



Welcome to your new home

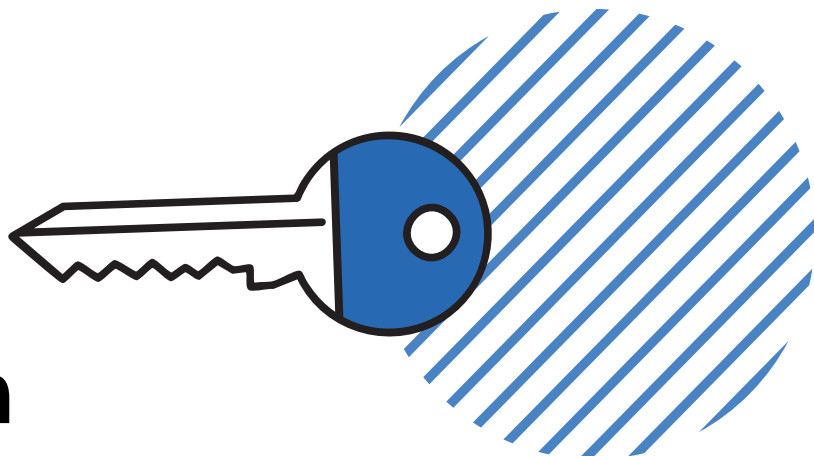
Home User Guide





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Introduction

Welcome to your new home

We have produced this guide to help make moving in and living in your home a smooth and happy experience. It is intended for general information purposes only.

This user guide aims to:

- inform you of what to do if anything goes wrong
- help you to reduce the cost of running your home

If you are a Plymouth Community Homes Tenant, the important information regarding your home can be found in the Property Handover Information Sheet.

What if you have an emergency out of hours?

If you have an emergency outside normal working hours (5pm to 7am), weekends and on Bank Holidays, call **0800 917 9459**.

Insurance

We strongly advise all residents to take out household contents insurance.

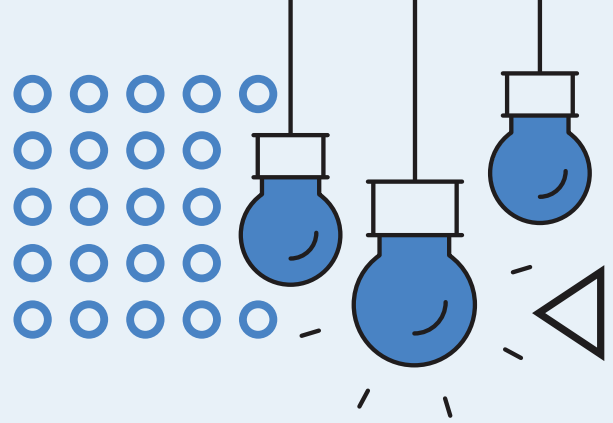
You can do this by either arranging it privately or use Plymouth Community Homes insurance scheme. For more information about this scheme please call **01752 388333**

or **01752 388335** or via email at:

insurance@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk

This policy is called My Home Insurance and is offered to all tenants and Shared Owners and includes:

- Affordable premiums
- No excess to pay
- Flexible payment options
- Realistic minimum sums insured
- Quick and easy to apply for cover
- Cover for extended accidental damage and personal possessions for an additional premium.



Property Handover Information

The Property Handover Information sheet is in your handover pack. It tells you the meter serial numbers for your Gas, Electric and Water, and other important information regarding your property.

Reporting repairs or defects

Tenants and Shared owners

Your home is covered by a 12-month defect period starting from the date it is certified as 'Practically Complete'.

A defect is an issue resulting from the builder's workmanship. Here are some definitions for what classifies a defect/repair:

12-Month Defect

A 12-month defect is any issue or fault that arises within the first 12-months following the practical completion of a building or property. This period is commonly referred to as the defects liability period, during which identified defects should be reported to PCH and addressed.

Latent Defect

A latent defect is a hidden flaw or fault in a building or structure that is not immediately apparent and cannot be identified through reasonable inspection at the time of completion. These defects may only become noticeable after a significant period has passed. These also need to be reported to PCH.

Repair (After 12 Months)

A repair after 12-months refers to any maintenance or corrective work required once the initial 12-month defect period has ended. These repairs fall outside the original defect liability period and can only be raised to PCH by residents of rented properties.

During the 12-month defect period, report any defects to Plymouth Community Homes. They will refer the matter to the developer, who will then contact you to arrange a visit to investigate the defect.

Within the initial 12-month defect period, residents of rented properties can raise repair requests to PCH, including examples listed in Examples of Non-Defects (page 5).

If your property is covered by an NHBC or ICW Warranty, you can report defects to Plymouth Community Homes during the second year. They will contact the developer to investigate the issue.

Please note that properties covered by LABC or Premier Warranties do not have a year 2 defect resolution period.

At the end of the 12-month defect period, an End of Defects inspection will be conducted to identify any issues that have arisen. Remedial works will be arranged based on this inspection. It's important to note any concerns during the first 12 months so they can be addressed during this inspection.

Shared Owners – standard model shared ownership lease

Once the initial defects period has ended, you are responsible for handling your own repairs in accordance with your shared ownership lease agreement.

Shared Owners – new model shared ownership lease

This shared ownership home comes with a 10-year initial repair period, as detailed in your lease. Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) is responsible for repairs during this period, subject to specific criteria while you own less than a 100% share. Please refer to your New Shared Ownership Lease Guide for details on repairs and the claim process.

Reporting Repairs

Reporting Defect Repairs for the first 12 months (the defect period starts when the property is certified as being 'Practically Complete').

By phone:

Call our Contact Centre on **08082 306500** (7am to 5pm Monday to Friday). This number is free from landlines, charges from mobiles may vary. Our telephone number for the deaf and hard of hearing is **07899 848886**.

Online:

Go to our website, **www.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk** and follow the links to 'Reporting a repair online'.



In person:

Plumer House, Tailyour Road,
Crownhill, Plymouth, PL6 5DH

Examples of Non-Defects

Accidental damage, misuse, minor cracking / cosmetic imperfections, natural settlement, wear and tear, owner modifications **are not considered defects (or repairs for rented properties)**



Living in your new home

Whether you are renting your home or are a Shared Ownership leaseholder, permission is required from us when carrying out anything which may affect the structure or value of the home.

As your new build home begins to settle, it's completely normal to notice some minor cracking, particularly around door frames, ceilings, and skirting boards. These are usually caused by natural shrinkage and drying out of materials.

However, if you spot a crack that is wider than the thin edge of a pound coin, please report it so we can investigate further (3mm).



Minimising cracking

Your new home will need care and consideration in the initial months of occupation to allow your property to dry out.

Building materials absorb moisture during construction, which can cause shrinkage and cracks as they dry. This is normal and usually addressed during redecoration.

To help your property dry out properly, please avoid decorating - including hanging pictures, wallpapering, or painting - for the first 12 months. Early decorating can trap moisture and cause long-term issues. The property will be inspected after 12 months, and any necessary repairs will be made. If you decorate before then, you may be responsible for any damage.

To help manage moisture and temperature in your home, please follow these guidelines:

- Leave space around furniture, especially near external walls, to allow air to circulate and prevent condensation.
- Maintain an even temperature throughout the house, including unoccupied rooms.
- Use heating evenly and sparingly at first.
- Reduce moisture in the air to prevent condensation.
- Ensure plenty of ventilation by keeping windows and trickle vents open as long as possible each day

Safe Drilling Practices

Be cautious of electrical cables in 'safe zones' (150mm around fittings and wall perimeters). Do not use these areas for fixings and always check before drilling. Additionally, be aware of heating pipework that may run horizontally or vertically within the walls to feed radiators.





Preventing condensation

Newly built properties can contain up to eight tonnes (8,000 litres or 14,000 pints) of water due to the building process. It can take six to nine months, and sometimes up to two years, for homes to fully dry out and reach a moisture-balanced state.

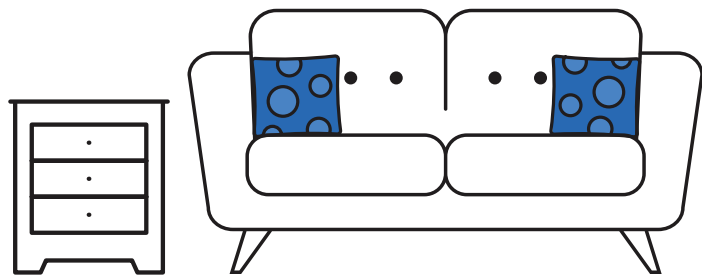
Excess moisture in new homes can lead to condensation and potential mould if not addressed. Here are some tips to avoid moisture build-up:

- **Ventilate kitchens:** Open windows and use the extractor fan while cooking.
- **Use bathroom extractor fans:** Allow them to run when the bathroom light is on to remove excess water vapor.
- **Manage window condensation:** Wipe draft-stripped windows with a dry cloth before opening to prevent mould growth and damage to plaster and window boards

To manage moisture and prevent condensation in your new home, consider these tips:

- **Use trickle vents:** Keep them open for ventilation.
- **Avoid portable heaters:** They produce a lot of water vapor; use your central heating system instead.
- **Dry clothes properly:** Use a well-ventilated room or an external clothesline, not airing cupboards.
- **Manage indoor drying:** If drying clothes indoors, use the bathroom with the extractor fan on and keep the door closed.
- **Heat all rooms:** Ensure all rooms are at least partially heated to prevent condensation.
- **Maintain consistent heating:** Keep room surfaces warm and ventilated. It's better to have a small amount of heat for a long period than a lot of heat for a short period.
- **Avoid cold rooms:** Keep heating on at a low level, especially in rooms with large outside walls. Maintain living room temperatures at about 17°C (65°F) when not in use.

For more condensation advice, please see the video on our Youtube channel - www.youtube.com/@plymouthch - titled 'Managing damp and condensation'



Your Garden

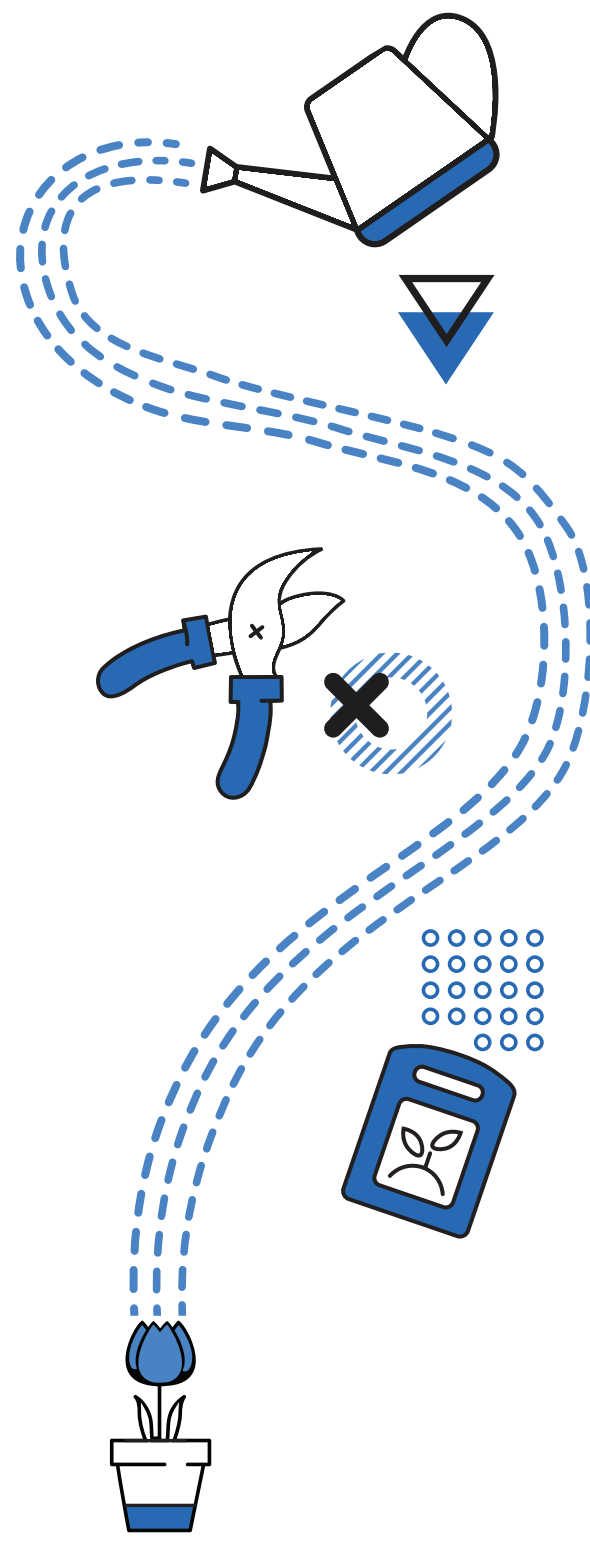
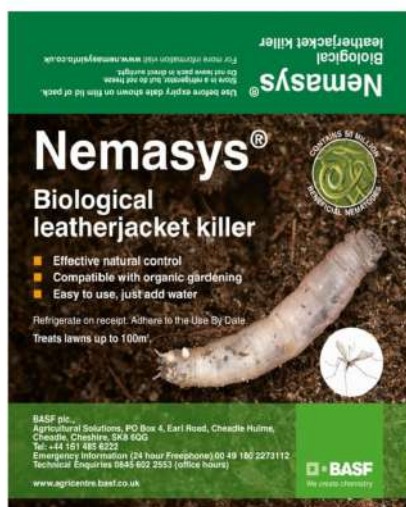
Your garden is yours to maintain and enjoy. As the homeowner or resident, you are responsible for its upkeep. Some properties may include turf or planting as part of the landscaping, depending on the plot. These features form part of the approved planning for the development and, where applicable, must be kept in place and properly maintained.

If any planting is removed or changed, you may be required to restore it at your own cost. Shared Owners should also follow the restrictive covenants in their lease.

Newly laid turf and planting need regular watering, especially during warmer months, to help them establish. A new garden takes time to settle and may not thrive if it isn't cared for or experiences heavy use early on.

Please note: lawns can sometimes be affected by Leather Jacket larvae (crane fly larvae), which feed on grass roots. This is not considered a build defect and falls under general household maintenance. To help prevent this, treat your lawn with an organic Nematode solution between August–October and again in April–May, when soil temperatures are above 12°C. Always follow the product instructions and check your lawn regularly.

Example Nematode product:





Equipment

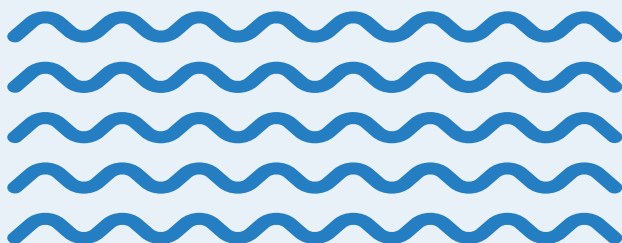
Kitchen

To keep your stainless steel sink in good condition, avoid using harsh products. Bleach should only be used when properly diluted, and it's best to avoid silver dip cleaners, photographic chemicals, or acidic substances. Everyday items like fruit juice, vinegar, mustard, and mayonnaise can cause damage if left on the surface for too long.

Never pour oil, fat, or grease down the drain, as this can cause blockages and damage your plumbing.

To protect your worktops, avoid placing hot pans, cooking utensils, or irons directly on them. Instead, use heat-resistant mats or boards to prevent heat damage.

If you are in a rental property, a space has been left for your own cooker. Please ensure that all appliances are installed by a GAS SAFE (gas) or NICEIC (electric) approved fitter.

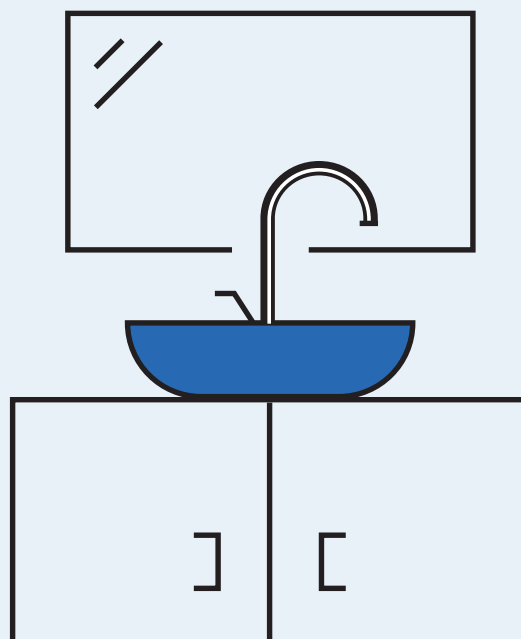


Sanitary ware

To keep your bathroom surfaces in good condition, use recommended spray or cream cleaners. Avoid scouring pads or gritty powders, as they can damage the finish.

Please don't mix bleach with toilet cleaners, and avoid letting bleach sit in sinks or on waste fittings, as this can cause staining or corrosion.

Please don't flush wet wipes, nappies, or other non-flushable items, as these can block pipes and damage the drainage system.



Additional cover

Structural warranty

From years 2/3 to 10/12 (depending on your warranty agreement), your property is covered by a structural warranty. This protects you against major defects. Tenants can report these to Plymouth Community Homes, who will assist with your claim.

If you are a shared owner, please report your claim directly to Plymouth Community Homes. Claims must meet the minimum value threshold to be considered valid. For full details on what is covered and the eligibility criteria, please refer to your warranty policy schedule. This document outlines the types of issues that may be covered under your warranty and any conditions that apply.

Product Warranties

If there is a problem identified which is not covered by your warranty cover, you may still be able to access assistance through product

warranties (available only to shared owners) or your PCH Building Insurance. Please refer to your handover pack for more information.

Building Insurance

PCH provides Building insurance for your property, covering structural items and communal areas in flats. The premium for this insurance is included in the annual service charge. As a Shared Owner, you cannot opt out of PCH's insurance. For more information, please contact insurance@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk or www.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk/your-home/contents-insurance/

Shared Owners are expected to take out their own content insurance. This can be arranged through PCH's Home Contents Insurance scheme if required.



Refuse Collection

Bins and Waste Collection

You will need to contact your local council to arrange delivery of your household waste and recycling bins. Most councils offer this service online or via their customer service phone lines.

Collection Schedule

Please check your council's website for your specific collection schedule. Household waste and recycling are typically collected on an alternate weekly basis, but this may vary depending on your local authority.

Bin Storage

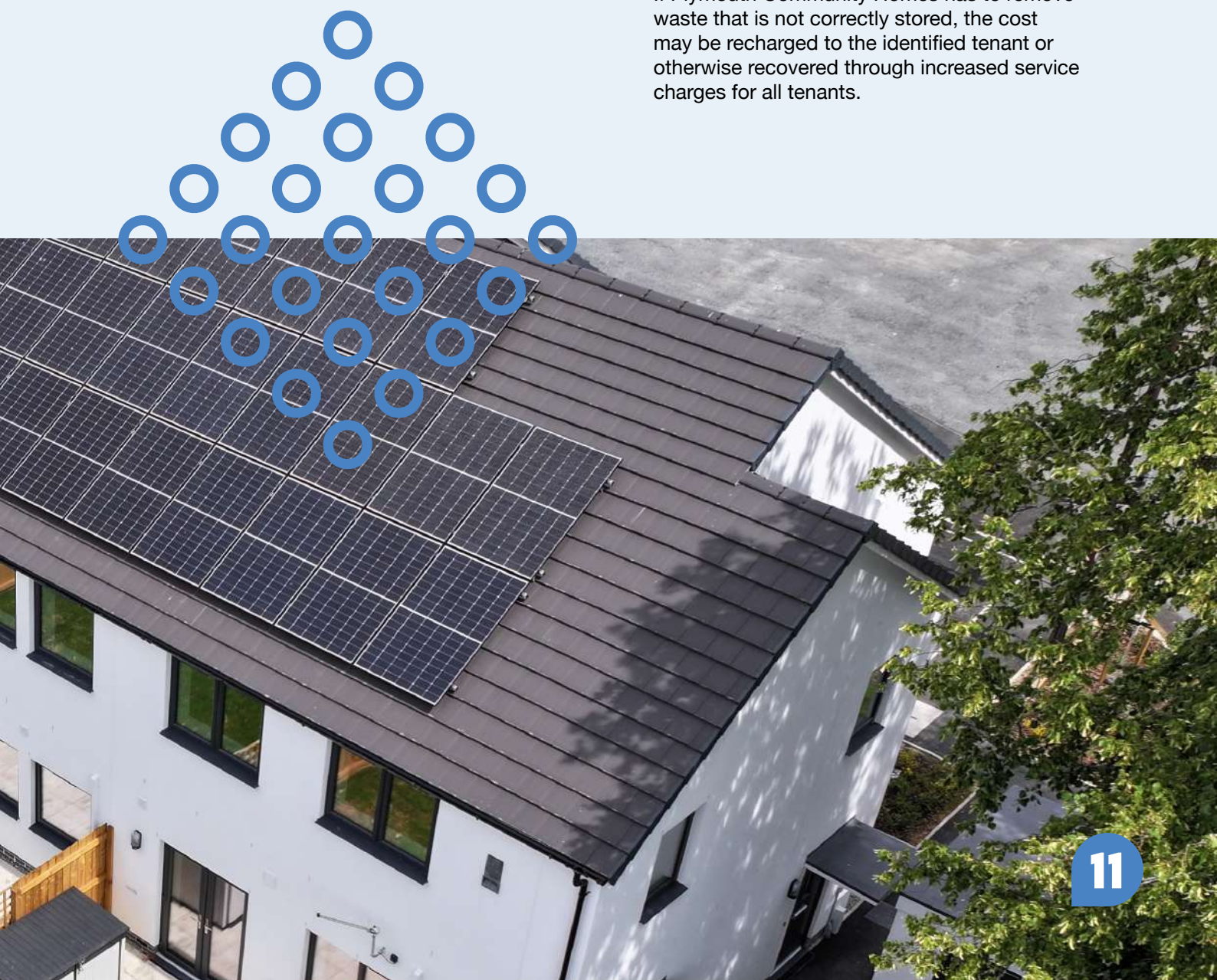
All bins and recycling containers should be stored within the rear garden of your home, except on your designated collection day.

Recycling Containers

Recycling containers can usually be ordered online or collected from your local council's customer service centres. Availability may vary, so it's best to check with your local authority for up-to-date information.

Important Notice

If Plymouth Community Homes has to remove waste that is not correctly stored, the cost may be recharged to the identified tenant or otherwise recovered through increased service charges for all tenants.



This information is available in other languages through our website



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