



Shared Owners Customer Pack



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Welcome

Welcome to Advance and thank you for choosing us to purchase your home with. We look forward to developing a happy and productive relationship with you over the coming months and years.

We hope this handbook gives you lots of information that will be useful to you during your shared ownership term as well as giving some handy hints to keep your home in good condition.

You will find information on:

- Your rights and responsibilities as a leaseholder
- Rent and service charges
- Looking after your home
- What to do in emergencies
- Useful contacts

Your Lease provides you with all of the legal information you will need, this handbook is intended to provide practical advice and support to help manage your home.

Please read and keep this handbook in a safe place. If the content needs to be updated we will make sure we send it to you. You can also find a copy of the content of this pack on our website at www.advanceuk.org

We hope you find the handbook useful and informative. If you need any more help or information please do contact me. Please store my contact details somewhere safe, such as in your phone.

The Leasehold Team

About Advance

Our vision is to transform the lives of people with a disability or mental health condition by providing the best quality housing and support services. We want to enable our customers to live the lives they choose, achieve their personal goals, feel valued and know their voices are heard.

Everything we've ever done was because someone, somewhere, wanted something different and better out of life and we were determined to support them to make it happen. In 1974 we supported four people coming out of institutional care who had a dream of living independently in the community. Back then, our solution was to buy a house on a city street, fill it with furniture, and help them settle in.

We've learned to do things a bit differently - our solution doesn't stop at a front door and a comfy sofa. These days we support thousands of people at home, at work and in the community.

These are people who start from a position of disadvantage due to their health or their disability and who want more choice, more control and more opportunities. Where we don't have the knowledge to support people we learn, so that we can get it right; where we can't provide a solution, we'll find a local partner who can.

People's expectations change as their lives change. We are not afraid to get on and meet those expectations in new, forward-thinking ways: making the status and security of home ownership available to people with disabilities or mental health issues, with nearly 700 people buying a share in their own home; offering employment advice that broadens the horizons of people who find it hardest to get a job; or providing both a suitable home and support to people who have complex needs so they gain more stability and control over their lives.

We've come a long way in forty years. The number of people we work with across England has grown from 4 to thousands and the range of things they trust us to provide keeps growing.

We have won plenty of awards that tell us we are doing a good job but one thing won't change, we want to be better and enable more people to live the lives they choose, achieve their personal goals, feel valued and know their voices are heard.

Our Strategic Plan is available on our website: www.advanceuk.org

Facts about Advance



1,800 customers provided with support



45 new homes developed for shared ownership



84% of customers are satisfied with the quality of their home



93% of customers are satisfied with our support



74% of customers are satisfied with our housing services

Our values

Our values drive everything we do. They make sure we focus on getting the best result for our customers. We use our values to help us to recruit new staff and train existing staff.



Partnership

We work in partnership with our customers and build relationships with others that help us serve our customers better

Respect

We treat our customers, colleagues and others as we would like to be treated

Inclusion

We work to create an environment where diversity is celebrated and where everyone can thrive

Drive

We do the right thing at the right time and everything we do is driven by our customers' needs

Efficiency

We make good use of resources, find innovative ways to do things and maximise efficiency to deliver the best services for our customers

Diversity and equality

We are committed to promoting positive attitudes to diversity and encouraging inclusion and social cohesion, fostering good relations between people with diverse characteristics.

We are committed to ensuring customers are respected and treated with dignity as citizens.

We are committed to advancing equality of opportunity and eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment.

We aim to ensure that no one receives unfair treatment due to age, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, ethnic origin, race, nationality, religion or beliefs, state of health, disability, marital status, pregnancy or maternity status, caring responsibilities, class, appearance, dress, criminal record or any other grounds that cause a person to be treated with injustice.

Our services

We provide a range of services for people with disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health conditions, and age-related needs. Our services are tailored around an individual's needs and aspirations.

Housing

We believe that everyone has the right to a safe and happy home. That's why we provide a range of housing options. From shared homes to shared ownership, supported living to state-of-the-art developments, we have expertise in providing high quality homes that meet customer needs. As we provide a range of support services too, we can develop a personalised package of housing and support that will enable customers to achieve their ambitions.

Support services

Our support is flexible and tailored to individual needs and aspirations. From support in your home or community, to round the clock care, specialist support to short-term and respite care, our dedicated team delivers effective and compassionate support.

Because our support is personalised, we will work with you, your family, and friends, to make sure your support helps you achieve your ambitions. Whether you need emotional support, help finding work, support to take up new hobbies, or assistance with staying on top of your bills, we will be there to empower you to live more independently. If you have more complex needs, you can be confident that we have the expertise to provide specialist support. Our Support Workers are passionate about doing things better, and support our customers to live full, independent, and happy lives.

To learn more and get the latest information about our growing services please go to our website: www.advanceuk.org

Rent, service charges and benefits

We try to keep our rents as low as possible while making sure we still have money to maintain and improve our services and properties. Here is some information on your rent, and other costs relating to your house.

1. Setting the rent

We set the amount of rent you pay. We review this every year, to make sure it agrees with the Government guidelines. If there are any changes to your rent, we will write to you at least 1 month before, telling you how much the new rent is, and the date the new rent will start.

2. Rent statements

We will send you a regular rent statement. You can also see your rent statement any time through the MyAdvance online portal. The rent statement shows:

- Your current balance (how much money you have in your account)
- All the payments you have made including any benefits or payments you have made yourself

3. Service charges

The 'service charge' is a charge for the extra services that we provide to your home. You may be able to pay some of this service charge through your benefits. For the costs which you cannot pay for with benefits, a 'personal service charge' may be added to the total service charge.

We will tell you what your service charge costs are when you first move in. They will also be shown on your tenancy agreement.

4. Housing benefit and council tax benefit

All tenants can apply for Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Universal Credit.

For more advice and information please contact Customer Services by calling 0333 012 4307. More advice and information is available from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

5. How to pay your rent & service charge

You are responsible for paying your rent and service charges. Your Housing Officer will help you to make sure you have the right benefits in place.

However, there could be some costs, such as your 'personal charge', which need to be paid to Advance. Here are the ways you can pay Advance:

- Pay through Direct Debit. This is where the money automatically gets sent from your bank account to us. Your Housing Officer can set this up for you, or you can complete the form on our website. www.advanceuk.org
- Pay online, 24 hours a day by using www.allpayments.net

- Pay by mobile phone using the allpay mobile phone app. Visit the app stores for iTunes, Android or Google Play, search for 'allpay' then download the app to your phone
- Pay by telephone using the allpay automated telephone payment service on 0844 5578321
- Use your Advance payment card at any shop offering paypoint access
- By post, using a cheque made payable to 'Advance Housing & Support' and sent to Advance, 2 Witan Way, Witney, Oxon, OX28 6FH. Please include your tenancy reference or account number so we can transfer the money into the correct account.
- Money transfer. There are 2 main ways you can transfer money to Advance:
 - By standing order. This is where you set up a date for the money to be sent to us from your account.
 - By using your bank's internet banking options. Please contact Advance for more information on this.

Many of these payment methods will need an Advance payment card. Your Housing Officer will order you one when you start your tenancy.

6. Council tax

You have to pay your council tax bill. You may be able to claim Council Tax Benefit to help you pay this. We can help you claim for this benefit.

7. Late rent payments

You have to pay the rent every week, on Monday. If you miss payments, we might have to take legal action. When you move in, we will tell you how important it is for you to make these payments.

If you do not pay your rent or do not have the right benefits to pay your rent, this could affect you seriously. You may have to go to court, or you could also lose your home.

If you owe us rent, we will work with you to help you manage your rent arrears (this is the rent that you owe). We will work with you to break down your rent arrears into smaller payments. You might also be able to claim for Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you think you will have a problem paying your rent. If you tell us in early we might be able to offer you some advice.

If you are behind with your rent, you will receive letters telling you what to do. Please do not ignore these letters. The sooner you contact us, the sooner you can get help with your payments.

Section 20 consultation

This is a summary of the regulations that Advance must follow when we consult you about work or services which are paid for through your Service Charge Account.

Why must we consult you?

Under the terms of your lease, you must pay towards the cost of any services or work to your home. You do this by paying a service charge.

We must consult you about any works (including repairs, maintenance and home improvements) which will cost you more than £250 (including VAT). This is to make sure we do not spend your money on items you do not want.

What is a section 20 notice?

A section 20 (S20) notice is a letter to tell you that we intend to carry out work or provide a service that you will have to pay for. The S20 will include information about what we plan to do and how much it is estimated to cost. It will give you the opportunity to take part in the consultation process and comment on what is being planned. You will receive 2 letters:

- 1. Letter 1** - Notice of Intension to carry out works. You have 30 days to agree to the work that needs doing.
- 2. Letter 2** - Appointing a contractor to carry out the works and the cost of the works. You have 30 days to decide if you agree with our quote- date, time and costs will be clear to you before we start anything.

We do our best to make sure you are ready and able to cope with the works. We will keep in touch and visit some jobs afterwards to check that you are happy.

What if you are not happy with our contractor?

If you are not happy with our contractors, please contact us as soon as possible so we can work with you to resolve and issues and agree how we rectify problems.

What services are included?

Here is a list of the repairs and maintenance services that are included under the terms of your leasehold:

Included	Not included
<p>Houses only:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gutters, drains and external pipes including cleaning 2. Roof tiles and roof structure including cleaning 3. External wall structure repairs and maintenance 4. Floor structures 5. Pathways, driveways, steps structures within the boundaries of the property, excluding cleaning 6. Decorating of outside walls only 7. Windows window panes, catches, sills and sash cords 8. Chimneys, chimney stacks and flue structures, excluding cleaning 9. Maintenance and repairs to garages and store structures <p>Houses and flats:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Internal wall structure repairs and maintenance 2. Plasterwork of internal walls 3. External and internal doors, door frames, door hinges, locks and handles 4. Repair and installation of basins, sinks, baths, toilets, flushing systems and waste pipes 5. Electric wiring, including switches and sockets 6. Gas pipes and water pipes 7. Water heaters, boilers, gas and electric fireplaces repair and replace with like for like; excluding surrounds and electric heating installations 8. Annual gas check and servicing 9. Hard wired smoke alarms 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Loft insulation, cavity wall insulation 2. Installing, repair and maintenance of solar panel heating systems 3. Internal decorating of internal walls, doors, ceilings, cupboards and floors 4. External and internal cleaning of property 5. Repair and maintenance or replacement of floor coverings 6. Chimney sweeping and cleaning 7. Repairs and maintenance or replacements and installations of sheds, hot houses etc. 8. Large Adaptations of any sort (need Senior Management agreement) 9. Garden maintenance or repairs including tree felling or cutting of hedges and trees 10. Building of extensions, conservatory or any improvement and enlargement of the house structure 11. Repair, maintenance or replacement of any appliances 12. Installation, maintenance and repairs on TV aerials or dishes 13. Installation, repairs and maintenance of security systems, door entry systems and battery smoke and fire alarm systems and burglar alarms

Your rights and responsibilities

It is important that you understand your rights and responsibilities as an Advance tenant. Please read this alongside your tenancy agreement.

Tenancy Agreement

Your tenancy agreement is a legal document that sets out your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. It is important that you read it. It includes details of our policies and how they may affect the way in which we respond to requests for permission under the terms of your tenancy agreement. We may update the policies we refer to.

Security of tenure – your right to live in your home

You have the right to live in your home as long as you keep to the conditions of your tenancy agreement. We can ask the courts to make an order for possession to end your tenancy if:

- You have not paid the rent
- You, a member of your household (including children) or visitors cause a nuisance to another resident
- You, a member of your household or visitors damage your home or the estate where you live
- You do not live in the property as your only or main home
- You made a false statement to get your tenancy
- You allow your home to be used for illegal purposes; or
- We plan to demolish or carry out wide-ranging work on your home.

Your rights as a shared owner

You have the right to live peacefully in your home

As a tenant, you have the right to live peacefully in your home without interruption or interference from us, as long as you keep to the terms of your tenancy agreement.

You have the right to maintenance work and the right to repairs (as per the terms of your lease)

We will keep the structure of your home (including plumbing, heating and electrical systems) in repair. You have the right to have these repairs, which are our responsibility, carried out within certain timescales. It's important that you report the repairs to Advance on 0333 012 4307 or through the MyAdvance online portal.

You have the right to make improvements to your home

You can make improvements, alterations and additions to your home, including decorating outside fixtures and fittings, as long as you get our written permission and all other necessary approvals (for example, planning permission or building regulations approval) beforehand. If in doubt, ask us first.

When you move out, we may charge you the cost of putting right any alterations you have

made to the property without our permission. Please be aware that not all improvements or alterations will add value to your home. It is important to check with us before you undertake any changes, so we can check there are no lease terms we need to be aware of.

You have the right to be consulted

We have a legal responsibility to consult you if we are considering:

- Changing how we manage and maintain your home
- Making improvements or major repairs to your home*
- Transferring your lease to another landlord.

* if the cost is over £250.00 (including VAT), you will receive an S20 consultation letter informing you of the charge

Your responsibilities as a tenant

Rent and service charges

You are responsible for paying your rent and valid service charges regularly and on time. We make it as easy as we can for you to pay regularly and in time by offering a range of ways to pay. For more information about making payments and claiming benefits, please see the Rents and Benefits section.

Maintaining your home

You are responsible for:

- All decorating inside the property
- Door keys and handles
- Floor tiles
- Doors and cupboard handles and catches
- Minor plaster repairs
- Waste plugs and chains to sink, wash hand basins and baths
- Blocked sinks, wash hand basins and baths
- Toilet seats
- Wall, window sill and fireplace tiles
- Washing-line posts
- Draught-proofing doors and windows
- Renewing or re-fixing coat hooks; and
- Making sure that any boiler is supplied with water before igniting it and that there is an adequate supply of water after this.

Being a good neighbour

You are responsible for the behaviour of all members of your household, including your visitors and guests. Causing a nuisance, harassment or annoying other residents could be classed as causing antisocial behaviour, examples include:

- Abandoning vehicles
- If you've been given permission to keep a pet, allowing animal-related problems (persistent dog barking and dog fouling)

- Environmental damage, such as fly-tipping (illegally dumping rubbish in public areas) and creating a lot of litter
- Neighbour nuisance and noise nuisance (such as loud music and holding regular loud parties)
- Rowdy or inconsiderate behaviour
- Carrying out graffiti and environmental damage (breaking fences and play equipment)
- Leaving drug-taking equipment lying around (for example, needles).

We work to tackle antisocial behavior and take complaints of antisocial behaviour very seriously.

Insurance

You are responsible for insuring the contents of your home. We make it easy for you to insure your belongings under a special household contents insurance scheme for social housing tenants and leaseholders.

For more information about the insurance scheme, please contact Customer Services on 0333 012 4307 or through the MyAdvance online portal.

Repairs

You are responsible for looking after your home, garage and garden (if you have one). This includes reporting repairs to us so that we can deal with them. You may be held responsible for repair costs as a result of damage caused deliberately or by neglect.

You must let us into your home, store and garage or shed to do repairs and service gas appliances. We will normally contact you beforehand if we need to visit you at home.

Our staff, contractors and agents all carry an identity card. Which they will show to you. If you are still not sure about letting them in after seeing their card, there should be a phone number on the card you can call to check their identity. Staff will not mind waiting outside while you make the call.

Waste and Rubbish

You are responsible for getting rid of waste and rubbish including larger household items. You must get rid of all rubbish promptly and properly and not allow rubbish or other waste to build up in or around your home.

Gardens

If you have a garden, you must keep the area tidy, including hedges, trees and shrubs (unless gardening is expressly included in the services provided under this tenancy). This is a condition of your tenancy. Gardens that are overgrown or full of waste and rubbish are not only unattractive but can be a nuisance and even a danger to your household and your neighbours. We inspect all our homes regularly and we will ask you to restore the garden to a reasonable condition if it is neglected or untidy. If you do not do this, we may make the decision to do the work ourselves and charge you for the costs involved.

Any tree already planted in the garden when you accepted the tenancy becomes your responsibility and you are responsible for maintaining it. If you want to plant a tree in your garden, you must plant it in a place where it does not or will not cause damage, nuisance or

obstruction to either your property or any neighbouring property. We would recommend planting any tree a good distance from the boundary with your neighbouring property or any pavement, path or road. We do not accept responsibility for maintaining trees in gardens unless they are causing danger or damage to the structure of the property or a neighbouring property. For full details of your responsibilities as a tenant, please see your full tenancy agreement.

Sole leaseholders

You are the 'sole leaseholder' if you are the only person who signs the lease. This also applies if you were a joint leaseholder but the person with whom you had a joint lease has died. If this applies to you, please contact the Leasehold Team and we will help with changing the names on your lease.

Joint leaseholders

If more than one person signs the lease, this is called a joint lease. Joint leaseholders have equal rights. We will consider applications for joint leases from:

- Married couples;
- Civil partners;
- Partners
- Close relatives (mother, father, sister, brother, non-dependent son or daughter).

If you are a sole leaseholder and you want to have a joint lease with someone, please contact the Leasehold Team. You will also need to contact your solicitor.

Applying for a transfer

As a shared owner, you can apply to transfer to a different property which meets your needs. This can be a larger or smaller property as needed.

If you wish to transfer houses, please contact the Leasehold Team to discuss your options first. We will have to assess whether you meet the criteria to 'port' your mortgage. This is an exceptional request, and you should allow plenty of time for the sale and purchase of another more suitable property through Advance.

Ending your tenancy

If you wish to sell your home, please contact us the Leasehold Team. We can support you through the sale and financial processes involved.

Looking after your home

To keep your home in good condition you, your household and any visitors should:

- Take care of the property and use anything in your home which belongs to us properly
- Take care of any fixtures, fittings or furnishings that were provided as part of your tenancy
- Try to solve minor problems and report faults promptly and allow us to access your home so that repairs can be made within agreed timescales
- Keep the inside of your home clean and decorated
- Do not dump rubbish.

You are responsible for the actions of your household, pets and visitors, whether you are aware of their actions or not.

Repairs

It is important that you look after your home and let us know as soon as possible if anything goes wrong. Our Customer Service Team will take the details of your repair and arrange an appointment at a mutually convenient time; making it easier for you to plan your time. Sometimes our contractors may call without an appointment if they are in the area. But they will only carry out the repair if it is convenient for you.

Repairs can be reported by contacting the Customer Service Team from 8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday:

- Call free phone on: 0333 012 4307
- Send a message through the MyAdvance online portal

You can request a call-back during office opening hours and we will call you back at no cost to you. We will take details of the nature of the problem and check that we have an up-to-date number on which to contact you. Please let us know any times you are not available so we can organise a suitable time to visit and carry out repairs.

Depending on the repair, it will be completed within the following timescales, or sooner if possible:

- Emergency Repairs within 24hrs
- Out-of-hours repairs contact made within 2 hours
- Urgent Repairs within 5 working days
- Routine Repairs within 28 calendar days

Emergency repairs

If the repair is an emergency we will try to solve the issue as soon as possible. Emergency repairs are those that threaten your health, safety and welfare and may include:

Gas leaks - Report immediately to the National Gas emergency helpline on [0800 111 999](tel:0800111999)

- Bare electrical wiring
- Overflowing sewage
- Broken external doors leaving a property unsecured
- Burst pipes, severe leaks
- No heating in severe weather
- No hot water

To check progress on a repair contact Customer Services: Phone on [0333 012 4307](tel:03330124307) or send a message through the MyAdvance online portal.

Service standards – cleaning & gardening

Advance is committed to providing reliable, prompt and efficient services to our customers. This leaflet sets out our service standards for our customers who have a Cleaning and Gardening service supplied by Advance and the contractors we use.

This service standard is an agreement made between Advance and our customers, who were involved in setting the standards. In order to improve our Cleaning and Gardening service, Advance monitor and review this standard and the service provided using the regular feedback from our customers.

You can judge the quality of the service you're getting by comparing it with the standards below.

What you can expect

Our gardeners and cleaners will:

- Be polite and treat you with respect
- Provide a service that fits with best practice guidance and in accordance with the service specification for your home
- Have staff that are well trained and comply with the relevant Health and Safety regulations
- Feedback any concerns you have to Advance.

Cleaners and gardeners must comply with safeguarding requirements.

Cleaners and gardeners must carry a form of identification. Cleaners and gardeners must have an environmental policy.

What we ask of you

- Please be polite
- Please allow cleaners/gardeners into your home to carry out the services we have agreed with you
- Please let Advance know if you have any issues or concerns with the service offered.

Service charges

For all properties that we supply cleaning and gardening to, we will apply a service charge and this amount will be communicated to you annually.

You only have to pay for the service you get. The total cost of the service is split equally between all of the residents where you live.

Housing Benefit will normally pay for this charge if you receive full Housing Benefit.

We promise to:

- Carry out satisfaction questionnaires
- Carry our telephone surveys to find out what you think about the service
- Try and keep prices low without compromising on quality

- Involve residents in selecting new cleaners and gardeners
- Listen to you and act on what you say
- Look for ways to improve our service

Service standards

As a Housing provider we work to the standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing. Find below a summary of how we meet those standards and how we measure our effectiveness in performing against them.

Service standard	How we measure our performance
Your tenancy	
We specialise in supported housing. We offer tenancies to give you appropriate security to suit the purpose of the accommodation. This will usually mean an assured tenancy or an assured shorthold tenancy, depending on the accommodation. Our shared owners have a lease.	All tenants should have a valid and appropriate tenancy agreement. If not – contact us.
Property lettings	
We have a detailed lettings standard, which we ensure our rented properties meet before we re-let them. This includes redecorating where necessary.	Questions in the annual customer survey.
Furnished homes	
Most of our rented homes are offered as fully or part furnished, which includes white goods and flooring, with the cost payable through a service charge. These costs are eligible through housing benefit.	All repairs or replacement for furniture, white goods and flooring should be completed with our agreed target times.
Settling in	
Once you have moved in, your Regional Housing Officer will visit after 8 weeks to make sure you are settling in well.	All tenants or shared owners should be visited 8 weeks after moving in.
Contacting us	
You can contact us for repairs or any other issues, online at www.advanceuk.org , by phone on 0333 012 4307 or by e-mail at customer.services@advanceuk.org We aim to answer phone calls within 5 minutes and respond to e-mails within one working day.	Percentage of calls answered within 5 minutes and emails answered within 24hrs.

Landlord health and safety	
We will do everything we are required to do as a landlord to ensure your home and any communal areas are safe. This includes an annual gas safety check, electrical checks, fire safety checks, water safety checks and asbestos checks.	Monitoring safety checks for gas, electrical, fire, water and asbestos.
Quality of repairs	
We work closely with our maintenance contractors to ensure safe and high-quality services. We have a Code of Conduct that our contractors work to. A copy of this is available to customers on request.	Customer satisfaction surveys following maintenance or repair work.
Timescales for repairs	
Emergency repairs within 1 day Urgent repairs within 1 week Routine repairs within 1 month	Percentage of repairs completed within target time.
Planned maintenance	
We have a programme of planned maintenance to ensure our properties are kept in good condition. This includes replacing older kitchens, bathrooms, windows, etc.	Completion of planned maintenance against the timetable and budget.
Annual visits	
Your Regional Housing Officer will visit you at least once a year to check everything is OK with your home and your tenancy. You can also request a visit at any time if you need one.	Annual visits completed.

Anti-social behaviour

We take all reports and incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) seriously. All victims of ASB will be contacted within 3 days of reporting an incident and will be kept updated every 10 days.

When the incident is resolved we will ask you how satisfied you were with how we dealt with the issue reported.

Compliance with our targets and policy.

Complaints

If something is not right, please let us know.

When you make a complaint, we will acknowledge, investigate and respond to you within the timescales set out in our complaints policy. You can find out more about this below.

If it needs longer, we will keep in touch with you.

Complaints dealt with within timescale.

Customer satisfaction with how the complaint was handled.

Staying safe in your home

The information below is intended to give you some advice and guidance to ensure your safety in your home.

Security

As with any person you do not know requesting entry into your property, always ask to see identification before you open the door.

Never be afraid to ask the caller to wait whilst you look up the company phone number. You can confirm their credentials with the company before you let them into your home. Advance works with contractors to ensure they work safely and respectfully, including training them on Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults. All contractors will wear a uniform and carry identification when visiting your property.

Asbestos

Asbestos is a natural mineral that has been used for many years as insulation, reinforcement of building materials and fire protection. Asbestos is dangerous only when disturbed, it can remain functional and safe while it is maintained and in good condition. If asbestos becomes damaged it releases fibres into the air which can cause problems if inhaled. It is now banned from use.

Advance is committed to protecting tenants by ensuring that asbestos is not disturbed. We manage a database containing records of asbestos surveys and locations identified.

What you can do

It is vital that you ask our permission before carrying out any home improvements as this could disturb existing asbestos. We will check our records to see if your property has any asbestos present.

If you are concerned that you may have damaged or ageing asbestos in your home please do not hesitate to contact us by calling Customer Services on 0333 012 4307.

Fire safety

Here are some key tips to ensure you remain safe from fire in your home:

Smoking

If you are feeling drowsy, are drinking alcohol or are taking prescription drugs, take extra care when smoking. Don't light up if you need to lie down and never smoke in bed. When you finish a cigarette make sure it is right out.

Chip pan fire safety

If you have a chip pan fire, never try to tackle the fire yourself. Turn off the heat if it is safe to

do so. Get out, stay out and call 999. To avoid chip pan fire, it's best to cook chips in an oven.

Don't leave cooking unattended

Make sure you know what's cooking and how long it should be cooking for. Avoid cooking if you're tired, have been drinking alcohol or taking medication that can make you drowsy.

Use electric plugs safely

If you put too many plugs in one socket it can start a fire. One plug in each socket is best. This is very important for things that use a lot of electricity, for example, electric fires and washing machines.

Check for hot plugs or plugs with dark marks. Check for wires that are loose or broken. If you find any, take the plugs out of the socket.

Smoke alarms

Always test your smoke alarm regularly and replace a flat battery straight away.

Fire safety reminders for flats

The following is an extract on advice from the Fire Brigade if you live in a purpose built flat.

Escape route:

- Have an escape plan, which you practice and ensure all members of your household are aware of this plan
- The best route is normally the way in and out
- Keep communal areas and balconies clear so that they don't block your escape and cause a fire risk
- Always keep door and window keys where everyone can find them.

If your flat is affected by fire or smoke and your escape route is clear:

- Get everyone out, close the door and leave calmly
- Don't use the lift
- Call 999, give them your address details and let them know which floor the fire is on.

If your escape route is not clear:

- It may be safer to stay in your home until the Fire Brigade arrives
- Find a safe room, close the door and block any gaps with soft materials to stop the smoke
- Go to a window and shout "HELP FIRE" and call 999
- Be ready to explain where you are and the quickest way to reach you.

If there is a fire in another part of the building:

- Your home should give you some protection from fire – walls, floors and doors can hold back flames and smoke for 30 to 60 minutes
- You are usually safer staying in your home, call 999, tell the Fire Brigade where you are

and the best way to reach you

- If you are in the communal parts of the building leave and call 999
- However, if you feel unsure, unsafe, can see flames or smell smoke then leave your flat and exit the building.

Gas

Gas Servicing is an annual requirement and is a crucial part of our efforts to keep your home safe.

Advance responsibilities

Under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 we must:

- Ensure that we use only Gas Safe registered engineers to carry out work on gas installations
- Not permit a gas appliance to be used if we suspect it to be unsafe or inadequately ventilated
- Undertake an annual safety check on gas pipework and landlord owned appliances
- Keep records of all inspection defects and actions taken
- Provide tenants with records of gas servicing or safety checks.

What you can do

- It is a legal requirement that you provide us with access to your home under the terms and conditions of your Tenancy Agreement
- Failure to provide access is a breach of your Tenancy Agreement. A charge may be made for each appointment where our contractor fails to gain access to carry out servicing and safety checks. Should any subsequent legal action be taken to obtain access and/or possession of your home, then all costs incurred in bringing such action will be your responsibility.
- If you decide to install your own gas fire, permission must be obtained from us and the works carried out by a competent Gas Safe registered engineer
- If you smell gas please call 0800 111 999.

Carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless, tasteless and highly poisonous gas. It can be deadly and is most often produced by appliances which haven't been properly installed or maintained. It can escape from gas appliances like gas boilers and fires. This is why it is essential that you allow us access to your home, so we can make sure your gas appliances are working safely.

A carbon monoxide alarm can detect even the smallest amount of carbon monoxide in your home and emits a loud alarm before levels become dangerous. As your landlord we are committed to your safety and can install carbon monoxide alarms if required.

Electrical

We ensure the safety of your home by carrying out electricity checks every 5 years. This is to ensure that all power supplies are safe. All electrical work must be done by a qualified electrician under Part P of the Building Regulations requirements and a safety certificate supplied. We will also complete appliance testing on the goods we have supplied at given

intervals.

What you can do DO

- Report any electrical problems immediately to Customer Service on 0333 012 4307
- Allow access to the property if an electrician needs to visit
- Regularly check the condition of plugs, cables and extension leads
- Check that any adaptor you use is safe – it should comply with British standards and be adequately
 - rated for the connected load
- Try and reduce the use of extension leads and adaptors wherever possible
- Use appliances according to the manufacturer's instructions.

DO NOT

- Carry out your own electrical repairs
- Take mains powered portable appliances such as radios, heaters or hairdryers into the bathroom
- Overload sockets with extension leads
- Use any electrical appliances with wet hands
- Leave items such as mobile phones charging overnight.

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

We are committed to ensuring the safety of our homes. PAT testing is a legal requirement and you must allow access to your home to enable our contractors to complete the necessary checks. This is to ensure all appliances are safe for use. Where we have provided furniture and appliances for your home we will arrange to undertake PAT testing every year.

What you can do

Most faults identified in PAT testing can be identified using a visual check. Some of the main things to look out for include:

- Damage to the lead including fraying, cuts or heavy scuffing, e.g. from floor box covers
- Damage to the plug, e.g. to the cover or bent pins
- Coloured wires visible where the lead joins the plug (the cable is not being gripped where it enters the plug)
- Damage to the outer cover of the equipment itself, including loose parts or screws
- Signs of overheating, such as burn marks or staining on the plug, lead or piece of equipment
- Equipment that has been used or stored in unsuitable conditions, such as wet or dusty environments or where water spills are possible.

Water safety - Legionella

Legionella is an illness contracted by inhaling drops of water contaminated by the Legionella bacteria. The bacteria is found in most water systems, but multiplies and becomes dangerous in stagnant water with temperatures between 20°C and 45°C. Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia and everyone is susceptible to infection.

What you can do

There are a few simple steps you can follow to help reduce the risk of bacteria and legionnaires disease in your home:

- If you have taps or showers you don't use regularly, run them for 5 minutes at least once a month to clear the pipes
- If showers are used regularly, the risks are reduced, however, you should still regularly clean and disinfect your shower head, ideally every 3 months
- Ensure there aren't any places where water can stay still and build up bacteria
- Do not adjust the temperature setting of the boiler
- Inform Advance if your hot water is not heating properly
- If you have been away from your home for 2 weeks or more, run your taps through for 5 minutes before using the water
- Allow contractors access to your home to carry out tests on your water - this is only carried out on a sample of properties annually
- Keep the hot water on your boiler system at a minimum 60°C. Warning - be aware of scalding.

Staying safe in your community

It is important to us that the people we support or who live in our houses feel safe and are able to do the things they enjoy in the area they live.

We believe that everyone has the right to:

- Live their life free from violence, fear and abuse
- Be respected by other people
- Make choices about their life and things that affect them

House shares

If you will be living in a house with other people, or you will share some communal spaces, you need to be considerate of the people you live with. Here are some points to think about:

Tips for living in a house share

- Respect each other - You may have many differences with the people you live with, but be respectful of their views and behaviours.
- Allow privacy - People like to have their own spaces, and time to themselves, so make sure that you allow this. If someone is in a room with a shut door, knock before entering.
- Be tidy - everyone has different levels of tidiness, but if you are making a mess (e.g. cooking), put everything you have used away and clean dirty surfaces. If you are having trouble with sharing duties, you might want to create a cleaning rota.
- Share communal spaces - You may share some spaces, for example, a living room. If so, make sure everyone in the house has the chance to use it. You may want to set certain times that people are allowed to watch TV, play games etc, to make it fair.
- Talk to each other - If you are having issues in your house share, it is always good to talk these through. You might want to have regular house meetings where you can discuss these.

You can talk to your Housing Officer about any problems you are having in your house share. They will try to sort out any issues where they can.

Anti-social behaviour

You don't have to deal with antisocial behaviour on your own. We are here to help. We want to keep you safe and with your help we can make lives safer and better.

Antisocial Behaviour means different things to different people but you can report any of the following issues:

- Behaviour causing alarm, distress or annoyance including harassment and intimidating behaviour
- Neighbour nuisance
- Noise and loud parties

- Dog fouling
- Litter and fly-tipping
- Abandoned cars or even bicycles
- Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property
- Being drunk and rowdy
- Dealing or using drugs
- Hate crime, such as racist abuse.

What to do

If you are the victim of any of the above behaviours, please contact your Housing Officer or Customer Services on 0333 012 4307 or through the MyAdvance online portal.

Customer Services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. In an emergency please call 999.

What happens next?

If you call Customer Services to report anti-social behaviour the person who answers your call will record the details of the incident and pass this information to the relevant people for action. Someone will contact you within two working days to discuss it further and agree action. Remember - in an emergency please call 999.

We will provide help and assistance wherever possible to help sort out the complaint. We will make use of all possible avenues, including mediation, the assistance of other agencies like the police, and will even take legal action if necessary, in a fair and consistent manner.

Staying safe online

The internet and social media (Facebook, X, WhatsApp etc.) are great opportunities to build your networks, access information, get to know people and have your voice heard – but it's important you do this safely.

Some tips for online safety:

- Be careful about sharing information about yourself on the internet with people you do not know. Remember that information you put online about yourself can be seen by others
- Be careful about sharing pictures. If you do not know someone, do not share pictures of yourself with them
- Keep all of your passwords a secret
- Always keep your bank details a secret if someone asks you for them, especially in an email. It's usually safe if you have bought something online and you are paying it, but if you are not sure, ask somebody first
- If you think that you are being bullied on the internet, contact the police or speak to your Support Provider or Housing Officer
- If you are not sure about something you have seen or been asked online, ask a friend, family member or Advance staff member for advice.

Bullying and Harassment

Bullying is when a person or a group of people say or do unkind things to someone else. Bullies are often trying to make themselves feel better by being mean to someone else.

Harassment is when someone does something on purpose to upset someone else. It happens more than once and the person does it because they want the other person to feel bad.

If you feel bullied or threatened in the area where you live it is important to tell someone what has happened. You can phone the police if someone is making you feel scared, upset or unsafe. You can ask people to leave you alone if you feel they are being rude or unkind.

You can ask a neighbour, family member or friend to help you or stay with you. Tell your Housing Officer about the problems. It is important to write down exactly what has happened to help you remember or tell someone about it straight away.

Hate crime and mate crime

Hate crime is when someone does something mean to someone because of who they are. For example, being mean to someone because they have a learning disability.

Mate crime is when someone makes you think they are your friend but they really just want to use you for something, for example stealing your money.

Tips for dealing with hate crime and mate crime:

- If you find yourself in a situation and something doesn't feel right, trust your feelings
- If you think something isn't right, walk away
- Take time to get to know new people before you trust them
- Always meet new people in public places
- If someone is asking you to do things you don't like, speak to someone else you trust, and share what has been happening
- Write down **what** happens and **when** it happened so that you remember
- Call someone like the police for help if someone is making you feel unsafe
- Ask a neighbour, family member or friend to help you or stay with you. Tell your Housing Officer.

Neglect or Abuse

Abuse is when someone does or says something to you which makes you upset or scared. Neglect is when someone who is supposed to care for you ignores your needs, therefore putting you in danger.

If you think you are being neglected or abused, you should tell someone you trust as soon as you can. The type of people you may wish to contact are:

- A friend or family member
- Your Support Worker/Provider or Housing Officer
- A nurse or doctor or health worker
- A social worker
- A carer at your care home, day centre, or in your home
- Someone from a charity, like Age UK, Mencap, or Mind
- A care inspector from the Care Quality Commission
- The police.

Moving to a new area

It can be difficult moving to a new area, especially if you don't know anyone. Here we have included some tips on what to do if you are moving somewhere new.

1. Get to know your area

First, find out where your key local services are (Supermarkets, GP, Post Office, religious centre) and check your local Public transport routes. You can do this by walking around, asking someone you know, or searching on the internet.

2. Introduce yourself to your neighbours

It is a good idea to get to know your neighbours and let them know who you are. They might have some helpful advice for you, and knowing them will help you feel safer in your community. Simply knocking on your neighbour's door and saying hello is a good start, if you feel comfortable doing so.

3. Visit your local community centre

If you are looking for things to do, ways to meet new people, or where to get advice, your local community centre will have some information for you. They run clubs and meetings which you can join. They will also have information about other local services. Buying a local newspaper is another good way of finding out about what is happening locally.

Getting involved

You have the right to be kept informed and to be consulted about matters affecting you. We believe that by working together we can develop a better service. There are a number of ways that you can get involved at Advance:

Go to one of our regional groups – Meet other customers nearby and share your views about Advance – ask your Housing Officer for information. Issues raised at local and regional meetings are shared with the National Forum.

Go to our Advance Collective – All customers are welcome to come to an Advance Collective meeting near them. Two elected Advance customers lead the Advance Collective. These customers run four meetings a year in different places around the country so that they can meet as many customers as possible. Issues raised at Advance Collective meetings can be raised at the Operations Board.

Get your voice heard at the top level of Advance – The Housing Customer Partnership is made up of elected customers and Advance Board members and Directors. It provides a forum for customers and Board members to discuss strategic and nationally relevant topics regarding Advance.

Come to our annual customer conference – Every summer we hold a big event for customers to come and meet new people, have fun and learn more about Advance. Details will be shared with all customers – spaces are often limited due to the cost of running events like this. Make sure you book early.

Take part in choosing new staff – Help us choose who we want working at Advance. One way you can do this is by being on the interview panel.

Help train Advance staff – Work alongside our trainers to teach staff about learning disabilities or mental health conditions.

Have your say and fill out our customer survey – Every year we ask our customers to tell us what they think of Advance by filling out a survey. This helps us find out what we are doing well and where we could do better. Results of the survey will be available for customers in our annual Customer Report.

Get political – Do you feel passionately about the rights of people with a learning disability or mental health condition? Sometimes we go to parliament to represent Advance on issues that affect our customers. We also take part in national campaigns such as Mental Health Awareness Week and Learning Disability Week.

If you would like to find out any more about the things above, speak to your Housing Officer or contact the Customer Engagement team: inclusion@advanceuk.org

Customer Engagement Interest Form

Name	
Preferred Contact Details	
Secondary Contact Details	
What Advance services do you use?	
Where do you live?	
Do you need any support with travel?	
Is there anything else we can do to help you be involved?	
Do you have a learning disability? (optional)	Yes/No
Do you have a mental health condition? (optional)	Yes/No
Any other disability – please specify (optional)	

How would you like to be involved?

Regional Forums	Yes	No
Advance Collectives	Yes	No
Recruiting new staff	Yes	No
Talking to the media	Yes	No
Sharing your story	Yes	No
Events	Yes	No

Is there anything else you would like to be involved in?

Thank you for filling out this form. We will contact you if something you have said you are interested in is available. You may not hear from us straight away – but we will contact you if and when something you are interest in comes up.

Please email completed forms to: customerengagement@advanceuk.org

Or send by post to:

Customer Engagement
 Advance Housing & Support
 2 Witan Way
 Witney
 Oxon
 OX28 6FH

Giving us your views

We welcome feedback from customers so that we can make sure we are giving you the best service possible. Whether you have a comment, compliment or complaint, we will take your feedback seriously and use it to improve our services.

If you have a comment, compliment or complaint we would encourage you to share it with your Housing Officer or other member of staff. However, if you would prefer not to contact a member of staff you can contact the Customer Services Team by:

Phone on 0333 012 4307

Sending a message through the MyAdvance online portal.

Filling out the 'Comments, Compliments and Complaints' form on the 'Customers' section of our website: www.advanceuk.org

Writing to 'Customer Services Team' at Advance, Unit 2, Centre Court, Meridian North, Meridian Business Park, Leicester LE19 1WR. Please include your contact details (name, phone number and address or email) so we can reply to you.

Comments and Compliments

If you have an idea, comment, or compliment about our service, we would love to hear about it. We will pass all comments and compliments to the relevant member of staff and their manager, and send you an acknowledgement within 1 working day.

Complaints

Don't worry about making a complaint. Please remember that:

- It is OK to complain
- Complaints help us to make our services better
- We will listen to you and you will be taken seriously
- You and everyone involved in a complaint will be treated fairly
- You will not lose your service if you make a complaint
- We will not tell anyone about your complaint unless they are involved in looking into it
- You can ask a friend or family member to contact us if it makes it easier.

We understand that occasionally something can go wrong, or you may be dissatisfied with the service you have received. If you have a complaint, we will investigate it thoroughly and send you a detailed response. Any complaint we receive goes through a standard process:

Stage one

1. We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days.
2. We will investigate your complaint and respond to you within 10 working days. We will do this in writing, or in your preferred format.
3. If we need more time to investigate your complaint, this can be extended by another 10 working days. If this is the case we must let you know and tell you why.

Stage two

If you are unhappy with our response at stage one of our complaint process you can ask for your complaint to be reviewed. What happens next:

1. Contact us within 20 working days of receiving your stage one response, and let us know you wish to appeal our decision.
2. We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days.
3. We will investigate your complaint and respond to you within 20 working days. We will do this in writing, or in your preferred format.
4. If we need more time to investigate your complaint, this can be extended by another 20 working days. If this is the case we must let you know and tell you why

Ombudsman

If you are unhappy with our response at stage two of our complaint process, you can contact an ombudsman who will carry out an independent investigation of your complaint.

For complaints about Housing:

Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 152
Liverpool
L33 7WQ

Telephone: 0300 111 3000 (lines are open Monday to Friday from 9:15am to 5:15pm).
Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

For complaints about your Support provider:

The Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

Telephone: 0300 061 0614 (lines are open Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 5:00pm).
Fill in an online form: www.lgo.org.uk/complaint-form

How we use your information

Advance needs to collect and use certain types of information about our customers in order to provide the services that they need. We make sure your information is protected and available when you want it.

You have a number of rights when it comes to the way we handle and retain information about you:

- You have the right to have confidential information we may have about you protected, so it can't be seen by people who shouldn't be allowed to see it
- You have the right to access information we have on file about you, except in certain situations - a copy of our policy is available from your staff team
- If you tell us that the information we hold about you is not correct, we have a legal obligation under the Data Protection Act to correct this
- Advance have a particular responsibility to safeguard sensitive personal data, including information about your health, race and beliefs
- If you give us permission to use your story and or photograph in our publications or on our website we will ask you to sign our consent form.

Our policy is that all customers have a right to view the information that we hold about them. The 2018 Data Protection Act gives individuals, including staff and customers, a legal right to have access to personal data about themselves.

Customers can verbally request to see their file; they do not need to make a formal request in writing. Our staff are encouraged to share information with the customer as long as it does not pertain to a third party.

We would only share information about you with a friend or relative if you have consent to do so. However, you can choose what information you would like to share and who you would like us to share it with and also if you do not wish to share any information with anyone. Your choices should be recorded on a "Consent to Share Information" form.

We require all of our sub-contractors or suppliers to comply with our policies and the Data Protection Act.

Staff working on Employment contracts are expected to take additional measures to protect the security of customer information. We will investigate staff who have not maintained our confidentiality agreements. If you have any questions about data protection please contact your Housing Officer.

PRIDE Awards

The Advance PRIDE Awards are our way of recognizing the good work done by staff. They are given to individuals or teams who have gone above and beyond in their role, done some exceptional work and demonstrated the PRIDE values.

We give out PRIDE Awards each quarter and welcome nominations from customers.

If you think a staff member at Advance deserves to be recognized for their work, you can put them forward for a PRIDE Award.

How to nominate someone for a PRIDE award

It's really easy to make a nomination. You can:

- Complete the form on the next page and hand it in at an Advance office or give it to a member of staff to hand in.

OR

- E-mail us at: PRIDE.nominations@advanceuk.org. Please include in your e-mail:
 - Your name and where you live
 - The name of the staff member or team you want to get an Award
 - Why they should get the award. Please tell us about what they have done and how it has helped you or others.

Winners will receive a certificate and details will be shared on the intranet to celebrate the achievement.

Each year, we will also select an overall individual and team winner, and winners in each of the five PRIDE value categories in our Annual Pride Awards.

Nomination form

PRIDE

Partnership

We work in partnership with our customers and build relationships with others that help us serve our customers better

Respect

We treat our customers, colleagues and others as we would like to be treated

Inclusion

We work to create an environment where diversity is celebrated and where everyone can thrive

Drive

We do the right thing at the right time and everything we do is driven by our customers' needs

Efficiency

We make good use of resources, find innovative ways to do things and maximise efficiency to deliver the best services for our customers

Your name and contact details:

(Please include an email and the best phone number to contact you on)

Who would you like to nominate?

(Please include scheme name or number if you are nominating a support team)

Why are you nominating this person/team?

(Explain why you are nominating this person or team. Please give as much detail as possible including the background, what was done and the outcome of the activity – particularly how it brought the values to life.)

Please email your completed nomination form to: PRIDE.nominations@advanceuk.org

Useful contact details

Advance Customer Services

Customer Services will deal with all enquiries. If they cannot deal with your enquiry, they will pass it to the appropriate person or team to resolve it. To contact Customer Services:

- Phone on 0333 012 4307
- Send a message through the MyAdvance online portal
- Email: customer.services@advanceuk.org
- Write to 'Customer Services Team' at Advance, Unit 2, Centre Court, Meridian North, Meridian Business Park, Leicester, LE19 1WR. Please ensure you include your contact details (name, phone number and address or email) so we can reply to you.

Emergencies – fire, police, ambulance

- **Fire, Police and Ambulance Emergency services: 999**
- For **non-emergency** calls, dial **101**.
- **NHS Direct** – call 111
- If you are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment, a **text phone is available on 18001 101** for non emergency calls

Household emergencies

- **First point of contact at Advance:** Customer Services 0333 012 4307
- **Gas emergencies** National Grid 0800 111 999
- **Electricity emergencies** National Grid: 0800 40 40 90

Community Safety

- **Crimestoppers** Call free on **0800 555 111** www.crimestoppers-uk.org
- **Victim Supportline** Call free on **0808 168 9111**
- **National Domestic Violence and Women's Aid** 24 hour helpline **0808 2000 247**
- **Samaritans** 24-hour free support helpline **116 123 (UK)**
- **Voice UK** supporting vulnerable people who have experienced crime or abuse
Helpline 0845 122 8695 /**Text Number:** 07797 800 642 **Email** voice@voiceuk.org.uk
- **Age UK** advice or information on money, care or health, call: 0800 055 6112

Citizens Advice Bureau

The Citizens Advice Bureau provides independent advice on many things including your rights, Housing Benefit, Employment and Debt advice. Best of all it is free!

You can find advice on their website, or search for your local CAB branch at <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>. You can also phone their Advice Line on **08444 111 4444**.

Money and debt

- **Clockwise Credit Union** call 0116 242 3900 or visit their website: <https://www.clockwise.coop>
- **Citizens Advice Bureau** provides free, confidential and impartial advice to everyone. Find your local branch at www.citizensadvice.org.uk or phone on 03444 111 4444
- **National Debt Line** call free on 0808 808 4000
- **Stepchange** for impartial debt advice visit www.stepchange.org/
- **Money Advice Service** call 0800 138 7777 or visit www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk

Benefits and Employment Advice

- **Department for Work and Pensions**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions>
- Information about **Universal Credit** <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>
- **Universal Jobmatch** for help finding work <https://www.gov.uk/jobsearch>
- **Job Centre Plus** go to <https://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus>

Local groups

Local Advocacy Groups

Advocacy groups support people to speak up, challenge decisions and make complaints. Find your local advocacy group at www.actionforadvocacy.org.uk

Local Social Services Department

If your service is funded by your local council you can contact your local social services department. You can find their contact details at this website: www.direct.gov.uk

Your right to vote

We encourage all customers to have their say and be heard by voting in local and national elections. You can register to vote and get more information at: www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Information Technology

- **Leonard Cheshire Disability:** Discover IT @Home

Offers disabled adults access to IT equipment and specialist adaptations within their homes.

Tel: 020 7112 1489 email: innovation@leonardcheshire.org

website: <https://www.leonardcheshire.org/support-and-information/work-and-skills-development/discover-it-home>

- **Learn My Way:** free courses & advice on getting online
<https://www.learnmyway.com>

Mental Health information:

- **MIND** for information about mental health <http://www.mind.org.uk/>
- **Mental Health Foundation** <http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>
- **Rethink Mental Illness** information and advice. www.rethink.org/ 0300 5000 927
- **UK Council for Psychotherapy** www.psychotherapy.org.uk Tel 0207 014 9955

Learning Disability information:

- Information about learning disabilities - www.learningdisability.co.uk/
- **Learning Disability England** www.learningdisabilityengland.org.uk
- **Disability Rights UK** www.disabilityrightsuk.org/how-we-can-help/advice-and-information
- **People First** advocacy organisation for people with learning disabilities <http://peoplefirsttd.com/>

Support Services:

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

- For any queries about the care or support service you receive you may want to contact the CQC. Website: www.cqc.org.uk Telephone: 03000 616161

Health and Wellbeing

- **Diabetes UK** for information about Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes including Easy Read information: <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/>
- **Annual Health Checks** – information in Easy Read from Mencap: <https://www.mencap.org.uk> or from Diabetes UK here: www.diabetes.org.uk
- **NHS Choices**: general information about health and wellbeing: www.nhs.uk

Local contacts and information

Local information and contact details for useful services will be provided to customers in the paper copy of the pack.



T 0333 012 4307 W advanceuk.org



[@advanceuk.org](https://www.facebook.com/advanceuk.org)



[@advancetweets](https://twitter.com/advancetweets)



[@advance_uk](https://www.instagram.com/advance_uk)