

6 Repairs and Maintenance



**Responsibility for looking
after your home**



A member of the National
Housing Federation





We aim to keep your home in a good state of repair. This includes the main structure and outside of your home. To make this happen, there are certain repairs that are your responsibility and others that are ours. Repairs that are our responsibility will have a target completion date. This is the date that we expect to have completed your repair by.

If you are elderly, disabled or vulnerable, the target completion dates shown below may be reduced to allow for your individual needs. Please contact us for more details.

Listed below are examples of repairs and whose responsibility they are. This is not a full list and the Repairs Policy will give more examples. For further information, please contact us.

If any of the items listed have been fitted by the tenant, the tenant is normally responsible for their repair or replacement if they break, unless TOH has agreed otherwise. The list below therefore assumes that the item has been provided by TOH.

Responsibility	YOURS	TOH	When will the repair be done? (if TOH responsibility)
Water and sanitary			
Plugs and chains to baths, sinks, wash hand basins	✓		
Clearing blockages to baths, sinks, wash hand basins and waste pipes		✓	Within 7 days The cost may be recharged to the tenant if it is found that the blockage has been caused by wilful damage or neglect.
Re-fixing toilet seats		✓	Within 28 days
Burst pipes/constant leak		✓	Within 24 hours
Minor/occasional internal leak (that can be contained)		✓	Within 7 days
Blocked drains		✓	Within 24 hours
Total loss of water supply		✓	Within 24 hours (where our responsibility)
Toilet not flushing (when there is no other toilet in your property)		✓	Within 24 hours
Tap cannot be turned off (dripping)		✓	Within 28 days

Responsibility	YOURS	TOH	When will the repair be done? (if TOH responsibility)
Gas and electricity			
Gas safety checks		✓	Annually When we call to do your gas safety check, we may also service gas appliances not provided by us and then recharge you for doing this.
Re-lighting pilot lights to gas appliances (where possible)	✓		
Fuses and resetting circuit breakers		✓	Within 24 hours
Maintenance of aerials, associated cabling and boosters etc (unless communal)	✓		
Blocked flue to an open fire or boiler		✓	Within 24 hours
Unsafe electrical power or lighting circuits including sockets, switches or fittings		✓	Within 24 hours

Responsibility	YOURS	TOH	When will the repair be done? (if TOH responsibility)
Gas and electricity continued			
<p>Gas leak (If you think there is a gas or carbon monoxide leak, turn off the gas at the meter and telephone the National Gas Emergency Service (formerly TRANSCO) immediately on 0800 111 999)</p> <p>Please note – all gas leaks are considered an emergency.</p>		✓	Within 24 hours
<p>Total loss of gas supply (assuming meter in credit or there has been no cut to supply)</p>		✓	Within 24 hours
<p>Total loss of electrical power (assuming meter in credit or there has been no cut to supply)</p>		✓	Within 24 hours
<p>Minor electrical faults</p>		✓	Within 7 days

Responsibility	YOURS	TOH	When will the repair be done? (if TOH responsibility)
Heating			
Setting programmers and thermostats	✓		If you live in sheltered housing accommodation, your support officer can help you to set your programmer and thermostat
Total loss of heating or water heating between 31st October and 1st May		✓	Within 24 hours
Total loss of heat or water heating between 2nd May and 30th October		✓	Within 7 days
Servicing of solid fuel appliances		✓	Annually

Responsibility	YOURS	TOH	When will the repair be done? (if TOH responsibility)
Security			
Cleaning and changing batteries of smoke detectors		✓	Annually (In sheltered housing schemes, support officers may undertake this on behalf of tenants).
<p>Insecure properties e.g. through broken locks or windows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● damage caused by residents, their family, friends or visitors. ● damage caused by others will be made safe within 24 hours. <p>The damage may be investigated.</p> <p>The tenant may be recharged.</p>	✓	✓	

Responsibility	YOURS	TOH	When will the repair be done? (if TOH responsibility)
General Property Repairs			
Damage caused by you, family, visitors or pets	✓		
Minor plaster repairs	✓		
Hat and coat hooks	✓		
Tightening of screws to hinges and door handles	✓		
Cupboard door catches	✓		
Curtain rails and tracks	✓		
Replacement of lost / misplaced keys	✓		
Loose or detached banister or hand rail		✓	Within 7 days
Extractor fan inside bathroom or kitchen		✓	Within 7 days
Repairs to kitchen fittings		✓	Within 28 days
Easing doors and windows		✓	Within 28 days
Door entry phone not working		✓	Within 7 days
Warden call system failure		✓	Within 24 hours
Lift failure		✓	Within 24 hours
Rotten timber flooring or stair tread and defective flooring		✓	Within 7 days

Responsibility	YOURS	TOH	When will the repair be done? (if TOH responsibility)
General Property Repairs continued			
Communal area internal decoration (to be decorated at least once every five years)		✓	
Leaking roof (temporary repair)		✓	Within 24 hours
Leaking roof (follow up work)		✓	Within 28 days
Blocked gutters		✓	Within 7 days
Sweeping of chimney		✓	Annually If you regularly use your solid fuel fire, you may wish to pay to have your chimney swept more often.
Repairs to boundary walls, gates and fences		✓	Within 28 days
General plaster repairs		✓	Within 28 days
General internal joinery		✓	Within 28 days
Driveway and path repairs		✓	Within 28 days
General external joinery		✓	Within 28 days
Gate catches		✓	Within 28 days

Responsibility	YOURS	TOH	When will the repair be done? (if TOH responsibility)
General Property Repairs continued			
Gardens (individual homes) Hedges or trees must not be cut down or removed unless you have our written permission	✓		
Infestations inside the property such as rats, mice, squirrels, wasps, ants or fleas Contact us for further advice.			Normally tenants are advised to contact Environmental Health.
Belongings			
Anything belonging to you	✓		
Cooker not working (where we have supplied the cooker)		✓	Within 7 days
Emergencies			
Making safe after fire, flood, or explosion		✓	Within 24 hours

Responsibility	YOURS	TOH	When will the repair be done? (if TOH responsibility)
<h2>Planned and Cyclical Maintenance</h2> <p>This work is mainly major improvement or upgrading work and is carried out according to a planned timetable and usually covers a number of properties at the same time. For example:</p>			
Routine repairs more effectively dealt with as a larger contract i.e. fencing		✓	According to cyclical maintenance programmes
Cyclical external painting and the repairs required before it is done		✓	Every 4 – 5 years
Large repairs / refurbishment		✓	According to cyclical maintenance programmes
Replacement of kitchen units, doors, boilers etc		✓	According to cyclical maintenance programmes
Repairs and maintenance to shared parking areas; entrances to flat; shared staircases; shared gardens and yards		✓	Dependant on type of repair needed
Cleaning of communal (shared) areas such as stairs, hallways, parking areas		✓	Varies from estate to estate. Ask your housing officer for more details
Lawn mowing and grounds maintenance of communal (shared) gardens		✓	Varies from estate to estate. Ask your housing officer for more details

We have three main types of repair for which targets repair times are set.

- Emergency repairs we aim to do within 24 hours. It may only be possible to make an emergency repair safe or prevent further damage on the first visit.
- Urgent repairs we aim to do within 7 days.
- Routine repairs we aim to do within 28 days.

Some routine, non-urgent repairs such as fencing, are completed through programmed work. This means that we will batch repairs together so that we can attract discounts from our suppliers and contractors which helps us to keep costs down. If this is likely to apply to your routine repair we will let you know when you report it.

How to report a repair

So that your home stays in a good condition please tell us as soon as possible about any repairs to your home or communal areas, which are our responsibility.

You can tell us about any repairs by:

- Phoning us
- Writing to us
- Calling in personally or through your tenancy services officer or support officer

- Tenants of sheltered housing schemes can use their pull cord
- Via our website on the Internet (Non-Emergencies only)

When you phone we will arrange for a contractor to carry out the repair, or arrange an inspection.

If you have an emergency repair outside working hours then call the emergency out of hours number which is: 0845 034 5535

When you ask for a repair to be carried out we will need to know:

- your name
- address
- telephone number
- as much information about the repair as possible
- arrangements for access to the property

Please make sure that the contractor can get into your home when they call. Normally the contractor will leave a card to tell you they have called. The card will have on it a telephone number for you to contact. Where possible appointments will be made with you. If the contractor fails to gain access they will let TOH know and we will write to you. This may result in the repair being cancelled and in some cases you might be recharged for the contractors call out.

Repairs which are your responsibility

– even if we carry them out

- You are responsible for repairing any damage to your property or communal areas caused by you or by your negligence. This also includes damage caused by other people who live in your property including children, animals and visitors.
- Any repair work you do, must be done to a satisfactory standard acceptable to us.
- If we have to organise the work, you will be charged for the repairs. We will send you a bill with an explanation of the works carried out.
- If you do not pay the bill we may take steps to recover the costs, and this may mean legal or court action against you.

New or refurbished properties

Different arrangements apply to these. There is a 'defects period' which can vary from six to twelve months depending on our arrangement with the builder. Your tenancy services officer should inform you when you sign-up for the tenancy what the defects period is for your home.

- **Defects within the 'defects period'**

You should report these to us in the normal way. We will then arrange for the contractor to call.

- **Defects that occur just before the 'defects period' comes to an end**

We will arrange a convenient time to come and inspect the property. If you know about any defects, it is important that you tell us.

Any outstanding defects arising out of the main contract works will be listed and the contractor told. It is the contractors' duty to put these defects right at his cost.

- **Defects outside the 'defects period'**

All future maintenance will be dealt with in the normal manner.

Customer feedback

When you report a repair you will receive a copy of the works order within 2 working days telling you who will do the repair, the estimated completion date and the access arrangements made by you.

There is a tenant's satisfaction questionnaire on your copy of the works order - we appreciate your comments so please complete this and return it to us when the repair is finished. Your feedback is important to us so that we can continue to make improvements.

Inspections after repairs have been done

We inspect a percentage of repairs after completion to check for good standards of work. Please let us know if you are not happy with a repair, the way a contractor carried out the repair, or, if you think repairs have taken longer than the target time to complete.

Annual gas safety check

We have a legal responsibility to carry out an annual gas safety check on appliances we have provided. These checks are designed to ensure the correct and safe operation of the gas installations and systems provided by us.

- **It is up to you to ensure your own appliances are safe. Unsafe or defective appliances can kill so it is essential that checks are carried out every year.**
- **A CORGI registered gas contractor appointed by us will contact you in writing each year informing you of when they will be calling to carry out the annual gas safety check.**
- **It is very important you allow our contractor access. Failure to grant reasonable access to carry out such checks will result in us taking legal action against you and you could receive an injunction giving us access to your home. In some cases you could even lose your home. We must carry out these yearly checks as we will not endanger the safety of others.**

Planned and cyclical maintenance

We aim to keep residents fully informed and we carry out consultation before major work is undertaken. We do this by:

- providing written notice and notifying you of the names of contractors who will be doing the work
- consulting with householders on major repairs and if possible giving choices on design etc.

ensuring that contracts which require access arrangements within working hours are agreed with individual residents

Estate maintenance and communal areas

Please let us know if you are not happy with the standard of cleaning and maintenance of these communal areas or if you feel contractors or staff are not performing well.

Tenant's responsibilities for communal areas

- **Defects**
Please report any defects or damage to communal areas as soon as possible.
- **Rubbish and obstructions**
You must keep any shared or communal entrances free from rubbish, furniture, domestic appliances or any items that may cause obstruction or fire risk. Do not drop litter or dump unwanted household items in communal areas.
- **Safety equipment**
You must not interfere with security or fire safety equipment or means of escape in common areas.
- **Doors and visitors**
You should not – for the security of yourself and of others – leave or wedge doors open. Remember to make sure that they are closed behind you. Do not let people whom you do not know into the building.
- **Child's play**
Do not let any child in your care play in shared entrances, halls, stairways, passageways or lifts.

Insurance

- **Structure**

We insure the structure of your property and also the communal areas on the neighbourhood scheme.

- **Contents**

It is very important that you insure your possessions. We will not normally pay for, or replace your furniture, carpets or personal belongings if they are damaged under any circumstances e.g. flood or fire. Our insurance does not cover contents that belong to you.

There are many insurance companies who offer low cost insurance and will allow you to pay for the cover in weekly or monthly payments, making it easier to afford. Your local Yellow Pages will have details of insurance companies and agencies. We have also negotiated a low cost home contents insurance scheme for TOH tenants. If you would like more details please contact your local office.

Alterations to your home

We do not allow tenants to make alterations to our properties without consent. This includes removing or altering any of our fittings, putting holes in walls, removing or altering internal or external walls and fences.

If you wish to make alterations, you must obtain permission in writing before any alterations or additions are made to your property:

- we will not normally refuse permission unless, it will make the property less safe, decrease its value or add maintenance costs for example
- we may attach conditions relating to standards of workmanship
- when you leave the property, you must return the property to us in its original condition if the improvement is not left behind/intact

You may also be required to get other approvals (for example, planning permission or building regulation approval).

If you make an alteration to your home after we have given permission, you may have the right to compensation for improvements. Please read the later section on Compensation for Improvements.

Paraffin heaters and mobile gas heaters

You are not allowed to use or store at the property any of the following:

- **paraffin heaters**
- **mobile gas heaters**
- **gas cylinders**
- **containers of petrol or paraffin**

These can be dangerous and can also create a great deal of condensation which gets deposited around the house, causing mould and other related problems.

For more information on reducing condensation and for tips on how to save energy please see the section on Safety and Energy Efficiency in the home.

Aerials, satellite dishes and similar items

These must not be put up without our written permission. In some areas you may also need the permission of the local council. Speak to your local Council for further advice.

Contractors code of conduct

All of our contractors must follow a code of conduct. This includes:

- The criteria they must meet to become and remain an “approved contractor” of the TOH.
- The roles and responsibilities of TOH and the contractors.
- The standards and behaviours which are expected of the contractors.
- The administrative procedures that the contractor and TOH must follow to ensure the repairs service works effectively.
- How TOH will monitor and review the work done by the contractors.
- What the contractor must do if they are not happy with TOH.

If you would like a copy of our Contractors Code of Conduct, please ask us to send this to you.

Your rights

The right to repair

- You may be entitled to compensation if we fail twice to carry out an emergency or urgent repair which you have reported, within the published target completion time. [This does not include repairs classed as routine or planned and cyclical maintenance.]
- We will pay you £10 plus £2 per day until the work is completed, up to a maximum of £50.
- However, to be eligible for this payment you must have allowed access for a contractor to attend to the repair and in some circumstances we may just make the repair safe within the target time.

Your right to compensation for improvements

- At the end of your tenancy, you may be able to claim compensation for improvements that you have made to your property. You must have obtained written permission from us before you did the work and obtained three quotes from genuine contractors.
- If you are thinking about making improvements to your property, first discuss the matter with us.

Your right to a home loss payment

- If you have held a tenancy for at least one year and you are asked to move from your property on a permanent basis (for example, if we need to demolish your property for improvement purposes), you have the right, under certain circumstances, to receive a home loss payment.

Your rights if you have to move temporarily

- If we need to carry out work on your property and it is not possible for the work to be carried out while you continue to live in it, we may ask you to move out for a temporary period.
- If this happens, we will offer you alternative accommodation, and you could be eligible for a disturbance allowance.

Adaptations to your home

If you have mobility problems and need alterations or adaptations to your home, such as grab rails in the bathroom, a shower rather than a bath, then we may be able to help.

We have a limited budget available for these alterations and therefore we may have to prioritise according to need but grants may be available from other sources and we can give you advice about this if we are unable to help.

How does it work?

First you need to contact your tenancy services officer.

You will need a support letter from your doctor that explains your needs.

You'll then be placed on our waiting list if we can help and when your name reaches the top of the list, we will refer you to an occupational therapist and sometimes our equipment suppliers will visit you to make an assessment.

The occupational therapist assessment is to determine what disabilities you have and how these affect your day to day life. From this, recommendations will be made for equipment or adaptations that will help you. You will receive a written report detailing this information.

Sometimes, depending on your financial circumstances, you may be required to make a contribution to the cost of the equipment or adaptations. This will be discussed with you.

We will then arrange for the work to be carried out and ask you to complete a satisfaction questionnaire.



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