

CHAPTER

5

Repairs & Improvements

ADUR
DISTRICT COUNCIL



Repairs & Improvements

Introduction

Both you as the tenant and we as council, have responsibilities and obligations towards repairs. In addition, we try to be a good landlord and carry out repairs as quickly as possible. This booklet gives details of our target times for repairs, and your rights if we fail to keep to them.

Your Responsibilities

We will not do repairs that are your responsibility and if you wilfully or neglectfully damage the property and do not put them right we will recover the cost of putting the damage right from you.

We will not maintain any item which you have provided or erected yourself unless we have agreed to do so in writing.

Our Responsibilities

We are responsible for repairing and maintaining the structure and outside parts of the property you live in, and any fittings or facilities in communal areas.

We are responsible for all water or gas pipes, electrical wiring, heating systems, drainage, power and light fittings. This does not include items that are listed as your responsibility or items you have installed.

Outside, we are responsible for main paths to front and rear doors along with driveways or hardstandings, which have not been constructed by you or a previous resident of the property.

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We will also repair and maintain outbuildings, which form part of the original property when built.

By law, we must inspect every property where there is a gas supply, and carry out an annual safety check and service.

For residents of Sheltered Housing Schemes, we will do more repairs. You should discuss any repair requests with your Housing Support Officer.

Here are some details of repair responsibility:

Council Responsibility

The main structure of the building including roof, ceilings, walls and floors and all communal areas

Outbuildings which form part of the original property when built

Doors and windows

Main drainage

Guttering

Main paths to the front and rear doors

Fences, walls and gates which are adjacent to public foot-paths, roads or other open areas

Gas, electrical and water services

Heating and hot water systems

Electrical systems wiring, power, light, sockets and switches plus electrical fittings installed by the council

Sinks, basins, baths, toilets, flushing cisterns, overflows

Showers

Tenant Responsibility

Fireplaces and fireplace tiles

Fire baskets – Grates – unless only form of heating

Sweeping flues and chimneys, where tenant has their own solid fuel heating system

Resetting thermostats and programmers

Insulation jackets to hot water cylinders [loose fitting]

Blocked waste pipes to baths, wash hand basins, sinks, showers and gulley grids which are avoidable and may be solved using a domestic cleaning fluid

Plugs and chains to baths, wash hand basins and sinks

Faulty outside taps

WC seats and covers

Plumbing in and maintenance of white goods

Vents for tumble dryers

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Fuses, plugs, light bulbs, fluorescent tubes

Testing of smoke alarms and replacement batteries as required. This does not apply to Sheltered Housing and council installed system in communal ways

TV aerials other than communal systems in flats and maisonettes
Cable TV connections and cabling

Telephone points and junction boxes

Reset of electrical fuse trip switches (circuit breakers)

Door bells

Replacement of lost keys

Replacement of broken locks to external doors or doors opening on to communal ways other than fair wear and tear

Replacement of lost window keys

Internal door locks and fittings

Adjusting internal doors

Adjusting doors to fit carpets

Cracked or broken glass in windows/doors due to wilful or neglectful damage

Cleaning window glass and frames other than in Communal Areas or Sheltered Schemes

Clearing air vents and window trickle vents

Door numerals and letter plates

Draught excluders

Internal Decoration

Minor plaster cracks (non structural)

Floor and wall tiles, splash backs etc

Washing down/removal of condensation and mould

All cupboards and shelves i.e. fixtures

All cupboard hinges, catches and door furniture i.e. fixtures

Curtain rails

Hat and coat hooks

All floor coverings, within flats, maisonettes, bedsitting rooms and houses including thermoplastic floor coverings adhered to structure

Repairs to your own white goods, cookers, hobs, fridges, freezers, washing & drying machines etc unless supplied by Council

Gardens, trees, shrubs and hedges other than in communal areas

Veranda and lean-to extensions, garden sheds

Driveways and hard standings – unless supplied by Council and scheduled as such

Garden paths other than to the front and back doors

Fences, which are not adjacent to public footpaths, roads or other open areas such as parks and garage compounds

Gate latches and hinges other than communal or into public areas etc

Washing lines other than communal provided by Council

Dustbins (except communal)

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Infestation by rats, mice, cockroaches, bees, wasps, fleas etc

Repairing damage caused by your household and visitors

Any additions or improvements made by tenant without written approval

How to Report Repairs

When you require a repair that you think is the council's responsibility, first check the list in this booklet, and then when you are satisfied that the repair is not your responsibility contact us giving the following information:

- **Your name, address and telephone number**
- **When you will be at home, during normal working hours**
- **What repairs need to be carried out.**

Please be as accurate as you can when describing a repair as this may help us get a contractor to your home quicker. The more accurate information you can provide, the more likely we will be able to pass the work directly to a contractor.

**You can log your own repair on-line at
www.adur.gov.uk/tenants-on-line**

**Alternatively call the
REPAIRS FREEPHONE: 0800 783 7150
or direct on 01273 263030**

When you report a repair you will be told the job number and an acknowledgement will be sent to you by your preferred method of communication. We will also give you the opportunity to complete a satisfaction survey about the service you received.

Right to Repair

You have the right to get certain urgent repairs that affect health, safety or security done quickly.

For more details of the Right to Repair scheme please see the booklet entitled 'Your Rights'.

Priority Times

The council aims to give a good repairs service and has clearly identified how long various repairs are expected to take. The chart shows some common repairs and their allocated priority times. Please remember this list is purely a guide and not a complete list of all repairs we carry out and it does not affect your rights under the Right to Repair legislation.

Please note: Priority times may vary if we need to inspect the fault before it is repaired.

The chart below shows priority times:

Trade	Repair	Priority
Bricklayer	Repair minor leak in roof	Urgent
	Repair/renew concrete path	Non-urgent
	Repair solid floor	Non-urgent
	Repair/renew brickwork	Non-urgent

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Trade	Repair	Priority
Carpenter	Board up opening	Emergency
	Repair/renew locks	Emergency
	Repair/renew door	Non-urgent
	Repair/renew window	Non-urgent
	Repair/renew kitchen units	Non-urgent
	Repair/renew garage door	Non-urgent
	Repair/renew gate	Non-urgent
Electrician	Restore supply	Emergency
	Repair or renew fittings	Urgent
	Repair extractor fan	Urgent
Heating	Re-fix radiator	Urgent
	Repair gas fire (winter months)	Emergency
	Repair boiler (winter months)	Emergency
Labourer	Rod blocked drain	Emergency
	Clear gully	Emergency
Plasterer	Renew ceiling	Non-urgent
	Plaster/skim walls	Non-urgent
Plumber	Unblock WC, soil pipe	Emergency
	Repair cistern (not flushing)	Emergency
	Repair leaking waste pipe	Emergency
	Repair/renew WC pan (Cracked not leaking)	Non-urgent
	Renew bath	Non-urgent
	Clean blocked or leaking gutters	Non-urgent
	Repair loose gutters	Urgent

Key

1 day = Emergency 7 days = Urgent 42 days = Non-urgent

When will a Contractor Call?

Our contractors can normally call Monday to Friday between the hours of 8.00am and 5.00pm. The time to be taken to complete the repair once work has started must be taken into consideration when arranging a visit. If you cannot be at home during normal working hours you must arrange for someone to wait in on your behalf.

If you are not at home when a contractor calls they will leave a card letting you know they called. The card will detail the contact information you need to rearrange the visit, although you should let us know if you cannot keep to an arranged visit.

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

**If you are in any doubt ring the Council
on 01273 263000.**

Outside office hours we only respond to emergency problems. Outside office hours ring the Duty Officer on 07713889128. When calling the duty supervisor please make sure you have as much information as possible about the fault so that they can decide the best way to help you. If there is a real emergency help will be with you as soon as possible.

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You will be recharged for a repair if

- You fit any type of installation or fixed appliance that we did not give you our written agreement to install, or where you have mutually exchanged into your home, this includes any installation of fixed appliances made by the previous tenant and not by us, such as built in cookers or electric showers.
- You have altered the property without our written agreement, and have not reinstated the property to its original condition.
- Having obtained prior written permission and agreed to maintain an installation, the installation was poorly fitted by you, or somebody employed by you.
- You failed to keep a pre-agreed appointment.
- You will be recharged if the work is needed because of damage was caused deliberately or as a result of neglect or the actions of a member of your household or visitors to your home.
- Some common examples of repairs needed as a result of damage or neglect are:
 - Damage to internal and external doors
 - Damage to kitchen units and worktops
 - Broken windows or window locks
 - Missed appointments with our contractor
 - Blocked toilet or drainage

What can I expect when I have a rechargeable repair carried out?

- We will tell you whether you are responsible for paying the costs of the work at the time you order a repair.
- For all rechargeable work we will provide you with an estimate of the cost within 7 working days.
- We will send you an invoice for the work within 10 working days of completing the work. An administration charge of 15% plus VAT at the rate current at the time will be added to the invoice.

What if it wasn't my fault?

Should any damage be caused by a member of your household, an invited or uninvited visitor to your home (or any communal areas if you live in a block of flats), as the tenant you are still responsible for paying for the damage to be repaired.

Where the damage has been caused by someone not invited to your home, and you feel the damage is deliberate or a result of vandalism, you should report the matter to the Police to investigate.

Please ask the Police for a Police Crime Report Number. If you are able to give us a Police Crime Report Number we may not recharge the cost of the work to you particularly if we are able to obtain a conviction.

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When work is going to be done in your home....

- If any furniture needs to be moved, or if any floor coverings that you have put down (e.g. carpets, laminate, sheet vinyl) need to be taken up, you should arrange for this to be done prior to our contractor arriving.
- Our contractor will be willing to help move some items of furniture providing this can be safely done. They may also remove floor coverings, where you have not, but they will not put them back down or be responsible for any damage caused.
- Our contractors will not be held responsible for any damage. You should move all breakable/valuable items to a safe place before our contractor arrives.
- If the repair is to an electric storage heater, please ensure to turn it off at least 24-hours before our contractor is due to call, so it has time to cool down.
- You need to make sure that our contractor can get to the repair work easily.
- Please ensure all pets are kept out of the way and your children away from the work area.
- A responsible adult must be at home at all times while the repair is being carried out.
- All our staff and contractors are expected to be considerate and respectful towards you and your home. We expect you, members of your household and visitors to behave in a similar manner towards our staff and contractors. Failure to do this could mean the repair is not carried out.

- Please do not smoke in your home while our staff or contractors are in attendance. We also ask that you do not smoke in the room where the repair work is to be carried out for at least one hour prior to the appointment time.

Condensation

Condensation is caused when moisture in the air reaches a cold surface and condenses into water droplets. The increased moisture in the air is often caused through cooking, washing and drying clothes. Condensation is often accompanied by black mould, which can affect walls, ceilings, window frames as well as your clothes, bedding and decorations.

How to reduce condensation

- **Make sure there is constant heat in your home when the outside temperature is lower than the inside temperature.**
- **Make sure there is ventilation in each room. Open windows. Close the kitchen door when cooking, and cover saucepans.**
- **Do not use paraffin/liquid gas heaters.**
- **Dry damp clothes outside and vent tumble dryers to the outside.**
- **Whilst running a bath and after using the bath open the window and shut the door. If necessary pour cold water into the bath first to reduce steam.**

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Smoke detectors

Your home should be fitted with a smoke detector. If it is battery operated you should test it at least once a week and replace the battery if necessary. We do not replace batteries in smoke detectors. If there is not a smoke detector in your home please let us know and we will arrange for one to be fitted.

Planned Maintenance and Improvements

The council sets out a planned maintenance and improvement programme. Included in the long term programme are, external & communal way decoration, re-roofing works, kitchen and bathroom refurbishment, re-pointing, central heating and other major repair works. The programme is restricted by the budget available in each year and dates for work are only provisional estimates.

Adaptations for Tenants with Disabilities

The council is committed to ensuring that people are able to use the facilities in their home. If you or a member of the family living in your home are finding it difficult to access your home or to use a particular facility, perhaps a bath or stairs then let us know.

All requests for help will be investigated by a housing management officer and if necessary a West Sussex County Council occupational therapist may be needed to identify the most appropriate way to help you. Once your needs have been agreed the work will be planned and a contractor appointed. Adur Homes Services have an Adaptation Policy and a copy can be obtained by contacting us.

In some cases it may be better for you to move to more suitable accommodation. We will be pleased to offer you advice and guidance on any aspect of this process.

Your Right to Improve your Home

With the council's permission you have the right to carry out certain improvements to your home. Please refer to the chapter entitled 'Your Rights' for more information.

Compensation for Improvements

The council operates a system of compensation for some improvements you have made to your home, provided permission has been sought and granted. Such compensation is payable only when you end your tenancy and move out. The section of this handbook entitled 'Ending your Tenancy' has more information on your right to compensation.

Notes

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The information in these leaflets is available in alternative formats (e.g. large print). If you should require these please contact us.