



Your Homes  
Newcastle



# Repairs and servicing

This information is about asking for repairs to your home. If you need this in a different language phone 0191 278 8633.

This information is also available in easy read, large print, Braille and audio tape. We can also arrange for you to see a British Sign Language interpreter.

বাংলায় Bengali	এই তথ্য হল আপনার ঘর বাড়ী মেরামত করতে চাওয়া সম্বন্ধে। এই তথ্য যদি <বাংলায়> অথবা অন্য কোন ভাষায় প্রয়োজন হয় তাহলে এই নাম্বারে ফোন করুন- ০১৯১ ২৭৮ ৮৬৩৩
普通话 / 国语 Chinese Simplified	这是有关要求维修您的住房的信息。如果您需要此信息的普通话版本或其它语言版本，请致电 0191 278 8633 索取。
廣東話 / 粵語 Chinese Traditional	這是關於如何要求維修您住房的信息。如果您需要此信息的廣東話版本或其它語言版本，請致電 0191 278 8633 索取。
فارسی Farsi	این اطلاعات درباره درخواست تعمیرات در خانه شماست. در صورت نیاز به این اطلاعات به زبان فارسی یا زبان های دیگر با شماره تلفن ۰۱۹۱۲۷۸۸۶۳۳ تماس بگیرید.
Français French	Ces informations concernent les demandes de travaux pour votre logement. Si vous avez besoin de ces informations en français ou dans une autre langue, téléphonez au : 0191 278 8633.
کوردی سۆرانی Kurdish	ئهم زانیاریانه سهبارت به چۆنیهتی داخوایی بۆ چاککردنهوهی خانووکهتانه. ئەگەرچهزتان له وەرگرتنی ئهم زانیاریانه به زمانێ کوردی یا ههر زمانێکی دیکه ههیه به زماره تلیفۆنی 0191 278 8633 پێوهندی بگرن.
Português Portuguese	Esta informação refere-se ao pedido de reparações em sua casa. Se precisar desta informação em <português> ou noutra língua, queira ligar para o 0191 278 8633.
русском Russian	Информация о предоставлении помощи с ремонтными работами в Вашем доме. Если Вы нуждаетесь в этой информации <на русском> или другом языке звоните по тел. 0191 278 8633.
Español Spanish	Ésta es información sobre cómo pedir que se realicen reparaciones en su casa. Si necesita esta información en español o en otro idioma, llame al 0191 278 8633.

# Contents

Repairs and servicing	5
Which repairs are you responsible for?	5
Which repairs am I responsible for?	6
How do I report a repair?	7
What information do I need to give when reporting a repair?	7
Do I get a receipt when I order a repair?	9
Do staff carry ID?	9
Health and safety of our staff	10
The Right to Repair scheme	10
What about emergency repairs outside office hours?	12
How long will I have to wait for my repair to be carried out?	13
Discretionary allowance scheme (delay in carrying out repairs)	14
What happens if a contractor damages my decoration?	15
How does applying for the Right to Buy affect repairs?	16
'Recoverable' repairs	17
What happens if I cannot organise the repairs I am responsible for?	17
How can I help to improve the YHN repairs service?	19
What do I need to know about gas servicing and maintenance?	20

What should I do if I think there is a gas leak?	21
What should I do if there is a fault or problem with a gas appliance?	22
What can I do if my heating breaks down?	23
What if my heating is provided as part of a group or district heating scheme?	24
What about electric storage heaters?	24
What should I do if there is an electrical fault?	25
Advice about electrical safety	26
Meters and supplies	26
Is there any way I can reduce my fuel bills?	27
How do I give you a compliment, complaint or comment?	27

## Repairs and servicing

We and you are responsible for looking after your home. We are responsible for most repairs, maintenance and servicing needed to the property, but you are responsible for a number of minor repairs and for decorating the inside of your home.

We want to maintain your home as best we can, and rely on you to help us by reporting repairs quickly and allowing us into your home to carry out the necessary work.

### Which repairs are you responsible for?

By law we must carry out certain repairs. We are responsible for maintaining the following.

- The structure and outside of your home
- The pipework, cables and so on for the supply of water, gas and electricity and sanitation (drainage and disposal of waste water)
- Shared areas
- Fixtures and fittings (including baths, sinks, toilets, radiators, storage heaters and so on) that we have provided (or we have inspected and approved)

This means that we will carry out all repairs except those that you are responsible for.

For more details about which repairs we will carry out for you, please see the repairs manual. You can get this from any of our community housing teams and online at [www.yhn.org.uk](http://www.yhn.org.uk).

For your own health and safety, you must report repairs as soon as you find out that they are needed. Reporting repairs early also helps to reduce costs by making sure that the fault does not get any worse, which could mean even more work. You should also report repairs to shared areas – do not assume someone else will report it!

## Which repairs am I responsible for?

Under your tenancy agreement, you are responsible for minor repairs needed from time to time, and for keeping your home painted and decorated. This means that you are responsible for the following.

- Decorating the inside of your home
- Door handles on doors inside your home
- Your letterbox
- Inside doors and their fittings
- Plugs and chains in baths, basins and sinks
- Toilet seats and lids
- Small cracks in the plaster
- Floor tiles and wall tiles
- Fireplace tiles
- Minor repairs to kitchen cupboards and drawers
- Bulbs on gas or electric fires, and their light fittings

For more information about the repairs you are responsible for, see the repairs manual. You can get this from any of our community housing teams and online at [www.yhn.org.uk](http://www.yhn.org.uk).

These are known as your repairing responsibilities.

**You will also have to pay for any repairs that are needed because you have misused or neglected the property.**

## How do I report a repair?

You can report a repair in the following ways.

- ☎ By phoning the Repairs Centre on 0191 277 8888 (lines are open 24 hours a day)
- 📠 By sending a fax to 0191 277 3674
- 📱 By texting 'FIX' to 80800
- 🌐 Online at [www.yhn.org.uk](http://www.yhn.org.uk)

You can also report a repair to any community housing office or customer service centre by phone, by e-mail ([repair@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:repair@newcastle.gov.uk)), by letter or in person.

## What information do I need to give when reporting a repair?

When you report a repair it is important that you give us as much information as you can to help us order work as quickly and accurately as possible.

### When reporting a repair, we will ask you:

- your name and address;
- the details of the repair;
- where the repair is needed;
- information on getting into the property;
- a daytime phone number;
- any special circumstances (for example, if you are older or disabled); and
- any other important information (for example, a crime reference number if you are reporting a repair resulting from vandalism to your home).

For many repairs we will offer an appointment for our contractor to carry out the work.

## Repair inspections

In some circumstances, for example, if the work is difficult to identify, we will carry out an inspection so that we can accurately order the repair work. We will make an appointment for an inspector to call to inspect the work.

## Appointments for repairs and inspections are available between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

All missed appointments affect the service we provide to our tenants and cost money that comes out of your housing budget. Please try to keep the appointments you have made. If you cannot keep an appointment, please contact your local community housing team or the Repair Centre as soon as you can.

We want our contractors to keep all appointments. They must tell you if they cannot keep an appointment or they are delayed.

## Do I get a receipt when I order a repair?

When you report a repair, we will give you, or send you, a repair receipt. The receipt will contain information about:

- the repair order number;
- the work or inspection to be carried out;
- when the work was ordered; and
- the date the work or inspection will be carried out.

If you want to ask about the progress of a repair, you should contact either your local community housing team or the Repairs Centre and quote the repair order number.

## Do staff carry ID?

**All our contractors and staff carry ID, which you should ask to see.**

Contractors should also have an official form (or job sheet) giving details of the work they have been sent to carry out.

You can also phone your local community housing team or the Repairs Centre if you want to check who they are.

Gas, electricity and water company staff carry similar identification.

**If you are not sure who a caller is, don't let them in.**

## Health and safety of our staff

We take the health of our staff very seriously and want to protect them as far as possible from the dangers of second-hand smoke. To help with this, we ask tenants not to smoke in the same room as any staff visiting your home. Please do not smoke in that room in the 30 minutes before an appointment time or during the visit.

## The Right to Repair scheme


The Government introduced the Right to Repair scheme for council tenants in April 1994. It was introduced to make sure that certain repairs which may affect the health, safety or security of tenants are done within set timescales. Repairs that are covered by the right to repair are called 'qualifying repairs'.

All repairs that we prioritise as emergencies are qualifying repairs.

If we fail to complete a qualifying repair on time, and you have given us reasonable access to carry out the repair, you can ask us to get a different contractor to do the work instead. If the second contractor also fails to do the work on time, you may be entitled to compensation. Opposite are some examples of qualifying repairs and the timescales for them being carried out.

- Unsafe power, lighting or electrical fitting – **one working day**
- Blocked flue on an open fire or boiler – **one working day**
- Toilets which do not flush (if this is the only toilet in the house) – **one working day**
- Loose or broken banisters or handrails – **three working days**
- Leaking roof – **seven working days**

You can get more details about this scheme from:

 Administration section  
YHN House  
Benton Park Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE7 7LX

 Phone: 0191 278 8600

The details are also on our website at [www.yhn.org.uk](http://www.yhn.org.uk).  
The information is in the Reporting Repairs section.

You can also get information by contacting any of our community housing teams (see the 'Useful addresses' booklet for contact details).

## What about emergency repairs outside office hours?

An emergency repair is a fault that is an immediate danger to your safety, security or health. For example:

- major storm or structural damage;
- no usable toilet in the property;
- the heating or hot-water system breaking down in winter;
- total loss of electrical power; or
- not being able to get into your home or your property not being secure (you will need a crime number to report this repair).

If you need an emergency repair outside office hours, phone the **Repairs Centre** immediately on **0191 277 8888** (lines are open 24 hours a day).

You will be passed to our out of hours emergency team who will arrange for someone to call to do the repair or to make your home safe by doing a temporary repair until a full repair can be arranged. If you report a repair which is not classed as an emergency, we will arrange for the work to be done during normal working hours.

After 6pm we may charge you a fee of at least £40 for any call-outs which are not genuine emergencies or that could have waited until the next day.

## How long will I have to wait for my repair to be carried out?

We will do all we can to carry out repairs as quickly as possible. We give repairs a priority depending on the type of work that is needed. The time taken depends on the sort of repair you need.

We have five different categories of repair, from emergencies where there is a danger to the public or property, to non-urgent repairs. Some types of repair such as fencing may be 'batched' (put together with other repairs to be carried out together as part of a programme).

The priority categories are as follows.

Category	Timescale from when the repair is reported
Emergency	Completed within four hours
Urgent – one day	Urgent, completed within one day
Urgent – three days	Urgent, complete within three working days
Urgent – seven days	Urgent, complete within seven working days
Routine – 15 days	Complete within 15 working days
40 days	By arranged date

## Discretionary allowance scheme (delay in carrying out repairs)

The discretionary allowance scheme covers unreasonable delays in carrying out repairs. An unreasonable delay is classed as any delay beyond one week for emergency repairs, or two months for essential repairs, from the time of reporting the repair to the time it is completed.


Examples of emergency repairs are:

- burst pipes and tanks;
- electrical and gas faults (making safe);
- blocked drains;
- heating or hot-water systems failing in winter; and
- any fault likely to injure people.

Examples of essential repairs are:

- severe water penetration;
- severe leaks to radiators or pipes;
- unsafe ceilings;
- collapsed floors; and
- insecure locks and catches on outside doors.

You can get more details about this scheme from:

 Administration section  
YHN House  
Benton Park Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE7 7LX

 Phone: 0191 278 8600

The details are also on our website at [www.yhn.org.uk](http://www.yhn.org.uk). The information is in the 'Reporting Repairs' section.

Information is also available from any of our community housing teams (see the 'Useful addresses' booklet for contact details).

## What happens if a contractor damages my decoration?

### Damage resulting from repairs and maintenance work

Sometimes, the type of work our contractor is doing will cause damage to decorations. This is unavoidable and, wherever possible, we will tell you beforehand that there is likely to be damage. When damage cannot be avoided, we will compensate you for damage to decoration. Any payment made is a gesture of goodwill, we have no liability to you. The amount of compensation depends on the extent of the damage. Examples of the type of work that will result in inevitable damage include damp-proofing work or repairs to plasterwork.

You can get more details about this scheme from:

🏠 Administration section  
YHN House  
Benton Park Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE7 7LX

☎ Phone: 0191 278 8600

The details are also on our website at [www.yhn.org.uk](http://www.yhn.org.uk).

Information leaflets are also available from any of our community housing teams (see the 'Useful addresses' booklet for contact details).

## How does applying for the Right to Buy affect repairs?

### Right to Buy

If you apply to buy your home under the Right to Buy scheme while your application is being processed we will not carry out any repairs, maintenance (including planned maintenance such as repainting the outside of your home) or improvements that are likely to affect the value of your home.

We will continue to carry out repairs to keep a property protected from the wind and rain, and to maintain services (that is, heating and electrical installations).

If you buy your council home, you will then be responsible for all repairs that may be needed.

If you want more information about the Right to Buy, contact the Right to Buy team (see the 'Useful addresses' section).

### Leaseholders

If you live in a flat and use your right to buy, you will become a leaseholder. We have a dedicated leasehold team who provides a service to leaseholders. Details of repair responsibilities and so on will be included in the information pack and leaseholders' handbook you will receive when you buy your home.

If you want more information about leaseholders, contact the Leasehold Team (see the 'Useful addresses' section).

## 'Recoverable' repairs

You are responsible for any repairs needed to your home or shared areas because of damage, misuse, neglect or carelessness by you or anyone living with or visiting you.

If you cause damage to the property, we will recover the costs from you and may take legal action to repossess your home.


If you employ a contractor to work at your home, and they damage the property, we can hold you responsible for the repair and you will have to pay the cost of having the damage put right. If you ask us to carry out the work, we will charge you for it.

If the damage has been caused by someone who is nothing to do with you, please report the incident to the police. In this situation, or if the damage was accidental, we may repair the damage without charge. Please contact your community housing team for advice or help.

## What happens if I cannot organise the repairs I am responsible for?

If you want us to carry out any of the repairs you are responsible for we can do so. However, we will usually charge you for the work, unless there are exceptional circumstances. We will deal with each case individually, and you should contact your local community housing team if you need more information. Remember that the estimated cost we give you before we start the work is only an estimate and the actual cost may be higher. It may be cheaper to have any repairs that you are responsible for to be carried out by your own contractor. Look in the Yellow Pages or ask a friend or relative for the names of reliable contractors.

We can also carry out a number of improvements to your home under the 'Rechargeable works scheme'. The scheme covers installing security alarms, electric fires and surrounds, modern homes improvements such as fitting new windows, doors, kitchens and bathrooms, electric rewiring and installing heating systems. We will charge you for this work, but you can choose between making a one-off cash payment or paying in weekly instalments. You can get more details about this scheme, including eligibility conditions, from your local community housing office or customer service centre, or from us at:

 Administration section  
YHN House  
Benton Park Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE7 7LX

 Phone: 0191 278 8600

For more information about your right to carry out improvements, see 'Tenants' improvements and alterations' in the 'Improvements and other planned work' booklet.

## How can I help to improve the YHN repairs service?

We are committed to improving our service to you and welcome your comments, ideas and suggestions for improving the service.

### You can:

- pass your comments to your local community housing team, either in writing or verbally;
- fill in one of the customer comment cards available in any of our service outlets; or
- pass your comments directly to the repairs and maintenance team in the Property Department at YHN House – see the 'Useful addresses' booklet.

### Contractor comment cards

We will send you a contractor comment card with the repair receipt. This allows you to comment on the service you have received. Please fill in and return this card as our contractor uses the information you give to improve the service they provide.

### Customer satisfaction surveys

You may get a phone call asking you for your views on our service, or you may receive a questionnaire through the post. These surveys are carried out by an independent researcher on our behalf. We have designed the surveys to give us valuable information about the services we provide. The surveys ask you for your opinions on the finished work and how our staff and contractors treated you. The information you provide helps us to improve our service to you.

# What do I need to know about gas servicing and maintenance?

## Gas safety inspections

By law, we must check our gas appliances at least once a year to make sure they are safe.

Our contractor will make an appointment to visit your home to carry out this safety check.

## Servicing gas appliances

We must also make sure that our gas appliances are serviced each year. Our contractor will contact you to make an appointment to carry out the service. You do not have to pay for this service.

You must let our contractor into your home so that they can carry out this important work. If you don't, we will take legal action to get into your home to carry out the work, and we may charge you for the legal costs.

Appointments for gas servicing and maintenance are available between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday (and up to 8pm on one day a week), and between 8am and 12noon on some Saturdays.

**Please note – the gas safety check and service only cover appliances we have installed in your home. We cannot check or service your cooker or other appliances that belong to you.**

## What should I do if I think there is a gas leak?

Make sure you know where your gas stop valve is. Keep the key (or a spanner) nearby so you can turn off the supply if you need to. If you do not know where your gas stop valve is, ask a member of staff from your local community housing team.

If you can smell gas and think it is because of a gas leak, you must:

- shut off the gas supply and open the windows;
- not use any light switches, lighters, matches, candles or other naked flames;
- not smoke or use any electrical equipment;
- phone Northern Gas Networks immediately on 0800 111 999 to report the problem; and
- not turn the supply back on, or try to use any gas appliance, until the gas leak has been repaired and you are told it is safe to do so.

## What should I do if there is a fault or problem with a gas appliance?

If there is a problem with any gas appliance:

- do not use the appliance; and
- phone the Repairs Centre immediately on 0191 277 8888 to report the problem. Or you can contact your local community housing team during office hours.

**Remember, we are not responsible for repairs to gas appliances that belong to you. We may charge you a call-out fee if you call us out to repair an appliance that is not our responsibility.**

## What can I do if my heating breaks down?

If you have gas central heating you should do the following.

### **Make sure the boiler's pilot light is lit.**

For boilers on the wall there is usually a spy hole for you to check that the pilot light – a glowing flame – is still lit. If you have a back boiler behind a fire, the pilot light is underneath the fire.

If the pilot light is not lit, relight it following the manufacturer's instructions, which are usually on the side of the boiler. If you are not sure what to do, phone the Repairs Centre for advice.

If the pilot light still does not work, phone the Repairs Centre or your local community housing team.

If the pilot light is lit but your heating is not working, report the fault to the Repairs Centre or your local community housing team.

Many new appliances have electronic ignition rather than a pilot light. If the electronic ignition is not working, report the fault to the Repairs Centre or your local community housing team.

Please note: in some circumstances, for example, during very cold weather, the repairs contractor may provide temporary heating or hot-water facilities (or both) until your system can be fully repaired. Ask the person carrying out the repair or local community housing staff for more details.

## What if my heating is provided as part of a group or district heating scheme?

If your heating is provided as part of a district heating or group scheme (for example, on Byker estate or in sheltered flats), you should report any problems or faults to your local community housing team, customer service centre or the Repairs Centre.

## What about electric storage heaters?

If you have a fault with your electric storage heaters, contact your local community housing team or the Repairs Centre.

## What should I do if there is an electrical fault?

Most properties now have modern fuse boards that have push buttons or switches which turn off (or 'trip') if there is a fault. This is a safety feature built into the unit and is designed to turn off the electricity supply to a faulty appliance before it can cause a fire or electric shock.

If you have got one of these fuse boards, check to see if any of the switches have turned off. If any switches have turned off, you can try to turn the electricity back on by flicking the switch back on. If this does not work, or none of the switches have turned off, please contact the Repairs Centre. The operator will give you more advice or send an electrician out to see if any repairs are needed.

**If you are not sure what to do, please contact the Repairs Centre for advice.**

If your fusebox has fuses which do not have individual buttons or switches, report any electrical fault to us as explained in 'How do I report a repair?'.

**Please note: if the electricity has gone off ('tripped') because of a fault on an appliance that you own, we are not responsible for repairing it. We may charge you if you call us out for an electrical emergency that turns out to be due to a fault on one of your appliances.**

## Advice about electrical safety

**Overloading sockets is dangerous and can cause fires.** If a plug is blackened, burned or scorched it may mean that the fuse in that appliance has blown. Always use a fuse with the rating shown in the manufacturer's instructions for the appliance.

**Do not use a socket or light switch that is cracked, damaged or charred. Do not use adaptors or extension leads. Report any electrical faults immediately.**

## Meters and supplies

You are responsible, under a contract with suppliers, for gas, electricity and water meters and supplies. Always make sure you know who your gas and electricity suppliers are and how to contact them if you have a problem with your meter.

For more information about gas and electricity suppliers, see the 'Moving in' and 'Useful addresses' booklets.

If you have a card or token meter for your gas or electricity and you run out of credit, we cannot provide an emergency supply. We will charge you for any unnecessary call-outs that result from you losing your supply.

## Is there any way I can reduce my fuel bills?

Heat escapes from nearly every part of a property. This increases the amount of fuel you use and pay for. Insulating the major problem areas can make a great deal of difference to your comfort and your fuel bills. There are a number of schemes designed to help people on low incomes insulate and draughtproof their homes. You can get more information from any of our offices or online at [www.yhn.org.uk](http://www.yhn.org.uk).

See also the 'Energy efficiency' section in the 'Living in your home' booklet.

## How do I give you a compliment, complaint or comment?

We are committed to providing an excellent service to our customers. We would like you to tell us any compliments, complaints and comments you have about our services. Your feedback helps us to find ways to improve services.

For information about how you can give us a compliment, comment or complaint, please see the 'What to do if I have a complaint' section in the 'Welcome to your new home' booklet.



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