated support worker. You will meet with them regularly. These meetings are a chance for you to talk about your goals, your wellbeing, and any problems you have.
- **Working Together:** Support is a partnership. We ask that you help design your own support plan with your key worker and talk openly with our support team so we can give you the best help.

3. Your Legal Rights & Our Obligations

- We promise to provide homes that meet the government's Decent Homes Standard and are fit for you to live in.
- We must give you at least 24 hours' notice before we enter your home to do repairs or checks, unless it is an emergency.
- We will make reasonable changes to our services or accommodation if you are disabled. Please talk to your support worker about what you need.

4. Your Home: Rights, Responsibilities & Finances

- **Our Job:** We are responsible for making sure our buildings are safe and legal. We do regular safety checks and sort out necessary repairs.
- **Your Job:** You must take good care of your home, keep your living space clean and safe, and report any damage or hazards quickly. You must let us into your home for repairs or inspections. You are expected to keep your home clean and avoid damaging walls, floors, or furniture. You must stick to the rules in your tenancy agreement.
- **Rent and Service Charges:** Your costs include your rent and service charges (which are often covered by Housing Benefit). You may also have personal costs, like utilities, which you must pay yourself.
- **Housing Benefit:** Our team can help you manage your Housing Benefit claims. However, it is your responsibility to give the local council the right information and pay your personal charges on time.

5. Property Condition & Repairs

- **Reporting Repairs:** Our maintenance team handles repairs. We fix problems based on how urgent they are. It is best to call us for urgent issues.
- **Emergency Repairs:** These are serious problems like burst pipes, blocked drains, mould, broken windows or doors, lift failures, or no heating/hot water. If this happens out of office hours, please call our 24-hour emergency line at [Insert Phone Number].
- **Urgent Repairs:** These include broken door entry systems or parts for lifts and heating.
- **Routine Repairs:** These include dripping taps, or small repairs to walls, woodwork, fences, or kitchens and bathrooms.
- **Safety Checks:** We do yearly checks to keep your home safe and meet legal requirements. Staff will give you notice before they visit to check fire safety, electrics, and for signs of damp. You must let us into all rooms and make sure we can get to exits easily.
- **Home Improvements:** Ask us before you make any changes to your home. You need our written permission first. If you don't, we might charge you or ask you to put things back to how they were. Never try to move or break materials that might contain asbestos (this can be in some homes built before 2000).

6. Service Standards

- We aim to fix emergency repairs within 24 hours and routine repairs within 28 days. You can find full details of these timings in your tenancy pack.

7. Health, Safety, Wellbeing & Safeguarding

- **Gas Safety:** If you smell gas, call the National Gas Emergency Line immediately on 0800 111 999. Turn off the gas supply if you can, put out any flames, open windows and doors, and do not smoke or use light switches.
- **Fire Safety:** We check our fire safety regularly. You must not break or change smoke alarms, block fire exits, use unsafe electrical items, or store too many things that could cause a fire. If you live in a building with shared spaces, we have a specific fire safety booklet that tells you what to do in an emergency.
- **Anti-Social Behaviour:** We do not accept anti-social behaviour (like being noisy, aggressive, or disruptive). We take all reports seriously and will investigate. If you feel threatened, talk to a housing officer or call 999 if you are in danger.
- **Safeguarding You:** Your safety is our main priority. If you or someone else is experiencing abuse, neglect, or being taken advantage of, please tell a member of staff straight away. We will listen to you and work with the right agencies to keep you safe.

8. Damp, Mould, and Condensation

- **Our Promise:** YMCA North Tyneside is committed to providing healthy homes and we do not accept damp and mould. We check our buildings regularly to spot issues early. We will never blame you for damp or mould, and we will investigate every report.
- **Reporting:** Tell us immediately if you see damp, mould, peeling wallpaper, leaks, or musty smells. We will record the problem, visit to see what is wrong, and tell you what we will do to fix it.
- **Prevention:** Use extractor fans when cooking or bathing. Open windows when you can. Keep furniture slightly away from outside walls. Don't block radiators with furniture. Try to keep your home at a steady, comfortable temperature.
- **Vulnerable Households:** Tell us if anyone in your home has asthma, a weak immune system, is pregnant, is under five, over 65, or has a disability. This helps us put your case first and give you extra support.

9. Moving In and Moving On

- **Preparing for Independence:** Our goal is to help you gain the skills and confidence to live on your own. You will work with your support worker to achieve this and it will be part of your agreed support plan.
- **Moving Out:** If you are leaving, you must give us the required notice (usually 28 days). Check your tenancy agreement for the exact rules. When you move out, please leave your home clean, take all your things with you, and return your keys to the office.

10. Your Data and Home Safety

- We use your basic details (name, address, and phone number) to book essential safety checks, such as gas and fire safety inspections, to keep your home safe.
- Your information is stored securely in our property management system, 'True Compliance'. We only share these details with our software provider or if we are legally required to do so by regulators.
- We value your privacy: we do not sell your data or use it for marketing purposes.
- You can read our full Privacy Notice online at ymcanorthtyneside.org. If you would like a printed copy or need to update your phone number, please call us (see contact details below)

12. Leadership & Accountability

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for making sure we follow the rules and standards set by the government. If you have a serious concern about our standards, you can email them (see contact details below)

11. Feedback, Complaints & Contact Information • **Feedback:**

We want to hear from you. Tell us what we are doing well, and what we can do better.

- **Communication:** We promise to keep you updated. When we are fixing a problem or providing a service, we will let you know what is happening and what the next steps are.
- **Complaints:** If you are not happy with our services, please tell us so we can put it right. If you are still not happy with the answer, you can ask a senior manager to look at the issue.
- **Appeals:** If you disagree with a policy-based decision, you have the right to appeal to the Operations Manager within 14 days.
- **Contact Us:** To report a housing issue or give feedback, contact YMCA North Tyneside Housing Services:
    - Telephone: 0191 257 5434
    - Email: customer.relations@ymcanorthtyneside.org
    - Office Hours: 8.30am-4.30pm

Appendix: Quick Start Guide

Need Help Fast?

- **Gas Leak or Fire:** Call 999 immediately. If you smell gas, call the National Gas Emergency Line: 0800 111 999.
- **Emergency Repairs (e.g., burst pipes, no heating):** Call our 24-hour emergency line on 0808 164 011 (Carlisle & Penrith residents must contact CPM on 07943610714).

Reporting Repairs

- Tell us about repairs as soon as you see them.
- **Call or Email:** Contact us at 0191 257 5434 or maintenance@ymcanorthtyneside.org.

Your Top 3 Responsibilities

1. **Keep it clean:** Look after your home and living space.
2. **Let us in:** You must allow us access for yearly safety checks and repairs.
3. **Ask first:** Always ask us in writing before you make any changes to your home.

Your Support

- You have a dedicated support worker. Use your regular meetings to discuss

your goals, wellbeing, and any problems you have.

Feedback & Complaints

- If you are unhappy, please tell us. We want to put things right. You can complain or appeal a policy-based decision by contacting the housing office.

Office Details

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