

HOUSING SERVICES



AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN LEWES DISTRICT COUNCIL AND
THE SHELTERED FORUM

Sheltered Compact

MAY 2008



Lewes District Council
www.lewes.gov.uk

WHAT IS A SHELTERED COMPACT?

A Compact is an agreement between Tenants from Sheltered Schemes across the district, who are members of the Sheltered Forum and Housing Staff from Lewes District Council (LDC). The Compact deals specifically with issues that are important to Sheltered Tenants. It aims to inform and involve Tenants on the services provided by LDC, who to contact with enquiries about services and possible improvements to the services that Sheltered Tenants would like considered.

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Throughout the Compact you will find some information which is in italics.



This information is intended as a note to all Tenants, advising on how to get the best out of that service.

If you have difficulty understanding this Compact or know of a neighbour who may have difficulty reading it, please let your Scheme Manager know, or call Ruth Tahsin, Tenant Participation Manager on **01273 487249**.

1 Scheme Manager's Duties

On a daily basis the Scheme Manager will:

- Be on site at the scheme – but s/he is not required to be on site 24 hours a day – The Scheme Manager will switch over to Central Control when going off site.
- Answer emergency calls during the night when at home, not when on annual leave or sick leave – In general the Scheme Manager is on duty Monday to Thursday 9am - 5pm, Friday 9am - 4.30pm. After this time please do not contact her/him directly but pull your emergency cord, Central Control will then contact the Scheme Manager for you if s/he is available.
- Test the alarm system for each Tenant daily (Monday to Friday), by means of a daily call. Any faults found to be reported as emergencies. If your Scheme Manager is on leave or training, you will be called by another member of staff.
- Carry out twice-daily security checks.
- Be aware of health and safety issues and take appropriate action as and when necessary.
- Be responsible for communal areas.
- Keep accurate records - this includes maintaining a diary, completing individual support plans, updating records of Tenants' next of kin and GP, monitoring repairs reported by Tenants etc.

When required the Scheme Manager will:

- Report repairs to LDC's fault centre and monitor progress. In the event of an emergency repair, always pull your cord in the first instance.
- Central Control can act quickly to get your repair fixed and will contact the Scheme Manager for you if s/he is on site.
- Give access to contractors e.g. alarm engineers. The Scheme Manager has consent forms available, which means that s/he can let workers into your home, such as Council repair contractors, but only if you give permission.
- In the event of an emergency situation arising when the tenant(s) is not at home, the Council will enter the property (as per your Tenancy Agreement) in order to rectify such an emergency, even if permission has not been given. Examples would be flooding, water escape within the property, fire, gas leaks, electrical faults, a failure of the emergency alarm system where one or more other properties on the scheme are affected or the security of the property etc.
- Attend meetings and training sessions
- Provide cover at other schemes as required – If your Scheme Manager is asked to go to cover another scheme you will still receive your daily call and Central Control will be available if you need them.
- Take bookings, collect payment, keep records and monitor cleanliness on the scheme and of any guest rooms. The Scheme Manager is responsible



for ordering furnishings (e.g. new mattresses for the beds), so if you have any ideas for improving the guest room, please let him/her know.

- Collect TV licence money from eligible Tenants. Once you reach 75 years of age you no longer have to pay.
- Check empty properties.
- Monitor visitors on site. If someone calls at your door, use the door chain (if you have one) and ask to see I.D. If you still have concerns, ask the caller to contact the Scheme Manager or make an appointment for another time. If you are very worried pull the cord to alert the Scheme Manager or Central Control.
- Make initial enquiries regarding loss or damage to a Tenant's property.

The Scheme Manager will provide the following assistance to residents:

- Be responsible for the well being of Tenants by:
 - making referrals to the appropriate authority,
 - sharing information (with Tenant's consent) with other professionals,
 - giving emotional support, being aware of mental and physical changes in Tenants and after consultation with Tenants and their relatives, taking the appropriate action.
- Give advice as requested, such as what equipment is available for Tenants with disabilities.
- Promote independence of Tenants, by facilitating self-help, assisting with completing forms and reading and explaining mail on request.
- Give practical help in a crisis. Assist if a Tenant is taken ill, contact GP, ambulance and (with Tenant's consent) next of kin. Arrange shopping, meals, collection of prescriptions etc until other agencies or relatives can take over. Scheme Manager's help will not usually continue for more than 48 hours.
- Assist in organising social activities. Enable Tenants who wish to take part to do so.
- Provide guidance in neighbour disputes.
- Give advice, respect confidentiality, listen when requested.
- Scheme Managers cannot undertake personal care e.g. helping Tenants out of bed, toileting, dressing, feeding, bathing, washing, administering medication, changing dressings, collecting or delivering repeat prescriptions, collecting pensions or shopping.



2 Alarm System/Daily Calls

All flat schemes have a pendant system in operation. This means that every Tenant is allocated a pendant, which they press in an emergency. When on site, Scheme Managers have a mobile receiver which will pick up an emergency signal, so that they can take appropriate action. Scheme Managers can make daily calls from one flat scheme to another.

Some bungalow schemes have slightly different systems. In an emergency situation Tenants pull a cord or press a pendant in their property, which alerts the Scheme Manager when on site. It is not possible to transfer these calls to other Scheme Managers within the district. On some Schemes up to five pendants are available which can be loaned to more vulnerable Tenants. Lifeline can be installed free of charge if this number is exceeded. On other Schemes there is the facility for all Tenants to have a pendant if they need one.

When the Scheme Manager is off duty, calls are switched to the Control Centre. When an emergency call is received, in the first instance the Control Centre will try and establish the nature of the problem. The operator may then call the Scheme Manager, unless previously advised that s/he is off site or unavailable for other reasons. Depending on the nature of the call the Control Centre may then:

- contact the emergency services
- contact a key holder (usually a neighbour or relative)

Lead Officer: Supported Housing Manager **01273 484306**

3 Service Charges

All Tenants are now charged separately for:

- the services that are provided for them
- the rental of their homes

The charges are itemised and appear on twice yearly rent statements.

Many service charges can be claimed from housing benefit, but some cannot as shown below:

General Service Charge

This separate charge applies to all Tenants (not just those in sheltered schemes). The amount used to be included in the general rent charge but is now shown separately. The General Service Charge covers the maintenance costs of all open communal areas throughout the Lewes District Council area.

Sheltered Housing Communal Charge

This charge is made to cover a proportion of the services required for each sheltered scheme. The costs are scheme specific, and are eligible for Housing Benefit.

The charge covers:

- Staffing (these costs are spread equally over all the Council's sheltered schemes)
- Communication/door entry systems
- Cleaning of communal areas
- Window cleaning:
 - flat schemes: all windows external, communal areas internal
 - bungalow schemes: communal rooms external and internal
- Laundry facilities

- Lift
- Communal heating and lighting

Sheltered Housing Personal Charge

These charges are not eligible for Housing Benefit and cover:

- Personal heating and lighting where provided by a central system
- Amenity charges where white goods (fridges/cookers) are part of the fixtures in a property

Supporting People Charge

The Supporting People programme was introduced by the Government in April 2003 and concerns housing related support for vulnerable people. That is, lower levels of support, which do not amount to personal care that allows people to remain in their own home. It enables the Council to work with partners to review and regulate the quality of the service provided.

The charge is calculated on a proportion of the costs of each scheme and covers:

- Scheme Manager
- Alarm system
- Communal facilities
- Grounds maintenance

Will you have to pay this charge?

Eligibility for the charge to be paid is calculated in a similar way to Housing Benefit, though the levels of income and savings allowed are slightly different. Anyone whose tenancy started after 1 April 2003 will have applied for the charge to be paid by East Sussex County Council.

A financial assessment will be carried out and you will be informed whether the charge will be paid for you or whether you have to pay it yourself.

If you have any queries regarding these charges, please contact the Rent Office on **01273 484318** or the Supported Housing Office on **01273 484318**.

4 Cleaning of Communal Areas

How often will the areas be cleaned?

Work will be done at varying intervals such as weekly, monthly etc. according to the needs of the Scheme. Your Scheme Manager can show you a copy of the schedule, and areas to be cleaned will include:

- entrances and lobbies
- corridors / staircases
- lifts
- communal lounge / kitchen
- communal WCs / bathrooms
- guest room
- laundry room
- bin store
- office

If you have any queries or complaints about the cleaning, please contact your Scheme Manager

Lead Officer: Supported Housing Manager **01273 484306** or Supported Housing Officer **01273 484264**

5 Grass Cutting and Shrub Maintenance

Grass cutting - how often is it cut?

Lewes District Council employs grass cutting contractors who cut the communal grassed areas in sheltered schemes during the growing season (April to October), up to 16 times a year. East Sussex County Council is responsible for cutting the road verges, and cut these up to 6 times a year.

Due to the very high cost of disposal, contractors do not usually collect grass cuttings. However as a result of negotiations by Sheltered Scheme Staff, the Sheltered Forum and Community Services, it has now been agreed that grass cuttings will be picked up and disposed of at a number of sheltered schemes, these are:

Churchill House – Seaford

Neills Close and Jubilee Homes – Newhaven

Rathan Court – Newhaven

Meridian Court – Peacehaven

Mill Close- Ringmer

Arundel Road/Southdown Avenue – Peacehaven

Brooks Gardens – Newick

It is not possible to collect the grass from the remaining schemes, because of the layout of the grassed areas.

Shrub maintenance

Shrub beds are maintained a maximum of 8 times during the year. Pruning of hedges takes place twice yearly.

Areas of grass to be cut and approximate dates

Each Scheme Manager should have a map showing which areas of grass are cut on the scheme and the approximate dates that the contractors will be calling.

What you can do if your grass is not cut properly

If an area of grass has not been cut properly or has been missed out, the problem should be reported to the Scheme Manager, or directly to the Community Services Help Desk on **01273 484999**. If the matter is not resolved contact Bill Gandey, the Parks Technical Assistant on **01273 484457**.

If you are calling to report a problem it is best to call on the same day that the contractors have been, as they can often be contacted on their mobile phone and asked to return to finish the job.



Before ringing to complain of poor service, please bear in mind that the contractors often have to carry out their work in the wet as they are committed to carrying out a certain number of cuts per year.

Grass cutting in private gardens

Tenants in Sheltered Schemes are responsible for maintaining their own private gardens and are expected to arrange for this to be done.

Scheme to provide low cost gardening for Tenants' private gardens

The Parks and Gardens Manager has set up a low cost gardening project to provide basic maintenance in Tenants' private gardens, such as grass cutting, hedge trimming etc using the Council's own contractors. Tenants taking part are expected to pay for the service, but the cost has been kept down, as the contractor would be working in a number of gardens at the same scheme.

If you are already in the scheme you must contact your Scheme Manager by the 31st December to ensure that you will still get this service for the next year.

If you are interested in taking part in this scheme, you must contact your Scheme Manager by 31st December to ensure you are included in the scheme for next year.

6 How to get help with small household jobs

Some Tenants in sheltered schemes have said that they find it very hard to obtain reliable tradespeople to do small DIY jobs around the home, such as putting up shelves, hanging curtains etc. Whilst the Council do not have their own handyman, there is service available from "Anchor Staying Put" at a reasonable cost - £10 per hour for those on means tested benefits and £15 per hour for those who are not (as at June 08), plus materials.

They have three Technicians who are members of the Guild of Master Craftsmen. Two of them deal with minor jobs such as fitting of shelves/curtain tracks and the third is able to help with gardening and decorating problems.

The work they do includes:

- Minor carpentry, such as fitting of shelves
- Fitting of curtain tracks
- Gardening work including clearance/adaptations
- Decorating work which can be done in less than 16 hours

This is not a full list, please contact them and they will be happy to discuss your requirements with you, and are happy to provide a FREE quote for any jobs that you need doing.



They can be contacted on:

Anchor Staying Put

Wealden & Lewes
First Floor
32/33 Vicarage Fields
Hailsham
E Sussex
BN27 1BQ

01323 441013

<http://www.stayingput.org.uk/agency/wealden/aboutus.htm>

7 Room a year Redecoration Scheme

The Council currently operates a “room a year” redecoration scheme, which is available to any Tenant who is in receipt of housing benefit or any other means tested state benefit, for any room which is in need of decorating.

The Council can either supply the paint in order for the Tenant or a relative/friend to complete the job, or the Council can carry out the work if the Tenant is physically incapable and does not have a relative or friend who can help.

Only one room per year can be re-decorated at a time. Contact your Scheme Manager for an application form.

8 Reporting a routine repair

Non emergency repairs to your property:

If you wish to report a repair to your bungalow or flat, you can do this in two ways:

Report the repair to your Scheme Manager

S/he will then report the repair to the Council and keep you informed of progress.

Report the repair yourself:

Directly to the Council's repairs section by dialling **01273 484448**. In most cases the repairs clerk will ask you if you would like an appointment. If you say yes, the contractor who is given the job will call you later to arrange this. You will then receive a letter stating the nature of the repair and who will be carrying out the work. If the repair is not a routine job then the Maintenance Officer may need to visit you first to decide the best course of action.

Heating repairs

The only exception to the above is if you wish to report a routine repair to your gas heating – this should be reported either by yourself or through your Scheme Manager as follows:

Bungalow Schemes to BSW on **01444 836036**

Flat Schemes to Alpha Heating Ltd on **01293 404080**
(out of hours **07811 345291**)

Emergency Repairs to your property

If your repair is an emergency, for example your heating is broken in winter or your lights are not working, you have four possible courses of action:

Report the problem to your Scheme Manager

S/he will speak to the Council who will arrange for a contractor to call.

Pull your alarm cord and speak to central control.

They will contact the council who will arrange for a contractor to call.

Report the repair yourself - during office hours by dialling **01273 484448**. The repairs clerk will arrange for a contractor to call.

Report the repair yourself - outside of office hours by dialling **07860 524969**. You will speak to the duty officer who will arrange for a contractor to call.

If the Council agrees that the repair is an emergency they will arrange for the contractor to call within 24 hours.

Telling the Council what you think of the repair carried out

Every time you report a repair to your property the Council will send you a letter. Part of the letter contains details of your repair; the other part of the letter is a feedback form, which can be completed and returned to the Council once the repair has been carried out. Please take the time to complete the feedback form and return it at no extra cost to yourself. The Council has pledged to investigate any reports of a "poor" repair and is always happy to hear when a repair has been carried out well.

Repairs to communal areas

If you see a repair that needs carrying out to a communal area at your scheme, for example in the communal room or in a corridor, please report the repair directly to your Scheme Manager. They report all communal repairs to the Council repairs clerk and are updated regularly on the progress.

9 What to do if you encounter Anti- Social Behaviour

If you are in any immediate danger, then get to safety, ring 999 and ask for the Police. If the incident is not an immediate threat to you but is, for example, vandalism, or another crime being committed then ring 999. If you are in your home and you see people behaving in an anti - social or criminal way, pull the emergency cord or use the lifeline pendant and ask Central Control to call the police.

Do not get involved with any incident, but observe carefully what is happening. Write things down as soon as you can, so that your memory of the incident can be jogged in future. Where you encounter persistent incidents, keep a diary of events to help build a case. Diary sheets can be obtained from your Scheme Manager.

For other incidents contact the police on **0845 6070999**. Even if the police cannot attend immediately, the incident will have been recorded and will help them to build a case, to be dealt with in time.

Make sure that your Scheme Manager is aware of any incident.

If you want to report information in confidence about a possible crime, then phone Crime- stoppers on **0800 555111**

In persistent cases you may also want to report the problem to your Supported Housing Officer on **01273 484264**. You may be asked to complete a nuisance behaviour reporting form. Again, this can be used to build a case against persistent offenders.

If you have a problem with noise, e.g. loud noise late at night, then contact the Council's Environmental Services Department on **01273 484340**. They have powers to act swiftly in some cases of high-level noise nuisance.

10 How to get involved in decisions which affect Tenants in Sheltered Housing

There are a number of ways that Tenants can become involved in decisions that the Council makes regarding their scheme, the area in which they live, or for the Housing Department, as shown below:

Six monthly meetings for each Sheltered Scheme with the Housing Department

Every six months a meeting is arranged at each scheme. The meetings give Tenants a chance to speak to their Supported Housing Manager, Supported Housing Co-ordinator, Housing Officer, Maintenance Officer, and other Officers at the Tenants' request, about any housing issues which are of concern to their scheme. Posters are put up in the communal areas approximately two weeks before each meeting and all Tenants are encouraged to attend.

Sheltered Forum

The Sheltered Forum was set up within Lewes District so that Tenant representatives from each scheme can meet with the Sheltered Housing Management to discuss housing issues of particular interest to sheltered housing Tenants. Scheme Managers do not attend the Forum meetings, unless invited to speak on specific topics. The Forum meets quarterly and is constituted in such a way that allows the group to raise funds on behalf of schemes. The type of issues that might be discussed at the Forum are: service charges, pets in schemes, promotional weeks etc.

If you are interested or would like to get more information please contact the Tenant Participation Manager on **01273 487249**, or the Supported Housing Manager on **01273 484306**

Tenants and Residents Associations (TRA)

A TRA can be set up by Tenants living in a scheme as long as the majority of Tenants at the scheme are in favour of a TRA acting on their behalf. Tenants can also become involved in a TRA which represents the larger community in which they live and not just their scheme. The Council can help Tenants to set up a TRA, assist with running costs, training and other practical help. As well as discussing social activities, TRA's are able to get actively involved with issues that affect their scheme. They are also able to send two representatives to TOLD (Tenants of Lewes District, a group made up of Tenants across the district who talk to the Council about issues such as rents,

repairs etc) and the Housing Consultative Panel (a group made up of Tenants, Councillors and Housing Staff who amongst other things prioritise a yearly budget for making environmental improvements across the district).

TRA's are asked to sign up to a written constitution. This includes details on who is eligible to join, how often meetings will be held, how they will elect people to be Chair, Secretary, Treasurer etc.

Full details of the "Standards for setting up a Tenants and Residents Association" are included in the Lewes District Compact. There are also guidelines specifically for Sheltered TRA's. For more information call the Tenant Participation Worker on **01273 487249**.

The following schemes are all served by TRAs which cover their larger community:

Reed Court - Malling Residents Association;

Newton Road - Landport Residents Association,

Downland Scheme – Ashington Community Association;

Newick Scheme – Newick Community Association;

Churchill House, Seaford – Chyngton Estate Residents Association.

For more information call the Tenant Participation Worker on **01273 487249**.

Social activities committees

These committees are set up by Tenants living in the scheme, to organise activities for those living there. As it is a part of their duty to assist in setting up social activities, the Scheme Manager can be involved. The committees can be set up in two ways:

A committee with a constitution, that elects a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The benefit of setting up such a committee is that a formally constituted committee is able to apply for grants from outside agencies as well as through their own fundraising efforts.

A Social committee is run without constitution. This type of committee is still accountable for any money that they collect from Tenants for social activities and usually has a treasurer. Books to assist with accounting can be supplied by the Council.

Some social committees choose to have paid membership, which means that members pay a small monthly amount. This lessens the burden of fundraising on the committee. People living at the scheme who do not wish to be members can still attend outings arranged

For more information about setting up a Social Committee contact your Scheme Manager or the Council's Tenant Participation Manager on **01273 487249**

Taking part in Housing Service reviews

LDC is currently committed to looking at the way Housing Services are provided and whether improvements can be made.



These are called service assessments. Tenants are invited to let the Council know their views at each assessment in a number of ways, ranging from joining a working group, to taking part in postal surveys. At the moment the following services are being assessed:

- The service that we provide to disabled Tenants
- How reports of anti-social behaviour are dealt with
- Sheltered Housing Review
- Rents

Details of how you can become involved in each assessment are included in newsletters which go to all Tenants, "Housing Link", and "Tenants Voice" which are printed three times a year. Or you can call the Council's Tenant Participation Manager on **01273 487249**.



11 Use of Communal Rooms

Communal rooms can be used for a whole range of activities such as:

- coffee mornings
- gentle exercise classes
- darts
- socials
- bingo
- fish and chip suppers, lunches etc
- meetings
- private functions

Schemes with a TRA or a constituted Social Activities Committee can apply for grants from outside agencies, such as the lottery, towards activities to take place in the room or for equipment for the room.

The following standards apply to communal rooms:

- Any communal room is ultimately part of the scheme and therefore the responsibility of the Scheme Manager. Any additional furnishings, pictures etc supplied by Tenants or by a Tenants Association need to be agreed with the Scheme Manager before purchase, and the Scheme Manager will ensure that they are added to the Scheme inventory.
- As they are Council owned buildings the Council will ensure that they comply with Health and Safety standards and provide a safe environment for Tenants and their guests.
- A diary will be provided and all meetings and activities recorded in the diary. Regular meetings and events can be noted and a timetable agreed.
- Since all Council buildings are non-smoking this will apply to the room

and smoking will not be permitted.

- The room will not usually be available to anyone outside the scheme other than for meetings organised by the Council, except with the prior agreement of all Tenants.
- Equipment owned by Tenants Associations will need to be put on the Council's inventory, for insurance and Health and Safety.
- All bills relating to the running costs of the room will be paid for by the Council e.g. electricity, TV licences etc; though the costs will be reflected in Tenants' service charges.
- Tenants may use the room for family gatherings, by arrangement with the Scheme Manager, up until 10pm. However, they cannot exclude other Tenants from the room. One exception may be for a funeral, but only if all Tenants are made aware that the room is out of use at that time.
- The Scheme Manager will advise people when they book of what the rules are for when someone wants to use the room for a family gathering.

12 Fundraising in Sheltered Housing

Funds raised in individual Schemes

Funds may be raised in Schemes by activities such as bingo, coffee mornings, bonus ball or bring and buy sales etc. Tenants decide how this money will be spent. This decision should be with the agreement of the majority of Tenants.

Accounts

In order to protect the interest of both Tenants and staff, simple accounts must be kept of all money taken in and spent. It is advisable that a bank account be set up with three signatories in place. These three signatories cannot be related in any way or live in the same property.

LDC staff will look at accounts at the end of each financial year and a copy should be available to all Tenants on the Scheme.

General Sheltered Housing Funds

Money is raised at events which involve all the Council's sheltered schemes e.g. an auction, a Country & Western afternoon, the annual interscheme quiz. Money raised is banked in the Council's general fund with a specific identifiable code. Accounts are kept by the Supported Housing Manager.

Money will be spent to benefit all Tenants and you will be consulted.

If you have any ideas on how this money could be spent or you have any queries please contact any of the office staff.

Lead Officer: Supported Housing Manager **01273 484306**.

13 Complaints or Comments about the Council's Housing Service

If you have a complaint to make about any of the Council's services, which cannot be dealt with by your Scheme Manager or Housing Officer, ask your Housing Officer for a complaints form to complete. This will then be investigated and you will receive a written reply. All complaints are monitored as the Council aims to learn from its mistakes. Positive comments on the Housing Services are also much appreciated.

14 Planned Major Repairs for Sheltered Housing

The Council is committed to providing a ten year programme of major repairs throughout all of its housing stock. Major repairs include such things as new bathrooms, kitchens, double glazing etc. The following schemes are included in the current major repairs programme. Subject to funding being available, the major repairs listed below will be carried out in the years stated:

Double Glazing

Kitchen Improvements

A survey will be carried out and kitchens will then be brought up to standard at the following schemes:

- Seaford House 2007/8
- Churchill House Seaford 2007/8
- Mills Scheme Ringmer 2009/10
- Neills Close Newhaven 2010/11
- Meridian Court 2011/12

Bathrooms

A survey will be carried out and bathrooms will then be brought up to standard at the following schemes:

- Seaford House 2007/8
- Churchill House Seaford 2007/8
- Mills Scheme Ringmer 2009/10
- Neills Close Newhaven 2010/11

Electrical rewiring

A survey will be carried out and electrical wiring will then be brought up to standard at the following scheme:

- Churchill House Seaford 2007/8

Heating Improvements

A survey will be carried out and heating improvements will be made to bring up to standard at the following schemes:

- Mills Scheme Ringmer 2007/8
- Neills Close Newhaven 2007/8

Contact details

Adrian Woolridge **01273 484377**

Tony Johnson **01273 484378**

**This leaflet can
be made available in
large print, audiotape, disk or
in another language upon request.
Please telephone 01273 484141
or email lewesdc@lewes.gov.uk**

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們就會為您提供特別版本。聯絡方式:
電話: 01273 484141 或
電子郵件: lewesdc@lewes.gov.uk

“এই পুস্তিকা অনুরোধ করলে বড় মুদ্রণ, শ্রবণের টেপে
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করুন বা ইমেইল করুন
lewesdc@lewes.gov.uk-তে”

Housing Services
Southover House, Southover Road
Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1AB

Repairs Hotline 01273 484448
Out of Hours Emergency 07860 524969