

Repairs



How to report a repair

You can report a repair:

- **By phone**

Call our Contact Centre on: **08082 306500** – this number is free from landlines; charges from mobiles may vary. You can also use the free courtesy phone at your local housing office.

- **In person**

At your local housing office, or caretaker.

- **By letter**

Write to:
Housing Repairs
Plymouth Community Homes
Fort Austin
Fort Austin Avenue
Plymouth PL6 5SR.

- **Using the internet**

Visit www.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk.

- **At your tenants and residents association**

What if you have an emergency?

If you have an emergency in normal working hours, call our Contact Centre on: **08082 306500**.

Outside normal working hours and on Bank Holidays, call **0800 917 9459**.

A duty officer will arrange to carry out an emergency repair until a full repair can be arranged. Completion of the repair will be carried out during normal working hours.

What information do you need to provide?

- Your name and address.
- When you can provide access to your home so an appointment can be made.
- A daytime phone number – this can be a mobile so that we can contact you to arrange to inspect or carry out the repair.
- As much information about the repair so that we can arrange for the most suitable tradesperson.

Appointments

We will offer an appointment at the time a repair is reported. Generally, this appointment will be for morning or afternoon, Monday to Friday between 7.30am to 5pm.

Some appointments will be available for small repairs on selected evenings up to 8pm, Monday to Friday, and between the hours of 9.30am to 12noon on Saturday. These appointments are only intended for minor repairs that can be completed in one visit. They are intended to enable you to provide access without taking time off work or other daytime commitments.

We will make an appointment for all repairs for:

- Pre inspections.
- Carrying out the repair.
- Post inspections and following up complaints.

Where a customer fails to keep an agreed appointment a card will be left informing them that the repair has been cancelled.

Response times

When you report your repair you will be advised of its priority. Every effort will be made to complete the repair within that time. This may not be possible if you request an appointment outside of the stated timescales.

The circumstances and needs of vulnerable tenants and households are also taken into account in deciding response times. We will carry out repairs more quickly where:

- Your sense of security is affected.
- Your home would be without heating in winter.
- Your mobility is affected.
- The health and safety of young children is affected.

Emergency repairs

We will try to respond in four hours, but will definitely be there within 24 hours. You will need to provide access if needed.

This emergency service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Emergencies are

made safe and, if possible, completed within the 24 hour target. Repairs after making safe may be carried out under a longer timescale.

Emergency repairs are those needed to avoid serious health or safety risks or serious structural damage. They also include repairs that are needed to ensure a home is secure.

Urgent repairs

Urgent repairs are completed within three working days of the repair being ordered and by appointment.

Urgent repairs are those that, if not repaired, will cause substantial discomfort to the customer and/or potential damage to the property.

Routine repairs

Routine repairs are normally carried out within 20 working days. We will offer you either a morning appointment (7am to 1pm) or afternoon appointment (1pm to 5pm) on a weekday.

Access to your home

In your Tenancy Agreement (Section 3), you have agreed to allow access to Plymouth Community Homes' staff, contractors or agents to enter your property for the purpose of inspection, maintenance and/or repair. An appointment will be made whenever possible.

However, in the case of an emergency, Plymouth Community Homes may need to force entry to deal with the problem. In this case, the property will be left secure.

You may wish to provide your housing officer with an emergency contact number (a mobile is best) or contact details of a key holder.

Identification

Plymouth Community Homes' staff and its contractors carry and will show, on request, a photo identity card when visiting your home – **ask to see it before letting anyone into your home.**

If this is not provided when requested, you can refuse



access – please advise our Contact Centre. For vulnerable tenants, our Contact Centre will agree a code word when the repair is reported, if requested.

Women only operatives

For women who would prefer not to have men working in their homes (for example, because of previous domestic violence), we will make every effort to use female operatives to carry out the repair.

Women can request this when reporting the repair to our Contact Centre. If a female operative is not available we will arrange for a female member of staff to attend.

Customer choice

Plymouth Community Homes is committed to offering choice in repairs and improvements wherever reasonably possible.

However, responsive repairs are normally restricted to the replacement of fixtures and fittings on a like-for-like basis.

The service you can expect from us

1. We must keep your home in good condition. We will repair and maintain:
 - The structure and exterior of the building – roofs, walls, floors, ceilings, window frames, external doors, drains, gutters, outside pipes.

- Kitchen and bathroom fixtures – basins, sinks, toilets, baths.
 - Electrical wiring and gas and water pipes.
 - Heating equipment and water heating equipment.
 - Any communal areas around your home – stairs, lifts, landings, lighting, entrance halls, paving, shared gardens, parking areas and rubbish chutes.
2. We must maintain any external paintwork at regular intervals.
 3. We must do repairs in a reasonable time. When you report a repair we will tell you when the work will be done by (this depends on how urgent it is) and/ or if it will need to be inspected.
 4. We must clear up after a repair. We will leave your decoration as close as possible to how it was before the repair was done. However, if redecoration is necessary we will offer a decoration voucher to cover the cost of the work.
 5. We will send you written confirmation when a repair has been ordered to your home, the details of the appointment made and whether the repair comes under the Right to Repair legislation. However, if the work is an emergency or the appointment is within five days of the work being reported, no confirmation will be sent.

- We must keep your home in good condition.
- Satisfaction with repairs will be continually monitored to ensure we deliver the high standard expected by our customers.
- We value your feedback on repairs.

6. Tenants have the right to get repairs done on time and within the timescales set out later in this section. However, if you wish to agree a repair outside of these timescales you are entitled to do so.
7. If you install a gas heater or gas water-heating appliance with permission, we will maintain and service them. Such gas heating appliances will become the property of Plymouth Community Homes on termination of the tenancy.
8. When carrying out gas safety checks in homes, Plymouth Community Homes will shut down any unsafe gas appliances that it has no responsibility to maintain.

Customer satisfaction

Satisfaction with repairs will be continually monitored to ensure we deliver the high standard expected by our customers. When a repair is completed, our Contact Centre will contact a sample

of tenants by telephone.

When a response is returned showing any dissatisfaction, we will arrange an appointment for an inspector to visit to identify and arrange for any outstanding problems to be resolved.

Plymouth Community Homes will measure and report on levels of satisfaction by:

- Area.
- Type of repair.
- Property type.
- Property age.
- Length of tenancy, and
- Ethnic origin of household.

Complaints and feedback

If you are not happy with a repair, please let our Contact Centre know. We are also pleased to pass on any compliments to staff.

If you wish to make a formal complaint, you can do so by referring to the Viewpoints leaflet or via the website www.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk.

Timescales for repairs

The repairs listed are our most typical repairs.

Generally, repairs that are not listed are treated as routine, 20-day repairs.

| Type of repair | Responsibility | Category | Comment |
|---|--------------------------|-----------|--|
| Boilers – solid fuel | | | |
| Drain down back boiler | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | |
| Repair back boiler | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Emergency if only source of heating or hot water |
| Central heating | | | |
| Total or partial heating failure | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | October – April |
| Total or partial heating failure | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | May – September |
| Chimneys | | | |
| Make safe dangerous chimney | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | |
| Repair chimney | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Clear blocked flue | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | |
| Chimney sweeping | Tenant | | Twice yearly |

| Type of repair | Responsibility | Category | Comment |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Clothes line | | | |
| Communal clothes line | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Coal storage | | | |
| Coal outhouses | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Condensation | | | |
| Mould growth less than 25% of room | Tenant | | Unless caused by defect |
| Mould growth more than 25% of room | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Cookers | | | |
| Cookers | Tenant | | |
| Decoration | | | |
| Internal decorations | Tenant | | Pensioner – Plymouth Community Homes may undertake decorating |
| Damaged decorations caused through Plymouth Community Homes repairs | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine or decorations voucher | |
| Door entry systems | | | |
| Phone not working | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | |

| Type of repair | Responsibility | Category | Comment |
|---|--------------------------|-----------|--|
| Door not closing | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | Secure only |
| Additional phone or move phone | Tenant | Routine | Tenant disabled – Plymouth Community Homes' responsibility |
| Doors | | | |
| Make safe or secure external door | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | Rechargeable if lost key |
| Lost key | Tenant | Emergency | Rechargeable |
| Door glazing replacement | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | Rechargeable – Plymouth Community Homes will board up |
| Glass replacement after boarding | Tenant | Routine | Following payment of recharge |
| Repair or replace unusable lock | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | Sticking but useable then Routine |
| Replace faulty seals to external door | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Repairs to internal door locks and handles | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Rechargeable if tenant damage |
| Kitchen cupboard doors | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Rechargeable if tenant damage |

| Type of repair | Responsibility | Category | Comment |
|--|--------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| Letter box | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Ease and adjust door | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Unless caused by floor coverings |
| Drains | | | |
| Blocked foul drains – Plymouth Community Homes owned | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | |
| Blocked rainwater drains – Plymouth Community Homes owned | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | If causing flooding – Emergency |
| Electrics | | | |
| No electricity | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | Except during power failure |
| No lights | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | |
| Lights and power only partial | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | |
| Check electrics after water penetration | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | |
| Dangerous or exposed wires | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | |

| Type of repair | Responsibility | Category | Comment |
|---|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Unsafe socket or fitting, cracked or exposed wires | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | Rechargeable if tenant damage |
| Repair or renew fuse box | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | No power – Emergency |
| Fuses to appliances | Tenant | | |
| Communal lighting hallway and landing | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | Complete failure – Emergency |
| Lamps/bulbs | Tenant | | |
| Smoke detector | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | Rechargeable if battery |
| Smoke detector battery | Tenant | | |
| Resetting of electrical trips or rewire fuse | Tenant | | |
| Other internal electrical work | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Extractor fan | | | |
| Extractor fan in kitchen/ bathroom not working | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | |
| Fences/gates | | | |
| Repairs to fences and gates | Plymouth Community Homes | Programmed works | Unless health and safety implications |

| Type of repair | Responsibility | Category | Comment |
|--|--------------------------|----------|---|
| Fireplaces | | | |
| Fire grates and parts | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Re-fix loose tiles to hearth or surround | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Re-fix damaged or missing tiles to hearth or surround | Tenant | | |
| Floor | | | |
| Rotten floorboards | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | |
| Repairs to floorboards | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | Tenant damage – rechargeable |
| Re-fix loose and/or squeaking floorboards | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Tenant damage – rechargeable |
| Floor/quarry tiles | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Where fitted by Plymouth Community Homes only |
| Other floor surface | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Where fitted by Plymouth Community Homes only |
| Re-screed concrete floor | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |

| Type of repair | Responsibility | Category | Comment |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------|---|
| Skirting boards | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Garages | | | |
| Door locks | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | Emergency if car locked in garage |
| Keys lost | Tenant | | |
| Defective roof | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Emergency if dangerous |
| Light | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Door repairs | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | Emergency if car stuck in garage |
| Gas | | | |
| Gas leaks | Plymouth Community Homes/Tenant | Emergency | Contact Wales and West Utilities |
| Failure of gas fires fitted or approved by Plymouth Community Homes | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | Emergency if only source of heating in room |
| Gas cookers, connections and other tenant appliances | Tenant | | |

| Type of repair | Responsibility | Category | Comment |
|---|--------------------------|-----------|---|
| Gutters | | | |
| Clear blocked gutter | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Replace broken gutter | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Urgent if during wet weather |
| Re-make leaking gutter joint | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Replace fascia board | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Heaters (room or water heating) | | | |
| Glass to Parkray/solid fuel heater | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | |
| Total or partial heating failure | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | October – April |
| Total or partial heating failure | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | May – September |
| Immersion heater | | | |
| Repair/replace | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | If only form of water heating or alternative form is solid fuel and tenant is elderly or disabled |
| Repair/replace | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | If alternative source of water heating is available |

| Type of repair | Responsibility | Category | Comment |
|--|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------|
| Kitchen fixtures | | | |
| Kitchen units provided by Plymouth Community Homes | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Rechargeable if tenant damage |
| Kitchen worktops provided by Plymouth Community Homes | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Rechargeable if tenant damage |
| Kitchen sink | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Rechargeable if tenant damage |
| Outhouses/sheds | | | |
| Lights in outhouse | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Only brick or concrete structures |
| Outhouse repairs | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Only brick or concrete structures |
| Locks | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | Only brick or concrete structures |
| Lost keys | Tenant | | |
| Glazing | Tenant | | |
| Paths/external steps/handrails | | | |
| Repairs to paths | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Emergency if trip hazard – make safe |
| Repairs to driveways, hard standings and patio areas | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Emergency if trip hazard – make safe |

| Type of repair | Responsibility | Category | Comment |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| Steps | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Emergency if trip hazard – make safe |
| Handrails | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Emergency if health and safety hazard |
| Pipes/tanks/cylinders | | | |
| Burst pipe – internal | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | |
| Burst pipe – external | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | |
| Blocked or leaking soil pipe | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | |
| Replace section of soil pipe | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Water hammer/ pipe vibration | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Re-fix rainwater pipe | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Airlock | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | Emergency if no water |
| Burst tank | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | Immediate attention |
| No water | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | |

| Type of repair | Responsibility | Category | Comment |
|--|--------------------------|-----------|--|
| Continuous overflow | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | Emergency if water meter installed |
| Leak from water or central heating system | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | |
| Stopcock or valve faulty | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | |
| Hot water cylinder insulation | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Pipe insulation | Tenant | | Tenant must not disturb any insulation provided |
| Drainage inspection cover | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | If dangerous, Emergency to make safe |
| Plumbing | | | |
| WC blocked | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | Rechargeable if tenant abuse |
| Re-fix/replace WC pan | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | If unusable – Emergency |
| Replace loose or broken WC seat | Tenant | | If tenant disabled, Plymouth Community Homes: Urgent |
| Toilet not flushing | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | Urgent if another toilet in property |

| Type of repair | Responsibility | Category | Comment |
|--|--------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------|
| Blocked sink, bath or hand basin | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | |
| Unusable sink, bath or hand basin | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | Tenant damage is rechargeable |
| Re-fix loose hand basin brackets | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | Tenant damage is rechargeable |
| Re-fix loose bathroom tiles | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Tenant damage is rechargeable |
| Re-fix loose shower tiles | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | Tenant damage is rechargeable |
| Re-fix bath panel and frame | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Tenant damage is rechargeable |
| Plugs | Tenant | | |
| Taps running full bore | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | |
| Taps dripping | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Urgent if water meter installed |
| Replacement taps | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Urgent if unusable |
| Other tap repairs | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | |
| Replace shower over bath | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Urgent if cultural/ medical issues |

| Type of repair | Responsibility | Category | Comment |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Replace shower where no bath available | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | |
| Roofs | | | |
| Slipped tiles | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | Where dangerous |
| Make safe after storm damage | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | Where no health and safety issues |
| Major roof repairs | Plymouth Community Homes | Planned contract only | |
| Rain penetration | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | Emergency if dangerous |
| Loose or cracked tiles | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | Emergency if dangerous |
| Garage or outhouse roofs | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Emergency if dangerous |
| Lead flashings | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Re-bed/re-point roof ridge tiles | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Stairs and lifts | | | |
| Stairlift/lift not working | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | |

| Type of repair | Responsibility | Category | Comment |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Repair banister/hand rail | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Emergency if dangerous |
| Loose banister/hand rail | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | Emergency if dangerous |
| Rotten/damaged stair tread | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | Emergency if dangerous |
| Re-fix loose stair tread | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Emergency if dangerous |
| Missing balustrade | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | |
| Walls | | | |
| Dangerous wall | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | To make safe |
| External brickwork | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| External rendering | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Major repairs if planned maintenance |
| Internal plastering | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Minor/hairline cracks: tenants' responsibility |
| Window glazing | | | |
| Broken glazing | Tenant/Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | Needs crime number – rechargeable if tenant damage |

| Type of repair | Responsibility | Category | Comment |
|--|--------------------------|-----------|--|
| Broken glazing where boarded | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Rechargeable to tenant |
| Communal glazing | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | Emergency if required to secure property |
| Loose window frame | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | |
| Re-putty glazing | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Window repairs | | | |
| Window not opening or fully closing | Plymouth Community Homes | Urgent | |
| Window cannot be secured | Plymouth Community Homes | Emergency | Only if ground floor or easy access |
| Ease/adjust | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Window catches | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | Emergency if cannot secure |
| Sill boards | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Rain penetration | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |
| Faulty seals | Plymouth Community Homes | Routine | |

Right to Repair

Under the Right to Repair Scheme we must complete certain urgent repairs (called qualifying repairs) within set time limits. If we do not complete a qualifying repair within the correct time and you have allowed

us reasonable access, you can ask us to get another contractor to do the work. In the unlikely event that the second contractor also fails to do the work on time, you may be entitled to compensation and should contact our Contact Centre.

| Defect | Prescribed period (in working days) |
|--|--|
| Total loss of electric power | 1 |
| Partial loss of electric power | 3 |
| Unsafe power or lighting socket, or 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 space or water heating between 31st October and 1st May | 1 |
| Total or partial loss of space or water heating between 30th April and 1st November | 3 |
| Toilet not flushing (where there is no other working toilet in the dwellinghouse) | 1 |
| Blocked or leaking foul drain, soil stack, or (where there is no other working toilet in the dwellinghouse) toilet pan | 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 | 7 |

| Defect | Prescribed period <i>(in working days)</i> |
|--|---|
| Insecure external window, door or lock | 1 |
| Loose or detached banister or hand rail | 3 |
| Rotten timber flooring or stair tread | 3 |
| Door entry phone not working | 7 |
| Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working | 7 |

Electrical faults

If you have lost all of your electrical supply

- Switch or button circuit fuse board:
 1. Check whether a button or switch on your fuse board has turned off the whole supply. This will need to be reset if this is the case.
 2. If the switch will not reset, switch off each individual fuse in turn and try resetting the switch after each one until the electricity comes back on. This process will show you which circuit the fault is on.
 3. One of your appliances maybe faulty. To find out which appliance

is faulty, unplug them all, switch the circuit on and plug in each appliance in turn. The power will switch off when you connect the faulty appliance. A qualified electrician should repair the appliance.

4. If you need to check if there has been a power cut in the area, check with neighbours or telephone your power supplier.
- Fuse board with wired fuses:
 1. Check the fuses to see which one has blown, and replace the fuse wire.
 2. If the fuse blows again, one of your appliances maybe faulty. To find out

which appliance is faulty, unplug them all, switch the circuit on and plug in each appliance in turn. The power will switch off when you connect the faulty appliance. A qualified electrician should repair the appliance.

If you have lost part of your electrical supply

One of your appliances maybe faulty. Unplug all appliances, switch the circuit on and connect each appliance in turn. The power will switch off when you connect the faulty appliance. This appliance will then need to be repaired by a qualified electrician.

It is important to ensure that you do not overload sockets, as this can be dangerous. If a plug is charred, it may mean a fuse has blown. Always use the rating of fuse shown in the manufacturer's instructions for the appliance. Do not use a socket or light switch that is cracked, damaged or charred.

If, after trying the above the problem continues, please phone Repairs.

Burst and frozen pipes

If you have a burst pipe:

- Put something under the leak to catch the water.
- Turn off the main stopcock immediately.
- Turn on all the cold water taps.
- Turn off the central heating, boiler, and immersion.
- Contact Repairs.

To avoid frozen pipes:

- Keep your home reasonably warm, particularly where water pipes are close to external walls.
- Make sure that taps are turned off, especially at night.
- Report any running overflows.
- If you are away from your home for more than a few days, and there is a danger of frosty weather, leave the heating on at a

low temperature to provide background warmth or turn off the stopcock and draw off any water from the system.

If you do have frozen pipes, turn off the main stopcock at once, and contact Repairs.

Condensation

Condensation is caused when warm, moist air comes into contact with cold surfaces such as windows, walls or floors.

How do I reduce condensation?

- In cold weather, try to leave some heating on in each room.

- Heat rooms well, but not with oil or propane gas heaters which produce moisture.
- Do not hang damp washing on radiators to dry.
- Open windows when cooking or after bathing and ensure that any electrical ventilation is switched on. Keep doors shut to prevent moisture spreading through the house.
- If you dry clothes using a tumble drier, it must be vented directly outside.
- Do not block airbricks or vents – it will stop moisture



getting out and prevent essential ventilation.

What is the difference between condensation and dampness?

Dampness may happen on some walls and can be identified by brown staining. Condensation usually takes the form of black spots or mould, particularly in corners of rooms or behind furniture where the air circulation is poor.

Damp patches with definite edges, on walls or ceilings, maybe caused by problems with the outside of the building, e.g. loose cement pointing letting in rainwater.

If you suspect dampness in your home, call our Contact Centre to arrange for a repairs surveyor to inspect your home.

Smoke alarms

If there are no hard-wired alarms in the property, we will arrange for smoke alarms to be fitted by Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service when you start your tenancy. These will

be up to a maximum of one per floor, or two for a large flat. You should test your smoke alarms every week to ensure that they are working correctly.

Devon and Somerset Fire Service provides a free fire safety visit – the contact number is 01392 872200.

Adaptations for elderly and disabled tenants

We can, in certain circumstances, provide adaptations to assist elderly or physically disabled tenants in their homes.

Adaptations can include:

- Level access shower unit.
- Stair lift.
- External ramps.
- Door entry system.
- Grab rails.
- External handrails.

You should first contact your occupational therapist at Plymouth Social Services, who will advise on suitable adaptations. Applications are then prioritised.

For more information, please

refer to the Council's Help With Adapting Your Home leaflet, which is available from your local housing office.

Home improvements

You have the right to carry out improvements to your home, but you must first obtain our written permission.

Before carrying out any work you must apply in writing to:
Housing Repairs Service
Plymouth Community Homes
Princess Court
23 Princess Street
Plymouth
PL1 2EX

You must provide details of the alteration, with detailed plans and specifications where necessary. In some circumstances, a repairs surveyor will visit to discuss your request.

You will also need to satisfy any planning and building regulations.

We will consider whether the proposed work will:

- Cause any additional costs for the future.
- Result in claims against us from third parties.
- Spoil the appearance of the property.
- Require significant re-instatement work before the property could be re-let in the future.
- Be carried out to an acceptable standard and by a competent and qualified tradesperson.

- You have the right to carry out improvements to your home but you must first obtain our written permission.
- Assured tenants have the right to claim compensation for certain improvements they make, at the end of their tenancy.

All consents will be given in writing and may specify certain requirements and restrictions.

You are responsible for the cost of any repairs required as a result of faulty installation, poor workmanship or defective materials. You are also responsible for the maintenance of alterations or improvements you have carried out, with the exception of fixed gas appliances.

Right to compensation

Assured tenants have the right to claim compensation for the following improvements at the end of their tenancy:

- Bath or shower, wash-hand basin and toilet.
- Kitchen sink and work surfaces for preparing food.
- Storage cupboards in bathroom or kitchen.
- Central heating, hot water boilers and other types of heating.

- Thermostatic radiator valves.
- Pipe, water tank, or cylinder insulation.
- Loft and cavity wall insulation.
- Draught-proofing of external doors and windows.
- Double glazing or other window replacement or secondary glazing.
- Rewiring or the provision of power and lighting or other electrical fittings (including smoke detectors).
- Security measures (excluding burglar alarms).

Interior decoration does not qualify for compensation.

You should make a claim for compensation when you tell us you want to leave, but you will have up to 14 days after your tenancy ends to make a claim.

You will need to provide:

- Your name and address.
- Details of the improvements you have made.

- The cost of each improvement, with original invoices. This can include the cost of materials (but not appliances such as cookers or fridges) and labour costs (but not your own labour).
- The date each improvement began and finished.

We will consider the following in working out your compensation:

- That permission has been granted.
- The original cost of the improvements.
- How long ago the improvements were made.
- If the original costs of the improvements were excessively high.
- The condition of the improvements at the time of the claim.
- If you owe us any money at the end of your tenancy, this can be deducted from any compensation.

You can claim up to £3,000 for any single improvement but you will not get any compensation for improvements worth less than £50.

If you make a false claim (for example, if you claim for an improvement you haven't actually made or you claim more than the actual cost) we can take you to Court.

Planned maintenance and improvements

This is repair work that is planned and carried out to keep properties in good order or to replace items that have reached the end of their useful life.

These repairs are carried out as part of a planned programme to make them more cost effective.

Examples of this work may include:

- External repairs prior to a painting contract.
- Heating installation or upgrade.
- Insulation to properties.
- Window replacement.
- Electrical rewiring.

When you report a repair that falls within a planned programme, our Contact Centre will advise you of the timescale of the programme.

Before we start work we will write to you with details of the work and the contractor and who to contact for any further information.

Rechargeable repairs

Under the terms of the Tenancy Agreement, tenants have a responsibility to look after their homes. Where Plymouth Community Homes becomes aware that:

- A repair has been caused by deliberate damage or neglect, or
- Tenants fail to carry out a repair that they are responsible for, or
- Alterations have been undertaken by tenants without prior permission.
- Tenants will be given 28 days to remedy the repair to a standard acceptable to Plymouth Community Homes. If they fail to do so, the association will carry out the work and

recharge the tenants for the costs of that repair.

In certain cases where accidental damage occurs, tenants may be able to claim on their home contents insurance policy (a low cost scheme is operated by Plymouth Community Homes), see the Home Contents Insurance Scheme leaflet.

On completion of the rechargeable repair, Plymouth Community Homes will issue an invoice for the costs. If a tenant/s is/are unable to pay the costs in full, they will need to contact their housing office to agree a payment plan.



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REPAIRS FREEPHONE 08082 306500

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