

Your guide to **repairs**



Contact Centre for Repairs 020 8921 8900

www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk


ROYAL borough of
GREENWICH

Introduction

This repairs and maintenance handbook tells you about the standard of service you can expect from Royal Greenwich and gives you a range of helpful information.

It is important that you understand your rights and responsibilities, which you can find on page 15.

We hope you find this handbook useful. If you need to know more, please call our Contact Centre for Repairs on **020 8921 8900**.

Tenant involvement

We have produced this handbook in consultation with members of our tenants' and residents' borough wide housing panel.

To find out more about how to get involved, contact the Community, Participation and Diversity Team on **020 8921 5558**.

**Please keep this handbook
in a safe place where you can easily
find it when you need a repair.**

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How to report repairs

Most people choose to report their repair by phone. You can speak to one of our Contact Centre staff on 020 8921 8900, who will help you during the following times:

Monday to Thursday 9.00am to 5.30pm

Friday 9am to 4.30pm

If you live in sheltered or supported housing, you can ask your scheme manager to ring the Contact Centre for Repairs for you. When your scheme manager is off duty, you can report your repair through Greenwich Telecare.

River Heights Tenant Management Co-operative (RHTMC): please report your repair to the TMC office on: **020 8316 2133**.

Walpole Estate Management Board (EMB): please report your repair to the EMB office on: **020 8317 4599**.

Emergencies outside office hours:

Ring 020 8854 8888 for emergency repairs only. We will only come out to make your home safe, and do the full repair during normal working hours. We will charge you the cost of our call-out if we find that the repair was not an emergency or you could have dealt with it yourself.

Please see page 10 for more information about emergency repairs.

Other useful phone numbers

Thames Water Utilities Ltd **0800 587 0036**

Gas emergencies (Transco) **0800 111 999**

EDF - Electricity **0800 096 9000**

Calls to 0800 Freephone numbers may not be free from some mobile phones, so please check with your provider

What happens when you report a repair?

When you report your repair, we will ask you to tell us the following:

- Your name, address and a contact phone number.
- As much as you can to help us do the repair effectively. If water is leaking into your home from another property, we will need to know the address of this property as well.
- A time when someone will be at home.
- Anything else you think we need to take into account about your household.
- Whether your home has recently been repaired or refurbished, as the work may be covered by a guarantee.
- If the repair relates to an adaptation for a disabled person.

After you have reported the repair, we will give you a job number and details of when the work will be carried out or inspected.

Please make sure you get a job number when you report your repair, and make a note of the number in case you need to make further enquiries. We will send you a receipt confirming the repair details.

Sometimes a Property Services Officer will need to look at the problem before we can order a repair and we will arrange a convenient time with you.

If you are out when we call, we will leave a card asking you to phone us to make another appointment.

If you cannot keep an appointment, please let us know, otherwise we may cancel your repair.

If the contractor does not arrive, please call the contractor's hotline (see page 6 for numbers).

Royal Greenwich will charge you if you deliberately provide false information about your repair, for example:

- **how urgent it is**
- **how it is affecting you**
- **how it was caused**

Repairs contractors

Our contractors have a Freephone hotline for you to contact them about the progress of your repair. Please have your repair order number ready before calling.



Repair contractor Freephone hotlines

Royal Greenwich Building Services: 0800 0521183

Gas Freephone hotlines

Royal Greenwich Building Services: 0800 317715

K&T Heating Services: 0800 0434726

These numbers will be on the repair receipt that we send.

Repairs priorities and timescales

Depending on how serious the repair is, we will deal with it within:

- 2 hours for an emergency repair
- 1-5 working days for an urgent repair
- up to 20 working days for a non-urgent repair.

Your right to repair

The Right to Repair Scheme covers certain small urgent repairs that may affect your health, safety or security. If they are not done within a certain time, you have the right to ask us to get another contractor to do them. If the second contractor does not do the repair in time, we may pay you compensation.

The repairs that qualify for this right are on page 34.

Planned maintenance

Planned maintenance is repair work we order in bulk because it's better value for money. We will tell you if your repair or replacement has to wait for a bulk order. Here are some examples of repairs that come under planned maintenance:

- inspecting and clearing drains and guttering
- fencing on roads or public rights of way
- painting shared internal areas in blocks of flats
- pest control
- tree work.



Out of hours emergency repairs

You can contact Royal Greenwich's emergency service outside office hours if the problem creates a **very serious** health and safety risk.

We should be able to respond to emergency repairs within 2 hours, depending on the type of emergency.

**Out of hours emergency repairs are 'make safe' only.
Your full repair will usually be ordered on the next working day,
depending on how urgent it is.**

You can phone the out of hours service on 020 8854 8888

When deciding if a repair is an emergency, we may take into account special circumstances in your household, such as sickness, age or disability.

Examples of emergency repairs include:

- no drinking water supply
- burst pipes and you cannot stop the water leak
- blocked drains and toilets causing flooding
- complete power failure in your home
- dangerous structures, such as ceilings, walls and chimneys
- fire or storm damage to your property. We will make your property safe if this is practical, bearing in mind weather conditions
- boarding up windows or doors and securing your property after a break-in, provided you have a crime reference number from the Police
- regaining entry if you have lost your key - we will recharge you the cost of this
- lift breakdowns.

Urgent repairs

1 working day - repair

Total loss of electricity.

Unsafe power, lighting socket or electric fitting.

Total loss of water supply.

Loss of gas supply.

Blocked flue to open fire or boiler.

Loss of heating (including hot water) between 1 November and 30 April.

Blocked or leaking toilet or toilet not flushing (where you have no other working toilet).

Leaking water pipe, heating pipe, tank or cistern, where the water cannot be shut off. Sometimes, we will just make the situation safe within the response time, and may have to return later to complete the work.

Insecure external window, door or lock.

3 working days - repair

Partial loss of electric power.

Blocked bath, basin or sink.

Rotten timber flooring or stair tread.

Loose or detached bannister or hand rail.

Tap that cannot be turned on or off at all.

Loss of heating (including hot water) between 1 May and 31 October.

Partial loss of water supply.

5 working days - repair

Leaking roof.

Door entry phone not working.

Mechanical extractor fans not working.

Non urgent Repairs - 20 working days

All other non-urgent minor repairs will be completed within 20 working days.

If we need to inspect your home before ordering your repair, we will tell you at the inspection when the repair should be completed.

Appointments and access to your home

Appointments for inspections

If we need to inspect your home, the Contact Centre for Repairs will arrange a convenient time for us to visit. We take account of the urgency of the repair when agreeing an appointment date.

We offer inspection visits for a morning or afternoon during the following times:

Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm

Appointments for repairs

We will offer you an appointment for any repairs that cannot be completed in one working day.

We offer appointments during the following times:

Monday to Thursday 9am-12 noon or 1-5pm

Friday 9am-12 noon or 1-4pm

Evenings - Monday to Friday Up to 8pm

Saturday Up to 1pm

We can only offer evening and Saturday appointments for repairs that can be done without disturbing your neighbours.

Access to your home

You must allow our staff and contractors access to inspect and do essential work, including repairs, improvements and safety checks required by law, as well as pest treatment. We will give you at least 24 hours' notice, except in an emergency.

In an emergency, we may have to enter your home in your absence if there is a risk of personal injury or serious damage to the property.

Knowing where things are in your home

To help us do repairs and maintenance work, it is helpful if you can tell us where the following are in your home:

- Mains water tap (stop cock), which is usually under the sink or wash hand basin.
- Electricity fuse box.
- Gas meter, if there is one.
- Heating controls. Make sure you know how to use these controls.

Please call the Contact Centre for Repairs if you need help with this on **020 8921 8900**.

Moving into your home

You will need to contact Thames Water if Royal Greenwich is not collecting your water charge. If you are not sure about this, call the Council on 020 8854 8888 and ask for your Income Officer.



Insuring the contents of your home

Although Royal Greenwich insures the structure of your building, you are responsible for insuring the contents of your home. We strongly advise all tenants to take out insurance to cover their possessions and decorations against theft or damage. This is also necessary in case you accidentally cause damage to your neighbour's home, for example, water damage from a leaking pipe or broken washing machine, or fire damage.

You can take advantage of Royal Greenwich's scheme or make your own arrangements with an insurance company.

Under Royal Greenwich's scheme, you pay your insurance charge weekly at the same time as your rent.

If you use Royal Greenwich's scheme, your insurance cover is automatically cancelled if you owe rent. We will let you know when it will be cancelled so you can make other arrangements.

Our insurance scheme covers damage to, or loss of:

- furniture
- electrical goods
- TV
- freezer contents
- clothing
- keys
- carpets

This includes water and fire damage, vandalism and theft. Staff at your local Council office can tell you how to join our insurance scheme.



Lettable homes standard - information for new tenants

When we invited you to view your new home, you would have received a booklet describing the standard you could expect your property to be in at the start of your tenancy.

Here are the main points of the Property Letting Standard for new tenants

Before we let you a new home, we will have:

- done a safety inspection of the gas, electrics and plumbing and completed any repairs needed to ensure they are safe to use
- arranged for any Council owned gas appliances in the property to be checked
- ensured the property is secure and all essential repairs have been done
- ensured the property is clear of rubbish
- inspected the property before you receive the keys
- arranged to complete any non-essential repairs after you move in.

If you need another copy of Royal Greenwich's Property Letting Standard, please contact your local office.

Repairs when moving under a mutual exchange

If you are exchanging your home with another tenant, we will tell you which repairs need to be done to your current home before the mutual exchange can go ahead. You may also become responsible for any repairs to the property you are moving to. You will be told about this.

The tenant you are exchanging with will also be told about any repairs in your home that will become their responsibility.

Before or soon after the exchange, a gas inspection and electrical inspection will be done.

We have a legal duty under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to service appliances and check gas pipe safety every 12 months.

We will take legal action forcing you to let us into the property to do all necessary work.

Our repair responsibilities

By law, we are responsible for keeping the structure and exterior of your home in good repair. To help us do this, we need you to report repairs and allow us reasonable access to your home.

We are also responsible for all communal facilities such as lifts and door entry systems. Please report repairs to the Contact Centre for Repairs on **020 8921 8900**.

We are responsible for repairs to:

Outside	Inside
Roof and chimneys	Walls and ceilings
Drains, gutters and rainwater pipes	Wiring and electrical fittings
Walls and windows	Gas installations for heating and hot water, but not your own cookers or fires
Outside doors and frames	Plumbing, except fittings and appliances you have installed
Steps and front garden paths	Waste pipes
Garages and storage cupboards.	Cisterns and toilets
	Baths, basins and sinks.

Other responsibilities

We have a legal duty under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to service gas appliances and do a gas safety check every 12 months, even if you don't use gas.

We also have a legal duty to do an electrical safety check every 10 years.

When we tell you that a gas safety check is due, it is important that you make an appointment for the check and keep to it.

We need you to allow us reasonable access to do these checks. If you do not we will take legal action to gain entry. You may then be recharged the costs of a forced entry.

Your repair responsibilities

Under your tenancy conditions, you are responsible for:

- taking good care of the interior of your home, including fixtures and fittings
- reporting repairs, especially if the problem is likely to cause injury or damage to people or the property
- allowing Council employees or contractors into your home to carry out inspections and necessary repairs or improvements, including gas servicing
- getting written consent from Royal Greenwich before you carry out alterations to your home, for example painting the exterior or installing an aerial or satellite dish
- removing unauthorised alterations before the end of the tenancy and making good any resulting damage
- handing back your home in good repair and reasonable condition at the end of your tenancy, empty of unwanted furniture and rubbish. If you don't, we will charge you for the removal
- not keeping paraffin, gas cylinders or any other substance that significantly increases the risk of fire or explosion on the property
- ensuring that any household waste products including discarded furniture and fittings are disposed of considerately and do not obstruct communal/public areas, such as corridors, balconies etc
- not damaging any fixtures or fittings (including signs) to the communal areas and to report damaged or defective items you may notice such as broken doors or glazing.

You are responsible for repairing and paying for any damage caused by you, your family, your guests, pets, or any contractor you employ.

You are also responsible for making reasonable efforts to do the following before contacting us for a repair:

- **shut off the water supply, if there is a serious leak**
- **unblock toilets and sinks.**

Residents should note that all Council boilers are Data Tagged, which means they can be easily identified in the event of theft

Other things you are responsible for:

- fixtures and fittings you have installed, such as curtain rails, showers, doors and cupboards
- broken gate catches and repairs to garden sheds
- cookers
- your own fires and heaters
- light bulbs and fuses
- loose and broken edging to kitchen work tops
- the full cost of fitting new locks and supplying keys and fobs if lost, except in special circumstances (see page 18). (You may want to leave a spare set of keys with someone you trust.)
- toilet seats
- lifting flooring before we do repairs
- adjusting internal doors when new floor covering is fitted
- knobs, knockers, spy-holes, letter boxes and doorbells
- plumbing connections to washing machines and dishwashers
- minor plaster cracks
- glazing
- draught excluders to doors and windows
- internal doors, unless they are fire doors, and cupboard latches
- any alterations or improvements you have done to your home
- a fence will be repaired or replaced only if it joins public land. Any other fencing will not be repaired or replaced and is your responsibility. Fencing that is in an unsafe condition will be removed.

If you are over 65 or disabled and are living on means-tested benefits or disability related benefit, the Greenwich Handyperson Service may be able to do some minor repairs for you. Examples include dealing with broken toilet seats and changing light bulbs. To find out more, call **020 8921 2614** or see page 32.

Repair responsibilities required by law

Gas: Fitting, altering or removing gas appliances or pipe work may only be done by a Gas Safe Registered person.

Electrics: Work should only be done by a person qualified or experienced to do the work. Fitting or replacement work in kitchens or bathrooms must:

- comply with part P of the Building Regulations, and
- be done by a qualified electrician who issues a certificate to say the work is safe.

Asbestos: Handling, cutting or breaking up asbestos will release asbestos fibres, which are harmful to health. We strongly advise you to get professional advice or contact us before removing or working on asbestos materials. If you intend to dispose of any material containing asbestos, you must do so in a way that is safe for you and other people. It must be sealed in marked bags and taken to a registered asbestos handler. See page 24 for more details.

Problems involving leasehold properties

If you rent a flat, your neighbour(s) may have bought the lease of their home from Royal Greenwich or from someone else who owned it. These residents are called leaseholders. Royal Greenwich continues to be responsible for the structure of the whole building and certain communal areas, but any leaseholders in the building are usually responsible for repairing and maintaining everything inside their flat.

By law, we have to consult leaseholders before we do work that will cost more than a certain amount, as they will have to pay their share of the cost.

If you are experiencing a problem involving a leasehold property, please call the Contact Centre for Repairs on **020 8921 8900**.



Repairs we charge for - all tenants

In most circumstances, we will charge you for repairs to damage caused by your misuse or neglect, for example losing your key or breaking fixtures and fittings such as windows. These are called 'rechargeable repairs'.

Our charges are based on a fixed price list. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, you must pay for the work before we do the repair. If we agree that your circumstances are exceptional, we will do the work and send you a bill for it when the work has been done.

If you are the victim of crime and your home has been damaged, you should report it to the Police and ask for a crime number. You must give us the crime number when you ask us to carry out repairs, including lock changes, otherwise you will have to pay in advance.

If you ask us to change your door locks for any other reason you will have to pay in advance, unless:

- all adults are aged 65 and over and any children living with you permanently are under 16;
- a child of 5 or under is locked in a property on their own;

You may also do the work yourself or pay for someone else to do it. If you do this, you must take reasonable health and safety precautions to avoid putting yourself or anyone else in danger. If you do the work yourself, we may inspect it to make sure it meets our standards. If you want to alter or improve your home, you must first get our written permission, which we will not unreasonably withhold or delay.

Fitting, altering or removing gas appliances or pipe work must only be done by a Gas Safe Registered person.

Electrical work should only be done by someone qualified or experienced to do the work. Fitting or replacement work in kitchens or bathrooms must:

- **comply with Part P of the Building Regulations, and**
- **be done by a qualified electrician who issues a certificate to say the work is safe.**

If you are unsure whether your repair is rechargeable, please call the Contact Centre for Repairs on 020 8921 8900.

Repairs we charge for - tenants moving out

In certain circumstances we will charge you for repairs.

When you move out, you are responsible for leaving the property clean and empty of unwanted furniture and rubbish (including lofts, sheds and the garden). If you don't, we will charge you.

If you are transferring to another Council property, we may refuse to let you move unless your property is clean and repairs you are responsible for have been carried out.

Disposal companies charge high fees for taking computers, televisions, fridges and other similar appliances. If you leave them behind, you could end up being charged several hundred pounds. Please contact Hazardous Waste on **020 8921 4664** for advice.



Right to compensation

You have the Right to Compensation if you have paid for home improvements and leave before you have had the full benefit of them. To qualify, you must have had our written permission before doing the work.

Compensation is based on a formula set by the Government. You cannot get compensation for improvements that cost you less than £50 or more than £3,000. You can make more than one claim.

Only certain types of improvement qualify, as follows:

- Bath or shower
- Wash hand basin
- Toilet
- Kitchen sink
- Storage cupboards in bathroom/kitchen
- Work surfaces for food preparation
- Room or water heating
- Thermostatic radiator valves
- Insulation of pipes, water tanks or cylinders
- Loft insulation
- Cavity wall insulation
- Draught proofing of external doors or windows
- Double glazing or other window replacement or secondary glazing
- Rewiring or providing of power and lighting or other electrical fittings, including smoke detectors
- Security measures but not burglar alarm systems

All requests must be in writing.

Please call the Contact Centre for Repairs on **020 8921 8900** and it will give you the address.

Compensation for home loss and disturbance

If we ask you to move out of your home because we need to redevelop the area or make major improvements or repairs, you may be entitled to compensation.

We will let you know what you are entitled to and how to claim.



Our service standards

We use service standards to help ensure our services are monitored and consistent. The standards apply across Royal Greenwich. They are as follows:

Telephones - we will:

- aim to answer phone calls within 5 rings (15 seconds)
- tell you the name of the person or section you are dealing with
- call you back, on request, to reduce the cost to you of reporting a repair
- provide phones in our reception areas for you to use
- use Language Line, so that our service is more accessible

**We are particularly busy on Monday mornings or after a Bank Holiday.
You are more likely to get a quick response if you ring us at other times.**

Letters - we will:

- respond fully to all correspondence (including email) within 10 working days.
If this is not possible, we will write to you stating when we can
- use plain English and translate any letters and information you don't understand.

Complaints - we will:

- respond fully to all formal complaints (including those by phone and email) within 15 working days. If this is not possible, we will write to you stating when we can
- use plain English and translate any responses and information you don't understand
- monitor all complaints by ethnicity, gender, disability, age, religion and sexual orientation to ensure that our service is accessible to all.

Respecting others

You or anyone acting on your behalf must not harass, abuse, or use or threaten violence against any Council employee or agent.

Our customer care standards

We want to make sure our staff and contractors treat you and your home with respect. All our staff and contractors will:

- show you their identification card before asking to enter your property
- have appropriate clothing and the equipment needed to complete your repair
- use dustsheets where needed, and clean up at the end of each day and at the end of the job. Please let us know if this does not happen
- always be friendly and courteous and respect your home and culture
- make every effort to keep you informed of progress and phone you if there are delays (if we have your phone number)

If you need anything translated, our repair operatives can use a phone interpreting service. They will show you a Language Line card if they think you need this service. Female tenants may ask for a female operative if this would make them feel more comfortable and we will do everything we can to meet this request.

To check our standards, we will examine:

- a sample of all repairs orders, and measures of customer responses, to ensure the quality of work is of a high standard
- site arrangements to ensure they are safe
- responses to complaints to ensure they are dealt with properly

Access to your home

You should ask to see official identification cards before letting anyone into your home, including our employees.

Refuse access to anyone who can't provide identification.

Letting us know what you think

We want you to be satisfied with our repairs service. If you are not, we need to know so we can put things right. If you think we have done a good job, do please tell us so we can pass this message on to our staff.

You can let us know by:

- phoning the Contact Centre for Repairs on 020 8921 8900
- participating in our customer satisfaction sampling
- making a complaint - we have a two stage formal complaints procedure and we will respond to you within 15 working days. There is more information about complaints on our website at www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk
- contacting your councillor or MP at their local surgery or in writing, to:
 - o Ward Councillor, Town Hall, Wellington Street, Woolwich SE18 6PW
 - o Member of Parliament, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.
 - o our website at www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk
 - o Members Support on **020 8921 5045/5050**
 - o your local tenant housing panel representative.

Claiming for disrepair

Many law firms offer to act on your behalf if you think your landlord has not repaired something they should have done, or have done a repair badly. They often offer help on a 'no win, no fee' basis. However, there may be hidden costs, and many of these firms make promises they cannot keep.

We are committed to solving any disrepair problems and we ask you to discuss your concerns with us before using a law firm.

We will strongly defend all false claims of disrepair.

Other useful information

Asbestos

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral made up of many small fibres. It is mined from rock and milled into fibres from which a wide range of materials were produced.

Why was asbestos used in buildings?

Asbestos fibres are strong and resistant to heat and chemicals. This led to their widespread use in a wide range of building materials and other products, particularly between 1950 and 1980 but certain types were still used up to 1999.

Why is asbestos potentially a problem?

Asbestos-containing materials in good condition do not pose a risk to your health. They can however become a risk should asbestos fibres become airborne.

This may occur if the asbestos-containing material is drilled, sanded, cut or broken up. It can also occur should the material be in a poor or damaged condition and liable to disturbance. If disturbed, the material may release fibres that can be inhaled deep into the lung causing possible damage.

People at most risk are those that work directly with asbestos. These include builders, carpenters, electricians, plumbers and decorators.

What is the likelihood of exposure to asbestos in the home?

Even if your home contains asbestos products you are highly unlikely to be affected by it.

Any repairs or major works undertaken in a tenant's homes by Royal Greenwich, or our contractors, will include a risk assessment. This will be to assess the potential location of asbestos and likelihood of disturbance during the works.

Measures will be taken to manage the material safely either by avoiding disturbance, encapsulation or removal by specialist contractors and working in a controlled manner. This will further reduce chances of exposure.

Where is asbestos likely to be found?

The list below shows some common areas where asbestos-containing materials may be found. The list of products that may contain asbestos is a lengthy one - this list is not all-inclusive.

Exterior

- 1) Roof garage and shed sheets, tiles or roof felt
- 2) Gutters and down pipes
- 3) Fascia

Interior

- 4) Partition walls
- 5) Panels beneath windows
- 6) Cupboards around domestic boilers
- 7) Panels behind electrical equipment
- 8) Panels behind fires or heaters
- 9) Panels on or inside fire doors
- 10) Concealed in ducts or pipe casings
- 11) Bath panels
- 12) Floor tiles
- 13) Textures coatings (artex)
- 14) Gaskets and rope seals inside gas appliances
- 15) Cold water storage tanks

Doing DIY and avoiding Asbestos

High, short-term exposure to asbestos fibres can occur during 'Do It Yourself' DIY work.

- Do not carry out any DIY works on asbestos containing materials
- Do not disturb it by banging nails or screwing into it
- Do not drill into it
- Do not drill into it by hand or power tools
- Do not scrape it or use a steam stripper
- Do not attempt to remove asbestos-containing materials

If you are unsure if there are any asbestos-containing materials in your home, please call Royal Greenwich on **020 8921 4025** to find out more before you do any DIY work.

If you have damaged asbestos materials in your home you should seek advice on appropriate action to take. Please telephone Royal Greenwich's Contact Centre for Repairs on **020 8921 8900** and we will arrange for someone to inspect the damage.

Advice for leaseholders

Leaseholders are responsible for the repair and maintenance of their properties. This includes any materials that may contain asbestos. Specialist laboratories can sample suspect material to determine if asbestos is present, contact the Asbestos Removal Contractors Association (ARCA) below who can advise on surveyors and contractors licensed to remove it.

Where can I get further information on asbestos?

The following organisations will provide further information and advice on asbestos.

- Health & Safety Executive (HSE) advice on legal requirements for asbestos
www.hse.gov.uk telephone **0845 345 0055**
- Asbestos Removal Contractors Association (ARCA) for UKAS accredited asbestos surveyors and removal contractors www.arca.org.uk telephone **01283 531126**.



Condensation

Condensation happens when moist air reaches a cold surface, such as a window. Condensation often builds up when washing and drying clothes, and cooking. There may be black mould too, which can affect walls, ceilings and window frames, as well as your clothes and bedding. There are things you can do to reduce condensation:

- Make sure the level of heat in your home is constant and avoid sudden changes in temperature.
- Make sure there is ventilation in each room. Don't block air vents.
- When cooking, close the kitchen door, cover saucepans and open the windows. Switch on the extractor fan, if you have one.
- Dry damp clothes outside and vent tumble driers to the outside. Please don't block access on shared walkways if you are drying clothes outside.
- When running a bath, run the cold water before the hot. Afterwards, open the window, if you have one, and shut the bathroom door. Switch on your extractor fan, if you have one.

Do not remove fuses from extractor fans.

For safety reasons, do not ever use paraffin or liquid gas heaters in the home.

If you would like a copy of our leaflet about condensation, please call the Contact Centre for Repairs on **020 8921 8900**.

Decent Homes

Decent Homes is a Government standard that all Council properties should meet.

The Decent Homes standard means your home should:

- meet the statutory minimum standard
- be in a reasonable state of repair
- have reasonably modern facilities and services
- provide a reasonable degree of comfortable warmth.

The statutory minimum standard for Decent Homes means your home should be:

- free from serious disrepair
- structurally stable
- free from dampness that may harm health.

Your home should also have:

- adequate heating, lighting and ventilation
- an adequate piped supply of drinking water
- an effective drainage system
- a suitably located toilet
- a bath or shower and wash hand basin with hot and cold water
- facilities for preparing and cooking food.

Your home should also meet the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, which aims to keep homes safer by assessing 29 hazards that may damage health and safety.

There's a full list on our website at www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk

or ask the Contact Centre for Repairs on **020 8921 8900**.

Decorating

Royal Greenwich may do some decorating for older or disabled people.

Please contact **020 8921 6541** for more information.

Disabled adaptations

If you need to have your home altered to meet your needs, for example having grab rails or a shower fitted, please contact Royal Greenwich's Adults and Older People's Services Access Team on **020 8921 2304**. They will let you know if you qualify for an assessment by an occupational therapist. The occupational therapist may then arrange to visit you and recommend how your home can be adapted for you to live more comfortably and independently.

If you don't qualify for an occupational therapy assessment, or you just need a simple grab rail, the Greenwich Handyperson Service may be able to help.

To find out more, call **020 8921 2614** or see below.

Energy saving tips - save energy and money

Heating

- Shut your windows when the heating is on and close all curtains at dusk to keep the heat in.
- Keep your internal doors closed to reduce draughts.
- If you can adjust the heating in your home, turn it down if you are too hot. Turning down the thermostat by 1° can save up to 10% on fuel bills.

Cooking

- Choose the right size pan for the food you are cooking and the hob size.
- Keep the lid on or use a pressure cooker.
- Don't overfill the kettle for just one drink.

Lighting

- Replace ordinary light bulbs with energy saving ones, especially where the lights are on for long periods. They use about 25% of the energy and last up to 15 times longer. They can also save around £10 a year on your bill.

Appliances

- If you have a washing machine, wash a full load each time. Wash at the lowest temperature for each load.
- Defrost your freezer regularly. Don't leave the fridge door open for longer than necessary and don't put hot or warm food in the fridge - let it cool first.
- Don't leave your TV and video on standby - turn them off at the main switch. On standby, they can still use up to 25% of the electricity they use at full power, (check your user instructions) .

For more information call the Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on **0800 512 012**.



Fire Safety

Communal staircases, corridors and balconies should be kept clear of all combustible material or anything that might block escape routes e.g. household waste, furniture, pushchairs, prams and bicycles.

Domestic waste, i.e. rubbish should be removed to the appropriate refuse area immediately and not stored in communal areas.

It is a breach of your tenancy conditions to store items in communal areas within blocks, which pose a fire risk or a potential obstruction. These items will be removed - you may be charged for the removal and legal action could be taken against you.

Preventing Fire

Never smoke in a chair if you think you may doze off, never smoke in bed.

Do not leave a lit cigarette, pipe or candle unattended. Use deep ashtrays so that cigarettes cannot roll out, and don't throw hot ash into a waste paper basket.

Keep matches and lighters well out of the reach of children.

Sit at least three feet away from heaters. Never put a heater near clothes or furnishings.

Check the condition of cables to all electrical equipment regularly. Don't overload electrical sockets.

Before going to bed:

- Close all the doors as this helps to prevent fire spreading.
- Make sure the cooker and heaters are turned off.
- Switch off and unplug all electrical appliances except those that are meant to stay on, like a video or fridge.
- Empty ashtrays, making sure the contents are cold.

Prevent a fire starting in the kitchen:

- Never fill a pan more than one third full of fat or oil.
- Never leave the pan unattended with the heat on.
- Dry food before placing it in the hot oil - wet food will cause the oil to bubble up and possibly spill over the edge of the pan.

If the pan does catch fire:

- Don't move it or throw water on to it.
- Turn off the heat if it is safe to do so.

If in any doubt, leave the room, close the door, shout a warning to others and call the fire brigade.

Planning your escape in the event of a fire

Fire can strike when you least expect it, often during the night. You will only have a short time to get out, so plan your escape route rather than waiting until there is a fire.

Think of another way out in case the normal one is blocked.

Keep the escape routes clear of obstructions at all times. If the corridors, balconies or staircases outside your home are not kept clear report it to Royal Greenwich. It is a criminal offence to block these routes or damage any fitting provided to protect the route.

Tell everyone in the house where the door and window keys are kept. Avoid locking yourself in at night with a key, use a thumb turn lock or leave the key in the lock at night.

We will not give permission for security grilles on front doors and windows as they can make it harder to get out of the property if there is a fire.

Escaping from fire

Fit a smoke alarm, this gives extra time for you and others to get out safely. A smoke alarm is cheap and simple to install. Make sure it is a good one and complies with the British Standard or equivalent type of international standard. They are widely available from DIY and hardware shops. If you have difficulties, local voluntary organisations or the fire brigade may be able to fit the alarm for you.

If your smoke alarm goes off while you are asleep or you smell smoke, don't investigate. Shout to wake everyone up, and get them out as quickly as possible. Never assume that it is a false alarm.

Dial 999 if you have time.

Check closed doors with the back of the hand. If they are warm do not open them because this means there is a fire on the other side.

Smoke and fumes can kill. If there is a lot of smoke, get down as near to the floor as possible where the air will be cleaner.

Don't rush, keep calm and get everyone out as quickly as possible. Don't stop to pick up valuables, but you may need a coat if it is safe to get one.

If your escape is blocked by fire it may be safer to stay put until the fire brigade arrives. Close the door and use towels or sheets to block any gaps to stop the smoke. Go to a window, call for help and wait to be rescued.

Escaping from fires in flats and maisonettes

If you live in a flat or maisonette please follow this extra advice:

Flats and maisonettes are built to give you some protection from fire. Walls, floors and doors will hold back flames and smoke for a time.

If there is a fire elsewhere in the building you're usually safer staying in your flat unless heat or smoke is affecting you.

If there is a fire in your flat, leave the building closing the door to your flat behind you.

If you can safely do so, warn others in the adjoining flats that you have a fire in your home.

If there is a lot of smoke, crawl along the floor where the air will be clearer.

If you live in a building with a lift: Do Not Use Lifts If There Is A Fire, Go Down The Stairs Instead.

If doors are open on the staircase close them as you leave to stop smoke spreading.

Call 999 from any phone as soon as possible when it is safe to do so. Give them the address including the number of your flat, and tell them which floor the fire is on.

If you know your postcodes give this as well.

Do not re-enter the building unless instructed to by the Fire Brigade.

It is Royal Greenwich's responsibility to protect you from the danger of gas related problems by carrying out an annual gas safety check.

The Gas Safety Regulations 1998 specify that it is the duty of the landlord to ensure that appliances, flues and pipe work are safe to use.

Even if you don't have any gas appliances, such as a cooker or a fire, we still need to check the pipes that run through your property. If we contact you to arrange a gas inspection in your home, it's because we've already identified this as essential.

You are responsible for allowing these checks to take place. You are in breach of your tenancy agreement if you don't let us in. If necessary we will go to court to gain access and, as a last resort, we'll force entry into your home. You will be re-charged for this.

Royal Greenwich Gas Contractors who are both registered with Gas Safe are Greenwich Building Services (Central, East and West Areas) Free-phone 0800 317 715 and K&T Heating Services (South Area) Free phone 0800 043 4726

Handyperson Service

The Greenwich Handyperson Service provides help for older and disabled people by doing some essential jobs around the house.

The service is available to private home owners and council tenants aged 60 or over, and to people who have a disability.

Council tenants may get help with:

- hanging curtains or blinds
- changing light bulbs
- taping down carpets
- replacing broken toilet seats
- installing simple stair grab rails
- installing or repairing door bells.

The scheme is free if you get means tested benefits, Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance.

For more information call 020 8921 2614

Internal woodwork

We won't repair or replace wood work inside your home unless there is a health and safety risk. This applies to things like doors, door frames and skirting boards.

Laminate flooring

Please ask us for advice if you are thinking of installing laminate flooring.

Please consider the following before you replace your carpets with laminate flooring:

- Slippery floors are the main cause of over a third of falls by older people.
- If you spill anything on the floor, it should be mopped up straight away to avoid the risk of slips and falls.
- If you have a rug on top of the flooring, it should have anti-slip matting underneath. Loose mats and rugs can cause tripping and injury.
- Before installing laminate flooring, you must fit suitable underlay to act as sound insulation. Otherwise you may cause noise nuisance to your neighbours, particularly if you live in a flat, and we may take legal action against you for breaching your tenancy. This could result in you having to take up your laminate flooring or, in extreme cases, losing your home.
- If you install laminate flooring, we will not refit it if it needs to be removed to do a repair.

Major work

We do various major improvements every year and will contact you if you are going to be affected. Major improvements include window and roof replacement.

Please contact your local office to find out if your home is scheduled for improvement or look on our website at www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk.

Right to repair

The right to repair scheme applies to qualifying repairs only. A qualifying repair is one that remedies the defects set out in the table below:

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

Repairs costing more than £250 are exempt and do not count as a qualifying repair.

Where the contractor fails to meet the repairs deadline (as shown above), the tenant is entitled to ask for a second contractor to carry out the work. The Right to Repair does not apply if the tenant has requested a longer period than the “prescribed period”, for the commencement of work. If the work or materials are covered by a guarantee or warranty the designated first contractor will have to carry out the work.

If the second contractor fails to carry out the repair by the deadline, the tenant is entitled to compensation, for details check with your local Council office.

Smoke detectors

We recommend that you fit smoke detectors in your home. We install smoke detectors before we let our empty properties. Check that your smoke detector is working properly at least once a month and change the battery when it runs out.

If you are aged over 60 or disabled and living on a means-tested benefit or disability-related benefit, the Greenwich Handyperson Service can do a Home Fire Safety Check. They will give you advice about fire safety that is specific to your home and can install or replace smoke detectors for you. This service is free, offered in partnership with the London Fire Brigade.

For more information call **020 8921 2614**.

Trees

We will do tree work only where there is a health and safety risk, or if the tree is likely to damage your property. All other tree work in your garden is your responsibility, but you will need our written permission before doing any pruning, or removing any established trees or hedges.

TV aerials

We install and maintain some TV aerials, usually those fitted to blocks of flats. However, most tenants will need to install and maintain their own aerial.

We are not legally responsible for providing TV aerials. If you want to fix a satellite dish to council property, you must ask for our **written permission** before doing so.

Translations and other formats

This document contains important information about Neighbourhood Services. The information can be provided in your language, in large print, on disc, tape, Braille or other format. Ask your local Council office for advice.

આ પત્રિકામાં ડાઉસીન સેવા પર અગત્યના માહિત આપવામાં આવે છે. આ માહિત ગુજરાતીમાં, મોટા અક્ષરોમાં, કમ્પ્યુટરની ડીસ્ક પર, ટેપ પર, બ્રેઈલમાં અથવા બીજા આવૃત્તિમાં મળી શકે છે. સલાહ માટે તમારા ડાઉસીન ઓફિસમાં પૂછો.

GUJARATI

এ ডকুমেন্টে হাউজিং সার্ভিস সমূহ সম্পর্কে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ তথ্য রয়েছে। এসব তথ্য বাংলায়, বড় অক্ষরে মুদ্রিত আকারে, ডিস্ক, টেপ, ব্রেইলী বা অক্ষরের জন্য বিশেষভাবে মুদ্রিত অথবা অন্যান্য আকারে দেয়া যাবে। পরামর্শের জন্য আপনার স্থানীয় কাউন্সিলে যোগাযোগ করুন।

BENGALI

இத்தகவல் பத்திரம் வீட்டு சேவைகள் பற்றிய முக்கிய தகவல்களைக் கொண்டுள்ளது. இத்தகவல்களைத் தமிழில், பெரிய அச்சப்பிரதியில், டிஸ்கில், ரேப்பில், கண்பார்வை குறைபாடுள்ளவர்கள் தடவிவாசிக்கும் (பிரெய்ல்) வசதியில் அளித்து உதவப்படும். உங்கள் உள்ளூர் வீட்டுவசதியளிக்கும் ஆபீசில் இதுபற்றிய அறிவுமையக் கேட்டறியவும்.

TA I L

Bu belgede konut hizmetleriyle ilgili önemli bilgiler yer almaktadır. Buradaki bilgileri Türkçe olarak size ilticobilceğimiz gibi, iri harflerle basılmış, diskete yazılmış, teyp okunmuş şekilde ya da görmeyenler için kabartma Braille alfabesi olarak veya başka bir formatta da verebiliriz. Bu konuda yöreinizdeki belediye konut ofisine başvurabilirsiniz.

TURKISH

Este documento contiene información de importancia sobre servicios de vivienda. La información podrá facilitarse en español, en tipo grande, en disco, en cinta, en Braille, u otros formatos. Solicite asesoramiento en su Oficina Local de la Vivienda.

SPANISH

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਵਿਚ ਘਰ ਦੇਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਡਿਸਕ ਜਾਂ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ, ਬ੍ਰੇਲ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸਦੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਦੇ ਕੌਂਸਿਲ ਆਫ਼ਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਗਣਾਹ ਲਓ।

PUNJABI

Dokumentigaani wuxuu xarbaarsan yahay xog aad muhiim u ah oo ku saabsan adeegyada guri dejinta. Xogtaani waxaa lagu heli karaa iyadoo ku qoran Afka Soomaaliga, ama farta waaweyn, amase iyadoo cajaladda kombiyuutarka ku duuban, amase iyadoo cod ah oo ku duuban cajaladda rikoorka ama farta dadka indhaha la amase iyadoo u qoran qaabab kale. Fadlan ka codso talo arrintaas ku saabsan Sarkaalkaaga kuu qaabilsan Guri dajinta.

SOMALI

Ce document contient des informations importantes concernant les services de logement. Cette information peut être fournie en français, en gros caractères, sur disque, sur bande, en Braille ou en d autres formats. Contactez votre « Council Office » (bureau de logement) local pour vous renseigner.

FRENCH

這份文件中有關於住房服務的很重要信息。我們擁有此文件的中文版，大號字體版本，而且還提供錄音磁帶，文件存盤，盲文印刷版本等服務。欲瞭解詳情，請查詢您的地區房屋事務所。

CHINESE

Bản văn này gồm có những chỉ liết quan trọng về dịch vụ nhà cửa. Những chỉ liết đó có bản tiếng Việt, chữ to, trên đĩa, trong băng, in băng hệ thống chữ nổi (cho người mù) hoặc dưới những dạng khác. Xin hỏi phòng nhà cửa địa phương của bạn để được chỉ dẫn.

VIETNAMESE

Notes

Notes

PUSH CARD OUT AND KEEP IN A HANDY PLACE

Contact Centre for Repairs

020 8921 8900 - Textphone 020 8921 4413

Out of hours emergency repairs:

020 8854 8888 - Textphone 020 8921 4413

www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk

email: repairs@greenwich.gov.uk

Always ask to see official identification cards before letting anyone into your home, including our employees.

Refuse access to anyone who can't provide ID.



This document contains important information about housing repairs. The information can be provided in your language, in large print, on disc, tape, Braille or other format.

Ask your local Council office for advice.



Housing Services

The Woolwich Centre
35 Wellington Street

Woolwich, London SE18 6HQ