

# Repairs and Services

## 1. Repairs – Our responsibilities

We are responsible for maintaining:

- The structure and outside of your home.
- Drains, gutters and external pipe work.
- The installations for water, gas and electricity supply, sanitary ware and drainage.
- The installations for water heating, central heating and any other fixed heating equipment we have supplied.

Many repairs will be done as and when they are needed. Some works, such as external painting will be done at regular intervals, generally every five years. We may also do other external repairs at the same time since this is often the most cost-effective way to organise such work.

## Reporting Repairs

You can report repairs by:

- Telephoning the Repairs Team on 01483 444222.
- Calling in at our offices.
- Letter.
- Via our Website [www.guildford.gov.uk](http://www.guildford.gov.uk)
- E-mail to [repairs@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:repairs@guildford.gov.uk)

When you report a repair, please:

- Give as much detail as possible about the nature of the problem. See pages 4, 5, 6 and 7.
- Tell us when you will be at home - for example, every afternoon, or, any day but Wednesday.

Remember – your repairs are paid for out of rents. We want to make the most effective use of the rent you pay. To help us do this, please be sure to be at home when you say you will be, so that our workmen do not have a wasted journey. We will make every effort to follow your advice about when you will be at home.

The majority of work can be done by appointment. We are unable to offer precise times, but can offer appointments for specific days on a 'morning' 'mid day' or 'afternoon' basis.

To ensure that this system operates effectively, please ensure you keep any appointment made.

## Emergency repairs

During Office hours, please report emergency repairs on 01483 444222.

Outside Office hours, telephone 01483 532122. Your call will be automatically routed to the emergency standby officer.

The emergency repair service is only intended for repairs that, if not attended to quickly, could lead to

personal injury, damage to the property or to a health hazard. If the repair required is not listed below, please wait until the next working day before reporting it. Abuse of the system may lead to genuine emergencies not being dealt with quickly and you could be charged with the cost of the call out.

The following are regarded as emergency repairs:

- Blocked toilet (if there is only one toilet in the property).
- Blocked drains.
- Dangerous structures.
- Total failure of electrical supply or failure of the cooker point.
- Water supply bursts but not minor leaks.
- External doors and windows, if a security risk.

### Gas Leaks

Gas Leaks should be reported to:

National Grid: 0800 111 999 or 0800 371 787 (for Minicom users)

### When will my repair be done?

All repairs are given a priority at the time of ordering. Examples are set out below to show how we organise repairs.

Priority	Definition	Example of Work
<b>Emergency</b> Attend site within 4 hours	Immediate serious risk to health, safety or welfare of residents or members of the public or likely to cause extensive damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsafe wall.</li> <li>• Blocked drains.</li> <li>• Serious flooding.</li> </ul>
<b>Next Day</b> Complete by end of next working day	Some risk to health, safety or welfare of residents or members of the public or likely to cause some damage.	Total loss of heating. Insecure first floor window. Only toilet not flushing.
<b>Urgent</b> Complete within 7 working days	Slight risk to health, safety and welfare of residents or members of the public or significant inconvenience	Leak to sink, basin or bath. Water wastage Loose roof tiles not over public footpath.
<b>Normal</b> Complete within 30 days	Routine repairs that do not significantly affect the use of your home. Most external repairs.	Renew bath or wash hand basin. Repair kitchen unit. Repair gutters.

### Access to your home

Repairs will normally be done between 8.30am and 4pm., Monday to Friday.

Normally we will only come into your home by agreement. However, under the terms of your tenancy we can require you to give us access to your home without notice if there is an emergency, or at 24 hours notice otherwise. We will only insist that you give us access if we consider it essential for safety reasons (for example, for gas servicing) or to ensure that your home (or a neighbouring property) remains in good condition.

If you do not give us access to your home for repairs you have requested, we will assume you no longer want them done.

## **Gas equipment**

If you have gas central heating we must service it once a year. We will also service any fixed gas fires we have provided. This is a legal obligation on us as your landlord. It is very important for safety reasons that you cooperate with us and give our contractors access to your home for this work. If the service is not carried out on time, please contact the Repairs Team on 01483 444222.

If you have a gas cooker, you must ensure it is connected or disconnected only by a person who holds 'GAS SAFE' registration. This is a legal safety requirement.

## **If the work is not done in the time stated.**

Sometimes your repair will be delayed because specialist advice is required. If this happens we will let you know, normally by letter.

We may decide that certain repairs should be included in a future planned maintenance programme. If this happens we will let you know, normally by letter.

If workmen call and you are not at home, a card will be left asking you to contact the Repairs Section to make alternative arrangements.

If the time for the repair to be done has passed, and you have heard nothing, please contact the Repairs Team to ask what is happening.

If the repair is still not carried out and you are not satisfied with the explanations given, you may write to the Head of Neighbourhood and Housing Management Services who will ensure that the matter is investigated.

You may alternatively arrange certain types of repair to be carried out yourself under the "Right to Repair" scheme provided the repair in question meets the criteria for the scheme. It is essential that you seek advice on this from the Repairs Team before having any work carried out. A leaflet on the "Right to Repair" is available from the Repairs section.

## **Repairs reporting guide**

When you report a repair, we need to know as much as possible about the problem. The table below is a guide to the information we need. If you cannot answer all the questions, do not delay reporting the repair.

<b>Please tell us</b>	<b>Advice</b>
<p><b>Doors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which door is the problem?</li> <li>• What is wrong with it?</li> <li>• If it is your front or back door, is your home secure?</li> </ul>	<p>If the damage has been caused by vandalism, you must report it to the Police and tell us the Police Crime Reference Number. Otherwise you may be required to pay the cost of repairs.</p> <p>If you have had a new carpet fitted and the door catches on it, you are responsible for having the door adjusted.</p>
<p><b>Locks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which door is involved?</li> <li>• What type of lock it is?</li> <li>• What is wrong?</li> </ul>	<p>If the damage has been caused by vandalism, you must report it to the Police and tell us the Police Crime Reference Number. Otherwise you will be required to pay the cost of repairs.</p> <p>You are responsible for replacing lost keys.</p> <p>If you lock yourself out and we have to gain entry for you, you will have to pay for all work involved.</p> <p>You are responsible for replacing internal door locks and handles.</p>
<p><b>Drains</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the problem a leak, a blockage or a smell? Which drain is blocked?</li> <li>• If there is a leak, where is it?</li> </ul>	<p>Unless the drain is defective, you will be required to pay for the cost of clearing the drain.</p> <p>If the drain to more than one property is blocked the blockage is probably in the sewer. This is the responsibility of Thames Water who can be contacted on 08459 200 800</p>
<p><b>Gutters and down pipes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the problem at the back, front or side? Is the problem the gutter or a down pipe?</li> <li>• Is the gutter blocked? Broken? Has a joint failed?</li> <li>• If there is an overflow, where is it from? A toilet cistern? The main water tank?</li> </ul>	<p>Rainwater running from a gutter and soaking brickwork can cause damp inside your home.</p> <p>Please let us know if this is a problem.</p>
<p><b>Heating and hot water</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What type of heating is it? Gas? Electric? If it is a gas system, where is the boiler?</li> <li>• Is the whole system failed, or just part of it? If just part of it, which room is affected?</li> <li>• If there is a water leak, e.g., from a radiator, where is it?</li> </ul>	<p>Remember:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Before reporting heating as failed, please check that it has not been turned off by mistake and that all controls are set correctly.</li> <li>2. If Gas central heating stops, and the room is warm, it may be that the heating has warmed the room up to the temperature set on the wall thermostat.</li> <li>3. If you have a prepayment meter, ensure your credit has not run out.</li> </ol>

Please tell us	Advice
<p><b>Kitchen fittings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it a wall unit? A floor unit? Under the sink? What is the problem?</li> <li>• What part of the unit is affected?</li> </ul>	<p>If we have to replace kitchen units, work surfaces or tiles we cannot guarantee to match existing.</p>
<p><b>Electrical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the problem? E.g. no power, faulty switch or lamp holder?</li> <li>• Is it one room, or your whole home?</li> <li>• Is there a safety hazard such as exposed wires?</li> </ul>	<p>You are responsible for maintaining your own electrical appliances. This includes replacing light bulbs and fuses in plugs. In some cases a fault in your own appliance could cause a main fuse to fail, or a mini-circuit breaker to cut out.</p> <p>Please see section 4 for advice on resetting a mini-circuit breaker.</p> <p>If there is a total power failure, is the cause a power cut affecting your street?</p>
<p><b>Bathroom fittings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is broken or damaged - the bath panel? The bath itself? Tiles?</li> <li>• If it is a panel, is it at the side or the end? What is it made of?</li> <li>• If tiles, what size are they, what colour?</li> </ul>	<p>We cannot always match the original materials.</p> <p>You are responsible for replacing plugs and chains.</p>
<p><b>Roofs and chimneys</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it a sloping or flat roof?</li> <li>• What is the problem? Is the roof leaking? Are there missing tiles?</li> <li>• Where is the problem?</li> </ul>	<p>If you use coal or log fires, you must have the relevant chimney swept regularly.</p>

Please tell us	Advice
<p><b>Pipes and water supply</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the problem? Water leaking? No water? Noisy pipes?</li> <li>• Where is the problem?</li> <li>• Is the problem in the hot or cold water supply?</li> </ul>	<p>If there is no water supply, check if the local Water Company has cut off the supply because it is doing work in the area before reporting a repair.</p> <p>You should know where your main stopcock is so that you can turn off the water in the case of an emergency.</p>
<p><b>Taps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which room is the tap in? Bathroom? Kitchen?</li> <li>• Where is the tap? Bath, basin, sink?</li> <li>• Hot or cold water? What is wrong with it?</li> <li>• Can the tap be turned off?</li> </ul>	<p>You are responsible for replacing tap washers.</p>
<p><b>Toilets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have more than one toilet in your home, which toilet is it?</li> <li>• Where is the problem? The toilet pan? The cistern? The water pipes? The link to the drain?</li> <li>• What is the problem? A leaking pipe? The toilet won't flush? The toilet or cistern cracked?</li> </ul>	<p>If the toilet is blocked you will have to pay the cost of unblocking it, unless there is a fault in the drainage from it.</p> <p>You are responsible for replacing broken toilet seats.</p>
<p><b>Windows</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which window is involved?</li> <li>• What is the problem? Is the window damaged? Sticking? Loose?</li> <li>• What is the window made of? Is it single or double-glazed?</li> <li>• If a window has been broken, is your home secure?</li> </ul>	<p>If window has been damaged by vandalism, you must report it to the Police and tell us the Police Crime Reference Number. Otherwise you will be required to pay the cost of repairs.</p> <p>Where appropriate, for speed, we may board over a broken</p>

## 2. Repairs – Your responsibilities

You are responsible for taking normal care of your home to ensure nothing is damaged. You also have other responsibilities that are written into the terms of your tenancy.

Specifically, you are responsible for:

- Any damage to the property that is not caused by ‘fair wear and tear.’
- Redecorating the inside of your home.
- Your fences and gates, if you have a garden that is exclusively yours.
- Your own domestic equipment, such as fridges and cookers.

If we have to do work to your home that is not caused by ‘fair wear and tear’ we will ask you to pay for the work to be done. It is not fair to other tenants to ask them to pay for such work out of the rent they pay.

We give below examples of items we will take responsibility for and items you will be required to pay for:

<b>Example</b>	<b>We pay for work</b>	<b>You pay for work</b>
Clear blocked drains.	Where a drain is faulty – e.g. it has collapsed.	If the drain has been blocked by misuse. By this we mean something has been put in the drain by a member of your household or a visitor that should not have been put there.
Electrical wiring, sockets and light fittings.	When faulty.	If damaged by residents or visitors - example a nail driven into a cable, or a broken power point.
Fences and gates.	If communal gardens.	For your own garden.
Lost keys (including stolen keys)	N/A	This is not fair wear and tear.
Pipe work leaking	If pipe work is faulty.	If damaged by residents or visitors - example a nail driven into a pipe.
Windows - broken	Only if window frame or glass faulty	We may not charge if breakage is the result of criminal damage or racial harassment, what happened is reported to the Police and a Police Crime number is quoted.

If you are required to pay for work we may do the job first and send you the bill afterwards: we have the right to demand part or full payment before starting work.

Alternatively you may have the work done yourself. We will inspect it once it is completed. If the work is acceptable, that will be the end of the matter: if not we will tell you what has to be done and inspect again, once the work is complete.

We will not accept the bill if you call in your own workman without our written agreement.

### 3. Internal decorations

You are responsible for redecorating your home. If the decorations are damaged - for example by an accident in your home - you may need to make a claim against your household insurance.

We offer a redecorating service for elderly and disabled tenants who have nobody at home capable of doing the work for them. The work is done every five years, generally during the winter immediately after external repainting is done. A charge may be made for the service. For advice, please contact the Repairs team ☎ 01483 444222.

### 4. Practical advice

#### Gas-fired Central Heating

To get the best results:

- Control the temperature carefully. Most systems have a wall thermostat that controls how warm your home gets. A setting of 20 to 22 degrees Centigrade (68 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit) is normally comfortable. Once the area where the thermostat is placed has reached the temperature you have set, the heating will turn off until the temperature in the area drops to below the setting.
- A programming unit is provided which gives you control over when your central heating will operate. If you are out at work all day, you can set the heating to come on around the time you get up, turn off when you normally leave, switch on when you are due home and turn off at bed-time. This saves you from having the heating running when you do not need it.
- Some systems have a small thermostat on the hot water cylinder. If this is set to about 50 degrees Centigrade this should be adequate.
- In warm weather you can set your programming unit to 'Water only.'

#### Electrical heating

Some flats and houses are equipped with electric storage radiators. These use cheap rate electricity overnight to build up heat that is then available to heat your home during the day.

Hot water - if your home has storage radiators, it will also have a hot water cylinder, which is heated by an immersion heater overnight.

#### Dampness and condensation

Dampness has a variety of causes:

- Broken gutters.
- Leaking pipes.
- Leaking roofs.
- Damp rising through the floor.

We can normally deal with dampness by carrying out appropriate repairs.

Condensation is more complicated and is sometimes mistaken for rising or penetrating damp:



- Warm, moist air in a room causes mist or water droplets to form on cold surfaces such as glass. It can also form on any surface that is cool in comparison to the room as a whole. This process is called condensation.
- Condensation can cause mould growth on walls, ceilings and furniture, especially in areas where there is little air circulation. It can cause mildew on clothes.
- There is always some moisture in the air, but the amount can be greatly increased by normal day-to-day activities such as cooking, having a bath, drying clothes indoors, using a tumble dryer, doing the washing up. Heating a room using paraffin or bottled gas will put excessive amounts of moisture into the room.
- Preventing condensation is partly a matter of keeping your home properly heated and ventilated. You can also take measures to reduce the risk of condensation:
  - Keep the amount of moisture in the air to a minimum.
    - Cover saucepans when cooking.
    - Always ensure tumble driers are vented to the open air.
    - Open a window if you dry clothes indoors.
  - Control the amount of warm, moist air.
    - Close kitchen and bathroom doors to prevent warm, moist air going into other parts of your home.
    - Open kitchen and bathroom windows to allow warm, moist air to escape.
    - Never use paraffin or bottled gas to heat a room. These heaters put considerable water vapour into the atmosphere.

## Electrical equipment

If you have a modern fuse box with mini-circuit breakers a fault on an electrical appliance may cause a circuit to switch off. The fault can be as simple as a light bulb failing. If a circuit does switch off:

- ◆ Reset the switch.
- ◆ If the cause is a fault on an appliance, such as an electric kettle, check the appliance and have any fault corrected. If a light bulb has failed, change it.

Older fuse boxes have cartridge fuses that can be pulled out for checking. The fuses contain fuse wire, which must be of the correct type for the specific fuse. If a fuse fails, the fuse wire must be replaced with the correct type only. If this is not done, or the fuse is bypassed with normal electrical cable, a fire risk may be created. If in doubt contact the Repairs Team for advice ☎ 01483 444222.

## 5. Safety advice

### Gas-fired central heating in general

Many gas fired central heating systems have metal external flues. If your home has one please ensure that it is not blocked or obstructed in any way. There is a serious safety hazard if it is blocked or obstructed.

### Gas-fired central heating via a back boiler.

If you have Gas-fired central heating via a back boiler in your living room:

- You should not use the room for sleeping. The reason for this is that there is a very slight risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- If the room has vents to the outside air please ensure that they are not blocked or obstructed in any way. The air that comes through such vents is needed for the safe operation of the boiler.

## **6. Insurance**

### **What our Insurance covers**

We insure the structure of your home. Our insurance does not cover the contents or internal decorations of your home.

We also have third party cover. This covers us if our employees do any damage.

### **What you must cover yourself**

We cannot give detailed advice on insurance cover - this should come from your insurer, but we advise you should ensure you have insurance to provide:

- Cover for loss of your possessions (including the cost of redecoration) if there is a fire, flood or other disaster.
- Third party cover. This could be important if something that goes wrong in your home affects others, such as neighbours. If you live in a flat, it should provide cover against incidents such as a failure in a washing machine causing damage in a flat below yours.
- Occupiers liability cover - this will protect you against claims from visitors if they suffer injury in your home.

## **7. Gardens**

### **Individual Gardens**

If you have your own individual garden you are responsible for keeping it neat and tidy. This means the grass must be kept cut, any hedges or bushes trimmed and the area reasonably weed free.

### **Communal Gardens.**

Some blocks of flats and Sheltered Housing schemes have communal gardens. We provide a gardening service for such areas.

### **Gardening service for elderly and disabled tenants.**

We provide a limited gardening service for elderly and disabled tenants. Gardens are mown and hedges cut back. Apply to your Area Housing Manager.

## **8. Television aerials**

It is up to you to provide your own television aerial, but you will need to apply to us for permission to erect one, whether a conventional one, or a satellite dish. If you live in a block of flats you may need Planning Permission may apply if you want to erect an aerial or satellite dish.

Certain blocks of flats have communal aerial systems.

## **9. Refuse collection**

### **Standard arrangements**

Guildford's standard method of refuse collection is to collect refuse in wheeled bins provided by us on a fortnightly basis. Collection is on a fixed day but there are special arrangements at Bank Holidays.

Please do not put your rubbish out until the evening before it is due to be collected. This reduces the risk of it being scattered around the area.

### **Blocks of flats**

Certain blocks of flats have communal bin stores. If there is a refuse chute, do not put large items into the chute that will block it.

### **Bulk refuse**

Bulk refuse, such as old furniture, can be dealt with in one of two ways:

- Special collection can be arranged by telephoning our Cleansing service on 01420 488783. A charge will be payable.
- Take your bulk refuse to your local disposal site.

Note: Do not dump refuse: it is an offence for which you can be prosecuted.

# Notes



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