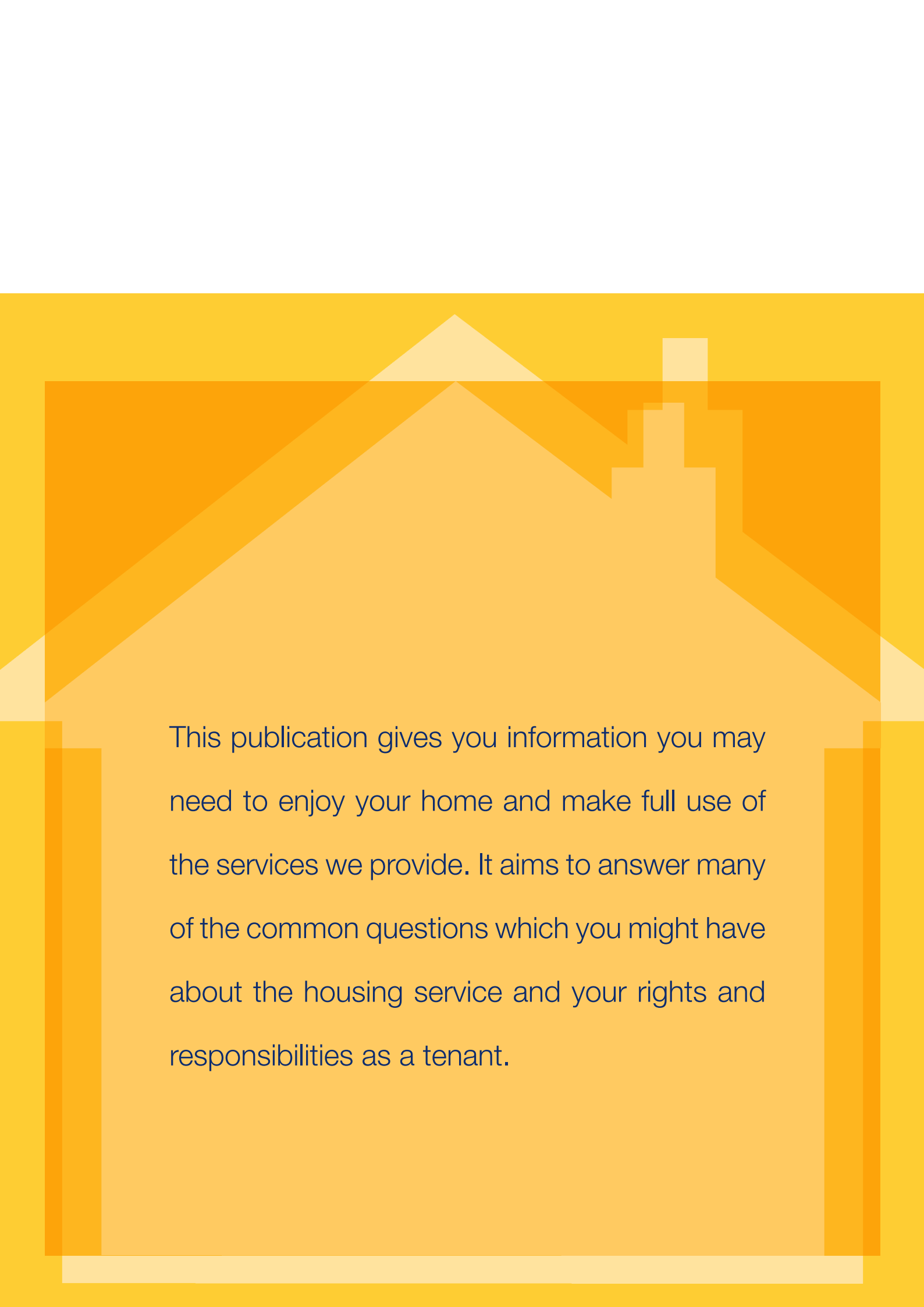




Information **for tenants**

The background of the page features a stylized, layered graphic of a house. The house is composed of several overlapping shapes in various shades of yellow and orange. The roof is a large, light-colored triangle. Below it, there are darker, more complex shapes representing the walls and a chimney on the right side. The overall effect is a warm, abstract representation of a home.

This publication gives you information you may need to enjoy your home and make full use of the services we provide. It aims to answer many of the common questions which you might have about the housing service and your rights and responsibilities as a tenant.

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Our **commitment**

Your right to receive a high-quality service

You have the right to expect a high-quality service from us. We will try to maintain and improve the level of service we provide so that you can enjoy your home.

We want to make sure that the services we provide:

- 🏠 are effective and respond to your needs;
- 🏠 are high quality and provide choice;
- 🏠 are good value; and
- 🏠 take account of your views and suggestions for improvement.

Our service standards and commitments to you

If you send us a letter or email

- 🏠 Our written responses will be in plain English.
- 🏠 We will acknowledge your correspondence within three working days.
- 🏠 We will respond to all letters within ten working days.
- 🏠 If we cannot provide a full response within this time, we will tell you when you should receive an answer.
- 🏠 Our response will be in the format that suits you, including in Braille, on audio tape, in a different font size and in different languages.

If you visit the office

- 🏠 Staff will be polite and respectful.
- 🏠 All staff will display name badges.
- 🏠 You will not have to wait more than 10 minutes.
- 🏠 If you have an appointment, we will see you on time. If there is a delay, we will explain why.
- 🏠 You can ask for a private interview room.

If you phone the office

- 🏠 We will answer your call within five rings.
- 🏠 Staff will give you their name and department.
- 🏠 If the person answering your call cannot help you, they will transfer you to the appropriate person.

If we visit your home

- 🏠 Staff will show identification and will introduce themselves.
- 🏠 Staff will be polite.
- 🏠 Staff will show respect for your home.
- 🏠 Where possible, we will arrange home visits at a time that is convenient for you, especially if you cannot leave your home.



Rights and **responsibilities**

This section outlines your rights and responsibilities as a tenant.

Your rights as a tenant

This section sets out your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. If you want more information about any of your rights and responsibilities, please contact your local housing services office. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).

The tenancy agreement you signed when you took up the tenancy of your home is a binding agreement between you and South Lanarkshire Council. It sets out:

- 🏠 the conditions of your tenancy;
- 🏠 your rights and responsibilities as a tenant; and
- 🏠 our rights and responsibilities as your landlord.

Your Scottish Secure Tenancy agreement is a legal document - keep it safe so you can refer to it if you need to.

Your rights

You have a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST)

You have a right to stay in your home for as long as you want to, as long as you follow the conditions of your tenancy agreement.

Did you know?

- 🏠 You have the right to be consulted on the way we deliver services.
- 🏠 You have the right to see your personal files.
- 🏠 You have the right to transfer your tenancy.



You have the right to pass on your tenancy.

If you die or leave your home, your husband or wife, or the person you live with, may have a legal right to take over your tenancy if it has been their only or main home. There may be exceptions if the property has been specially adapted. Your local housing services office will be able to give you more information.

You have the right to take in lodgers.

If you have enough space, you may want to take in a lodger. However, you must get our permission before you do this.

You have the right to sublet.

If you are going away for a significant period of time then you have the right to sublet your home to someone else. However, you must get our permission before you do this.

You have the right to a mutual exchange.

You may want to exchange your home with another tenant. Your local housing services office holds details of other tenants who want to exchange their home. If you find a suitable person to exchange with, you must have our permission before you go ahead with the exchange.

You have the right to repair.

We will keep your home windtight and watertight, and will carry out repairs within a reasonable time. In particular, we will maintain the structure and outside of the house, and installations such as gas, water, hot water and central heating. The tenant's guide to repairs will help you work out what the problem is. The repair centre phone numbers are in the [Useful contacts section](#).

In **very specific circumstances**, you have the right to instruct a different contractor, who must be on our list of approved contractors, to carry out work if the original contractor fails to start the work by the appointed date. We strongly recommend that you contact the local housing services office or call centre before you contact another contractor. **You can get an information leaflet providing more details from your local housing services office.** There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).

You have the right to improve your home.

You may want to carry out alterations to your home to make it more suitable for you and your family, for example, fitting double glazing, a new kitchen or a new bathroom. You must get our permission before you carry out any improvements.

You have the right to compensation for improvements.

There are certain types of improvement which we will pay you compensation for when you leave your home, as long as you got our permission to carry out these changes.

Your rights are set out in your tenancy agreement. If you want more information about your rights, you should read your tenancy agreement or contact your local housing services office for advice. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).


Contents insurance



We give all tenants the opportunity to take part in the contents insurance scheme. The amount we charge you will depend on the level of cover you need, and we will add the cost to your rent every two weeks. Your rent account must be clear and you must pay your rent on time. Your rent account must be up to date if you make any claim. You can get more information from your local housing services office. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).





Your responsibilities



As a tenant you have certain responsibilities under the conditions of your tenancy agreement. These include the following.

-  **Paying rent and other tenancy-related charges**


You must pay your rent and other tenancy related charges on time, including payment for any garage or lock-up you rent. Most tenants have to pay their rent every two weeks. We will tell you if you have to pay it differently when you sign your tenancy agreement. The [Making payments section](#) explains how you can pay your rent and tenancy-related charges.
-  You may be entitled to claim Housing Benefit to help pay towards your rent. Our specialist team of benefit and revenue staff and Money Matters staff will be able to give you advice and information. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).
-  **Living in your home**

You must live in the property as your only or main home.
-  **Looking after your home**

You should keep it clean, tidy, properly heated and ventilated.
-  **Reporting repairs.**

The tenant's guide to housing repairs will give you more information. The contact details for the repair centre are in the [Useful contacts section](#).
-  **Not disturbing, or allowing other people including household members or visitors to your home to disturb, harass or cause nuisance to, other people living in the property, neighbours or people living in the community**
-  **Getting our permission before you take any further action**

Your Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement sets out various situations where you will need our permission before you take further action. For example, laying laminate flooring, keeping a pet, building a garage, putting up a satellite dish or fitting glass doors.

If you are not sure what permission you will need, please contact your local housing services office. (There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#)). If you fail to get our permission when you should, we may ask you to put the property back to how it was.
-  **Ending your tenancy**

You must let us know if you want to leave your home. You must pay us all the money you owe when you end your tenancy. You can get more information on leaving your home in the [Moving home section](#).



Smoking

If you or anyone in your home smokes, under the Government's no smoking laws you must not smoke near our staff while they are visiting you. Please do not smoke in the areas of your home where our staff will be working, and make sure that you close any door between the room you are smoking in and the areas our staff are working. Please co-operate with us in this matter, to help protect the health of our employees. If you are likely to have difficulty doing this, please let us know before we start any work.

If you want more information or advice on any of the above please contact your local housing services office who will help you and give you the appropriate application forms.



You and your neighbours

Respect for others

You have a right to expect your neighbours to behave reasonably, and they have the right to expect the same of you.

As a tenant, you are responsible for making sure that all members of your household and visitors show respect for your neighbours.

You, the people living with you, and your visitors must not act antisocially or do anything which could reasonably cause nuisance or annoyance to any neighbour, resident, council employee, contractor or agent.

Under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Anti Social Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004, we have the power to take action against any person causing annoyance or nuisance or against any person being antisocial by causing fear, alarm or distress to people living in the community.

Examples of antisocial behaviour and nuisance include but are not limited to:

- 🏠 harassment;
- 🏠 vandalism or graffiti;
- 🏠 racial abuse;
- 🏠 religious abuse;
- 🏠 burglary and car theft;
- 🏠 drinking in public;
- 🏠 substance misuse;
- 🏠 dropping litter;
- 🏠 making unreasonable noise when using televisions, stereos, radios, musical instruments and DIY tools;
- 🏠 failing to control a pet or allowing it to damage or foul other people's property;
- 🏠 allowing children or the children of visitors to cause nuisance or annoyance;
- 🏠 allowing visitors to be noisy or disruptive;
- 🏠 parking any vehicle, caravan or trailer inconsiderately; and
- 🏠 using the property for illegal purposes (for example, selling drugs or allowing drugs to be sold from your home).

Disagreements with your neighbours

Your neighbours will probably be friendly and helpful. But sometimes there may be problems, for a variety of reason. We have a variety of services which can help deal with these problems, including:

- 🏠 Area Services;
- 🏠 the Community Warden Service;
- 🏠 the Mediation Service;
- 🏠 the Antisocial Behaviour Investigation Team; and
- 🏠 the Specialist Legal Team.

What should I do if I have a problem?

- 🏠 If the issue relates to a crime, you should contact the police. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).
- 🏠 If a problem relates to nuisance or antisocial behaviour, you should contact your local housing services office and give them details of the situation.
- 🏠 If you want, you can also report the problem on the antisocial behaviour Freephone number **0800 389 1105**.



What happens once I report the problem?

- 🏠 When we receive your report, we will carry out an investigation to find out the facts.
- 🏠 Depending on how serious the issue is, staff at our local housing services office will try to sort out the matter. If appropriate, they will involve the mediation service to help sort out a disagreement. Both sides have to agree to mediation. If mediation is not used, how the case will progress will depend on individual circumstances, for example, it may pass to the Antisocial Investigation Team to investigate further.
- 🏠 If the issue is more serious, the Antisocial Investigation Team may become involved. The team will investigate the problem and work with appropriate agencies to deal with the issue.
- 🏠 If we cannot sort out the situation, we can apply to evict the person causing the problem if he or she is a council tenant. We could also apply for an Antisocial Behaviour Order (ASBO). This is a civil court order to prevent the person from continuing with their behaviour. **An ASBO can be made against anyone - owner-occupiers, tenants in the public and private rented sector, and people living in or even visiting these households.**
- 🏠 We will keep you up to date with the progress of your complaint.

We have detailed procedures setting out how any complaints should be dealt with. If you need more information you should contact your local housing services office first. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#). Housing officers will support you and will do all they can to respect your confidentiality.

Paying rent and Council Tax

Your rent helps us pay for the day-to-day services we provide for you, including housing-management costs, our repairs service and the cost of major planned improvement work.

We review your rent each year, and consult with tenants about proposed rent increases.

How to pay your rent

You can pay your rent in a variety of ways, and these are listed on the opposite page of this leaflet.

The simplest way to pay your rent is by direct debit as, once you have set this up, payments are made automatically from your bank account and you don't need to do anything else.

Once you have signed your tenancy agreement, you will receive a rent payment card. This card provides you with some helpful information including your rent reference number.

For a lost payment card fill out the online council tax or rent payment card form and a new card will be ordered for you. Alternatively contact our Benefits and Council Tax call centre **0303 123 1011**

Rent collection cycles – dates for paying your rent





We charge rent fortnightly over 24 rent cycles throughout the financial year. We will give you a rent-cycle calendar when you sign your tenancy agreement.

We include details of our rent-cycle calendar in the letter we send you each year to tell you how much your rent will be. You can also see our rent payment cycles on our website at www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk.

Problems paying

If you are having trouble paying your rent you should get help and advice as quickly as possible by contacting your local housing services office on **0303 123 1012**.

The sooner we know about a problem, the easier it will be to help, for example by:

-  reaching an agreement with you for paying any money you owe;
-  helping you find easier ways to pay;
-  checking if you qualify for any benefits, such as Housing Benefit or any other state benefits; and
-  giving you advice on managing your money or dealing with debts.

You can also check if you are entitled to Housing Benefit by using our online benefits calculator at www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk.

If you already receive Housing Benefit, it is important that you tell us immediately of any changes in your circumstances as you will have to pay back any overpayment if we pay you too much Housing Benefit.

Missed rent payments (arrears)

If you fall behind with your rent payments, we will make every effort to contact you to discuss this and try to provide you with as much help as possible. However, it is important to be aware that if you do not pay the money you owe or come to a suitable arrangement to repay this, we will take action to recover the amount owed. This may lead to court proceedings, which could result in you being evicted from your home.



If you are behind with your rent and not keeping to an agreed repayment arrangement you may not be able to transfer to another property.

You can ask for a copy of our rent arrears policy from any of our local housing services offices or you can read it online at www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk.

Money Matters Advice Service

The staff at Money Matters can help you with a wide range of money and benefits issues. This includes checking what benefits you are entitled to, helping you with filling in forms and providing support if you have been refused benefits or you want to appeal against a decision on your benefit claim.

Our trained money advisors can help if you are having problems managing your household budget or dealing with debt problems. They can also contact your creditors (the people you owe money to) to negotiate reduced payments, and can give you advice on the options that are available to you. In some cases we are also able to represent you at the sheriff court if a creditor takes action to recover any money you owe them.

You can make an appointment for this service over the phone or by calling at your local Money Matters Advice Service.

You can also contact other agencies, such as Citizens Advice, for advice and help.

Making council tax payments

Each property is placed in a council tax band (set by Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board). The council tax charge for your home depends on which band it is in and the number of adults who live there.

Each property receives a council tax bill, each year, whether it is owned, rented or empty.

There are a variety of discounts and exemptions for council tax. You can find out more about council tax discounts and exemptions, including how to apply for these, on our website at www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk. You can also check if you qualify for a discount or exemption by calling our Benefits and Council Tax call centre on **0303 123 1011**.

Water charges are included in your council tax bill. These are set by Scottish Water and we collect them on their behalf. The water charges pay for essential water and sewerage services. If you have a septic tank or a private water supply, you may not have to pay water or waste-water charges.

If you are on a low income (whether you are working or not) and need financial help to pay your council tax, you may qualify for Council Tax Reduction. To find out more or to check if you qualify, you can fill in our online benefits calculator at www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk or call our Benefits and Council Tax call centre on **0303 123 1011**.

The council tax financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March and payments are due between April and January each year (10 monthly instalments). These are due on the first day of the month – unless you are paying by direct debit.

Easy ways to pay your rent and council tax

- 1. Direct debit:** You can set up a bank instruction to pay your rent or council tax automatically from your bank account. To arrange a direct debit for council tax phone **0303 123 1011** and for rent phone **0303 123 1012**.
- 2. Online:** Visit www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk and follow the instructions to make a payment quickly and easily. You will need your 10-digit rent reference number. You will find this on your rent payment card, in letters we have sent you or on your rent statement.

To pay your council tax online, you will need your nine-digit council tax reference number and your account name (this is the name on your council tax card or bill).
- 3. Standing order:** You can set up a regular payment from your bank account by standing order. Remember, you will need to change the standing order amount if your payment amount changes.

To arrange a standing order for rent contact **0303 123 1012** for the form and for council tax phone **0303 123 1011**.
- 4. By phone:** Call our 24-hour payments call centre on **0303 123 1005** to pay by debit card or credit card. **Please note payment by credit card is subject to a surcharge of 1.23%.**
- 5. At a post office:** You can pay at any post office using your rent or council tax payment card.
- 6. By PayPoint:** Take your payment with your rent or council tax payment card to any shop that displays the PayPoint sign.
- 7. By post:** You can send a cheque or postal order made payable to South Lanarkshire Council to:

Central Cash Office
Brandon Gate
1 Leechlee Road
Hamilton ML3 0XB

Remember to write your name and address, and your rent or council tax reference number, on the back of the cheque or postal order.

Please do not send cash through the post.
- 8. Salary deduction:** If you are a South Lanarkshire Council employee, you can ask us to take your rent and council tax payments from your salary.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction: If you are on a low income, whether you're working or not, and you need any financial help to pay all or part of your rent or council tax, you may be able to get Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction, or both.



Having your say

Our commitment

We are committed to involving tenants in South Lanarkshire by:

- 🏠 providing a range of ways for tenants to become involved through local housing forums, tenants and residents groups and the Tenant Participation Coordination Group;
- 🏠 providing resources to support tenant involvement;
- 🏠 providing good quality information;
- 🏠 encouraging people to get involved locally;
- 🏠 making sure tenants can give their views on the service; and
- 🏠 providing a system for tenants to make a complaint if they are not happy with the service.

Tenant involvement covers a wide range of topics, and we are keen that you can get involved in a way which suits you.

There is an independent support and advice project in South Lanarkshire which provides a range of development support to tenants' groups. The contact details for this service are in the [Useful contacts section](#).

For more information on how to set up a group or to find out about existing groups, contact your local housing services office. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).

Letting us know

We try to provide the services you need as efficiently as possible, and are confident that most of our tenants are happy with the service. However, even in the best-run organisations, things can go wrong.

How to make a complaint

We take complaints about our services seriously and deal with them in confidence. We use information from complaints to improve our services and prevent the same problems happening again.

You can complain:

- 🏠 in person at any council office;
- 🏠 by phoning any council office;
- 🏠 in writing - you can use the Freepost card, so you don't need a stamp;
- 🏠 by email to customer.services@southlanarkshire.gov.uk;
- 🏠 to your local councillor, Member of Scottish Parliament or Member of Parliament; or
- 🏠 to your local tenants' and residents' association.

If you need help to write down the complaint, please ask at your local housing services office (see the [Useful contacts section](#)).

You can, of course, also make a complaint through your local councillor or Member of Parliament (see your local newspaper for the times of the surgeries).

You can get contact information for tenants' and residents' groups from your local housing services office (see the [Useful contacts section](#)).



How we will deal with your complaint

- 🏠 When you make a complaint, we will try to sort the problem out straight away, but if we cannot sort out the matter immediately we will contact you to let you know what is being done. In every case, we will acknowledge your complaint in writing within **two working days**.
- 🏠 If you are not happy with the response you receive to your complaint please let us know. We will pass your complaint to a senior manager, who will check it out for you and try to sort the problem out within a further **five working days**.
- 🏠 If you are still not satisfied after this stage, we will pass your complaint to the Executive Director of Housing and Technical Resources who will investigate the matter within **10 working days** and get back to you.

If you feel that we have treated you unfairly, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to investigate.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

4 Melville Street

Edinburgh EH3 7NS

Phone: 0870 011 5378

Text: 0790 049 4372

Fax: 0870 011 5379

Email: enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk

Using a freepost address means you will not have to pay for postage.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Freepost EH641

Edinburgh EH3 0BR

Making comments and providing suggestions

We would also welcome your suggestions, comments and compliments about our service. The local housing services office will be pleased to receive your feedback. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#). We also carry out customer satisfaction surveys to get your views on the services we provide. Please take time to take part in any surveys or fill in our survey form if you receive one.



Moving home

Your house – does it suit your needs?

We have a housing policy which aims to make sure we are consistent and fair when offering properties throughout South Lanarkshire.

The policy says we will:

- 🏠 offer properties to people in housing need;
- 🏠 meet the needs of existing tenants; and
- 🏠 offer housing in a way that will help achieve balanced and sustainable communities.

You can look at a full copy of the housing allocation policy at any local housing services office. A summary of the housing policy and relevant guidance for people applying for housing are available from all local offices free of charge and available on www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).

How to apply for a house

If you want to apply for a council house or want to transfer from a council house, contact your local housing services office where you can get an application form and relevant guidance. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).

Who can apply?

Anyone aged 16 or over can put their name on our housing list.

Transfers

If you are an existing council tenant and want to transfer to another house because your current accommodation is not suitable, you should contact your local housing services office. We will consider the circumstances of your case and, if satisfied, put you on the waiting list. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).

Mutual exchanges

It might take us considerable time to arrange a transfer, but you may be able to arrange a mutual exchange with another tenant. Any council or housing-association tenant can apply for a mutual exchange. **However, you must get our permission before you take further action (we will not unreasonably withhold this permission).**

If you find someone who is willing to exchange, you should contact your local housing services office. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#). Both you and the other tenant must fill in the appropriate application form.

We will carry out various checks for both tenants, for example, their rent account and the condition of their house. Once we have completed all our enquiries, we will tell you in writing if we have approved your exchange or the reasons why we have refused it.

If we approve the exchange, we will tell you the date on which the exchange should take place. You should never move before the date we give you.



Ending your tenancy

If you want to end your tenancy, you should contact your local housing services office who will:

- 🏠 agree a date on which your tenancy will end (this will be at least 28 days after you confirm in writing that you want to give up the tenancy);
- 🏠 give you a termination of tenancy form which will confirm the date on which your tenancy will end (you and any joint tenant must sign and date the form);
- 🏠 tell you your responsibilities up to the date your tenancy ends (including how much rent, council tax, and any other payments that you have to pay before you leave);
- 🏠 arrange a date with you to inspect your home;
- 🏠 deal with any questions you may have; and
- 🏠 arrange to remove any unwanted items from the property or garden by contacting Land Services. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).
- 🏠 completion of disposal of goods forms (where appropriate)

Homelessness

Our responsibility

We have a duty to help you and give you advice if in the future, you are homeless or are threatened with homelessness. We must make sure that accommodation is available to you if you are homeless and in priority need, as long as:

- 🏠 you have not made yourself homeless intentionally; and
- 🏠 you have a local connection with South Lanarkshire.

If you find yourself homeless or threatened with homelessness

During working hours you should contact the local housing services office to arrange for an interview with a housing officer. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#). Outwith office hours, phone the homelessness standby service on **Freephone 0800 242024**.



Services for **tenants with a disability**

If you are experiencing problems living in your home due to a disability or health problem, we may be able to provide support services to help you.

To help us provide a service which meets your needs, please:

- 🏠 tell us if you have health problems or a disability that may mean you need support;
- 🏠 keep us up to date with your circumstances if they change; and
- 🏠 tell us if you are experiencing problems maintaining your home.

Keeping in touch

If you need help to keep in touch with us, please let us know:

If you are hearing impaired or deaf, we can arrange to have a British Sign Language interpreter present at any interview or meeting you go to.

We can also help by giving you information in a format which is suitable to your needs, including large print or braille.

- 🏠 We can send a copy of any letters to the person providing you with support, with your permission.
- 🏠 We can ring you when we have sent you a letter, to read it to you and discuss what you need to do next.
- 🏠 We can speak to the person who is supporting you. This may be a relative, friend, support worker or professional representative. We must have your permission in writing to do this, to respect your confidentiality.
- 🏠 A visiting officer from our Money Matters team can visit you at home if you need help filling in benefit forms.
- 🏠 A housing officer can also visit you at home if you need general help in housing-related issues, including antisocial behaviour problems.

Adaptations

If you have health problems or problems moving around, your current home may need some alterations to make it more suitable for your needs. This may mean anything from getting your taps altered to major changes to your property (for example, a ramp or walk-in shower).

If you think you might benefit from an adaptation to your property you should contact your local social work office first. They will arrange for an occupational therapist to visit you to discuss options and assess your needs. The occupational therapist will then tell you how the property could be altered to make your life easier.

The occupational therapist will issue a report to your local housing services office for the work to start.

If you want more information about adaptations, please contact your local social work office. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).

You may also want to consider transferring or exchanging to a property which is more suitable for you. The [Moving home section](#) provides more details.





Gardening

If you find that you cannot look after your garden because of your health problem or disability, you may be able to get help through our care of gardens scheme. This service provides a free garden-maintenance service for anyone over 70, or people under 70 who meet the qualifying conditions due to a disability or health problem.

There are specific conditions for being accepted onto the scheme.

- 🏠 If you are over 70 you will automatically be accepted onto the waiting list.
- 🏠 If you are under 70 but of pensionable age you will have to provide a medical letter.
- 🏠 If you are under pensionable age, we will ask you to provide medical information relating to your disability.
- 🏠 If there is someone in your household who can do the work, you may not be eligible for the scheme.

You should contact your local housing services office to get more information and an application form. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).

Getting help

Social work may be able to help you if you find that you need support to stay in your home, for example help with daily tasks such as washing, dressing, preparing meals and shopping. If you feel that you would benefit from any of these services, Social Work Resources will need to carry out a care assessment first. There may be a charge depending on your income. For more information, please contact your local social work office. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).

You can also ask for housing support through a community alarm (Alert) which is connected through your normal phone to a control centre and provides a 24-hour response service. You will be able to use this by pressing an alarm, which is worn around the neck as a pendant, to tell us if you need help in an emergency, for example, if you have a fall. If you would like an assessment for a community alarm, you should contact your local social work office. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).

Benefits

If you have a disability, you may be able to get help to pay your rent by claiming Housing Benefit. There is also a range of other benefits which you may qualify for such as Disability Living Allowance and Incapacity Benefit. Our Money Matters service will be able to give you advice and information, and help you fill in the forms. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).

Safe in your home

Fire

Every year, several hundred people die or are seriously injured as a result of house fires. Fire can start within seconds and spread very quickly.

Handy hints

Always:

- 🏠 unplug appliances when you are not using them at night;
- 🏠 get rid of cigarette ends safely and empty full ashtrays;
- 🏠 guard open fires;
- 🏠 keep matches and lighters out of the sight and reach of children;
- 🏠 close doors inside your home at night;
- 🏠 leave halls and staircases free of obstacles; and
- 🏠 keep petrol, paraffin, aerosol cans, flammable materials and so on away from heat or flames.

Never:

- 🏠 overload electrical power points;
- 🏠 try to repair electrical power points;
- 🏠 leave open fires unattended;
- 🏠 leave a chip pan unattended on the cooker;
- 🏠 smoke in bed; or
- 🏠 use a damaged or worn flex.

If fire breaks out in your home:

- 🏠 call the fire brigade;
- 🏠 tell everyone in your house and get them to leave immediately;
- 🏠 shut all doors and windows;
- 🏠 leave immediately if you cannot put out the fire yourself;
- 🏠 use the stairs - do not use lifts; and
- 🏠 warn your neighbours.

If you live in sheltered housing with shared corridors and exits, it is important that you familiarise yourself with the fire procedures for your complex.

Smoke alarms

You should have a smoke alarm fitted in your home. Smoke alarms are a vital safety feature in your home.

Handy hints

- 🏠 Test your smoke alarm at least once a week.
- 🏠 To test your alarm, press and hold the button on the front of the alarm for a few seconds. The alarm should sound. If there is no sound, you may have to clean the alarm or replace the battery.
- 🏠 Keep the alarm free from dust.
- 🏠 To clean your smoke alarm, you should remove dust using the nozzle of a vacuum cleaner. Clean the outside of the alarm using a damp cloth.
- 🏠 If the smoke alarm starts to beep now and again, this means that you need to fit a new battery. You must replace the battery when this happens.



If there is smoke in your home, you will hear the alarm ring without stopping. This should give you and your family enough time to leave your home and call the Fire and Rescue Service.

If you do not have a smoke alarm or are experiencing any problems with your alarm, please contact your local housing services office or repair centre immediately. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).

Gas

What to do if you smell gas

Handy hints

- 🏠 Do not switch on or off any lights or electrical appliances.
- 🏠 Put out cigarettes.
- 🏠 Do not use matches or a naked flame.
- 🏠 Open windows and doors.
- 🏠 Turn off your pilot light and main gas supply. The meter box is normally near the front door or in a box outside.
- 🏠 Phone **National Gas Emergency** immediately on **0800 111 999**.
- 🏠 Never try to fit, repair or service your gas fire or cooker yourself.

Electricity

Handy hints

- 🏠 Always switch off and unplug electrical equipment before you work on it. If you are not sure, call an expert.
- 🏠 When wiring plugs, secure the flex in the clamp and follow the wiring colour code. Never use ordinary wire or silver paper instead of a fuse. Always use a fuse of the correct rating.
- 🏠 Replace worn or damaged flex or leads. Use proper connectors, not insulating tape, to join two pieces of flex together.
- 🏠 Do not trail flexes over cookers, under carpets or where anyone can trip over them.
- 🏠 Do not run more than one appliance from the same socket if you can avoid it. If you need an adaptor, use one with a fuse.
- 🏠 Consider fitting safety sockets or dummy plugs to stop children from putting their fingers or other objects in the electrical sockets.

Winter weather

Handy hints

Winter weather can cause serious damage to your home and your belongings. You can reduce the risks by taking the following precautions.

- 🏠 Make sure you have home contents insurance.
- 🏠 Check you know how to use your heating system properly.
- 🏠 If you go away for the winter, turn off the stop taps and drain off the hot-water system. Contact your local housing services office for advice on how to do this. Leave a key with a neighbour or friend in case of an emergency.
- 🏠 If you are going away from home in the winter for a short time, set your heating to come on a few times each day, particularly in the early hours of the morning when it is coldest.



- 🏠 Open the hatch to the roof space (if you have one) in very cold weather. This will allow warm air to circulate around water tanks and pipes in the loft.
- 🏠 The best way to avoid frozen or burst pipes is to keep low background heat in every room. If you are on a limited income, you may want to speak to our Money Matters service for information on relevant benefits, including Cold Weather Payments. You can only receive Cold Weather Payments if you receive specific benefits. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).
- 🏠 If you do get frozen pipes, you should turn off the water at the stoptap, open all taps to the sinks and bath, and contact the repair centre immediately. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).
- 🏠 If your pipes freeze, thaw them out gently using warm air or water. If they are part of the hot-water system, turn off or put out the source of heat, for example, the immersion heater, gas boiler or coal fire. **Never** switch on your boiler or immersion heater to try and thaw out pipes that are already frozen.

Insuring your belongings

Fire and water can cause serious and long-term damage to your home, furniture, decoration and any other belongings. We are responsible for any damage to the structure of the house itself, but **not for the damage to any contents**. (See the [rights and responsibilities section](#).)

It can be very expensive to replace furniture and other belongings, so we strongly advise you to take out insurance cover. Ignoring the benefits of insurance could leave you with few or no belongings if there is a fire, flood or other disaster which affects your home.

You can arrange your own contents insurance or you can take part in our home contents insurance scheme for tenants. You can get details of the scheme by contacting your local housing services office. There are contact details in the [Useful contacts section](#).

We will collect the insurance premium payment with your rent, so you can spread the cost over the year.

Making your home more secure

Most break-ins take place during the day and are carried out by individuals who may live or work locally. You can avoid a break-in by taking some simple precautions.

Handy hints

Always do the following:

- 🏠 Lock all windows and doors when you go out - even if you are only going to be out for a short time.
- 🏠 Leave a light on if you are out after dark.
- 🏠 Ask a friend or relative to keep an eye on your house if you go away on holiday.
- 🏠 Keep a list of all the valuables you own, and note down any serial numbers. Even taking photographs of your items would be useful for the police if your property is stolen.
- 🏠 Report anything suspicious to the police.

Never do the following:

- 🏠 Let any stranger into your home without checking their identity first. If you are not sure of the person's identity, ask them to call back later. This will allow you to check out their story by phoning the organisation or company they claim to be from. Look up the number in the phone book. Do not rely on the number the caller provides.
- 🏠 Leave valuables lying around where they can be spotted through a window.



- 🏠 Leave house keys in a secret hiding place outside for you or anyone else.
- 🏠 Leave notes on your door saying that you are out.
- 🏠 If your flat has a door-entry system, never let strangers through or hold the door open as you are leaving, whether they can identify themselves or not. You should never put yourself in a situation where you feel threatened in any way.

When you go away on holiday

Handy hints

- 🏠 Leave your valuables at a bank or at another safe place.
- 🏠 Leave your holiday address and your keys with a friend or relative.
- 🏠 Ask someone to keep an eye on your home.
- 🏠 Stop deliveries of milk and papers.
- 🏠 Tell your housing services office if you are going away on holiday for more than four weeks.

Protecting your children within your home

You will need to take extra care if you have young children in your home. For your child's safety, you should make sure that you do the following.

- 🏠 When cooking, turn saucepan handles so that they are out of reach.
- 🏠 If the oven has been on for some time, the outside door will be too hot to touch so keep your child away.
- 🏠 Always keep the electric kettle and its flex out of reach.
- 🏠 Always put your iron in a safe place until it cools down. Never leave it switched on when you're not using it.
- 🏠 Make sure that water heaters and central-heating boilers are out of your child's reach.
- 🏠 Fit lockable guards to fires and storage and convection heaters.
- 🏠 Fit covers to sockets which are not being used.
- 🏠 Get rid of old plugs and light bulbs safely.
- 🏠 Never let children near electrical garden appliances.
- 🏠 Always keep poisonous substances out of reach.
- 🏠 Never let children play near or with window catches or locks.

Energy advice

The Energy Advice Unit deals with enquiries over the phone, in local housing services offices, at community flats or even in your own home. Advisers are also available to talk to community groups about the service they provide.

One-to-one contact is the main method of dealing with enquiries, but you can also get advice from a Freephone service or by post from the unit's library of leaflets.

Home Energy (Scotland) 0808 808 2282



Reporting repairs

Who do I contact?

- 🏠 Repairs call centre - **0303 123 1010**
- 🏠 Emergency number (out of hours) - **0800 24 20 24**
- 🏠 On-line - **you can report non-urgent repairs on our website**

Do I need to do anything?

Tell us as much as you can about the repair you are reporting as this will help us identify the problem and get the work done as quickly as possible.

What can I expect?

- 🏠 Emergency repairs – we will complete or make safe repairs within 24 hours.
- 🏠 Repairs by appointment – we will carry these out at a time suitable for you within 30 working days.
- 🏠 Routine work – we will complete routine work within 30 working days. This is usually for work to the outside of your home where we don't need access and it isn't urgent.
- 🏠 We will normally send you a receipt for routine work and repairs we will carry out. When we call, we will give you an opportunity to say whether you are satisfied with the repair.

What if I'm not happy?

If you're not happy about any aspect of our service, please contact us at the repair call centre first.

There is more information about repairs in **Tenant's guide to housing repairs** booklet, or on www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk



Useful contacts

To contact your area housing office - phone: 0303 123 1012 (automated service)

Cambuslang Area Housing Office

Cambuslang Gate
27 Main Street
Cambuslang G72 7EX

Email: housing.cambuslang@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Rutherglen Area Housing Office

Cambuslang Gate
27 Main Street
Cambuslang G72 7EX

Email: housing.rutherglen@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Clydesdale Area Housing Office

South Vennel
Lanark ML11 7JT

Email: housing.carluke@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Email: housing.lanark@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

East Kilbride Area Housing Office

Civic Centre
Council Offices
East Kilbride G74 1AB

Email: housing.eastkilbride@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Hamilton, Blantyre and Larkhall Area Housing Office

1 Leechlee Road
Hamilton ML3 0XB

Email: housing.hamilton@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Email: housing.blantyre@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Email: housing.larkhall@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Reporting housing repairs

All areas: **0303 123 1010**

Email: housing.repairs@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Antisocial behaviour: (24-hour answer service)

Antisocial behaviour hotline
Free phone: **0800 389 1105**

Email: asb.housing@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Out of hours emergency helpline

(If you need to report an emergency repair or if you find yourself homeless outside normal working hours)

Phone: **0800 242 024**

Environmental services

Phone: **0303 123 1015**

Land services

(Including refuse collection, grounds maintenance and street cleaning)

Phone: **0303 123 1020** (local rate call)

Care of gardens

Phone: **0141 584 2704** or **0141 584 2705**

Mediation services

Phone: **0141 584 2664 / 0141 584 2665** or **0141 584 2667**

Email: mediation.service@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Energy advice

Freephone: **0808 808 2282**

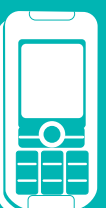
Email: energy.advice@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Publications about benefits and council tax

How to contact us:

For more information on anything mentioned in this leaflet, or if you have any other questions about benefits and council tax, please call our Benefits and Council Tax Call Centre on **0303 123 1011** (calls charged at the local rate).

You should send your filled-in Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit application forms to the **Benefits and Council Tax Processing Centre, Council Offices, 45 John Street, Blantyre, G72 0JG.**



Publications about rent arrears

How to contact us:

For more information on anything mentioned in this leaflet, or if you are having difficulties paying your council rent, please call your area housing office on **0303 123 1012** or you can contact our Customer Service Centre on **0303 123 1015**

If you have a question about Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit, please call our Benefits and Council Tax Call Centre on **0303 123 1011** (calls charged at the local rate).

Customer Service Centre

For all other questions about council services, please contact our Customer Service Centre.

Email: customer.services@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Phone: **0303 123 1015**

To make a payment for council services, please phone **0303 123 1005**.



Social Work area offices

Clydesdale Social Work office

Council Offices
South Vennel
Lanark ML11 7JT

Email: swloclydesdale@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

East Kilbride Social Work office

Civic Centre
Andrew Street
East Kilbride G74 1AB

Email: swloeastkilbride@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Hamilton / Blantyre / Larkhall Social Work office

Brandon Gate
1 Leechlee Road
Hamilton ML3 0XB

Email: swlohamilton@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Rutherglen and Cambuslang Social Work office

Royal Burgh House
380 King Street
Rutherglen G73 1DQ

Email: swlorutherglen@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

You can contact all Social Work area offices by calling 0303 123 1008.

Out of hours

Emergency Social Work Service
Phone: **0303 123 1008**

Email: esws@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Age Scotland

Helpline for older people
Phone: **0333 32 32 400**

Email: info@agescotland.org.uk

Care Inspectorate

South Area
Princes Gate
Castle Street
Hamilton ML3 6BU
Phone: **01698 897800**
Lo-call: **0845 600 9527**

Email: enquiries@careinspectorate.com

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

4 Melville Street
Edinburgh EH3 7NS
Phone: **0800 377 7330**
Fax: **0800 377 7331**

Email: ask@spsso.org.uk

Using a freepost address means you will not have to pay for postage.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Freepost EH641
Edinburgh EH3 0BR

You can contact us or review our services on our website at:

www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk



If you need this information in another language or format,
please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs.

Phone: **0303 123 1015**

Email: equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

如果您需要本资料的其他语言版本或格式，请使用以下
方式与我们取得联系，我们将尽可能满足您的要求。电
话 **0303 123 1015**。

电子邮件：

equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

अगर आपको यह जानकारी किसी अन्य भाषा या स्वरूप में
चाहिए, तो इस बात पर चर्चा के लिए हमसे संपर्क करें
कि हम आपकी ज़रूरतें कैसे सबसे अच्छे रूप में पूरा कर
सकते हैं।

फ़ोन **0303 123 1015**

मेल: equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Jeśli potrzebują Państwo otrzymać niniejsze
informacje w innej wersji językowej lub formacie,
prosimy o skontaktowanie się z nami, aby omówić,
jak możemy najlepiej spełnić Państwa potrzeby.

Numer telefonu: **0303 123 1015**. E-mail:

equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਜਾਂ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ
ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੀਆਂ ਲੋੜਾਂ ਪੂਰੀਆਂ
ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਚੰਗੇ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕਰ ਸਕੀਏ। ਫੋਨ

0303 123 1015.

ਈਮੇਲ: equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

گریہ معلومات آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا صورت میں مطلوب ہیں تو مہربانی فرما
کر ہمارے ساتھ رابطہ کریں
کہ ہم اچھی طرح سے آپ کی ضروریات کیسے پوری کرسکتے ہیں۔ فون

0303 123 1015

ای میل: equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk



www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk