

Maintenance and repairs



CHAPTER

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OUR UNDERTAKING TO YOU

Winchester City Council undertakes to maintain your home in a safe and weather-tight condition and wherever possible to provide modern facilities in line with the government's Decent Homes standard. Repair issues will be categorised as soon as they are reported and dealt with in line with the priorities shown on page 44.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

We will not repair or replace your own structures, fixtures or fittings, other than those fitted by the Council's nominated contractor under the Tenants Improvement Scheme. See page 63 for details of the Tenants Improvement Scheme.

The following list gives an idea of items for which you are responsible:

- Replacing lost keys
- Gaining entry if accidentally locked out
- Replacing light bulbs and fluorescent tubes
- Appliances, plugs and their fuses
- Broken glass to windows and doors
- TV aerials where not on a communal council maintained system
- Installation of your own appliances. This includes connection of gas and electric cookers, which must be fitted by an appropriately registered installer. A completion certificate for the work must be forwarded to us within one week

HOW TO REPORT A REPAIR

You can report a repair by:

- Writing to us
- Calling in to or telephoning the Customer Service Centre
- Completing a maintenance report card, available from the Customer Service Centre
- E-mail to housing@winchester.gov.uk
- Calling out of hours on **01962 865 405**

When will the work be done?

When you report a repair, we will decide how urgent it is and will place it in one of the categories shown in the table on page 44. The notes show the type of work placed in each category and how soon the repair is likely to be carried out.

LANDLORD SERVICES
City Office, Lakeside House, Winchester
The contractor that you have chosen to use is SE, GOLDEN COMMON who completed the work on 14/03/15. Performance - Please complete and return the Customer Service Card (see reverse) to us when you have finished the work. Please tear here and return card to: www.winchester.gov.uk

SE, GOLDEN COMMON
performance - Please complete and return the Customer Service Card (see reverse) to us when you have finished the work. Please tear here and return card to: www.winchester.gov.uk

Job Number: 2484439
Contractor: JAD Building Contractors Ltd

Job Description: VOID No 14753 please carry out works as per the attached drawings

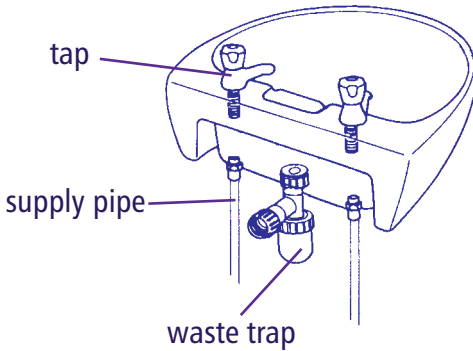
Was your repair request dealt with in a pleasing and efficient manner?	Yes / No	Comment
Was the work carried out at the agreed time and date?	Yes / No	
Are you satisfied with the finished quality of the work?	Yes / No	
Was the work carried out in a well-organized and workmanlike manner?	Yes / No	
Was the work carried out in a well-organized and workmanlike manner?	Yes / No	
Was the work carried out in a well-organized and workmanlike manner?	Yes / No	

Category	Response	Repair
A	Out of hours call outs. We try to respond to and make safe these repairs within two hours . However, this will usually only mean temporary repairs. Follow-up works may then need to be raised on lower priorities.	<p>This category only includes work necessary to prevent danger to life or extensive damage to your property. In exceptional circumstances, we may regard a repair as an emergency if it causes undue anxiety or stress or would cause significant inconvenience over a prolonged period.</p> <p>If your repair is covered by any of the items in 'B' (below) and can be managed overnight, it will be actioned the following day.</p> <p>If you call the Council for work that is not an emergency, you may be charged for any costs incurred over and above the normal repair charges.</p>
B	Emergency repairs. These will be carried out wherever possible within two hours and may only involve making safe or carrying out temporary repairs. Follow-up works may then need to be raised on lower priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Total loss of electricity ■ Defective light fittings to kitchen, bathroom and stairways ■ Burst water pipes ■ Loss of water supply ■ Loss of hot water (1st Nov to 31st April) ■ Total failure of central heating (1st Nov to 31st April) ■ Replacement of WC pans, where there is only one WC ■ Restore flush to WC where tenant is unable to flush with a bucket of water ■ Roof leaks ■ Dangerous roof slates/chimneys (make safe) ■ Defective external door locks ■ Board up or re-glaze for safety or security reasons ■ Blocked sewers
C	Urgent repairs. These will be carried out within five working days . This category covers works required to prevent you suffering undue inconvenience or further damage to your property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Replacement of WC pans ■ Rain penetration to doors/windows ■ Electrical repairs general (not specified in B) ■ Glazing ■ Containable leaks ■ Loss of hot water (1st May to 31st Oct) ■ Total failure of central heating (1st May to 31st Oct)
D	Priority repairs. These will be carried out within twelve working days . These include minor repairs which are non-urgent and not an emergency, as defined above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Repairs to overflows (category 'B' in winter months) ■ Loose floorboards ■ Garage doors ■ Chimney pots ■ Tap washers
E	Routine repairs. These will be carried out within 30 working days . This category includes all other minor repairs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All other general repairs
F	Planned maintenance. This covers major items of replacement throughout a number of properties, such as works of a structural nature. These works tend to be expensive and there may be long delays before they are carried out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ External repair and painting ■ Kitchen/bathroom refurbishments ■ Re-roofing ■ Replacement guttering/soffits etc

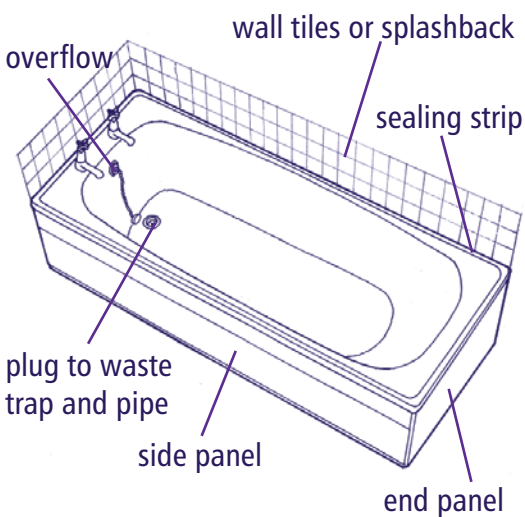
You may find the following diagrams and instructions useful when reporting a repair

BATHROOMS

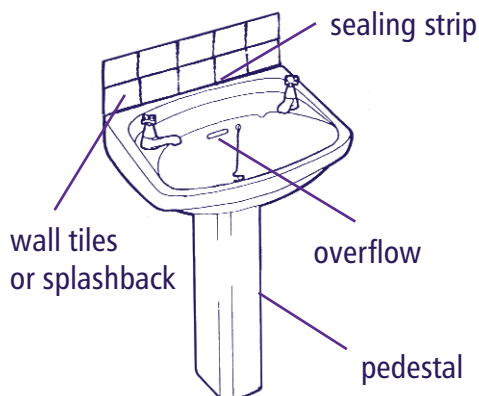
BASIN



BATH



BASIN



before you contact us...

- If water is near electrics, DO NOT TOUCH. Turn electricity off at consumer unit main switch.
- Stop leak causing more damage.

tell us...

bath/basin water leaking

- Are electrics affected?
- Where is leak (bath or basin)?
- What is affected (waste pipe/trap, pipe or tap)? See diagrams opposite.
- If pipework is affected, is it hot or cold supply pipe or waste pipe? See diagrams opposite.

bath/basin blocked

- What is blocked (bath or basin)?
- What caused the blockage?

bath or basin damaged/broken

- What is damaged (bath or basin)?
- What is affected part made from (metal, plastic or china etc.)?
- If a bath panel is affected, which panel (side or end panel)?
- Does it need to be replaced or refixed?

damaged wall tiles

- Where are tiles?
- Are they loose, broken or damaged?
- How many are affected?
- What size and colour are they?
- How did it happen?

bath panel loose

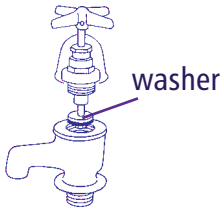
- Which bath panel is affected (side or end panel)?

seal failed around bath, basin or sink

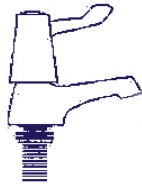
TAPS AND HOT WATER

TAPS

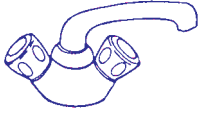
INSIDE A TAP



LEVER TAP



MIXER TAP



STANDARD PILLAR TAP



HIGH NECK PILLAR TAP

SUPATAP

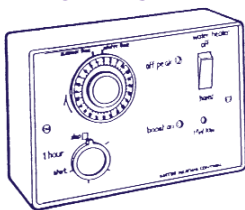
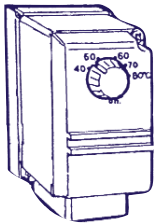


BIB TAP

MODERN PILLAR TAP

HOT WATER

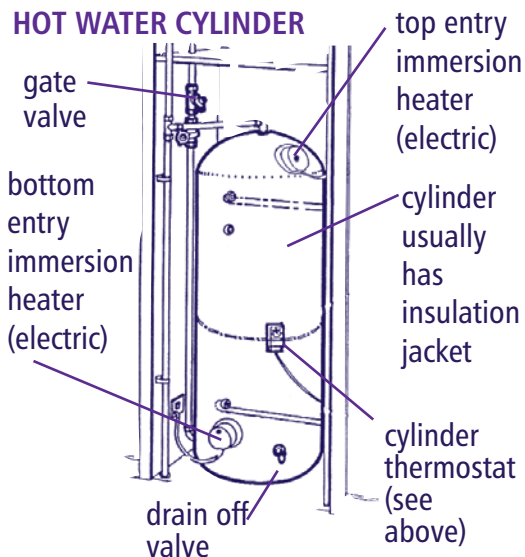
TYPICAL WATER TEMPERATURE CONTROLLERS



cylinder thermostat

economy 7 controller for water heater

HOT WATER CYLINDER



before you contact us...

tell us...

tap dripping

- Is it on bath, basin or sink?
- What type of tap is it? See diagrams opposite.

tap loose

- Is it on bath, basin or sink?
- What type of tap is it? See diagrams opposite.

plug/chain required

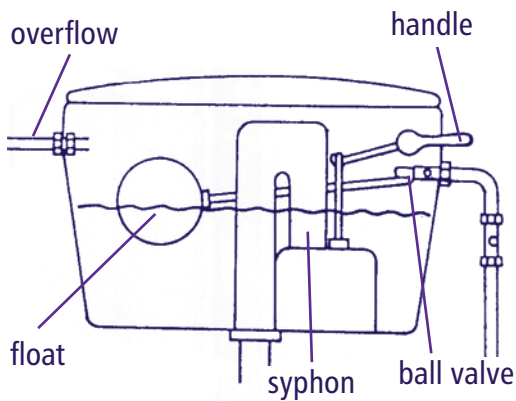
- Is it on bath, basin or sink?

no hot water

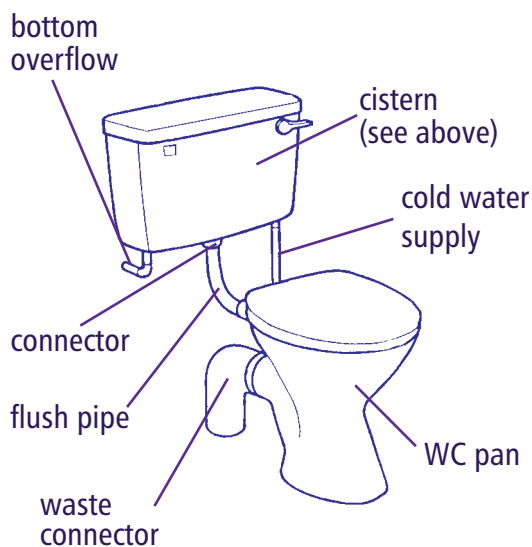
- If gas, check time clock controller is set for hot water and timer is set correctly.
- If electric, is there a power cut? Are neighbours affected? If so, contact your electricity company (see under 'Electricity' in the telephone directory).
- If coin or credit meter, has it run out of credit?
- What heats water (gas, electric or solid fuel)?
- If electric, are other electrical facilities working?
- Are heating controls set correctly?
- Is room heating still working?
- Do you have alternative source of hot water (immersion heater or gas heater etc.)?
- Do you have a hot water cylinder?

TOILET SUITES

CISTERN



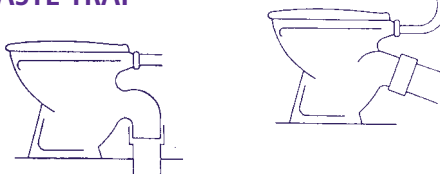
TOILET



'P' TYPE WASTE TRAP



'S' TYPE WASTE TRAP



LOW LEVEL CISTERN



before you contact us...

- Try to stop leak and any damage it is causing.
- If serious, turn off water at stopcock and gate valves from cold water tank. Open all taps to drain water from system. Turn off heaters affected.

tell us...

toilet leaking

- Where is leak (pan, cistern, overflow, supply, flush or waste pipe or pipe joint)?
- If leak is from cistern, is it high or low level cistern?
- Is affected part loose, cracked or broken?

toilet will not flush

- Has water authority said that water would be turned off?
- You can use a bucket of cold water to flush until problem is fixed.
- If cistern is not filling, lift lid and see if anything is stopping the float from working. Try moving the float up and down to see if it will fill.

- Is the handle or chain moving properly?
- Is the float still

overflow running

- As a temporary solution, tie float in the up position, thus closing the ball valve.

- Does the overflow run outside?
- Is the cistern flushing?
- Is the float working?
- Is overflow running continuously?

seat damaged

- Is it broken, damaged or missing?
- What is it made from (plastic, wood etc.)?
- What colour is it?

toilet blocked

- Try unblocking it yourself by removing excess water into a bowl, and using a toilet brush or plunger (without metal disc).

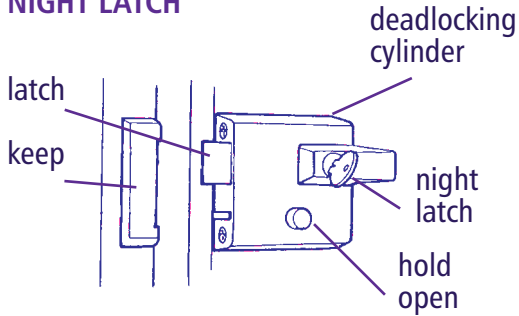
- What caused blockage?

soil stack blocked

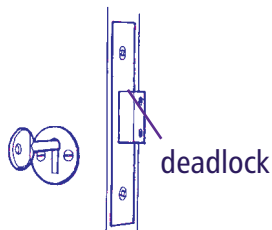
- Do you live in a house or flat?
- If a flat, which floor are you?
- Is your toilet causing the blockage?

DOORS AND LOCKS

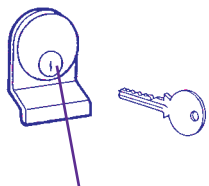
CYLINDER RIM NIGHT LATCH



MORTICE DEADLOCK



OUTSIDE DOOR PULL

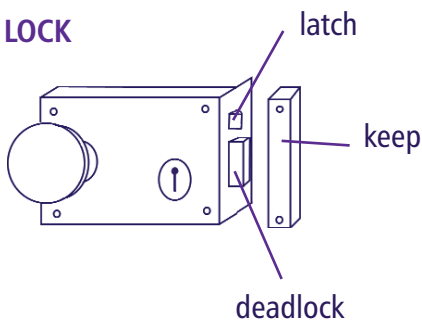


barrel cylinder

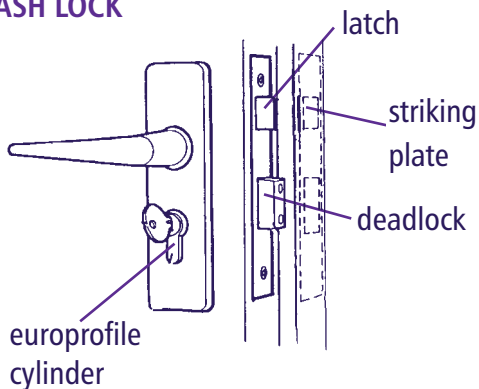
OVAL CYLINDER



RIM LOCK



MORTICE SASH LOCK



before you contact us...

tell us...

door lock not working

- Tenant's own locks are your own responsibility.
- What type of lock is it? See diagrams opposite.
- What is wrong with lock (lever handle faulty, spring worn out, striking plate out of place or lock not fitting into keep etc.)? See diagrams opposite.
- Which door is affected?
- What is door made of (wood, metal or plastic)?
- Is your home secure?

keys lost/locked out

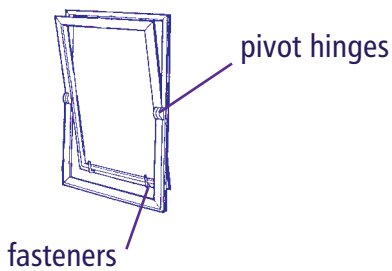
- This is usually your own responsibility.
- Are you locked out of your home?
- What type of lock is it? See diagrams opposite.
- Where is door (front, rear, patio or store)?

ironmongery missing/not working

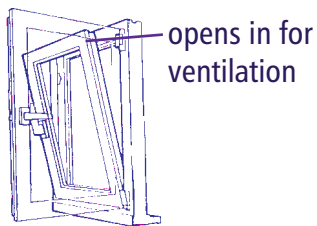
- Tenant's own fittings are your own responsibility.
- What fitting is it (letterplate, handle, chain, door viewer, house numbers etc.)? See diagrams opposite.
- Is door not closing properly?
- Is your home insecure?

WINDOWS

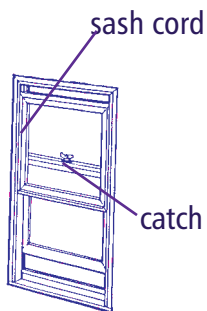
PIVOT WINDOW



TILT & TURN WINDOW

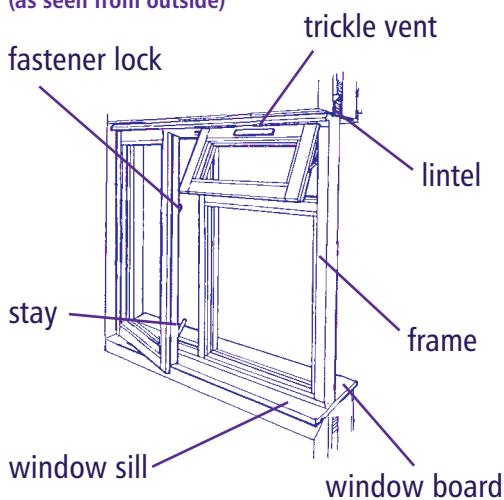


SASH WINDOW



CASEMENT WINDOW

(as seen from outside)



before you contact us...

- If you can do it safely, remove any loose broken glass which could be dangerous to others and wrap it in newspaper before safely disposing of it.
- You may be recharged for broken window/door glass. If the Police have been involved, you must tell us the incident number.

tell us...

glass damaged

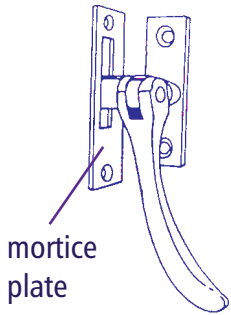
- Is it single or double glazed?
- Where is window (which floor of the building, a communal window or one to your home)?
- What type of glass is it (clear, wired, or obscure)?
- What is window frame made of (wood, metal or plastic)?
- Is your home secure?

window frame jammed

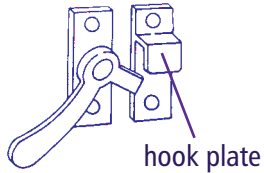
- What is frame made of (wood, metal or plastic)?
- What type of window is it (sash, pivot or tilt window etc.)? See diagrams opposite.
- What is causing problem (rotten wood, hinges or sash cord broken etc.)? See diagrams opposite.
- Is your home secure?

WINDOW FASTENERS

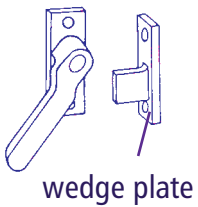
REVERSIBLE CASEMENT FASTENER



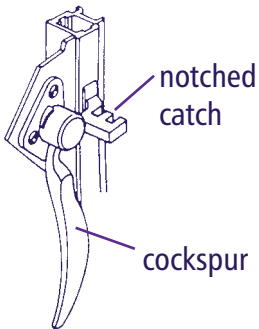
HOOK CASEMENT FASTENER



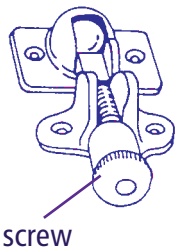
WEDGE PATTERN CASEMENT FASTENER



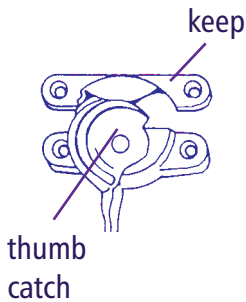
CASEMENT FASTENER



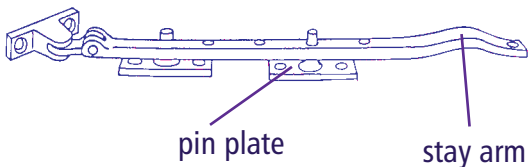
BRIGHTON SASH FASTENER



FITCH SASH FASTENER



CASEMENT STAY



RESTRICTOR STAY

(prevents full opening of window)



before you contact us...

tell us...

ironmongery defective

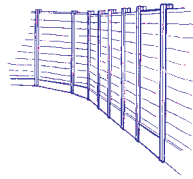
- What type of window is it (sash, pivot or tilt window etc.)?
- What is frame made of (wood, metal or plastic)?
- What part is defective (stay, catch, fastener or lift etc.)?
See diagrams opposite.
- Is your home insecure?

FENCES

PALLISADE FENCE



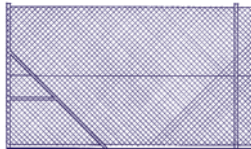
CONCRETE POST & TIMBER PANELLED



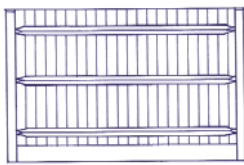
INTERWOVEN FENCE



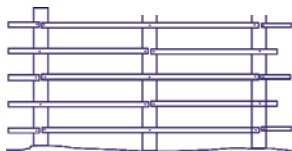
CHAINLINK FENCE



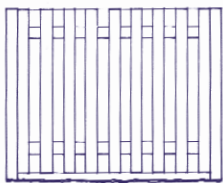
CLOSE BOARDED FENCE



RANCH STYLE FENCE



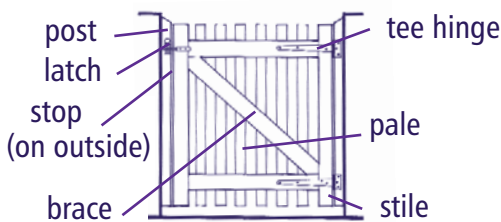
HIT & MISS FENCE



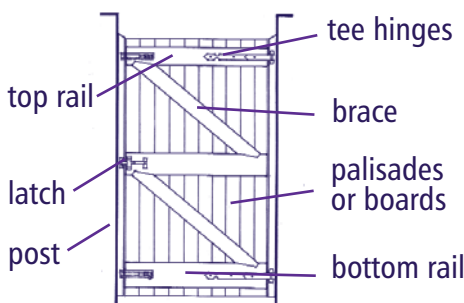
CHESTNUT PALE FENCE



BRACED GATE



LEDGED & BRACED GATE



before you contact us...

tell us...

fence dangerous/broken

- Where is fence (front, rear or side)?
- What kind of fence is it (boarded, chestnut pale, timber palisade, ranch style etc.)? See diagrams opposite.
- What are posts and panels made of (wood or concrete)?
- Does it need to be replaced or resecured?
- Is it your own fence or shared with your neighbour?

gate jamming

- What is gate made of (wood or metal)?
- What is causing it to jam (hinge broken etc.)?

gate latch/bolt broken

- What type of latch is it?
- What is gate made of (wood or metal etc.)?

gate post rotten/broken

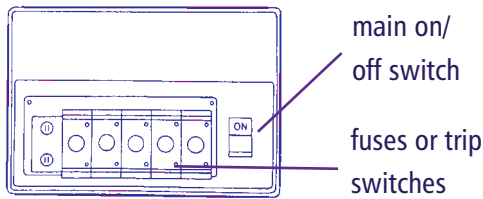
- What is post made from (wood or concrete etc.)?

gate post stop defective

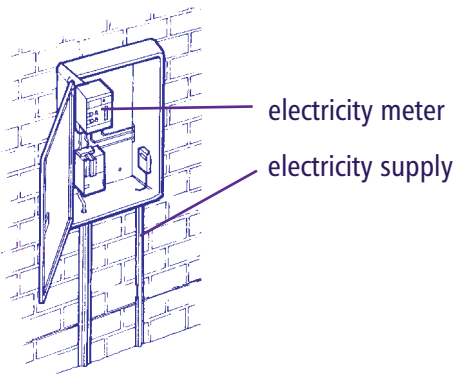
- What is gate post stop made from (wood or metal etc.)?

ELECTRICAL

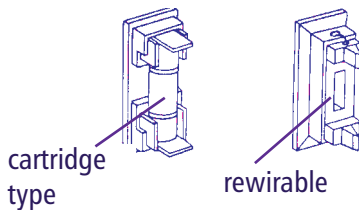
ELECTRICITY CONSUMER UNIT



ELECTRICITY METER



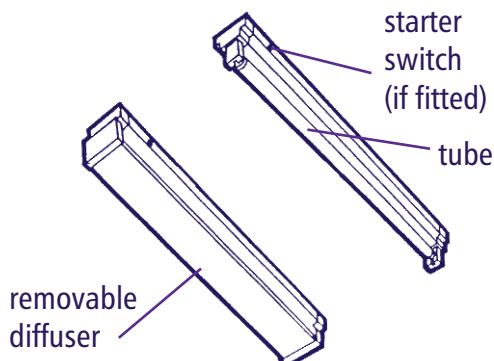
TYPES OF FUSES



TRIP SWITCH (replaces fuses in modern consumer units)



FLUORESCENT LIGHTS



before you contact us...

tell us...

no power at all

- If you have a coin or credit meter, check that it has credit on it.
- See if trip switch is activated or a fuse has blown on consumer unit.
- Are your neighbours affected? If so, contact your electricity supplier (under 'Electricity' in the telephone directory).

electrical fitting smoking

- DO NOT TOUCH FITTING.
- Turn electricity off at consumer unit main switch.
- What fitting is it (light, plug etc.)?
- Where is it located?

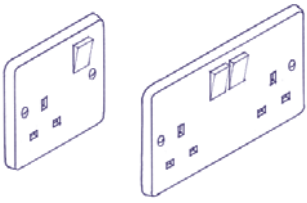
light circuit failed

- See if trip switch is activated or fuse has blown on consumer unit.
- Has bulb blown?
- Are power sockets working?
- Are power sockets working?
- Are power sockets working?
- How many lights are affected?
- Is light fitting causing the problem (the pendant, batten holder, wall or ceiling switch etc.)? See diagrams opposite.

fluorescent tube not working

- What is the problem (tube flickers, broken etc.)?

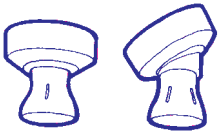
SINGLE & DOUBLE SWITCHED POWER SOCKETS



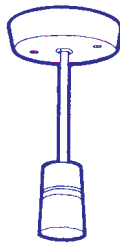
COOKER CONTROL POWER SOCKET



BATTEN LAMP HOLDERS



PENDANT LAMP HOLDER



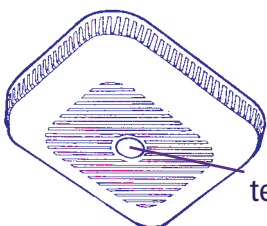
CEILING PULL SWITCH



CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR



SMOKE DETECTOR/ SMOKE ALARM



test button

before you contact us...

- Is it the appliance, rather than the power socket that is faulty?
- Is trip switch activated or a fuse blown in the consumer unit?
- Is there no power at all in your home?

tell us...

plug socket not working

- Are other power sockets working?
- Is trip switch activated or a fuse blown in consumer unit?

smoke detector defective

- If it is battery operated, check batteries.
- Is it battery operated?
- Where is the smoke detector?
- What appears to be problem?

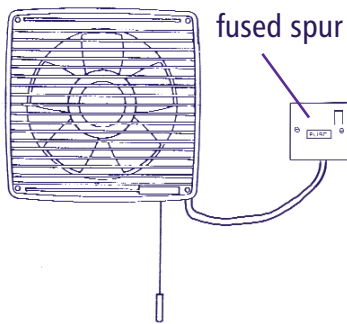
carbon monoxide detector defective

- Gas appliance - turn off the appliance, ventilate the room and call Transco.
- Solid fuel appliance - damp down the fire and ventilate the room.

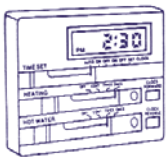
ELECTRICAL / HEATING SYSTEMS

EXTRACTOR FAN

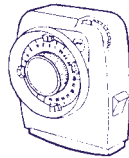
(showing wiring to fused spur)



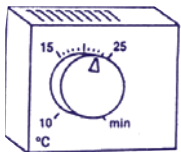
DIGITAL PROGRAMMER



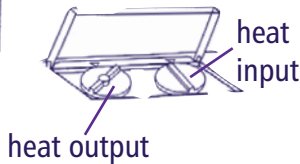
CLOCK PROGRAMMER



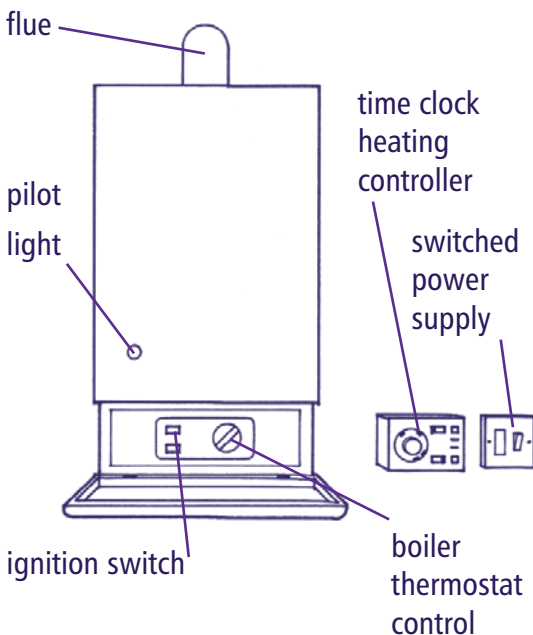
ROOM THERMOSTAT



STORAGE HEATER CONTROLS



WALL MOUNTED CENTRAL HEATING BOILER (front panel open)



before you contact us...

tell us...

extractor fan faulty

- Is fan switched on?
- Where is fan?
- What type of fan is it?

central heating boiler faulty

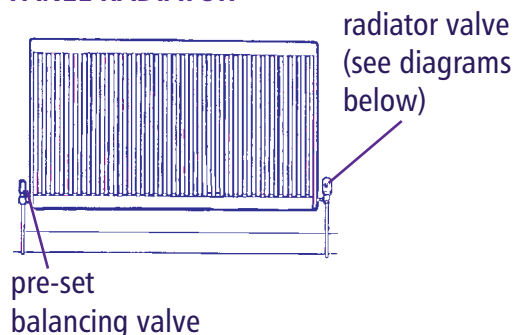
- If electric, check that power is still on, and that meter is still in credit.
- If gas, check that pilot light is on.
- Check that boiler thermostat is set correctly (usually between 18°C and 22°C). See diagram opposite.
- Check that clock or digital timer is set correctly.

communal heating faulty

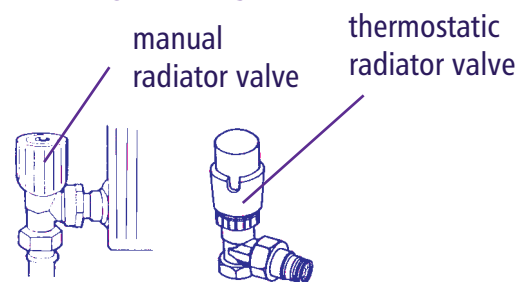
- Check that room thermostat is set correctly (usually between 18°C and 22°C).
- Are other flats affected?
- If you live in older people's supported housing, contact your support staff.
- Check that thermostatic valve is turned up enough.
- Is this your only source of heat?
- Is there any hot water?

HEATING SYSTEM

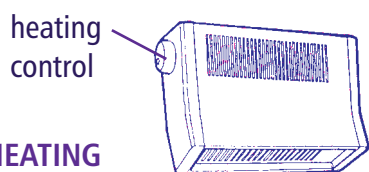
PANEL RADIATOR



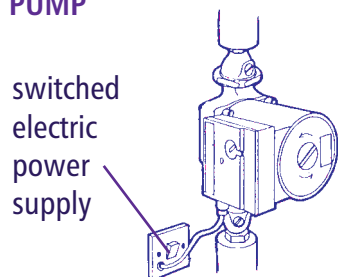
RADIATOR VALVES



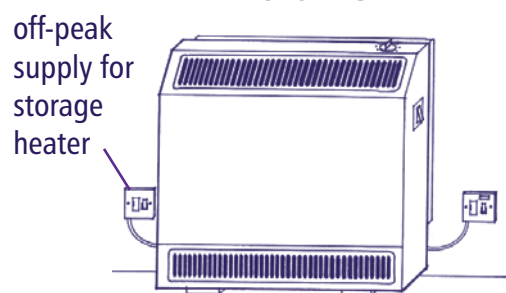
WALL MOUNTED DOWNFLOW HEATER



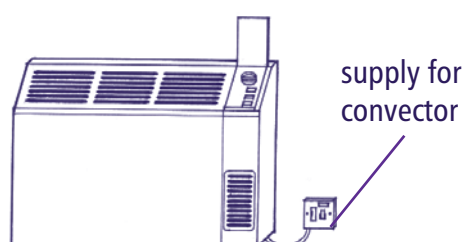
CENTRAL HEATING PUMP



STORAGE HEATER



CONVECTOR HEATER



before you contact us...

tell us...

radiator not heating up

- Check that thermostatic valve is turned up enough.

- Is thermostatic valve turned up enough?
- How many radiators are affected?
- Do you have hot water?

radiator leaking

- Try to stop leak causing damage.
- Turn radiator valve off.

- Where is leak coming from?
See diagram opposite.

fumes appear in room

- If gas leak, DO NOT SMOKE, USE MATCHES OR TURN ELECTRICAL SWITCHES ON OR OFF. Open windows.
- Turn off any appliances that are causing fumes.

- What is causing fumes?
- Has flue been cleaned recently?
- If the heating system is the cause, can you see manufacturer's name and the model?

storage heater defective

- Make sure heater is turned on at socket.
- Check thermostat is set correctly.

- How many heaters are affected?
- Where are they?
- What appears to be the problem?
- Can you see manufacturer's name and model number?

radiator/convector heater faulty

- Check thermostat is set correctly.

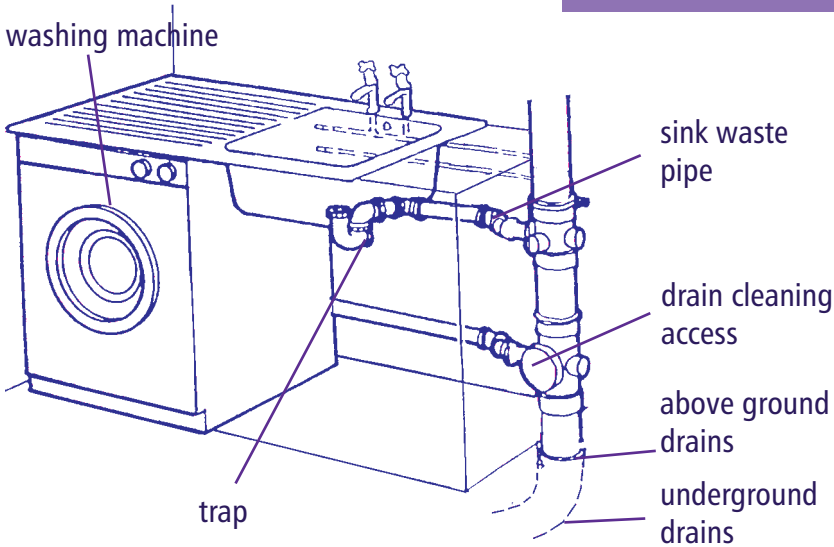
- What appears to be the problem?
- Can you see manufacturer's name and model?

KITCHENS

before you contact us... tell us...

WASHING MACHINE

(showing typical plumbing)



washing machine blocked

- Do you know what caused the blockage?

damaged cupboard

- Which unit is affected (a corner unit, floor or wall unit, with single or double doors)?
- What part is faulty? See diagram opposite.
- In what way is it damaged?
- Do you think it can be repaired or will it need to be replaced?
- What is it made of (wood, plastic or metal etc.)?
- What colour and size is it?

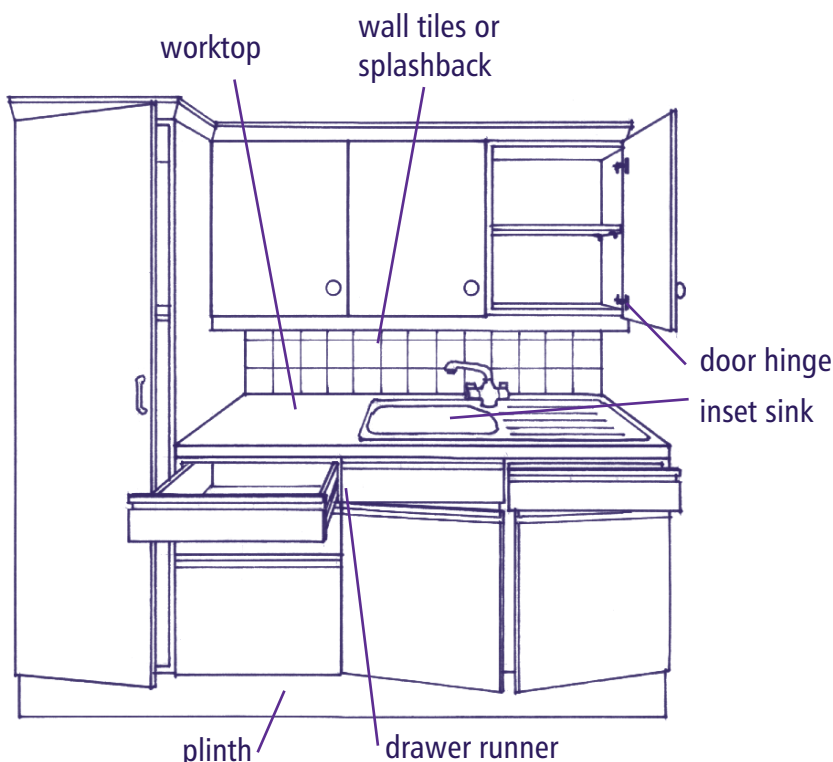
sink unit leaking

- Try to stop the leak causing more damage.
- Where is leak coming from (pipe, tap or waste pipe/trap)? See diagrams opposite.

sink blocked

- Try to clear it yourself using a plunger.
- Stop using sink while blocked.
- Are other outlets affected?
- Is washing machine blocked?
- What caused the blockage?

TYPICAL KITCHEN UNIT



damaged wall tiles

- Where are tiles?
- Are they broken, loose or missing?
- How many are affected?
- What size and colour are they?

Please refer to page 46

- Sink tap dripping.
- Tap loose.
- Sink plug/chain required.

APPOINTMENTS

You must report any defects to the property as soon as practical. We will arrange for the repairs to be carried out as necessary. You must keep to these arrangements.

A Property Surveyor may need to inspect the defect before the contractor does the work. We will confirm the appointment for the inspection on a green customer care card.

The system for contractor appointments is as follows:

- For all repair jobs (except emergencies), wherever possible the Customer Service Centre will arrange for the repair to be carried out on a weekday morning or afternoon. We will confirm the appointment date, time and job number on the customer care card.
- We do not make appointments for emergencies. If you report an emergency, we expect you to wait at home for the contractor to arrive.
- You should telephone the number on the customer care card if the appointment time is not suitable, so we can rearrange the appointment. We will offer you a new date, if the contractor is unable to keep the appointment.
- The job will be cancelled if the contractor calls at the arranged time and date and is refused access or is unable to gain access. We will leave a card with you stating the reason why. You will have to report the repair again if you still want the work carried out.

We are unable to carry out work where a child under 16 is alone in the property.

If you choose to leave the contractor alone in your property while your repair is being carried out, you do so entirely at your own risk.

Please take the time to complete and return the pre-paid customer care card once the job has been completed. We value your comments and they help us to gather information and to monitor the contractor's performance. We aim to carry out telephone interviews with around one third of tenants to monitor the quality of the work.

OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCIES

The out of hours service operates:

- From 5.00pm to 8.30am, Monday to Friday
- On Bank Holidays

The purpose of our out of hours emergency repairs service is to provide an emergency call out service when the Customer Service Centre is closed.

Please note that gas leaks or suspicion of fumes from a gas appliance should be reported direct to **Southern Gas Networks** on **0800 111 999**.

It is expensive to organise tradesmen out of hours, so it is important that you only request a call out for a genuine emergency. We define an emergency as danger to life or limb, where there is a serious risk to health or where there is risk of considerable damage to the property, for example, if a water leak causes a ceiling to collapse. In exceptional circumstances, we may also regard a repair as an emergency if it causes undue anxiety or stress or would cause significant inconvenience over a prolonged period. The Council aims to respond and make safe wherever possible within two hours.

We do not tolerate verbal abuse towards our staff, so if you are abusive to our call out officer we will not treat your call as an emergency.

The emergency call out officers may use their discretion, based on the nature of the call or where the tenant is disabled, a pensioner or has a young baby in the property. The emergency system should not be used by tenants to 'short circuit' the normal repair priorities. See page 44 for full details of these priorities.

We will charge you for the emergency call out if the contractor informs us that it was not a genuine emergency. You may be depriving another person with a genuine emergency if you abuse the system.

FIRE SAFETY

Three quarters of all fire deaths happen at home. Older people and young children are most at risk. One third of all domestic fires are caused by chip pans or children playing with matches.

Reducing the risk

- Make sure that all equipment and appliances are in good working order, are serviced regularly and repaired or thrown away when worn out. Avoid buying second hand electrical appliances. If you do, make sure you have them tested before you use them.

- Unplug electrical equipment that is not being used. Do not leave appliances on 'stand-by' for long periods.
- Avoid using electrical adapters. A multi-socket bar is safer.
- Never throw water on an electrical appliance or burning oil, such as a chip pan fire.
- Do not leave pans of fat or oil unattended whilst cooking.
- Always guard open or radiant fires, such as bar heaters.
- Store matches and lighters safely, out of reach of children.
- The use of Liquid Petroleum Gas or paraffin heaters is not permitted in flats or maisonettes. These appliances are easily knocked over and can cause a fire.
- Do not store gas cylinders or paraffin inside your house or bungalow.
- Avoid storing flammable materials that could be a fire risk. Don't allow rubbish to pile up against the side of the building or under external staircases. Rubbish accumulated in the garden can also be a risk.
- Do not clutter up stairwells, landings and corridors in blocks of flats, especially with items that may easily catch fire. Remember, this is the emergency exit route for you and your neighbours, so your safety and theirs depends on everyone co-operating.
- Doors can help contain a fire and prevent smoke spreading if they are shut, so avoid propping doors open, especially self-closing fire doors.
- Close all doors before going out or going to bed.
- Ensure cigarettes are fully extinguished and don't smoke in bed!
- Have a nightly checklist and go around your home before you go to bed making sure each item is left in a safe condition.
- Never leave children alone in the house.
- Encourage all your family and visitors to be aware of safety.
- The 'blue light' services need a clear route to deal with emergencies. You can assist by parking properly and keeping access roads clear.

Fire drill

Safety comes first, so:

- Don't attempt to tackle the fire yourself.
- Get everyone out.
- Never use the lift in an emergency, always use the stairs.
- Crawl on the floor if there is smoke. The air is cleaner near the floor, so put your nose as low as possible. Remember, smoke is poisonous and can kill you.
- Close all windows and doors behind you.
- Raise the alarm, call 999 and ask for the Fire Brigade.
- Don't stop to pick up valuables or animals. Never go back in, it isn't worth the risk. Nothing is more valuable than your life or the lives of your loved ones.
- If you can't get out, get everyone into one room, block the door and stay by the window or on the balcony if you have one.
- Wait near the building. When the Fire Service arrives, give them as much information as possible about the fire and the building.

Escape routes

Plan safe escape routes now, even if you never have to use them. Make your children and other dependants aware of what to do in an emergency.

Smoke detectors

All our properties should be fitted with smoke detectors and we check these annually. If there is no smoke detector fitted in your home contact the Customer Service Centre immediately.



It is your responsibility to ensure that your smoke detector is fitted with a live battery at all times. Never leave the smoke detector without a live battery and never remove it. It may be a nuisance if the alarm goes off while you are making the toast, but it could save your life. This should not be a problem if you ventilate the kitchen adequately whilst cooking. This is particularly important in hostels and older people's supported housing where the detectors may be linked to the main fire alarm system and the Fire Service will be called out.

You should test the smoke detector at regular intervals. If it does not work, the battery may need replacing. If this does not rectify the problem, contact the Customer Service Centre immediately.

ELECTRICITY

A number of companies now supply electricity. Full details are available in the telephone directory under 'Electricity'.

You are responsible for your own electrical appliances. However, for your own safety, observe these general safety rules:

- Only use good quality plugs
- Make sure plugs are wired correctly
- Always fit the correct fuse for the job
- Use short undamaged flexes
- Regularly check flexes and fittings
- Do not use plug adaptors
- If you need extra sockets you may have some fitted through the Tenants Improvement Scheme. There will be a cost involved. See pages 63 and 64

If all your lights go out or you lose power to your sockets, try these few simple steps before contacting the Customer Service Centre or the out of hours service:

- Go to the fuse board. Check if all the switches are in the 'on' position. If not, simply reposition the appropriate switch and the problem should be solved. If a lighting circuit has tripped, it may be that a bulb has blown and needs replacing.
- If a socket circuit switch or the main switch has tripped, reset the switch. If it immediately trips again, then you probably have a faulty appliance. Unplug all your appliances and then try to reset the switch again. You should find that it is now successful. You will now need to plug in each appliance in turn. If the switch trips out again, you will have located the faulty appliance. You should not attempt to use this appliance until it has been

checked by a qualified electrician or, if it is under warranty, you should contact the supplier or manufacturer.

- If having followed the steps above, you still cannot reset the switch, then contact the Customer Service Centre or the out of hours service, as appropriate. You may be advised that the contractor will not attend until the next day if crucial lighting is not affected.

GAS

A number of companies now supply gas. Full details are available in the telephone directory under 'Gas'.

Your chosen supplier will be responsible for all pipework leading to the meter. The Council is responsible for the internal gas pipes only.

Repairs of gas pipes installed by the Council

You should contact the Customer Service Centre to arrange repairs to our gas pipes or call the out of hours service, who will make sure that the system is safe.

Gas leaks

In the event of a gas leak, make sure you immediately:

- Put out cigarettes. Do not use matches or naked flames.
- Do not operate electrical switches, either on or off.
- Open doors and windows to ventilate and clear the gas from the room.
- Check to see if a gas tap has been left on accidentally or if a pilot light has gone out. If not, there is probably a gas leak. Turn off the whole supply at the meter and call **Southern Gas Networks** on **0800 111 999** and have your postcode ready.

Be especially alert when returning to buildings which have been empty for some time. If you smell gas in the street, report it at once to Southern Gas Networks. Don't just leave it to someone else.

Turning off your main gas supply

For your own safety, make sure you know where the main gas tap is for your home and how to turn it off. The main gas tap is usually near the gas meter.

CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

A carbon monoxide detector is a fail safe device used to monitor the levels of harmful carbon monoxide in the air. Carbon monoxide is an odourless gas produced from burning fossil fuels. If the appliance you are using is not working correctly, carbon monoxide may escape into your home and you would not be able to detect its presence without a special detector. All homes where there is at least one fossil fuel appliance (gas or solid fuel) should have one fitted. If you think you should have one, contact the Customer Service Centre.

The carbon monoxide detector will normally be located in the same room as your gas boiler or solid fuel appliance and will be checked annually by the Council. Do not attempt to change the battery in your carbon monoxide detector. These are sealed units and the whole unit will be replaced when necessary.

The carbon monoxide alarm will sound if it detects the possible presence of carbon monoxide in the air. If carbon monoxide is present, it could result in serious illness or death from poisoning. You should take the following action:

- **Gas appliance.** Turn off the appliance, open doors and windows and contact **Southern Gas Networks** on **0800 111 999** immediately
- **Solid fuel appliance.** Damp down the fire, open doors and windows and contact the Customer Service Centre or out of hours service immediately

HEATING SYSTEMS AND APPLIANCE SERVICING

The Council is required by law to inspect any gas fired or solid fuel heating appliance and associated pipework located in your home every year.



Our contractor will also check and service your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors whilst carrying out the gas servicing to ensure the safety of you and your home.

It is essential this work is carried out every year to prevent the occurrence of poisonous gas emissions being produced by faulty heating appliances.

Failure to carry out this work could result in serious illness or death by carbon monoxide poisoning.

When you receive notification of an appointment from our contractor, you must keep this appointment or contact the contractor direct to arrange a more suitable time.

The Council will take the necessary legal steps to gain access if you do not allow us to carry out the required work. We may serve a Notice on you and seek possession of your home through the court or we may apply for an injunction.

You are responsible for ensuring you are not using a gas appliance that you know or suspect to be unsafe. This also applies to gas supply pipes that may not be in current use.

APPLIANCE LOG BOOKS

Appliance log books are issued to all properties with gas and solid fuel appliances as part of our heating systems contract.

The log book gives details of the appliances and how to operate the heating and hot water systems within your home. It must be left in the property should you transfer or terminate your tenancy. There is space in the log book for you to keep the engineer's work reports giving a service maintenance record for your appliances.

If your heating system has recently been serviced and you do not have a log book or if your last service record is more than twelve months old, please contact the Customer Service Centre.

Back boilers

If you have a solid fuel back boiler and it makes boiling or bubbling noises, damp down the fire and let it go out. You should then contact the Customer Service Centre or the out of hours repairs service.

WORKING FIREPLACES AND FLUES

We will ensure that all open chimneys in use are swept as required. If you regularly use a solid fuel appliance or open fire and you suspect the chimney has not been swept, contact the Customer Service Centre.

WATER SUPPLY

Mains stopcock

You should locate your mains stopcock, so you can turn it off quickly in an emergency. If for any reason your water supply is turned off, you will not have any hot water once your tank is empty. You should turn off the boiler immediately to protect the cylinder and boiler from damage.



Leaking pipes

There are steps you can take to limit the damage to your property and possessions if you have a water leak.

Many hot and cold pipes to baths, basins, sinks and toilets are now protected with an isolating valve which you can turn off. This means that instead of turning off the water at the stopcock and losing the supply to the whole property, you can isolate the troublesome feed.

You will need a flat screwdriver, a knife or a small coin. Turn the screw in the middle of the valve clockwise to turn it off.

You may need to turn off the water supply if the leak is more serious or your home does not have isolating valves. Put a bowl under the leak to catch any remaining water then report the leak to our Customer Service Centre.

You should learn where to find the isolating valves and stopcocks and make sure you know how to operate them. This could save valuable time in an emergency.

Serious, uncontrollable leaks will be treated as an emergency. Remember, if you request an out of hours call out and the leak could have been contained until at least the next working day, you may be charged for the cost of the visit.

A plumber will visit you within five days if the leak is controllable or containable. If in doubt, always telephone us for advice.

Stored water leaks

Cold water storage tanks or hot water cylinders may also leak and these are not always easily contained.

When you discover a major leak:

- Turn off the water at the incoming mains stopcock
- Turn off the boiler and immersion heater
- Run the hot water taps to drain down the system
- Put a bowl under the leak, if possible, to catch any residual water
- Report the fault to the Customer Service Centre or the out of hours service

It should not be necessary to make an out of hours call if you have followed the advice above. However, you should contact the Customer Service Centre the next morning. You may report the fault at any time, but do not expect an immediate visit if you have been able to control the situation. Remember, you may be charged for the cost of an out of hours visit if it is not a genuine emergency.

You may need to draw off water for your immediate and essential needs if you have to turn off the water at the incoming mains stopcock for any length of time:

- Draw off water into buckets or a similar receptacle to flush the toilet
- Fill up kettles, jugs and saucepans with water for drinking and cooking
- Avoid non-essential tasks, such as bathing, laundry and washing the car

Frozen pipes

You can thaw out a frozen pipe by gently warming it with a cloth soaked in warm water or with a hairdryer. Never use a blowlamp. If you are going away in the winter, please make sure that you either leave the heating on or turn off both the heating and the stopcock.

Burst pipes

You can stop water flowing from a burst pipe by shutting the main stopcock and turning on all the taps to run off the water in the pipes and the cistern.

Taps

Washers wear out more quickly if you over-tighten taps when you turn them off. Remember to turn off the water supply at the stopcock before replacing a washer. If you are a pensioner and are unable to replace washers, you should report the fault to the Customer Service Centre.

Frozen hot water systems

Do not light the boiler if you cannot draw hot water after a frost. Make sure the boiler is turned off and if possible warm the house to remove the blockage. You can test this by seeing if the hot water taps run freely. Contact the Customer Service Centre if the problem continues.

Water meters

You may have a water meter installed in your home, but you should contact your Area Housing Manager first to obtain permission. Once you have this, contact your supplier to make the necessary arrangements. Full details are in the telephone directory under 'Water'.

LOOKING AFTER YOUR HOME

Internal decoration

You are entirely responsible for the internal decoration of your home and must keep it to our reasonable satisfaction. You may be charged for the cost of redecoration if you fail to do so.

We may decorate a room for people who are pensioners and disabled people who have difficulty decorating and do not have relatives to help them. This scheme is discretionary. For further details contact the Customer Service Centre.



External decoration

We will survey the exterior and internal communal areas of our properties at least once every five years and carry out repairs and painting as necessary.

You are not responsible for carrying out your own

external decorations, but you may do so at your own expense. You must seek permission from your Area Housing Manager before starting any work.

Blocked gullies, sinks and wastes

You must use the property properly and responsibly and take reasonable care to keep all grates, grids, drains and gullies (not including gutters that catch water from the roof) clean and clear. You must also take care not to block toilets and sinks. The Council will clear blockages if you are unable to, but we may charge you for repeated blockages caused by misuse or neglect.

Take the following steps to avoid blocking drains:

- Always scrape food waste into the bin.
- Do not pour waste fat or oil from frying pans or fryers down the sink. Instead, when cool, pour into an empty bottle with a screw top and put into the waste bin.
- Make use of a plughole cover to trap any small particles that could pass through the plughole and get stuck in the u-bend.
- Clean sinks regularly to help dissolve fatty and other deposits.
- After washing hair always ensure that any loose hair is removed from the plughole.

Should a blockage occur, try the following measures before contacting us:

- Put washing soda crystals into the plughole and wash down with boiling water. This can help to dissolve the blockage.
- Use a sink plunger to try to shift the blockage. Remember to cover the overflow hole with a damp cloth.
- There are a number of specialist sink blockage clearers on the market which can be very effective. However, always make sure you read the label and follow safety guidance instructions.

A blocked sink is not an emergency and will not be attended to overnight or even the same day. If you want it unblocked sooner, you may make your own arrangements with a private plumber at your own cost.

Damage to property

You will be charged to repair any reckless, accidental or wilful damage or neglect to the property or its fixtures and fittings. We are not responsible for damage to or loss of your fixtures and fittings, including furniture, carpets, clothing and household effects. You are advised to take out your own insurance policy to cover these risks.

IMPROVEMENTS

You may, at your own expense, improve, redecorate and extend the property, subject to gaining all the necessary approvals, such as planning permission and building control. Restricted work must be carried out by an approved contractor. We recommend that you employ an appropriately qualified design consultant should you wish to carry out any structural works.

The following list gives examples of items for which you must obtain permission:

- Erection of outbuildings, garages and sheds
- Extension to the property
- Removal of internal walls
- Any work to the electricity or gas installations
- Installation of kitchen or bathroom fitments
- Installation of any heating system
- Replacement doors or windows
- Disabled adaptations
- Installations of drive, hard standing or dropped kerb
- Fish ponds
- Extensive patio or decked areas
- Installation of laminate flooring

You are advised to get advice from your Area Housing Manager before starting any improvements.

At the end of the tenancy, you must remove any structures or improvements, where we have not granted permission for them to remain. See page 17 for further details.

Your right to compensation for improvements

At the end of your tenancy, secure tenants may be entitled to compensation for certain specified home improvements. See page 95 for further details.

TENANTS IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

This scheme helps tenants who would like minor home improvements carried out but are worried about finding a reliable builder and getting a fair price for the work. You can now use our nominated contractor, who will carry out work to an acceptable standard and at a fixed cost to you.

You are deemed to have obtained our permission if you use this scheme, so you do not have to request permission from your Area Housing Manager. We will maintain these home improvements throughout your tenancy or until they are beyond economic repair.

The arrangement is made between you and our nominated contractor and you should pay them direct. We will not carry out quality inspections or become involved in any possible disputes, nor will we guarantee the quality of any work carried out.

Please see the table on page 64, which lists the available items agreed in conjunction with the Council's Property Surveyors and your Property and Contracts Forum.

Only those works listed in the table can be carried out at the fixed price, as agreed by the Council. Items marked * will be subject to you obtaining a quote from the contractor for the work.

Please contact the Customer Service Centre, who will give you more information about the scheme, including an idea of the costs.

All of these items are subject to health and safety considerations.



Works included in Tenants Improvement Scheme

Item	Security
1	Supply and fit 5 lever mortice deadlock to existing external timber door
2	Supply and fit window locks/stays to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Timber windows ■ PVCu windows ■ Aluminium windows
3	Supply and fit patio door security locks to tilt and turn or sliding PVCu or aluminium patio doors
4	Supply and fit door security viewer to front or back door
Item	Lighting and power
5	Supply and fit additional lighting point to any internal room. To be run off existing switched unit
6	Supply and fit lighting circuit to permanent shed/outhouse
7	Supply and fit power circuit to permanent shed/outhouse
8	Convert single socket to double socket
9	Supply and fit additional double socket. To be spurred from existing socket
Item	Kitchen and bathroom
10	Supply and fit additional ceramic wall tiling. Choice will be offered from WCC specified Johnsons Prismatic range
11	Supply and fit additional Howdens Greenwich white kitchen units, subject to no layout re-design and where space permits
12	Supply and fit additional cold water service point
13	Supply and fit electrical circuit and fused spur service point
	Doors
14	Supply and fit internal door and furniture to WCC specification
15	Supply and fit external door and furniture to WCC specification
	Garden
16	Supply and fit outside tap
*	Decoration and sundry items
17	Partial or whole decoration of one room to WCC specification. Range of finishes will be offered in line with the Council's internal decoration policy
18	Erection of shelf units. To be supplied by you
19	Erection of curtain battens and/or tracks. To be supplied by you

CONDENSATION

You have a duty to minimise levels of condensation within the property, ensuring it is sufficiently heated and ventilated. Condensation on windows or walls must be removed at frequent intervals to prevent damage.

Many people mistake the results of condensation for types of dampness associated with building defects. Tackling the problem promptly and effectively can help prevent further issues developing.

Condensation occurs when warm moist air comes into contact with a cold surface. This is often why your windows, ceramic tiles, pipework and sometimes even walls will appear to run with water.

Lots of activities produce moisture, such as cooking, drying washing, running baths and using portable gas or paraffin heaters. The following steps can help you reduce the moisture in your home and prevent condensation:

- **Cooking.** Cover pans and do not leave kettles boiling. Open the kitchen window and keep the door closed.
- **Washing.** Dry washing outdoors, if at all possible. Drying clothes indoors will increase moisture levels in your home. Ensure you open the windows if you have to dry clothes indoors. If you have a vented tumble dryer, make sure the pipe goes outside when in use. Self-condensing tumble dryers do not need a vent through an outside wall.
- Do not use portable gas or paraffin heaters. A litre of moisture will be released into the house for every litre of fuel you burn.
- **Ventilate your home.** Make use of trickle vents where they are fitted to your windows. Open your windows every day. Wherever possible, leave one window in each room ajar to allow air to circulate. Try to maintain some ventilation overnight as well, if it is safe to do so.
- **Bathing.** When running a bath, run both the hot and cold taps at the same time to reduce the amount of steam in the air. It is wise to fit an extractor fan if you have a shower. Keep the door closed and open the window as soon as you have finished in the bathroom.
- **Furniture.** If condensation or mould is apparent, place furniture slightly away from outside walls to allow air to circulate behind. Do not overfill wardrobes and chests of drawers, again to allow air to circulate.
- **Heating.** Make sure your home is adequately heated during cold weather. It is better to have the heating on continuously on a low setting than to have short bursts of high heat. This will also save you money.

You may find, in spite of taking these measures, you still get condensation in your home. It is important to make sure you wipe down wet surfaces frequently to prevent timber rotting and mould growth, which can cause respiratory problems, especially in young children or elderly people. Do not brush mould, because this may spread the spores. Wash it with a mould killer or bleach in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. You should dry-clean mouldy clothing or bedding.

DECORATION VOUCHERS

We may offer you decoration vouchers, depending on the condition of the décor at the time you sign for your tenancy. Decoration vouchers may also be given to tenants following repair work if we believe it is more cost effective than carrying out the work ourselves.

These vouchers are issued as a goodwill and discretionary gesture and are only intended to cover the cost of basic materials. The value of the vouchers depends on the condition and size of the room and can roughly be summarised as follows:

- Small rooms (less than 6.3 square meters / 70 square feet) - up to £30
- Large rooms (over 6.3 square meters / 70 square feet) - up to £50
- Hall, stairs and landing - up to £100

You will not be given vouchers for a particular room or area that we deem to be in a reasonable condition. When assessing decorating allowances, we do not take into account personal preferences, such as colour or fashion.

The vouchers can only be collected and signed for by you. They may be obtained from the Council's Cash Office. They can be exchanged for a range of materials at any of the following stores:

- B&Q
- Homebase
- Warwicks (Wickham)
- Brewers

The participating stores are only authorised to exchange vouchers for the following items:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| ■ Friezes | ■ Rollers |
| ■ Stanley knife | ■ Sealer |
| ■ Paste | ■ Glazed tiles |
| ■ Scrapers | ■ Seam rollers |
| ■ White spirit | ■ Mastic |
| ■ Wood filler | ■ Sugar soap |
| ■ Sandpaper | ■ Varnish |
| ■ Tile adhesive and grout | ■ Paint |
| ■ Paint brushes | ■ Wood stain |
| ■ Paint brush restorer | ■ Paint trays |
| ■ Wallpapering table (1 only) | ■ Paint stripper |
| ■ Wallpaper stripper | ■ Wallpaper |

The Voids Officer will tell you if the vouchers will be issued to you in instalments. You should contact the Voids Officer after you have used each instalment, so they can check the materials have been used at your home and arrange for the next instalment to be issued. You will not get your next instalment if there is no evidence that you have used the first instalment.

Do not write on or otherwise deface the vouchers, as the participating stores may refuse to accept them. We will not replace lost or defaced vouchers.

TENANT RECHARGES

In certain circumstances, you may be charged for work carried out to your home. The list below is a guide and is not exhaustive. We reserve the right to charge you for any reckless, accidental or wilful damage or neglect to your property, fixtures or fittings.

- The cost of all unnecessary maintenance visits
- Failure to take reasonable care to maintain the property and the fixtures and fittings throughout the tenancy
- Failure to keep the property in a clean and habitable condition
- Failure to protect the property from fire, frost or water damage
- Failure to keep internal decoration in reasonable order
- Causing blockages to sinks, wastes, drains and gullies
- Failure to return the property to us in a reasonable condition at the end of the tenancy
- Action needed to gain access to the property in an emergency
- Abuse of the emergency call out service

Our policy is to charge tenants for the full cost of repairs where the circumstances of the damage are not known. This may include an out of hours call out fee and associated costs. You should call the Police and get a crime number if your home has been damaged through crime or vandalism. This will help us recover the costs through any subsequent court case. You may be charged if you are unable to give this information.

We will advise you if it is likely a recharge will be made. Any decision about recharging is not made by the contractor who comes to fix the fault.

Recharges when vacating your home

At the end of your tenancy you must completely clear the property of all your belongings and fixtures and fittings. You must leave the property in a safe condition and repair any damage to decoration. You will be charged for the costs of removing any items left in the property.

In addition, we will charge you for reinstating the property to its original condition and for removing your alterations or adaptations, such as electrical wiring and fittings that do not conform to our safety standards, artex on walls or unauthorised building works. We will also charge you for any council fixtures and fittings that are missing, such as doors and kitchen units, and for items that have to be renewed due to neglect or wilful damage.

If you are in any doubt, you should contact the Voids Officer before leaving the property.

ASBESTOS

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous material that was used extensively to construct both residential and commercial buildings, but has now been phased out.

In domestic premises, asbestos was commonly used in the manufacture of soffits, gutters and downpipes. It was also used as a roofing material for garages, car ports and garden sheds. Inside, it was used in floor tiles, coatings, such as artex, boiler flues and to line boiler cupboard doors in blocks of flats.

If asbestos is in good condition and unlikely to be damaged and does not pose a significant health risk, there is no legal obligation for us to remove it.

We are constantly surveying our properties and updating our asbestos records for both domestic premises and garages. In this way we are able to:

- Confirm the exact location of the affected components
- Identify the type of asbestos present
- Monitor the condition of the material

You can help us by reporting any damage to the building to the Customer Service Centre. The sooner we are advised the quicker we can assess the situation and take action if necessary.

You should contact the Customer Service Centre for advice if you are planning extensive DIY in your home.