What you should know about the maintenance of your home...

The information contained in this booklet is designed to help you understand what you can expect from our repairs service, plus advice on what to do in an emergency situation.
### Important Equipment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where Is It?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mains water stopcock inside your home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer unit and trip switch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas supply tap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central heating boiler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold water storage tank</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hot water tank</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Annual gas checks

Fill in table below to keep track of your annual gas checks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date of gas check</th>
<th>Contractor's contact number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
How to report repairs

During normal office hours

Phone 01233 330366
Email repairs@ashford.gov.uk
Website www.ashford.gov.uk/housing

When you contact us we will need

Your full name and address, including your postcode
Your rent account number if possible
Contact phone number(s)
Full details of the repair needed, using this handbook
Convenient times for the contractor to call

Out of hours emergencies

Phone 01233 330366
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Introduction

This repair guide for tenants has been produced to provide general advice to tenants on dealing with repairs. If advice from your landlord differs from anything found in this guide, you should assume that what they have told you applies. Contact us on 0300 003 0711 or go to www.ashford.gov.uk/housing for guidance if in any doubt.

Who is responsible for repairs?

As your landlord, we have a legal duty to carry out certain repairs when these are needed. As legislation changes, the responsibility for specific repairs may also change. This means that there may be times when we have carried out certain repairs in the past, but because of changes in the law, a specific repair may become your responsibility, or vice versa.

We expect that as time passes, normal wear and tear will occur to your home. However, should your home need a repair because of either neglect or damage either by you or your friends or family, we will expect you to carry out any necessary repairs. If a repair is needed because of your neglect or damage, we may give you notice to make good, and in some cases we may carry out the repair on your behalf and then charge you for the cost.

There may be some occasions when we will carry out a repair for which we are not generally responsible. This will usually depend on your circumstances, and these are known as discretionary repairs.

The sections below give advice on which repairs are our responsibility, and which are yours. There is also a table of responsibilities. If you still have any queries about whose responsibility a specific repair is then ask us, using the normal number for reporting a repair.

We are all responsible for the environment so please do not put paint, oil or petrol into the drains or leave litter or broken glass around.

Your responsibilities

You are responsible for keeping your home in a reasonable condition and for attempting to solve minor problems, and for insuring the contents of your home. Please read the Helpful tips section.
You are expected to take reasonable precautions to prevent damage to the property by fire, frost, the bursting of water pipes or the blocking of drains and sinks.

We strongly recommend that you take out contents insurance for your belongings in your home.

You must provide access each year for the registered gas inspector's safety check visit.

We rely on you to report any faults promptly and as fully and accurately as you can. Be sure to provide access to our contractors at the appointed time to ensure that the repair can be undertaken within our agreed timescales.

Check the contractor's identification and confirm with them the work that needs to be done. Keep the area clear of furniture, pets and children.

Finally, remember that someone else will be moving into your home if you ever decide to leave. Please make sure that the property is clean, tidy, reasonably decorated and that all your unwanted belongings have been cleared, including any in the roof space.

Our obligations
We are obliged to keep the structure and exterior of your home and the building in which it is situated in good repair.

We also undertake to keep in good repair and proper working order installations for the supply of water, gas and electricity, for sanitation and for room and water heating. This includes annual gas safety inspections and regular electrical safety inspections. We are legally required to check the safety and operation of the gas installation and appliances once a year. Installations which are not checked and serviced can become inefficient or dangerous.

In the case of flats and maisonettes, we will take reasonable care to keep common entrances, halls, stairways, lifts, passageways, rubbish chutes and any other common parts in reasonable repair.

Please refer to the repair responsibilities chart for further details on specific repairs.

Right to repair
Some small urgent repairs are covered by the Right to repair: this requires us to carry out qualifying repairs quickly and without cost to you. If these repairs are not completed after two requests, and you have provided full access, you may be entitled to compensation.

Vandalism or graffiti
We need your help to combat vandalism. Please tell us quickly when you see it. Do not assume that someone else will report it. We will prosecute vandals when there is a witness, to discourage others, and save
rent money being used to repair vandalised areas.

**Repair Priorities**

Some repairs are more important than others. When a problem threatens health and safety, your well being, or the property, it will be deemed to be an emergency. If the problem is severely inconvenient, it will be categorised as urgent. Other repairs are categorised as routine.

**Emergency repairs**

See the Emergencies section for dealing with gas or water leaks, or loss of electrical power.

An emergency is defined as something which could not have been foreseen and which could cause danger to health, tenants' safety, or serious damage and destruction to property. Emergency call out contractors will usually make safe to enable full and proper repairs to be undertaken during normal working hours. The types of work they attend include:

- Severe roof leaks
- Burst pipes
- Blocked drains
- Blockage of your only toilet
- Loss of electrical power or light
- Loss of gas
- Loss of heating in cold weather where there is no other form of heating available
- Loss of immersion heater if this is the only source for hot water

We recognise that vulnerable tenants will need special consideration in certain circumstances.

If a contractor is called out to carry out a repair as an emergency when an emergency repair is not justified then you are liable to be charged for all costs concerned.

Emergency repairs will be carried out within 4 Hours.

**Urgent Repairs**

These are repairs which materially affect your comfort or convenience. In certain circumstances these repairs could be treated as emergencies. The list includes:

- Partial loss of electrical power or light
- Unsafe power, lighting socket or electrical fitting
- Partial loss of water or gas supply
- Loss or partial loss of space or water heating
- Blocked or leaking drains, or soil stack
- Toilet blocked or not flushing
- Blocked sink, bath or basin
- Tap which cannot be turned
- Leak from water or heating pipe, tank or cistern
- Leaking roof
- Insecure external window, door or lock
- Loose or detached stair hand rail
- Rotten timber floor or stair tread
- Door entry phone not working
• Extract fan not working in a kitchen or bathroom with no other venting.

Urgent repairs will be completed within 3 Days.

You may be entitled to compensation if we fail to carry out urgent or emergency repairs on time after a second request to do so. This does not apply if we have been unable to gain access to your home to carry out the repair, or for particularly expensive jobs. Ask us for a copy of our compensation policy.

Non urgent repairs
These are less urgent repairs that can wait a short time (up to 28 Days) and include minor problems with toilets, baths, sinks, doors or windows sticking, plaster repairs, brickwork, and other non urgent internal and external repairs.

Planned maintenance
Where maintenance can be planned in advance we can arrange for it to be done on a group of homes at the same time, to keep costs down. Examples include external painting, and repairs to doors and windows in preparation for painting, boiler replacements, annual servicing of gas appliances and central heating, and inspection and testing of appliances provided by us.

You will be contacted in advance by the contractor or ourselves to carry out any surveys which may be required prior to the work commencing.
## Who is responsible for repairs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repair</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Us</th>
<th>You</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boundaries</td>
<td>Fences, walls and gates dividing or otherwise which do not form boundaries to Public Highways and/or Public Footpaths</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundaries</td>
<td>Fences, walls and gates that form boundaries to Public Highways and/or Public Footpaths</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Boundaries</td>
<td>Establish and mark boundaries for our properties</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condensation</td>
<td>Advice and assistance available from us upon request</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors</td>
<td>Internal door(s), frames, handles, latches, locks and draft proofing</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors</td>
<td>Internal door operation and adjustment (where existing)</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Doors</td>
<td>Fire doors</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors</td>
<td>External door, frame or lock repairs following a break in</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors</td>
<td>External door operation and adjustment, frames, locks and ironmongery provided by us</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors &amp; Windows</td>
<td>Cleaning, lubrication and basic upkeep and maintenance</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical</td>
<td>Fuse box, wiring, sockets and light fittings</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical</td>
<td>Equipment or circuits not owned or installed by us</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical</td>
<td>Light bulbs, plugs and fuses</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>Roof, chimney stack, guttering, rainwater goods, fascias, soffits</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>Pathways and hard standings to dwellings, outbuildings and garages provided by us</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finishes</td>
<td>Seals and tiling around bath, basin, worktops, etc, where provide by us</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finishes</td>
<td>Internal decoration</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floors</td>
<td>Loose floor coverings, fitted carpets, laminate flooring, etc</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floors</td>
<td>Floorboards, sub floor or tiling provide by us(except for damage due to neglect or misuse)</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardens</td>
<td>Maintenance, removal and disposal of vegetation</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glazing</td>
<td>Defective or broken glazing (except for damage due to accident or misuse)</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heating</td>
<td>Chimney sweeping open fires and Tenants own appliances</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heating</td>
<td>Heating systems, radiators, thermostats, timers, etc installed by us</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heating</td>
<td>Chimney sweeping for an Ashford Borough Council provided solid fuel heating system</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infestation</td>
<td>Vermin, rats, birds, squirrels</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infestation</td>
<td>Insects, ants, wasps, fleas, bed bugs</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Who is responsible for repairs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repair</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Us</th>
<th>You</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insulation</td>
<td>Loft, cavity wall, pipes and cylinder jackets</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>Cookers/ovens gas or electric installation including any required modifications to kitchen</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>Kitchen units and worktops (except for damage due to neglect or misuse)</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>Taps, gate and wheel valves</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>Toilet seat re-fix or renew, plugs and chains to baths and sinks</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>Water service pipes, tanks and overflows</td>
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<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>External taps</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>Blocked waste pipes or traps within the property (except for flats or when caused by a defective system)</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>Toilet pan and cistern, baths and showers provided by us</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>Soil vent pipes, drains and chambers</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubbish</td>
<td>Rubbish and debris clearance and disposal from property, land or garage</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Staircase, banisters and handrails (except for damage due to neglect or misuse)</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Gaining entry where locked out including repairs as the result of gaining access</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Keys for window locks provided by us</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Asbestos testing, assessment and removal where posing a risk</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Door Entry Systems provided by us</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Window safety restrictors above ground floor to childs bedroom</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Keys for doors</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Additional door locks, chains and viewers</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Smoke alarm battery replacement</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Window safety restrictors to ground floor or rooms other than Childs bedroom</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV Equipment</td>
<td>TV aerials, satellite dishes and telecommunications equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV Equipment</td>
<td>Communal TV aerial systems provide by us to flats and maisonettes</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>Electricity and Gas supplies from the meter</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>Electricity and Gas meters and supplies to the meters</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
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</table>
EMERGENCIES

Fire
- Dial 999. Get everyone out and do not go back for any reason
- Close all doors and windows
- Warn your neighbours if any of them might be in danger

If you smell gas
- Open the doors and windows to get rid of the gas
- Check to see if the gas has been left on unlit, or a pilot has gone out. If so turn the appliance off, and do not try to relight it until all smell of gas has been cleared from the property
- If the leak cannot be stopped by turning off an appliance, or you are uncertain whether it has been stopped, turn the main gas supply off at the meter and phone the gas emergency service immediately - National Grid 0800 111 999
- Do not turn any electrical switches on or off
- Do not use door bell
- Do not smoke
- Do not use matches or naked flames

Burst or leaking pipe
- Turn the water off at the mains. See the helpful tips section.
- If electrics are affected, turn off the electricity at the consumer unit. See helpful tips for more advice
- Call our repairs service. If our office is closed, use the emergency number

Loss of electricity
- If neighbours are also affected, call your electricity company (check your electricity bill for the number). Otherwise, see our helpful tips section
- If the problem persists after following the helpful tips advice, call our repairs service. If our office is closed, use the emergency number
Improvements and Alterations
Before you make any alterations to your home you must write to us to obtain permission. We have to ensure that your home is not damaged or made unsafe. In some cases you will also have to obtain Planning Permission or Building Regulations Approval from the local authority. An alteration is anything which is an addition or change to the property or its gas, electrical or water supply.

Examples of the most common alterations are:

- Moving/removing fitted units or doors
- Modifications to central heating
- Plumbing in washing machines or other appliances
- Building patios
- Knocking down walls
- Double glazing
- Fitting a gas fire or building a feature fireplace
- Enclosing porches
- Extensions
- Additional fencing
- Satellite dishes
- Fitting different light switches
- Adding or moving electric points

All electrical work must be done by a qualified electrician under Part L of the Building Regulations requirements, and a safety certificate must be supplied.

Your rent will not increase as a result of any improvements you make, but you will be responsible for repairs. If you do not obtain permission you may be charged to repair or restore your home.

At the termination of your tenancy you may qualify for a compensation payment, less an allowance for depreciation, for an improvement or alteration you carried out after 1st April 1994. It is important to note that you must have had written permission from us prior to any work being carried out. Contact us for more information.

Our performance
We will inspect a proportion of repair jobs when they are completed, and instruct the contractor to remedy any unfinished or poor quality work.

You can help us achieve the highest quality by returning any 'satisfaction slip' or questionnaire we send you. Alternatively you can request an inspection of repair work that you consider to be of unacceptable quality, by telephoning the office where you report your repairs.

Code of Conduct
We require contractors to ensure that works are carried out with the minimum of disruption to tenants. They are required to:

- Introduce themselves to the tenant and show proof of identity. Do not hesitate to ask to see it
Complaints

We are committed to providing a high standard of service to our tenants. However, if you think we have failed to provide a satisfactory service, you should make use of our complaints procedure, which is designed to resolve complaints as quickly as possible.

In the first instance you should inform the manager at the office where you report your repairs. Minor complaints can be reported verbally. If the matter is more serious we suggest you put it in writing. If you are dissatisfied with the response you receive, you should follow our complaints procedure. If you are still dissatisfied at the end of that, you have a further right to complain to the Tenant Services Agency.

If you need help in making a complaint we can advise you of independent agencies which can assist you. Independent advice can be obtained from the Citizens Advice Bureau or a solicitor.

In certain circumstances if we fail to meet satisfactory standards resulting in material loss or serious inconvenience, you can apply for compensation. Copies of our compensation policy are available from our offices or online at www.ashford.gov.uk/complaints.
How repairs are made

Before you call
Look up the repair in this book and note down the information you need to give us

When you call
Please let us know:
- Your name and address
- Your contact phone number(s)
- Details of the repair
- Times when the contractor can call (ie, am or pm)

The repair is recorded
Details of your repair are noted

An appointment is made with the contractor and you will be consulted about the date and time.

For more complex repairs a housing officer or technical officer will call to assess the extent of the problem. They will then place an order with the contractor

An appointment is made
If the date or time is not convenient you should call back immediately to make another arrangement. Missed appointments cost money

The work is completed
Return your customer survey to tell your landlord if the repair was completed satisfactorily. Was the work carried out on time, to acceptable standard and in an
BATH / BASIN

wall tiles or +---+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+ splashback

seal +---+-+-+-+-+

...tii;......

plug to waste +-----+-+

trap and pipe

side panel

end panel

Bath

Basins

wall tiles or +---+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+-+ splashback

sea +-----+-+

overflow +-----+-+

pedestal +-----+-+

-waste control pull

-waste plug

pop up
Bath/basin water leaking

*If water is near electrics, do not touch. Turn electricity off at consumer unit main switch. Stop leak causing more damage.*

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

Bath/basin blocked

*Can you clear blockage yourself? (see Helpful Tips)*

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

Bath or basin damaged/broken

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

Bath panel loose

Which bath panel is affected? (side or end panel)
What is it made from? (hardboard or plastic)

Damaged wall tiles

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

Seal gone around bath

Seal gone around basin
BATH / BASIN / SHOWER

Taps

Modern pillar tap

High neck pillar tap

Standard pillar tap

Bib tap

Mixer tap

Bath / shower mixer tap

shower head

shower hose
Bath tap dripping
What type of tap is it?

Basin tap dripping
What type of tap is it?

Basin loose
Are brackets loose or broken?
Is basin loose on its brackets?
Is pedestal broken?

Tap loose
Bath or basin tap?
What type of tap?

Shower hose broken
How did it happen?

Shower arm broken
How did it happen?
Seal gone around shower tray

Shower tray broken

What is it made of? (ceramic or plastic)

Shower not working

If it is your own shower, this is your responsibility.
If electric, has fuse blown?
Are neighbours also affected by power cut?

What type of shower is it? (electric or connected to the central heating. See shower diagram)
What is happening? (no water, or only hot or cold water)
Do you have hot water in rest of home?
Can you see a make or model number on shower?

Shower blocked

If limescale is the problem, use descaler fluid which can be bought from a DIY shop.

What is causing blockage?

Shower switch broken

Damaged wall tiles

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

Stopcocks and gate valves

- Gate valve
- Stopcock, stop valve or stop tap
- Service valve
- Draincock
- Stopcock with drain valve
**WCleaking**

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

Where is leak? (pan, cistern, overflow, supply, flush or waste pipe or pipe joint. See diagrams opposite)
If leak is from cistern, is it high or low level cistern? (See diagrams page 20)
Is affected part loose, cracked or broken?
Is it your only WC?
Is it a coloured WC or white?

**WC will not flush**

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

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

**Overflow running**

As a temporary solution, tie float in the up position, thus closing the ball valve (see helpful tips for help).

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

**WC loose**

Is pan or pipe broken?

**WC blocked**

Try unblocking it yourself by removing excess water into a bowl, and using a toilet brush or plunger (without metal disk). (See helpful tips for help)

What caused blockage?

**Soil stack blocked**

Do you live in a house or flat?
If a flat, which floor are you?
Is your WC causing the blockage?
Water system

- Cold water storage tank
- Overflows
- Rising main
- Hot water cylinder
- Boiler

Flow: Cold water -> Hot water

Legend:
- Cold water
- Hot water
Burst pipe

If water is near electrical fittings, turn off electricity at consumer unit main switch. (See helpful tips)

Are electrics affected by burst?
Is it inside or outside building?
Are pipes frozen?

Water leaking

Can you stop leak or isolate it? Try to catch water in a bowl or bucket. (See helpful tips)

Is pipe, tank or cylinder leaking?
Are electrics affected?

Banging pipes

Adjust main stopcock where water comes into home.

How often is it happening?

No cold water

Are neighbours affected?
Make sure taps are turned off, even though no water is coming through.

Is there cold water at kitchen sink?
Are pipes frozen?

Storage tank overflow running

Is overflow running outside?
See helpful tips for advice
HOT WATER

Gas boiler

- flue
- ignition light
- pilot light
- boiler
- thermostat
- time clock

Hot water cylinder

- gate valve
- top entry immersion heater (electric)
- cylinder usually has insulation jacket
- cylinder thermostat
- bottom entry immersion heater (electric)
- drain off valve
No hot water

If gas, check time clock controller is set for hot water and timer is set correctly.
If electric, is there a power cut? Are neighbours affected? If so, contact your electricity company (Details are on your electricity bill).
If coin or credit meter, has it has run out of credit?

What heats water? (Gas, electric, or solid fuel)
If electric, are other electrical facilities working?
Are heating controls set correctly?
Is room heating still working?
Do you have alternative source of hot water? (Immersion heater or gas heater etc)
Do you have a hot water cylinder?

Water temperature

Adjust the thermostat on the cylinder to 55 - 60°C

Is water too hot or too cold?
EXTERNAL / INTERNAL DOOR

External door

- door closer
- top rail
- door stile
- glass panel
- letter plate
- panels
- bottom rail
- threshold
- weatherboard
Door jammed

Is it front or rear door?
What type of door is it? (Refer to diagrams)
What is door made of? (wood, metal or plastic etc)
Is door jammed open or closed?
Can you still get in and out of your home?

Door frame damaged/rotten

Is door or frame affected?
Is it front or rear door?
What type of door is it? See diagrams
What is door made of? Wood, metal or plastic etc
Is home insecure as a result of this problem?

Threshold rotten/needs repair

What type of door is it? See diagrams
What is it made from? (wood, metal etc)
What is wrong with it? (rotten, broken etc)

Weatherboard rotten/broken

What type of door is it? See diagrams
What is it made from? Wood, metal or plastic
What is wrong with it? Rotten, broken etc

Glass damaged

What type of door is it?
If fully glazed, which panel(s) is damaged?
Is it your own door or a communal one?
Is it front or rear door?
Is it single or double glazed?
What type of glass is it? (clear, wired or obscure)
Is your home secure?

Draught coming around door

Where is draught coming from?
(between wall and frame, around door or under door)
Is there any draught proofing around door?

Rain coming in under door

Does door have a weatherboard? See diagram of external door
EXTERNAL / INTERNAL DOOR

Locks and latches

Rim night latch - Yale or similar

- Latch
- Deadlocking cylinder
- Lever
- Hold open catch

Mortice sash lock

- Latch
- Lever handle
- Deadlock

Perko door closer

- Spring in cylinder
- Cylinder plate (fits to door edge)
- Anchor plate (fits to door frame)

Outside door pull

- Barrel cylinder
Door lock not working

Tenant's own locks are your own responsibility.

What type of lock is it? See diagrams
What is wrong with lock? (lever handle faulty, spring worn out, striking plate out of place or lock not fitting into keep etc)
See diagrams
Which door is affected?
What is door made of? Wood, metal or plastic
Is your home secure?

Keys lost/locked out

This is usually your own responsibility.

Are you locked out of your home?
What type of lock is it? See diagrams
Where is door? Front, rear, patio or store

Door fittings missing/not working

Tenant's own fittings are your own responsibility.

What fitting is it? (letterplate, handle, chain, door viewer, house numbers etc)
Is door not closing properly?
Is your home insecure?

Door sticking/jamming

Where is the door?
What type of door is it?

Door damaged

Where is door?
What type of door is it?
What appears to be the problem?
How did it happen?

Door latch defective

What type of latch fitting is it?
Where is door?
What is wrong with it?
How did it happen?
What appears to be the problem?
Glass damaged

If you can do it safely, remove any loose broken glass which could be dangerous to others, and wrap it in newspaper before binning it.

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

Window frame jammed

What is frame made of? Wood, metal, or plastic
What type of window is it? Sash, pivot or tilt window etc See diagrams
What is causing problem? Rotten wood, hinges or sash cord broken etc. See window diagrams and lock diagrams
Is your home secure?

Window fittings defective

What type of window is it? Sash, pivot or tilt window etc See window diagrams
What is frame made of? Wood, metal or plastic
What part is defective? Stay, catch, fastener or lift etc See lock diagrams and window diagrams
Is your home insecure?
Damaged cupboard

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

Doors and shelves

What part is broken (door, hinge)?
Is shelf in kitchen unit loose or broken?
Is shelf in wall or floor unit?

Damaged drawer

Is the drawer broken or sticking?

Worktop damaged

Is worktop loose or broken?
How did damage occur?

Damaged wall tiles

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

Washing machine

sink top

sink waste trap

washing machine supply taps

washing machine waste trap
Washing machine blocked
Do you know what caused the blockage?

Waste trap leaking
What type of waste trap is it?

Sink unit leaking
Try to stop the leak causing more damage

Where is leak coming from? Pipe, tap or waste pipe/trap. See sink diagram

Sink blocked
Try to clear it yourself using a plunger
See Helpful Tips for help
Stop others using sink while blocked.

Are other outlets affected?
Is washing machine blocked?
What caused the blockage?

Seal gone around sink

Sink tap dripping
What type of tap is it?

Sink top
Is sink top loose or broken?
Is entire sink unit damaged?

Tap loose
What type of tap is it?
GAS / ELECTRICAL HEATING

Gas boiler

--- flue

Central heating pump

--- switched electric power supply

Heating controls

--- temperature dial

Digital programmer  | Clock programmer  | Room thermostat
Central heating boiler faulty

If electric, check that power is still on, and that meter is still in credit.
If gas, check that pilot light is on.
Check that boiler thermostat is set correctly -- usually between 18°C and 22°C. See heating control diagrams
Check that clock or digital timer is set correctly. See helpful tips for more information.

Is it your only source of heat?
Do you have hot water?
Can you see manufacturer’s name and what model it is?

Communal heating faulty

Check that room thermostat is set correctly (usually between 18°C and 22°C).
Are other flats affected?
If you have a warden or caretaker, contact them.

Is this your only source of heat?
Is there any hot water?
Heaters and radiators

Storage heater with convector

Wall mounted convector heater

off-peak supply for storage heater

supply for convector

Panel radiator

pre-set balancing valve

radiator valve

Radiator valves

Manual radiator valve

Thermostatic radiator valve
Radiator leaking

Try to stop leak causing damage
Turn radiator valve off

Where is leak coming from? See radiator diagram

Fumes in room

If gas leak, do not smoke, use matches, or turn electrical switches on or off.
Open windows. Follow emergency action outlined in the emergency section
Turn off any appliances that are causing fumes

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

Storage heater defective

Make sure heater is turned on at socket
Check thermostat is set correctly
If no power in the rest of your home, see the no power section

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

Radiant/convector heater faulty

Check thermostat is set correctly.
If faulty plug, see 'Plug socket not working'

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

Radiator not heating up

Check that thermostatic valve is turned up enough. See heating control diagrams
Try bleeding radiator. See bleeding a radiator in helpful tips

Is thermostatic valve turned up enough?
How many radiators are affected?
Have you tried bleeding radiator(s) affected?
Do you have hot water?
ELECTRICAL

Electricity

ceiling switch  smoke detector  light fitting  extract fan

Electricity meter

electricity supply

Electricity consumer unit

main on/off switch

fuses/circuit breakers

Trip switch – replaces fuses in modern consumer units
Extractor fan faulty

Is fan switched on?

Where is fan?
What type of fan is it?

No power at all

If you have a coin or credit meter, check that it has credit on it.
See if trip switch is activated or a fuse has blown on consumer unit. See helpful tips for help
Are your neighbours affected? If so, contact your electricity supplier (details on your electricity bill)

Is yours the only property affected?
Has trip switch been activated or a fuse blown on the consumer unit?

Electrical fitting smoking

Do not touch fitting.
Turn electricity off at consumer unit main switch.

What fitting is it? Light, plug etc
Where is it located?

Light circuit failed

See if trip switch is activated or fuse has blown on consumer unit See helpful tips for help
Has bulb blown?
Are power sockets working?

Are power sockets working?
How many lights are affected?
Is light fitting causing the problem?
Pendant, batten holder, wall or ceiling switch etc. See socket and light holder diagrams

Fluorescent tube not working

What is the problem? Tube flickers, broken etc
ELECTRICAL

Plug sockets

Single plug socket

Double switched plug socket

Cooker control plug socket

Lighting

Ceiling pull switch

Pendant lamp holder

Batten lamp holders

Smoke detector / smoke alarm

 angled lampholder

 test button
Plug socket not working

Is it appliance rather than power socket that is faulty?
Is trip switch activated or a fuse blown in the consumer unit? See **helpful tips** for help
Is there no power at all in your home?
If so, refer to the **no power section**

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

Appliance not working

Tenant's own appliance is tenant's responsibility
Is it power socket rather than appliance that is faulty?
Has fuse blown in the plug? If so, renew it with a suitably rated fuse.
Is trip switch activated or a fuse blown in the consumer unit?
Is there no power at all in your home?
If so, see **no power section**

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

Smoke detector defective

If it is battery operated, check batteries
If you have a warden, contact them

Is it battery operated?
Where is the smoke detector?
What appears to be the problem?
GARDEN / GATES

Garden

clothes line —

rotary drier

post for clothes line

Gates

Braced gate

post  tee hinge

latch

stop (on outside)

brace

bottom rail  stile

Ledged and braced gate

post  bottom rail

latch

barrel bolt

reversible hinge

brace

pal isades or
Rubbish dumped in garden

What sort of rubbish?
Who put it there?
Is it hazardous?

Clothes post broken

What is it made of? (concrete or metal etc)
How was it broken?

Clothes line broken

What type of clothes line is it?
Is pulley or bracket broken?

Clothes line stolen

What type of clothes line is it?

Gate broken/rotten

Where is gate? Front, side or rear
What type of gate is it? Single or double etc. See gate diagrams
What is gate made of? Wood or metal
Does it need to be replaced or resecured?

Gate jamming

What is gate made of? Wood or metal
What is causing it to jam? Hinge broken etc
GATES / FENCES

Fences

- Palisade
- Chain link
- Chestnut pale
- Close boarded
- Interwoven
- Hit Et miss
Gate latch/bolt broken

What type of latch is it?
What is gate made of? Wood or metal etc

Gate post rotten / broken

What is post made from? Wood or concrete etc

Gate post stop defective

What is gate post stop made from?
Wood or metal etc

Fence dangerous/broken

Where is fence? Front, rear or side
What kind of fence is it? Boarded, chestnut pale, timber pallisade, ranch style etc. See fence diagrams
What are posts and panels made of?
Wood or concrete
Does it need to be replaced or resecured?
Is it your own fence or shared with your neighbour?
How many panels are affected or what is the length of affected fencing?
EXTERNAL

Exterior

- cracked cill
- render
- paving slab
  - cracked
- brickwork loose and unstable
- combined window and door unit
- cracked brickwork
Brickwork

Is the brickwork cracked?
How large is the crack?
Is the crack below a window?
Is the crack near a downpipe or other water source?
When did the crack appear?
Do you think the crack is growing?

Door and window frame

Is a door and window frame broken?
How did the damage occur?

Render

Is the render cracked?
Has a section of render come off the wall?
Is there a crack in the render around a door or window frame?

Shed

Is a padlock broken or missing?
Is the shed full of rubbish? Who put it there?
Is the shed or bin store broken?
Walls

Half brick wall with projecting pier

Wall with brick coping

Wall with concrete or stone coping

Up and over garage door

Metal door

Hanger

Tracks

Pivot arm

Locking mechanism

Lifting spring

Frame
Wall dangerous / collapsed

Is wall your own, or shared with a neighbour?
What is wall made of? Brick or concrete etc
What part of wall is damaged? Pier, coping or pointing etc. See wall diagrams
What caused the damage?

Garage door faulty

What type of garage door is it?
What is door made from? (wood, metal etc.)
What is the problem? (door or frame is loose, damaged or off mechanism, lock is broken or keys are lost etc)
Paths and Steps

Paths

- Insitu concrete (or macadam)
- Gravel
- Brick
- Concrete flags

Steps

- Pre cast concrete steps on brick
- Insitu concrete steps
- Brick steps
Paving damaged

*If dangerous, warn others.*

Where is path? Front, rear or side
What type of path is it? Flag, concrete etc. See paving diagrams
What is wrong with path? Paving stones/flags are broken or loose etc
Are paving stones/flags square or rectangular?
How many are affected?
Is it hazardous?

Steps broken

*If dangerous, warn others.*

Where are steps? Front or rear
What are steps made of? Concrete, brick, etc See step diagrams
How many steps are affected?
Is it hazardous?
Roofs and drains

interlocking tiles  plain tiles
slates  ridge tiles

flat roof

gutter  downpipe

Pitched roof

slate or plain tiles (top surface flat)
stop end
gutter
fascia

Chimney stack

gas
flaunching
lead flashing
chimney pot

soffit  bargeboard
Tiles/slates broken

If electrics are affected by water leakage, do not touch, and turn electricity off at consumer unit main switch
If there is leakage, try to stop water causing more damage
If it is dangerous, warn others

What type of roof is it? Slate, tile etc
If roof is tiled, which type of tile? Flat or not flat.
Are they missing, broken or loose?
Which part of the roof is affected? See roof diagrams
How large is area affected is?
Is roof leaking?
Are electrics affected?

Chimney stack damaged

If it is dangerous, warn others

Which part is affected? Stack, pot or flashing etc. See chimney stack diagram
Is it damaged, loose or missing?
Does chimney have more than one flue?
Is it dangerous?

Flat roof damaged

If electrics are affected by water leakage, do not touch, and turn electricity off at the consumer unit main switch
If there is leakage, try to stop water causing more damage
If it is dangerous, warn others

What type of roof is it? Felt, asphalt or lead etc
Which part of roof is affected? See roof diagrams
How large is affected area?
Is roof leaking?
Are electrics affected?
Gutters, downpipes and drains

- Gutter bracket
- Gutter
- Outlet
- Soil pipe
- Hopper
- Downpipe
- Gully
- Grid or grate
- Manhole

Gullies

- Back inlet gully
- Open gully
Manhole cover defective

If dangerous, put something over it to alert others to the danger.

Where is it?
What is the problem? Loose, broken or missing
What is it made of?
Is it dangerous?

Manhole overflowing

Where is it located?

Gully cover defective

Where is it?
What is the problem? Loose, broken or missing
Do you think it can be refixed or does it need to be replaced?
What is it made of?
What size is it?

Gutter overflowing

Where is the overflow coming from?
Gutter, hopper, pipe etc. See gutter diagrams

Gully blocked

Try to clear any leaves or other rubbish yourself with a stick.

What is blocking the gully?

Drains blocked

What is blocking the drain?

Guttering/downpipe defective

What is affected? Gutter or downpipe. See gutter diagrams
What is the problem? Guttering or downpipe is blocked, cracked, loose etc
If it is leaking, can you tell where from?
Joint, or pipe etc See gutter diagrams
What is it made of? (metal, plastic etc)
Can it be refixed or does it need to be replaced?
External communal facilities

Internal communal facilities

CCTV
refuse chute
refuse bin
door entry

communal lighting
Door entry faulty

*If door is jammed, refer to 'Door Jammed' section*

Has whole system failed, or is only your home affected?
Is fault at entrance or your phone?
Is door jammed?

Emergency lighting faulty

Which lights are affected?
Is it failing to turn off or not coming on?
Is fire alarm ringing?

Communal lighting faulty

*Is power cut causing the problem. If so, contact electricity board (under 'electricity' in the Phone Book).*

Which lights are affected?
Is it on all the time?
Does it not come on at all?

Rubbish chute faulty

What is wrong? (chute is blocked, broken etc)

Services

Is fire alarm ringing?
Is CCTV faulty?
Is there a problem with the communal TV aerial?
Stairs

- Baluster
- Stair string
- Handrail on balustrade
- Newel post
- Handrail on brackets
- Closed balustrade
- Riser
- Nosing
- Tread
Loose tread

*If hazardous, warn others.*

Is it inside your home or a communal staircase?
What is the rough size of affected area?
What are stairs made of? (wood, concrete etc)

Handrail or balustrade defective

Is it inside your home or a communal area?
Which part is affected? Handrail, post, individual baluster etc. See staircase diagram
Can it be refixed or does it need to be replaced?
Walls and floors

- **Walls and Floors**
  - plasterboard
  - cornice/coving
  - plasterwork
  - skirting
  - floorboards
  - mouse hole
Loose floorboard

*If hazardous, warn others.*

Is it inside your home or a communal area?
What is the rough size of affected area?

Plaster repairs

Is there a crack in the plaster or is a patch damaged?
Where is the damage? (wall, ceiling, door or window frame, coving?)
How large is the affected area?

Skirting board

Is the skirting board broken or loose?
If broken, is wood crumbling or rotting?

Vermin

*Infestations are usually your responsibility*

Have you seen mice or mouse droppings?

Floor tiles

Are tiles loose, broken or missing?
What type of tile (ceramic, quarry, vinyl)?
What size area is affected?
Helpful tips

Looking after your home
You are responsible for keeping the inside of your home in good condition. To help you do this it is best to carry out small tasks and checks to prevent future problems:

• Wipe down on a regular basis all windows affected by condensation and if any mould has formed clean it off using a wash of diluted bleach, or a proprietary product available from supermarkets and DIY shops. See Condensation below.
• Limescale can be removed from baths, sinks, shower heads, and taps with a descaler available from all DIY shops.
• Blockages in kitchen sink waste pipes can be prevented by flushing through using a drain clearing product.
• Outside gullies should be kept clear of leaves and other debris so that water drains away easily.
• Make sure you know where the main stopcock is, and how to turn it off. Also, be sure you know how to turn off electricity and gas supply in an emergency. If you do not, ask any of our staff or contractors when they next visit you.

In the Autumn you should check the following list of items and notify us of any problems. We can then repair them before they get worse and cause you any inconvenience:

• If you use an open fire have you swept the chimney? This is normally your responsibility.
• Are all your heating controls set correctly?
• Are there any tiles or slates missing or broken on your roof?
• Are there any blockages or leaks from gutters and downpipes?

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)
EPCs are provided on all new tenancies from 1st October 2008. The certificate carries an energy audit on your home, and recommendations on how to make it more energy efficient.

It gives your home a standard energy and carbon emission efficiency grade from A to G, where A is the most efficient and with the average to date being D.

You can also take action to save energy in the home.

• Use low energy lightbulbs
• Switch electrical appliances off when not in use: don’t put them on standby
• Look for 'Energy Saving Recommended ratings when buying appliances
• Use lower temperatures for washing
• Make sure the dishwasher or washing machine is full before you switch it on
• Set room heating to 18°C
• Draught proofing

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<th>Potential</th>
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<td>(1-20)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not energy efficient - higher running costs</td>
<td></td>
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Condensation

Condensation occurs when there is an excessive build up of moisture in the air. There is always moisture in the air, but people create additional moisture in their homes by:

• Cooking, or boiling water
• Taking baths or showers
• Using paraffin or bottled gas heaters
• Drying clothes indoors

Warm moist air condenses and forms water when it cools: for example when it touches a cool surface. In your home these are outside walls, mirrors, windows, wall tiles and even clothes.

If this condensation cannot dry out it will cause mould to form on walls, in cupboards and on window sills, and mildew to form on clothes, especially leather goods.

There are four things you can do to stop condensation forming:

• Produce less moisture by covering pans and turning down the heat when boiling, switching off boiling kettles, and drying clothes outside, or in a well ventilated room, and not using paraffin or bottled gas heaters.
• Ventilation to let the moisture out, by opening a bathroom or kitchen window for a while to let the steam escape, or using an extract fan; and by opening windows for a while each day to change the air in your house.
• Keeping your home warm by at least keeping a low background heat: this need not result in significantly increased heating costs.
• Wipe down where moisture settles.

Leaking, burst or frozen pipes

When pipes leak
Place a dish or bowl underneath the leak. Pull back any carpets and lay down newspapers or towels to absorb any dampness.

When pipes burst
Turn off the water at the main stopcock, and any gate valves from the water tank,
and switch off any water heaters. Open all taps to drain water from the system.

Can it be isolated?
Some items of equipment may have their own isolation valve (either a gate valve, or a service valve). If not, you may be able to isolate the fault by just turning off a gate valve on a pipe coming out of the cold water tank. This will leave you with some services, even though it might only be cold water at the kitchen tap. You could then temporarily flush toilets using a bucket of cold water.

If electric fittings get wet
DO NOT TOUCH and turn off electricity at the meter.

When ceilings bulge
To prevent the ceiling falling down, place a bucket under the bulge and pierce a small hole to let the water through.

When pipes freeze
Turn off the water at the main stopcock and open the cold taps. It is best to leave the pipes frozen but you may try to thaw the pipe using hot water bottles or a hair dryer. DO NOT USE A BLOW LAMP. Take care to thaw from one end of the frozen section and not from the middle. Conserve hot water until the pipes are thawed.

General information
Know where your main stopcock is and check that it turns easily and is able to shut off the water supply. It is usually where the water pipe enters the house or near the kitchen sink. Get to know where the gate valves for the hot and cold water tanks are.

If you go away for a few days in winter, lower the setting on your central heating room thermostat but leave the heating on.

Bleeding a radiator

When to do it
If the top part of a radiator is cold while the bottom is warm, this is because air is trapped in the system. Bleeding the radiator releases this air and allows hot water to fill the whole system.

Do not bleed if
Do not bleed the radiators if you have a combination boiler: this type of boiler will have either a pressure gauge or a low pressure light on the front or underside of the boiler, and you will probably not have a hot water cylinder.
Before bleeding
If the whole radiator is cold, check that the radiator valve is open. If more than one radiator is cold, the whole heating system may need to be checked by a plumber.

Turn off the heating system before bleeding, otherwise the pump might draw more air into the system.

You will need a special radiator key, available from most DIY and hardware shops. You will also need a rag or cloth and a bucket or bowl.

How to bleed
The bleed valve is the small square nut at the top end of the radiator. Place the key over the valve and hold the cloth around it to catch any water. Gently turn the key anti-clockwise until you hear a hiss - this is the air being released. When water starts to come through, turn the key back clockwise to shut the valve off. DO NOT unscrew the valve completely as the plug will come right out.

Smoke detectors
Smoke detectors need to be cleaned and tested regularly to make sure they will operate effectively.

Most smoke detectors can be cleaned using a soft brush adaptor on the end of a vacuum cleaner. It is important that they should remain free from dust and grease. Care should be taken not to damage any of the internal parts. Never allow a smoke detector which is run from mains electricity to get wet.

Loss of electric light or power
Warning
• Never tamper with the electricity company's fuse and seals.
• If in doubt, contact your landlord.

Turning off electricity
If you need to turn off all electricity (eg because of water penetration), use the main ON/OFF switch on the electricity consumer unit.

Fuse or trip switch
Check your consumer unit or fuse box: it will either have fuses or trip switches (see diagrams). Modern electric circuits are fitted with a circuit breaker fuse system: if a fault develops, a switch is tripped and the circuit is broken.
When a switch is tripped
Open the cover on the consumer unit to expose the trip switches. The consumer unit is usually next to the electricity meter. Check which switches have tripped to the OFF position and put them back to the ON position. For more detail, refer to any information supplied.

If tripping occurs again
It is probably being caused by a faulty appliance. You need to identify which circuit is affected and which appliance on that circuit is causing a problem.

Which appliance is faulty?
Go around the house noting which set of lights or sockets are not working. Unplug all appliances on that problem circuit and switch off the immersion heater. Switch the tripped switch to the ON position and plug in the appliances one by one until the trip goes again. Leave that appliance unplugged. If one of our appliances is at fault, report the repair; otherwise get it fixed yourself by a qualified electrician or service engineer.

What causes it to trip or blow a fuse?
- An overloaded circuit
- Too many appliances being used at the same time
- A faulty or misused appliance
- Overfilled kettles
- Unclean toasters
- Cooker rings worn out or cracked
- Faulty immersion heaters
- Faulty connections on leads to appliances, eg hi-fi, TV, etc
- Light bulbs blowing

No power at all
The most common cause for no power in your home is a tripped switch or blown fuse. If you have a coin or credit meter, ensure it has enough credit. If neighbours are also affected, contact your electricity supplier, using their website or the number on the bill. If your home is the only one affected, and you have checked the consumer unit, you are sure the bills are paid or the meter has credit, contact your electricity supplier. If they are unable to help, contact us.

Plugs
The socket outlets in your home will take square pin plugs. The plug which you require will have a fuse inside it. We do not supply plugs and you will have to obtain them yourself. To find out the correct type of fuse to fit in a plug, check the rating plate on the appliance. Do not overload plug sockets by using multiple plug adaptors.

Controlling your central heating

How to set a digital timer
Check the clock is showing the correct time. If not, put the timer switch to 'clock' and adjust the time using the 'forward' and 'reverse' buttons. Reset the timer
switch to 'auto'. Set the 'heating' and 'hot water' switches to come on once, twice, or stay on all the time, as you require. During freezing spells, keep the heating on all the time, and turn the thermostat down during the night and if you are out all day.

**How to set a clock timer**

Turn the clock until it is showing the correct time. Decide when you want the heating to come on and go off and set the pins or arrows for those times (see below for how to change pins and arrows). Set the timer switch to 'timer' or 'auto' as appropriate to the unit. During freezing spells, keep the heating on all the time, and turn the thermostat down during the night and if you are out all day.

**How to control the temperature**

To set the thermostat turn the dial so that the arrow or marker is against the temperature setting you want. A comfortable temperature is between 18°C and 22°C.

**Storage heaters**

These operate by storing heat during 'off-peak' periods when the electricity is cheaper, usually overnight. This heat is then released into the room the following day and evening. There are two controls (input/charge and output/boost) on the majority of storage heaters which have to be adjusted in anticipation of the following day's weather.

'Input' or 'Charge' control: This must be set manually to ensure that an adequate amount of heat is stored during the night. In the winter, the input control must be set higher as the outside temperatures are usually colder.

'Output' or 'Boost' control: The output control tells the heater how much heat to give out during the day. If this is at the maximum setting (usually 6 or 9) you will find that the stored heat is distributed fairly quickly. It is important to set the controls to reflect the temperature outside and the times that you are in the property, e.g. if you are going out or to bed then turn the output down to the minimum setting.

Although storage heaters can be large and bulky in size because they use offpeak electricity they are much cheaper to run than panel heaters or bar fires. A well controlled storage heater should give you ten hours of useful heat a day.

As the weather gets warmer and you find you no longer need the storage heaters on, then simply turn them off at the wall. Be sure not to put clothing or ornaments on top of the heaters as they can become very hot and lead to a fire risk.

**Clearing a blocked waste pipe**

**Clearing a sink or bath blockage**

Bail out most of the water using a suitable container. Hold a rag firmly over the overflow opening, and place a plunger
over the drain hole. Pump the plunger up and down rapidly. Plungers can be obtained from most DIY shops. After clearing the blockage, it is advisable to clean out the waste trap.

Cleaning out a waste trap
First bail out any excess water from the bath, basin, or sink using a jug or bowl. Place a bowl underneath the trap and unscrew the joints to remove the trap. Clean thoroughly and replace the trap, checking that the seals are in place and that all joints are screwed up tightly.

If more than one fitting is blocked
The problem may be in the soil stack or main drain. This will need to be cleared by one of our contractors. Blockages are usually caused by the build-up of fat, tea leaves, hair, etc. It is advisable to clean wastes with a drain clearing product.

Clearing a blocked WC

Clearing blockages
If the pan is already full, remove some of the water into a suitable container using a jug or bowl. Push the toilet brush or plunger to the bottom of the pan and pump up and down vigorously about 10 times. This creates a vacuum and pressure which may shift the blockage. Check by flushing the toilet to see whether the blockage has gone. You may need to repeat the process several times before the toilet flushes normally. Do not use plungers with a metal disk, as these may chip or crack the toilet bowl.

Avoiding blockages
Air fresheners that attach to the rim of the toilet pan should be fastened securely to ensure they do not fall in and cause a blockage. Blockages are usually caused by unusual objects: nappies, toys, sanitary towels, airfresheners, etc. If such a blockage occurs as a result of one or several of these objects becoming lodged, you may be charged for clearing the blockage.

Overflows
To stop an overflow
If the toilet cistern is overflowing try lifting the float to close the ball valve: if this stops the overflow, try to tie it up, using a piece of wood and some string, as in the diagram.
You can do the same with a cold water storage tank as a temporary measure.
Damp

- Are there damp patches and black mould on walls and ceiling?
- Are the damp patches on the ceiling?
- Is the damp patch below a window?
- Condensation usually happens in the kitchen or bathroom where hot water makes the atmosphere steamy, but it can affect other rooms as well. Another sign is water running down the inside of windows. See Helpful Tips on page 65.
- A cracked or damaged window cill may be letting water into the wall. The cause of the problem may be visible.
- Is the ceiling immediately below a roof?
- The roof may be leaking, especially if the roof is flat. Or a pipe may be leaking in the roof space. A look at the roof may show an obvious problem like missing slates or tiles.
Is the damp patch on the wall neither below a window nor at ground level?

Are the damp patches at ground level or on the lower part of the wall?

An overflowing gutter may be broken or just blocked with leaves and other rubbish so that in dry weather nothing seems to be wrong. But when it is raining, there may be water pouring down the wall. The damp problem may also be worse after rain.

There may be something piled up against the outside wall which is causing the problem. Or the damp may be caused by rising damp (water being drawn up into the wall from the ground). It may be possible to see peeling wallpaper and discoloured patches on the lower part of the wall on the inside. The floor might also be damp. This will need an inspection.

There may be a leak from a pipe, especially if the ceiling is below the bathroom. Or there may be a leak from a radiator or water cylinder. Checking the room above the leak may show an obvious cause. If this is another flat, contact us.

If the ceiling is bulging, it might collapse. This can be prevented by making a small hole to let the water out. Put a bucket underneath first!
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Thanks to the NHMF for drawings, advice and testing the product.
Contacts

Report a Non-Urgent Repair online at www.ashford.gov.uk/report-a-repair or email us at repairs@ashford.gov.uk

For any Repair issue, please call 01233 330366
Our office phone lines are open 8.30am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday, outside of these times, you will be diverted to our out-of-hours emergency call centre.

Other Useful Contacts

Our Heating/Hot Water Maintenance Contractor
Tel: 0800 206 1371

National Gas Emergency Service
Tel: 0800 111 999

March 2019