



# Getting your home repaired

A guide for customers



## 1. Introduction

We understand how important your home is to you, and we are committed to maintaining your home in good condition. This guide is designed to provide you with useful information about our repairs service. More information is available at [www.stonewater.org](http://www.stonewater.org)

## 2. Report a repair

You should tell us as soon as possible when your home needs a repair. We will not repair damage caused by you.

You can report a repair on-line via our website, by e-mail or telephone the Customer Contact Team.

Website – [www.stonewater.org](http://www.stonewater.org)

Phone (Customer Contact Team) – 01202 319119

Email – [customers@stonewater.org](mailto:customers@stonewater.org)

Our phone lines are open 8am- 8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am-1pm on Saturday.

If you have an emergency outside of these hours, you will be transferred to our out of hour's service who will determine whether the repair is one that needs to be attended to immediately. If the repair is not classed as an emergency you will be advised to contact us when our offices are open.

## 3. How quickly will repairs be completed?

We aim to carry out repairs as quickly as possible, based on an appointment system.

Repairs are prioritised depending upon:

- the seriousness of the defect
- the impact it will have on the household, and
- the potential damage to the property.

Repairs are categorised as High Priority or By Appointment.

### High Priority Repairs

For repairs that could pose an immediate danger or cause serious damage, we will make sure that your home is safe and secure within four hours of you reporting it. For other high priority repairs we will make a temporary or permanent repair within 24 hours. If a follow on repair is required then our contractors will arrange a mutually convenient appointment with you.

Examples of high priority repairs are:

- total failure of the electricity supply
- complete failure of heating or hot water to property occupied by elderly or vulnerable tenants
- major leaks which are un-controllable and cannot be contained
- lighting to communal stairways and corridors if dangerous
- failure of a warden alarm or call system.





## By Appointment Repairs

These are repairs which do not pose an immediate risk to health or safety.

These repairs include:

- repairs to any communal facility such as door entry system
- kitchen repairs such as repairs to unit doors
- easing and adjusting windows
- minor plumbing work such as leaking overflows and repairs to taps.

## Vulnerable customers

We will ensure that customers living in supported housing, (including customers living in general needs housing who receive support and customers who have a live-in carer), and retirement living accommodation are given priority appointment times so that repairs are carried out as soon as practically possible.

## 4. Access to your home

We will at various times require access to your home, for example to inspect a repair or service gas appliances. Under your tenancy agreement you must allow us reasonable access, provided we write to you more than 24 hours before we need to come into your home (unless it's an emergency where no notice is required).


If you try to prevent us from entering, we may take legal action to gain entry and charge you the cost of getting into your home.

## 5. Identity cards

All of our employees and contractors carry an official identity card. Before allowing anyone into your home claiming to represent Stonewater please ask to see his or her identity card. If you are in any doubt about the identity of a caller, do not let them in and call Stonewater to confirm they are who they say they are.

## 6. What will we repair?

As part of your tenancy agreement, we carry out certain repairs in your home. Other repairs are your responsibility. In general we are responsible for the maintenance and repair of the building's structure, exterior, fixtures and fittings, heating, hot water, electrical, gas and sanitation installations, kitchen and bathroom suites. See section 7 below detailing what we are responsible for repairing and what you are responsible for.





## 7. Whose responsibility is it?

<b>BATHROOM</b> – who is responsible	Stonewater	Customer	
Bath	✓		
Shower	✓		
Toilet bowl	✓		
Toilet cistern	✓		
Blocked toilets		✓	
Toilet seat		✓	
Wash hand basin	✓		
Taps	✓		
Plugs and chains		✓	

<b>DOORS</b> – who is responsible	Stonewater	Customer	
External doors including hinges and handles	✓		Excludes letterbox.
Door name plate		✓	
Door bell		✓	
Glass in door		✓	
Internal doors		✓	
Locks & bolts on internal doors		✓	
Locks & bolts on external doors		✓	
Door entry system	✓		
Letterbox		✓	

<b>WINDOWS</b> – who is responsible	Stonewater	Customer	
Broken glass in windows		✓	Includes boarding up.
Broken glass panels		✓	
Window frames	✓		
Window sills	✓		
Lost keys to window locks		✓	





<b>KITCHENS</b> – who is responsible	Stonewater	Customer	
Stop taps	✓		
Cookers		✓	Unless you pay a service charge for maintenance of your cooker.
Kitchen work tops	✓		
Kitchen unit doors	✓		
Kitchen units	✓		
Sink bowl and drainer	✓		
Blocked drains		✓	Excludes communal drainage systems.
Kitchen fittings provided by the customer		✓	

<b>ELECTRICAL</b> – who is responsible	Stonewater	Customer	
Replacing light bulbs, fluorescent tubes, starters, plugs and tripped fuses		✓	
Communal lighting	✓		
Smoke alarms	✓		
Carbon monoxide detectors	✓		
Socket outlets and switches	✓		
Total or partial power failure	✓		

<b>PLUMBING</b> – who is responsible	Stonewater	Customer	
Down pipe (soil and rain)	✓		
Drains	✓		
Guttering	✓		
Overflow	✓		





Water supply	✓		
Tap washers	✓		
Plugs and chains		✓	
Washing machines fittings and hoses		✓	
Burst pipes (not caused by the customer)	✓		

<b>SAFETY CHECKS – who is responsible</b>	Stonewater	Customer	
Gas leaks	✓		
Annual gas safety check / service	✓		
Electrical Check (mutual exchange or transfer)		✓	Stonewater will undertake but payment will be required in-advance and will be a condition of the mutual exchange or transfer.
Gas Check (mutual exchange or transfer)		✓	Stonewater will undertake but payment will be required in-advance and will be a condition of the mutual exchange or transfer.

<b>STRUCTURE – who is responsible</b>	Stonewater	Customer	
Chimney including pots and cowls	✓		
Roof including slates and tiles	✓		
Roof skylight	✓		
Fascia and soffit boards	✓		
Brick work / render	✓		
Foundations	✓		





Damp proof course	✓		
Walls	✓		
Plaster and plaster board	✓		Excludes minor cracks.
Floors	✓		
Ventilation systems	✓		
Skirting boards	✓		
Loft hatch	✓		
Stairs	✓		
Banister	✓		
Steps to entrance / exit	✓		
Porches	✓		
Handrails	✓		

<b>OTHER</b> – who is responsible	Stonewater	Customer	
Boundary fences or walls bordering a communal area	✓		
Fencing (privacy panels)		✓	
Fencing between properties		✓	
Gates	✓		
Driveways	✓		
Main access paths	✓		
Other paths in gardens		✓	
Garages	✓		
Greenhouses		✓	
Garden sheds		✓	





Outbuildings		✓	
Communal drying areas	✓		
Parking areas	✓		
Communal areas to flats	✓		
Communal decoration	✓		
Floor coverings		✓	
Driers		✓	
Garden		✓	
Internal decoration		✓	

### Communal areas

We are responsible for communal areas. Should you discover a fault in a communal area please report it to us.

### 8. What to expect from Contractors

All contractors employed by us work within an agreed code of conduct when they are doing work in or around your home. They are required to conduct themselves in a professional and civil manner at all times and to protect your home using dust sheets and protective coverings. Contractors must maintain confidentiality at all times, although they have an obligation to report to Stonewater any concerns with regard to the conduct of any resident or any issues surrounding child protection.

### 9. Chargeable repairs

If you or any member of your household or a visitor have caused damage to your home, whether accidental or on purpose, it is your responsibility to put this right.

You may carry out these works yourself; otherwise you should look to hire a skilled professional. You are responsible for these costs.

If you do not carry out any repairs or replacement work for which you are responsible, we may send an official notification asking you to do so within a certain time frame. If you still do not carry out the work we may, after a reasonable period of notice, enter your home and do the work ourselves. You would then be charged for the work and any administrative costs incurred. Where the property deteriorates because of neglect, for example when repairs have not been reported and as a result the problem has got worse, we will charge you for the cost of remedying the resulting problem.

As a general rule we will not carry out repairs that are your responsibility, such as boarding up or reglazing broken windows. In certain circumstances we may decide to do so, for example where







customers are vulnerable.

## 10. Moving out

When you move out of your home you need to make sure that it is clean and empty. It should be in a good decorative order and in a good state of repair. You must ensure that all keys including communal entrance keys and fobs are returned to us. There may be some wear and tear but there should be no sign of damage or neglect. If a property is left in disrepair, or if we have to clear it of goods or clean it, we will charge you for the cost of doing this work.

## 11. Home insurance

We strongly advise you to take out home contents insurance as we do not insure your contents, fixtures and fittings, and decorations against theft, fire, vandalism or leaks. Visit our website to find out more about how we can help you obtain home contents insurance easily and at a price that is affordable.

## 12. Non-payment of charges

Should you fail to pay any money you owe us, we will take legal action through the small claims court. We may also serve a Notice of Seeking Possession against your tenancy.

## 13. Home improvements

We want you to feel at home in your property and have the freedom to make some additions and changes.

Depending on the terms of your tenancy agreement you may be able to make improvements or alterations to your home, but there will be times you'll need to get written permission from us before you start work.

You may need permission to make these types of changes: putting up a satellite dish, replacing a kitchen or changing the electric fittings.

### **Our planned improvements**

We carry out a programme of planned works to maintain and improve your home.

As your home gets older we may need to replace or improve things such as bathrooms, kitchens, heating installations and doubling glazing.

Every year we plan which homes will need items replaced due to their age and condition. To do this we plan improvements on the basis of the information that is held on our stock condition database, which is a tool we use to look at the current equipment and fittings in our homes and predict when these may need to be replaced and the cost of doing this.





## Your right to compensation for improvements you carry out

You have the right to claim back compensation for certain improvements which you make to your home. We pay this compensation when your tenancy ends, as long as those improvements were made after 1st April 1994.

A list of agreed improvements and further details can be found at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

## 14. Aids & adaptations

We aim to help you live as independently as possible. One of the ways we can do this is by funding certain aids and adaptations to your home so that you can live more comfortably and maintain your independence for longer.

There are a range of services and simple adaptations such as grab rails, stair lifts and ramps that we can offer, and we'll work closely with you to find the options that best suit you.

## 15. Your safety

We take your safety very seriously and believe it's important for you to live safely - not just for the sake of you and your family but also for those that live around you.

### Gas servicing

We have a legal duty to carry out a safety check each year to make sure that the gas supply and appliances in your home are in a safe condition.

We comply with our responsibilities by undertaking an annual service and safety inspection that includes gas pipework, gas cookers, gas boilers, gas fires and gas water heaters.

Our contractor will contact you to arrange a convenient appointment. If you cannot keep this, please contact the gas contractor straight away to arrange another appointment.

If you do not allow us access we may have to cap the gas supply for safety reasons and to remove any risks to you or your family. It could also result in us taking legal action against you. Any costs we incur in taking this action will be passed on to you.


If you smell gas call National Grid on 0800 111 999 immediately (minicom 0800 587 5055) and:

- DO Turn off the meter at the control valve
- DO Put out any naked flames
- DO Open doors and windows
- DO Keep people away from the affected area
- DON'T Smoke or strike any matches
- DON'T Turn electrical switches on or off.

For further information on Gas safety visit our website.

### Fire

We will fit a smoke alarm in your home and carry out fire risk assessments for all communal areas. It is your responsibility to make sure that you test the smoke alarm in your home and keep exits clear.





For further information on Fire safety visit our website.

### **Electrical**

We will test your electricity supply and wiring before you move into your home to make sure it is safe. You should make sure that your own electrical equipment is safe and in good working order.

### **Water**

At times we may need you to turn off your water supply. You should make sure you know where your stopcock is. It is wise to test it twice a year to make sure it is working. You can do this by shutting it off to check it closes, then opening it fully. Then close it slightly by turning it a little towards off.

Note – if you do have to turn off your water supply, you may also need to turn off your heating system.

### **Carbon Monoxide**

Carbon monoxide (CO) is known as the 'silent killer' as it is colourless and odourless. It can come from faulty appliances powered by any fuel that burns. These include gas, solid fuel and oil fuels. CO alarms detect the presence of this poisonous gas.

We will fit and service carbon monoxide detectors as part of our ongoing maintenance programmes. If one has not yet been fitted then take the following precautions:

NEVER Use a gas appliance if you think it is not working correctly. Look out for signs that include yellow or orange flames, soot or staining around the appliance and pilot lights that frequently blow out

NEVER Cover up a gas appliance

NEVER Block or obstruct any internal or externally fixed ventilation grille or airbrick

NEVER Block or cover any internal or externally fitted flue from a gas appliance


NEVER Allow an unqualified gas fitter or person to install or carry out works on your gas appliances, or attempt the work yourself. (All qualified Gas fitters are registered with Gas Safe and must present an up to date Gas Safe identification card).

### **Asbestos**

Some of our homes contain asbestos as it was used extensively as a building material in the UK from the 1950s through to the late 1980s. If your home was built after the year 2000, it will not contain asbestos. We do not need to remove all asbestos from our properties, as it is often safer to manage the asbestos rather than disturb it. Do not tamper with or touch any asbestos material.

Areas where asbestos containing materials might be found include: external fascia and soffit board; roof felt or lining panels; roof cement; cold water tanks; textured coatings to ceilings and walls (eg: artex); ceiling panels; garage roofs; bath panels; panels behind fires; heaters or boilers; service ducting; boiler flues; garage rainwater downpipes; panels beneath window frames; roof sheets or tiles; old ventilation pipes; hot pipe insulation; garage fascia boards; garage window lining; fire door panels; partition walls; vinyl floor tiles and linoleum products.

If you are planning to do any DIY which involves drilling, cutting or sanding materials in any of the locations mentioned above, or if you are in any doubt, please contact us. For further information on Asbestos visit our website.





## 16. Protecting your home

### Frost damage prevention

In cold weather, water inside pipes, cisterns and basins can freeze and expand, causing serious damage. At the start of a cold spell, take these precautions to avoid freezing:

- make sure that all taps are turned off at night
- report any running overflows
- keep your home as warm as you can
- find out where the main stopcock is and how to turn it off
- if you are leaving your home empty for more than a few days, and there is a danger of a hard frost draw off any water from the domestic system after turning off the stopcock, or if you have a central heating system, leave it running at a low temperature to provide background warmth.

### Burst pipes

If you have a burst pipe, you should:

- switch off your central heating system or immersion heater if you have one
- turn off the main stopcock
- put something under the leak to catch the water
- turn on all taps to drain the system as soon as possible
- call the repairs number.

### Condensation

Dampness in buildings can be caused in many ways. The most frequent cause of reported damp is condensation. Condensation occurs when moist air reaches a cold surface and deposits water on or in that surface. Air can become heavy with water vapour from cooking, washing, hot baths and drying clothes. Dampness shows up as black mould growth, particularly near windows or in areas where air cannot circulate.

To limit condensation:


- reduce the amount of water vapour in the air by drying clothes outside. If you have to air them indoors, keep a window open
- after a bath or shower keep the bathroom door closed and the window open so that steam can escape without getting into other rooms
- try to ensure that there is enough heat and ventilation in each room. If you have an airbrick or vent in the wall or window do not block it up or you will stop moisture getting out and prevent essential ventilation. If you experience continuing problems a Maintenance Surveyor can carry out a check on the cause of the dampness and give further advice.


For more information visit our website.

## 17. Home energy advice

With the cost of energy prices rising, it's important that you heat your home efficiently so you can save on your bills.

Home energy advice is available from a number of sources and most of the companies that supply gas





and electricity can provide free help. They can advise on the best ways of paying for fuel, how to spread the payments through the year and how to save energy and cut fuel bills. Being energy efficient means taking simple steps to reduce the amount of fuel that you use but still keeping your home warm and comfortable.

Work on improving the insulation of your home to reduce the amount of heat lost through the windows, walls and roof is normally undertaken on a programmed basis .

## **18. Treating pests & vermin**

We do not treat vermin such as cockroaches, mice or rats, nor do we remove fleas, bed bugs, wasps, bees, and ants. Your local council offers a service that will deal with pests/vermin that are harmful to public health.

We will block up holes / access points that pests/vermin are entering through, for example holes in brickwork where mice and squirrels are getting into a building.

For further information visit [www.stonewater.org](http://www.stonewater.org).

If you have any questions please call our Customer Contact Team on 01202 319119 or email [customers@stonewater.org.uk](mailto:customers@stonewater.org.uk)