

Section 5

REPAIRING AND MAINTAINING YOUR HOME

This section explains repairs and maintenance responsibilities, how to report repairs and provides useful information to help you identify some of the more frequently reported problems.

OUR REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Your Tenancy Agreement explains our responsibilities for repairing and maintaining your home. This includes:

- All plumbing and drainage, including guttering and associated pipework.
- The building structure, including the foundations, roof, walls, doors, windows and chimneys **not sweeping**.
- Painting and decoration **external only**.
- External paths, steps, ramps, gates, boundary walls and/or fences.
- Gas, water, electricity and heating installations including all statutory inspections and testing.
- Communal facilities including lifts, electrical installations, stairs, corridors and landscaping.
- Garages and outhouses.
- Security.

YOUR REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

You are responsible for keeping your home in a reasonable condition, resolving minor problems and insuring the contents of your home. This includes:

- Decorating the inside of your home including making good any minor cracks in the plaster
- Changing domestic fuses, light bulbs **including fluorescent tubes**, replacing keys and/or locks when keys are lost or stolen and replacing toilet seats.
- Maintaining the garden including dustbins and refuse areas **excluding communal areas** and repairs caused by neglect, wilful damage to the property, negligence and forced entry.
- Taking reasonable precautions to prevent damage to the property by fire, frost, the bursting of water pipes or blocking of drains.
- Any fittings, appliances, or alterations supplied or carried out by you, including TV aerials, plumbing in washing machines and/or dishwashers.
- Replacing gas and electric meter box cupboard doors.
- Sweeping chimneys.

RECHARGEABLE WORKS

Where you require us to carry out repairs that are actually your responsibility you will be charged. In addition to your responsibilities listed above rechargeable works include, for example:

- Any damage caused by you or other persons living in/visiting your home.
- Repairs resulting from improvements carried out to the property without our written consent.
- Removal of rubbish (other than normal domestic refuse) or abandoned items.

WHEN YOU REPORT THE REPAIR YOU WILL BE TOLD IF YOU HAVE TO PAY THE COST.

HOLIDAYS AND ABSENCE FROM YOUR HOME

If you are going away from your home for more than just a day or two, perhaps on holiday, it is useful to take one or two preventative measures:

- Turn off the gas and water supplies at the mains, when appropriate.
- Where appropriate switch off and unplug all electrical appliances.
- Ask a friend to look after your home while you are away.

REPAIR TARGET TIMES

We require our contractors to complete all repairs within pre-determined time periods. These time periods are determined by the nature of the work. When you report a repair problem you will be told what target time has been set for the completion of the repair. The target times are as follows:

EMERGENCY - WITHIN 24 HOURS

URGENT - WITHIN 7 DAYS

ROUTINE - WITHIN 28 DAYS or SPECIFIED DATE

Please note our contracted working periods are Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm. Our contractors do not work on Saturdays or Sundays.

EMERGENCY

Repairs that are an emergency will be completed within 24 hours or sooner depending on the nature of the problem reported. Repairs include:

- Gas leaks.
- Total loss of electrical supply.
- Total loss of water supply.
- Total loss of gas supply.
- Partial loss of the gas supply **between the 31st October and 30th April or where no other form of water heating is available.**
- Blocked flue to open fire or boiler.
- Blocked or inoperative WC, **where there is no other working WC in the property.**
- Loss of heating or hot water between the 31st October and 30th April.
- Blocked or leaking foul drainage system.
- Severe leak from water or heating pipework, water storage cylinders or tanks, windows, doors and/or the roof.
- Insecure external windows or door locks.
- Loose and/or dangerous roof tiles or slates.

Wherever possible the contractor will complete emergency repairs within 24 hours or sooner. In some cases, especially out of hours, the contractor may only be able to effect temporary repairs. The contractor will return during the next working day to complete the repairs. If you report an emergency repair you must remain at your home until the contractor arrives. If you have to leave the property, for example to collect children from school, you must let us know. Failure to do this may result in you being charged for a wasted visit.

URGENT

Repairs that are urgent will be completed within 7 days or sooner. Repairs include:

- Partial loss of electrical power
- Unsafe power, lighting socket or electrical supply.
- Partial loss of water supply.
- Total or partial loss of heating and/or hot water between 1st May and 30th September
- Blocked sink, bath or wash hand basin.
- WC not flushing **where there is another WC in the property.**
- Minor leak from the water or heating pipework, water storage cylinders or tanks, windows, doors and/or the roof.
- Loose and/or detached banister or hand rail, rotten timber flooring or stair treads.
- Failure of door entry systems.

ROUTINE

All other repairs that are routine will be completed within 28 days or within a specified time period if specialist materials have to be ordered

REPORTING REPAIRS

Your Tenancy Agreement states that it is your responsibility to report repairs as soon as possible to the Maintenance Department. Failure to report a repair which results in additional damage to your or adjacent properties may result in you being charged for any damage caused.

HOW TO CONTACT US

You can report a repair problem by telephone or by email:

Telephone

Maintenance Dept. (Daytime and out of hours)

01747 852878 Electrical repairs

01747 858067 Building maintenance & plumbing repairs

Email

General@wessex.org

If you have an emergency outside office hours or during the weekend, you should telephone the Emergency Out-of-Hours service. **An out of hours emergency is defined as something which could not have been foreseen and which could cause serious damage or destruction to property or a danger to health or life.**

BEFORE YOU CONTACT US

Using the information in this section:

- Check whether you are responsible for the repair. **See Your Responsibilities.**
- Prepare a full description of the problem.

WHEN YOU CONTACT US

Whenever you request a repair, or ask someone else to report it on your behalf, please be prepared to provide the following information:

- The name of the person whose home it is and the address of the property needing the repair.
- A telephone number where you can be contacted during the day.
- Suitable times when someone will be at home to let us in to repair or inspect the reported problem.
- A full description of the problem.

We will inform you:

- Whether a repair order or an inspection has been arranged.
- Which company employee will be carrying out the inspection.
- Which contractor will be carrying out the work and the repair target time.

A copy of the works order will be sent to your home. The works order will briefly describe the reported problem, confirm the repair completion target date and the works order number, inform you of the contractors name and contact telephone number. The works order contains a pre-paid repair satisfaction card, which we ask you to complete and return to our Winchester office. Your comments will help us to monitor the quality of the service we are providing to you.

We are committed to provide a high standard of service. However if, for any reason, you are not satisfied with the service provided please contact us immediately so that we can take what steps are necessary put right the problem.

THE REPAIR

We require our contractors to ensure that all works are carried out with the minimum of disruption. Our contractors are required to adhere to the following Code of Conduct:

- Arrange access to carry out the works.
- Carry identification.
- To respect your property and possessions. **This includes protection of your property during the works.**
- To keep your home secure at all times.
- To comply with health and safety legislation and relevant codes of practice.

If you fail to keep the first pre-arranged appointment our contractors will leave a contact card. Telephone the contractor directly or the Maintenance Department to arrange a new appointment. If you fail to keep a second pre-arranged appointment the works will be cancelled and you may be charged for an abortive call.

REPAIRS WHILST YOU ARE OUT

Occasionally, in an emergency situation, floods, fires etc, we may need to enter your property when you are not at home. In this situation we will try and contact you, if this is not possible we will enter your home to carry out whatever works are deemed necessary. Thereafter, at the earliest opportunity, we will contact you to explain why it was necessary for us to enter your home. **An employee or representative of New Forest Villages Housing Association will always be in attendance if we enter your home.**

DAMAGE CAUSED BY CONTRACTORS

If you feel that a contractor has caused damage to your personal property, you should initially complain to the contractor directly and notify the Maintenance Department. If you are not satisfied with the contractor's response contact the Maintenance Department immediately.

RIGHT TO REPAIRS

Where we fail in our duty to have a qualifying repair carried out within a specified time and, after a further request from yourself still fail to have the repair carried out within a second specified time, then you may be paid compensation.

A qualifying repair is defined as a repair, which, if not completed within the specified period, is likely to jeopardise your health, safety or security.

Please be aware that:

WE WILL NOT ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BILL IF YOU INSTRUCT A CONTRACTOR TO CARRY OUT WORKS WITHOUT OUR PERMISSION

COMPENSATION FOR REPAIRS

We will only consider making compensation payments for the following circumstances:

- Disturbance.
- Temporary re-location.
- Damage to decoration caused by the repair works.
- Where there has been an unacceptable delay in carrying out a reported repair.

If you think you may be entitled to compensation you should contact the Maintenance Department.

YOUR RIGHT TO COMPENSATION FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO YOUR HOME

Written agreement **must be** obtained from us before you carry out any improvements or alterations to your home.

At the termination of your tenancy you may qualify for a compensation payment under our "qualifying improvements" scheme. This is a payment for works/improvements you have made to the property. **But**, you must obtain a written agreement from us in advance of undertaking any improvement to your home to qualify for compensation under this scheme. Contact the Maintenance Department if you require further information about this scheme.

VANDALISM

Please inform us quickly if you know of any vandalism to your home, communal areas or estate. Do not assume that someone else will report it.

MAJOR REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS

A Stock Condition Survey, regular property inspections and tenant participation enable us to plan future improvements to your home.