



Moving

- When you move
- Moving in, including transfers, mutual exchange and rightsizing
- Keeping a pet
- Home contents insurance
- Resident parking permits and garages
- Ending your tenancy



Moving

When you move

Utilities

You are responsible for registering with utility companies. The details of your electric and gas (if applicable) supplier and meter locations will be provided when you sign your tenancy. Take gas and electric meter readings on the day your tenancy starts as you will have responsibility for any charges from this date.



Water

Contact Affinity Water to let them know you are the new tenant and tell them when you moved in.

If you have a water meter, take a reading on the day your tenancy starts and give this to Affinity Water.

The water will have been shut off while the property has been empty. You will need to turn on the stopcock / surestop device once you have moved in to resume the cold water supply.



Details of where to find the stopcock / surestop device will be included on your **Utility Information** sheet.

If you do not have this information, call the **Neighbourhood Team** on **01707 357 796** or email **neighbourhoods@welhat.gov.uk**.

Hot water / heating

If your home has gas, you will first have to register with a gas provider and then arrange with us for your meter to be uncapped for the hot water and heating to work.

To arrange an appointment for your gas meter to be uncapped, please call **Housing Maintenance** on **0800 111 4484**.

At the appointment, the gas engineer will uncap and recommission the heating systems and complete a safety check on the gas installations.

Moving

Gas safety check

For your safety, we are legally required to carry out a gas safety check every 12 months on all gas appliances in your property. We will contact you to offer an appointment.

Cooker points

There will be either a gas or electric cooker point in the kitchen. We will not supply additional gas or electric cooker points. You will need to arrange and pay to have your electric or gas cooker connected. It is against the law for anyone other than a qualified electrician or gas safe engineer to carry out these connections. A list of gas safe engineers can be found at www.gassaferegister.co.uk

Door keys and fobs

We will give you two sets of keys for your new home and if your property is in a block with a secure communal area, two entry fobs. If you require additional sets of the entry fobs, we will charge you for them. For more information contact the **Neighbourhood Team** on **01707 357 796** or email neighbourhoods@welhat.gov.uk

Gardens

If your property has its own garden, you are responsible for maintaining it. This includes any hedges or trees within your boundary.

Fencing

WHBC is only responsible for providing boundary marking fencing between properties. This is in the form of close-boarded or lap fence panels. We will not maintain or repair any fencing that a resident has installed or for boundaries we do not have responsibility for.

Pest control

It is your responsibility to deal with pests, such as rodents or insects, in your home and you will need to organise any pest control treatments. Our contractor **John O'Conner** offers a discount to Welwyn Hatfield residents. They can be contacted on **01462 421 579** or by emailing pestcontrol@johnoconner.co.uk

If pests are seen in communal areas, please contact the **Neighbourhood Team** on **01707 357 796** or neighbourhoods@welhat.gov.uk



Moving

Change of address checklist

We've put together a handy list of suggestions of who you may need to notify of your new address.

Water Company	☐	DVLA	☐
Gas Supplier	☐	Doctors	☐
Electricity Supplier	☐	Dentist	☐
TV Licence	☐	Optician	☐
Car Insurance	☐	Schools / Colleges	☐
Car Breakdown / Recovery	☐	TV Subscription Services	☐
Contents Insurance	☐	Broadband Supplier	☐
Life Insurance	☐	Telephone Provider	☐
Pet Insurance	☐	Subscriptions	☐
Banks and Building Societies	☐	Online Retail Accounts (e.g. Amazon)	☐
National Savings / Premium Bonds	☐	Milk Delivery	☐
Credit Card Companies	☐	Online Supermarket Deliveries	☐
Employer	☐	Newsagent	☐
Council Tax	☐	Sports Club	☐
Department of Work and Pensions	☐	Library	☐
Housing Benefit	☐	Family and Friends	☐
The Electoral Roll	☐	Royal Mail (for mail redirection)	☐

Moving

Moving in, including transfers, mutual exchange and rightsizing

If you would like to move, there are several ways to search for a new home.

Transfers

Before making an application to move to another of our properties, you will need to complete a brief pre-assessment questionnaire on the council website,

www.welhat.gov.uk/housing-garages

After completing the questionnaire, you will be presented with a personal action plan outlining your most suitable housing options. You will be asked to complete a **Housing Needs Register** application.

Transfer applications are assessed in line with the Housing Allocations policy which can be found on our website,

www.welhat.gov.uk/policies/council-housing-allocations.

Those with an identified housing need are banded accordingly and can bid for suitable housing.

Your housing application login allows you to view and bid for the properties you're eligible for on our website.

Mutual exchange

A mutual exchange is when council or housing association tenants swap their homes, with their landlord's permission. Each tenant moves into the property of the person they are exchanging with.

You can exchange with:

- another WHBC tenant
- a tenant of another council or housing association

You'll need to complete and sign the appropriate legal paperwork before you move and you will usually take over the existing tenancy agreement of the person you're exchanging with.

It is not possible to exchange to an empty property.

It is important to remember that you will be agreeing to take over your new home as it is. If the property needs decorating or repairing, you will have to carry out this work yourself.



Moving

Who can exchange

Any council or housing association tenant with a secure, assured or flexible tenancy can apply for a mutual exchange.

Your application may be turned down if you:

- are in arrears with your rent
- have caused a nuisance, committed anti-social behaviour, or you have breached your tenancy agreement in some other way
- have not allowed us to carry out a gas safety check during the last 12 months
- are being taken to court
- have been issued with a notice seeking possession of your home
- have not kept your home to the standard required
- have altered your home without our permission

The application may also be turned down if the property you would like to move to is:

- too big or too small for your needs
- has been designed or adapted for a disabled or older person, or built for a specific age group and you, or the person you're exchanging with, does not qualify for that type of housing



Finding someone to exchange with

The easiest way to find a swap with another tenant is to register with **HomeSwapper**, an online database of people who want to move home.

It's free to use and is a nationwide service, so you can move within Welwyn Hatfield or anywhere else in the country.

To register, go to **www.homeswapper.co.uk** and complete an online application form.

You'll need to supply:

- contact information
- choice of locations
- number of bedrooms you need
- details of the kind of home you would like

Once you have found a property you are interested in, you'll need to contact the tenant to arrange to view each other's homes.

You can show an interest in as many homes as you like until you find a home that suits you.

Moving

Rightsizing Transfer Scheme

If you are an existing tenant and live in a property that is too big for you, we can help you move to a smaller, more manageable home.

People downsize for all sorts of reasons. It can be an opportunity to move to a new area or to a property more suited to your needs.

A smaller home is easier to keep clean and manage. You could also pay less in rent, council tax and energy bills.

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to find a more suitable home. The help we can provide includes:

Advice

We can meet with you to discuss your housing options, including sheltered accommodation and mutual exchanges. We also offer practical help with the moving process, including guidance on how to arrange removals, changing your utility suppliers and changing addresses.

The Housing Needs Register (waiting list)

If you are not already registered for a transfer, we can help you apply and show you how to 'bid' for homes which might be of interest.

We can set up auto-bidding for applicants. This means the system



will automatically place bids according to your preferred area and house size.

Additional priority

Households who are looking to rightsize are awarded additional priority in accordance with the Housing Allocations Policy.

Financial assistance

You may be able to claim some financial assistance towards the cost of rightsizing. The amount payable is based on the size of property you are moving from and in to.

Incentives will be paid following the completion of the move by BACS payment. Any money owed to the council may be deducted from the amount offered.

Moving

Eligibility

To be eligible for this scheme you must be a council tenant and meet one of the following criteria:

- your current home has two or more bedrooms
- you are under occupying your home by at least one bedroom
- you must not be moving into overcrowded conditions
- in most cases you should not have rent arrears and your property should be in good condition

How to apply

For more information about the **Rightsizing Transfer Scheme**, please contact the **Neighbourhoods Team** by calling **01707 357 796** or emailing **neighbourhoods@welhat.gov.uk**

Further information

Further information can be found on our website **www.welhat.gov.uk**



Keeping a pet

If you want to keep a pet in your home, you must get our written permission. This needs to be done before you house any animal in your property or garden, including but not limited to: cats, dogs, livestock and reptiles.

The request should be emailed to **neighbourhoods@welhat.gov.uk** or posted to **Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, Campus East, Welwyn Garden City AL8 6AE.**

Only when this has been received, and all conditions met to the satisfaction of the council, will written permission be granted for a pet to be kept.

We will not withhold permission if you require a guide dog or other assistance pet but you will still need to let us know they are in your home.

Moving

The following factors will be considered when deciding whether to grant permission for a pet:

- The size and type of animal – dogs listed in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and any animal listed in the Schedule of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 may not be kept.
- The size and type of property.
- Proximity to outside space.
- The health and ability of the resident to provide the level of care required for the animal.
- Any other animals already in your home.
- The impact of the animal on neighbouring residents.
- The impact on the condition or safety of the home, including overcrowding and fire safety.
- Any previous problems within your household relating to pet ownership or antisocial behaviour which may give rise to concerns about your ability to look after a pet in an appropriate manner.



For permission to be granted, we also expect you to provide confirmation that the following conditions can be met:

- A contingency plan is in place whereby a family member / friend will re-house your pet should you have to temporarily leave the property or you become incapable of providing the level of care required for the pet.
- You agree to make good any damage caused to the property by your pet.
- If appropriate to the animal, the pet is micro-chipped and registered with a local veterinary surgery, PDSA or animal welfare centre.
- You are responsible for the health and welfare of your pets. Routine healthcare must include regular control of parasites (fleas and worms), vaccination and neutering where appropriate.
- You must ensure your pet is suitable and trained for their accommodation (i.e. cats must be litter trained and dogs house trained).
- The control of your pet and any animals visiting the property are your responsibility.
- They must never be allowed outside the boundary of your property on their own – this includes communal balconies, gardens, stairwells, and corridors.

Moving

- If your pet fouls in the communal gardens or outside communal space, you must clear up after it immediately and responsibly dispose of the waste.
- In our independent living accommodation, pets are not allowed in communal socialising areas e.g. communal lounges, kitchens, craft areas and exercise rooms.
- Animals should not cause harm or concern to a visiting member of WHBC staff or any of their contractors.
- If we give permission for a pet and you do not obtain this pet within six months, you are required to make a fresh request.

How long will it usually take to approve your request?

We will aim to provide an answer to your request within 10 working days. In more complicated cases it could take up to 28 days.

If you were offered a new home via our choice-based lettings system, we will provide an answer to your request within three working days, in more complicated cases this may take up to 10 days.

If you are unhappy with the way we have dealt with your request, you can follow our complaints policy.

Withdrawal of permission

Permission to keep your pet may be withdrawn by the council if:

- We receive complaints about your pet from neighbours or staff which is evidenced as nuisance, such as a dog barking excessively, and which cannot be resolved satisfactorily.
- You are found to be keeping animals for commercial breeding purposes, or you allow your property to be used for such purposes.
- You are found to be in breach of any of the conditions around the keeping of animals set out in your tenancy agreement.
- Your animal harms or presents as harmful to other residents, the general public or a member of WHBC staff or their contractors.
- You have too many pets in your home.

Please note the breach of any tenancy conditions could result in WHBC taking enforcement action, including repossession of your home.

For more information about our pet policy or to request a permission form, see our website

www.welhat.gov.uk or contact your **Neighbourhood Officer** on **01707 357 796** or **neighbourhoods@welhat.gov.uk**

Moving

Home contents insurance

Home contents insurance is not included as part of your tenancy agreement. No matter how careful you are, there's always the risk of your belongings being damaged, broken or stolen.

Replacing them can prove expensive, so it's a good idea to take out home contents insurance, either through the scheme we run in partnership with Thistle Tenant Risks or by using another trusted provider.

The Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Home Contents Insurance Scheme is designed for tenants and the premiums can be paid weekly alongside your rent.

The scheme is open to all WHBC tenants, except those who have rent arrears.

What the scheme covers

The low-cost scheme provides cover for the contents of your home against fire, theft, water damage, storms and other hazards, but not accidental damage (except at an additional cost).

Cover can be provided for items such as furniture, carpets, curtains, clothes, bedding, electrical items, jewellery, pictures and ornaments, plus the contents of your freezer and stolen keys.

The scheme also covers damage to the fixtures and fittings in your home which you are responsible for under the terms of your tenancy agreement.

Other benefits include:

- weekly payments alongside your rent
- no excess (you don't pay the first part of a claim)
- no minimum security requirements
- freezer contents cover
- loss and theft of keys cover
- cover for contents in the open, in sheds and in garages as standard
- tenant responsibility and improvements cover included

The cost and paying premiums

The cost of your premiums will be based on the value of the contents you would like covered. Premiums are charged on a weekly basis and can be paid with your rent. All premiums include Insurance Premium Tax at the current rate.

Moving

Starting a policy

1. Download an application form from our website (these are also available for collection at the council offices).
2. Complete the application form giving your personal details and the sum insured required.
3. Return your completed form to us.

Your application will be sent to Thistle who will review the information you've supplied. If your application for cover is accepted, you will be sent a welcome letter which will advise you of the amount you need to pay and when the first payment has to be made.

Important information

You must ensure you answer all of the questions on the application form fully, and that your answers are true and correct to the best of your knowledge and belief.

Contact us immediately if there are any inaccuracies or omissions. Failure to do this will result in your policy being invalid or it will not operate in the event of a claim.

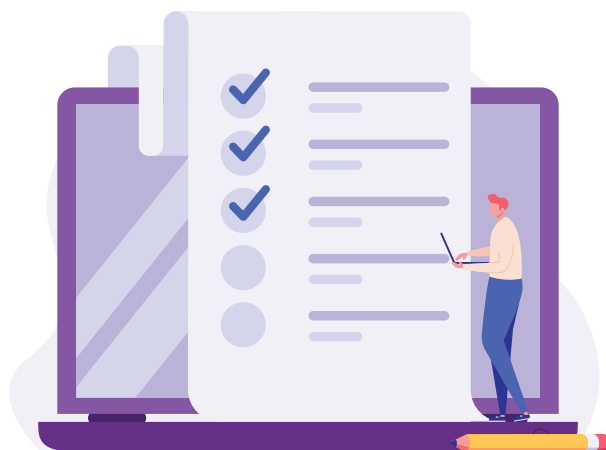
You should keep a copy of all information and correspondence you supply to us in connection with your application. A copy of your application and supporting information can be supplied on request for a period of three months after its completion.

A copy of the policy wording is available on request.

You are not covered until your application has been accepted by Thistle Tenant Risks.

You must keep your payments up to date or your cover will be invalid.

For more information, see our website www.welhat.gov.uk/tenants or contact **01707 357 000**.





Resident parking permits and garages

Parking permits

Parking permits are issued and managed by the council's Parking Services team.

If your road is in a permit zone, there will be signs in place stating, 'resident permit holders only'.

To find out if your road is within a permit zone or to apply for a permit, go to

www.welhat.gov.uk/parking-permits

Once you have created a permit account and logged in, simply click on 'apply for a permit' and go through the application process as shown in the user guide on the page.

Please note for vehicle document Parking Services will accept either the log book or insurance schedule showing the vehicle is linked to the new permit address.

For reference, the quickest document to acquire is the vehicle insurance

schedule as insurers can change address details for vehicles in advance of a home move and provide the document electronically.

Only vehicles that will be insured / registered at the permit address will be eligible for an annual parking permit.

If you are unable to get vehicle documents amended before your move, you can also apply for visitor vouchers to cover your vehicle(s) in the meantime.

If you require any further information or assistance with parking permits, please call **01707 357 000** or email **parkingservices@welhat.gov.uk**

Garages

We have garages available to rent throughout the borough. You can rent a garage for your vehicle or use it for storage.

For more information or to make an application please see our website **www.welhat.gov.uk/garages** or email **garages@welhat.gov.uk**

Moving

Ending your tenancy

To end your tenancy, you must request a tenancy termination form from us, fill it in and return it.

You can do this by contacting the **Neighbourhoods Team** on **01707 357 796** or **neighbourhoods@welhat.gov.uk**

You must give us at least 28 days written notice that you wish to end your tenancy. The end of the notice period must be a Sunday. Rent is payable until the end date of the tenancy.

All the keys to the property should be given back to us by 12 noon on the Monday after the tenancy has ended. We will continue to charge you until the keys are returned or we obtain possession.

Before you leave

You must let us have access to the property to carry out an inspection before it is left empty.

At the end of your tenancy, we ask that:

- All your belongings, as well as any floor coverings (carpet, vinyl) installed by you, have been removed from the property and garden – this includes the loft and any outbuildings.

- The property and garden are in a clean, tidy condition and clear of rubbish.
- WHBC's Council Tax and Housing Benefit teams have been notified (if applicable).
- You've arranged for any post to be redirected.
- Final meter readings have been taken and the gas, electricity, water and any other utility companies have been notified.



Moving

Removing items

If we have to clear any items from the property or garden, or if we have to carry out work to bring the property back to a reasonable and safe standard, we will charge you for the cost of this.

This may include removing unsafe garden walls, patios or filling in ponds.

If you leave items behind after your tenancy has ended, we may dispose of them. We will do this without giving you any notice and you will be charged the cost.

Fixtures and fittings

All fixtures and fittings, whether they have been installed by the council or by you, become property of the council when the property is vacant and must remain.

Rechargeable repairs

If you leave your tenancy and rechargeable work is needed to make the property ready for a new tenant, we will add the cost to your final rent account.

This will appear in a separate account called a sub-account. You will be sent an invoice showing the work needed and the cost. If you do not pay the invoice we will take legal action against you and refuse to re-house you if you apply for housing in the future.

