



Homes for Haringey

Repairs handbook for residents

Everything you need to know about repairs



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www.homesforharingey.org/repairs

Introduction

Welcome to your repairs handbook which includes everything you need to know about Homes for Haringey's Repairs Service. This handbook gives you useful information about:

- The types of repairs we will carry out for you
- How to report a repair and make a repair appointment
- How long your repair should take and the standard of service you can expect from us
- The annual maintenance programme to ensure your safety
- Your responsibilities for maintaining your council home
- Help to diagnose your repair plus handy hints

This handbook is for residents who have an introductory or secure council tenancy.

Contact us about a repair

Sign up to your free online account and report your repair at: **www.homesforharingey.org/seemydata**

Tel: **020 8489 5611**

Our Repairs Service

Homes for Haringey, on behalf of Haringey Council, offers a comprehensive repairs service to ensure your council home is well maintained.

The service is divided into three parts:

- Reactive repairs completed as and when they are needed. These are sometimes called 'responsive repairs' or 'day-to-day' repairs;
- Planned minor repairs which need to be assessed before we can carry them out. This includes joinery which has to be made, or fencing which is best carried out as batches of larger jobs;
- Programmed maintenance works such as the annual gas safety checks, where we schedule the work up to a year in advance;

We are responsible for repairs to:

- The structure and outside parts of your property (such as walls, roofs, windows)
- Water and gas pipes, electrical wiring, heating, drainage, power and light fittings inside and outside your home (we will provide the pipe work for a washing machine but you are responsible for plumbing in the machine)
- Shared (communal) areas in blocks of flats;
- Fences, walls and garden paths giving access to your home
- Outbuilding such as garages and store cupboards

We are not responsible for anything you have had installed yourself.

Reporting a repair

Reporting a repair and making an appointment is simple and you can do it in a number of ways:

Online

You can report a repair online once you have signed up to your free online account at:

www.homesforharingey.org/seemydata

By telephone

Our office hours are Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm, but you can contact our Customer Contact Centre on **020 8489 5611**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week if you have an emergency repair.

All our telephones accept calls using Tynetalk. You can find out more about this service by contacting Action on Hearing Loss on freephone **0800 7311 888** or Freetext **18001 0800 500 888** or visit **www.tynetalk.org**.

Whichever way you contact us, we will want to know enough information to get the right person out to you first time:

- Your name, address and a contact number so we can ring you back
- Whether there are things we need to know about you such as if you're hard of hearing, or you need time to get to the door
- As much as you can tell us about what needs to be done.

Making an appointment

You've told us that the most annoying problem with reporting repairs is not knowing what's happening. So our aim is to offer an appointment every time you contact us. We think that it is more important to offer and keep an appointment than to set ourselves lots of different targets that aren't important to you.

Once we've got all the information, we will agree a date and time that's convenient for you, and we will complete the majority of repairs in a single visit. If our operative needs more time to complete the job, they will call their manager to let them know.

Sometimes we will need to pre-inspect, and more complicated repairs can take several visits. If it's not going to be straightforward we'll let you know.

We have four time slots on weekdays:

- Early morning between 8am and 11am
- Late morning between 10am and 1pm

- Early afternoon between 12pm and 4pm
- Late afternoon between 4pm and 6pm

If one of our contractors is carrying out the repair, they will also offer an appointment, but their appointments may be organised differently.

We'll give you a job number for your reference, so **keep a note of it** in case you need to ring us. If you give us a mobile number, we'll send you a text reminder the day before the appointment. If we only have a landline number, you'll get a recorded voice mail.

Priority needs

We try to run an efficient and fair service, but we also understand that some people need extra help. If you think this applies to you, please tell us when you contact us, and your Tenancy Management Officer will talk to you in more detail about your needs.

Carrying out your repair

Whether it's our own staff or contractors working on our behalf, we all follow a common code of conduct:

- We will do our best to arrive during the appointment time slot agreed. If we're running late or need to reschedule the appointment, we will contact you as soon as we know.
- If we find that a part needs to be ordered, or the repair cannot be completed on the first visit, we will offer you a new appointment before we leave whenever possible. Where it is not possible, we will get back to you within 10 working days to confirm the next steps.
- It's impossible to avoid creating dust, but we will try to keep mess to a minimum, use dust sheets where necessary, and tidy up afterwards.
- All repairs operatives should be wearing uniforms and carrying photo identification.
- Workers will not use your facilities or equipment without asking your permission first.
- We are working in your home and we will respect that. Operatives will not have the radio on, make personal phone calls, eat, drink or smoke in your home.
- We'll be aware of health and safety at all times.
- We won't enter your home unless there is an adult present – either the tenant or someone who is at least 18 years old.

We need your help

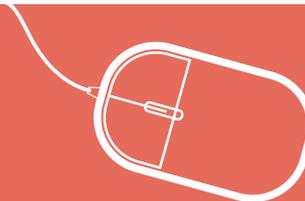
It may be necessary for you to move items that are fragile or could easily be damaged to allow the operative access to the repair.

We may have to ask you to keep family and pets out of the area in which we are working if what we are doing poses a risk.

Unhappy with our service?

If you think that we haven't kept to our appointment timelines as outlined on pages 8-14, tell us on **020 8489 5611**.

If you think we haven't followed our standards, the first thing to do is to tell the operative. If it doesn't resolve the issue, then call us on **020 8489 5611**.



Report a repair online

Remember – you can a report repair online quickly and easily.

Just sign up to your free online account on our website at:
homesforharingey.org/seemydata

How long repairs take

Not all repairs are the same and we need to take care of the most urgent ones first to ensure your safety and to protect the property.

We have four repairs categories:

- Out of hours
- Emergency
- Agreed appointment
- Planned

Regardless of what category your repairs falls into, our aim is to sort the problem out as efficiently as we can and to have satisfied customers.

Out of hours refers to a job which is so urgent that it cannot wait until the next working day. Examples of this type of work include:

- Burst pipes or major water leaks
- No electricity or lighting in the whole property
- No lighting in the communal areas
- Lift breakdown (where there is only one lift)
- Broken or missing man hole cover
- Overflowing drains flooding into a property
- Dangerous structure.

We expect you to carry out some simple checks before you contact us:

- Can you shut off the water supply to stop it flooding the property?
- Have you checked the electricity control panel to see if you can reset the trip switch?
- Do you have credit on your meter/card?
- Is it just your home which is affected, or do your neighbours have a similar problem?

If your neighbours are affected as well, you might need to contact the relevant utility companies:

For power cut emergencies:

UK Power Networks – Tel: 0800 316 3105

From mobiles dial: 0333 323 2105

www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk

If you smell gas or suspect a carbon monoxide emission:

National Grid – Tel: 0800 111 999

www.nationalgrid.co.uk

To report a burst water pipe or leak outside your home:

Thames Water – Tel: 0800 316 9800

www.thameswater.co.uk

If we can do a quick repair, we will. If it's more complicated, we may simply turn off or take the service out of use, and return to complete the work the next working day.

Emergency repairs

Emergency refers to a repair which puts a person or property at risk during the day.

We will attend within **24 hours** of you reporting it, and will attempt to complete the repair on our first visit. This includes:

- Burst pipes or major water leaks
- Leaking waste pipe from a sink or toilet
- Total loss of heating or hot water
- Toilet which cannot be used (where there is only one)
- No electricity or lighting in the property
- No lighting in communal areas
- Flooding drains
- Dangerous structure
- Lift breakdown
- Broken or missing man hole cover
- Broken glazing which presents a hazard.

Agreed appointment

This includes nearly everything else which can be completed in a single visit.

We will offer you an appointment to suit you and which we can keep **within 28 days**. This includes:

- Toilet that will not flush
- Water running from overflows
- Partial loss of electricity supply, or light fittings or sockets not working
- Loose handrail or banister
- Roof leaks
- Partial loss of water supply
- Tiling
- Minor plaster repairs
- Glazing repairs
- Flooring
- Windows and doors, locks which are difficult to operate
- Extractor fans

Planned repairs

Planned repairs are those where we know that the job has to be pre-inspected, in order for larger components to be measured and manufactured, where the job may take several days to complete, or where it is more economical and efficient for the work to be packaged up.

For these repairs, we will inspect within 28 days, and tell you at the inspection when the job will be carried out. Examples include:

- Plastering large areas
- Renewing joinery such as windows
- Fencing.

Other repairs

Repairs for other services have different time scales.

Gas:

The response time for a serious water leak from your central heating system causing a threat to your health or damage to the property is **2 hours** and **24 hours** for any other breakdown.

If the repair cannot be completed or new parts are required to be ordered, the completion time is **5 days** from the date the repair is first reported to the gas contractor.

If a new boiler is required, the time scale is completion within **5 days** of the replacement being authorised by our gas inspector. If you are without heat and/or hot water at any time following a visit by our gas contractors, you should be provided with temporary space and water heating equipment until the work is complete.

Annual gas safety checks:

The Gas Safety Regulations require an annual inspection of all gas installations to check that they are safe. Your landlord has a responsibility to do this, and you have a responsibility to allow the inspection to take place. **It's for your safety!**

The gas contractors will send you up to three letters over a number of weeks with appointments to visit your home. If the first appointment is not convenient, please call the gas contractor directly to rearrange rather than waiting for follow-up reminder letters. After the third reminder letter, we will apply to the court for a warrant to force entry to carry out the check, and we will recharge you for all our costs incurred.

Even if you think you have no gas pipe work in your home, the regulations require us to inspect. This also applies if you do have a gas supply but you don't use it.

Carbon monoxide:

Carbon monoxide (CO) can kill. It is an odourless, colourless gas produced in very small quantities when you use your boiler. Normally it passes through the flue into the external atmosphere but, when the appliance is not working properly, it can feed back into your home.

If you suspect that you may be breathing in CO, you should seek medical help immediately. A simple blood test at your doctor's surgery or hospital can detect the presence of CO in the blood. If we detect CO when testing an appliance, we will be required by law to shut it down, and cannot reconnect it until you produce medical evidence from a doctor.

If you have CO alarms in your home, we will check that they are operating during the annual safety check. But don't wait for our contractor to turn up — get into the habit of testing them regularly.

If the CO alarms are battery operated, you will need to replace the batteries when they run out.

If you smell gas at any time, call 0800 111 999 immediately.

**Open windows to help disperse the gas.
Do not use electrical switch.
Turn off any open flame.
Get out of the property.**

Call 999 in case of a fire or explosion.

Door entry and CCTV:

The response time for a problem in your home is **24 hours**.

The response time for a defect affecting the block is **4 hours**.

If the contractor cannot fix the problem on the first visit, they have up to 5 days to obtain parts and fit them. Sometimes finding spare parts for older systems can take us longer. We regret any delays but will always do our best to get things working while keeping any inconvenience to a minimum.

Satellite dishes / TV aerials:

The response time for a breakdown affecting a block is **4 hours**. In case of loss of service to a single home, the response time is **24 hours**

Lifts:

The response time to a breakdown is **4 hours**.

Most times we get the lift working again on the first visit. If the repair requires additional work, our contractors have up to **7 days** to complete the repair unless major components require replacement.

The response time for lift trappings is **1 hour**.

Use the intercom to speak to someone who can help you or press the alarm button. You can call us on 020 8489 5611.

The Fire Brigade will only attend if you have a serious medical condition which puts you at an immediate risk.

Your responsibilities

As a tenant, you are expected to keep your property clean, tidy and in good condition. There are also some repairs which are always your responsibility:

- Replacing locks and keys if you lose your keys
- Repairing, adjusting, or replacing inside doors, locks, handles, linings, doorstops and architraves
- Maintaining kitchen units (including the sink unit and taps)
- Repairing and renewing floor coverings
- Replacing light bulbs, fluorescent light tubes and fuses
- Replacing plugs and chains on baths, basins and sinks
- Replacing fixtures and fittings such as curtain rails, hooks and shelves

- Cleaning windows (except in shared areas) and maintaining your private garden (not shared gardens) including grass, shrubs, trees, all hardstandings, paths, patios except those that lead up to the front and back entrance doors.

There are some repairs we will only carry out if the repair is needed due to fair wear and tear or because of damage caused by a fault with a structure or service. We will:

- Repair or replace kitchen units (including sink units and taps)
- Repair or replace floor tiles (in kitchens, bathrooms and toilets only)
- Repair or replace baths, basins, pans and cisterns (including bath panels and toilet seats)
- Repair or replace paths and paving (only leading to front and back doors).

Rechargeable repairs

If you ask us to carry out a repair that is your responsibility, our Customer Services advisors will ask you how the damage occurred. We will not carry out the work unless there is a good reason for it.

If we consider that you are responsible for the damage, we will tell you how much the repair will cost, and you will be asked to pay for the repair before the work is done.

If we attend a repair and find that you, your family or visitors have caused any damage, we will explain that you will be recharged for the work; if you agree with the charge, we will carry on and complete the work.

You can hire a qualified contractor to do the work or you can do it yourself.

You can also pay in advance for us to do the works. To pay in advance and to book an appointment, contact our Customer Services. You can pay by debit or credit card. Unfortunately, we are unable to accept cash.

If the repair is not paid for, we will seek a court order to ensure the cost of the repair and our administrative costs can be recovered.

Handy hints

Aids and adaptations

If you have a disability and find some day to day tasks difficult, your home may need adapting to suit your needs. You can request an assessment by an Occupational Therapist to determine whether you need simple aids such as grab rails, lever taps or more specialist equipment such as stair lifts or level access showers. Find out more and apply at **www.homesforharingey.org/adaptations** or at **www.haringey.gov.uk** (search for 'adaptations').

Asbestos

Asbestos is present in many of our properties, but it is only a risk when it is damaged or moved without being made safe first.

We maintain a register of the location, type and risk of materials containing asbestos where they are known to exist. We follow guidance from the Health and Safety Executive when to remove asbestos and when to leave it undisturbed. Find out more at **www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos**.

If you intend to carry out work in your home and think the material you might be drilling or cutting could be asbestos, ask us to check it out first.

Condensation

Condensation accounts for 90% of our pre-inspections in the colder months as residents report dampness in their home. It is caused by excess moisture in the air, which reverts to water when it comes into contact with a colder surface.

Here are a few things you can do to avoid condensation:

- Ensure your home is well ventilated by keeping windows and internal doors open a few inches.
- Try to leave a space between the back of furniture and walls to allow the air to circulate.
- Use the bathroom extractor fan when you're having a bath or shower, and the kitchen fan when cooking; cover pans and don't leave kettles boiling unnecessarily.
- Try to keep your home at an even temperature rather than alternating from cold to very warm and back again.
- If you are drying washing inside, open the windows to allow more ventilation, and never dry wet washing on radiators.

If you think condensation may be a problem, ask for one of our advice packs by emailing our Customer Services team at **customerservices@homesforharingey.org**.

Fire safety

Get into the habit of checking any smoke alarms or detectors on a regular basis, and replacing any batteries when needed.

- Never leave lit candles unattended or near curtains. Tea lights should sit in a dish with water.
- Keep portable heaters away from clothing, bedding curtains or furniture.
- Regularly check electrical equipment such as electric blankets.
- Keep fire doors closed at night, and don't remove self closing devices from doors.
- Keep hallways free from obstruction.

Heating

The ideal temperature in your home will be between 18° and 21°. Set the wall thermostat (if there is one) within this range, and it will control the temperature by turning the heating on and off. The higher the temperature, the more fuel you will use, and the higher your bill. If it's cold, it is most efficient to keep our heating on low all the time.

Alterations and improvements

If you are planning any changes or improvements to your home, you should contact us first to get written permission. For more information go to www.homesforharingey.org/

Please submit your request to make alterations to your property on a tenant alteration and improvement form. This is available from our Customer Service Centre on **020 8489 5611**. You can also email us at **customerservices@homesforharingey.org**.

Alterations and improvements include:

- Fitting laminated flooring
- Putting up an aerial or satellite dish
- Installing new kitchen or bathroom units
- Fitting a conservatory or extension
- Electrical improvements such as fitting a new shower, low voltage lighting or extra sockets
- Installing a gas or electric fire.

Some changes will also need planning permission and/or building control approval. Find out more on Haringey Council's website at: **www.haringey.gov.uk/planning**

If you would like any advice, please contact us on **020 8489 5611**.

If you are installing a gas cooker or a gas fire, you must ensure that the contractor you use is GAS SAFE registered. You can check this by calling **0800 408 5500** or go online at: **www.gassaferegister.co.uk**

If you are making changes to the electrics, you must ensure that the contractor you use is NICEIC registered. Visit **www.niceic.com** for further details.

Insurance

We strongly encourage you to take out contents insurance against damage to your possessions due to unforeseen events such as burst pipes, leaks, fire or theft.

Residents sometimes think that they will be able to make a claim against Homes for Haringey or their neighbours, but in order for that to succeed, they would have to be able to show that the damage was the result of negligence. Its far better to have your own insurance cover, and let the insurers sort out who is responsible.

We offer a contents insurance scheme for council tenants and leaseholders. Find out more at **www.homesforharingey.org/homeinsurance**. For a copy of our contents insurance booklet email the Council's Insurance Department at: **insurance@haringey.gov.uk**

Leaks

Residents tell us that leaks are one of the most common and most annoying problems they experience – and they take too long to sort out.

We understand how stressful this is, so now we are being much firmer on this.

Tell us where the leak is coming from and how bad it is, and we'll agree a time to come round and fix it. If necessary, we will force entry, and recharge the person causing the problem for repairing the leak and the damage to the door.

Stopcocks

Where's yours? You would be surprised how many people don't know ... and then when there's a problem, there's a panic to try and find it.

How do you find it? Trace the pipe work back from the cold water tap in the kitchen until you find it. It's a good idea to turn it from time to time to stop it seizing up, but don't leave it fully open.

Your compliments, complaints and suggestions

We value your feedback about our Repairs Service. When we complete a repair, we will send you a repairs satisfaction survey. Please make sure you complete the survey and return it to us to the freepost address provided with the survey.

We may contact you to arrange to inspect recently completed repairs. We also carry out telephone surveys to ask you what you think of our Repairs Service and what improvements you'd like to see.

Get involved

We also have a range of resident involvement opportunities. You might like to join one of our resident panels or take part in more regular customer feedback activities. To find out more, contact our Resident Engagement team on **020 8589 5611** or email them at: **resident.involvement@homesforharingey.org**

Making a compliment or complaint

Happy with the way one of our officers has dealt with your repair? Not happy with our service?

You can complete our online feedback form at **www.homesforharingey.org/feedback** or call our Feedback team on **020 8589 5611**.

If you would like a copy of this booklet in another language or you would like it in any of the following formats please complete this form and send to the Freepost address below.

- In large print
 On audio tape
 In Braille
- In another language, please state:



Name:

Tel:

Address:

Email:

Please return to: Freepost RLXS-XZGT-UGRJ, Haringey Council,
Translation and Interpretation Services, 8th Floor, River Park House, 225 High Road, London N22 8HQ

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020 8489 5611
www.homesforharingey.org
Follow us on Twitter: @homes4haringey

Emergency contacts

FIRE

In the event of a fire call **999**

GAS

If you smell gas call **0800 111 999**

LOSS WATER PIPE or LOSS OF WATER SUPPLY

Call Thames Water on **0800 316 9800**

ELECTRICITY

If there is a lack of supply call **0800 028 0247**



Homes for Haringey