



TENANT'S GUIDE



to living in one of our properties

The importance of being Ernest

Time for a quick history lesson

Ernest Cook was the shy, unassuming grandson of travel agent, Thomas Cook. When great wealth was thrust upon him, he combined this good fortune with a passion for conserving the countryside, buying several country estates which were eventually bequeathed to his educational charity, The Ernest Cook Trust.

Fast forward seventy years, the legacy of this remarkable bequest can be seen in the dynamic work pioneered by The Ernest Cook Trust today.

The important difference we make

As one of the UK's foremost providers and funders of Outdoor Learning, our programmes support children and young people, their families and communities, particularly those that are disadvantaged. We help to nurture a lifelong journey of learning, appreciation and respect for the countryside, encouraging stronger connections to nature.

We do this on and beyond our 23,000 acres of land, located across six counties from Cumbria to Dorset. See our UK-wide impact. [UK-wide impact](#)

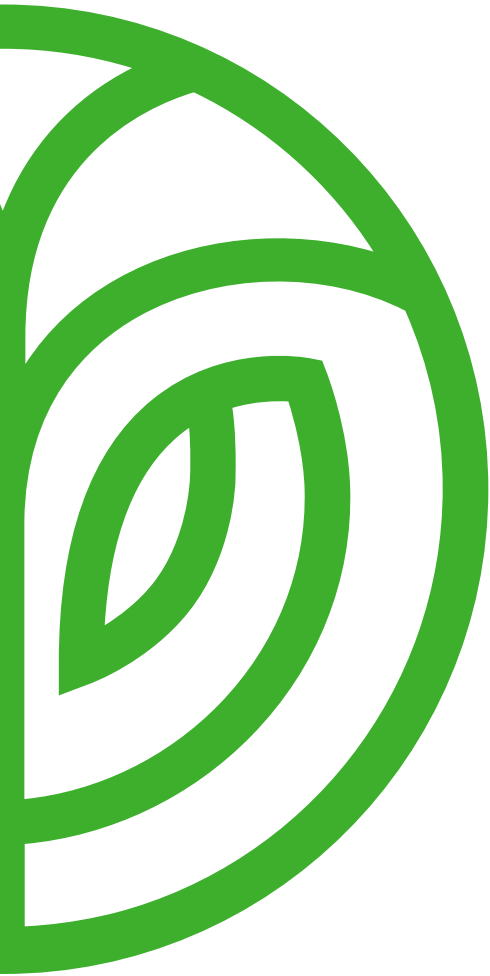
By working with likeminded partners and collaborators, we ensure this important work has a secure future, for the people we support and the land in our custody.

Thank you

Surplus income from our properties contributes to the important work of The Ernest Cook Trust. As a tenant living in one of our properties, you are contributing to the important work of The Ernest Cook Trust - thank you.

Find out more about [what we do](#).





Welcome

Whether you are a new tenant or have been with us for years, we're delighted that you have made your home in one of The Ernest Cook Trust's properties.

You are part of a unique story that has seen the Trust's charitable activities make a real and lasting difference to many thousands of disadvantaged children and young people across the UK for over 70 years.

As your landlord, we recognise our duty of care and responsibilities to you, aiming to be fair and professional in all our dealings. Our role is carefully governed, particularly as we are a registered charity. We aspire to give you the highest quality service and support. Our main priorities are:

- » **To provide a comfortable, secure and well-maintained home**
- » **To ensure that both the Trust as landlord, and you as the tenant, fulfil our obligations and abide by the Tenancy Agreement**
- » **To keep the lines of communication between us open, regular and courteous**

Please take a few minutes to read through this Guide. You will find a detailed framework of useful information and an outline of our respective responsibilities.

We look forward to continuing the unique story of The Ernest Cook Trust with you.

Thank you.

Michael Birnie MRICS FAAV
Property Director

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Our Property Administrator

For all general enquiries regarding your property or tenancy, please contact our Property Administrator.



Clare Tapley - Property Administrator

Tel 01285 712492

Email: clare.tapley@ernestcooktrust.org.uk

Normal office hours: Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm
(out of hours answerphone available)

Emergencies

If you have an emergency at your property which requires our assistance, call 01285 712492 (+ option 7 if calling outside normal office hours)

General Emergency Advice

If you find yourself in an emergency, your common sense and instincts will usually take over. However, please remember the following:

- » Call 999 – if someone is injured or there is a threat to life
- » Don't put yourself or others in danger
- » Remain calm, think before acting
- » Follow the advice of the emergency services

Gas Emergency Advice

If you smell gas anywhere in or around your home, you MUST:

- » Put out all naked flames
- » Call National Gas Emergencies IMMEDIATELY on 0800 111 999
- » Open doors and windows to let in fresh air
- » DO NOT use any electrical equipment, not even to switch off
- » Wait outside the property for the engineer to arrive

Power Cut Advice

If you experience a complete loss of power:

- » Check to see if your neighbours have also lost power
- » Call the National Power Cut Helpline on 105
- » Alternatively, contact your power supplier (refer to your Tenancy Agreement for details)

Water Supply Cut

If you experience a complete loss of cold water supply:

- » Check to see if your neighbours have also lost water supply
- » Call your Water supplier (refer to your Tenancy Agreement for details)

Landlord & Tenant Responsibilities

There are a number of landlord and tenant responsibilities that both parties are obliged to fulfil. These are summarised here, together with our rights and obligations as your landlord. Further details can be found in your Tenancy Agreement.

As landlord, what will The Ernest Cook Trust do?

- » Be fair and respectful
- » Communicate in a way that is professional and courteous
- » Respond to enquiries and problems quickly and efficiently
- » As far as possible, arrange meetings to take place at your home when it is convenient for you
- » Continually review and monitor our services, and make improvements where necessary

The Ernest Cook Trust's responsibilities, as landlord

- » Keeping your property wind and watertight
- » Keeping the outside structure of your property in a good state of repair including external decoration
- » Keeping your property safe and secure
- » Ensuring that the gas, electricity, oil, water and sanitation services are maintained
- » Keeping the property fixtures and fittings operational and in a good state of repair

What rights does The Ernest Cook Trust have?

- » The right to review and change the terms of your Tenancy Agreement
- » The right to enter your property to carry out repairs, inspections and general servicing after providing the necessary notice
- » The right to end your tenancy should you breach your tenancy agreement, or we require the property back

Landlord & Tenant Responsibilities

Over three-quarters of our tenants said that they were either quite likely or very likely to recommend The Ernest Cook Trust as a landlord to their friends and family

According to the 67% of tenants who responded to our July 2022 Tenant Survey

As the tenant, what are your responsibilities?

- » Looking after your home as set out in the terms of your Tenancy Agreement
- » Paying the rent and bills for your home on time until the end of your tenancy, including your notice period
- » Setting up your own accounts with utility providers; informing them when you leave the property
- » Registering with your local authority with regard to council tax, electoral roll, refuse collection, recycling etc
- » Arranging for Contents Insurance to cover your possessions
- » Arranging your own telephone and broadband connections, and TV Licence
- » Keeping the inside of your home in a good state of decoration
- » Keeping the inside of your home tidy, clean and in good condition
- » Living in and not sub-letting your home either in whole or in part
- » Not causing any nuisance or annoyance to your neighbours or to others
- » Heating and ventilating your home
- » Maintaining the garden: however please do not cut down or cut back large trees or well established hedges without our written permission
- » Retaining keys to all doors and windows
- » Replacing broken glass panes, bath and basin plugs, toilet seats, fuses and light bulbs as and when required
- » Maintaining smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms when appropriate (this is not required for mains powered devices) and testing on a regular basis
- » Emptying your septic tank as and when necessary. Check your Tenancy Agreement for more details. If you are unsure, please contact the Property Administrator
- » Arranging for chimneys to be swept, if your property has open fires or wood burning stoves
- » Keeping your home vermin and pest free both inside and outside. This includes the removal of bee and wasp nests
- » Letting us know in writing if you plan to leave before the end of your tenancy term date, giving us at least 2 months' notice, or following the end of your fixed term
- » Informing us of any repairs that need addressing as soon as possible

Services & Supplies

At the start of your tenancy, we will advise all utility providers and your local authority that you have moved in to the property, providing them with any required meter readings.

Please note that it is your responsibility as the tenant to set up your own accounts with these utility suppliers (pay the bills and inform them when you move out of the property).

Changing your electricity or gas supply to a 'Pay as you go' key meter is only permitted with The Ernest Cook Trust's prior written consent.

You may change utility suppliers, but you must notify us of this in writing.

Please refer to your Tenancy Agreement for details of your utility providers.

Locations for the following, where appropriate, can be found in the Inventory provided at the start of your tenancy:

- » **Fuse box**
- » **Electricity meter**
- » **Gas meter**
- » **Water meter**
- » **Oil tank location**

Water & Sewage Supply Contacts

Estate	Supplier	Website	Telephone
Barnsley Fairford Filkins Hartwell Hatherop	Thames Water	www.thameswater.co.uk	0800 316 9800
Little Dalby Slimbridge	Severn Trent Water	www.stwater.co.uk	0800 783 4444
Trent	Wessex Water	www.wessexwater.co.uk	0345 600 4600

Water Meter and Stopcock Location

Please see your house inventory

Local Council Contacts

Estate	Council	Website	Telephone
Barnsley Fairford Hatherop	Cotswold District Council	www.cotswold.gov.uk	01285 623000
Filkins	West Oxfordshire District Council	www.westoxon.gov.uk	01993 961000
Hartwell	Aylesbury Vale District Council	www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk	01296 585858
Little Dalby	Melton Borough Council	www.melton.gov.uk	01664 502502
Slimbridge	Stroud District Council	www.stroud.gov.uk	01453 766321
Trent	West Dorset District Council	www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk	01305 251010

British Telecom Contact

Customer Services	0800 800 150
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Repairs

“ECT stay in touch, they also leave you to enjoy your home.”

Tenant comment

Repairs to your property are categorised as either **Emergency**, **Urgent** or **Routine**.

The list below shows how we categorise different repairs.

Emergency Repairs:

Where the following apply:

- » An immediate risk to health and safety
- » Failure of essential services
- » Your home is not secure
- » Your home may be at risk of major damage

Urgent Repairs:

Where the following apply:

- » A possible risk to health and safety
- » Significant damage to your home

Routine Repairs:

All non-emergency, non-urgent repairs

Please note that some repairs may take longer than anticipated to resolve. This should only occur if there is an issue with resources, a delay obtaining any required approvals, or if the repair requires more time to complete than was originally anticipated. We will always try to work efficiently and effectively, but appreciate your understanding and co-operation when circumstances are beyond our control.

Where appropriate, external contractors will be used to resolve issues at your property.

If an agreed repair has not been carried out in an agreed timescale, please contact the Property Administrator who will investigate and make appropriate arrangements.

Repairs

	Item	Priority
Plumbing	Burst blocked or overflowing pipes	EMERGENCY
	Water going into electrics	EMERGENCY
	Toilet pan blocked	EMERGENCY
	Large leaks at joints and seals	EMERGENCY
	Water pipes frozen	EMERGENCY
	Stopcock jammed – no water supply	EMERGENCY
	Little or no water through pipes	EMERGENCY
	Heating not working (May be recharged if due to tenant running out of fuel)	EMERGENCY
	Water coming in through door	EMERGENCY
	Pipes or waste leaking	URGENT
	Small leaks at joints and seals	URGENT
	Pan, cistern, basin or bath broken	URGENT
	Radiator leaking	URGENT
	Toilet cistern will not flush	URGENT
Toilet flush handle or chain broken	URGENT	

Repairs

	Item	Priority
Plumbing	Shower not working	URGENT
	Pipes burst underground	EMERGENCY
	Pan, seat, cistern basin or bath loose	ROUTINE
	Tap dripping or will not turn off/on	ROUTINE
	Rainwater gully/trap/outlet blocked	ROUTINE
Kitchen	Plug or chain missing/damaged	ROUTINE
	Wall units loose or dangerous	URGENT
	Shelves and drawers require repair	ROUTINE
Doors	Kitchen units and ironmongery faulty	ROUTINE
	External door will not close securely	EMERGENCY
	External door will not open	EMERGENCY
	Forced entry required (May be recharged if due to tenants losing keys)	EMERGENCY
Windows	Internal door requires repair	ROUTINE
	Window glazing broken (May be recharged if damage caused be tenant's actions)	EMERGENCY
	Windows require repair	ROUTINE

General Advice & Problem Solving

We have compiled this list of general advice to help with the regular enquiries and problems you may encounter as one of our tenants. Not all items listed will be relevant to your property. This list is not exhaustive and is intended as a simple guide.

Boilers

We will arrange for your boiler to be serviced annually.

Heating

If the heating stops working, we ask that you carry out the following fault finding checks before contacting the Property Administrator:

Conventional Boilers

- » For Oil Boilers - is there oil in the tank?
- » Thermostat - check that it is set to at least 19°C
- » Pilot light - is it lit for a gas boiler?
- » Boiler switch - is it turned on at the electric socket?
- » Fuses - has the fuse in the boiler's electrical plug blown?
- » Programme time - has it been set to the correct day/date/time and is it working?
- » 'Lock Out' valve - make sure this valve is depressed. (This is usually red)

Combi Boilers

- » Oil - is there oil in the tank?
- » Pressure bar - check the pressure reading, it should be reading at least 1
- » 'Lock Out' valve - make sure this valve is depressed. (This is usually red)

Oil Tanks

- » Please ensure that there is oil in the tank at all times.
- » If the oil is allowed to run low or dry and your boiler stops working, the pipes will need to be flushed through after delivery - the cost of this will be recharged to you. We recommend that you have at least 30cm /12" of oil at all times
- » Please ensure that you check the oil level in the tank regularly (weekly or fortnightly) especially during cold weather
- » The most effective way of checking the oil level, even if you have a monitor, is by dipping a long clean bamboo cane into the tank, and measuring the level of oil
- » Please note that at busy times of the year it can take several days for oil to be delivered
- » If you are concerned that your oil tank is leaking, or need help measuring, please contact the Property Administrator

Radiators

Radiators will, from time to time require bleeding to keep the heating system working efficiently. It is your responsibility to bleed the radiators - please contact us if you need advice on how to do this.

General Advice & Problem Solving

"I feel very much NOT just another tenant. Interaction with the Trust is always genuinely friendly, rather than the 'have a nice day' blandness and insincerity found elsewhere."

Tenant comment

Open Fires & Wood Burning Stoves

- » Please burn seasoned one year-old logs or dry logs, kindling or coal
- » Please be aware that burning damp or green logs increases the risk of tar deposits in the chimney which cannot be removed via a chimney sweep and can greatly increase the risk of a chimney fire
- » Chimneys should be swept a minimum of once a year
- » If you have a wood burning stove, chimney sweeping is required twice a year
- » If you have a thatched property the chimney **MUST** be swept twice a year, ideally once before you use it and then once again after winter

Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Alarms

- » You are responsible for the checking and testing of both smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in your home on a regular basis
- » Unless mains operated, you are also responsible for maintaining the alarms
- » Carbon monoxide alarms will be fitted in rooms where there are open fires, wood burning stoves, Agas and Rayburns
- » Please do not remove these alarms or disconnect the batteries as they are there for your health and safety

Freezing Pipes

To avoid burst pipes:

- » Keep the property comfortably warm throughout the day and night
- » If you leave your property unattended for more than 2 weeks please notify the Property Administrator. You will be required to turn off the water at the stopcock and/or drain down the hot and cold water systems

Burst Pipes

If you have a burst pipe:

- » Turn off the water supply at the stopcock
- » Switch off the electricity supply at the mains if water may come into contact with it
- » Switch off any water heaters
- » Switch off the central heating system
- » Telephone your Water Supplier emergency helpline (as appropriate)
- » Warn neighbours who might suffer damage
- » Telephone the Property Administrator to advise

General Advice & Problem Solving

Almost half of The Ernest Cook Trust's tenants have been living in their homes for more than 10 years, way above national averages

Hard Water

Some properties are supplied with hard water which can cause limescale to build up in water pipes and appliances. We recommend that you de-scale sanitaryware (taps, WC, shower heads etc) regularly to prevent them from failing.

There are many cleaning products available on the market for limescale removal. Cost effective alternatives include white vinegar, lemon juice or caustic soda. Always take care when handling these cleaning products - wear rubber gloves and follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Septic Tanks & Drains

Your Tenancy Agreement will explain if you have a septic tank. If so, it is your responsibility to have it emptied. When substances other than waste water are flushed down the drains, problems can occur. For example, fats and oils can solidify causing smells and blockages, or using excess washing powder can clog the pipes. Please do not put the following items down drains:

- » Waste food
- » Sanitary products
- » Disposable nappies and wipes
- » Cotton wool and buds
- » Bandages and dressings
- » Fats, oils and grease
- » Paints and solvents
- » Fuel

Condensation

Condensation mainly occurs during cold weather, appearing in places where there is little air flow, such as bathrooms, windows and behind large pieces of furniture. As a result, black mould can occur which should be wiped down and cleaned. Please follow these guidelines to help reduce condensation:

Heat your home more

Keep low background heating on as much as possible. Try to keep a consistent room temperature as fluctuations cause condensation to form as air temperatures cool down quickly. This can also be cost effective.

Produce less moisture

- » Use lids and cover pans when cooking
- » Dry clothes outside or in a bathroom with the door closed and the window open or extractor fan switched on
- » Wipe away any moisture appearing on walls, windows, sills and other surfaces as soon as it appears

Ventilate to remove moisture

- » Open windows in kitchens and bathrooms when in use or make sure that any extractor fan is switched on
- » If possible, keep small windows ajar or trickle vents open
- » Do not block up any permanent vents, extractor fans, chimneys or windows

General Advice & Problem Solving

More than 80% of The Ernest Cook Trust's tenants said that they were either quite satisfied or very satisfied with their home

According to the 67% of tenants who responded to our July 2022 Tenant Survey

Minor Interior Works

With written permission, we are happy for you to do minor interior works to your home such as hanging pictures or installing blinds or curtain poles. However, this work must be done to a good standard or you may be charged at the end of your tenancy to make good. Alternatively, find a reputable local contractor to undertake such minor works for you.

Gardens

It is your responsibility to maintain the garden. As a minimum, we expect you to cut the hedges back at least twice a year and to mow the lawn at least fortnightly.

Please note that hedge cutting is normally carried out in the winter period between September and February. If you have large trees or well established hedges please contact the Property Administrator who will organise a specialist to carry out the work and re-charge you the cost.

Vermin & Pest Control

It is your responsibility to ensure your home is free from all vermin and pests both inside and out. This includes the removal of bee and wasp nests. Contact your local council's Environmental Health team for advice and assistance.

Pets

Pets are permitted where you have our written permission. We reserve the right to withdraw this consent at any time if any pet becomes a nuisance or damages the property. For further information or advice, please contact the Property Administrator.

If your tenancy comes to an end

This will be covered in more detail closer to the end of your tenancy. As a general guide, the property must be returned to us in a similar condition as when you started the tenancy, and as noted on your Inventory, if you have one. All of your belongings must be removed.

Please check, clean and tidy:

- › Interior doors and walls
- › Windows inside and out
- › Kitchen cupboards, units, surfaces and appliances
- › Bathrooms, shower screens
- › Sinks, splash back areas, tiles
- › Fireplaces
- › Garden, sheds and garage

Please also ensure that all keys associated with the property are returned to us. As a general guide, please check your Tenancy Agreement to see what notice is required and call us at the first opportunity, or to discuss any queries.

Frequently Asked Questions

With a new home there are lots of things to think about and ask. Here are a few of the questions that we are asked most frequently.

Q Will the landlord repair something that a tenant damages?

A If you (or someone who lives in or visits your home) damage the house or fittings in the house, such as kitchen units, window panes, sanitary ware or the heating system, walls, garden structures or plants - then it is your responsibility to repair the damage. We are always happy to provide help and advice.

Q Can tenants carry out their own alterations?

A **No.** In accordance with the terms of the Tenancy Agreement, you are not permitted to carry out any alterations to the property unless you have written consent from The Ernest Cook Trust.

Q What if you are unhappy with the standard of a repair made to your property?

A Take a note of what happened and when, including photographs. This will help us address your concerns and manage the standards of work from contractors.

Q What happens if I experience financial difficulty and cannot pay my rent?

A If you do experience difficulty paying your rent on time, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can help you to determine the best solution to your situation. There are organisations and charities who offer debt advice and may be able to help in times of hardship, but we will not ignore rent arrears and if necessary, will take action to recover any monies due.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q What if one of the parties on the agreement wishes to leave the property?

A Please contact us as soon as possible to discuss possible options.

Q Can I redesign my garden?

A No. As stated your Tenancy Agreement, you are not permitted to do any works to change the style or form of the garden without first obtaining the Landlord's written consent.

Q Many of your properties are quite old. Does the Trust have a longterm plan for the necessary ongoing maintenance and upgrades required?

A Over the past two years, we have undertaken an inspection of our residential properties, creating a maintenance programme that is now an invaluable tool, helping us manage and prioritise all necessary and appropriate work. This marks a new phase of positive, proactive maintenance by the Trust for all our tenants' homes.

We take our responsibility as landlords and custodians of the Trust's properties very seriously. Given the age of our housing stock, this is a never-ending process which is constantly under review.

For more details please refer to the Repairs section on pages 10-12.

“A lovely place to live with good, fair landlords.”

Tenant comment

Thank you for making your home in one of our properties.

You are part of The Ernest Cook Trust story, helping disadvantaged children and young people make lasting connections with the natural world.



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