

Repairs

Repairs

The way in which your home is looked after will be important to you.

This has been split into six sections and provides you with information as follows:-

Reporting a repair
Repairs you are responsible for
Repairs the Council is responsible for
Protecting your property
Insurance, Safety and Security
Improvements

To report a repair you should use the following numbers:

029 20872087 for reporting a new repair only (24hrs for emergency repairs)

Office Hours are Monday to Thursday 8.30 am to 4.30 pm. Friday 8.30 am to 3.30 pm

Or by using the repair reporting phone in some Service Outlets which is free of charge.

There are three categories of repair which are raised on a day-to-day basis.

Emergency Repair (attended within 2 hours - completed within 24 hours)

Urgent Repair (5 working days)

Routine Repair (25 working days)

Proud to Deliver
Yn Falch o Gyflawni



Emergency Repairs are where danger of injury to persons and/or serious damage to property is likely. Here are some examples:

- Where a property is insecure after a break-in or vandalism.
- Where there is an elderly tenant at risk or is locked out or in.
- Where there is no water supply or where water pipes or tanks have burst and caused severe flooding (where the stopcock cannot be turned off). Make sure you know where the stopcock is for turning off your supply.
- Where the internal lighting and/or power supply fails completely or there is a dangerous electrical fitting or fault.
- Gas Leaks – Be sure you know how to turn off the gas supply at the valve in case of emergency. Never attempt to deal with faults yourself. Any gas leak can be dangerous and should be reported directly to Wales and West Utilities.
- Where there is total failure of a heating system between November and April and there is someone who is elderly, disabled or a baby under six months old in the household. Temporary heating may be provided if we are unable to carry out an immediate repair. We will only call after 10pm if the temperature drops below freezing (otherwise we will attend the following day). The Council reserves the right of discretion in exceptional circumstances.
- A blocked toilet (if there is only one in your home).
- Any glazing will be made safe and secure where there is a danger or where security of your home is involved.
- A roof repair – where there is a major water leak or any other hazard considered a danger.
- Failure of communal staircase lighting.
- Failure of smoke detectors.
- Dangerous structures.

Your home will be made safe within 24 hours and any follow up repair work where necessary will be completed under Urgent and Routine jobs. During office hours you should report all emergencies to the Repair Reporting Line.

Urgent Repairs which are not covered under emergency category include:

- Defective hot water and/or heating systems.
- Plumbing repairs (this does not include gutter repairs and overflows which are covered under Routine repairs).
- Glazing.
- Electrical faults.

Any repairs, which are urgent, will be completed within 5 working days.

Routine Repairs are all other day-to-day repair works which are not covered under the Emergency or Urgent repair categories. These will be completed within 25 working days.

When reporting a repair it is your responsibility to check they have your correct telephone number. This is important as your number is used to make appointments to have your work done

- If the repair is straightforward a works order will be raised immediately and you will be given a repair reference number, please keep this safe in case you have to ring again regarding the same repair.
- In some cases it will be necessary for a technical officer to contact you to obtain more details before an order is raised.

- If you are out when someone calls we will leave a calling card. To arrange an alternative time please telephone the number given on the card within 2 working days.
- If you do not telephone within this time the inspection or works order will be cancelled. You will then need to contact the Repair Reporting Line to re-raise the order.

The Government Timescales which are set for certain repairs to be carried out are as follows:

Problem	Time Limit (in working days)
Total loss of electric power	1
Partial loss of electrical power	3
Unsafe power or lighting socket, 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 water heating between 31 st October and 1 st May	1
Total or partial loss of water heating between 30 th April and 1 st November	3
Blocked or leaking foul drain, soil stack or (while there is no other working toilet in the dwelling house) toilet pan	1
Toilet not flushing (where there is no other working toilet in the dwelling house)	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	1
Insecure external window, door or lock	1
Loose or detached banister or hand rail	3
Rotten timber flooring or stair treads	3
Door entry phone not working	7
Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working	7

We will try to carry out repairs within the times stated unless:

- The repairs you have reported are to be done on a programmed basis (e.g. annual gas servicing or repairs required before external painting). If this is so you will be told when the work will be done.
- Works need to be undertaken by specialist contractors.
- You have not let the operatives into your home at a reasonable time to do the work.
- Difficulty is experienced by the Council or its contractors in obtaining any necessary spare parts, or the weather has been too bad to do the work.

If we fail to carry out a repair within the timescales you have the right to arrange for the repair to be carried out yourself. However, the cost of the repair must not be more than £250.00. You must tell your Tenancy Officer if you intend to use your right to repair and you must be a secure tenant to have this right.

Getting repairs done yourself is your right for certain work if you wish. The Council will consider applications via the Tenancy Officer for you to paint the outside area of your home.

You are responsible for certain repairs – these are explained in your tenancy agreement.

You must make your own contents insurance arrangements (the Council operates an Insurance Scheme – see separate information sheet).

Additional repairs you are responsible for if you succeed or exchange into a Council property are repairs to fittings that were **not** fitted by the Council. For example bathrooms, kitchens, patio doors, non standard light fittings etc.

Accidental damage - the Council will not repair any item which becomes defective as a result of neglect and misuse or accidental damage by any member of the household or your visitors. This includes the cost of gaining entry and replacing locks should you lose your keys, cause damage to fixtures or fittings like doors or windows. The tenant can ask the Council to carry out the work but it will be at their own expense.

Note: If you ask the Council to carry out the repair you must pay in advance. However, in certain circumstances where paying in advance may not be possible, for example, you are unable to leave the property as it is insecure, there is a severe water leak or if work carried out which is found to be your responsibility. At the Council's discretion, a Recoverable Repair Account can be set up for you to pay back the money by instalments.

If your home has been broken into and the police are bringing charges you **may** be charged for the cost of any damage done to the Council property. If the police are forced to gain entry to the premises it is your responsibility to reclaim any costs for repairs. If the police have acted on incorrect / false information you should contact the police to carry out the necessary repairs not the Council.

Interior of your home – you are responsible for keeping it in a reasonable condition. Any items damaged or allowed to deteriorate through neglect or carelessness by you, or any member of your household, or any visitors to your home, will be your responsibility to remedy.

In the event of you failing to carry out your repair responsibility the Council, after giving reasonable notice, may undertake the necessary work and charge you for any cost incurred.

As your landlord the Council is responsible for certain repairs - following defects caused by fair wear and tear - these are contained in your tenancy agreement.

Gas Maintenance - all servicing of gas appliances including emergency and responsive repairs is carried out by the Council.

Any appliances which are the tenant's own, which the Council checks, and are not safe, will be condemned (i.e. you can no longer use). It is then your responsibility to renew/replace/repair that particular appliance. It is not the Council's responsibility.

Glazing - will only be replaced when you can **prove** that the damage was caused by circumstances of a criminal nature. (As part of the proof you will be asked to provide the Council with an Occurrence Number.) The information can be provided to the Housing Enquiries Team.

We will make safe and secure when danger exists or where security of the property is at risk. However, if caused accidentally/intentionally you may be charged.

The Council may repair, at your expense any damage caused by you, or that of a person you have invited onto the premises.

Materials, goods and workmanship – the Council will make good any structure and/or finishings disturbed when carrying out a repair for which they are responsible. They will make good any structure and/or any finishings whether or not they are in an existing defective condition when an item is removed and replaced and is the responsibility of the Council.

Programmed Repairs are repair work that is planned and carried out to keep items in good order or to replace items that have broken down. From time to time, and in order to maximise the resources available to the Council, certain types of repairs may be scheduled to be undertaken as part of a Planned Programme. Examples of this work may include:

Internal Repairs - Rewiring
 Kitchens (such as renewal of kitchen units and worktops)
 Bathrooms

External Repairs - Fencing and Railings (renewal of paths and fencing)
 Walls and Gates
 Line Posts
 Concrete Paths and Drives

When you report such repairs you will be told if the work falls into this category. A repair receipt will be posted to you giving a target completion date for the job.

The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) provides a common target standard for the condition of all social housing in Wales. The Council is committed to improving its Housing Stock, these schemes include new kitchens and bathrooms and Secure by Design external doors and are already well underway.

Helpful Tips to Protect your Property

Frost Precautions - serious damage can be done to pipes, cisterns, sinks and basins by expansion of water when it freezes in cold weather. Sometimes you can only see the results when the thaw comes and water leaks through the pipes or appliances.

At the start of a cold spell take these precautions:

- Keep your home as warm as you can (if you are an older person you can get help with keeping your home warm with Winter Fuel Payments).
- Know where to find the main water stopcock, and know how to turn it off (if it is not working properly report it so that repairs can be carried out).

If you are leaving your home empty for more than a week, when the weather might turn cold and there is a danger of hard frost, take these further precautions:

- Draw off all the water from the system by turning off the stop-valve and then turning on all the taps until the water stops running (but don't leave while they are still running just in case the waste pipes are frozen and the water will not run away – leave the taps open.).

N.B. Check the immersion heater and boiler are OFF before drawing off water.

Flush the WC cistern to empty it and put salt in the lavatory pan to stop the water freezing.

When you come back:

- Turn the stop-valve on again and make sure there is an adequate flow of water from all of your taps before turning them off. This is to check that there is no airlock in any of the pipes.
- If, having switched on your central heating for a reasonable period, you find that the radiators are not getting hot, turn the system off and notify the Repair Reporting Line.

Find out where the following are situated and how to turn them on and off:

- Mains water stopcock.
- Mains gas supply stop valve.
- Electrical main fuse box.
- Electrical immersion heater switch for hot water.

Know how to operate the controls of your heating system.

If you cannot find or are unable to operate any of the above, or you think any of the appliances are faulty, please contact the Repair Reporting Line.

If you have a burst pipe you should:

- Switch off your central heating system and/or immersion heater if you have one.
- Turn off the main water stopcock (usually located in the kitchen under the sink).
- Turn on all the taps to drain the water as quickly as possible from the system to stop it flooding your home.
- Find out where the water is coming from, if you can.
- Notify the Repair Reporting Line.
- If water is seeping into electrical switches or ceiling lights, turn off the electric supply at the consumer unit.

Do your best to make a temporary repair until a plumber can reach you – the chances are that if you have a burst pipe, so will many other people and they cannot get to everyone at once. If the burst is from a pulled joint, try to put the pipe back into the joint and tie tightly with a piece of rag. If the pipe is split or has a hole, try to find a piece of Plasticine, soft soap or other similar substance, and bind this onto the burst with a rag, bandage or tape. Place a container underneath to catch any leaks.

You may then turn the water on again for your needs, making sure that you turn it off if your temporary repair is not satisfactory. Always turn it off again at night or if you are going out. If the water has been leaking through an electric light ceiling rose or switch **do not switch on** but inform the Repair Reporting Line at once.

Dampness in buildings has several causes. These may include water entering the building due to defective gutters, or rising damp due to the bridging, or failure of the damp proof course. The commonest cause of damp that we are asked to investigate is caused by condensation.

Condensation is caused when moist air reaches a cold surface and deposits its water on that surface. Air can become heavy with water vapour from cooking, washing, hot baths and from drying clothes. It shows up in the form of black mould growth particularly near windows or in areas where air cannot circulate such as behind cupboards in kitchens and bathrooms.

To limit condensation you should:

- Try to reduce the amount of water in the air by drying clothes outside if possible. If they have to be aired indoors – keep a window open and the door closed.
- As far as possible keep lids on saucepans and turn the heat down when they are boiling.
- After having a bath or shower keep the bathroom door closed and the window open so that the steam can escape directly without getting into other rooms. If you have an internal bathroom, ensure that the extractor fan runs for at least 20 minutes after you switch the light off.
- Try to make sure that there is sufficient heat in your rooms so that there is no cold surface in the path of water vapour. Also, make sure that there is some ventilation in each room – nobody likes draughts, but ventilation is essential.
- You must not use paraffin and liquid gas stoves as they give off water which saturates your home and your belongings as they burn.
- Try to provide background heat and an even temperature throughout your home. This is more economical than starting from cold each time.
- If you have an airbrick or vent in the wall or window, do not block it up or you will stop the moisture getting out and prevent essential ventilation.

If you experience continuing problems Repair Officers can carry out a check on the cause of dampness and give further advice.

Insurance, Safety and Security

Insurance - If a pipe or water tank bursts or leaks because of frost damage, or if your washing machine overflows, the Council is not responsible for any damage caused to your own or other person's belongings. You must make your own insurance arrangements to cover these risks.

Some insurance policies only cover fire damage – make sure you get cover for floods, frost damage and other damage such as broken windows.

It is your responsibility to insure the contents of your home. The Council does operate its own insurance scheme; contact your Housing Enquiries for more details.

Safety in your Home - most of the accidents which occur in the home can be avoided if you follow simple rules.

Electricity

- Switch off appliances if not in use.
- Make sure all plugs are wired correctly and safely with no exposed cables.
- Inspect leads regularly – never use appliances with frayed or damaged leads and never cover leads with carpets or rugs.
- Always unplug televisions and equipment before going to bed.
- Do not overload socket outlets by using multiple plug adaptors.

Gas

If you smell gas:

- Extinguish cigarettes.
- Never use a match or naked flame.
- Do not operate electrical switches.
- Open doors and windows to ventilate the area.
- Check gas appliances to see if a gas tap has been left on or a pilot light has blown out.
- Vacate the room containing the gas appliance and close connecting doors.

If you still think there is a gas leak, turn off the gas supply at the meter and **call Transco on 0800 111999**. Leave the property and do not re-enter or allow anyone else to do so until advised it is safe to do so.

Warnings

You may be placing yourself at risk if you install a ceiling fan especially if you have a gas appliance in the same room. The fan can induce spillage from the appliance and this is poisonous.

Large cooking ranges use a considerable amount of gas. This, in turn, produces a large amount of products of combustion. Please ensure you check with the manufacturer before installing a cooking range in your kitchen. Additional ventilation may be necessary. Without ventilation a cooking range could be harmful.

Solid fuel should only be acquired from a member of the Approved Coal Merchant Scheme. Look out for the distinctive red, blue and white circular logo.

Approved merchants will:

- Supply a wide range of solid fuels ensuring you are always able to enjoy the benefits of real fire heating.
- Correctly describe, prepare and deliver your chosen fuel.
- Give advice on the correct type of fuel for your appliance.
- Keep you informed of current prices and any special discounts or promotions available.

On the rare occasions when things go wrong, your merchants will:

- Investigate promptly and sympathetically any complaint on product or service.
- Be insured against Public and Product Liability risks.

Safety Advice

DO

- Remember to check your throatplate is clear of deposits 24 hours after chimney sweeping.
- Remove and clean the throatplate each month if you have a room heater or stove.
- Use the correct fuel as recommended by your Approved Coal Merchant and the appliance manufacturer.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for operating, maintaining and cleaning your appliance.
- Co-operate with your landlord for access to service your appliance – **this is important.**

DO NOT

- Smother the firebed entirely when refuelling, otherwise this may lead to combustion problems.
- Seal off room ventilators.
- Leave an open fire unattended without a fireguard.

These tips will help to increase the efficiency of your appliance.

If you do smell fumes or you feel unusually faint / suffer headaches:

- Do not stay in the room any longer than necessary.
- Open all doors and windows.
- Let the fire burn out.
- Contact the Repair Reporting Line.

Carbon Monoxide is an odourless and tasteless gas that can kill and maim without warning in just a couple of hours.

Heating and cooking appliances fuelled by coal, smokeless fuels, wood and oil can be just as likely as gas appliances to cause carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning if they are poorly installed, faulty or used incorrectly. CO poisoning is most likely caused by inadequate ventilation or a lack of the correct maintenance of appliances, flues and chimneys. Some incidents are also due to incorrect installation and deterioration of the chimney. Poisonous CO gas is produced when fuel does not burn properly.

You can die from carbon monoxide poisoning or your health can be permanently damaged. CO gas is odourless and tasteless, so you will not be aware that it is present. You are particularly vulnerable when you are asleep and the elderly and young are particularly at risk.

The symptoms of CO poisoning can be very much like flu, they include tiredness, drowsiness, headaches, dizziness, chest pains and nausea. Faces can also take on a cherry red appearance.

If you believe that you may have suffered CO poisoning; then move outdoors immediately and inhale pure oxygen if available.

Medical advice should always be sought.

Make sure you are not at risk from CO poisoning:

DO

- Ensure your Gas and solid fuel appliances are installed, regularly checked and maintained for safety only by a competent qualified Gas Safety engineer. If your appliances have not been checked for over one year or you feel that it is not operating correctly, please call the Repair Reporting Line on 02920 369379 immediately.
- If you live in a flat and are buying a gas cooker make sure it is fitted with Flame Supervision Devices (FSD). This device cuts off the gas supply if the flame goes out.
- Empty ash from a solid fuel appliance regularly, as the fire may not burn properly and this could also damage the appliance.
- Have your chimney swept regularly (at least once a year) even if you burn smokeless fuel. Have your chimney swept after any prolonged period when the appliance has not been in use.
- Clean the appliance flueways and have flue pipes connecting appliances to chimneys swept regularly in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations.
- Ensure your gas installation is checked and appliances are serviced each year.

DO NOT

- Use the wrong fuel for your appliance.
- Allow non-competent people (i.e. not Gas Safety registered) to install, work on or maintain your gas appliances.
- Block or obstruct wall and window ventilation grilles or airbricks which provide fixed air paths.
- Block or obstruct flue outlets or chimneys.
- Cover an appliance or block the hot air outlets.
- Use your appliance if you think that it is not working properly **particularly if you are suffering from any of the symptoms mentioned previously**. Signs to look out for include fumes or smoke in the room, slower than usual burning, evidence of sooting, difficulty in lighting and staining around the appliance casing.

Fire

- Always keep matches away from children.
- Use a guard in front of an open fire.
- Never leave a chip pan unattended – turn off the heat if you have to leave the kitchen.
- Do not hang clothes over or around fires, heaters or cookers.
- Do not prop open fire doors or interfere with their closing mechanisms.
- Close all doors at night.
- Empty ashtrays regularly ensuring cigarettes have been fully extinguished.
- Test your smoke detectors regularly to ensure they are operating correctly.
- Never sleep in your living room leaving the fire on.

If a chip pan catches fire – turn off the heat and cover the pan with a lid or damp cloth to smother the flames. **Never try to carry the pan or throw water over it.**

If someone's clothing catches fire – lay the person on the floor, roll them up in a rug or curtain to put out the flames and call an ambulance.

If your home catches fire:

- Close the door of the room containing the fire.
- Make sure everyone leaves the building.
- Call the Fire Service by dialling 999.
- Contact Housing Enquiries at the earliest opportunity.

Do not re-enter the building until you are advised to do so by the Fire Officer.

Falls - the majority of deaths from accidents in the home are the result of falls. You can guard against this type of accident by following these simple rules:

- Do not polish the floor under rugs and carpets.
- Make sure stairs and landings are well lit and kept clear.
- Put guards at the top of the stairs if you have young children.
- Ensure upper floor windows are kept locked.
- Wipe up any liquid spills immediately.
- Repair or cover any holes in your floor coverings to avoid tripping.
- Make sure your stair carpet is securely fitted.

Security - if you leave the house:

- Close all windows and lock them.
- Lock both front and rear doors.
- Never leave your door key under the mat or in your letterbox. Thieves always look in these places.
- Always cancel newspapers and milk deliveries when you go away.
- Never leave a note on the door stating that you are away.

Keys - We do not keep spare keys to your home. If you lose your keys and we have to force entry to your home, you will be charged for the repair work involved. Whenever possible, ensure a relative or neighbour holds a spare set of keys for you. Your own contents insurance may cover this (the Council operates an Insurance Scheme – see separate information sheet).

Improvements - As a secure tenant you have the right to carry out improvements to your home but you must not make any improvement without the Council's written consent. You should first establish whether there is a need for Planning Permission or Building Regulation approval and this should be obtained before starting the works.

Before considering a proposal of alteration you must send the following details in writing to your Tenancy Officer for approval by a Senior Manager:

- Details of the alteration.
- Where structural alterations are proposed; plans and specifications defining the work.
- Where applicable, Planning and Building Regulations approval.
- Sufficient information to assess the quality of the materials to be used, the likely disruption which will be expected whilst the work is being undertaken, and the possible impact on surrounding properties.

When considering the application the following factors will be assessed by the Council:

- That the improvement does not make your home or any other adjacent property unsafe.
- The improvement would not cause the Council any additional costs in the future.
- The improvement would not result in claims from third parties due to disturbance.
- That the work will be carried out to an acceptable standard and by an appropriately qualified builder.
- That you have obtained the necessary Planning Permission and/or Building Regulation approval.
- That the works do not spoil the appearance of the property and compliment the layout and finishes of similar properties on the same site.
- That the alterations will not make the property difficult to let at a later date.
- That where necessary proper controls are put in place to reduce exposure to asbestos should it be contained within the fabric of the building

If approval is given you must let the Council know when you start the work so that an inspection can be undertaken as the work proceeds if this is considered necessary. In all cases a formal inspection will be carried out to ensure that the work undertaken meets the agreed standard of work that has been approved.

You might be eligible to receive compensation for certain authorised improvements when your tenancy ends.

If you carry out improvements to your property without the permission of the Council, the Council may return the premises to its original condition and charge you for the cost of the work.

NOTE

Introductory and demoted tenants do not have the right to compensation if the tenancy is terminated during the introductory or demotion period. However, the Council may allow you to carry out improvements subject to the same conditions outlined above.