



## **Becoming a Member of Tenants First Housing Co-operative through the Mortgage to Rent Scheme**

### **1. What is this fact sheet about**

The prevention of homelessness, whatever the cause, is a key strategic aim of Tenants First Housing Co-operative. In meeting this objective Tenants First is an active participant in the Scottish Government's Mortgage to Rent scheme. This scheme may help home owners who are in mortgage difficulties, stay in their home.

This fact sheet provides a summary of what it means to you if you become a member of the Co-operative and what you can expect from the mortgage to rent process.

### **2. How long will it take Tenants First to purchase my home?**

Unfortunately, we cannot give an exact timescale as to how long this will take and, indeed, if it will go ahead. The first step is for Tenants First to agree to purchase your property; if we decide to do this then we notify the Scottish Government of this decision. Solicitor's will then take over the management of purchasing your home. The whole process can take several months.

If the purchase is concluded it is often the case that we are advised of your settlement date at the last minute. You must be prepared for this as you will have to sign a tenancy agreement shortly after. We will keep you informed of any progress made.

### **3. Becoming a Member of the Co-operative**

To become a member/joint member of the Co-operative you are required to pay £1.00. You will be given a share certificate. This gives you the right to participate in the running of the Co-operative and make decisions about the business. You can also attend our Annual General Meetings to find out how your rent money is being spent e.g. any improvements to be made to the properties and join the various sub-committees and/or Resident Tenant Associations that we have.

### **4. Visits from staff / our contractors**

We will arrange for your property to be surveyed and gas and electrical checks to be carried out. Our Property Management section will also check to see if any repairs are required to your property.

A Housing Officer will visit you to provide you with information on the Co-operative as a prospective landlord, the process of the house sale and how your tenancy will work.

## **5. The Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement**

On successful completion of your Mortgage to Rent application you will sign a tenancy agreement with Tenants First Housing Co-operative. This agreement is more commonly known as a Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement (SST) and it details all the conditions of your tenancy between you and Tenants First Housing Co-operative. It is a legally binding contract. This is an ongoing agreement which gives you security of tenure.

## **6. Will I be able to buy my home back?**

No. The Co-operative cannot give you the right to 'buy back' your home at anytime in the future. This is in line with current legislation. However, you will have security of a Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement for as long as you wish to remain a member of the Co-operative, so long as you continue to abide by the tenancy conditions.

## **7. How much rent will I be charged?**

We will provide details of your rent during the home visit by our Housing Officer. Rent is charged monthly in advance. E.g. if you sign up to your tenancy on 14<sup>th</sup> May, you will be paying from 14<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> May on the day you sign your tenancy. Your next monthly rent is then due to be paid on or before 1<sup>st</sup> June. We offer several methods to allow you to pay the rent, including Direct Debit, Debit Card, Internet, Bank, Post Office or Housing Benefit (if you qualify).

## **8. What kind of house insurance will I need?**

The Co-operative will provide buildings insurance for your home. However, you will have to arrange home contents insurance for your belongings and décor. There are many insurance companies that you can choose from and you are free to choose any that meet your requirements.

## **9. Referral to the Independent Financial Inclusion Officer?**

Once you are a member of the Co-operative it is compulsory that you are referred to the Financial Inclusion Officer. The Financial Inclusion Officer provides an independent and confidential service. You can discuss your finances with them and they can assist you with such things as; applying for any benefits or charity payments that you may be entitled and giving you budgeting advice.

### **10. Will I be responsible for any repairs or improvements to the property?**

There may be certain improvements required to your property to bring it up to the Scottish Quality Housing Standard (SQHS). You will be advised of this by our Property Management Section.

Further improvements for your property will be scheduled into our planned maintenance programme which shows when specific improvements will be carried out each year to our properties.

When you become a member, we will advise you how to report repairs that we carry out, and a list of what repairs Tenants First is responsible for. We will also advise you of what your responsibilities are because not all repairs will be carried out by the landlord e.g. the replacement of a toilet seat will be your responsibility.

### **11. Final Stage?**

As stated previously you must be ready to sign for your tenancy at any time as the sale may settle very quickly. You must attend one of our offices to carry out the signing which will take approximately 45-60 minutes.

We will advise what you need to bring with you but this will include; identification of who you are, details of your bank account if you are paying by Direct Debit or Standing Order, your £1.00 membership, details of any benefit income and bank statements if you are claiming housing benefit and any rent money due.

**If you would like more information and advice or would like to comment on your views of our service please contact us:**

<p><b><u>Tenants First Housing Co-operative</u></b>            23 Albert Street,            Aberdeen            AB25 1XX            Telephone 01224 628400,            Fax 01224 628428            e-mail <a href="mailto:enq@tenantsfirst.com">enq@tenantsfirst.com</a></p> <p><b>Office Opening Hours:</b>            Monday to Thursday - 8.30 am to 5.30pm            Friday - 8.30am to 4.30pm.</p>	<p><b><u>Tenants First Housing Co-operative</u></b>            27 Slains Court,            Peterhead            AB42 2YF            Telephone 01799 474282,            Fax 01779 871969            e-mail <a href="mailto:enq@tenantsfirst.com">enq@tenantsfirst.com</a></p> <p><b>Office Opening Hours:</b>            Monday to Thursday - 9am to 5pm            Friday - 9am to 4.30pm.</p> <p>(between 12.30 and 1.30pm every day the office closes)</p>
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**Our web site address is [www.tenantsfirst.com](http://www.tenantsfirst.com) or e-mail [enq@tenantsfirst.com](mailto:enq@tenantsfirst.com)**