

Chapter 4: Repairs

We are responsible for carrying out repairs and general maintenance to your home on behalf of the council. We aim to provide good-quality repairs that not only meet the council's legal responsibility as your landlord, but also take account of your needs.

A separate **repairs handbook** gives you more details on the types of repairs we will carry out and tells you about the best way to report problems. It is designed to make reporting repairs easier and more efficient. You can get a copy from Customer Services Centres.

Reporting a repair

When you contact us

Let us know:

- your name, address and phone number;
- details of the item that needs repairing; and
- whether you are hard of hearing, have difficulty getting to the door or have any other special needs.

We will tell you the maximum time within which we will do the job. If any work is needed inside your home, we will give you an appointment.

If the repair problem is complicated, we may inspect the problem before placing an order for the repair. The person who takes your repair request can give you more information and, if necessary, make an appointment for the visit.

Warning – Before you let anyone into your home to carry out a repair or gas servicing, you should check their identity card and work order to make sure that they are genuine.



How to report a repair

You can report a repair in a number of ways.

By phone

- During office hours: Freephone **0800 195 3404**
(for all repairs **except** gas problems)
Mondays and Fridays from 8am to 6pm; and
Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8am to 8pm
- Outside office hours: **020 8348 3148**
(for emergencies only, including heating)
- Minicom (for people who are hard of hearing)
020 8489 4306

Only call the emergency number **020 8348 3148** for **genuine emergency repairs**. Non-emergency calls to the emergency number could affect other tenants with more serious problems. **Emergency repairs** are those repairs that need to be done to prevent immediate danger to people, to prevent major damage or to make a property secure.

By visiting us at one of the council's Customer Services Centres to report your repairs problem. You can find details about Customer Services Centres on page 9.

By e-mailing us at repairs@homesforharingey.org

Important: do not use this e-mail address for emergency or urgent repairs. Instead, phone the call centre, visit any Customer Services Centre, or report emergency repairs to our out-of-hours service (details above).

By using our on-line Graphical Repairs Ordering System

on our website at www.homesforharingey.org. We have designed the system to help you identify and report repairs from a series of clearly designed drawings and images.

For your added convenience, you will also be able to book an appointment on-line. You will need your unique PIN and password,

which you should have received in the post. If you have lost your PIN or forgotten your password, or have any other questions about the on-line Graphical Repairs Ordering System, please e-mail hitsupport@homesforharingey.org or phone the call centre on 0800 195 3404. If you are a new tenant, we will send you your unique PIN and password within a month of you moving in. You can also ask us for it by e-mailing hitsupport@homesforharingey.org.

Important – Gas leaks

If you smell gas, contact National Grid (previously called Transco) immediately on 0800 111 999.

- Do not smoke or strike matches.
- Put out naked flames.
- Do not turn anything electrical on or off until the problem is fixed.
- Do not use any phone, not even a mobile phone, or intercom system (if you have one) inside your home. Using a phone inside your home could cause an explosion.
- Do turn off the gas supply at the meter.
- Do open doors and windows.

Gas heating repairs

During office hours, you should report problems with gas heating direct to the council's gas contractors. If you live in:

- the Broadwater Farm, Hornsey, South Tottenham and Wood Green areas, phone **TSG Gas Services** on **020 8527 7974**;
- North Tottenham, phone **T A Horn** on **020 8275 3080**; or
- supported housing, phone **Purdy Ltd** on **01992 703410**.

Outside office hours, report emergency gas repairs on **020 8348 3148**.

The response times for our gas contractors are:

- **within 24 hours for the total loss of either heating or hot water** (if it is a serious water leak from the system, we aim to be with you in two hours); and
- **within five working days** for all other gas-heating problems.

Gas-safety checks

By law, we must carry out a gas-safety check and service every year for all the gas appliances in your home which we have supplied (for example, the boiler). This is carried out by specialist Corgi-registered engineers. We have to carry out a yearly check even if you do not use gas as there may be gas pipes that you are not aware of.

We will not check any appliances that you have installed (for example, a gas cooker) – this will be your responsibility. You will have to make sure that any appliances you have installed are serviced once a year by a specialist Corgi-registered engineer.

Access to your home

You **must** allow our staff or contractors into your home at any reasonable time to carry out repairs, inspections, gas safety checks or improvements.

We will normally give you at least 24 hours' warning. In an emergency and if we cannot gain access in any other way, we may have to force entry without giving you notice.

If we have asked you to let us into your home and you fail to do so, we may take legal action against you. You may have to pay the costs of the legal action.

For loss of other supplies

Phone the following numbers at any time.

- Thames Water – **0845 920 0800**
- Electricity (various suppliers) - see your electricity bill for your contact number.

Repairs that we will carry out

We are responsible for repairs to:

- the **structure** and outside parts of your property (walls, roofs, windows, and so on);
- **water and gas pipes, electrical wiring, heating, drainage,**

power and light fittings inside and outside your home (we will provide the pipework for a washing machine, but you are responsible for plumbing in the machine);

- **shared ('communal') areas** in blocks of flats;
- **fences, walls and garden paths** giving access to your home; and
- **outbuildings** such as garages, store cupboards and so on.

If any furniture needs to be moved or if any floor covering [carpets, laminate, and sheet vinyl] needs to be taken up, you are responsible for doing this.

Homes for Haringey follow a 'like for like' repair policy. This means that we will only replace items that we cannot repair with something of the same type. For example, if we could not repair a broken wooden window frame, we would replace it with another wooden window frame.

We are not responsible for repairing items that you have installed yourself, and we will not carry out any repairs that are your responsibility [see below].

Your responsibilities

Your general responsibilities under your tenancy agreement are to:

- **maintain your property**, by reporting repairs that we are responsible for and by carrying out repairs which you are responsible for (details are given later in this section);
- keep your **home clean and in a reasonable condition**, including decorating the inside of your home;
- **tell us as soon as you notice a problem** which we are responsible for, and if possible take action to prevent it getting worse;
- allow us **into your home** to carry out repairs, gas-safety checks and any necessary inspections;
- get our permission in writing to carry out any **improvements or alterations** to our property (please see page 52 for the other permission you may need);

- properly repair and maintain any **fixtures, fittings or appliances you have had put into your home**;
- take action to **prevent and control condensation** (see the repairs handbook for more details);
- take action to **prevent pipes from freezing** (see the repairs handbook for more details); and
- repair any **damage caused by you, a member of your family or a visitor** to your home.

If you experience a **break-in or your property is vandalised or damaged** we will make your property safe and carry out any necessary repairs. You must report the incident to the police, get a police crime number and provide this when you report the matter to us.

All tenants are responsible for:

- repairing, adjusting or replacing inside doors, locks, handles, linings, doorstops and architraves;
- maintaining kitchen units (including the sink unit and taps);
- repairing and renewing floor coverings;
- replacing light bulbs, fluorescent light tubes and fuses;
- replacing plugs and chains on baths, basins and sinks;
- replacing fixtures and fittings such as curtain rails, hooks and shelves;
- cleaning windows (except in shared areas); and
- maintaining your private garden (not shared gardens), including grass, shrubs, trees, all hardstandings, paths and patios, except those that lead to the front and back entrance doors.

Please see the repairs handbook for a full list of your responsibilities.

Fair wear and tear

There are several repairs that we will only carry out if the repair is needed due to fair wear and tear or because of damage caused by a fault with a structure or service.

We will:

- repair or replace kitchen units (including sink units and taps);
- repair or replace floor tiles (in kitchens, bathrooms and toilets only);
- repair or replace baths, basins, pans and cisterns (including bath panels and toilet seats); and
- repair or replace paths and paving (only paths to front and back doors will be repaired or replaced).

If you are the **tenant and over 60 or disabled**, we provide a full repairs service for the property. This does not cover repairing or maintaining any items you have installed or improvements that you have made to the property itself. **This includes homes used by elderly people, such as sheltered accommodation.**

Rechargeable repairs

If you, a member of your family or a visitor cause damage to the property through **neglect**, we will take action to recover the costs of repairing the property. You can find more details about our policy for charging you in chapter 5.

Lost keys or fobs

We do not keep spare keys to your home. You are responsible for your own keys. If you lose them, you will have to make your own arrangements to get into your home and repair any damage caused in the process.

We can provide keys and fobs for entrance doors to blocks of flats. We can replace these if you lose them, although we will make a charge for this. If you lose these keys, you should contact your tenancy management officer.

Asbestos

If you suspect that you may have asbestos in your home, contact us on **0800 195 3404** for help and advice.

We will arrange an appointment for a surveyor to visit you to assess the material and, if necessary, arrange for it to be tested. Our specialist asbestos team keeps a register of all properties known to have asbestos.

Materials containing asbestos are safe as long as they are left undisturbed. Do not carry out do-it-yourself repairs such as sanding or drilling on any materials that you suspect may contain asbestos.

You can get an information leaflet, *Asbestos – what you need to know*, from the council's Customer Services Centres.

Response times for general repairs

We measure the response time for a repair from the time you report the problem to us. We may change these response times from time to time to improve the service you get, check our website for details – www.homesforharingey.org.

Different types of repair have different response times.

Emergency – we will respond within 24 hours

To remove immediate danger to people and prevent major damage or flooding, or to make a property secure. In extreme situations, we aim to make the situation safe within two hours.

Priority A – we aim to complete the work within three working days

These are repairs that need to be done quickly to prevent immediate damage to the property, to overcome serious inconvenience to tenants, or where there is a possible health, safety or security risk.

Priority B – we aim to complete the repair within 20 working days

For work where the problem does not cause immediate inconvenience or present a danger. Most of our repairs are in this category.

Priority C – we aim to complete the repair within 80 working days

This is mainly planned work to the outside of properties and work in gardens and shared areas. This includes repairs where an item, such as a non-standard window, needs to be specially made.

There is a full list of repairs and their priorities in the repairs handbook. If you have lost your copy of the repairs handbook, you can visit any Customer Services Centre to get another one or you can download one from our website at www.homesforharingey.org.

Repairs to specialist equipment

Lifts – we aim to respond to breakdowns within **four hours** of receiving a report. Where parts are needed and available, any repairs will be carried out within five working days. We will tell you in writing if the repair will take longer than five days.

Door-entry system – we aim to respond within **four hours** if the door will not open, and within 24 hours for all other problems.

Shared television aerials – we aim to respond within **24 hours**.

Decorating the outside of your home

We aim to decorate the outside of all homes regularly. If you live in a block, this includes shared areas such as the lobbies, corridors and shared staircases.

Decorating the inside of your home

You are responsible for decorating inside your home.

Decoration schemes for elderly or disabled people

We have a programme for decorating up to three rooms in your home if you are elderly (over 60) or disabled. We will contact you **every six years** to find out if you qualify.

If you qualify, we will either carry out the work for you or pay you a fixed amount for each room to do the work yourself. (This is called the 'optional decoration' scheme.)

If you want to decorate more often than we are able to, you will have to arrange for the work to be done and pay for it.

Appointments

If we make appointments to inspect your home or carry out repairs, you should keep them. **If for any reason you cannot keep the appointment, you must contact us as soon as possible to rearrange the appointment.**

If we cannot keep an appointment, we will contact you as soon as possible to rearrange it.

No access

If the contractor cannot carry out the work because you have not kept the appointment, they will leave a 'no access' card.

If you receive one of these cards, you need to reply within two days. Otherwise, we will cancel the repair and you will have to report the repair all over again.

If we have asked you to let us into your home and you fail to do so, we may take legal action against you. You may have to pay the costs of the legal action.

Insurance

You should take out home contents insurance. This will cover you against damage to your personal belongings, carpets, furniture, decorations and other household contents if you have a fire or flood.

Contents insurance will provide cover if, for example, your bath overflows or your washing machine leaks. You will be responsible for the cost of any damage caused to your own property as well as any damage to any neighbour's home or shared area.

You should also make sure that your policy covers you for accidental damage and for stolen items if you are the victim of a burglary.

To insure the contents of your home, you can use any insurance company you choose. It can be hard to get contents insurance so, to help, the council has introduced a home contents insurance scheme for all tenants.

The scheme is run by **Royal and Sun Alliance Insurance Plc.** You can download an information leaflet and application form from our website at www.homesforharingey.org.

Royal and Sun Alliance Insurance PLC
PO Box 394
Winchester
Hampshire
SO23 8XG

Tel: 08457 337788

Website: www.royalsunalliance.com



Telling us about our service

We want to know what you think of the service that we provide. This helps us to improve areas where you are not satisfied.

We include a satisfaction card with your repair confirmation for all **priority-B and priority-C** repairs. After we have done the work, please fill in the card and return it to us. The postage is free. Your name will go into a monthly draw for a cash prize (**currently £100**).

If we have your phone number, it is likely that we will phone you to find out what our service was like.

If you are not happy with our response to your problem, you can make a complaint. See chapter 20, 'Telling us what you think'.

What happens if we do not do a repair in time?

The right to repair regulations

The **right to repair** is part of the Government's citizen's charter scheme, which was introduced in 1994 for council tenants. It gives you the right to have certain repairs done within set time limits. These are small urgent repairs which, if not carried out on time, might affect your health, safety or security. They are called '**qualifying repairs**'.

If we do not complete a qualifying repair within the time allowed, you have the right to ask us to get another approved contractor to do the work. If the second contractor fails to do the work in time, you will be entitled to claim compensation. You can get more information in the leaflet *A better deal for tenants: your new right to repair*, which you can get from your Customer Services Centre or by visiting the website at www.communities.gov.uk

Qualifying repairs are listed opposite.

Problem	Days
Total loss of electric power	1
Partial loss of electric power	3
Unsafe electrical or light fitting	1
Total loss of water supply	1
Partial loss of water supply	3
Total or partial loss of gas supply	1
Blocked flue to an open fire or boiler	1
Loss of heating or hot water between 1 November and 30 April	1
Loss of heating or hot water between 1 May and 31 October	3
Blocked or non-flushing toilet (if it is the only toilet in your home)	1
Blocked sink, bath or basin	3
Tap which cannot be turned	3
Leaking pipe, tank or cistern	1
Leaking roof	7
Insecure window, outside door or lock	1
Loose or detached banister or handrail	3
Rotten timber flooring or stair tread	3
Door-entry phone not working	7
Extractor fan in a kitchen or bathroom not working	7

Getting permission

Your own improvements and alterations

You may carry out certain improvements and alterations to your home, but you **must** get our permission in writing before starting the work. This includes work such as:

- removing any fixtures or fittings belonging to the council;
- installing any permanent finishing, such as coverings that are glued or nailed to the walls or floor (examples include laminated or wood flooring, and ceramic wall and floor tiles);
- installing or removing a gas supply;
- moving radiators or putting in your own heating;
- installing burglar-proofing equipment, such as steel doors, grill doors or window bars;
- putting up fences or a satellite dish; and
- carrying out any structural alterations, or extensions.

Before laying a hard floor such as wood, laminate or ceramic tiles, or exposing bare floorboards in the property, you will need to lay a high-quality acoustic underlay (soundproofing) of a grade approved by the council. You must allow us into your home to inspect the work.

If you carry out alterations or improvements to the property or outside areas without our permission in writing, we may carry out work to put it right and charge you for it.

We have the right to insist that work is done correctly and to inspect it at certain stages.

For some building alterations, you may also need planning and building control (environmental services) permission. You should contact them before asking for our permission. Planning and building control staff will tell you which permission you will need. You can contact them on **020 8489 0000**.

If your home is in a conservation area (such as the White Hart Lane

Estate) or is a listed building, there may be other rules about improvements or alterations you can carry out.

Once you have consulted environmental services, please write to your tenancy management officer giving details of the planned work and asking us for permission to carry out the improvements.

We cannot increase your rent as a result of improvements you have made to the property.

You are responsible for all repairs and improvements to any items that you have installed.

Compensation for your improvements

Section 100 of the Housing Act 1985 gives local authorities the power to pay you compensation for **any** improvements you have made.

If you improve your home and then leave, your improvements will become our property. If you want to take something with you that you have fitted, you must restore our property to the condition it was in before you carried out the alteration.

You may be able to get money back from us when you leave a property where you have carried out improvements. The rules of this scheme are that:

- 1 we must have given you permission in writing for the improvement;
- 2 the work must have started on or after 3 October 1980;
- 3 the work must add to the value of the property; and
- 4 the money you get back must not be more than the cost of the work.

Any compensation payment will take into consideration any reduction in the value of the improvement over time.

Please phone the call centre, visit our website or contact any Customer Services Centre for more details.

