



Broxtowe  
Borough  
COUNCIL

# HOUSING DEPARTMENT REPAIRS HANDBOOK

“Getting it right first time”

**Prior to reporting a non emergency repair please refer to the relevant section of this handbook**



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## DETAILS YOU NEED TO PROVIDE

When reporting a repair please provide as much information as possible to assist us with diagnosis, which will help to reduce the time between reporting and completion of works. We will need to know:

- The address of the property where the repair is needed
- Your name and if you are the tenant of the property
- Times will you be at home for a workman to call, even if the work required is outside the property
- Contact numbers
- Specific details of the repairs you are requesting



## HOW TO REPORT A REPAIR

**Telephone:** 0115 917 7777 (24 hours emergency out of hours)

**Email:** [housingrepairs@broxtowe.gov.uk](mailto:housingrepairs@broxtowe.gov.uk)  
(non-emergency repairs only)

**Online:** [www.broxtowe.gov.uk/repairsrequest](http://www.broxtowe.gov.uk/repairsrequest)  
(non-emergency repairs only)

### Normal hours of service are:

8.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday – Thursday  
8:30 am – 4:30 pm, Friday

**Outside of these hours, we will only carry out emergency repairs.**

### If you smell gas PHONE: 0800 111 999

- Do not smoke or strike matches
- Do not turn electrical switches on or off
- Do not put out naked flames
- Open doors and windows
- Keep people away from the affected area
- If possible turn off the meter at the control valve

## WHAT WE WILL DO

Depending on the details provided you will be informed of one of the following:

- An appointment will be offered for a workman to visit you
- You will be transferred to the Repairs Team
- If a Senior Maintenance Officer needs to visit you prior to ordering the work an appointment will be offered
- If the repair is your responsibility you will be advised of this, or if it is included on a programme of long term planned works

If you have had your property modernised / improved during the last 12 months and wish to report a defect on a modernised fixture or fitting please contact the **Modernisations Team** on **0115 917 7777** or email [capitalworks@broxtowe.gov.uk](mailto:capitalworks@broxtowe.gov.uk).

## EMERGENCY REPAIRS

An emergency repair is where there is serious risk to the health and safety of the property occupants, or where their welfare would be at risk. Here are some examples of emergency repairs:

### No heat or hot water

Where no other facility for heating or hot water is available. If you have a gas/electric fire, shower or immersion heater these are seen to be alternative facilities and the repair would **not be** considered as an emergency.

If you are elderly, disabled, or have young children and where the weather is particularly severe, this may be relaxed. If the fault cannot be rectified straight away you will be left with temporary heating facilities.

### Serious water leaks

If the leak cannot be contained, i.e. water through the ceiling; cylinder leaks; water supply or central heating pipe leaks, please refer to the section in this handbook on 'Frozen and Burst Pipes'.

### Gas leaks/suspected carbon monoxide

Call the **National Grid 0800 111 999** **immediately** and refer to the section in this handbook on 'Gas Safety'.



### Total loss of electric power

99% of these reports are usually caused by a faulty appliance or defective meter.

If we attend to a reported fault and identify that it is your appliance that is defective, you may be charged for the visit. Please refer to the section in this handbook on 'Electrical Safety and Fault Finding'.

### Blocked soil pipe or waste pipes

If the drains are blocked below ground, you will need to contact the Repairs Team on 0115 9177 777.

If individual waste pipes are blocked, this is considered to be **your responsibility** unless they are all blocked at the same time which indicates a soil vent pipe blockage. If the fault cannot be rectified straight away, you may be left with temporary toilet facilities.

### Toilet not flushing where there is no other working toilet at the property

Dependent upon your circumstances, you may be asked to flush the toilet using a bucket of water or the ball valve inside the cistern.

### Insecure door, window or lock, broken glazing

We will only be able to make safe the defect, which will mean boarding up the window, please refer to the section in this handbook on 'Door and Window Damage'.

## REPORTING NON-EMERGENCY REPAIRS AS AN EMERGENCY

If you have knowingly reported a repair as an emergency, when it is not an emergency, you may be charged for this.

# GAS

## GAS SERVICING

We will contact you in writing 56 days prior to the anniversary of your previous gas service to arrange an appointment. If you are not going to be in for when the appointment has been made, let us know so we can rearrange it.

Gas servicing checks will be carried out by one of our Gas Safe engineers.

### Importance of Gas Servicing

You are at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning if:

- Your gas appliance was poorly installed
- Your appliance is not working correctly
- Your appliance has not been checked for safety or maintained regularly

Providing access for your annual gas service to be carried out will help to protect you, your family, friends and neighbours from gas escapes and carbon monoxide poisoning.



### Complying with the Law

By law, Broxtowe Borough Council is responsible for making sure that the gas fittings, appliances and flues are maintained in a good and safe order and are checked annually. We keep a record of the safety checks carried out and will issue you with a certificate once they have been completed.

To comply with the law:

- We will carry out a free annual service of all gas appliances within your home, installed by the Council and a safety check on any appliances you have installed
- We will send a letter or text message and phone you with a reminder of your gas servicing.
- If the appointment is missed, we will make three further attempts to gain entry into your home to carry out the gas servicing checks
- Failure to provide access will result in further measures being taken to gain entry involving our Legal Department any legal cost incurred may be recharged
- If we identify any minor faults during the service where possible, these will be rectified the same working day.
- If we are unable to repair the appliance we will offer you temporary heating facilities during the winter period, if you do not have any alternative form of heating

## GAS SAFETY

### **Do not sleep in the same room as an open flued appliance**

Sleeping in the same room as an open flued gas appliance (back boiler or gas fire) contravenes gas safety regulations and puts your life in danger. If you are found to be sleeping in the same room as an open flued appliance during one of our visits, your gas heating appliance will be capped off for safety reasons. If you need to sleep in this area for medical reasons or personal reasons, please contact Housing Repairs for advice.

### **Do not install a gas appliance unless you are gas safe registered and have received written consent from Housing Department**

Only Gas Safe accredited people are allowed to repair; maintain; renew or improve gas appliances. Following any works to a gas appliance a gas safety certificate must be provided to Housing Repairs.

If any works are carried out to a gas appliance by someone not suitably qualified to do so, the issue will be referred to the Health and Safety Executive who will take appropriate action.

### **Do not install a ceiling light fan within the same room as your gas appliance**

Installing a ceiling fan can be very dangerous, as when in use, the fan can draw the products of combustion from the boiler into the room, instead of being taken outside.



**It is important that you and your family are as safe as possible in your home.**

# ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Electricity is perfectly safe, as long as you take care and apply common sense when using it. However, electricity can kill. If you are in any doubt, switch off the supply to the item in question and contact Housing Repairs.

## Consumer Units And Resetting Fuses

The consumer unit is usually fitted with either MCBs (Miniature Circuit Breakers), RCDs (Residual Current Device) or AFD (Arc Fault Detection Device). They are usually RCDs either 1 or 2.

CIRCUIT	FUSE RATING
Lighting	6 amps
Immersion heater	16 amps
Shower	32/40 amps
Cooker	30 amps
Power sockets	16 -20amps 32 amps

There may be more than one circuit for lighting and general power.

Larger appliances such as cookers, boilers and washing machines sometimes have a double pole separate wall mounted switch, which allows the supply to be isolated without moving the appliance or going to the consumer unit. These switches usually have an extra fuse, which can be changed by opening the small drawer in the front plate of the switch.

If a fuse blows, RCD or MCB a trips shutting down the circuit, it indicates that something has overloaded or caused a fault on the circuit.



## Electric Meter

All properties have either a credit or card meter. The meter is not the Council's responsibility. The Council is responsible for the supply from the meter to inside the property.

## Miniature Circuit Breakers (MCBs) and Residual Current Device (RCD).

MCBs are very sensitive and will trip out automatically when a circuit is overloaded or identifies a fault. A blown light bulb can even cause the MCB or RCD to trip. Both can be reset, by putting the switch back to the ON position.

On lighting circuits, switching the MCB or RCD on will restore all lights apart from the blown bulb, which can be replaced.

On individual circuits, the MCB and RCD may not reset as the appliance connected to the circuit may be faulty.

On power circuits, it is likely that only one appliance is causing the problem. The most likely appliances which will cause the MCB or RCD to trip are those using and switching large currents, such as, electric cooker, toaster, kettle, iron, fridge, freezer and washing machine.

If the MCB or RCD cannot be switched on after the circuit has tripped, a faulty appliance may be the cause.

**Faulty meters and supplies to the meter are to be reported to Western Power on 0800 678 3105 or visit their website: [www.westernpower.co.uk](http://www.westernpower.co.uk).**

If the MCB can be switched back on immediately after the appliance has tripped, it is possible that the fuse in the plug has blown. Try the appliance in another socket and if necessary, replace the fuse in the plug. If the MCB or RCD will not stay switched on when all appliances have been unplugged and the sockets switched off, the MCB or RCD or the circuit may be faulty. Report this problem to Housing Repairs.

If the Electrician attends your home to a report of no power and identifies a faulty appliance causing the problem, you may be charged for this visit. If a faulty appliance is identified, you will need to arrange for this to be checked by a qualified electrician.

### Residual Current Device (RCDs) and testing them

If your fuseboard is fitted with a “Residual Current Device”, your installation will be protected by a device which automatically switches off the supply if an earth fault develops.

#### If the RCD has tripped

Turn all circuit breakers to the off position then reset the RCD (this has a big yellow button with a T on it).

Then turn each MCB on one at a time. It is possible that when you turn one off, then on the RCD will trip. This means you need to go back to unplugging appliances and re-follow the steps above.



#### How To Identify A Faulty Appliance

- Switch off and UNPLUG ALL appliances connected to circuit
  - Switch on the MCB, it should now stay on
  - Plug in and switch on each appliance in turn checking the MCB after each appliance is switched on
  - If the MCB trips again, this indicates the last appliance plugged in is faulty
  - Switch the appliance off, reset the MCB and continue the process
  - If the MCB remains on when all other appliances have been connected,
- the appliance identified is likely to be the cause of the fault
- Further checking can be carried out by plugging the appliance into a different socket and seeing if the MCB trips again

#### Fuses

The above fault-finding guide is the same for rewirable or any other type of fuse. However, fuses must be repaired using fuses of the correct rating. Replacing a fuse is your responsibility.

#### Safety

**Please be careful when using electricity:**

- Water and electricity are dangerous together, do not use switches with wet hands. If water gets into a socket, turn off the circuit and do not use it again until it is completely dry
- Use good quality plugs to British Standard 1363, with part insulated pins. If you have children, use plug blanks to protect sockets from hands
- Do not remove sealed plugs from appliances
- Do not paint over sockets or switches
- If a socket or switch plate is cracked report it to Housing Repairs
- Never carry out DIY electrical work. All electrical work must be carried out by a registered qualified electrician and you must obtain written permission from us before carrying out any work
- Never cover an electrical fitting (storage heaters, central heating pumps, immersion heaters, extension leads etc) with clothing or linen as this can be very dangerous and cause the fitting to overheat



### FIRE SAFETY

#### Smoke Detectors

Smoke detectors fitted by the Council are either mains operated with a back-up battery or have a 10-year lithium battery.

The detector will bleep when the battery needs replacing. The unit is a sealed unit and you will need to report this to Housing Repairs.

Smoke detectors are fitted with a TEST button to ensure correct operation, which when pressed will emit a loud wailing tone. This should stop after the button has been released. You should test your smoke detector weekly.

If the alarm sounds for no obvious reason, the detector may need cleaning. A build-up of dust can sometimes set detectors off. Vacuum cleaner can be used to either blow dust out of the detector or remove dust from it.



### HOT WATER SAFETY

If your hot water is heated by an immersion heater and it develops a fault, it can become potentially dangerous if not repaired.

#### Warning signs to look out for:

- Excessively hot water coming out of the taps
- Excessive noise or “bubbling sounds” from the hot water cylinder
- Hot water coming out of the cold water taps
- Steam / moisture in the roof space or airing cupboard

If you notice any of these signs, please:

- Switch off the immersion heater immediately. The switch will be located in, or adjacent to, the airing cupboard or in the kitchen
- Report this to Housing Repairs

Ways to prevent problems:

- Do not leave your immersion heater on for 24 hours a day or whilst you are asleep at night
- Do not leave your immersion heater on when you are on holiday
- Be vigilant at all times checking for the above signs





## FROZEN AND BURST PIPES

Frozen and burst pipes can cause a lot of damage if not dealt with quickly.

Here are some things you should know for burst or frozen pipes.

- Know where your stop tap is. It may be where the water pipe enters your property, usually under the sink. It can also be found within the bathroom or airing cupboard
- Make sure that you can easily turn all taps and valves. Check them regularly and contact Housing Repairs if they do not function correctly
- Ensure that the temperature inside your property is not allowed to fall below freezing
- **If you are going away for some time during the winter period,** drain down the hot and cold water systems. This can be done by turning off the stop taps and gate valves and turning the taps on and flushing the toilet. Once drained down turn the taps off and ensure the heating system is not set to come on. On returning home, turn the water back on and ensure that water is again circulating in your radiators before turning on the central heating boiler
- Ensure any exposed pipework within the roof space or outside is lagged

### What to do if you get a burst pipe

- Turn off the water at the mains stop tap
- Open all taps to drain the system of water thereby stopping the leak
- Place a container below the leak and move any furniture / carpets etc to prevent them getting damaged
- If the water is from a property above yours, go and see them to find out what is leaking
- Turn off boilers
- If electrics are getting wet, do not touch. Turn off the circuit or electricity supply at the consumer unit
- If a water leak makes the ceiling bulge, place a bucket under the bulge and, using a sharp implement (screwdriver/knitting needle), pierce a hole to let the water run through. This will reduce any pressures on the ceiling and should prevent the ceiling from falling down

### What to do if you get a frozen pipe

- Turn off the water at the stop tap
- Try and thaw the pipework out using a hot water bottle
- If the hot water system is frozen, turn off the boiler



**You may be charged for a burst pipe if you have caused damage to the pipework. Once you have carried out the above contact Housing Repairs to report the problems.**

## RADIATOR PROBLEMS

When you have a problem with one or more radiators, there are some actions you can take before contacting the Housing Repairs.

The actions you take depend upon whether there are several or just one radiator affected.

### Banging noises from a radiator or several radiators

- The boiler thermostat may be set high or be faulty creating a high hot water temperature. This can be tested, by turning the boiler thermostat down (not the room thermostat)
- Lack of water pressure in the heating system. This can happen if the mains supply has stopped, or the expansion tank has run dry due to a valve which has seized closed. Look at the pressure valve on the boiler (if you have one), is this within the recommended settings for your boiler? This is usually between 1 and 2 bar on a combination boiler. If you try to investigate the problem and cure it yourself, you should first switch off the heating and then follow the

instructions on the side of the boiler casing showing how to re-pressurise the appliance

- Scale in the radiators. Build-up of contaminants and scale can cause hot water to release gases, as the gases crystallise on any impurities. If you think this is the problem contact Housing Repairs.

### All radiators are cold

If you look at your boiler and it appears to be working this problem would suggest that the available hot water is not reaching the radiators. The first culprit could be that the central heating pump is faulty.

Check the central heating timer is on. Have the clocks moved forward and the timer has not been adjusted, or has it been adjusted by the wrong amount? Alternatively, the system thermostat, or the room thermostat could be at fault and you will need to contact Housing Repairs.



### One radiator is cold

- If other radiators are functioning correctly this suggests that the problem is with this one radiator only
- Check if the radiator valve is switched off
- Is the radiator valve open or has it been closed? You can test this by moving the valve in an anti-clockwise manner to open it
- Is the thermostatic radiator valve set at a low temperature? If the valve temperature has been set low then the valve will switch off the radiator at a normal room temperature. To set, move the temperature to a higher setting
- Some of the valves are blocked - scale in your system may have blocked the valves



### Part of a radiator is cold

Sometimes there are problems with a central heating system that you can diagnose yourself. If the top of your radiator is cold and the bottom is warm it probably means that the radiator needs bleeding. If you want to check this, take care to not burn your hand on the radiator.

If the radiator is almost full of air, no difference in temperature between the top and bottom of the radiator will be felt, but in these extreme cases, the whole radiator will be cool. This will contrast with the rest of your central heating system where the other radiators will be hot to the touch. You should only bleed your radiator when there is a problem such as that described above. If there is no problem, leave well alone.



### How to bleed a radiator

1. Turn the heating and hot water to the off position.
2. Some radiators come with a small tool called a bleed key. There will also be a protrusion near the top of the radiator, on one side, called the bleed valve. Fit the bleed key into the bleed valve and carefully turn it counter clockwise only a tiny bit, usually just a 1/4 or 1/2 turn. The air will start escaping with a hissing sound similar to a bicycle tire.
3. When water begins to dribble out, all the air is purged, and you can gently return the bleed valve to its previous position.
4. You should then remember to turn the heating back on and check that there are no leaks from the radiator valve.

If you plan to bleed a radiator in a sealed central heating system (combination boiler) you will reduce the overall pressure of the entire system (consult your manual). This shouldn't be a problem if you top up the system afterwards from the main cold water feed. Refer to the next section of this handbook on "Re-pressurising the central heating system."

Take care when turning the valve to bleed a radiator. Have an old rag ready to shield your hand and a small bowl to catch any small drops of water. If radiator bleeding does not seem to improve the performance of your heater, especially if several radiators in your home are malfunctioning, there may be another problem that needs reporting to Housing Repairs.

**If we attend to low pressure caused by you bleeding a radiator, you may be charged for our visit.**

## RE-PRESSURISING THE CENTRAL HEATING SYSTEM



### Most combination boilers and many standard boilers are now installed as pressurised systems.

Combination boilers differ from the previous conventional boiler systems, which were reliant on a water tank (often in the loft) with a ball float device to maintain water levels within the system. As the self-filling water tank is omitted, a pressurised system requires filling manually via a filling loop. This allows a specific amount of water to be injected into the system via your mains cold water supply.

The water pressure within your heating system is distinct from the pressure in your hot or cold water taps. The pressure in your mains cold water taps comes direct from the water mains and is maintained by your water company. The pressure in your hot water taps is created by the head of water in your heating cylinder, or from the pump feeding your hot water supply.

There is no need to worry if your system does accidentally become over pressurised. All modern systems are designed with pressure safety valve incorporated into the plumbing. This acts like an overflow pipe releasing the excess pressure and allowing the system to revert to the recommended levels.

The safety valve may make a noise as it releases this excess pressure sounding

like a thumping noise. Do not worry, this sound will stop when the system pressure reduces to a lower level. If the system is free from leaks the water pressure should remain constant within the system in future months. If you notice that the pressure regularly falls you may have a water leak.

Bleeding a radiator will always cause the pressure to drop on the boiler. As a result, after bleeding your radiators

you should remember to check your pressure gauge and refill the system as required.

Random water leaks will cause pressure loss within a pressurised central heating system and the severity of water leaks can vary. Very small leaks will cause pressure drops over a long time, possibly several months or even a year. Leaks of this magnitude may not be detectable as the water evaporates quite quickly although you may spot some residue following evaporation of the water.

Larger leaks may be more visible and will mean your system will require filling as frequently as once or twice a week. If this is the case you should check your system for leaks when it is cold, paying particular attention to the areas around radiator and boiler valves. It is recommended that you check for leaks when the system is cold as heat causes expansion and can seal small leaks temporarily.

**If you identify any leaks report these to Housing Repairs**

## Maintaining Your Boiler Pressure (Topping up/Refilling)

Choose from Step 1, 2 or 3 according to the mechanism you have.

If your system pressure is above 2 then please see bleeding radiators.



### Step 1

- The blue lever is simply pulled down until the correct pressure is achieved (1-2 bar).



- Once the correct pressure has been achieved, release the blue lever.



### Step 2

- Insert the key as displayed with the arrow on the stem of the key lining up with the open padlock symbol on the edge of the hole
- Turn it to the right 90° and it should stop. If not remove the key and try again
- Turn the white plastic nut anti-clockwise and you will hear water flowing
- When the pressure is between 1 and 1.5bar turn the nut back off
- Turn the key back and remove
- There may be a slight drip of water as this is done, this is normal.
- If it continues then the nut has not been tightened enough.



### Step 3

- It will be between the last radiator on the system and the boiler.
- At one or both ends of the hose there will be a valve. This can be a small lever or a screw valve. Ensure both ends are connected
- If there is only one valve, slowly open this valve until the pressure starts to rise. Shut the valve when the pressure is between 1.0 and 1.5 bar.
- If there are two valves, slowly open the first until fully open. If pressure does not rise, slowly open the second valve. Shut the valve when between 1.0 and 1.5 bar, then close the other valve.

# CONDENSATION AND DAMPNESS

If you find dampness within your home, there are four main causes:

- Condensation
- Rising damp
- Penetrating damp
- Plumbing faults, broken pipes and lack of insulation

### Condensation

The air around us contains moisture that usually cannot be seen. If the air gets cold, it cannot hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear.

Condensation usually occurs during the colder months and does not leave a tidemark. It appears on cold surfaces and in areas where there is a poor circulation of air. The moist air is usually generated by living conditions.

An example of condensation is when you use the bathroom during the winter months, the mirror usually steams up. Condensation can occur in any room of the property or in cupboards, corners of rooms or behind furniture where air movement is restricted. Condensation will usually occur on a cold surface.



### Preventing condensation

#### Stop moist air spreading through your home:

- When cooking, bathing or washing/drying clothes, prevent the moist air from spreading throughout your home by keeping the doors closed even after you have finished cooking or bathing
- Dry clothes outside if possible. Tumble dryers must be vented to outside and you will need written permission for this work
- Cover pans with lids during cooking
- Avoid using Calor gas heaters

#### Ensure good ventilation

- When cooking or bathing, good ventilation of kitchens and bathrooms is essential. Ensure windows are opened and extractor fans are used. Ensure you leave the fan on or window open until the misting on the mirror has cleared or the room is dry
- If your windows have high level trickle vents, ensure these are left open all the time as these provide several air changes each day which help to prevent the build-up of moisture, especially during the night

- If you are drying clothes inside, ensure the doors are left closed and provide sufficient natural and mechanical ventilation
- Always keep air vents un-blocked as a lack of ventilation can also be very dangerous. Gas appliances need a supply of oxygen to burn effectively. Limiting the air supply to a room may lead to a build-up of poisonous Carbon Monoxide gases
- Do not overfill cupboards and wardrobes and make space between furniture and walls. If possible, avoid placing furniture

### Problems with condensation

- Condensation often manifests itself in mould growth within the areas affected
- Mould is a living organism and needs killing to get rid of it. To kill and remove the mould, wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash, which carries a Health and Safety Executive approval number, following the manufacturer's instructions. Mildewed clothes should be dry-cleaned and carpets shampooed
- Once treated with a fungicidal wash, redecorate using a good fungicidal paint to prevent the mould recurring
- It is now essential that the guidance in this chapter is followed to prevent the condensation and mould growth returning

against outside (particularly north facing) walls as these are colder than internal walls.

### Provide reasonable heating

- Condensation usually occurs on a cold surface. The provision of a constant temperature within your home will help to prevent condensation. The recommended temperature for households with individuals over the age of 60 and young children under the age of 5 is 21 degrees Celsius. For all other households, 19 degrees is adequate

Rising damp is very rare as all properties are provided with a damp proof course, which prevents the dampness rising from the ground above the floor levels of your home. It is usually evident when a tide mark is seen above the skirting board and will not normally rise above 1,000mm in height.

Penetrating damp is where rainwater or ground water gets through the fabric of the building. Rainwater can cause dampness if it gets through the walls, roof, windows or doors of your property. Prior to reporting problems with dampness, please try and establish whether it is being caused by a fault in the fabric of the building. Also, please ensure you check the outside of your home after strong winds to ensure damage has not been caused.

Dampness can also be caused within your property if the external ground levels are higher than the internal floor

level. This will allow ground water to penetrate the wall causing dampness internally. Please ensure that the levels of your garden are kept at least 150mm below the internal ground floor level. Also, please do not store items of furniture etc. against the outside wall as this can also lead to penetrating dampness.

### Leaking plumbing or broken pipes

Dampness can also appear due to a leak from a plumbing or heating pipe. Small leaks are often the cause of major repairs if left and must be reported immediately.

If your property is being affected by rising damp, penetrating damp, leaking plumbing or broken pipes, please contact Housing Repairs.

- The majority of council properties have a full central heating system installed. If you require further information on how to use the central heating

system effectively, contact Housing Repairs to request advice on energy efficiency of your heating system.



# ELECTRIC NIGHT STORAGE HEATERS

## How night storage heaters work and how to get the best from them

Night storage heaters work by storing up heat overnight in bricks in each heater, then releasing the heat gradually throughout the day. The advantage of this is that as most energy is used overnight when the electricity rate is at its cheapest; the heaters are efficient to run. The disadvantage is that unless this heat is used carefully during the day, the heaters will be cold by the evening.

If controlled by a timer clock the heaters should start charging automatically each night (normally around 11.30pm to 6.30am) without the need to switch them on with one of the isolation switches on the wall (and providing the input dial on the heater is set above 1). However, the temperature can be adjusted by the two dials normally found on top of the heater. One should be marked “input” and the other “output”.

The “input” dial controls how much electricity is absorbed into the bricks overnight and therefore how hot the heater gets. Typically, this should be set between 4 and 6. If the weather is cold turn this dial up, if the weather is warm turn it down.

The “output” dial controls how quickly the heater releases the heat. It works by opening or closing a flap inside the heater to allow more or less surface

area for heat to escape from the bricks. This should be set as low as possible during the day and whenever the property is empty. If the output is above 3 all day, you will have run out of heat by the evening. By having the output low during the day, it can then be turned up in the evening if needed. Remember to turn the output down again before you go to bed, or you will have no heat by the next day. If the labels have rubbed off the dials, look though the grill of the heater and move each dial in turn and see which one moves the flap inside. That dial is the “output” dial.

As Night storage heaters cannot produce instant heat, only adjust the dials by 1 or 2 settings per day to avoid being left on, on warm days with too much heat, or cold days with not enough.

Some of the heaters, more commonly

used in communal areas of sheltered schemes have a booster switch; this means the unit has a convector heater built into the storage heater. This will provide instant heat in case you run out in the evening however it's not a good idea to use it often as it runs off the daytime meter so the electricity will be more expensive.

## Heaters after absence from the property

When a night storage heater is used for the first time after being unused for more than a month, it needs three night's charge to bring up its efficiency again. During this time, try and keep the input as high as possible, and the output as low as possible to “charge” the bricks. After this time, you can start to adjust the input/output dials a little to better suit you.





## DOOR AND WINDOW DAMAGE

If a door or window has been damaged following a break-in or as a result of criminal damage, you will need to obtain a crime number from the Police. When contacting Housing Repairs, you will be asked to provide this number before the repair will be carried out. Failure to provide a valid crime number may mean that you will be held responsible for the damage and subsequently charged.

Please note, on some occasions you may be held responsible for the damage, even if a crime number has been provided. This would occur when there is repeated criminal damage at your property. If you have reported the damage out of hours a temporary repair may be carried out. **If you feel you are being victimised or at risk contact your Housing Officer on 0115 917 7777.**



## SLABS AND PAVING WITHIN YOUR GARDEN

As detailed within your Tenancy Agreement, you are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of your garden areas.

You are also responsible for all paving which does not form an essential access path to and from your property.

### Defective paving

If you have paving within your garden which is defective and is not the Council's responsibility, please advise us, as we would much rather you make us aware of the potential hazard rather than ignoring it and having an accident at a later date.

If we identify non-standard paving within your garden which you have inherited when your tenancy commenced, one of following will happen:

- 1. If you wish to keep it (ie. a patio) we will ask you to sign a disclaimer accepting responsibility for its future maintenance**
- 2. If you do not wish to keep it, we will arrange for its removal and**

**reinstatement of the area with topsoil and grass seed**

- 3. We might repair it and accept future responsibility for it**

### None standard paving

However, if we identify none standard paving within your garden which you have carried out and it is a potential danger, we will:

- 1. Ask you to complete the necessary repairs urgently**
- 2. If you fail to remove the potential danger, we will remove the potential danger and charge you for the works carried out**

If you have received written permission from us for the non-standard paving, please refer to the "General Conditions" attached to the permission letter regarding responsibility for maintenance.

There may be occasions when we require action on the above items quickly due to Health and Safety issues, which will require you to respond quickly to our questions and letters.

### Responsibility for paving

The responsibility for the paving within your garden area is as follows:

- Paving from the main footpath to the access doors of your property is the Council's responsibility. If you have problems with your access paths, report them to the Housing Repairs. We will respond to Health and Safety issues within 3 working days. All other paving repairs will be completed within 40 working days
- Please note, if the paving has a potential trip hazard of less than 20mm, we may not carry out any repairs as this is less than the intervention level guidelines
- All other paving, including patios, garden paths and paving under windows etc is your responsibility

## FENCES AND BOUNDARIES

Most of our properties have a garden or communal area, which have a boundary marked by a fence or hedge.

### Responsibility for fences and boundaries

#### Hedges and Trees Which Form a Boundary

You are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the garden and plants within the garden. You are therefore responsible for a boundary, which is marked by a hedge or planting.

**If you are unable to maintain your garden due to your age or disability please contact Tenancy and Estate Management on 0115 917 7777 to discuss if you are eligible for any assistance with this.**

#### Fencing Which Forms a Boundary

If you have erected the fencing, you are responsible for its maintenance and upkeep. If the Council have erected it, or it was there when your tenancy commenced and you did not sign to accept responsibility for it, the Council are responsible for it.



### Council Responsibilities

We are only responsible for defining where the boundary line is. We are not responsible for the provision of security within your garden area.

Therefore, there may be times when the fence is considered to be beyond economical repair and in these instances we will not replace the fence like for like. We may only erect concrete posts and straining wire fencing.

There are times when we identify that the fence is not in our ownership but the responsibility of a neighbouring property. If this is the case, we will contact them and ask them to carry out the necessary repairs.

Repairs to fencing are classed as being non-urgent and are therefore usually given a low priority. This will however be changed if the fencing is considered to be in a dangerous condition and will be made safe.

If you wish to erect your own fencing, please refer to the “Improvements and Alterations” section of this handbook



## RIGHT TO REPAIRS

Under the Right to Repair Scheme the Council is required to carry out certain repairs within a set time period. The type of repairs and the set time period for each are as follows:

Repair	Working Days to Complete the Work
Total loss of electric power	1
Partial loss of electric power	3
Unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical 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 open fire or boiler	1
Total or partial loss of space or water heating between 31 <sup>st</sup> October and 1 <sup>st</sup> May	1
Total or partial loss of space or water heating between 30 <sup>th</sup> April and 1st November	3
Blocked or leaking foul drain, soil stack, or (where there is no other working toilet in the property)	1
Toilet not flushing (where there is no other working toilet in the property)	1
Blocked sink, bath or basin	3
Tap which cannot be turned	3
Leaking from water or heating pipe, tank or cistern	1
Leaking roof	7
Insecure external window, door or lock	1
Loose or detached banister or handrail	3
Rotten timber flooring or stair tread	3
Door entry phone not working	7
Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working	7

If any of these repairs are not completed within the set time you can require the Council to instruct another contractor to carry out the work. If the second contractor fails to complete on time the Council must pay you £10 compensation, plus an additional £2 per each day's delay in completing the repair, subject to a maximum of £50.

**The Council will acknowledge receipt of a request for any of the above repairs**

# REPAIRS RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council is responsible for the majority of repairs within your home. However, you are responsible for the following repairs:

- Repair, renew/replace any fittings, extensions or alterations which **you** have installed or carried out
- Decorate the inside of your home including making good minor plaster cracks
- Put right any deliberate damage. If the damage is caused by an unknown third party, you will need to report the damage to the police and obtain a crime number
- Ease doors over carpets
- Re-secure loose handles to external doors
- Repair or replace damaged or missing handles from internal doors
- Replace lost keys and change locks if necessary
- Bleed air from radiators
- Reset central heating time clocks, thermostats etc.
- Replace radiator valve caps
- Toilet Seats
- Replace light bulbs, fluorescent tubes and their starters
- Repair or replace broken/missing plugs, chains
- Re-set fuses when blown
- Re-light pilot lights on boilers/fires. Reset combination boilers
- Blocked waste pipes, if blockage is caused by food waste or due to tenants' actions
- TV aerials from the aerial to the co-axial box (not communal aerials)

**Please note that if you are elderly or disabled, the above procedures may be relaxed.**

### If you are unable to get repairs done

We will carry out any of the above repairs but you will be asked to sign a standard sundry debt form first confirming that you accept you are responsible and will pay for the repairs once completed.



### Payment for repairs

You will be sent an invoice, usually within four weeks of the works being completed. **If you cannot afford to pay the invoice, please contact the Finance Department on 0115 917 7777**, who will be happy to discuss different payment methods with you.

### Council Obligation

The Council is responsible for repairing and maintaining the following:

- **Structure / exterior of your home (including drains, gutters)**
- **Space and water heating equipment, if they have been installed by the Council**
- **Installations for the supply of gas, electricity, water and for sanitation**
- **Common areas**
- **Plastering**
- **Kitchens and Bathrooms**
- **External decoration**

Repairs to the above items will be carried out in accordance with our standard priorities at no cost to you. If, however, the works are necessary due to an act of vandalism or neglect by you or another person in your home, you will be seen to be responsible and will be charged for the works.

## PLANNED MAINTENANCE

### Reporting repairs included on a planned maintenance programme

If you report a repair that is on a planned maintenance programme, you will be advised of this and when that programme is taking place.

If your request cannot wait until the planned programme, the repair may be carried out prior to the programme if one or more of the following apply:

- **There is a Health and Safety risk**
- **The security of the property is affected**
- **The property is not wind and water tight**
- **The welfare of the residents is affected**

If this is the case, we may not fully carry out the proposed planned maintenance works and may carry out a temporary repair until the proposed programme.

### Works Included on a Planned Contract

Typical works that may be carried out included on this programme are:

- **Gas servicing**
- **Electrical testing**
- **Rainwater gutter and pipe renewals**
- **Gutter cleaning**
- **Window replacements**
- **Major roof repairs**
- **Fascia board renewal**
- **Large re-pointing brickwork**
- **External painting**
- **Roof work**
- **Whole Kitchen replacement**
- **Whole bathroom replacement**
- **External door replacement.**



### Modernisation Works

Planned maintenance differs to the modernisation programme, which has been planned to ensure all of our properties achieve the Government's "Decent Homes" standard and our own "Broxtowe Standard" which covers the renewal of kitchens, heating and security enhancements.



## IMPROVEMENTS AND ALTERATIONS



**Under the terms of your tenancy agreement you are entitled to alter or improve the property you are living in. Prior to making any alterations or modifications to your home you must obtain permission from the Council. In some circumstances you may also need planning or building regulation approval, from our Planning Department.**

Once you have been granted permission to alter or improve your property, you will be advised of any conditions related to the permission. These will be attached to your permission letter. It is important that you read these in depth as they include important information regarding Health and Safety responsibility for maintenance and the standards that we expect.

Once you have finished your alterations you need to send us any electrical or gas certificates so we can check them to ensure this work has been completed safely.

Your rent will not increase as a result of any improvements or modifications you make, but you will be responsible for future maintenance.

If you do not obtain permission prior to altering or modifying you may be charged to restore your home to its original condition.

On termination of your tenancy you may qualify for compensation for the work carried out, less an allowance for depreciation. You must have had written permission from the Council to carry out works and retained the relevant receipts.

If you wish to apply for compensation for any improvements, or intend to carry out any work, please contact Housing Repairs with all relevant details and receipts.

### Definition of improvements or alterations

The definition of a modification or alteration is anything which is an addition or a change to the property, or its services. Examples include new kitchens, showers, laminate flooring and removal of internal walls.





