

Your Guide to **HOME SAFETY**



INTRODUCTION

This is your Home Safety Guide, courtesy of River Clyde Homes. It contains useful information, as well as hints and tips, on how to keep yourself and others safe in your home.

As your Landlord, River Clyde Homes, have a duty to provide you with a safe home, and we therefore we carry out a number of inspections and checks to ensure this. However, as our tenant, you also have a duty to co-operate with us.

This includes allowing us entry to undertake essential repairs and checks and not doing anything to override or disable any safety equipment that we provide.

For more information on your rights as a tenant and our responsibilities as your Landlord, please read your tenancy agreement. This Home Safety Guide does not replace your tenancy agreement and should be considered as additional information and guidance.

CONTENTS

This Guide contains information on the following:

Fire Safety

Electrical Safety

Gas Safety

Asbestos Management

Water Hygiene

Mobility Scooters

Alterations & Improvements



FIRE SAFETY

As your Landlord, River Clyde Homes provide and fit smoke alarms in our properties. You should also keep yourself safe and not do anything which could put yourself or other people at risk of injury from fire.



WHAT CAN I DO TO STAY SAFE?

Check that you have at least one working smoke alarm in your home. Contact us on 0800 013 2196 if you do not have a smoke alarm and we will arrange to have one installed. We recommend that you have a smoke detector in your lounge, hallway and a heat detector in your kitchen.

Test your smoke and heat alarm on a weekly basis. If your alarm starts to bleep on a regular basis it may have developed a fault or simply require new batteries. Please contact us for further information.

Never disconnect or take the batteries out of your smoke alarm. Some smoke alarms are connected to your electricity supply and you could be injured if you try to disconnect it.

For independent fire safety advice on smoke detectors, contact: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Tel: 0141 646 4500 or for a FREE Home Fire Safety Check please call: 0800 0731 999 or visit www.firescotland.gov.uk.



To reduce the risk of fire starting and spreading in your home:

- ▶ Do not store gas or petrol/diesel in your property
- ▶ Do not leave candles burning or food cooking unattended
- ▶ Always close doors at night, especially the doors to the lounge and kitchen
- ▶ Keep your exit route clear and your keys in an accessible place
- ▶ Do not smoke in bed and always dispose of cigarette ends carefully
- ▶ Take extra care if you smoke when you're tired, taking prescription drugs or if you have been drinking
- ▶ Keep lighters and matches out of sight and reach of children
- ▶ Don't leave vaping devices charging unattended
- ▶ Turn off electrical items not designed to stay on for long periods
- ▶ Always use the correct type of plug on your appliances and don't overload plug sockets or extension leads
- ▶ Take extra care if you smoke when you're tired, taking prescription drugs or if you have been drinking

If there is a fire or smoke in your home, or if the smoke alarm sounds:

- ▶ Alert everyone else and leave your home, staying together where possible
- ▶ Leave by your nearest exit
- ▶ Call 999 and ask for the fire service. Keep calm and speak clearly giving as much information as you can
- ▶ Go to a place of safety, away from the building and stay there until the fire service arrive so they know you are safe.



FIRE SAFETY IN MULTI- STOREY BUILDINGS

River Clyde Homes buildings are designed to keep you safe. If you live in a communal building, for example a multi-storey block or sheltered housing complex, it is important for the safety of everyone that corridors and stairwells are kept free of personal items. Mobility scooters must not be stored or left charging in corridors and escape routes.

Fire Doors

- ▶ Do not prop fire doors open in your property or in the communal areas. A fire door provides protection to the room or corridor behind, so it is important that they are kept closed unless they are fitted with an approved hold-open device. You should never wedge fire doors open.
- ▶ You should never carry out any alterations to your flat front door as this may reduce the protection it gives (fire rating).
- ▶ Do not remove or disable door closing devices. If the door closer is not working or you feel needs to be adjusted, please contact us on **0800 013 2196** to arrange an inspection and repair.



What should I do if there is a fire?

River Clyde Homes operates stay put Policy for fire evacuation in Multi –Storey Blocks this means that only the people in the flat or area in which the fire has started need to evacuate.

If you decide to evacuate the building please go to the designated assembly point so that the Fire and Rescue Service know you are safe.

If you have to leave the building in an event of a fire, always use the stairs and never use the lift. If you have to move through smoke keep as close to the floor as you can, where the air is fresher.



If a fire occurs in your home (General):

- ▶ Shout to alert the household and get out quickly
- ▶ If you have to move through smoke keep as close to the floor as you can, where the air is fresher.
- ▶ Close doors behind you as you escape, to prevent smoke and fire spread
- ▶ Don't return to investigate or fight the fire
- ▶ Don't use the lifts, always take the stairs to exit the building.

Once you get out, call the Fire and Rescue Service and stay out.

Only leave the safety of your flat if you're affected by heat or smoke, or if you're told to leave by firefighters or the Police.



Please see
Scottish Fire and Rescue
Service, (Multi-Storey
Fire Safety) leaflet for
additional fire safety
advice.



Fire safety when cooking

Kitchen fires are one of the most common causes of domestic fires and can easily take hold if food is left unattended. To reduce the risk of an injury or fire from cooking, please follow the advice given in this section:

- ▶ Take extra care if you have food cooking and need to leave the kitchen – always take pans off the heat or turn them down to avoid risk
- ▶ Take care when wearing loose clothing – they can easily catch fire. You should also keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob
- ▶ Use spark devices to light cookers – they are safer than matches or lighters because they don't have a naked flame
- ▶ Double check the cooker is off when you've finished cooking
- ▶ Keep the oven, hob and grill clean and in good working order – a build-up of fat and grease can ignite a fire
- ▶ Never put anything metal in a microwave – it can spark and cause fire
- ▶ Take care when cooking with hot oil – it sets alight easily
- ▶ If cooking oil starts to smoke – it's too hot. Turn off the heat and leave it to cool
- ▶ Use a thermostat controlled electric deep fat fryer – they can't overheat
- ▶ Never throw water over a chip-pan fire

For independent fire safety advice, contact:

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Tel: 0141 646 4500, for a FREE Home Fire Safety Check please call: 0800 0731 999 or visit www.firescotland.gov.uk

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

River Clyde Homes, as your Landlord have a legal duty to ensure that the wiring in your home and any equipment owned by River Clyde Homes and provided for your use is safe. We carry out periodic checks of the electrical wiring in your home. However, you are responsible for any electrical equipment you have brought into your home and how you use it.

To reduce the risk of an injury or fire caused by electrical faults you should follow the advice given in this section.

- ▶ Only buy electrical appliances and chargers from a reputable source and always check for a British or European safety mark
- ▶ Don't overload plug sockets or adaptors. An extension lead or adaptor will have a limit to how many amps it can take so be careful not to overload them – try to keep one plug per socket.
- ▶ Check your sockets regularly – if you see burn marks or they feel hot please contact us on 0800 013 2196 to arrange an inspection
- ▶ Ensure the correct fuse size is used
- ▶ Don't put electric heaters near curtains or furniture and don't dry clothes on them or cover the air vents on heaters
- ▶ Don't trail flexible cables under carpets or rugs – you won't be able to see any damage
- ▶ Regularly check for frayed or worn cables and wires. Check to see if the cable is fastened securely to the plug and check the socket for scorch marks. You should always carry out these checks before you use an appliance



CHECK
SOCKETS
REGULARLY

- ▶ Switch off appliances at the socket when not in use. Switch off appliances when you got to bed or when you go out unless they are supposed to be left on (e.g. fridge freezer)
- ▶ Carry out weekly tests on smoke alarms
- ▶ Keep electrical appliances clean and in good working order. Look out for fuses that blow, circuit-breakers that trip for no obvious reason and flickering lights
- ▶ Don't use electrical appliances near water and never touch electrical appliances with wet hands
- ▶ Don't use water on an electrical fire. Pull the plug out or switch the power off if it is safe to do so and call the Fire and Rescue Service.

For more information on electrical safety, visit the Electrical Safety Website www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk

GAS SAFETY

As your Landlord, River Clyde Homes have a legal duty to ensure that all gas appliances, fittings and flues installed within River Clyde Homes properties are safe for use. This includes things like central heating and boilers.

To do this, we must carry out an annual gas safety check using a registered Gas Safe engineer. We will notify you in writing when your gas safety check is due and arrange an appointment to complete the gas servicing.



What if an appliance fails the safety check?

If an appliance fails the safety check, it may be necessary then to disconnect it. The engineer will make the appliance safe while on site in this circumstance. They will then contact you to discuss and agree any further works required and when they will complete them. If one of the appliances that you own is faulty, the engineer will disconnect it and advise you seek help from a qualified Gas Safe Registered engineer.

What to do if you smell gas?

If you smell gas or suspect there is a gas leak you should:

- ▶ Turn off the appliance you are using
- ▶ Turn off the gas supply at gas meter
- ▶ Check to see if a gas tap has been accidentally left on or if a pilot light has gone out
- ▶ Extinguish all naked flames – do not smoke or strike matches
- ▶ Do not operate electrical switches – turning a light on or off can ignite leaking gas
- ▶ Open doors and windows to allow gas to disperse (this will get rid of gas by ventilating the property)
- ▶ Call Gas emergency service immediately on 0800 111 999

How can I tell if my gas appliance is faulty?

Any one of the following could be a sign that your gas appliance is faulty and may be producing carbon monoxide in your home:

- ▶ The flame on your cooker should be crisp and blue. Lazy yellow or orange flames mean you need to get your cooker checked
- ▶ Dark staining on or around gas appliances
- ▶ Pilot lights that frequently blow out
- ▶ Increased condensation inside windows

You should contact us immediately on 0800 013 2196 if you think that your gas appliance is not working properly.

Carbon Monoxide

If you have a faulty gas appliance, it can be dangerous and produce carbon monoxide gas. This is a colourless and odourless gas, which can cause headaches, dizziness, nausea, breathlessness and loss of consciousness. Exposure to carbon monoxide can also be fatal, so you should seek medical advice immediately if you have these symptoms.

During the annual gas safety check, River Clyde Homes registered gas safe engineer will install carbon monoxide detectors if there are none present and replace any that are faulty.

What if you have gas but no gas appliances?

If you have a gas supply meter fitted in the property, but do not have any gas appliances, we still need to inspect the pipework.



Gas Safety tips

- ▶ Make sure you know where your gas meter is located and how to turn off the gas supply in the event of an emergency
- ▶ Never cover an appliance such as a boiler or gas fire or block the air vents
- ▶ Never block or obstruct any fixed ventilation grilles or airbricks
- ▶ Never block or cover outside flues
- ▶ Never fit draught exclusion strips to doors of a room that contains a gas appliance
- ▶ Never use a gas appliance if you think it's not working properly and never cover gas appliances

Your gas safety responsibilities

You must allow us access to your home to complete your annual gas safety check. If you do not allow us access you will be in breach of your tenancy agreement and we will have the right to force access to your property.

If you employ anyone to carry out gas work in your home, you must ensure they are a registered Gas Safe engineer.

You must never attempt to do any gas related work or repairs yourself. Not only could you be breaking the law, but any work you carry out could be life threatening for you and your neighbours.

Section 2.14 of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement states that:

“You must not use or store bottled gas or paraffin or appliances which use bottled gas or paraffin in the house or in the vicinity of the house, unless you get our written permission first”.

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT

River Clyde Homes (RCH) has a regulatory duty to comply with **The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012**. We also have a duty of care for our customers and employees living or working in our properties.

What is asbestos and why was it used?

Asbestos is a mineral which has been used in building materials for many years from the 1950's until the mid 1980's worldwide. It is a good insulator and has been used extensively to protect building structures from fire and heat. Asbestos materials are only a risk to people's health if disturbed or damaged i.e breaking, sawing or drilling and therefore resulting in fibres being released into the atmosphere.

Is asbestos a hazard?

Most asbestos in homes generally does not put people at risk. Asbestos only becomes a risk when the fibres become airborne. Asbestos materials that are painted, mixed with other materials or enclosed and left alone are not a risk. Asbestos materials are only a risk when they are damaged or disturbed. As long as asbestos materials are in good condition, sealed and not likely to be worked on or damaged they will not release harmful fibres and is safe.

Leave it to us

If you suspect you may have disturbed asbestos or have found a suspected asbestos material **DO NOT PANIC.**

Call us on 0800 013 2196 for advice.

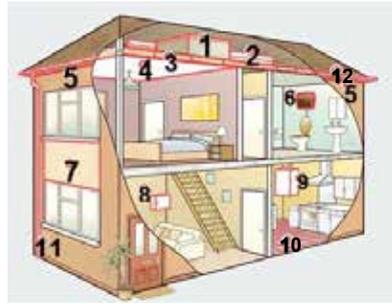
Do not attempt to clean it up or repair it yourself

Do not brush or vacuum as this will spread the fibres into the air.

Please Call us on 0800 013 2196 and River Clyde Homes will arrange for their specialist contractor to attend.

Do I have asbestos in my home?

The picture below shows you the places asbestos may have been used in typical domestic property, both inside and outside. However, not all properties will have asbestos in all these locations and your home may not have any asbestos at all.



Is River Clyde Homes managing asbestos in your home?

Our appointed specialist asbestos contractor carries out a variety of asbestos surveys in our properties. The surveys form part of our ongoing asbestos management programme and helps us build a portfolio of our properties. The survey information helps with any future repairs or planned improvement works and allows us to deal with the asbestos and therefore reduce the risk to tenants, employees or any other people who may visit the property. Should any removal / remedial work be required on asbestos materials, River Clyde Homes has an appointed HSE (Health and Safety Executive) approved licensed contractor to conduct such works. All customers moving into our properties will be told whether the property contains asbestos or not. Asbestos survey information will be made available to tenants who request it. For properties where there is no asbestos information available, it will be presumed the materials within the property contain asbestos until proven otherwise.



You should seek River Clyde Homes approval first if you are planning any type of work (major refurbishment, diy or decorating) in your home.

WATER HYGIENE

River Clyde Homes as your Landlord has an obligation to ensure you are aware of the possible causes and symptoms of Legionnaires' disease so you can identify any problems easily and report any concerns to us.

If your home has been empty for a long time, there is a chance that the quality of your water may be affected by the growth of bacteria, which occurs naturally from time to time in the mains water supply. Situations where this could happen include:

- ▶ If you have been away on holiday
- ▶ If you have been in hospital
- ▶ If there are water outlets such as showers, taps or hose pipes that are not used regularly

In sheltered housing complexes and high rise blocks, River Clyde Homes ensures that the communal facilities, empty properties and guest rooms are flushed weekly by our Wardens and caretakers. River Clyde Homes also arranges for monthly inspection and maintenance of the water systems through our approved water quality engineer.

What is Legionella and Legionnaires disease?

Legionella is a naturally occurring bacteria present in water. Although the risk is very low, there is a chance that Legionella bacteria can develop in stagnant or stored water in your home.

Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia and everyone is susceptible to infection. It is caused by the inhalation of very fine droplets of water from contaminated sources containing legionella bacteria.



Where is Legionella found?

All hot and cold water systems in residential properties are a potential source of legionella bacteria growth. It is usually caught in places like hotels, hospitals or offices where the bacteria have got into the water supply. It is very rare to catch it at home. The main areas of risk are where the bacteria can multiply and increase to dangerous levels and then spread, e.g. in spray from showers and taps. Conditions perfect for bacterial growth is where water of between 20°C and 45°C stagnates, and where there is sludge, rust and scale present for the bacteria to feed upon and multiply.

You can catch Legionnaires Disease it from things like:

- ▶ Air conditioning systems
- ▶ Spa pools and hot tubs
- ▶ Showers, taps and toilets

You can't usually get it from:

- ▶ Drinking water containing the bacteria
- ▶ Other people with the infection
- ▶ Places like ponds, lakes and rivers

Who is at risk?

Not everyone exposed to Legionella bacteria becomes ill. Legionnaires' disease is not contagious. On average there are approximately 500 reported cases of Legionnaires' disease a year across the United Kingdom. The symptoms of Legionnaires' disease are similar to those of flu:

- ▶ High temperature
- ▶ Tiredness
- ▶ Fevers or chills
- ▶ Muscle pain
- ▶ Headaches
- ▶ Dry coughs

There is no need for concern. Legionnaires' disease is easily preventable by putting in place some simple control measures.

What can I do to reduce the risk of Legionella?

- ▶ Run water through showers and taps for 10 minutes following a period of non-use (i.e. after you have been on holiday or if a room is not in regular use). When running the shower, try not to create any spray, by putting the shower head in a plastic bag.
- ▶ Keep all shower heads and taps clean and free from build-up of lime scale, mould or algae growth
- ▶ Flush toilets with the lid down following a period of non-use.
- ▶ Drain hosepipes after use and keep out of direct sunlight. Flush through for a couple of minutes before filling paddling pools etc.
- ▶ Keep spa's and Hot Tub's clean and free from dirt and debris and check and clean filters – change the water before use if it is not used often
- ▶ Keep stored hot water in your system at a temperature of 60 or greater (immersion heaters)

Report any deposits such as rust or any dirt flowing from your water outlets.

If you have any concerns regarding the quality of the water supply in your home, or for advice on how best to flush your taps and showers, please contact us on 0800 013 2196.



MOBILITY SCOOTERS

Mobility scooters can be a fire hazard if they are not stored and charged correctly. They will only be allowed in River Clyde Homes' buildings where it can be safely stored and charged without affecting the safe escape from the property in the case of fire. If you have a mobility scooter, you should let us know so that we can update our records.

Storage

Mobility scooters must not be stored in communal corridors or communal areas in blocks and sheltered schemes. In some buildings, mobility scooters can be stored inside your flat where access is available. Before you get a new scooter you must let us know and check that there is sufficient space to store it safely. It should not block your fire escape route or cause an obstruction to any visitors. If you store your mobility scooter outside a communal building, it must not cause a risk to any other residents or visitors, for example, by blocking fire escape routes.

Charging and maintenance

We have installed charging facilities for mobility scooters in some of our buildings and will continue to add more depending on the demand. Mobility scooters must not be charged in the communal corridors or communal areas. They should only be charged within your own home and according to the manufacturer's instructions. Charging should only be carried out during day time hours and not overnight. Mobility scooters should not be left unattended while charging. You must ensure that your scooter is serviced and maintained regularly and be able to show us evidence of this if requested.



ALTERATIONS & IMPROVEMENTS

Under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Scottish secure tenants and short Scottish secure tenants, you may be able to receive compensation from River Clyde Homes for improvements made to your home on or after 30 September 2002.

You must first get River Clyde Homes written permission as per section 5.21 of your tenancy agreement if you want to install, replace or fit any items from the list below (as taken from the Housing Scotland Act 2001):

- ▶ A bath or shower
- ▶ Cavity wall insulation
- ▶ Sound insulation
- ▶ Double glazing, replacing external windows or fitting secondary glazing
- ▶ Draught-proofing external doors or windows;
- ▶ Pipes, water tanks or cylinders;
- ▶ A kitchen sink;
- ▶ Loft insulation;
- ▶ Rewiring, providing power or lighting, or adding other electrical fixtures (including smoke detectors);
- ▶ Security measures other than burglar alarms;
- ▶ Space or water heating;
- ▶ Storage cupboards on a bathroom or kitchen;
- ▶ Thermostatic radiator valves;
- ▶ Wash hand basin;
- ▶ A toilet;
- ▶ A work surface for preparing food; and
- ▶ Mechanical ventilation in bathrooms and kitchens.

**DECORATING THE INSIDE OF YOUR HOME
DOES NOT QUALIFY FOR COMPENSATION.**



If you have made alterations or improvements with River Clyde Homes permission as per section 5.22 of your tenancy agreement, you may be entitled to compensation at the end of your tenancy, or when your tenancy is assigned or if your landlord changes. The Regulations that apply are the Scottish Secure Tenants (Compensation for Improvements) (Scotland) Regulations 2002 ("The Compensation Regulations"). You must apply for this compensation within the time limit stated in the Compensation Regulations – no earlier than 28 days before the end of your tenancy, the assignation or the change of landlord, and no later than 21 days afterwards. River Clyde Homes will need to know:

- ▶ Your name and address
- ▶ What improvements you have made
- ▶ How much each improvement cost;
- ▶ The date the improvements were started and finished

River Clyde Homes may also want to inspect the improvements. You can receive up to £4,000 for each improvement. You will not receive any compensation for an improvement if the amount of compensation would be less than £100.



RCH will start with the cost of the improvements and may ask you to provide proof of the amount you have spent. It is a good idea to keep a copy of any bills in a safe place and you may want to send a copy to River Clyde Homes when the works have been done.

If you had financial help such as a grant to help make your improvements, River Clyde Homes will take the amount of this grant from the cost of your improvements.

The value of the improvement you have made will decrease as the improvement gets older and as you get use out of it. The compensation you get will take the age of your improvement into account. River Clyde Homes may also reduce your compensation if they believe you paid too much for the improvement. River Clyde Homes may increase or reduce your compensation depending on the condition of the improvement when your tenancy ends. River Clyde Homes can also take off any money you owe from the compensation you are entitled to for example for unpaid rent.

Compensation can be claimed for:

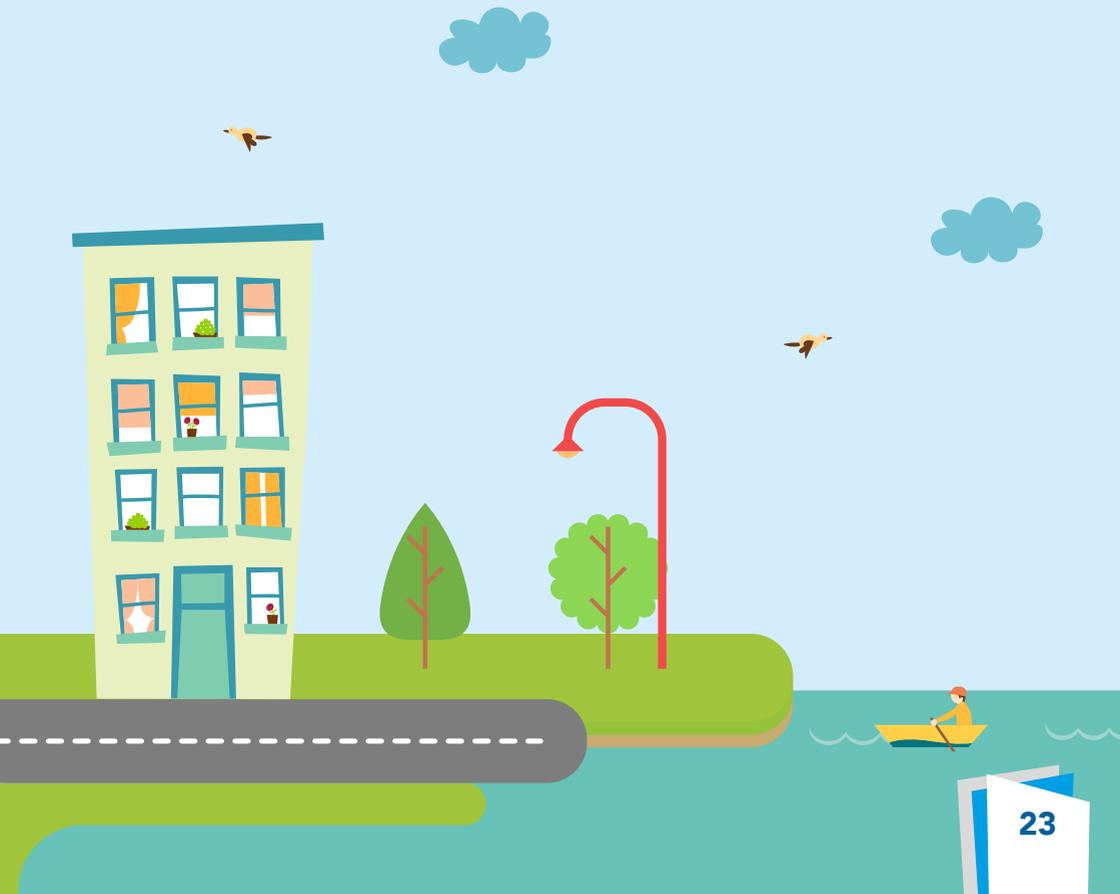
- ▶ the cost of materials (but not appliances such as cookers or fridges); and
- ▶ labour costs (but not your own labour)



If you carry out any alterations or improvements without River Clyde Homes permission as per section 5.23 of your tenancy agreement, River Clyde homes are entitled to restore the house to its previous condition during or at the end of the tenancy. If this is the case, River Clyde Homes are entitled to charge you for this work.

If you do not agree with River Clyde Home's decision on a claim, you can ask them to reconsider their decision within 28 days of giving it to you. RCH must then have their decision reviewed by:

- ▶ an independent valuer or surveyor of their choice;
- ▶ any of their members, committee members or board members who were not involved in making the original decision; or
- ▶ all of their members, committee members or board members.



To find out more, contact River Clyde Homes
Call Centre on 0800 013 2196 or the Scottish
Executive Development Department at:

Housing 2:3
Area 1-G
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

Email: housing.information@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Phone: 0131 244 2105

