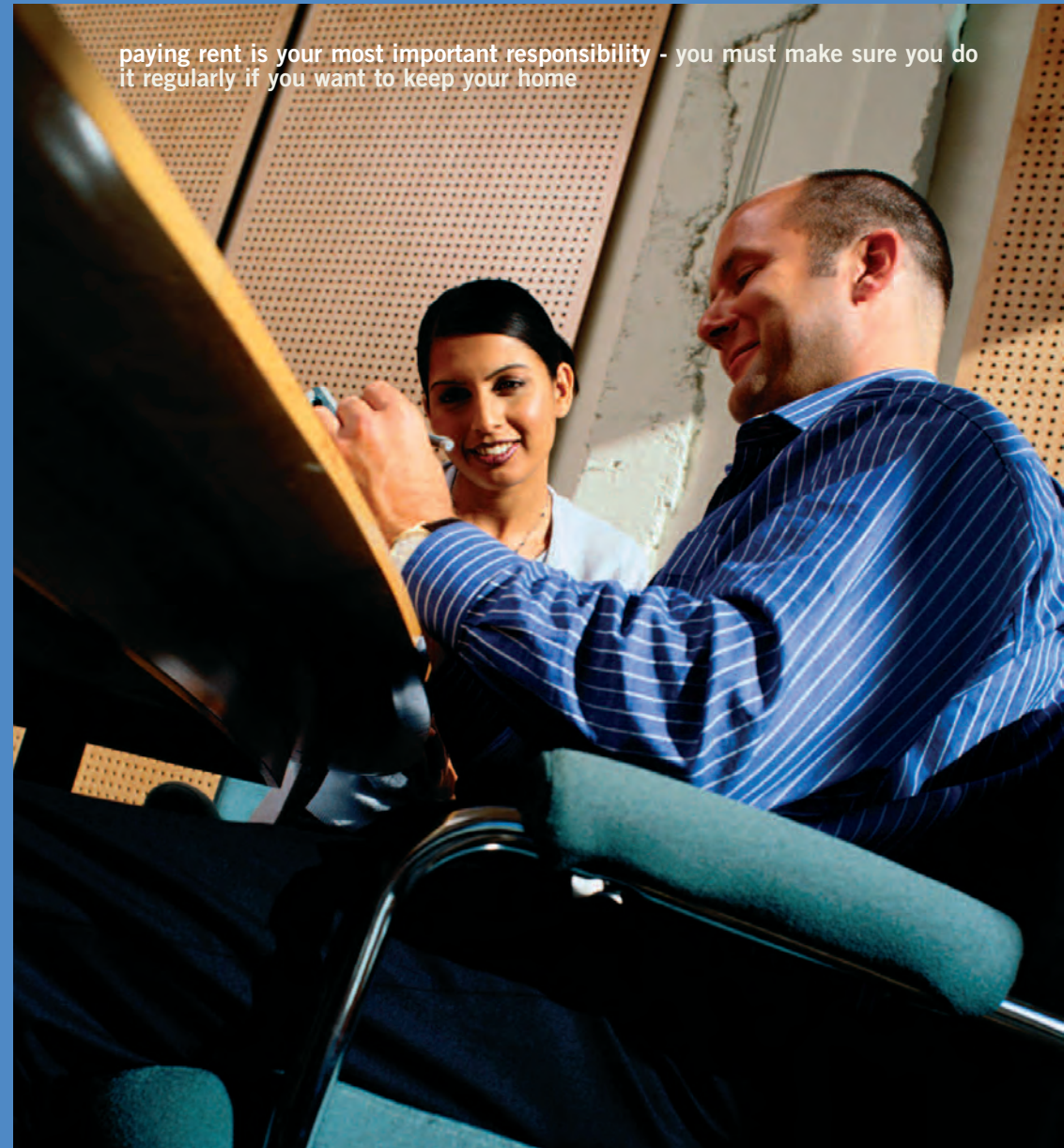


paying your rent

paying rent is your most important responsibility - you must make sure you do it regularly if you want to keep your home



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Rent Obligations

When you become a tenant of Ashton Pioneer Homes you will sign a Tenancy Agreement which is a legal contract. This will explain your responsibilities as a tenant the main one of which is to pay your rent each week.

If you are claiming Housing Benefit, it is your responsibility to ensure you complete the necessary forms and liaise with the Housing Benefit Department to ensure they have all the necessary information to process your claim. Staff at Ashton Pioneer Homes have been trained to verify all your documentation on behalf of the Local Authority.

As an APH tenant, you must pay your rent in advance but this can be done by setting up a Direct Debit or Standing Order with your Bank Account. If there is a delay with your Housing Benefit claim or you have any other problems with your rent, then it is important you contact your Housing Officer immediately.

Paying rent is your most important responsibility. You must make sure you do it regularly if you want to keep your home.

We'll give you a rent card, which clearly shows the amount you need to pay. Please bring it with you whenever you pay your rent, so we can update it.

Your rent is due each Monday and you'll need to pay it every week. If you want to pay less often you'll have to pay in advance.

Non collecting rent weeks

We don't collect rent for two weeks in December, providing your account is in credit/clear.

How to Pay Your Rent

You can pay your rent in any of the following ways:

- in person at the Ashton Pioneer Homes office
- deliver by hand at Ashton Pioneer Homes
- by Direct Debit
- by Standing Order
- by post
- by Housing Benefit

Paying your rent in person at the Ashton Pioneer Homes office

You can pay your rent at our office in Margaret House on Margaret Street. It's open between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday (9.00am - 3.00pm on Wednesdays).

You can pay by cash or cheque, but always make sure we update your rent card with your payment – or get a receipt.

Deliver by hand at Ashton Pioneer Homes

You can put your rent in an envelope and drop it into our Quickpay box inside the office in reception. Remember to include your name and address.

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Paying your rent by Direct Debit

To pay your rent by Direct Debit, you'll need to complete one of our Direct Debit forms. Contact us and we will arrange the amount and payment terms with you.

Your rent will then be paid automatically from your bank account into the Ashton Pioneer Homes account.

If we need to make any changes – for example, when your rent increases – you won't have to do anything. We'll make the changes for you.

Paying your rent by Standing Order

To pay your rent by Standing Order, you'll need to complete one of our Standing Order forms. Contact the Customer Services Team, who will arrange the amount and payment terms with you.

Your rent will then be paid automatically from your bank account into the Ashton Pioneer Homes account.

If we need to make any changes – for example, when your rent increases – you'll have to arrange them with your bank.

Paying your rent by post

If you want to pay by post, it's best to pay by cheque or postal order. You can pay cash if you wish – but for security reasons, you should avoid sending cash through the post.

Always remember to include your name and address, so we can send a receipt to you and send us your rent card.

What Your Rent Does Not Include

■ Council Tax payments

You need to pay these directly to Tameside Council.

■ Water charges

You need to pay these directly to your water utility supplier.

■ Gas, electricity and telephone

You must pay these directly to the supplier.

■ Home contents insurance

Ashton Pioneer Homes insurance only covers the structure of your home. It's not our responsibility to replace any personal possessions you lose, or to repair any damage to the decoration of your property resulting from burst pipes, fire or burglary.

To make sure you're covered, we recommend you take out a home contents policy.

What can I do if I am experiencing Debt problems?

If you are struggling to pay your rent and other important bills because you are experiencing debt problems then there are a number of things you must do.

Firstly you must contact your Housing Services Officer so that we are aware of your situation. Staff will deal with your case sympathetically and will try and assist with other agencies where possible. The sooner we know about any debt problems the easier it is for us to help you.

The next step is to make contact with more specialist advice agencies. Your Housing Services Officer will be able to assist you in this process. The Tameside

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Welfare Rights Service or the Citizens Advice Bureau will be able to offer you free and independent advice. They will be able to maximise your income by doing a full welfare benefit check to assess your entitlement. They also provide a full debt counselling service and in some cases will be able to reduce your debts by speaking to the companies direct.

Finally it is very important you make contact yourself with the Housing Benefit Department at Tameside Council so that they can assess if you are eligible for help with your rent. If you are on a low income, welfare benefits on the sick or you are pregnant you may be entitled to Housing Benefit. Unfortunately this can not usually be backdated so it is important you claim as soon as possible.

Staff at Ashton Pioneer Homes will help you as much as they can in these processes.

We are here to help!!!