

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE



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How to Report a Repair

If your home needs repair work by Ashfield Homes, you should contact us as soon as possible by:



- Telephoning the **Repairs Call Handling Centre on Freephone Tel- 0800 479 4999**
- Logging on to Ashfield Homes' website at www.ashfieldhomes.co.uk and use the Repairs Locator Tool
- Visiting your local Ashfield Homes Property Shop
- Letter to Ashfield Homes Ltd, Northern Depot, Station Road, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts, NG17 5HB
- Informing any Ashfield Homes employee
- E-mail to ahmail@ashfieldhomes.co.uk

If you are not sure who is responsible for the repair – i.e. yourself or Ashfield Homes, please contact us and we will advise you.

If your home has been fitted with an adaptation or any specialist equipment such as a stairlift or a shower that is not working properly, you should contact the **Repairs Call Handling Centre on Freephone Tel- 0800 479 4999**.

It would be helpful if you could provide us with details of the make, type and model of the equipment, what the problem is and when you are available for someone to call to carry out an inspection or repair.

When Are We Open?

The Repairs Call Handling Centre **Freephone Tel- 0800 479 4999** is open Monday to Friday 8.00am - 6.00pm for the reporting of all repairs and maintenance issues.

Outside of normal working hours you are welcome to contact us on the same number **Freephone Tel- 0800 479 4999** to report **emergency repairs only** 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. See page 34 for repairs which are considered as an emergency.



How Will We Diagnose the Repair?

With your assistance, if the repair is straightforward or an emergency, we may be able to diagnose the problem over the telephone by asking you a series of questions about the nature of the problem. If we can diagnose the problem with you over the telephone, we will arrange to send a Repairs Technician to your home to carry out the repair.

If your repair request is complex or you require advice of a technical nature, a Technical Officer will visit you first so that the correct prognosis can be made and materials can be arranged for the job. The Technical Officer can visit your home at your convenience, by appointment.

Any repair appointments can be arranged by contacting the **Repairs Call Handling Centre on Freephone Tel- 0800 479 4999**.

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Who Will Carry Out the Repair?

Most repairs conducted within your home will be completed by our Repairs Technicians, but for some specialised repair work, it may be necessary for an approved contractor to conduct the work on our behalf.

All our employees and contractors carry ID at all times, therefore if you are in any doubt about the identity of the caller to your home, please do not hesitate to contact our **Repairs Call Handling Centre on Freephone Tel- 0800 479 4999**.

PLEASE REMEMBER - "IF YOU'RE IN DOUBT, SHUT THEM OUT".

Appointments

If our Repairs Technicians need to get access into your home to complete repair work, you will be offered an appointment at your convenience.

Unfortunately, we cannot provide you with a specific time when we will be visiting your home, however, you may request a time and we will endeavour to meet this where we can.

We also offer evening and Saturday morning appointments upon request, for certain types of repair. Please contact your **Repairs Call Handling Centre for more details on Freephone Tel- 0800 479 4999**.



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Communication Regarding Your Repairs

For emergency repairs we will tell you when you report this when we expect one of our Technical Officers or Repairs Technicians to visit you. For all other reported repairs we will write to you to confirm what action Ashfield Homes have taken, or are going to take.



You will receive a letter for the following reasons:

- To confirm an appointment date for a repair or inspection to be completed
- To inform you if any requested repair work or inspections have been cancelled and the reason why
- To confirm any non-urgent repairs that have been ordered for you, and their anticipated completion date

When you have an appointment arranged with us you may also receive a text message reminder the day before we arrive, so please provide us with your telephone numbers when reporting your repair.

Please Keep Your Appointment

Once an appointment has been made, it is important that you are at home on the arranged date and time when one of our Technical Officers calls. If you are not in, a visiting card will be left indicating that we were unable to complete the necessary repairs, as arranged.

If you still require the repair to be completed, you should respond quickly and contact the **Repairs Call Handling Centre on Freephone Tel- 0800 479 4999** to arrange another appointment and avoid the repair request being cancelled.

What if I Cannot be in as Arranged?

If the appointment is not convenient, you may change it by contacting your **Repairs Call Handling Centre on Freephone** Tel- **0800 479 4999**, or by using any of the other methods of contact outlined earlier.



Emergency Standby Service

Please only use this service for real emergencies, by contacting us using our usual **24 hour Freephone number** Tel- **0800 479 4999**. If the emergency reporting system is abused, you may put another person's health or welfare at risk. If you provide us with false information or circumstances and we attend your home for non-emergency repairs, you may be re-charged.

We will get someone to you as quickly as practicably possible to ensure your home is made safe, 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. However, sometimes it may not be possible to complete a full repair, and a temporary or make safe repair will be completed.

DO NOT USE THIS SERVICE, UNLESS IT IS AN ABSOLUTE EMERGENCY, PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION.



Gas Leaks

Gas leaks are initially dealt with by National Grid on Freephone Tel- **0800 111999**. If you think you can smell gas, please take the following steps:

nationalgrid

- Put out any cigarettes or naked flames
- Check you have not left a gas tap or cooker on
- Turn off your gas supply at the meter
- Open doors and windows to let the gas out
- Do not use electrical switches, doorbells or a naked flame
- Do not use a telephone in the property – it can cause sparks
- **Ring National Grid's emergency number on Freephone Tel- 0800 111999**
- National Grid will make your home safe and advise you what to do next

If you inform us of any suspected gas leaks, we will immediately inform National Grid on your behalf before proceeding with any repairs.

No Electricity?

Before you contact the Repairs Call Handling Centre, please first check that a fuse hasn't



blown in your fuse box. If you have a modern circuit breaker type of fuse box, check that the trip switch or reset switch doesn't need resetting.

Before replacing the fuse wire, or resetting the trip or reset switch, unplug any appliance that might be faulty. Usual problem appliances include kettles, toasters and washing machines.

If you still have no electricity supply after completing the above steps, please ring the **Repairs Call Handling Centre on Freephone** Tel- **0800 479 4999**.

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How Quickly Can You Expect Repairs to be Done?

The time taken to complete repairs depends on the sort of problem you have. We have seven different categories ranging from emergencies where there could be a danger to life, to non-urgent repairs like cleaning your gutters.

We always try to work flexibly with our customers and in some circumstances, usually for older people or people with disabilities, we may attend to your repair sooner than the priority target.

Please advise us of any circumstances you consider we should be aware of, in order for us to offer you a service suitable to meet your individual needs.

Priority A – Emergencies Where We Will Visit Your Home Within 24 Hours

This is where there is likely to be a danger to life or major damage to your home or surrounding homes. We will try to get to you as quickly as possible to make the situation safe. The complete repair might take longer to carry out. Examples of Priority A repairs include:

- Gas leaks – phone **National Grid first on Freephone Tel- 0800 111 999**
- Total or partial loss of gas supply
- Total loss of hot water
- Total loss of heating between dates 1st October to 31st March (Winter)
- Blocked flue or chimney to heating appliance
- Partial loss of heating between dates 1st October to 31st March (Winter), where it can be shown to be urgently required e.g. by older people, disabled people, infants (*Continued*)

Priority A – Emergencies Where We Will Visit Your Home Within 24 Hours (*Continued*)

- Total loss of drinking water
- Blocked or leaking drain or sewer (this may be Severn Trent Water's full responsibility if the property was built prior to 1936)
- Blocked toilet – but only if there is no other working toilet for your home
- Tap which cannot be turned off
- Severe leaking water or heating pipe, tank, cistern or toilet
- Overflow running full bore
- Make safe insecure window, external door or external lock. However, lost keys are the responsibility of the tenant, except if you are a pensioner and then we will provide new keys or locks if they are required
- Rotten timber flooring or stair tread causing potential health and safety hazard
- Faulty staircase and corridor lighting in blocks of flats or sheltered accommodation for older people
- Dangerous structures such as loose cast iron rainwater gutters, unsafe chimney stacks or roofs
- Dangerous electrical wiring, sockets or switches
- Loose or detached banister or handrail for stairs
- Repairs causing serious danger to the security of the home



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Priority B Where We Will Visit Your Home Within 3 Working Days

This is for urgent repairs that do not fall into priority A. These include:

- Total loss of heating between dates 1st April to 30th September (Summer)
- Partial loss of heating between dates 1st October to 31st March (Winter)
- Partial loss of hot water (one tap left working only)
- Leaking water or heating pipe, tank, cistern, toilet (dripping or slight)
- Blocked bath
- Partial loss of lighting (apart from elderly and disabled people)

Priority C Where We Will Visit Your Home Within 7 Working Days

These are for urgent repairs that do not fall into priority A or B. These include:

- Electrical fitting not working but it is not a danger to health
- Leaking hot water tanks and other sanitary or water appliances, not dealt with under priority A or B – i.e. a leaking tap which can be contained
- Replacement of cracked or faulty back boilers where there is no hot water or heating available
- Partial loss of water, one tap not working
- Tap that cannot be turned on
- Taps dripping
- Blocked sink or basin

(Continued)



Priority C Where We Will Visit Your Home Within 7 Working Days (Continued)

- Overflow dripping
- Toilet that won't flush – where there is another working toilet in your home
- Broken glass in windows and doors where the Council is responsible for the repair (our initial action may be to board over the area to make safe and secure)
- Broken chimney pots
- Holes in a roof where rain is coming in (weather permitting for health and safety reasons)
- Collapsed ceilings (following water leaks etc, we will remove and make safe)
- Partial loss of heating between dates 1st April to 30th September (Summer)



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Priority D Where We Will Visit Your Home Within 30 Working Days

These are non-urgent repairs, which include:

- Sanitary or water appliances that need replacing but are not leaking
- Replacement of toilet seats
- Rainwater gutters and pipes that are leaking as a result of a blockage
- Re-hanging or renewing internal doors
- Easing all doors
- Letterboxes
- Weatherboards
- Easing windows
- Kitchen units – replacement and repairs
- Repair garage doors and frames
- Washing line posts
- Non-urgent floor repairs
- Non-urgent fireplace repairs
- Non-urgent plastering
- Non-urgent roof tiling
- Damp course repairs
- Skirting boards
- Non-urgent electrical works

Priority E Adaptations Where We Will Visit Your Home Within 16 or 50 Working Days (subject to finance permitting)

This is a special priority for aids and adaptations to your home. These include:

- Grab rails (16 days)
- Additional stair rails (16 days)
- Half steps (16 days)
- Bath poles (16 Days)
- Major adaptations e.g. access ramps, level entry showers etc. (50 days)

Please see our Service Standard or our 'Tenant's Guide to' leaflet for more information.

Priority F Where We Will Visit Your Home Within 90 Working Days

This is for non-urgent routine maintenance work or other specialist work, which include:

- Major joinery repairs
- Complete replacement of garage doors
- Replacement gates
- Repointing works or rendering brickwork (small areas)
- Chimney stack pointing
- Complete overhaul of rainwater gutters and pipes (other than three storey structures)
- Garden walls and fencing (small areas)
- Concrete footpaths and drives (small areas)



Priority G Where We Will Visit Your Home Within 249 Working Days

This is for annual planned maintenance, large works, or other specialist work. These include:

- Annual service to solid fuel and gas fires, boilers/appliances
- Maintaining common areas
- Refurbishing garages and garage sites
- Annual service to smoke alarms
- Fencing, entrance door replacement, pointing and brickwork repairs, work on paths and paved areas etc
- Complete overhaul of rainwater gutters and pipes for 3 storey structures
- Some electrical testing



What Happens if the Repair is Not Done Within the Timescale?

You should telephone us on Freephone Tel- **0800 4794999** if the repair is still outstanding, unless you have been provided with a good reason why the work has not been completed.

Your Right to Repair

You have a legal right to arrange your own repairs under the Right to Repair Scheme – but only if we fail to repair something within set time periods. You must have also allowed us reasonable time to gain access into your home to complete the work.

In general the Right to Repair Scheme ensures that small urgent repairs which might affect your health, safety or security are carried out quickly and easily. Not all repairs 'qualify' under the scheme.

The rules in relation to the Right to Repair Scheme are complex so contact us first on Freephone Tel- **0800 479 4999** - otherwise we might not pay the bill.

What is a Qualifying Repair?

A repair only qualifies for the Right to Repair Scheme if the cost is less than £250.

When a repair is reported, if you request the information, we will advise you:

- How long the repair will take
- If the repair qualifies under the scheme
- What to do if the repair is not completed within the time stated
- The name of the contractor if one is to be used
- The arrangements made with you to carry out the repair
- Any other details relating to the repair

Your Right to Alterations and Improvements

Should you wish to make any alterations or improvements to your home you should always contact us first and ensure that we provide you with written permission first.



We will assist and offer you technical advice regarding the standards we expect.

Please also be aware that work affecting the outside of your home may also need planning permission and building regulation permission from Ashfield District Council before you begin. You have to pay for the work yourself and it must be done to an acceptable standard.

Permission may not always be provided and will be subject to the relevant legislation, regulations, codes of practice and the Council's Policies. Permission may also be withheld when there is the likelihood to invalidate existing warranties or guarantees. This includes properties with external insulated render, with an associated 25 year guarantee, which would be invalidated if work is not carried out by an approved contractor.



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Your Right to Alterations and Improvements (Continued)

We are not responsible for carrying out repairs to your alterations, or improvements, which are required because of faulty fittings, substandard workmanship or defective materials.

There are some items and materials that we will provide to you free-of-charge to carry out minor repairs yourself. Contact our Repairs Call Handling Centre on Freephone Tel- **0800 479 4999** and we will deliver, or arrange for you to collect, the item or materials from the Company's Stores Section, Technical Services, Northern Depot, Station Road, Sutton in Ashfield, Notts, NG17 5HB.

Please see our Service Standard or our 'Tenant's Guide to' leaflet for more information.

Inspecting Your Alterations and Improvements

Whether you have received our written permission to undertake alterations or you have completed repairs as part of your Right to Repair we may need to inspect the repair, alterations or improvements once completed to check that these are of a satisfactory standard; so please let us know when the work has finished. Subject to obtaining written permission for improving your home you may be entitled to compensation for costs incurred when you leave your home.



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Repairs – If You Have Applied for the Right to Buy

Once you have submitted a Right to Buy your home we will continue to carry out essential repairs to the property during the application period. Your home is valued at the date the Right to Buy Application Form was received by the Council and the valuation reflects the condition your home was in at this date. Consequently, once you have applied to buy your home no improvements will be undertaken to the property and the property will be withdrawn from any planned maintenance programme.

The Council will not undertake major works such as replacing the roof covering, replacing windows, bathrooms or kitchens while the property is subject to the Right to Buy application.

Please note that once you have purchased your home, all outstanding repairs will be cancelled, even those which were requested before you commenced the Right to Buy process.

If you decide not to purchase your home, please ensure you contact us to let us know. This will allow us to ensure that any cancelled or postponed repairs are re-processed.

Useful Advice – Repairs and Maintenance

We will make arrangements for moving furniture and carpets (but not fitted carpets) for older tenants and tenants with disabilities. We will also help move heavy items for other households, however, we will not accept responsibility for any damage caused during this process. We will also provide you with reasonable notice of repair appointments so that you can clear areas of your home of your belongings and fitted carpets before works start.

Our Repairs Technicians will also provide dust sheets when needed and wear overshoes if necessary. Please be aware that our Repairs Technicians will not be able to remove their shoes when entering your home due to Health and Safety Reasons.

Winter - What To Do If Pipes Freeze

- If a pipe freezes, turn off the main stop tap. This is usually under the kitchen sink or near to where the mains water supply enters your home
- Turn on all cold taps throughout your home
- As long as you have been using your heating boiler every day, it is quite safe to continue to do so. It will help to defrost the affected area. It will also stop people getting extremely cold and potentially suffering from hypothermia
- If you know where the pipe is frozen, you can put hot water bottles on it. You can also use a fan heater or electric hairdryer to try and thaw the pipe. **Never use a naked flame.**

For further advice or help, contact our Repairs Call Handling Centre on Freephone Tel- 0800 479 4999 IMMEDIATELY.

Winter – What To Do If A Pipe Bursts

- Turn off the main stop tap
- Contact our Repairs Call Centre Handling Centre on Freephone Tel- 0800 479 4999 immediately
- If the burst is on a pipe leading from a storage tank, try to stop the water flowing out of the tank, or catch the water in buckets
- If you cannot stop the flow of water, open all taps to drain the system
- Turn off the central heating and let any solid fuel fires die down
- Remember to collect water in the bath for washing and flushing the toilet



For advice on winter warmth and/or energy efficiency please look out for information in your Homes 4 Rent magazine, on our website at www.ashfieldhomes.co.uk or contact the Repairs Call Handling Centre on Freephone Tel- 0800 479 4999

Electrical Safety

Electricity is perfectly safe, as long as you take care and apply common sense when using it.

Here are a few tips on electrical safety:

- Water and electricity or electrical appliances are dangerous together, do not use switches with wet hands
- Use good quality plugs that are manufactured to the correct safety standard (BS 1363). If you have children use plugs with part insulated pins and place plug blanks into sockets when they are not in use
- Regularly check electric cables and flexes to make sure they are not worn or damaged
- All new electrical appliances are supplied with a new sealed plug, where possible do not break the seal
- If a main fuse blows turn off the electricity at the main fuse box. You will need to pull out each fuse one by one, until you find the blown one. Replace the wire or cartridge with a replacement that has the right number of amps

If you are unsure or require advice, call our Repairs Call Handling Centre on Freephone Tel- 0800 479 4999.

- If a fuse keeps blowing try to find the cause by unplugging your appliances one by one e.g. washing machines, toasters, kettles, etc
- If you have a modern circuit breaker type of fuse box, unplug any appliance that might be faulty one by one before resetting the trip switch



Repairs and Maintenance

Helpful Hints When Decorating

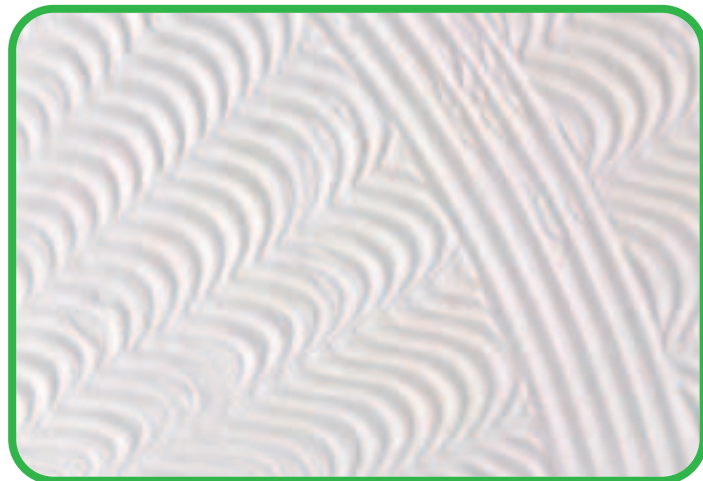
You are responsible for decorating the inside of your home and we expect you to keep it in a reasonable condition. If you remove any radiators during the course of your redecoration then it is your responsibility to ensure that these are re-fitted correctly and to rectify any repair issues that may have occurred as a consequence.

Loose Plaster

If you are about to remove wallpaper from the wall and the plaster appears loose, contact the [Repairs Call Handling Centre on Freephone Tel- 0800 479 4999](#), before it comes away from the wall totally as this will avoid any confusion. If you remove the plaster totally you may be responsible for its replacement.

Artexing

We advise tenants not to 'Artex' walls or ceilings, as removing it later can mean having to re-plaster walls which you may be responsible for, or for which we may re-charge you the costs.



Polystyrene Wall and Ceiling Tiles

We request you not to use these as they can be a fire hazard, produce toxic fumes when burnt, and can damage the plaster on the walls and ceilings.

