

YOUR TENANCY



Our approach to tenancy agreements

We offer several different types of tenancy agreement:

- ▶ secure tenancies
- ▶ assured tenancies
- ▶ starter tenancies
- ▶ assured shorthold tenancies
- ▶ affordable rent tenancies
- ▶ fixed term tenancies (this applies only to tenants new to Octavia for homes with three or more bedrooms, we will take you through the different tenancy conditions where this applies).

What we mean by your tenancy agreement

Your Octavia tenancy agreement is a legal contract which sets out your rights and responsibilities as our tenant. Many of these rights and responsibilities are the same for all our tenants, but some depend on the type of tenancy you have.

Whatever your type of tenancy, you must be a good neighbour and tenant. You must make sure that everyone in your household, as well as your visitors, behaves considerately in and around your home. If you do not, you are putting your home at risk.

Joint tenancies

If two or more people in your household signed your tenancy agreement, you are joint tenants. This means that together and individually you are responsible for keeping to the agreement with us. For example, any rent that is owed can be charged to any one or all of the joint tenants. If you are renting a home from us under the Affordable Rent system (we will let you know if this is the case), how your rent is set and increased is different from 'traditional' tenancies.



Affordable rent tenancies

Under Affordable Rents, central government allowed housing associations to let some homes at up to 80% of market rent. At Octavia we have set our Affordable Rents at much lower than 80% of market rent. Affordable Rents will increase each year by inflation plus a set percentage. Unlike 'traditional' tenancies, service charges are included in the Affordable Rent charged. However, in the tenancy agreement we will show service charges separately so you know how much you are paying for services.

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What you can expect from our service

Use of your home

You can live in your home for as long as you choose if you are a secure or assured tenant, or for the length of your tenancy if you are an assured shorthold tenant; providing you keep to the conditions of your tenancy.

Repairs

We will keep your home and areas you share with your neighbours in good condition. We will carry out repairs that are our responsibility and will redecorate the outside of your home and shared areas every 5 to 10 years.

Passing on your tenancy or 'succession'

If you die while you are a sole tenant with an assured or secure tenancy, your tenancy will pass to either:

- your husband, wife, civil partner or someone living with you in an established relationship
- another member of your family, if they have lived with you at the property for at least 12 months immediately prior to your death.

You cannot usually pass on a tenancy if it was passed on to you by someone else.

The potential successor must write to us to make their claim to the tenancy. They will get the same rights as the original tenant, except that when they die, the tenancy cannot pass to anyone else. If the property is larger than will be needed for the new household, we have the right to offer the successor a smaller home instead. We can also offer an alternative home if the property had been adapted for someone with specific needs and the adaptations are no longer needed.

If you die while you are a joint tenant with an assured or secure tenancy, your tenancy will automatically pass to the surviving tenant and will count as succession. The tenancy cannot pass to anyone else when the surviving tenant dies.

If you want to carry on living in your Octavia home after a joint tenant moves out, you need to contact us straight away to discuss what options are available.



Transferring your tenancy or 'assignment'

In some cases, you have the right to pass on your tenancy to someone else. An assignment can take place when:

- a court orders it as part of family proceedings
- you are exchanging your home with another tenant
- the person you assign the tenancy to would qualify as a successor if you died.

Your responsibilities during your tenancy

Your tenancy agreement explains all of your responsibilities as an Octavia tenant. These include:

- paying your rent and any other services charges on time and in full
- paying any other bills for your home, such as utility bills and council tax
- letting us know about any changes in your household, such as if someone moves in or out
- looking after your home, completing any repairs that are your responsibility and keeping the internal decoration in good order
- reporting any repairs that are our responsibility to us
- giving us access to your home so that we can check its condition and carry out repairs - we normally give you at least 24 hours' notice but this may not always be possible in emergency situations
- giving our contractor access to your home to complete an annual gas safety check.

There are some things which you will need our permission to do in your home. You must ask us in writing if you want to:

- keep a pet at your home
- make improvements to your home
- run a business from your home
- have someone else move into your home with you, including lodgers if you have this right
- swap your home with another housing association or council tenant - you have the right to do this if you are a secure or assured tenant
- end your tenancy - you must give us four weeks' notice (or a full calendar month, if you have a monthly tenancy) or you will be charged to the end of the notice period.

Although you do not need our permission, you also need to tell us in writing if you are going away from your home for more than six weeks. We will want to know the names and details of anyone living in your home or looking after it while you are away.

Making sure that we are succeeding

We will go through your tenancy agreement with you when you sign up to make sure you have understood your rights and responsibilities as our tenant. We carry out regular satisfaction surveys to check if tenants are happy with their tenancy and help us improve our service.

How to contact us about your tenancy

For more information or to request a transfer form please visit our website octaviahousing.org.uk or contact the Customer Contact Team on the number below.



Please contact us if you need any part of this information in Braille,
on audio tape or explained in a different language.

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