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**Advice for people living in caravans**

For some people the option of living in a caravan or mobile home can be an affordable and appealing prospect. However, living in a caravan also poses challenges compared to bricks and mortar and can be a problematic experience. This document provides information and advice for people living or planning to live in a caravan park.

Private caravan park sites must be licensed by the Council. Most sites in the District are licensed for holiday use only and are not meant to be used all year round occupancy. The terms of the license often require these sites to close for a period during the winter each year.

If you live in a caravan (either on a holiday park or elsewhere) as your main and principal home and have no other accommodation available to you elsewhere in the UK you should be paying Council Tax whilst in occupation. Occupation of the caravan on a permanent basis may be in breach of planning control if the site is restricted to holiday use only. Therefore, continued occupation of the caravan as your main and principal home could lead to the instigation of enforcement action to require the use to stop.

There are a number of caravan sites in the Chichester District that are licensed as “Protected sites” and these are licensed by the Council for permanent occupancy.

**Your Rights and Obligations**

If you live on a protected mobile home site your rights and obligations will be set out in your accommodation agreement. The accommodation agreement will set out your legal rights and obligations (including notice periods), the site regulations, site charges and services.

If you rent your mobile home, you should have a written contract which will say how long you can live in your home. Some contracts can be ended early and your landlord can ask you to leave by giving you 4 weeks’ notice. The landlord can also ask you to leave if you breach the terms of your contract.

If your home is considered as a “dwelling house” you may have an Assured Shorthold tenancy. To be a dwelling house your park home would usually be:

* so large that it can’t be easily moved or towed away (e.g. a large chalet that won’t fit onto a trailer), and
* your permanent residence, and
* connected to mains electricity or water.

Unless states otherwise in your written contract you will be responsible for home and contents insurance. If you are concerned about the condition of your caravan or if your home is in poor condition, you should seek advice from the environmental housing team.

If you are served Notice to leave your mobile home and are threatened with homelessness and are not sure about what you should do next, you should contact the council by following the link here: <https://www.chichesterhomemove.org.uk/>

**Responsibilities of the Site Owner**

Park Home and caravan site owners must clearly display their licence. The park owner is responsible for:

* keeping the communal areas in good condition
* repairing any damage to the base where your home sits
* maintaining any services that are supplied to your home or pitch (e.g. sewage and electricity).

If the park owner plans to make improvements, they must give you a minimum of 28 days’ notice in writing and notify you if it will affect your pitch fee. If you are dissatisfied with the conditions in your park you should complain to the park owner. If your complaint is not resolved, you can seek advice from the Council’s Housing Standards team. Further guidance can be found here: <https://www.chichester.gov.uk/housing-standards-and-home>.

**If you are asked to leave**

If you are served with valid notice you should seek advice on securing alternative accommodation. You may be asked to ensure that your Council Tax payments are up-to-date in order to access some of the services from the Council. It is most likely your housing issue will be resolved through seeking alternative private sector accommodation. The Council can provide advice on this option.

**The Housing Register**

You may be eligible to join the Council’s housing register. However, if you live on a holiday site and have not been paying Council Tax it is unlikely the Council will consider this settled accommodation as you are, strictly speaking, on holiday. Any periods residing in holiday caravans will not qualify towards the local connection criteria for the purposes of the housing register.

For further information on the housing register in the Chichester District, please follow the link here: <https://www.chichester.gov.uk/applyhousingregister>.

**Who else can help you?**

There are a range services available to help people living in caravans:

**Civil Legal Advice (CLA) -** Independent advice on debt, benefits, housing, employment, education and family for people living on benefits or a low income.

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice>

Phone: 0345 345 4 345

**Leasehold Advisory Service** – advice for leaseholders.

Website: <https://www.lease-advice.org/>

Phone: 020 7832 2500

**Shelter** – provides advisory services for those in housing need.

Website: [england.shelter.org.uk/](http://england.shelter.org.uk/)

Phone: 0808 800 4444

**Age UK** – advice and help of all kinds for people aged over 50 years.

Website: [www.ageuk.org.uk/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/)

**Council Services:**

**Housing Benefit -** <https://www.chichester.gov.uk/benefits>

**Council Tax -** <https://www.chichester.gov.uk/counciltax>

**Licensing -** <https://www.chichester.gov.uk/licensing>

**Housing Standards –** <https://www.chichester.gov.uk/housing-standards-and-home>.